

STUDENTS' RETURN

FSU prepping for fall semester

College using remote and in-person teaching when students return

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University students will return to campus for the fall semester with a mixture of in-person and remote instruction while keeping all members of the campus community safe, according to an

announcement by University President Richard Lapidus on Tuesday.

“Our goal is to offer as much flexibility for students and faculty as possible,” Lapidus said.

“The combination of course types and numbers are still under consideration with the understanding that certain courses

require in-class delivery and conversely reducing the number of people on campus at one time is an important consideration,” he said.

“Additionally, we will continue to work on various ways to deliver the robust array of support services that students both on- and off-campus need and de-

pend on.”

The COVID-19 pandemic’s arrival in the spring semester required colleges and universities to move to remote instruction and online delivery of student support services.

The experience was disruptive but provided valuable lessons that are helping shape the development of the fall semester plans, Lapidus said.

When the semester begins in

September, most classes will be offered in a hybrid format, blending in-person instruction with remote sessions and classroom configurations will be modified to allow for social distancing on campus, according to Lapidus’ announcement.

Residence halls will open with reduced occupancy.

Most rooms will be configured as singles with some others con-

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FSU

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figured as doubles to serve as “family units” within suites.

The university is still determining how room assignments will be made. The university’s dining areas will be open but with new protocols and occupancy limits, along with regular sanitizing of chairs and tables, according to Lapidus’ announcement.

These plans, designed to protect the health and safety of our community, meet current guidance provided by Gov. Charlie Baker’s higher educational working group shared as part of the state’s safe reopening plan, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

The university is prepared to alter its direction should these guidelines

change and will follow any new guidance from the state as it pertains to testing and contact tracing for which protocols are still being developed, Lapidus said in the announcement.

Officials are also awaiting guidance from the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the Massachusetts State College Athletic Conference about organized sports for this fall.

But President Lapidus said that the university is committed to developing programs that will foster the sense of belonging that is crucial to a robust collegiate experience.

“All of us are committed to fulfilling our mission and providing students with the academic and life experiences they deserve and have come to expect,” Lapidus said.

Information on the university’s ongoing COVID-19 response can be found at fitchburgstate.edu/coronavirus.



SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE FILE PHOTO

Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus at a trustees meeting in January.

Worcester State, Fitchburg State to return in the fall

The schools and others plan a 'blended model of instruction with face-to-face and remote coursework'

By Michael P. Norton
State House News Service

State universities in Bridgewater, Fitchburg, Framingham, Salem, Westfield and Worcester plan in September to bring students back to campuses, where they are scheduled to return to dorms and attend on-campus classes as the state copes with the uncertainties posed by COVID-19.

The state universities, in addition to the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams, Mass. College of Art and Design in Boston, and the Mass. Maritime Academy in Buzzards Bay, plan to offer a "blended model of instruction with face-to-face

and remote coursework for the fall semester."

The public higher education institutions announced their plans Thursday night, about three months after students were sent off campuses to pursue remote learning.

"Because the state universities have very few large lecture-style classes, and maintain low student-to-faculty ratios, we are confident our campuses will be able to provide students some level of in-classroom instruction," said Vincent Pedone, executive director of the State Universities Council of Presidents. "Our campuses are well-positioned to adapt to gathering size limitations and social distancing requirements, while providing the high-quality and affordable programming that is our hallmark."

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The Helen G. Shaughnessy Administration Building on the Worcester State University campus. Worcester State University among schools planning to open in the fall. [T&G STAFF/CHRISTINE HOCHKEPPEL]

RETURN

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The large University of Massachusetts system, which has campuses in Amherst, Boston, Dartmouth, Lowell and Worcester, has not announced its plans for the fall semester, and a spokesman for UMass President Marty Meehan said each of the UMass campuses will be making final plans available in the coming weeks.

The announcement came hours after state public health officials reported 271 new cases of COVID-19 and 36 new deaths, raising total reported infections in the state since the outbreak began to 106,422 and increasing the death toll to 7,770. COVID-19 hospitalizations, the seven-day average of the positive test rate and the three-day average of COVID-19 deaths continued to trend in downward in Massachusetts, but are rising in several southern and western states.

The state universities group said

Phase 3 of Gov. Charlie Baker's economic reopening plan is "expected by mid-August," and said they plan to follow state and federal COVID-19 health and safety protocols and procedures. Gov. Baker, according to his own plan, could move the state into Phase 3 as soon as June 29.

The nine state universities said they are still accepting admission and residence hall applications through the summer, and will be releasing more detailed "safe return plans" in the coming days and weeks.

"We are hearing from our students a demand for the return to in-classroom instruction and a return to their on-campus housing," Pedone said. "Our students value the personal attention afforded them by our small class sizes and enjoy the residence life experience offered at all our state universities."

The state Board of Higher Education plans to meet on Tuesday at 10 a.m., with members participating remotely in a meeting accessible on Zoom.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

New pact between FSU, Monty Tech transfers credits

Submitted Report

FITCHBURG » Leaders from Fitchburg State University and Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School recently signed an articulation agreement that will let high school students receive credits in early childhood education toward their bachelor's degrees.

The agreement is designed to support students by building on past learning experience and eliminating unnecessary dupli-

cation of learning outcomes.

Under terms of the agreement, Monty Tech students who have completed the Early Childhood Education Career Pathway Levels I-IV with a grade of B or higher will be granted six college credits at Fitchburg State, replacing the collegiate courses on Foundations of Inclusive Education and Designing Environments for Young Children.

The credits will be accepted for four years after the student graduates from Monty Tech. The agreement was created after a

lengthy review of course objectives at the high school and collegiate level to insure students were acquiring college level knowledge and competencies.

"This agreement recognizes the caliber of early childhood education preparation occurring at Monty Tech, and will give students a head start on their collegiate aspirations," Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said.

"We're proud to continue the constructive collaboration with area school districts that result

in opportunities for student success," he added.

"Monty Tech is thrilled to partner with Fitchburg State University on the Early Childhood Program articulation," Monty Tech Superintendent-Director Sheila M. Harrity, said. "With this agreement, our Early Childhood program students will have the opportunity to earn six college credits from Fitchburg State and apply it to their undergraduate program at no cost to them or their families.

"This is a wonderful way to

build the early childhood training and workforce pipeline that is needed in our region," she continued. "In addition, this partnership has allowed our Early Childhood program instructors to work directly with faculty from Fitchburg State.

"These conversations allowed for the sharing of curriculum and improving the rigor of our coursework at the high school level," Harrity said.

The articulation agreement is effective immediately and will be reviewed in May 2023.



Local police recruits learning new lessons in era of reform



By: [Wale Aliyu, Boston 25 News](#)

Updated: June 18, 2020 - 10:01 PM

FITCHBURG, Mass. — Just as police departments across the state are experiencing reform right now, so are the police academies, where future officers are learning what it takes.

Boston 25 News has been closely following recruits for months, and spent the day at the Fitchburg State Police Academy, to see how educators there are dealing with the civil unrest head-on.

The recruits recently got candid lessons from current officers on protecting and serving the community, including Harvard, Massachusetts Police Chief Edward Denmark.

“There have been times where I’ve used force in my past and a lot of that was anger,” Chief Denmark told the recruits. “I got so wrapped up in what my task was in that moment, as opposed to what my purpose was in the bigger picture.”

The recruits are also dissecting mistakes officers around the country have made in hopes of avoiding similar situations. For example, recruits had to write a two-page essay on what the four officers did wrong in the George Floyd incident.

“When we spend 15 weeks here, you do what you’re told here when you’re told to do it and nothing more. I think it can be challenging to get out on the street and confront a veteran officer, but those are the skills that we are learning here to be able to step up and make those tough decisions,” Medfield Police recruit William Bento told Boston 25 News reporter Wale Aliyu.

Fitchburg State University Police Academy has a model of training and educating the recruits simultaneously, which they say is the first in the country.

“Research has shown that educated officers have less ‘use of force’ incidents, they have less deadly force incidents, they are better problem solvers,” academy director Lisa Lane McCarty said. “To their credit, this is not a great time to be going through a police academy. And they have these faces on that say ‘they will be the change,’” she added.

In the five-year program, the 21 recruits will get a criminal justice bachelors, a master’s degree, a police certification, and first-hand lessons on the ethics and nuances of policing.

“They need to understand the limitations of some of the things that we have tried or even some of the things people are suggesting now,” Chief Denmark said. “How is a certification going to change the way someone feels in their heart and their mind? It’s not going to. It may help to make sure we have the right education. But at two in the morning when a fight starts in the middle of the street that doesn’t matter.”

Four of the recruits already have jobs waiting for them. Benjamin Torrence will be joining the short-staffed Haverhill Police Department, and says as an officer of Color, he feels the pressure to bridge the gap.

“I do feel the pressure, but I know I’m not alone,” Torrence said. “I’m excited, my fellow recruits are excited, to get out on the street to make a difference.”

With calls to defund, and dismantle entire departments, these recruits know their goal is to provide change, one interaction at a time.

“We want to be able to change peoples’ perspective if they have a negative outlook on this job,” Bento said.

“This is all fear-driven,” said Chief Denmark. “This is cops fearing people which causes them to have heightened fear and feel they need to use force. And communities of color don’t trust the cops based on the history of this country. This goes far beyond policing so they’re afraid.”

FITCHBURG STATE POLICE ACADEMY

'NEVER JUST BLUE'



NICOLE DEFEUDIS / LOWELL SUN

Harvard Police Chief Edward Denmark encouraged Fitchburg State Police Academy recruits to consider their own biases in a presentation on Wednesday morning.

Self-reflection a key theme in chief's address to future officers of the law

By Nicole DeFeudis
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FITCHBURG » When Harvard Police Chief Edward Denmark was training to become an officer decades ago, racial bias wasn't discussed in depth.

He recalls an instructor telling his class: "You're no longer black, white... You're all blue."

"And I thought to myself... 'That's not true,'" Denmark said. "Because when you go home, you get to take your blue off, and you can walk down the street, and no one's going to

mess with you. But when I go home, I can take my blue off, and depending on where I walk, I'm just another black guy that's going to rip (people) off or break into their car."

"So you're never just blue. You're always who you are underneath that uniform," he said.

Self-reflection was the theme of Denmark's presentation to Fitchburg State University Police Academy recruits and campus police staff on Wednesday morning. In response to na-

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NICOLE DEFEUDIS / LOWELL SUN

Fitchburg State Police Academy Recruits, bottom from left, Joshua Folmer-Lafleur, Abigail Robinson, Michael Brito, Keegan O'Donnell, Kelly McCusker Brown, rear from left, Jared Taje and Alyssa King listen to a presentation on fair policing at Weston Auditorium at Fitchburg State.

Recruits

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tional protests sparked by the killing of George Floyd during an arrest in Minneapolis, Denmark challenged the recruits to consider their own biases.

“Yes, we all have a role in this. We 100% have a responsibility to do our part to try to make this better — and it starts with this discussion we’re having here, to recognize our weaknesses and call each other out when we see something wrong. We have to do that,” Denmark said.

He began the presentation by showing footage of an officer pointing a gun at a black college student who was picking up trash outside a dormitory building in Colorado. Denmark intermittently paused the video, urging the recruits to question the meaning of “reasonable and necessary” use of force.

“It’s the old adage: If the only tool you have is a hammer ... (everything) looks like a nail,” Denmark said. “What makes something reasonable and necessary?” he asked later.

Academy Director Lisa Lane McCarty said she cleared the day for Denmark to deliver the “timely” and “important” message. She said recent events have made the recruits “more determined to go out there and do the job the right way... if anything, they want to be the change.”

Typically, a police recruit would be hired or sponsored by a police department before enrolling in a 20-week academy to be certified.

But students in the Fitchburg State Police Program study Municipal Police Training Committee curriculum over four years, beginning when



NICOLE DEFEUDIS / LOWELL SUN

Harvard Police Chief Edward Denmark, standing, gave a presentation titled, ‘Fair and Impartial Policing and Procedural Justice’ to Fitchburg State Police Academy recruits on Wednesday.

they are college freshmen.

Upon graduating with a degree in criminal justice, the recruits complete a summer academy to become certified police officers.

Then, they enter a one-year graduate program in criminal justice.

“What I’m seeing is that the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, along with MPTC and other organizations, have been really starting to push for an education requirement for police officers, because right now there isn’t any,” McCarty said.

“There is an understanding that a better-educated police officer is going

to have a skill set that could promote change. And research has shown that police officers who have a post-secondary education are less likely to use force ...

“They’re just better problem-solvers and decision-makers,” she continued.

Fitchburg State’s academy was spearheaded in 2013 by now-retired Fitchburg Police Chief Robert DeMoura, who previously served as deputy chief in Lowell, and university instructor David Weiss. DeMoura sought to transform students into “street-ready” police officers through extensive college

training.

Denmark said he believes police officers should be required to take a philosophy course.

“Where we’ve been lacking is teaching people how to think. We teach people skills, we teach people how to follow rules, how to follow directions. But in part of that process, sometimes we diminish their ability to think,” he said.

Recruit Benjamin Torrence, of Haverhill, said policing has “always been a calling” to him.

“Police officers need to be more than just people who go out and just arrest people, and beat up people and handcuff people. They

need to be expert communicators, they need to be experts in empathy, experts in sympathy, and experts in teamwork,” Torrence said.

Alyssa King, a recruit from Groton, said, “Every single one of us needs to be a difference, and in a good way.”

Both recruits earned bachelor’s degrees in May, and are currently in their third week of police academy training.

This group of 21 recruits will be the third to complete the Fitchburg State Police Academy.

“My bigger fear with this ... is that we try to plaster some new training, some

new certification some new requirements and think it’s going to fix (the situation). But we have a broader system built on systemic racism that the police didn’t cause, but they’re part of,” Denmark said.

“It’s not a training program that’s going to change our culture. It’s not a training program that’s going to change the way you feel about certain communities. It’s not a training that’s going to change the communities to feel differently about you. It’s the one-on-one interaction every day that’s going to make a difference,” he told the recruits.

COLLEGE TOWN

Fitchburg State
to revamp
career advising

By Scott O'Connell

Telegram & Gazette Staff

FITCHBURG – Fitchburg State University announced it has received a six-figure award from the David Educational Foundation to “remake” its career advising program.

The grant, worth more than \$250,000, will enable the university to build a new model for how it provides career advising and related services to students, as well as create a new internship and employer relations model.

The Davis Foundation has provided funding to Fitchburg State in the past as well, to improve data collection practices and the rate at which students complete their degrees, according to university president Richard S. Lapidus.

“The foundation’s latest investment will support career outcomes in connection to degrees and academic credit accumulation,” he said. “We are strategically focused on student success through career mapping, experiential learning, and advising to expedite students’ pathways toward careers.”

“My staff and I are excited to continue this work thanks to the support of the Davis Educational Foundation,” said Melisa Alves, the school’s director of career services and advising. “As we move forward with this work, along with our plans to build career communities, an internship program, and career readiness courses, we are confident our students will benefit greatly as we provide career services support that will prepare them for whichever step they decide to take upon graduating from Fitchburg State University.”

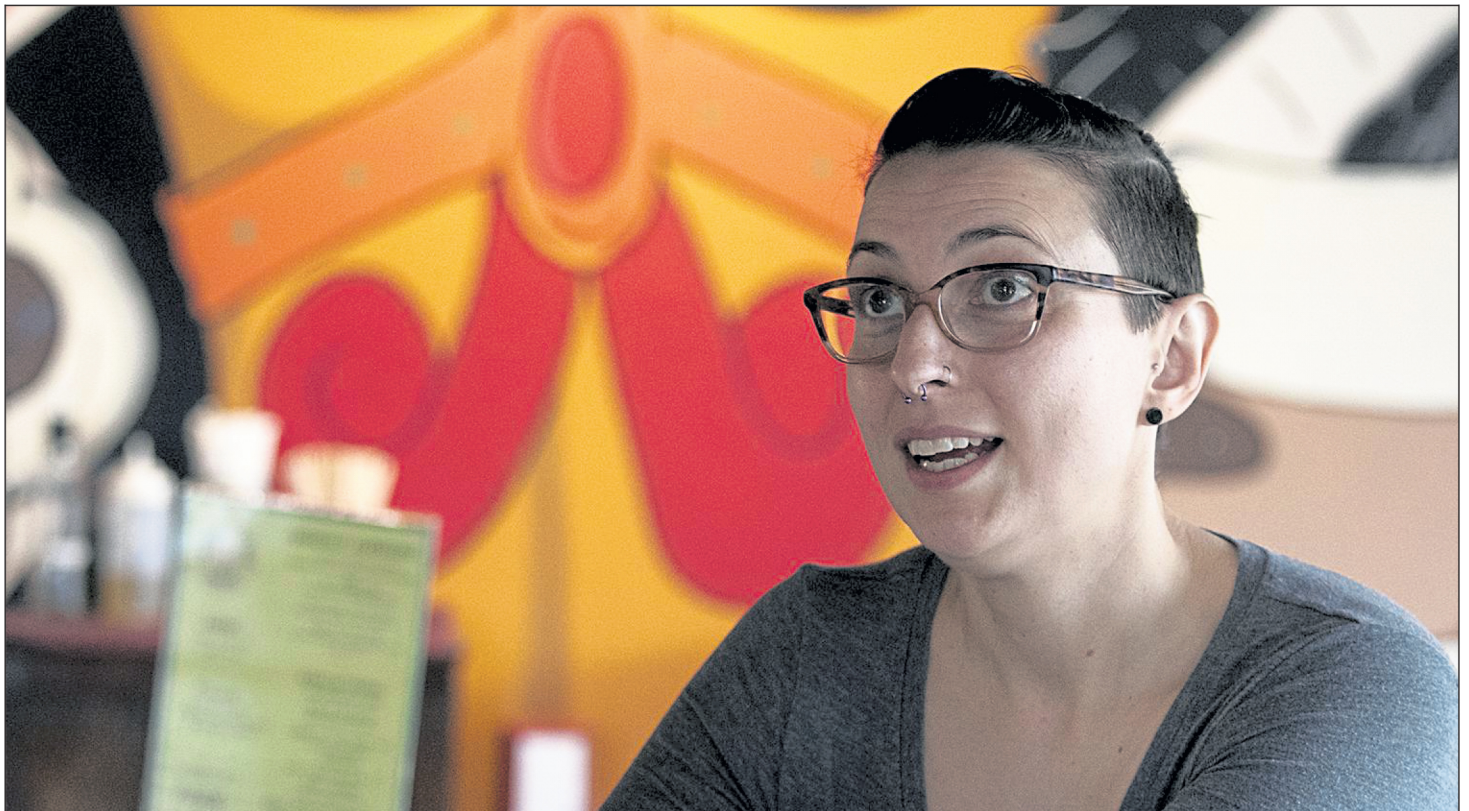
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FITCHBURG

Downtown businesses get boost from grants



JOHN LOVE / SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE

Kim Jones, owner of Strong Style Coffee in Fitchburg, said 'knowing that organizations like North of Main and other community organizations in Fitchburg are there in the worst of times to support us is why I choose to do business in Fitchburg.'

Staff Report

FITCHBURG » Downtown Fitchburg businesses hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic

have received more than \$62,000 in emergency grants through MassDevelopment's Transformative Development Initiative (TDI), in partnership with ReImagine North of Main,

according to a press release from the downtown revitalization group.

"It was nice to see the organized groups involved with Fitchburg do something to help

support the businesses that have made investments in the city," Steven Duvarney, owner of Duvarney Jewelers on Main Street, said. "For a retailer that

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Grants

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was deemed nonessential during COVID, Fitchburg has made us feel essential."

The grants were designed to provide flexible, emergency funding to help small businesses in the Fitchburg TDI District navigate these unprecedented times. The funds were targeted to support restaurants and businesses deemed "nonessential" by

Gov. Charlie Baker's executive order.

Administered by ReImagine North of Main with the support of the Fitchburg TDI Partnership, applications from 25 businesses were received and approved, according to the release.

Funding was made possible through MassDevelopment's TDI Local Emergency Funding and the ReImagine North of Main, which is supported by The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts Syner-

gy Initiative.

"As a small business owner, the last few months have been filled with uncertainty and fear," Kim Jones, owner of Strong Style Coffee on Boulder Drive, said. "Knowing that organizations like North of Main and other community organizations in Fitchburg are there in the worst of times to support us is why I choose to do business in Fitchburg. The financial support given to us has helped us reopen and rehire staff. This gesture

shows that they see beyond just numbers and care about the businesses and community that make our city a special place."

ReImagine North of Main is a collective impact initiative led by Fitchburg State University, the City of Fitchburg, Fitchburg Art Museum, The Minority Coalition, Making Opportunity Count and NewVue Communities. Fitchburg State University is the fiscal agent and project manager for the ReImagine North of Main initiative.