

**Richard S. Lapidus, Ph.D.**

PRESIDENT

## **President's Report to Trustees: Goals for 2019-20 Academic Year**

### **Overview:**

The president is responsible for leading the university in an effective and efficient manner, and administering daily operations with a primary focus on quality and excellence. The goals for this year are consistent with the campus strategic plan and are designed to support and strengthen the mission and vision.

### **Goals:**

#### **1. Maintain sound financial management and operational controls.**

- The University had a clean audit for FY2019.
- The University continues to automate operations in Student Accounts to increase efficiency and to increase student friendly operations.
- The FY21 budget was developed to create a balance between the use of reserves and cost saving measures.
- The University was able to hold student fees relatively stable.
- The University managed the financial impact of COVID-19 and use of CARES Act funding to minimize its impact on FY20.
- The University successfully secured \$1.2M in historic tax credits to support the renovation of the Theater Block.
- The University successfully negotiated a new utility contract with a projected annual savings of approximately \$100,000.
- The University launched a planned giving program as the Saxifrage Society and now have eight confirmed estate plans with provisions for Fitchburg State.
- The University launched a giving by payroll deduction option.
- They University Annual Fund raised \$180,803 from 1,860 gifts.
- Private support gifts totaled \$1,919,842
- Grants and Sponsored Research raised \$2,162,007 from combined Federal, State and Private Foundations.
- A new marketing plan was established for housing including a revised pricing structure.

#### **Information Technology Upgrades**

- Completed a multi-faceted compliance project to bring Fitchburg State in line with the General Data Protection Regulation law passed by the European Union.

- Completed the setup and rollout of JAMF, a product that lets the university manage Apple Mac computers in our enterprise.
- Installed and implemented Cisco Umbrella DNS security for all faculty and staff laptops, and all systems on campus.
- Installed and deployed an automated form routing and approval tool for campus.
- Mediated the theatre block office space with permanent projectors and sound in the conference room and classroom.
- Installed four Google Meet hardware systems in Percival, Sanders, Mazzaferro and Conlon.
- Converted all email, calendars, contacts, notes and shared calendars from Microsoft Outlook to the Google Suite and supported this large transition with online and in-person trainings throughout the year. This enabled Google live captioning on meetings for easier collaboration with hearing impaired faculty and students.
- Enacted two-factor authentication for extra-protection in critical areas on campus. The campus student information system and system administration systems now require two-factor authentication before use.
- Converted the universities main student information systems from physical servers to virtual servers, which reduces costs and increases uptime and recovery.
- Upgraded fiber network cable in some areas on campus, continuing a multi-year replacement schedule.
- Collapsed all wireless networks into one, role-based network that automatically partitions users onto more secure areas depending on their work at FSU.
- Performed a Risk Analysis audit in IT and performed mediation as required.
- Replaced the main telephone system for the University with an in-cloud solution that includes software panic-buttons and brings FSU in compliance with the digital 911 act.

## **2. Continue to work in support of strategic plan goals.**

- Graduate Certificate: Special Issues in Counseling.
- Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) in Interdisciplinary Studies (non-licensure) for the administrator licensure candidates of the DESE-approved Mass. School Administrators Association.
- MS Criminal Justice: revised a 100% online option and launched in summer 2020.
- Graduate Certificate in Creative Writing.
- The Exercise and Sports Science department developed three tracks within the Clinical Exercise Physiology concentration: pre-physical therapy, pre-physician assistant, and pre-athletic training.
- New curriculum for the Program Areas for Secondary and Middle School (PA-SM) were passed by the AUC, the curriculum covers middle and secondary teacher preparation in History, Math, English, Science, occupational education and chemistry.
- Developed and implemented proposals for courses and Concentrations for Health Care, Marketing, and Supply Chain Management within the accelerated online MBA program.
- Completed the course conversion for a 100% online delivery for our Masters in Computer Sciences.
- Completed and implemented a restructured online 7 week Accelerated Business Administration Bachelor Science degree.
- New Online Certificate MBA Programs in Accounting, Healthcare Management, Human Resource Management, Supply Chain Management and Marketing.
- Developed new non-credit programs in
  - Supporting LGBTQIA+ Students in K-12 Setting
  - Delivering High Quality Training on a Limited Budget - Online Self-Paced
  - Traveling the Road of Insulin Resistance through the Body and Brain Feb 4-13
  - Introduction to Cultural Competency for Educators
  - Intercultural Competency Training for Real Estate Professionals

- Back to Business During COVID-19 webinars
- Partnership with MindEdge to offer over 100 online certificate programs to support career professionals.
- 4 plus 1 programs were created for all licensure areas at the undergraduate level, creating pathways for students to add another license in their 5th year.
- An articulation agreement between Fitchburg State University and Monty Tech was created and approved. This agreement allows students at Monty Tech to receive college level credits in the early childhood degree program.
- Completed the self-study and the site visits and received ABET reaffirmation of accreditation for CS and CIS.
- Completed the self-study and the site visits and received IACBE reaffirmation of accreditation for BSBA (Accounting, Marketing, and Management) and MBA (Accounting, Management, HR Management).
- Honors Program Renewal: Massachusetts Board of Higher Education approved Fitchburg State's request to renew our membership in the Commonwealth's Honors Program.
- Completed the development of the first-year experience (FYE) seminar. Ten departments (2/3 of all depts.) have now successfully created a version of the course.
- Continued to expand the utilization of the Student Success Collaborative program to include texting to all faculty, use of Progress Reports for Attendance and Deficient Midterm Grade Reporting, and improve timely student registration.

#### Transfer Pathways

- Middlesex Community College's Associate in Science degree in Communication as a linked program for MassTransfer w/ B.S. Communications Media.
- Quinsigamond Community College's Associate in Arts degree in Liberal Arts - Media Communications Option as a linked program for MassTransfer w/B.S. Communications Media.
- North Shore Community College's Associate of Science degree in Liberal Arts – Communications and Media Studies as a linked program for MassTransfer w/B.S. in Communications Media.
- Two articulation agreements with Husson University, one into their Doctor of Pharmacy program and one with their Doctor of Physical Therapy, have been completed in spite of COVID related delays at both institutions.

### **3. Facilitate the development of a new campus strategic plan (2020-2025)**

- The campus strategic planning process ran the duration of the academic year and was an inclusive process that allowed, faculty, staff and students and community members to actively participate and provide input throughout.
- Using the Department of Higher Education guidance, the university completed two of the three required “touchpoints.”
- The strategic plan is in alignment with the Department of Higher Education's Equity Agenda with a focus on “educational justice” and being a “student ready campus.”
- The University is currently waiting for the Commissioner to return our draft document with feedback so the process can be completed.

#### **4. Continue to work on the improvement of student enrollment goals.**

- The University continues to refine our value proposition and brand statement for inclusion in all of our integrated marketing communications. The strategic marketing positioning focuses on high touch, hands-on, and active learning.
- Sought consulting assistance to better integrate all functions of the enrollment management process.
- Improved our use of Slate (CRM that provides a comprehensive platform for admissions and enrollment management.)
- Purchased more student names at both the high school senior and mid-level high school level to strengthen the enrollment funnel and begin meaningful conversations with potential students earlier.
- Redesigned the campus viewbook for the coming year.
- Broadened the use of multimedia to better reach students and their parents and allow for communication in different ways.
- Distributed over \$200,000 in scholarships for merit and need to 226 students.
- Disability Services transitioned its database to Maxient.
- Counseling Services successfully redesigned the way they prepare for students in crisis by rebranding their “Walk-in Hour” to an “Urgent Hour.”
- 1,616 pounds of food was donated to the Falcon Bazaar prior to COVID-19 dismissal.
- A Belonging Survey comparing feelings of belongingness on campus of students who are engaged outside the classroom and those who are not was created and insightful.
- A Case Manager position was designed to assist students in navigating often complex and difficult situations that can be barriers to student success and retention.
- A listening tour was conducted with the Black Student Union and Latin American Student Association memberships.
- A new programming series, “Courageous Conversations” was launched to discuss and formulate responses to racism and social injustice.
- A “Bias Response Team” and protocol was created.

#### **5. Continue to evaluate the campus organizational structure and grow faculty and staff in support of the university mission.**

- The University hired six tenure-track faculty, six one-year temporary faculty and 21 staff.
- Currently, all positions, with few exceptions, are frozen as the university considers right-sizing measures.
- Efforts for all searches continued to emphasize diversity in the candidate pools.

#### **6. Oversee ongoing capital projects and advocate for additional funding to address deferred maintenance and renovation needs as appropriate.**

- The University completed Phase 3 of the Percival Hall renovation (modernization of general-purpose classrooms located on the second floor.)
- Successfully completed the first round of deferred maintenance projects in collaboration with DCAM. This included Recreation Center roof replacement and window replacements in Edgerly Hall and Thompson Hall.

- Finished the second half of the Russell Tower bathroom renovations and upgrades.
- Completed the replacement and upgrade of the Mara Village walkways. All walkways are now ADA accessible.
- Completed the ADA walkway compliance work on Herlihy Hall.
- Installed new parcel postal delivery boxes that now allow students 24/7 access to package delivery.

## **7. Oversee the website redesign project**

- A total redesign of the university website is nearly complete. The site will now be, for the first-time, responsive which will allow web pages to render well on a variety of devices and screen sizes.
- Converted to Drupal content management software which will allow for tremendous flexibility and integration potential of new features as the website continues to evolve over time.
- Anticipated launch date, late September 2020.

## **8. Continue to strengthen university/community relationships.**

- The University has placed significant effort on strengthening alumni relations with support of the Alumni Association. (Alumni events including Homecoming and reunions, golf tournaments, alumni hockey, baseball, softball, soccer, basketball and gatherings on campus in the regional area, Cape Cod and Florida.)
- Developed virtual alumni town halls, coffee hours and “Falcon Talks.”
- Continued to strengthen connection with the Fitchburg Art Museum with programing and sponsorship support.
- The University facilitated the events in conjunction with the celebration of the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a series of programs, performances and exhibitions.
- The University produces a monthly Alumni E-Newsletter and Contact Magazine.
- The university has worked with the City of Fitchburg on infrastructure planning around the downtown main street area.
- The university has assisted the city with the collection of data around the upcoming census
- Sizer School - Board of Trustees
- Our Fathers House - Board of Directors
- Fitchburg Art Museum - Board of Trustees
- Chamber of Commerce - Board of Directors
- Fitchburg Plan - Co-Chair
- United Way - Board of Directors
- UMass Memorial Health Alliance Hospital - President’s Council
- Cushing Academy - Board of Trustees
- Fitchburg Public Library - Foundation Board
- NCAA Committee on Infractions
- Presidents Higher Education Reopening Working Group (Advisory to Governor Baker’s Massachusetts Reopening Advisory Board)

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Although not part of my formal goals, a tremendous portion of this year's efforts revolved around COVID-19 response. Collectively, the campus community responded to the challenge, converting courses to online or remote, establishing ways of continuing to provide the full array of student support service, transitioning business offices for continuity of operation, significantly changing technology to accommodate the move off-campus, and at the same time maintaining the health and safety of the entire campus community. Feedback at the end of the semester from students was positive and we learned good information about how to improve what we were going to need to do for successful summer activities and a fall academic launch. Faculty and staff learned similarly about what worked well and areas that needed refinement. It remains a continuous learning experience.