

Nypro CEO to address FSU grads

FITCHBURG — Steven D. Borges, executive vice president and chief executive officer of Nypro Healthcare and a 1990 graduate of Fitchburg State University, will deliver the address at the university's undergraduate commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 18, on the main quadrangle.

Nypro Healthcare is a division of Jabil Circuit, Inc., providing comprehensive design, manufacturing and product management services to a wide range of health care companies. The \$2.5 billion division spans numerous health care markets with manufacturing locations across Asia, Europe, Mexico, and the U.S., with more than 20 dedicated Nypro manufacturing sites.

Borges was executive vice president for Jabil's industrial division before taking on its health care

functions. He joined Jabil in 1993 as a manufacturing line supervisor and advanced into increasingly senior operational and business development roles. He lives in Florida with his wife, Ericka, and their two children.

"Steve Borges has built an accomplished career and we are honored that he will share some of the wisdom and

life lessons he has acquired with our graduates and guests this May," said Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said. "Steve has previously enlightened our students and faculty as an entrepreneur-in-residence in our business administration program, and we look forward to hearing his remarks on our largest stage of the year."

Additional commencement honorees will be announced in the coming weeks.



Steve Borges

Wednesday, April 17, 2019 B3

Health care executive to give FSU graduation speech

FITCHBURG – Steven D. Borges, executive vice president



Borges

chief executive officer of Nypro Healthcare, will give the commencement address at Fitchburg State University's graduation next month.

Mr. Borges is also a 1990 graduate of Fitchburg State, which will hold its undergraduate commencement on May 18 on the main quadrangle on campus.

"Steve Borges has built an accomplished career and we are honored that he will share some of the wisdom and life lessons he has acquired with our graduates and guests this May," Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said in a statement. "Steve has previously enlightened our students and faculty as an entrepreneur-in-residence in our business administration program, and we look forward to hearing his remarks on our largest stage of the year."

Nypro provides "comprehensive design, manufacturing and product management services" to a variety of health care companies, according to Fitchburg State. Mr. Borges joined Nypro's parent company, Jabil Circuit Inc., in 1993 as a manufacturing line supervisor. He and his family live in Florida.

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Fitchburg State, NewVue help revitalize downtown

Main Street's ideaLab aims to grow small businesses

FITCHBURG — The Fitchburg State University ideaLab — on the second floor of the theater block at 717 Main St. — is now home to the NewVue Communities Small Business Department, the first step in the center's evolution into a driver of revitalization in the heart of the downtown corridor.

NewVue Communities will use the ideaLab to provide technical assistance to businesses operating in a wide range of industry sectors, focusing mainly on micro-enterprises — business with five or fewer employees — and small businesses — with 20 or fewer employees. Services, which will be offered in English and Spanish, will include:

- One-on-one business counseling that covers how to start a business, write a business plan, improve marketing strategies and connect with potential local funding sources.

MORE INSIDE

■ Rollstone Bank & Trust is sponsoring a free, three-part seminar to help entrepreneurs get started. The series is hosted by NewVue Communities at Fitchburg State University's ideaLab.

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a space to realize ambitions and unleash creativity," Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said. "We are grateful for partners like NewVue Communities, whose expertise

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The Fitchburg State University ideaLab, on Main Street, is home to NewVue Communities' Small Business Department.

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NewVue Communities is helping small businesses succeed

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complements the university's resources."

"We are excited to be strengthening our part-

nership with Fitchburg State University and to continue to serve small businesses in the region," said NewVue Communities Executive Director

Marc Dohan. "Working out of the ideaLab is a great first step to help connect local business to the resources and assets offered by the university."

"The ideaLab is a fresh, modern and inspirational space," added NewVue Communities Director of

Small Business Ray Belanger.

NewVue's Small Business Assistance Program has worked with 828 businesses to create or retain almost 1,600 jobs in North Central Massachusetts over the past eight years, while facilitating more

than \$7.5 million in small business loans.

Fitchburg State purchased the theater block at 717 Main St. three years ago. The first phase of renovations includes the ideaLab as well as a state of the art studio for students in the univer-

sity's game design program, the only one of its kind at a public institution in Massachusetts.

Those wishing to access the NewVue Small Business Program should contact NewVue directly at info@newvuecomm.org or 978-342-9561.



The theater block on Main Street in Fitchburg, where NewVue Communities and Fitchburg State University are working together to help the area's small businesses grow.

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Alexander Ramos Jr., a senior at Fitchburg State, speaks during the “Fund Our Future” forum at FSU on Wednesday. Below, Daniel Hankins and Kenzie Jacobsen sing with the FSU choir to start the program. SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE PHOTOS/JOHN LOVE

Hardest course of all? The bills

At FSU forum, raising alarm for higher-education cost relief

By **Mina Corpuz**

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FITCHBURG — Alexander Ramos Jr. started at Fitchburg State University as a dual enrollment student in high school. When he was accepted full time, the first generation college student needed to work up to 30 hours a week because his family couldn't afford to pay out of pocket. Ramos also had to take out loans.

“It wasn't enough,” said Ramos, a senior studying political science. “How can colleges



expect students to be involved on campus and pay for college expenses at the same time?”

He was one of four students who shared challenges about pursuing their educa-

tion while juggling finances, which are issues school, city, and state leaders say stem from underfunded higher education.

More than 50 people gathered Tuesday at the university for a “Fund Our Future” forum to support state legislation that would increase funding for public higher education.

“Doing well in college is hard enough,” said Fitchburg Rep. Stephan Hay. “We don't need to increase that.”

The Cherish Act asks for

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At FSU forum, calling for college cost relief

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more than \$500 million in state funding to control the cost of public higher education and to make improvements on campuses like Fitchburg State.

“This may seem stupendous and excessive, but in reality it is enough,” said Aruna Krishnamurthy, an English studies professor who serves as chapter president of the Massachusetts State College Association union.

The bill looks to establish a five-year schedule beginning next fiscal year to restore funding levels for public colleges, universities, and community colleges from fiscal 2001.

Since then, state spending per college student has decreased by about a third from \$12,500 to \$8,500.

The Cherish Act also proposes no tuition or fee increases between fiscal 2020 and 2024.

Sen. Joanne Comerford, a Northampton Democrat, introduced the Senate legislation and Reps. Sean Garballey, an Arlington Democrat, and Paul Mark,

a Peru Democrat, offered the House version.

Between the two bills, co-sponsors from the North Central Massachusetts delegation include Hay, Reps. Natalie Higgins, D-Leominster, Jen Benson, D-Lunenburg, Harold

Naughton, D-Clinton, and Sen. Anne Gobi, D-Spencer.

In the 1970s, Fitchburg State’s tuition and fees per semester was about \$550. This semester it’s \$5,132 and would take about 934 hours working a minimum wage

job to support, said Michael Stassen, an adjunct math professor.

As tuition has increased, state funding has decreased and student debt has climbed, he said. About 84 percent of Fitchburg State’s Class of 2016 graduated with an average debt of about \$26,600.

Several city and state officials spoke about their own experiences attending the state’s public universities.

Taylor Landry, a legislative aide for Higgins, said she understands the issues students are facing. She attended Fitchburg State

“We know the value of public higher education and the value of Fitchburg State in the community we live in today.”

Mayor Stephen DiNatale



Michael Stassen, an adjunct math professor at Fitchburg State, speaks during the “Fund Our Future” forum at FSU on Wednesday. In the 1970s, he said, Fitchburg State’s tuition and fees per semester were about \$550. This semester it’s \$5,132 and would take about 934 hours working a minimum wage job to support, he said. Below, Mayor Stephen DiNatale, left, and Fitchburg Rep. Stephan Hay listen.

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and left without a degree, resulting in \$10,000 in debt that she is paying off.

Landry added that Higgins, who also attended public universities in state,

has about \$100,000 in student loan debt.

Mayor Stephen DiNatale said he, his wife, and daughter are all Fitchburg State graduates.

“We know the value of public higher education and the value of Fitchburg State in the community we live in today,” he said.

DiNatale added that the university drives the city’s economic development and is the second largest employer in Fitchburg.

The Massachusetts Teacher’s Association and

MSCA sponsored the forum.

Through the “Fund Our Future” campaign, the unions also support a bill called the Promise Act that would update the state’s funding formula for Pre-K-12 schools.

In January, school superintendents and city and state leaders came to Fitchburg State to advocate for more funding for their districts and to support the legislation.

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'A shared story' of Asian identity

At FSU forum, students and faculty trace their cultural journeys

By **Mina Corpuz**

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FITCHBURG — “Where are you from?” is a question Asian people face that can come with assumptions. It can also be a teaching moment to show that being Asian doesn't mean belonging to one culture, society and history, but rather to a number of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

“The discussion we're having is a starting point to have with each other that adds understanding,” said Wafa Unus, an English studies professor. “There is a shared story.”

Students and faculty gathered Thursday at Fitchburg State University to talk about navigating Asian culture and identity in Fitchburg, a city that has an Asian population of about 4

percent, according to 2017 estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Fitchburg High School senior Michael Kroch, whose family is from Laos, said he has tried to balance following his family's expectations and pursuing his individualism, which includes what he wants to study in college.

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At FSU forum, sharing Asian-American stories

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Kroch said his mother and grandfather have told their story about escaping war and oppression in Laos and coming to America.

“It was about fleeing that identity and seeking a new one,” he said.

Physics professor Jiang Yu, who is from China, talked about differences she's noticed between Eastern and Western cultures. Eastern society and culture is structured compared to how Western culture can be exploratory and personal, she said.

As first-generation immigrants, people may try to be pragmatic and careful rather than explore in a new country like the United States, she said.

“You don't really have thick roots,” Yu said.

She has lived in the country since graduate school and raised a daughter here. Despite that, Yu and her daughter sometimes see their cultural identity differently.

Being asked where she is from doesn't bother Yu, but for her daughter it can make her feel like she isn't American.

Assistant Professor Jonathan Amakawa, whose father is Japanese and mother is American, said he got a sense of what it means to be American

when he was living abroad.

He initially thought he wouldn't have much in common with another American student who was from Tennessee, but Amakawa found they watched similar television shows growing up and shared other interests.

Jinwie “Vince” Ma, a master's student who moved from China in 2010, said when he first started school in the United States, he wasn't used to feeling like a minority.

The panel discussion was a part of the university's community read of Celeste Ng's novel “Everything I Never Told You” that features the Lees, a Chinese-American family, and Asian identity and culture as a theme.

As panelists shared their experiences and stories, Unus, who is Pakistani, related the discussion to themes in the book.

Like how Kroch felt nervous about opening up to his parents, the book's main character, Lydia, feels unable to express herself with her parents.

Unus also pointed out how Lydia is reminded that she doesn't fit in because she looks different from other students, which is similar to experiences some panelists shared.

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Fitchburg work program open to Shriver and FSU students

Fitchburg Housing Authority to offer paid internships, jobs

By **Mina Corpuz**

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FITCHBURG — Students at Fitchburg State University and Shriver Job Corps will soon be able to work with the Fitchburg Housing Authority through an internship and work program unanimously approved Wednesday.

“We’re really looking at this collaboratively and what we can offer to the community,” said Doug Bushman, executive director of the housing authority.

The work program is expected to start in May and the internship would begin in June, he said.

FHA Board Chair Linda Byrne said both programs are an opportunity to have a connection in the community and provide young energy to the housing authority.

Two Fitchburg State students who live in the city can participate in the paid internship, which would run for eight weeks, Bushman said. They would provide administrative assistance in areas including finances, human services, public administration, and criminal justice.

David Weiss, a professor and director of the FSU’s Douglas and Isabelle Crocker Center for Civic Engagement, will manage the internship program.

He said students have already shown interest and have applied with Bushman.

“This comes full circle now,” Weiss said. “The Fitchburg Housing Authority and Fitchburg State are partnering to meet the needs and challenges of residents using students who are residents themselves.”

Bushman said he sees positives of having internship program based on the one he’s seen in Marlboro, where he previously served as housing director. He still keeps in touch with former interns there and hired a few of them, including Andrew Skoog, who is now FHA’s deputy director.

Shriver Job Corps, a federal work program based in Devens, would place two to four students to help with vacancy reduction and general maintenance at Green Acres, Bushman said.

Preference would be given to Fitchburg residents and the positions are paid.

FHA collecting back rent under Bushman

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In other business, Bushman gave his director’s report that gave updates on efforts he took on since starting as executive director.

A \$650,000 Pathway to Success Plan the board approved in January to fund property maintenance, training, staffing, and other efforts has been received by the state Department of Housing and Community Development. The plan has been revised since the end of March and has not yet been approved.

FHA has collected up to \$40,000 in back rent from tenants in the past 40 days, Bushman wrote in his report. At the beginning of the year, the authority had more than \$100,000 in back rent.

The authority is also working on \$3.1 million worth of capital projects, most of which are in the planning phase.

Ongoing toilet work at Green Acres and asbestos removal at Wallance Towers are expected to be done soon, he said.

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