

# LOCAL NEWS

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## FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

# A move-in day like no other



Senior Anthony De Freitas from Groton cleans the bins that students are using to carry their belongings to their dorm rooms on Tuesday morning.



JOHN LOVE PHOTOS / SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE

Junior Michael Sellards from East Boston takes a COVID-19 test as he checks in for the new school year at Fitchburg State University Tuesday. Giving him instructions on how to take the test is nurse Kara Lewis.



Students were given FSU face masks upon checking in Tuesday.

# LOCAL NEWS

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## FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

# Most classes to be in hybrid format

By Daniel Monahan

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**FITCHBURG** » Fitchburg State University will look much different when students return to campus in the fall because of the ongoing pandemic.

On Tuesday, President Richard Lapidus and Vice President for Student Affairs Laura Bayless discussed the changes students and faculty will encounter, adding that there are many new challenges this year.

“It’s just added more complexity,” he said. “But I think that we worked really hard on a reopening game plan.”

Bayless said she’s excited about the prospect of students returning to the campus and the vibrancy they bring with them.

“We have put really good plans in place to de-densify and demonstrate where social distancing needs to happen,” she said. “It’s going to be really different this fall, but it will be so

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good to have students, faculty, and staff back on campus.”

According to the pair, the university’s new health and safety measures will begin before a student ever steps foot on campus.

Prior to returning to campus, students and staff will participate in a training program that details the safety guidelines and confirms that they understand and will comply with expectations.

“We have made our expectations really clear and that will continue to be reinforced over time,” Bayless said. “For students, if there’s evidence that they’re flouting those expectations ... we can hold them accountable.”

Bayless said the university is not trying to restrict students’ freedoms, but these plans need to be followed to keep everyone safe.

When students return to campus, 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 the university.

Classes that require laboratory work or extensive use of technology will have in-person options available.

“Maybe 30% of the student population would be on campus and they would be rotating on and off to keep density down,” Lapidus said.

Another major change for the uni-

versity takes shape in the residence halls, which are opening with reduced occupancy. Lapidus said there are about 35-40% fewer students living on campus this year after most rooms were reduced to single occupancy.

Students will begin moving onto campus on Aug. 31.

Students and faculty will also be subject to the state’s travel order, which requires anyone coming from a higher risk state to have proof of a negative COVID-19 test or undertake a 14-day quarantine.

Lapidus said one of the biggest challenges has been understanding and coordinating a testing system.

“None of us are trained on testing or contact tracing, so we needed to get some expert advice,” he said. “These are all new things to us.”

Fitchburg State will be conducting its own COVID-19 surveillance testing, in partnership with the Broad Institute.

In addition, the university is partnering with the ACTION Center of Community Health Connections located in Fitchburg for students to be tested if they have been exposed to the virus. Payments and insurance rates will apply.

The university anticipates offering testing the week of Aug. 24 for staff and some students, and the week of Aug. 31, testing will be conducted for faculty and students.

Those who test positive will be immediately sent home to quarantine or isolated in a designated part of campus. Those who are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 would inform the Student Affairs Office and not come to campus or leave

their residence hall.

Contact tracing will also be conducted for any individual who tests positive, Lapidus said.

Lapidus said Fitchburg State is in constant communication with the city’s health officials and watching the number of cases in the region.

“When we start to see a problem, we will respond accordingly,” he said.

While the new protocols ensure the safety of students and staff, Lapidus said it was a challenge to create an opening model that seems to undermine the fundamental purpose of a university.

“You’re building a model that’s designed to do the opposite of what a university is supposed to do,” Lapidus said. “We’re supposed to bring people together, we’re supposed to create networks, and a variety of things. And during this crisis we’re asked to do the opposite.”

The goal now, he said, is to create those interactions and experiences despite the limitations.

Bayless said the university learned how to do that last spring, when classes were disrupted due to the initial COVID-19 outbreak.

At the time, students and school officials began setting up virtual social gatherings like online bingo or virtual escape rooms, she said. That creative thinking also applied to the classroom or to other university offerings such as counseling or mentorships, Bayless said.

“It’s different but I think that we have really great plans in place for it,” Bayless said.

The first day of classes – both with hybrid learning and virtual – will be Sept. 3.

## FALL REOPENING

# FSU details health, safety guides

By Daniel Monahan

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**FITCHBURG** » Fitchburg State University, which announced it would reopen with both in-person and remote instruction, released new details this week about its plans for keeping students safe, including a randomized testing program.

As students prepare to return to campus this fall, university officials have implemented a variety of new measures to promote social distancing, mask-wearing, and other safety protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The first day of classes – both in person and virtual – will be Sept. 3.

“We are excited for your return to campus and looking forward to a great – albeit different – fall semester,” the university wrote in its repopulation plan.

The university said it cannot guarantee zero cases of COVID-19, or prevent community infections, but added that its top priority was creating a culture of safety and accountability to maintain a healthy campus.

Fitchburg State will be conducting its own COVID-19 surveillance testing, in partnership with the Broad Institute.

It will be testing a randomized sample of members of the university each week to track trends of the spread of the virus, if any. Students will be notified if they are part of this randomized sample for a given week, and be notified of test results.

In addition, the university is partnering with the ACTION Center of Community Health Connections located in Fitchburg for students to be tested if

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they have been exposed to the virus. Payments and insurance rates will apply.

The university is in the process of determining a process for contact tracing.

Everyone on campus will be required to wear a face covering over the nose and mouth when indoors. They are also required outdoors when six-foot physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Students will also be required to self-monitor their health daily. Those who are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 would inform the Student Affairs Office and not come to campus or leave their residence hall.

The university anticipates offering testing the week of Aug. 24 for staff and some students, and the week of Aug. 31, testing will be conducted for faculty and students.

Students and faculty will also be subject to the state's travel order, which requires anyone coming from a higher risk state to have proof of a negative COVID-19 test or undertake a 14-day quarantine.

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 the university.

Prior to returning to campus, all students are required to review a series of online training videos and policies to meet requirements to repopulate campus.

Residence halls will open with reduced occupancy. Most rooms will be configured as singles with some others configured as doubles to serve as “family units” within suites.

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 the university.

On Thursday, the university announced it was canceling its study abroad programs which were planned for the spring semester.

The four planned programs would have sent faculty and students to Europe, Costa Rica and Japan.

“The health and safety of our university community remains a top priority,” Vice President for Academic Affairs Alberto J.F. Cardelle said. “We know the disappointment this announcement will create, but we are acting in the best interest of the health and safety of our community members.”

Cardelle said travel restrictions, health concerns, and passport processing delays were the root cause of the cancellation. He said the school is confident that it will return to a regular schedule of study abroad opportunities for students.

The reopening plan will remain fluid and is subject to change as further guidance and/or orders are directed from Gov. Charlie Baker and other state and federal authorities.

## FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

# \$293G Department of Education grant renews Trio Program

### Submitted Article

**FITCHBURG** » Fitchburg State University recently received a federal grant for \$293,000 to continue its TRIO Student Support Services program, which for over 20 years has helped first-generation, lower-income and high needs students excel in their collegiate studies.

The competitive federal grant program awards

funds to institutions of higher education to provide opportunities for academic development, assist students with basic college requirements, and to motivate students toward the successful completion of their post-secondary education.

The goal of the student support services program is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants.

At Fitchburg State, the

program — formerly known as Expanding Horizons — has been supporting students since 1997.

Fitchburg State's grant will support services to 160 undergraduate students who qualify as low-income, first-generation, and/or have a disability, according to Interim Director of TRIO Student Support Services Beth Swartz.

"This program helps students succeed by offering proactive advising and individualized support plans, along with cultivating a sense of belonging," Swartz said.

"These experiences help

enhance students' connection to the wider campus community and show them pathways to meeting their potential and finding success."

Swartz also noted the work of Karen Frank Mays, who died earlier this year after a lengthy tenure as director of grants and sponsored programs at Fitchburg State. She is remembered for her talent and her unwavering commitment to students and her colleagues. "Karen worked tirelessly to write and re-win this grant before she passed away. We will all miss her greatly and are thankful for her contributions."

# LOCAL

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## COLLEGE TOWN

**By Scott O'Connell**

Telegram & Gazette Staff

### **FSU gets grant for student support program**

Fitchburg State University has received a six-figure federal award to continue a program aimed at providing support to first-generation, low-income and high-needs students, the school recently announced.

The ultimate goal of the TRIO Student Support Services program, which began in 1997, is to increase the retention and graduation rates of those populations.

The \$293,000 grant will allow FSU to provide support services to 160 eligible students through the initiative.

“This program helps students succeed by offering proactive advising and individualized support plans, along with cultivating a sense of belonging,” said Beth Swartz, interim director of TRIO. “These experiences help enhance students’ connection to the wider campus community and show them pathways to meeting their potential and finding success.”

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## FALL SEMESTER

# FSU preps for student arrivals

### Submitted Article

**FITCHBURG** » Fitchburg State University will welcome students back to campus this month with an operational model designed to protect the health and safety of the community while honoring its commitment to students' educational objectives, according to a press release from the university.

"This will be a very different semester for

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our campus community, but the accommodations will serve our students as they pursue their degrees and assist with public health," Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said. "Our faculty, who shifted gears so rapidly this spring to accommodate a remote semester, have taken advantage of training and resources to begin the fall strong. And our student support services stand ready to assist

by in-person and remote avenues."

While there will be time periods this week for students to drop off their belongings in advance (by appointment), the main move-in for new students will take place Monday, Aug. 31. Residence halls are opening at approximately 65% of capacity, with most rooms being used for single occupants. North Street between Pearl and Ross streets will be closed to traffic during the move-in (approximately 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) on Monday, and portions of Highland Avenue and Ce-

dar Street may be closed at times as well. The university is restricting the number of guests accompanying students during move-in.

Other steps the university is taking to be safe during the pandemic include:

- All members of the campus community are required to take a training course on COVID-related hygiene and prevention before the semester begins.

- New student orientation is being offered in a virtual model.

- The university will of-

**'Our faculty, who shifted gears so rapidly this spring to accommodate a remote semester, have taken advantage of training and resources to begin the fall strong.'**

— Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus

fer COVID testing to all students, faculty and staff beginning this week. Once the semester begins, the university will be testing a random sample of 425 members of the campus community each week.

Any positive results will be shared with the city's Health Department and a contact tracing regimen will be enacted.

- Classes will begin Thursday, Sept. 3, with approximately half of courses offered in a hybrid model mixing in-person and remote sessions. Many courses will be completely remote, and there will be a small number of exclusively face to face classes, including labs.

- All spaces on campus have been de-densified to allow for social distancing and advisory signage has been posted throughout campus.

- Students on campus meal plans will be served at a number of takeout stations. No seated dining options will be available this fall.

- As announced earlier this summer, the Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference has canceled all sports competitions for the fall.

- The university has canceled its annual Homecoming events.

For more detail on the university's plans for fall, visit [fitchburgstate.edu/reopening](https://fitchburgstate.edu/reopening). All campus communications related to the pandemic are being posted to [fitchburgstate.edu/coronavirus](https://fitchburgstate.edu/coronavirus).

# POLICE CHIEF

*Sir Robert Peel's Nine Principles*

1. The basic reason why the police exist is to prevent crime and disorder.

2. The ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police actions.

## Great Ideas 2020 SHAPING THE FUTURE OF POLICING

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Health and Wellness During a Crisis **86**

4. The degree of co-operation of

# Combining Higher Education and Police Training



By Lisa Lane McCarty, Academy Director, Fitchburg State University Police Program, Massachusetts

**THE FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY POLICE PROGRAM IS AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO POLICE TRAINING** that is the only model of its kind in the United States. The program partners with—and is authorized by—the Massachusetts Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC) to combine higher education and police training in a “4+1” educational design. In five years, the students receive (in this order) a bachelor’s degree, a full-time municipal police certification, and a master’s degree.

Freshmen entering the program receive a light background check before admission into the program. Once enrolled, they must adhere to all of the MPTC recruit rules and regulations for their entire four years of undergraduate schooling. In other words, for four years, they follow the same academic, conduct, uniform, and appearance and grooming standards that a traditional recruit follows for approximately 24 weeks.

Two days after they graduate with their undergraduate criminal justice degree, the students enter the MPTC full-time municipal police academy. The academy is shorter than a traditional academy (at 17 weeks) because the students have already taken about one-third of the academy curriculum in their undergraduate classes. Once they complete the academy, they are fully certified as full-time officers and can be hired to work in any municipality in Massachusetts (and the surrounding New England states). They then begin their “+1” master’s degree year. This portion of the program is online due to the students getting hired so quickly and beginning field training programs, which make attending in-person classes difficult.

*“This program is creating highly educated, highly trained, and highly disciplined officers... they essentially have a four-year record of academics and conduct.”*

While in the Police Program, the students are required to wear uniforms to all classes that contain academy curriculum. The uniform consists of 5.11 khakis, 5.11 blue polos with their names embroidered, black belts with silver buckles, and high-gloss boots. Men must have short hair and no facial hair. Women must wear their hair in a tight bun and wear no jewelry or makeup.

All police students attend a mandatory monthly meeting with the academy director and the drill staff. The students must wear their uniforms to these meetings, as well. Every meeting begins with a uniform inspection. They are taught the art of drill and ceremony at these meetings and receive other training related directly to policing. This includes topics such as mental health awareness, active shooter, health and wellness, fitness, fair and impartial policing, and working with victims.

Currently about 200 police students are in the program, ranging from freshmen to seniors. The police students are broken into platoons and squads with one class leader, four platoon leaders, and sixteen squad leaders. This structure allows students in excellent standing to step up and be leaders with direction and guidance from the academy director and the drill staff. It also prepares the students to work as one unit, which will be critical in the academy.

The program has run two Recruit Officer Courses (ROCs) so far, in 2018 and 2019, and the third course began on June 1, 2020. The first two classes were pilot groups of ten and nine students respectively. As an example, of the nine students in the most recent academy class (the second ROC) who graduated in September 2019, all nine have been hired. Four individuals were hired prior to their graduation date, and eight of the nine have successfully completed their field training programs and are excelling in the various departments where they were hired. The current course (the third ROC) has twenty-four students, five who have already been hired by various police departments in the state (and were hired prior to the start date of June 1). This pre-course hiring is one of the goals of the program.



This program is creating highly educated, highly trained, and highly disciplined officers. The average age of these graduates from the academy is between 22 and 23 years of age. They are a known quantity to hiring chiefs because they essentially have a four-year record of academics and conduct. If they violate any of the rules and regulations over the four years, they are dismissed from the program and, therefore, do not ever make it into the academy. Most of these recruits are very physically fit because the program includes volunteer physical training sessions throughout their four years, which are run by student leaders.

There is a huge cost savings for municipal chiefs in Massachusetts with these recruits as well. Once they graduate from the academy, they can be hired by chiefs at no cost to the department. The recruits pay for their academy and all of their equipment through tuition and graduate loans, and the agencies do not have to pay them throughout the modified academy as agencies are required to do with traditional academy recruits.

At a time when it is becoming increasingly difficult for police departments to find and hire quality police officers, this program offers a unique and viable solution. ♡



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# Sentinel & Enterprise

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## HIGHER EDUCATION



JULIA MALAKIE / LOWELL SUN

Middlesex Community College director of public safety Dan Martin, with assistant director of facilities Steve Hentz, shows steps MCC is taking to reduce the risk of COVID-19 when school reopens, including 6-foot social distancing stickers.

**By Elizabeth Dobbins**  
edobbins@lowellsun.com

**LOWELL** » In higher education administration, it's a good rule of thumb: when the economy tanks, enrollment blossoms. Out of work residents look to grow their opportuni-

ties in the classroom.

But this time around, local institutions aren't counting on it.

"We're questioning whether that's going to be the case this time around, because the factor causing unemployment is different than anything be-

fore," said Bob LaBonte, the chief financial officer for Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner.

Instead, schools are bracing for cuts. This includes the University of Massachusetts Lowell, which last week announced it would reduce its operating

budget by 20%, temporarily lay off 100 staff members and eliminate another 100 staff and administrator positions through "retirements, voluntary separations or other departures." Earlier in June, Middlesex Community College also

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# Universities

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announced layoffs impacting some full-time and many part-time staff.

While Fitchburg State University and MWCC haven't announced any layoffs so far, they're expecting a financial outlook much leaner than what the institutions projected just six months ago.

Amid these grim projections is a lot of uncertainty. Administrators identified two big question marks.

The first is state funding. Though never timely — it's been years since the state has finalized a budget before July 1, the start of the new fiscal year — this year is particularly unclear. The preliminary budget the governor proposed in January was rendered moot by the coronavirus, which upended state finances.

Some colleges have called for a boost to state funding, even amid shortfalls. Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus isn't banking on it. The university is instead estimating a 10% to 15% decrease in state funding.

"I think we're taking the realist approach that we're probably not going to get a windfall," he said.

Second, administrators are still waiting to see what type of impact the virus will have on enrollment. How will prospective students respond to precautions required by COVID-19 as some classes move online and residence hall living changes? Match this with a smaller college-aged population than years past, an ongoing demographic trend that has already strained many universities.

"I think we have a couple of factors working against us," Lapidus said.

Even as schools confront these challenges, MCC President James Mabry said higher education has a role to play in the coronavirus response.

"We're really trying to stay focused on how we can be a key player in rebuilding the economy," he said.

Before the coronavirus outbreak, MCC determined it needed to chop 5% from its \$70 million budget — a strategy that allows the college to forgo raising student fees again, according to Mabry. He said contracts for about a third of the school's 450 to 500 part-time staff will not be renewed.

"There's a lot of positions we no longer need in this current environment," he said.

The college also announced it will now require prior approval for out-of-state travel and overtime and will not fill vacant full-time positions, except for a few critical spots.

Faculty, including adjuncts, are not included in these cuts, according to Mabry.

Similarly, Christine Gillette, a spokeswoman for UMass Lowell, said the cuts announced for the university will not include any lay offs of faculty members or cuts in academic programs.

Without any reductions, UMass Lowell is expecting a \$50 million budget gap. This is in part brought on by expenses incurred by bringing 2,700 classes online last spring, according to Gillette. UMass Lowell also refunded \$15 million to students for room, board and parking. It also lost anticipated revenue streams, like planned events, due to COVID-19, according to university administrators.

"We are anticipating a greater budget shortfall in the coming fiscal year, with the uncertainties of enrollment, student housing and the state appropriation," according to the university. "Tuition was frozen to help our students during these difficult times, but also resulted in a loss of anticipated revenue."

In addition to the layoffs, all staff are being required to take five furlough days. Senior administrators must take ten days and the university is instituting reductions in construction and capital projects, according to Gillette.

Staff who are temporarily laid off will maintain their health insurance and will be eligible to receive unemployment insurance. Gillette said the university hopes to call back these workers sometime in the fall and they are encouraged by "strong" student enrollment numbers in line with previous years.

"We will re-evaluate in September after enrollment, state appropriation and other revenue streams become more definitive," she wrote. "That will determine when we may be able to call back staff who are temporarily laid off."

Meanwhile the university is increasing student support services and increasing financial aid and scholarship support, according to Gillette. About 2,700 UMass Lowell students received federal stimulus funds distributed by the university to help with finances.

"As a result of UMass Lowell's fiscal responsibility and entrepreneurial approaches, it is better positioned than many other universities to remain strong during this economic downturn," she wrote.

Fitchburg State University expects to end this fiscal year with a \$2.4 million shortfall, according to Jay Bry, vice president of finance and administration. The university will be using a 1/12 budget for the month of July.

So far the university has received about \$4 million



JULIA MALAKIE / LOWELL SUN

Sign on elevator limits capacity to two people.



JULIA MALAKIE / LOWELL SUN

Middlesex Community College director of public safety Dan Martin pulls off a social distancing sticker.

in federal coronavirus funding, with about half going directly to students and the other half to the university's expenses, Bry said.

MWCC is also starting the year with a 1/12 budget. LaBonte said the college is expecting a 10% decrease in enrollment.

Federal stimulus money received by the school will help preserve jobs, according to LaBonte. Before the coronavirus outbreak, he said MWCC was operating below budget projections for this fiscal year. Over time, the school had also put money away for a "rainy day," which LaBonte expects the school to use to offset a potential shortfall.

"If this isn't rain," he said. "I don't know what is."



JULIA MALAKIE / LOWELL SUN

Hand sanitizer is available in the lobby.

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## REOPENING PROCEDURES

# FSU offers free biz webinars

### Submitted Article

**FITCHBURG** » A series of free webinars being presented this month by the Center for Professional Studies at Fitchburg State University will offer valuable guidance to businesses looking to reopen safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Navigating federal and state regulations can be overwhelming. The Center for Professional Studies at Fitchburg State, in collaboration with the Safety Trainers, has compiled the best combination of recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization, the Department of Public Health, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the state of Massachusetts to get businesses

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operating with safety and health as a top priority.

The programs are designed for anyone who is now part of a team or is responsible for managing health and safety in their workplace.

The webinars will run

from 3 to 4 p.m. July 27 through July 30. These four, one-hour webinars will bullet point out what businesses need to do to reopen.

Topics will include the “alphabet soup” of regulations and determining who in a business organization should be responsible for coordinating health and safety, as well as the engineering and administrative

controls that will apply to businesses and new house-keeping practices.

In partnership with Fitchburg State, the Safety Trainers will deliver this information in a manageable and organized system for business owners to take immediate action on implementing controls, training and updating policies to protect their enterprises and their employees.

For more information or to register, contact the Center for Professional Studies at [cps@fitchburgstate.edu](mailto:cps@fitchburgstate.edu), or by phone at 978-665-3636.

Details are also available online at [fitchburgstate.edu/academics/continuing-education/center-for-professional-studies/back-to-business-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-a-4-part-webinar-series/](https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/continuing-education/center-for-professional-studies/back-to-business-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-a-4-part-webinar-series/).

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## COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF NORTH CENTRAL

# \$28G grant to support scholarships at FSU

### Staff Report

**FITCHBURG** » The Community Foundation of North Central

Massachusetts has awarded Fitchburg State University \$28,000 for scholarships that will be awarded to students in the North Central Massachu-

setts Early College Academy. The funds will support renewable scholarships to local students from underrepresented populations who plan to at-

tend Fitchburg State.

“Fitchburg State has long been committed to helping students navigate a successful

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## Grant

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path to college completion, and the Early College Academy will help further that goal,” Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said.

“Given the current economic crisis in the region, this work is more important than ever. These scholarships for local students could be the difference between the students attending college or not. We are grateful to the Community Foundation for recognizing the transformative potential of the

early college model and their commitment to help students achieve their ambitions,” Lapidus said.

The Early College Academy, formally designated by Gov. Charlie Baker in 2019, includes Fitchburg State, Mount Wachusett Community College, Fitchburg High School, Leominster High School, Sizer School and Gardner High School.

It is designed to increase college participation by giving students the opportunity to earn up to 12 college credits while still enrolled at their sending high schools.

To learn more about the Academy, please visit [nearlycollege.com/](https://www.nearlycollege.com/).

**COLLEGE TOWN****By Scott O'Connell**

Telegram &amp; Gazette Staff

**Fitchburg State receives  
\$28K award**

Fitchburg State University has received a \$28,000 award it will use to fund scholarships for students in the North Central Massachusetts Early College Academy.

The money came from the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts, according to the school.

“Fitchburg State has long been committed to helping students navigate a successful path to college completion, and the Early College Academy will help further that goal,” Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said in a statement. “Given the current economic crisis in the region, this work is more important than ever. These scholarships for local students could be the difference between the students attending college or not.”

The awards specifically will help local students from populations underrepresented in higher education to attend Fitchburg State. The Early College Academy, which the state formally designated in 2019, includes Fitchburg State, Mount Wachusett Community College, Fitchburg High School, Leominster High School, Sizer School and Gardner High School.

The initiative provides students the opportunity to earn up to 12 college credits while still in high school.

# Most Affordable Online Master's in Education Degrees

If you're the type of person that takes pride in and works hard to maintain their practical knowledge and education, you might want to consider pursuing a degree that matches your priorities. Individuals with master's degrees in education are certified to become administrators, principals, education policy analysts, university professors, and much more. Below we've compiled a list of some of the most affordable online master's programs in the field of education. The colleges that run these programs are highly reputable, and the programs themselves are designed to accommodate all types of learners. It doesn't hurt that they're also affordable, high-ranking, and easily accessible through various online teaching formats.



## Methodology

All schools considered for these rankings

- Are regionally or nationally accredited
- Offer at least one fully online business degree (with no more than two weeks of required in-person work)
- Were collected from official accrediting agency websites.

Schools are ranked solely by the average net price as released in the most recent IPEDs database collected in July of 2020.

## 2020 Most Affordable Online Colleges for Master's in Education Degrees

Rank	School	Average Net Price
# 1	Northeastern State University	\$9,415
# 2	Eastern New Mexico University-Main Campus	\$10,338
# 3	Arkansas Tech University	\$10,537
# 4	Dickinson State University	\$10,817
# 5	University of New Mexico	\$11,368
# 6	Minot State University	\$11,635
# 7	Fort Hays State University	\$12,108
# 8	West Texas A & M University	\$12,982
# 9	Adams State University	\$13,383
# 10	Valdosta State University	\$13,502
# 11	Eastern Illinois University	\$14,146
# 12	Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville	\$14,790
# 13	Fitchburg State University	\$15,237
# 14	Missouri State University	\$16,134
# 15	University of the Cumberlands	\$16,340
# 16	Campbellsville University	\$17,788
# 17	Mississippi College	\$18,040
# 18	Buena Vista University	\$18,449
# 19	Framingham State University	\$18,937
# 20	Georgia College & State University	\$20,823
# 21	Evangel University	\$22,045
# 22	Midway University	\$23,084
# 23	Strayer University	\$24,593

## FITCHBURG STATE

# Lapidus stands with foreign students

## 'Valued members' of the school community

By Daniel Monahan

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**FITCHBURG** » Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus on Thursday announced the university would continue to support international students in the face of federal guidelines barring them from institutions conducting classes entirely online.

Lapidus said these rules will pose great hardship to international students who wish to continue their studies.

"I want our international students to know they are valued members of the Fitchburg State community and we are working on their behalf in the hopes they can remain with us," he said.

Last Monday, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement released guidelines that state international students attending colleges and universities operating online this fall will not be allowed to remain in the country.

The federal government doesn't plan to issue visas to students taking all of their courses online for next semester and encouraged students to return abroad. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection will bar these students from entering the U.S.

The guidelines were announced while the country faces the COVID-19 pandemic and many institutions move toward online instruction due to health concerns.

Lapidus said the school's Office of International Education is currently reviewing the guidelines to see how they will impact individual students.



“I am working with my counterparts at other institutions of higher education to develop a comprehensive response so that our voices are heard, and that the importance of our international students is made clear at the federal level,” he said.

He encouraged individuals to reach out to elected representatives in Washington, D.C., to make their feelings known.

Meryem Ezzahraoui, an international student from Morocco, said the federal guidelines for universities are shameful.

“It’s really disturbing for international students,” she said, adding students shouldn’t be forced to take in-person classes or face deportation. “The coronavirus will still be here in the fall semester, as well.”

Ezzahraoui said forcing international students to return home would create even greater problems in

the future.

“We might have trouble getting back or getting a visa later,” she said. “It’s going to be really disruptive. It costs a lot to go back and forth and it’s a big inconvenience for us and our families.”

Two weeks ago, the university announced 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.

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.

As of now, it is unclear how the reopening plan will include international students at risk of being barred from the country.

Residence halls will open with reduced occupancy. Most rooms will be

## ‘It’s really disturbing for international students.’

— Meryem Ezzahraoui, international student from Morocco



SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE FILE PHOTO

Fitchburg State President Richard Lapidus on Thursday announced the university would continue to support international students in the face of federal guidelines barring them from institutions conducting classes entirely online.

configured as singles with some others configured 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.

Officials are also awaiting guidance from the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the Mas-

sachusetts State College Athletic Conference on organized sports this fall.

Fitchburg State, along with every other college in the state, was forced to send students home when the COVID-19 pandemic hit back in mid-March. The university instituted a remote learning model to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Information on the university’s ongoing COVID-19 response can be found at [fitchburgstate.edu/coronavirus](http://fitchburgstate.edu/coronavirus).

# LOCAL NEWS

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## FSU'S CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

# Brush up on social justice at webinar

### Submitted Article

**FITCHBURG** » The Center for Professional Studies at Fitchburg State University is offering two free webinars that will explore issues related to social justice, implicit bias and microaggressions.

The online sessions, being held from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Aug. 25 and Sept. 1, will be led by Faustina Cuevas, M.Ed., an independent diversity, equity and inclusion consultant.

“Social justice is everyone’s responsibility,” Cuevas said. “We can no longer be silent in the face of blatant racism, and unjust treatment of those most marginalized in our society. In the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi, if we want to see change, we need to be the change.”

“The Center for Professional Studies has been offering social justice courses for two-years,” said Fitchburg State Associate Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education Lisa Moison. “We started by offering intercultural competency courses for K-12 educators, as well as a course in supporting LGBTQIA+ students,

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## Webinar

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which makes good sense. But, we felt that we needed to go beyond doing this work only in schools. We knew that it was equally important to offer this training to the business and nonprofit sectors.

“The Center worked with a team of diversity, equity and inclusion professionals to reimagine the training,” Moison continued. “We offered our first cultural competency training to the North Central Massachusetts Realtors Association this spring. It was a success and it made us want to reach even more professionals. By offering this free social justice webinar series, we hope to engage more with the Central Massachusetts business, nonprofit, and municipal agencies around the very important topic of racism, social justice, cultural competency, implicit bias and recognizing/understanding the damage of microaggressions. The university should lead our region in this vital work that can’t wait.”

The first session, titled “The Urgency of Social Justice,” will address the importance of social justice and why we can no longer be bystanders in the face of injustice. Participants will gain new understanding of social justice terminology and how those terms play a role in their lives, as well as intercultural competence and its importance in understanding ourselves and others. The difference between equality vs. equity and inclusion vs. belonging as a method to being a better ally will also be discussed.

The second session, titled “Addressing Implicit Bias and Microaggressions,” will use engaging videos, scenarios and other methods of learning to



COURTESY FAUSTINA CUEVAS

Faustina Cuevas will lead two free webinars that will explore issues related to social justice, implicit bias, and microaggressions on Aug. 25 and Sept. 1.

help deepen the understanding of these terms. Participants will learn how to identify their own implicit biases and define microaggressions, while discussing where they experienced or caused a microaggression and how to prevent it in the future. Participants will also gain tools to address and intervene when they witness, cause or experience a microaggression.

To learn more and to register, visit [fitchburgstate.edu/academics/continuing-education/center-for-professional-studies/social-justice-webinar-series/](https://fitchburgstate.edu/academics/continuing-education/center-for-professional-studies/social-justice-webinar-series/), or contact the Center for Professional Studies at [cps@fitchburgstate.edu](mailto:cps@fitchburgstate.edu), or by phone at 978-665-3636.

Cuevas was born and raised in the North Shore of Boston. She did her undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. At UMass, she studied psychology, Spanish and higher education. Being a first-generation college student and woman of color opened her eyes to the inequalities that exist in the educational system for people with marginalized identities.

She is constantly seeking to grow and learn, and places herself in spaces and around people who challenge her to be better.

She brings this energy and experience to her clients through her independent consulting work.

# LOCAL

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## COLLEGE TOWN

**By Scott O'Connell**  
Telegram & Gazette Staff

### Fitchburg State offers free online social justice training

Fitchburg State University's Center for Professional Studies is offering two free webinars in the next month that will cover social justice issues, implicit bias and microaggressions.

The university announced the two sessions, which will

run from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Aug. 25 and Sept. 1. They will be led by Faustina J. Cuevas, an independent diversity, equity and inclusion consultant, according to Fitchburg State.

"Social justice is everyone's responsibility," Cuevas said. "We can no longer be silent in the face of blatant racism, and unjust treatment of those most marginalized in our society. In the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi, if we want to see change, we need to be the change."

The first session, titled "The Urgency of Social Justice," is intended to help participants learn how to take an active role in upholding social justice, including learning terminology and intercultural competence. The second, called "Addressing Implicit

Bias and Microaggressions," will explore the meaning of those terms, and how participants can identify them in their own and others' behaviors and intervene.

The Center for Professional Studies has been offering social justice courses for two years, said the university's Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education Lisa Moison, initially for grade school educators.

"But we felt that we needed to go beyond doing this work only in schools," she said. "We knew that it was equally important to offer this training to the business and non-profit sectors."

For more information about the sessions and to register, visit [www.fitchburgstate.edu](http://www.fitchburgstate.edu) and search for "social justice webinar."

# Online master's degree ranks among most affordable

**Submitted Article**

**FITCHBURG** » Fitchburg State University's online graduate program in history has been ranked as one of the most affordable such programs in the country. The rankings, recently

posted by Online U, put the university's master's level history degree as the third-most affordable program in the U.S.

There will be a free webinar on the program at 5:30 p.m. July 15, where attendees can learn more about the curriculum, admissions requirements, finan-

cial aid opportunities and tuition. To register for the free webinar, visit <https://bit.ly/main-history>.

The master of arts in history program had been offered as a hybrid (blending in-person and online courses) for several years, but students have made it clear

they enjoy the flexibility of an online format. While the general method of course delivery has changed, much of what has attracted students to Fitchburg State's program for decades remains the same.

"For nearly 30 years, Fitchburg State's graduate program

in history has successfully trained students, enabling them to deepen their knowledge of the historian's craft, to explore a broad range of historical topics at the graduate level, and to work closely with faculty on historical research projects leading

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## FSU

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to a master's thesis or a master's degree," said Professor Daniel Sarefield, who chairs the graduate program in history.

"Over this time, hundreds of students have refined their knowledge of the past and become better historical researchers and writers and better history instructors at the middle school, secondary and post-secondary levels."

OnlineU is a guide that researches accredited institutions offering online programs in order to provide rankings that help prospective students find an online program that matches their budgets and career aspirations. To be considered for these rankings, a program must be regionally or nationally accredited and offer a degree in a given subject that is obtainable online or requires only very limited amounts of in-person work, allowing students

to retain their current employment and meet other personal obligations. Fitchburg State's Master of Arts in History program was ranked third overall.

Since the 2017-18 academic year, the university's history graduate program has been offering courses online on a regular basis. University faculty offer high-quality graduate instruction in the discipline of history in online and hybrid (History Institute) courses, as well as one-on-one instruction in directed studies and thesis projects, that use technology to bring instructors and students together virtually to facilitate discussion and debate on course topics and enhance graduate instruction.

If you have any questions about the program or wish to speak with someone about pursuing a master of arts degree in history at Fitchburg State, contact Professor Sarefield at [dsarefield@fitchburg-state.edu](mailto:dsarefield@fitchburg-state.edu).

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## FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

# TARENTINO FUND BUYING VESTS FOR FUTURE COPS



COURTESY FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Members of the Tarentino Charitable Fund Board pose with Fitchburg State University Police Program academy students and staff.

## Charity named for officer who died in line of duty in 2016

### Submitted Article

**FITCHBURG** » The Officer Ronald Tarentino Jr. Charitable Fund has pledged more than \$7,000 to Fitchburg State University's police program to help defray the cost of personal safety protection vests for these future officers.

The fund was established in

honor of Auburn Police Officer Ronald Tarentino, who was killed in the line of duty on May 22, 2016.

"We are profoundly grateful to the Tarentino Charitable Fund for their support of our police program and their commitment to officer safety," Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said. "Officer Tarentino's legacy of compassion and service stands as a powerful example for our students, who will never forget his sacrifice."

"The Officer Ronald Tarentino Jr. Charitable Fund is honored to

sponsor young men and women who are leading the way in community service," the Board of the Charitable Fund said in a statement. "This is a big responsibility. Our mission is to work hand in hand with organizations as well as community members to support and demonstrate acts of kindness, generosity and community service to individuals in need."

"The Officer Ronald Tarentino Jr. Charitable Fund has supported first responders and military families during loss, illness and tragic events, community mem-

bers who have experienced loss and tragedy, and organizations that continue to aid, support and work together to build a better community," the Board statement continued. "We are pleased to partner and offer this scholarship to Fitchburg State University Police Academy in memory of Officer Ronald Tarentino Jr."

Members of the third recruit officer course of Fitchburg State's police program are now enrolled in a 15-week summer academy, after which they will begin their master's degrees in

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## Police

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criminal justice.

The 21 members of the class completed their bachelor's degrees in criminal justice in May, and at the end of the academy will be certified to work as po-

lice officers in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

The program, developed in close collaboration with the state's Municipal Police Training Committee, is believed to be the first of its kind in the nation.

The program was recently featured in the July issue of *Police Chief* magazine, published by the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

**COLLEGE TOWN****By Scott O'Connell**

Telegram &amp; Gazette Staff

**Tarentino fund aids  
FSU police program**

A charitable fund created in honor of fallen Auburn police officer Ronald Tarentino Jr. has pledged more than \$7,000 to help provide protective equipment to Fitchburg State University's police program, the school announced last week.

"The Officer Ronald Tarentino Jr. Charitable Fund is honored to sponsor young men and women who are leading the way in community service," the board of the Charitable Fund said in a statement. "This is a big responsibility. Our mission is to work hand in hand with organizations as well as community members to support and demonstrate acts of kindness, generosity and community service to individuals in need."

Tarentino was killed in the line of duty on May 22, 2016.

Students in Fitchburg State's police program are enrolled in a 15-week summer academy, after obtaining their bachelor's degrees in criminal justice in May. At the completion of the academy, the 21 members of the class will be certified to work as police officers in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, according to Fitchburg State, as well as begin work on their master's degrees in criminal justice.