

To TBD,

As members of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees, we write to express our support for increased funding for public higher education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

We know the transformative power of the state's public higher education system, the majority of whose graduates stay in Massachusetts and become integral parts of our communities after completing their studies. They teach our children, protect our residents, and serve in an endless variety of capacities to make the Commonwealth stronger.

All of the students in this state deserve the chance to pursue the opportunities made possible through the high-quality education our public colleges and universities provide. Those opportunities are threatened by the continuing erosion in state support for their mission. Since 2001, funding by the state per student has shrunk 32 percent, while the amount of debt facing graduates continues to soar.

We urge the Legislature to approve and fund a foundation budget for our public higher education system that will allow our students – our Commonwealth's future leaders and citizens – to pursue their goals without having to incur lifelong debt. All of us will benefit from that wise investment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Donald R. Irving, Chairman

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Anna Maria Clementi, Vice Chair

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C. Deborah Phillips, Clerk

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Lynn M. Barrieau

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Martha Nicholson

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Delfi L. Nieto

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Frank M. O'Donnell

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Alexander Ramos, Jr.

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Carolyn E. Crowley Stimpson

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David C. Tiernan