



# Fitchburg State University

## Board of Trustees Personnel Committee

Published on April 3, 2025 at 11:31 AM EDT

### Date and Time

Monday April 7, 2025 at 1:00 PM EDT

### Location

This meeting will be held virtually. It will also be live streamed and recorded.

Notice of a meeting of the Fitchburg State University Personnel Committee on Monday, April 7, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

### Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
<b>I. Opening Items</b>			<b>1:00 PM</b>
<b>A.</b> Record Attendance		Lynn Barrieau	1 m
<b>B.</b> Call the Meeting to Order		Lynn Barrieau	1 m
<b>C.</b> Approve Minutes from the December 5, 2023 Meeting	Approve Minutes	Lynn Barrieau	2 m

	Purpose	Presenter	Time
<b>II. President's Evaluation Process</b>			<b>1:04 PM</b>
<b>A.</b> Fitchburg State University Presidential Profile Approved and published 12/21/2023	Discuss	Stacey Luster	5 m
<b>B.</b> President Hodge Goals Provided to the Board of Trustees on February 18, 2025	Discuss	Stacey Luster	10 m
<b>C.</b> Memo from Commissioner Santiago Provided to Community College and State University Board Chairs on April 6, 2021	Discuss	Stacey Luster	5 m
<b>D.</b> Vote - Letter of Support  In lieu of a performance evaluation (consistent with DHE practice for new presidents), recommend that the Board of Trustees authorize Chairman Fiorentino to submit a letter of support for President Hodge to Commissioner Ortega, which shall include support for any available compensation adjustments.	Vote	Lynn Barrieau	5 m
<b>III. Closing Items</b>			<b>1:29 PM</b>
<b>A.</b> Adjourn Meeting	Vote	Lynn Barrieau	1 m

# Coversheet

## Approve Minutes from the December 5, 2023 Meeting

**Section:** I. Opening Items

**Item:** C. Approve Minutes from the December 5, 2023 Meeting

**Purpose:** Approve Minutes

**Submitted by:**

**Related Material:**

Minutes for Board of Trustees Personnel and Human Resources Committee Meeting on December 5, 2023

VOTE Minutes December 5, 2023.pdf

DRAFT



# Fitchburg State University

## Minutes

### Board of Trustees Personnel and Human Resources Committee Meeting

Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees Meeting

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#### Date and Time

Tuesday December 5, 2023 at 8:15 AM

#### Location

Presidents' Hall, Mazzaferro Center, 291 Highland Ave., Fitchburg, MA 01420

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Notice of a meeting of the Fitchburg State University Personnel Committee on Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 8:15 a.m.,  
Presidents' Hall, Mazzaferro Center, 291 Highland Ave., Fitchburg, MA 01420

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#### Committee Members Present

K. Spinelli (remote), L. Barrieau, M. Fiorentino, Jr. (remote)

#### Committee Members Absent

D. Phillips, J. Flanagan

#### Guests Present

E. Gregoire (remote), F. Barricelli, G. Doiron, G. Doiron, J. Bry, J. Murdoch, J. Wolfman, L. Bayless, M. Bruun, P. Marshall, R. Lapidus, S. Dodd, S. Levine

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#### I. Opening Items

A.

## Record Attendance

### B. Call the Meeting to Order

L. Barrieau called a meeting of the Personnel and Human Resources Committee of Fitchburg State University to order on Tuesday Dec 5, 2023 at 8:17 AM.

L. Barrieau welcomed everyone and noted that M. Fiorentino will be a voting member at today's meeting.

### C. Approve Minutes

K. Spinelli made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Personnel Committee Meeting on 01-25-23.

M. Fiorentino, Jr. seconded the motion.

The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

#### Roll Call

J. Flanagan	Absent
D. Phillips	Absent
M. Fiorentino, Jr.	Aye
K. Spinelli	Aye
L. Barrieau	Aye

## II. Faculty and Librarian Reappointment Process

### A. Dr. Pat Marshall will lead the discussion

L. Barrieau introduced Dr. Pat Marshall, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

P. Marshall started her PowerPoint presentation by thanking Dr. Franca Barricelli, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. F. Barricelli is masterful in helping her break down and visualize complex processes, and she wanted to be sure that F. Barricelli was recognized in her role in preparing for today's presentation. Also, Dr. Sara Levine, Dean of Arts and Sciences plays a crucial role in the evaluation process.

P. Marshall stated that one of the important roles as Provost is to ensure that we are offering high-quality experiences to our students; and the evaluation process for faculty and librarians is one of the ways in which the university uses shared governance to support academic quality. Our professors and librarians are, by definition, qualified experts in their fields. They hold advanced degrees in their disciplines, and their core duties include:

- effective classroom teaching,
- academic advising and mentoring,
- participation in departmental and campus wide committee work,

- continuous development of the curriculum through assessment,
- contributing to the content of their disciplines through research, scholarship and/or creative activity, and
- service to the institution.

P. Marshall next talked about why evaluations are important per Article VIII (8) of the MSCA contract. These include:

- Making personnel decisions
- Encouraging and assessing professional and pedagogical experimentation AND
- Assisting members of the academic community in the improvement of performance.

P. Marshall stated the reasons why evaluations of faculty and librarians are conducted in higher education. These include:

- Ensuring academic quality
- Supporting pedagogical innovation and
- Providing for accountability in the process of shared governance

P. Marshall talked about the rigorous evaluation process and the annual reappointment levels of review required of tenure-track faculty members and librarians. The Deans play an important part in this process and the submission and review of materials is significant. The personnel calendar is always followed.

There was a discussion on student evaluations and response rates.

S. Levine discussed the review process of promotion and tenure and the large files of materials submitted. The Provost relies on the Deans evaluation whereas they allow for a deep dive into each candidate that applies for promotion and tenure. The Deans are important in helping to ensure academic quality.

The process for evaluations, promotion and tenure is rigorous, comprehensive, and includes multiple layers of review.

There was a discussion on Post Tenure Review and the appeal process.

L. Barrieau requested Personnel Committee meetings be scheduled prior to sabbatical, promotion and tenure requests to the full board.

### **III. Professional Development Opportunities**

#### **A. Ms. Jessica Murdoch will lead the discussion**

J. Murdoch discussed in detailed the multiple professional development sessions offered to faculty, librarians and staff. The various groups are surveyed as a means to learn what employees would like to know more about when developing programming. She talked about the financial limitations associated when putting these programs together.

J. Murdoch noted that she meets with the unions on a regular basis as required by the contract. One of the outcomes from those meetings is a desire to develop a recognition program for staff whereas the faculty already have a recognition program in place. She noted that morale is really challenging, not just here, but across the state.

J. Murdoch stated that we have experts within our ranks that lead some of the sessions. Here are some of the programs offered:

Build a Basic Budget, Deaf 101, Keeping Safe on Social Media, Self-Care: Small Changes for Positive Results, How to Support LGBTQIA+ Employees in the Workplace, Being a Student Ready Campus, SMART Retirement & Beyond Webinar, Campus Safety Overview, Gentle Yoga and Mindfulness, How to Create a Respectful Workplace, 5 Google Features That Will Help Gain Back Time in Your Day, Community Response to Active Shooter/Hostile Event, Understand and Embrace Diversity, and many others.

J. Murdoch noted that these programs are offered to everyone. The Human Resources staff try to engage our faculty and staff by sending reminders about the various professional development sessions.

#### **IV. President's Evaluation Process**

##### **A. Annual Presidential Evaluation Outline**

L. Barrieau stated that at the Trustee Retreat in June, the Board talked about looking at a different presidential evaluation process which was referred to the personnel committee. There are other ways of doing the presidential evaluation and she thought it would be a good idea to look how others perform this important work. There is an outline in the packet that suggested incorporating stake holders in the evaluation. One of the methods is for the President to do a self-evaluation. She said it's hard to know next steps as we develop a new process and input from the committee is needed to bring to the full Board.

M. Fiorentino noted that it's important that the Board agree on the process to be used before the new President is on board. We have current guidelines from the Board of Higher Education and those can be used as a beginning point. It is important for the entire Board to participate in the President's evaluation. It is imperative that Board members understand the process.

There was a discussion on the Commissioner's process, looking at different models, and having someone from the BHE interview the President.

L. Barrieau stated that she would reach out to someone at the Board of Higher Education to continue the conversation. She did include in the packet the materials from the Trustee Conference that provides an example.

R. Lapidus provided his perspective on the process. He agreed with what had been said. He noted that the new Commissioner has not changed the guidelines yet and he is not sure if they will be changed. He reminded the group that the evaluation process is unusual with the split weight of the evaluation between the BOT and the Commissioner along with only using cost of living as compensation. He said equity, merit and cost of living are often used interchangeably, but that they are different and that presidential candidates may not take the job without knowing what the evaluation process and compensation adjustments entail. He noted the materials presented in the packet are dated and, in many cases, have not been performed at Fitchburg State or at most of our sister institutions to his knowledge.

L. Barrieau stated that what we need as a Board is for someone from the Board of Higher Education to explain the process.

E. Gregoire acknowledged that the current process is not changing, but we need to operate within those guidelines and get clarity to figure out our responsibilities and expectations and stay up to speed.

There was a discussion on the BHE guidelines, strategic plans and the equity agenda, and metrics for presidential evaluations.

M. Fiorentino said it is important that we move forward on what is a presidential evaluation for this university and the next President. We need a step-by-step process and it will take some conversation. He is not suggesting a long-complicated process, but agreement on what are the best practices within the BHE guidelines. He acknowledged a key point from the President, stating that anyone coming in for an interview is also interviewing the BOT as well and if we don't articulate what the process is, it will be a problem.

L. Barrieau said that at the next meeting, she will put something together. She next requested budget related reports regarding faculty and staff hires. As people leave and are replaced, what does that mean to the budget.

E. Gregoire shared his thoughts surrounding the reporting of FTE's and position management, and what are the salary savings for this budget year and the 3-month hiring freeze.

J. Murdoch stated that she will coordinate with campus colleagues and put the data together for the next meeting.



## **B. Informational Documents**

## **V. Closing Items**

### **A. Adjourn Meeting**

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:18 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
L. Barrieau

**Fitchburg State University  
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

TO: Board of Trustees Meeting – Personnel Committee	DATE:  April 7, 2025
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER:
SUBJECT: December 5, 2023 meeting minutes	13-2024-2025

It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve the minutes from the December 5, 2023 Personnel Committee meeting.

# Coversheet

## Fitchburg State University Presidential Profile

**Section:** II. President's Evaluation Process  
**Item:** A. Fitchburg State University Presidential Profile  
**Purpose:** Discuss  
**Submitted by:**  
**Related Material:** presidential prospectus 2023\_\_24 FINAL.pdf





# PRESIDENTIAL PROFILE







Thank you for your interest in Fitchburg State University’s presidential search, and in learning more about this vital institution that has been changing the lives of students for nearly 130 years.

Our 12th president will build upon the legacy of Richard S. Lapidus, who has announced his intention to retire following the 2023-24 academic year. In his nine years leading Fitchburg State, he has prioritized student success, guided the creation and implementation of groundbreaking academic programs, led the expansion of online offerings and strengthened the ties between the university and the city in which it resides.

Since its founding in 1894, Fitchburg State has been a leader in the educational, cultural and civic life of the region. Its 58,000 alumni span the globe, as leaders in their disciplines and pillars of their communities. Following a long period of capital investment in the heart of the campus, recent growth at the institution has centered

on programmatic enhancements that will continue to distinguish Fitchburg State among the public and private institutions that comprise the robust higher education landscape of Massachusetts.

This national search begins with the conviction that Fitchburg State is poised to capitalize on continued growth and innovation in a changing landscape. While the institution has evolved over its long history, its core values endure, and the university will continue its progress with bold leadership and the cooperation of a committed and engaged campus community.

Our search process will continue to engage diverse constituencies of students, faculty, staff and community members to whom Fitchburg State University is so vital. Our goal is to identify a leader who can confidently embrace and promote all that lies at the heart of our endeavor, who is prepared to move us to higher levels, building upon a strong and proven foundation.

**C. DEBORAH PHILLIPS, Chair, Board of Trustees**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fitchburg State University seeks a forward-looking, engaging leader who is passionate about student success to serve as its 12th president.

A public comprehensive institution with a strong and proud tradition of excellence in teaching, scholarship, and public service, the university is situated on a 60-acre traditional New England campus in North Central Massachusetts, 40 miles west of Boston. Fitchburg State offers more than 50 undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the arts, humanities, sciences, social sciences, and professional fields to more than 6,500 students annually, including more than 3,000 graduate students, and is home to 198 full-time faculty and librarians. The president oversees an annual budget of \$120 million, which includes state funding, federal grants, and gifts from alumni and friends.

Founded as a teachers' college in 1894, Fitchburg State has developed into a highly-regarded university that blends liberal arts and sciences and professional programs within a small college environment. The university prepares students to lead and succeed by fostering lifelong learning and civic and global responsibility. A Fitchburg State University education extends beyond the classroom to include residential, professional, and co-curricular opportunities, with particular emphasis on career preparedness with students engaging in culminating experiences such as internships, research with faculty members, or participation

in national project competitions. Fitchburg State fosters an equitable society by working toward the principle of education justice and being a student-ready campus. The university provides leadership and support for the economic, social, and cultural needs of North Central Massachusetts and beyond. More information about Fitchburg State may be found at [www.fitchburgstate.edu](http://www.fitchburgstate.edu).

Fitchburg State, one of 29 institutions in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' system of public higher education, is governed by its Board of Trustees. The next president will be responsible for leading the university to new levels of achievement, and must possess a proven record of successful oversight of complex institutions and the skills to combine well-planned growth with strong fiscal responsibility. The president must possess the ability to attract and retain exceptional faculty and students, boost private philanthropy, demonstrate success in implementing strategic plans, and present a commitment to diversity and international initiatives.

The president will be a highly visible figure who is fully engaged with faculty, students, staff, alumni and extended university family as they build upon a strong foundation. Other requirements include a strong commitment to public higher education and a compelling desire to further the mission and core values of the institution.



## MISSION STATEMENT

Fitchburg State University is committed to excellence in teaching and learning and blends liberal arts and sciences and professional programs within a small college environment. Our comprehensive public university prepares students to lead, serve, and succeed by fostering lifelong learning and civic and global responsibility. A Fitchburg State education extends beyond our classrooms to include residential, professional, and co-curricular opportunities. As a community resource, we provide leadership and support for the economic, environmental, social, and cultural needs of North Central Massachusetts and the Commonwealth.



## Vision

Fitchburg State University will be nationally recognized for its excellence in teaching and learning in current and emergent fields, for its commitment to transforming lives through education, and for its dedication to public service.

In order to achieve this, we will:

- Prepare students for a global society through curricular innovation and program development.
- Achieve academic excellence by investing in our faculty and librarians in their pursuit of knowledge, professional competency, and scholarship.
- Employ innovative uses of technology in the library and across our campus to maximize student learning.
- Create a culture of diversity to meet the needs of the region and enhance the personal and academic lives of the university community.
- Build partnerships within our community to provide real-world opportunities for our students and collaborative solutions to community issues.

## Core Values

**ACCESSIBILITY.** Offering equitable access to high-quality programs and services to people of varying cultural backgrounds living within and beyond our diverse community of North Central Massachusetts

**AFFORDABILITY.** Providing opportunities for students of varying socioeconomic backgrounds to pursue an affordable, quality education

**COMMUNITY.** Forging partnerships with businesses and community organizations within the region to enhance quality of life

**ENRICHMENT.** Sustaining a supportive campus environment for students, faculty, staff, and alumni in which all members can grow and excel in their personal and professional lives

**EXCELLENCE.** Striving for excellence in academic programs and services through innovative teaching and professional practices



## FITCHBURG STATE FACTS

**Institution:** Public, four-year, co-educational, offering undergraduate and graduate degrees.

**Enrollment (Fall 2023):** 6,535 total students: 3,145 undergraduate, 3,390 graduate.

**Undergraduate Admissions:** For first-time freshmen: 4,353 completed applications, 90% acceptance rate, 16% yield; average combined SAT 1123 (SAT optional, 19% submitting). For transfers: 493 completed applications, 95% acceptance rate and 52% yield.

**Graduate Admissions:** 946 completed applications, 97% acceptance rate, 57% yield.

**Undergraduate student profile:** 26% part-time, 20% age 25 or older; 91% in-state residents; 33% live on campus in residence halls; 10% in online programs.

**Graduate student profile:** 82% part-time, 89% age 25 or older; 70% in-state residents; no on-campus residential population; 54% in online program.

**Diversity:** Undergraduate: 53% female, 47% male; 35% diverse. Graduate: 68% female, 32% male; 24% diverse.

**New student enrollment:** 617 first-year freshmen, 242 transfers, 519 graduates.

**First-year retention rate:** 73%

**Six-year graduation rate:** 53%

**Academic programs offered:** 34 undergraduate majors, with 50 concentrations and 60 minors; 21 master's degrees and certificates of advanced graduate studies; 22 undergraduate and graduate certificate programs; numerous online and hybrid options.

**Largest undergraduate majors:** Business Administration (12%), Communications Media (9%), Criminal Justice (7%), RN-BS Nursing (6%), BS Nursing (6%), Psychological Science (5%), Game Design (5%), Biology (4%), Exercise and Sports Science (4%); Non-degree (10%)

**Largest graduate majors:** Business Administration (32%) Education (26%), Computer Science (8%); Non-degree (27%)

**Degrees awarded (AY23):** 1,831: 690 bachelor, 55 post-baccalaureate certificate, 1,071 master, 15 Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies

**Total full-time day faculty and librarians:** 198

**Faculty/librarians with terminal degrees:** 92%

**Undergraduate student-faculty ratio:** 12:1

**Athletics:** Our varsity teams are members of six intercollegiate athletic associations, and are a member of the Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference (MASCAC), which includes seven other state colleges and universities. NCAA Division III, offering eight men's sports and nine women's sports. Team colors are green and yellow; team name and mascot is Falcons.



**Net operating budget:** \$120 million

**State support:** 34% of the budget from state appropriations; 66% from fees and other revenues.

**Undergraduate day division tuition and fees:** \$11,046 (in-state non-residential), \$22,854 (in-state residential)

**First-year freshmen receiving Pell Grants:** 45%

**Student loan borrowing (AY23):** 79% of graduates borrowed with an average debt of \$23,805

**Accreditations/approvals:** Fitchburg State University is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education, the Council for Standards in Human Service Education, and the Association in Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (pending review completion in February 2024). The university's programs are also approved by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Interstate Certification Compact of Educational Personnel, the State Board of Registration in Nursing, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the Commonwealth Honors Program, and the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology.

**Advancement:** 58,000 alumni, served by the Office of Alumni and Development. Alumni participation rate is 3.7 percent; total cash fund-raising revenue for fiscal 2023 was \$2.8 million. Federal, State and Private grants generated \$4.3 million in 2023.

**Fitchburg State University Foundation Inc.:**

An independent non-profit corporation organized under Massachusetts law. Governed by a board of directors. Portfolio: \$38.2 million in both foundation and university. Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc. was organized on June 6, 1978, exclusively for the benefit of Fitchburg State University, to establish scholarships and make awards to educationally talented and needy students; to establish a Distinguished Professor award within the faculty of the university; to subsidize inter-collegiate athletic programs; to subsidize budgets of departments of the university as needed for particular purposes; to encourage public use and support of functions and activities which further the mission of the university.

**Fitchburg State University Foundation Supporting Organization, Inc.:**

The Supporting Organization was organized on October 29, 1999 under the Foundation with a separate board of directors, to be a supporting organization operated, supervised and controlled for the exclusive benefit of the Foundation and all of its educational and charitable activities. As of June 30, 2023, the Supporting Organization's sole program activity has been to acquire, hold, operate and lease real estate and related improvements for the benefit of the Foundation and university.

**Campus:** Main campus comprises 48 buildings, several of which are over 100 years old. The university maintains 90 acres of land, including athletic fields and the adjacent McKay Complex. Its newest structure is the 100,000 sq. ft. science center, opened in fall 2013.





## SELECTED CHRONOLOGY

- The university was established in 1894 by an act of the Massachusetts Legislature. Opened as the State Normal School in Fitchburg, it first operated in temporary quarters in the city's former high school building. The modern campus took shape with the building of Thompson Hall in 1896.
- Egerly Hall, originally home of the School of Observation and Practice, opened in 1901, and in 1910 became one of the first junior high schools in the country.
- In 1932, the Normal School was renamed the State Teachers College at Fitchburg.
- Graduate programs were established in 1935.
- The nursing program began in 1943 through a cooperative effort with Burbank Hospital.
- The campus footprint expanded beyond the main quadrangle in 1956, with construction of a residence hall (Herlihy) on North Street.
- The State Teachers College at Fitchburg was renamed the State College at Fitchburg in 1960.
- The science building, named for former President George Condike, opened in 1963.
- In 1965, the institutional name changed to Fitchburg State College.
- A special education program was established in 1971, the same year the McKay Campus School opened. McKay houses a pre-school to eighth grade public school as well as university classrooms. Fitchburg State is the only university in the public system with a working school on campus.
- The university celebrated its centennial in 1994 with a variety of special events and completion of a capital campaign.
- Institution is renamed Fitchburg State University in 2010, reflecting the comprehensive scope of undergraduate and graduate programs. The Undergraduate Conference for Research and Creative Practice is held for the first time.
- The renovated Hammond Hall reopens in 2012, creating a "front door" bridging the campus and wider community.
- The Robert V. and Jeanne S. Antonucci Science Complex was dedicated in 2013, named for the President Emeritus (2003 to 2015) and his wife.
- A groundbreaking police program is launched in 2015, whose graduates complete two degrees in five years along with certification to work in municipal police departments across Massachusetts and neighboring states.
- The university's ties to Main Street are furthered with the purchase in 2016 of a long-vacant theater building, renovated into a game design studio and idealLAB. Renovation of the theater itself is in the design stage.
- The Carmelita Landry Arena at Wallace Civic Center is re-dedicated in 2018 as a year-round sports conditioning facility for varsity athletes and students in Exercise and Sports Science program. First class of police program graduates.
- New majors in environmental public health and educational studies launch in 2019, the same year Fitchburg State celebrates 125 years of changing lives.



## OVERVIEW

For more than a century, from a rented building with 46 students and five faculty to today's expansive high-tech campus and far-reaching influence, Fitchburg State University has held to its timeless mission of providing access to a quality education.

Today, Fitchburg State enrolls more than 6,500 day and evening students in more than 50 programs of study. The institution successfully completed a comprehensive [accreditation](#) review in 2022, and is guided by a [strategic plan](#) focused on education justice. Its recently adopted [academic plan](#) echoes the theme of education justice and the importance of being a student-ready campus.

The university has also embraced its host community, including robust partnerships with educational, civic and business organizations, along with significant capital investments in the city center. One major acquisition was the purchase of a long-vacant theater building on Main Street. Portions of the theater block have already been redeveloped into a state-of-the-art game design studio for university students, as well as an interdisciplinary ideaLab that has helped launch and support dozens of new businesses, many launched by recent immigrants to the U.S.

The university, as part of the system of public higher education, is also deeply engaged in statewide projects overseen by the [Department of Higher Education](#), which encourages collaboration among educational institutions and increased interaction with business and industry.

## Massachusetts Board and Department of Higher Education

The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education ("Board" or "BHE") is the Commonwealth's higher education authority with coordinating and regulatory authority over all public and private higher education institutions operating in the Commonwealth and authorized to grant degrees. The Board is staffed by the Department of Higher Education (the Department), which is run by a Commissioner who serves as the executive and administrative head of the Department, and Secretary to the Board. Together, the Board and Department are the leading voice and advocate for post-secondary education in the Commonwealth, serving critical roles as the state's regulator of state authorization and consumer protection.

Fitchburg State University is part of the Massachusetts System of Public Higher Education ("System"). The System serves approximately 290,000 students annually. The System consists of 15 community colleges, nine state universities and five University of Massachusetts ("UMass") campuses. The System exists to provide accessible, affordable, relevant, and rigorous programs that adapt to meet changing individual and societal needs for education and employment. Each community college and state university institution has its own board of trustees, while the five UMass campuses are overseen by the UMass Board of Trustees.

The Board of Higher Education has coordination and oversight responsibilities for the entire System, including the responsibility to analyze the present and future goals, needs and requirements of public higher education and to establish goals to achieve a well-coordinated, quality system of public higher education. The Board is also responsible for approving the appointments of, and setting the compensation for, all Community College and State University presidents. Under the direction of the Board and Department, the System is committed to the equitable provision of high-quality postsecondary learning opportunities for all of Massachusetts' residents.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

The next president of Fitchburg State University will have the opportunity to build on the long, rich history of the campus and its commitment to North Central Massachusetts. As this successful institution moves into a period of uncertainty facing all colleges and universities, the new president can take advantage of a track record of resilience, innovation, adaptability, and forward-looking leadership that has positioned Fitchburg State University to further advance its mission and impact in the future. The new president will be expected to address the following challenges and opportunities as they undertake this new role.

### Collaboratively Envision Future Opportunities and Strategies

Story after story in the national media outlines the challenges facing colleges and universities in the coming years. The next Fitchburg State president must embrace those challenges with energy, drive, and creativity. The president will provide leadership for developing a clear and compelling vision for the future that builds on the university's distinguished history as a liberal arts and teacher-training college and the university's evolution to a comprehensive, regional university. There have recently been a number of assessment and strategic planning efforts—from [NECHE](#) accreditation work to a self-led financial planning exercise—and the university is in the later stages of its current [strategic plan](#). The next Fitchburg State president will be expected to evaluate the data gathered through this work, engage the university's many constituents in thinking about the future, and shape a long-term strategy for the institution. The president will have willing partners across campus and in the community, who want to participate in the university's continued success and this individual must embrace those partners.

### Communicate Clearly About New Directions and Move to Implement

Fitchburg State's rich legacy, talented faculty and staff, and commitment to transforming the lives of the diverse student body it serves will anchor the institution in its exploration of new possibilities in curriculum, technology, and student engagement. After developing a clear plan for the short and long term, the next president must move carefully yet swiftly to implement this vision. A number of constituents on campus have invested in the various assessment exercises undertaken in recent years, and while the university continues to experience success, the time for moving forward boldly is now. The next Fitchburg State president will be expected to make decisions about

the future of the university, clearly communicate those decisions, and martial campus constituents to implement them expediently.

### Continue to Explore and Expand New Offerings and Serve Diverse Student Populations

The ongoing challenge that US higher education faces is the decline of the traditional undergraduate student population. Demographic shifts are contributing to a long-term decline in this group, and many campuses are seeing this trend already manifesting. The good news is that Fitchburg State has been forward-looking in online education, development of graduate programs, support of commuter students, and opportunities for students to get practical, hands-on learning experience. The university has created academic programs that are in demand and aligned with the needs of the communities it serves, including offerings in biotechnology, engineering technology, construction management, health professions, digital media innovation, and game design, as well as programs pending approval in creative arts enterprise and expressive arts therapy. The university's Police Concentration Program is the only one of its kind in the nation. This innovation will need to continue and expand to ensure healthy enrollment and a positive impact on the region, including continuing to provide opportunities for first-generation students and students from challenging socioeconomic backgrounds. Potential areas of growth that have already shown promise are international student recruitment, degree completion programs, and adult/mid-career graduate students. Experience in any or all of these areas would be advantageous for the next president. The president will also need to ensure alignment between the School of Graduate, Online, and Continuing Education and the broader university as program offerings and the student population continue to diversify.



## Enhance the Fitchburg State Community

As constituents across campus stated repeatedly, the commitment of every staff person and faculty member at Fitchburg State to students and their success has been and continues to be unwavering. This dedication is palpable and reflected in the experiences of students themselves. Following the pandemic, there has been some fatigue in the Fitchburg State community, requiring a president who is sensitive to the experiences of faculty, staff, and students and the ability to rally the community around its shared mission and goals. The next Fitchburg State president must have deep experience building a positive culture that nourishes and supports faculty and staff while ensuring the continued success of a diversifying student body. This individual must be visible, approachable, empathetic, and transparent as the university faces challenging decisions in the future. In addition, the university seeks a president who will model and support a collaborative leadership culture that values contributions from all constituents.

## Engage External Partners in Advancing Shared Goals

The university's next president will lead Fitchburg State's efforts to build positive relationships and impactful partnerships with its 55,000-person alumni base, city and regional leaders, local civic and social organizations, education-focused foundations, and businesses employing the accomplished graduates of Fitchburg State, among others. Recent efforts include the university's engagement in the revitalization of downtown Fitchburg through its [ideaLab](#) and the current [Theater Block project](#). The next president must have a commitment to partnering with external constituents to think through creative initiatives that will not only provide academic and curricular opportunities for students, but also support the continued development of the city and the region. Experience and success in building relationships with state and federal legislators will also be vital skills of the new president, as this work has yielded good results in the past. This individual must be able to effectively communicate the university's impact locally and regionally and partner with the university's advancement team and others to identify resources and donors to help support the institution's work.



## PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS & PERSONAL QUALITIES

### The successful candidate must have:

- A well-documented history of organizational leadership and proven success in meeting specific performance goals and objectives.
- An earned doctorate (including but not limited to a Ph.D., J.D., or Ed.D.), coupled with substantial experience relevant to the segmental mission and needs of the institution. In exceptional circumstances, an earned master's degree, coupled with substantial experience relevant to the segmental mission and needs of the institution, may satisfy minimum educational requirements.
- Substantial experience in a senior management position in higher education or substantial experience in a senior management position in a field outside higher education, where such experience is deemed relevant to, and provides a basis for judging, the candidate's capability to serve as a college or university president.
- An unyielding positive regard for the diverse population of students that Fitchburg State serves and a record of success improving equity and outcomes for all students through high-quality academic programs, impactful support structures and services, and an inclusive, welcoming environment.
- A demonstrable commitment and leadership in anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- A leadership style that seeks the knowledge and expertise of others to solve problems, effectively uses data in decision-making, transparently and effectively communicates decisions and strategies, and empowers others to lead initiatives that will advance the goals of the institution.
- Strong financial and budgetary management skills and demonstrated success effectively utilizing resources to advance institutional goals and ensure financial sustainability.
- Strong communication skills, including the ability to passionately advocate for an institution and effectively tell its story to many different constituents, and a commitment to being a visible, approachable, and positive presence on campus and in the community.
- Intellectual curiosity, humility, empathy, and the highest levels of personal and professional integrity.



### Additionally, the next president should have:

- Demonstrated experience working with others to shape a strategy that advances the mission of an institution, implementing that strategy, and assessing progress toward goals, as well as the ability to be agile and nimble in adapting to evolving circumstances.
- A record of aligning academic programs—undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education—with regional and state needs and an understanding of the importance of the liberal arts and professional programs at a regional comprehensive institution.
- Experience with strategic enrollment management, including recruitment of diverse student populations and implementation of programs that ensure a viable pathway to success for all students and the institution.
- Demonstrated experience recruiting and retaining exceptional leaders, faculty, and staff and creating an environment where they feel valued and connected to the mission of the institution.
- The ability to work effectively with the university's Board of Trustees and leverage its experience and expertise; engage and partner within a broader system of higher education; and advocate for the university with the state legislature and leaders.
- Experience engaging alumni, local, state, and regional partners to advance institutional goals and positively impact the communities an institution serves, including a record of success in fundraising.
- A willingness and ability to work collaboratively with union leadership in a collective bargaining environment.





## Presidential Selection Process

Interested candidates should review the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education [Guidelines and Procedures](#) for the Search, Selection, Appointment and Removal of State University and Community College Presidents. The application process will be confidential through the first round of interviews, which are currently scheduled to take place in early 2024. After the first round is concluded, the search committee will recommend to the Board of Trustees three to five finalists for consideration. Finalists will be invited to campus for a series of open meetings with various constituencies in Spring 2024. The Board of Higher Education and the Commissioner of Higher Education will have the opportunity to interview finalists as part of the campus visit process. Following the campus visits, the Board of Trustees will vote in open session to recommend to the Board of Higher Education the appointment of a single candidate as president. The Board of Higher Education must approve the appointment, the salary, and all terms and conditions of employment for the president.

## Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile and a CV or resume. [WittKieffer](#) is assisting Fitchburg State University in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by **February 16, 2024**. Application materials should be submitted using [WittKieffer's candidate portal](#). Nominations and inquiries can be directed to Greg Duyck, Ryan Crawford, and Randi Miller at [FitchburgStatePresident@wittkieffer.com](mailto:FitchburgStatePresident@wittkieffer.com).

## Fitchburg State University Presidential Search Committee

### LINDSAY CARPENTER-CONNORS

Director of Career Services and Advising Center  
APA Representative

### MARIO DELCI

Associate Commissioner for Research & Planning  
Department of Higher Education Representative

### JENNIFER L. FLANAGAN '04

Director of Regulatory Policy at Vicente LLP  
Member, Board of Trustees

### ERIC GREGOIRE '11

Assistant Director of Budget & Planning  
University of Massachusetts  
Member, Board of Trustees

### MARGARET HOEY

Professor, Biology/Chemistry  
MSCA Representative

### CAROLYN HUGHES

Administrative Assistant, Education  
AFSCME Representative

### KELLI LUNDGREN

Human Resources Operations Coordinator  
Administrative assistance for the search committee

### JESSICA MURDOCH '08, '14

Vice President for Human Resources and Payroll Services  
Liaison to the Board of Trustees  
Ex officio member of the search committee

### C. DEBORAH PHILLIPS

Founding Partner/Attorney, Nickless, Phillips & O'Connor  
Chairman, Board of Trustees

### ADRIANA PADILLA SALGADO

Class of 2026, Student Representative

### ELISABET TAKEHANA

Professor, English Studies  
MSCA Representative

### JONATHAN THOMPSON

Superintendent, Fitchburg Public Schools  
Community Representative

### DAVID C. TIERNAN '83

Senior Vice President, National Practice Leader  
at TRC Solutions in Lowell  
Clerk, Board of Trustees

### RICHARD TOOMEY

Associate Vice President, Enrollment Management  
Non-Unit Administrator Representative

### ALLISON TURNER

Class of 2024, Student Representative

## 2023-2024 Board of Trustees

### C. DEBORAH PHILLIPS, CHAIR

Founding partner, Nickless, Phillips and O'Connor

### LYNN TESCONI BARRIEAU, VICE CHAIR

Assistant Director, CASA (Court Appointed Special  
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### DAVID C. TIERNAN

Senior Vice President, National Practice Leader  
at TRC Solutions in Lowell  
Clerk, Board of Trustees

### MICHAEL FIORENTINO, JR.

Former president of Lock Haven University  
in Pennsylvania

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Director of policy for the law firm  
Vicente Sederberg, LLP

### ERIC GREGOIRE

Senior budget analyst for  
the University of Massachusetts

### SHEILA KING GOODWIN

Senior Vice President and chief community  
banking officer for Fidelity Bank in Leominster

### KAREN SPINELLI

President, owner, and managing partner  
of Spinelli CPA, PC, in Worcester and Leominster

### CAROLYN CROWLEY STIMPSON

Co-owner and board member at Polar Beverages  
Company, Worcester; Co-owner and vice president  
of Wachusett Mountain Ski Area; and President of  
MTNside Ski and Ride in Princeton

### ALLISON TURNER

Student Trustee, Class of 2024  
Political Science with a minor in History

### RICHARD S. LAPIDUS

President (ex officio)



# Coversheet

## President Hodge Goals

**Section:** II. President's Evaluation Process  
**Item:** B. President Hodge Goals  
**Purpose:** Discuss  
**Submitted by:**  
**Related Material:** Presidential goals.pdf



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Donna Hodge, Ph.D.

PRESIDENT

## Presidential GOALS: Update to the Board of Trustees

July 1, 2024 – January 31, 2025

**NOTE:** *The updates included here were made possible through the collaboration, creativity, and incredible efforts of Cabinet-level leadership, faculty, librarians, staff, student leaders, and numerous campus (and community) stakeholders*

### STABILIZE      HEAL      TRANSFORM

#### Develop and Communicate a Strategic Vision

**Goal:** Evaluate current strategic and academic plans with key stakeholders. Collaboratively establish a clear vision and actionable priorities aligned with Fitchburg State's mission, focusing on student success, equity, and education justice. Begin addressing demographic shifts and declining undergraduate enrollment by advancing recruitment strategies, particularly targeting first-generation, adult learners, and international students.

#### Strategic Reorganization

- **Realigned Senior Leadership, Phase 1:**
  - Elevated Dr. Patricia Marshall to the dual role of **Executive Vice President and Provost**, aligning academic leadership with institutional strategy.
  - Off-boarded long-serving VPFA and brought in an interim CFO to develop a transparent budget format. Upon her retirement in November, appointed Heidi Swift, a former Comptroller and Budget Director with extensive state experience, as **Executive in Charge of Finance**.
  - Integrated **Athletics and University Police** into the Office of the President, with Chief Michael Cloutier and Athletics Director Matt Burke joining the Cabinet for improved alignment.
  - Hired Stacey Luster as the university's first **Vice President of Personnel and General Counsel**, driving policy development, collective bargaining, and enhanced support for employees. This hire was made possible by the departure of long-time HR leader, enabling a strategic reorganization of Human Resources, Payroll, and the creation of a General Counsel Office.
  - Managed  $\frac{3}{5}$  **VP-level transitions** in 3-month period.
  - Established **Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP)** in order to support and elevate the academic possibilities and responsibilities of grant-writing with no new resources; this move allows me to hold Advancement accountable for actual funds raised through donor, corporate, and foundation pipelines. These teams will continue to collaborate on grant submissions, when necessary, in order to leverage all available resources.
  - Hired first **Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging**, Josh Dodds, who has extensive experience in executive communications, interdisciplinary best practices in professional development, corporate and higher education program building; he will work collaboratively across all divisions, with particular supports in Student Affairs (managing the CDI Office) and in partnership with Human Resources. Serves as our liaison to the COP for state initiatives in DEIB.

## Engaging and Elevating Campus Stakeholders

- **Presidential Ambassadors Program:** Launched a student leadership initiative involving nine participants who serve as advisors and institutional representatives at high-profile events.
- **Presidential Fellows Program:** Established a program for faculty and librarians, with nine Fellows currently serving, providing advisory input on institutional strategy, research priorities, and campus development.
- Nominated Dr. Erin Rehrig, Chair of the Department of Biology and Chemistry, to the **AASCU Department Chair Academy**, where she is now part of the 2024–2025 cohort.
- Hosted 18 (small) official events at the President’s House to foster collaboration and collect feedback on Fitchburg State’s vision. These included:
  - Halloween with SGA
  - Holiday Party with Community Leaders, Trustees, Legislators, and Donors
  - Welcoming German Delegation from Rhine-Waal University and faculty.
- Regularly engaged with the **Council of Presidents**, contributing to statewide policy and strategy discussions.
- Supported the **Chamber’s Young Professionals Program** and the **Chamber Leadership Institute (CLI)** by sponsoring two emerging leaders to join the 2024-2025 CLI cohort and speaking at a fall CLI event.
- Held regular meetings with all **union stewards**, resulting in 0 grievances to date compared to over 20 at the same time last year.

## Expanded Engagement with National Networks

- Completed the AASCU New Presidents Academy (June 2024 – December 2024), gaining tools and strategies to strengthen leadership.
- Nominated for **AASCU’s International Recruitment Committee**, working for international programs and statewide partnerships with Mexico and Canada to create a pipeline to our State Publics in New England.
- Joined AASCU’s Government Relations Committee, elevating the mission of our campus and national State Publics in Washington D.C. (will attend joint meeting in D.C. in April)
- Selected for the **Excelencia in Education President’s Network** (January 2025), joining a national cohort committed to advancing equity and Latino student success, providing a critical resource as Fitchburg State pursues Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) designation.
- Attended the NCAA National Convention in January 2025; engaged with national leadership in collegiate athletics and at D3 level; met for annual in-person MASCAC legislative agenda-setting.
- Received an invitation from partners at **Rhine-Waal University** to formalize the partnership agreement at an event in Germany during the summer of 2025. This event will also include the formalization of “sister cities” partnerships in Germany and Poland. I will be accompanied by Dr. Franca Barricelli (AVP Academic Affairs), State Representative and alum Michael Kushmerek, and Fitchburg Mayor Sam Squalia.

## Foster Campus Unity and Culture

**Goal:** Build relationships with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community partners by maintaining an active presence on campus and in the community. Address post-pandemic fatigue by promoting transparency, open communication, and morale-boosting initiatives.

## Leadership Visibility and Transparency

- Established a collaborative Cabinet structure with meaningful weekly working meetings to align cross-divisional strategies.
- Partnered with Chartwells Dining Services to sponsor \$5 meals for employees and provide free branded drink refills, enhancing campus morale. In fall 2024, 3109 employee meals were served; as of January 25, spring 2025 meals are at 301. Surveys suggest both food quality and service have radically improved (at 4.5 versus a 1.5 this time last year)
- Attended an average of three athletic events per week during the fall semester and two per week at the start of winter, maintaining visibility and connection with student-athletes, coaches, and supporters.



- Attending all Homecoming events; successfully moved our pep rally to the main quad to elevate and extend the reach of that event; attended 3 games, hosted Presidential Tailgate at Elliot Field;
- Established Official Presidential Social Media accounts, including Instagram, Facebook, Threads, and LinkedIn.
- Created a new Presidential Website where all campus communications are archived and accessible to all.
- Worked with AUC leadership and MSCA to pass AUC 1 and 2 during fall 2024 to move dates for move-in to better align with class start dates and to eliminate December commencement, based on recommendations from the 2023 Financial Sustainability Task Force (FSTF)
- Met with leadership from the FSTF to better understand what issues could be addressed immediately and what could be done over a longer period; some of these items have already been completed.

### Community and Cultural Leadership

- Hosted the **Student Government Association (SGA) Executive Board** in the President’s Conference Room for their bi-monthly executive committee meetings, providing a regular avenue for engaging student leaders.
- Established **FISA**, the first graduate student organization, formalizing the Fitchburg India Students Association.
- Joined the Fitchburg Art Museum Board of Directors (December 2024), strengthening ties with a key cultural partner.
- Attended and supported cultural events, including Diwali, Hispanic Heritage Month, LGBTQ+ History Month, and the Downtown Fitchburg Holiday Lighting, showcasing inclusivity and community connection.
- Partnered with the Chamber to host a **Young Professionals Fashion Event** on campus, further strengthening connections with emerging professionals.
- Collaborated with the **Community Foundation** to host the **Women’s Luncheon** on campus in March 2025, where I will serve as the keynote speaker.
- Created the **President’s Pavilion** events at Eliot Field for all field games (soccer, football, and field hockey) and at the Wallace Civic Center for ice hockey games. These events hosted dignitaries, parents, families, athletic prospects, employees, legislators, students, community members, and trustees, fostering deeper engagement and showcasing Fitchburg State’s hospitality.
- Hosted International students (and others) for Thanksgiving.

### Enhance Enrollment Management

**Goal:** Expand enrollment strategies by supporting innovative programs, including online and hybrid offerings, and focusing on retention of first-year students. Launch targeted outreach campaigns to underserved populations in North Central Massachusetts to enhance access.

#### Expanded Partnership with Fitchburg Public Schools

- Planned opening of the Fitchburg State Admissions Center at Fitchburg High School in Summer 2025, providing direct resources for first-generation and local students to navigate the admissions process.
- Expanded Early College programs, enrolling 171 students in 649 credits, supported by \$82,620 in state funding.
- Hosted **Falcon Express Events** – “one-stop” enrollment events – seven times, providing streamlined services to prospective students and their families, furthering accessibility and efficiency in the enrollment process.
- Begun process of “Direct Admissions” for Fitchburg Public Schools, Monty Tech, and Leominster grads.
- Approved the NE Rate for expanded area, in alignment with approved Commonwealth standards and other State Publics.
- Early stages of packaging new marketing for “\$100,000 EFC, and under” attending at no-cost.

### Retention and Recruitment Initiatives

- Reopened Herlihy Hall’s first wing in January 2025, welcoming seven former commuter students. Plans are in place to reopen Wing 2 in Summer 2025, with phased renovations leading to full reopening by Fall 2026.
- Strengthened international student recruitment, achieving enrollment rates 50% higher than 2020.
- Expanded marketing in strategic partnership with Wachusett Mountain (includes new FSU branding at mountain; inclusion at events [alumni and recruitment])

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## Strengthen Financial Sustainability

**Goal:** Assess the university's fiscal health and ensure prudent allocation of resources to align with strategic goals. Begin diversifying revenue streams by cultivating relationships with donors, alumni, and external partners to increase fundraising efforts.

### Financial and Capital Leadership

- Exceeded budgeted enrollment goals for fall 2024 and spring 2025 (final census pending for spring)
- Launched the Conlon Renovation Project with the CPM team, recruiting former project planner Heidi Messing to lead capital initiatives.
- Planned Fitchburg State's first competitive Dining Services bidding process in over 20 years (Fall 2025), with the new contract to include investments in back-of-house infrastructure and student dining enhancements.
- Overseeing and stewarding the \$10M capital project for the downtown Theater Block, working with a developers and legislative delegation to explore redirecting resources toward a longer-term strategy for a \$75M-\$100M P3 project.
- Secured funding for MSCBA building repairs for summer 2025 (apx. \$750,000).

### Increased Fundraising and Transparency (including State monies)

- Raised \$409,236 from 577 gifts in FY25, including four new endowments, such as the Paul and Doris Ballantine Scholarship, ensuring sustained student support.
- Secured \$70,000 in funding to support behavioral health and provide stipends for formerly unpaid internships for health services students.
- Received a \$1.29M investment in SUCCESS funds from the Commonwealth, appointing Dr. Beth Swartz to lead this initiative aimed at improving student retention and academic outcomes.
- Improved financial transparency by incorporating detailed updates into Board of Trustees meetings, enhancing fiscal oversight.
- Received \$100,000 gift from Barbara and Edward Walters.

### Alumni Engagement and Pipeline Development

- Hosted and attended multiple alumni-focused Homecoming events, including casino night.
- Hosted Alums at Soccer (M and W), field hockey, and football, and hockey.
- Spoke at and hosted the Gold Key event.
- Hosted and spoke at Mohawks reunion and dedication of tool chest in Anthony (named for Walter Harrod, \$10,000 donation and time and effort)

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## Expand Community Partnerships

**Goal:** Strengthen Fitchburg State's collaborations with local schools, businesses, and civic organizations, particularly through projects like the new admissions center at Fitchburg High School and the revitalization of the downtown area.

### Regional Collaborations and Leadership

- Worked with the City of Fitchburg on revitalizing the Theater Block and downtown cleanup initiatives, ensuring greater visibility for university-community projects.
- Attended **North Central Massachusetts Chamber's Business After Hours Events** three times, strengthening ties with the regional business community.
- Delivered a keynote presentation to the North Central Massachusetts Chamber at a breakfast event in November 2024, highlighting Fitchburg State's role as a regional economic driver.
- Scheduled to host a Business After Hours at the President's House in February 2025, increasing community engagement and elevating the university's profile.



- Attended regular **mayor meetings** for the tri-cities of Fitchburg, Leominster, and Gardner to strengthen regional collaboration.
- Served on the **City of Fitchburg's search committee** for the next Chief of Police and hosted the inauguration of the new Chief of Police on campus on January 31, 2025.
- Formalized the **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** for joint emergency response between University Police and the City of Fitchburg. Signing TBA.
- Attended and spoke at the **Downtown Holiday Lighting Event** with Fitchburg Mayor Sam Squailia, fostering community connections.
- Serve as an active member of the MASCAC, quarterly 1:1 meetings with the Commissioner.

### **K-12 and Civic Engagement**

- Strengthened partnerships with Fitchburg Public Schools, expanding Early College opportunities and planning the Fitchburg State Admissions Center at Fitchburg High School.
- Continued the Superintendents' Breakfast Series, fostering dialogue with education leaders about workforce alignment and grant opportunities.
- Invited FHS Marching Band to play and perform at 2 fall events and at 1 event in spring. Tours of campus and dinner in Holmes provided.
- Cabinet hosted a McKay luncheon for all teachers, paras, and staff during in-service day in fall.
- Successfully launched a school supply drive for McKay, led by the President's Office.
- Reviewed the contract and strengthened the partnership by upholding our part of the agreement (returning some unused areas of McKay to FPS).
- Burgeoning partnership with Boys and Girls Clubs of Fitchburg, Leominster, and Gardner.
- Formalizing FATV partnership.

# Coversheet

## Memo from Commissioner Santiago

**Section:** II. President's Evaluation Process  
**Item:** C. Memo from Commissioner Santiago  
**Purpose:** Discuss  
**Submitted by:**  
**Related Material:** Memo re Presidential Evaluations.pdf

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Community College and State University Board Chairs

FROM: Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner

CC: Community College and State University Presidents

DATE: April 6, 2021

SUBJECT: FY2021 Presidential Evaluations — Timeline and Statewide Priorities  
The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the process and timeline for conducting presidential evaluations this year, and to confirm the Board of Higher Education's (BHE) statewide and system priorities for academic year 2020-2021 (FY2021).

2020-2021 BHE Statewide Priority Objectives — The Equity Agenda and Responses to COVID-19: Under the BHE's Presidential Evaluation Guidelines, one of my responsibilities as Commissioner is to inform presidents and trustees of the system-level (i.e., statewide) objectives of the BHE for each academic year. The full text of the BHE guidelines on presidential evaluations and compensation may be accessed here: [BHE Presidential Compensation and Evaluation Guidelines](#).

Academic year 2020-2021 has been one of the most challenging in anyone's memory. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on our society and economy, and much remains uncertain about its long-term effects. In the higher education sector, colleges and universities both here and across the country have experienced declines in enrollment, previously unanticipated revenue losses, and higher costs stemming from pandemic mitigation and response efforts. Federal funding has helped close part of the financial gap created or exacerbated by the pandemic to date, and the leadership within our public higher education system has been innovative and proactive in implementing adaptive measures to grapple with the challenges brought on by the virus.

Still, there is widespread acknowledgment of the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on our students of color and low-income students. Now more than ever, it is vitally important that we maintain our commitment to and focus on the overarching Equity Agenda and campus efforts to improve success rates for all students.

Accordingly, as I announced during the Department's October 2020 Statewide Trustee Convening, the statewide priorities for academic year 2020-2021 will be essentially the same as last academic year: The Equity Agenda, plus pandemic-response efforts.

The Equity Agenda: I am again asking each local Board of Trustees to continue to focus on our overarching Equity Agenda, and campus efforts to significantly raise the enrollment, attainment, and long-term success outcomes among traditionally underserved student populations, particularly racially minoritized students. As in prior



years, I ask that you include in your respective Presidential evaluations three to five examples of initiatives that highlight how your institution has become more student-centered and equity-minded. Please include relevant data, either quantitative or qualitative. To that end, relevant BHE materials that you may find helpful as your frame your submissions include the following:

- [Equity-Minded Goalsetting Presentation](#), and [BHE 20-11](#) May 2020 DHE Presentation to the BHE and vote; and
- [Equity Agenda Update](#), February 2021 DHE Presentation to the BHE (slide 4 on participatory leadership is particularly instructive).

Pandemic-response efforts: Our individual and collective work responding to the pandemic within the public higher education system has been significant, of critical importance, and, by all accounts, has required each President's considerable time and attention. Therefore, in addition to the Equity Agenda criteria outlined above, I ask that you include information on your President's efforts to respond to, contain and mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic within your respective campus communities, and in the administration of your institution's resources. I welcome and look forward to reviewing your comments and observations on this important work.

Performance Measurement Reports (Data Dashboards): The BHE Presidential Evaluation guidelines require that evaluations of presidential work consider and include institutional data linked to system-level goals and metrics. (See Section III.B). In May 2019, DHE launched the Performance Measurement Reporting System (PMRS), a public-facing data tool intended to prompt constructive conversations about performance and accountability between and among DHE, the campuses, boards of trustees, legislators, and others, and specifically to assist campuses in fulfilling this requirement of the President Evaluation Guidelines. The Reports summarize campus performance on a robust set of key indicators approved by the BHE in December 2018 (See BHE 19-02), including comparisons where appropriate to the institution's segmental peers in Massachusetts or a national peer group of similarly situated institutions. The Reports also offer insight into gaps between different racial/ethnic, gender and income groups on many of the metrics and offer examples of campus best practices and innovations that are driving improvements in performance. We anticipate that this year's Reports (Data Dashboards) will be live and available to view by Presidents and Trustees in mid-April.

Presidential Evaluations Timeline: Consistent with the process we have used in prior years, the deadline for the completion and submission of presidential evaluations is June. However, we recognize that the timing of your presidential evaluation committee meetings, local board meeting schedules and other competing priorities may make it challenging to complete this important work within this timeframe. We, therefore, do allow for exceptions on a case-by-case basis. I have found this timetable and exception process to be effective and am not aware of any significant problems. Accordingly, I ask that you and your boards complete this year's evaluations by June 30, 2021. If this

is not realistic given your board meeting schedule, or if you have any other questions or concerns about this timeline, please work with Director of Trustee and Government Relations Matt Noyes ([MNoyes@dhe.mass.edu](mailto:MNoyes@dhe.mass.edu) or 781-605-4434).

Presidential Evaluations Process: I believe that the process of presidential evaluations used in prior years was useful. Having an opportunity to review the campus documentation and dashboards as part of one-on-one, in-person discussions with presidents proved, from my perspective, to be very helpful in understanding each institution's performance and presidential leadership over the previous year. Therefore, I will be continuing the process again this year. In addition, as in prior years, to streamline the submission process and to provide consistency among trustee submissions, I am requesting that boards of trustees continue to submit a one to two-page executive summary of the Board's evaluation of the president. The Board's summary should include the following:

- a summary of the process your board used to conduct the review;
- performance data used to support your board's conclusions and recommendations;
- your board's recommendation regarding a proposed compensation adjustment; and
- a summary which addresses the two areas of presidential responsibility (e.g., one section for institutional goals and objectives, and a separate section on statewide priority objectives).

Supporting materials and documents should be sent only to the extent that they relate to points addressed in the executive summary. I found presidential self-evaluations to be useful documents as well.

New and Retiring Presidents: We have several presidents who will be retiring or moving on to other opportunities during or at the completion of this year, with five open and pending presidential searches. Since the BHE guidelines were issued, it has been the practice of the DHE not to expect presidential evaluations from institutions where: 1) a president has been in office for less than one full year, or 2) a president has left office during or upon the completion of the academic year. While a presidential evaluation is not required in these two circumstances, it is a sound practice to periodically conduct institutional assessments regardless of the status of the president. If your board has already conducted an evaluation for a new or retired president or, alternatively, if you have instead conducted an institutional evaluation or assessment (for example, in preparation for a presidential search or transition), I would appreciate receiving copies of the same.

Periodic Comprehensive Reviews: The BHE Presidential Evaluation Guidelines ask trustees to conduct comprehensive reviews of presidential performance, no less than three years from the appointment of new presidents, and no less than every five years thereafter. (See Section III). A comprehensive review is intended to be broader than an

annual review, both in terms of scope and process. While an annual review is reflective and tends to focus on the accomplishment of past objectives, a comprehensive review is intended to be more forward-thinking, focusing on a President's ability to lead going forward. Through this memorandum, I am asking each of you to review whether you have conducted a comprehensive review of the president of your respective institutions in the past three to five years. If you have not, I ask that you conduct such a review in either FY2022 or FY2023 and notify Director of Trustee and Government Relations Matt Noyes ([MNoyes@dhe.mass.edu](mailto:MNoyes@dhe.mass.edu) or 781-605-4434) of your proposed timeline.

Thank you for your attention to these matters and for all your good work on behalf of Massachusetts public higher education.

# Coversheet

## Vote - Letter of Support

**Section:** II. President's Evaluation Process  
**Item:** D. Vote - Letter of Support  
**Purpose:** Vote  
**Submitted by:**  
**Related Material:** VOTE Letter of Support.pdf

**Fitchburg State University  
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

TO: Board of Trustees Meeting – Personnel Committee	DATE: April 7, 2025
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER: 14-2024-2025
SUBJECT: Letter of Support	

It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve Chairman Fiorentino to submit a letter of support for President Hodge to Commissioner Ortega, which shall include support for any available compensation adjustments.