

College Town

Scott O'Connell Telegram & Gazette

Published 4:23 p.m. ET Feb. 17, 2021



Fitchburg State to freeze tuition, fees for next year

Fitchburg State University recently announced it is freezing undergraduate tuition and fees for the 2021-22 academic year.

According to the state’s higher education department, the university charges \$10,654 per year in tuition and mandatory fees, a 1% increase from the previous year.

“Access and affordability are central to Fitchburg State’s mission,” FSU President Richard Lapidus said in a statement. “Our commitment to keeping costs flat reflects that commitment to keeping higher education within reach for students and families, especially at a time when so many have been hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

In the announcement, Lapidus said the pandemic has also created financial problems for colleges, but said FSU is trying not to pass those costs onto students.

February 9, 2021

Fitchburg State freezing tuition and fees for upcoming year



PHOTO | GRANT WELKER

Fitchburg State University

Fitchburg State University will freeze undergraduate tuition and fees for the upcoming academic year, the school announced Tuesday.

The coronavirus pandemic has brought an economic toll on the university, but the school didn't want to pass that burden on to students and their families, President Richard Lapidus said in a statement.

Fitchburg State's tuition, fees and other costs came to \$10,565 this year for in-state commuter students and \$21,627 for those living on campus. For out-of-state students, those costs are \$16,645 and \$27,707, respectively.

Framingham State University previously announced in December it, too, would freeze tuition and fees for the upcoming year.

OPINION

Kevin Corrado, Regional Publisher
Tom Shattuck, Senior Editor
Michael Sheehan, Regional VP of Circulation

Dennis West, Circulation Director

FITCHBURG-LEOMINSTER, MASSACHUSETTS FITCHBURG SENTINEL, 1838 LEOMINSTER-ENTERPRISE, 1873 INCORPORATED 1973

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Editorial

FSU's appropriate tuition-fee freeze

Recognizing no doubt the adverse effects associated with this pandemic, Fitchburg State University has indicated it will freeze undergraduate tuition and fees for the 2021-22 academic year.

“Access and affordability are central to Fitchburg State’s mission,” University President Richard S. Lapidus said. “Our commitment to keeping costs flat reflects that commitment to keeping higher education within reach for students and families, especially at a time when so many have been hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

In its statement, Fitchburg State mentioned it has long employed strategies to limit fee increases, which has kept FSU among the most affordable universities in Massachusetts’ public higher education system.

Currently, the full-year bill for full-time, in-state commuting students comes to roughly \$10,600. Out-of-state commuters can add about \$6,000 to that total.

For combined tuition, fees, room and board, the cost rises to roughly \$22,000 (in-state) and \$28,000 (out of state), respectively.

And like every other institution of higher learning, maintaining a semblance of normalcy at FSU during a pandemic has been a chal-

lenge.

As a result, students haven’t enjoyed all the benefits that usually accompany the price of a college education.

Aside from the inconvenient — but necessary — mandatory COVID testing to which most on-campus students are subject, participation in extracurricular activities has taken a serious hit.

The Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference (MASCAC) — in which FSU competes — previously announced that its “fall in spring” semester athletic conference competition, including all indoor and outdoor competition, has been canceled.

That decision precludes the possibility of resuming the fall conference competition this spring.

Faced with these impediments to the full collegiate experience, FSU took the high road by not saddling students with more debt during a pandemic, the effects of which will likely linger for several months, since the college-age population fall last on the COVID vaccination list.

FITCHBURG STATE

College freezing tuition, fees for 2021-22

Staff Report

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University will freeze undergraduate tuition and fees for the 2021-22 academic year, University President Richard S. Lapidus announced Tuesday.

“Access and affordability are central to Fitchburg State’s mission,” Lapidus said. “Our commitment to keeping costs flat reflects that commitment to keeping higher education within reach for students and families, especially at a time when so many have been hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Fitchburg State has long employed strategies to limit fee increases, and it remains among the most affordable universities in Massachusetts’ public higher education system. The pandemic has created new and challenging financial conditions for all of higher education, but Lapidus said Fitchburg State is working to keep from passing those costs onto students and their families.

The university continues to see growth in its nationally-ranked online programs, for example, and its mix of unique professional programs with a traditional liberal arts foundation remains a smart investment for students, Lapidus said.

“For more than 125 years, Fitchburg State has been changing students’ lives for the better,” Lapidus said. “We are continuing that work and are ready to serve today’s and tomorrow’s students.”

Fitchburg State is still accepting applications for fall 2021. The priority deadline for applicants is Monday, March 1. Applications received after that date will still be accepted but please contact the admissions office for assistance with completing the application process.

You can find more information at fitchburgstate.edu/admissions-aid.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

FSU honored as Military Friendly School

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University announced Wednesday that it has earned the 2021-2022 Military Friendly School designation, according to a press release from the university.

Institutions earning the Military Friendly School designation were evaluated using both public data sources and responses from a proprietary survey. Over 1,200 schools participated in the 2021-2022 survey with 747 earning the designation, according to the re-

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lease.

The 2021-2022 Military Friendly Schools list will be published in the May issue of G.I. Jobs magazine and can be found at www.militaryfriendly.com.

Methodology, criteria, and weightings were determined by Viqtory, a service-disabled, veteran-owned small business that connects the military community to civilian employment, educational and entrepreneurial opportunities. There was also input from the Military Friendly Advisory Council of independent leaders in the higher education and military recruitment community. Final ratings were determined by combining the institution's survey response set and government/agency public data sources, within a logic based scoring assessment.

It measures the institution's ability to meet thresholds for student retention, graduation, job placement, loan repayment, persistence (degree advancement or transfer)

'We are honored to once again receive the Military Friendly designation. Our institution is committed to supporting those who served as they pursue their academic goals. At the same time, our community is enriched by the diverse life experiences that student veterans bring to the campus.'

— Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus

and loan default rates for all students and, specifically, for student veterans, according to the release.

"We are honored to once again receive the Military Friendly designation," Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said. "Our institution is committed to supporting those who served as they pursue their academic goals. At the same time, our community is enriched by the diverse life experiences that student veterans bring to the campus." "Military Friendly is committed to transparency and providing consistent data driven standards in our designation process," said Military

Friendly National Director of Military Partnerships Kayla Lopez. "This creates a competitive atmosphere that encourages colleges to consistently evolve and invest in their programs. Schools who achieve designation show true commitment and dedication in their efforts. Our standards assist schools by providing a benchmark that promotes positive educational outcomes, resources, and support services that better the educational landscape and provide opportunity for the Military Community."

For more about FSU services, please visit fitchburgstate.edu/veterans.

LATEST HEADLINES

Fitchburg State planning for in-person fall semester**FITCHBURG STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Fitchburg State planning for in-person fall semester

By **STAFF REPORT** |

March 19, 2021 at 6:03 a.m.

FITCHBURG Citing the increase in available COVID-19 vaccinations and a downward trend in cases, Fitchburg State University is planning a return to a fully in-person experience for the fall 2021 semester, President Richard S. Lapidus announced Wednesday in a press release.

"Fitchburg State University is planning to return to in-person classes and a vibrant campus life in fall 2021," Lapidus said. "With an increase in the number of vaccinations becoming available, and coronavirus cases expected to trend downward, we are optimistic that we will be able to welcome back our students, faculty, and staff to a high-quality, on-campus experience in September."

The university will continue to act in accordance with federal, state and local health guidelines, reviewing its operational plans in response to any changing conditions, President Lapidus added.

"As has always been the case, all decisions will prioritize the health and safety of our campus community and the city in which we reside," he stated.

"For prospective students and for those returning, we know that this past year has been difficult for you and your families in so many ways," Lapidus continued. "In an effort to ease the financial burden of attendance, the university has decided to freeze its tuition and university fees. Taken together, not including financial aid opportunities, this makes the annual cost of a Fitchburg State educational experience among the lowest of all four-year colleges in New England."

For more information, please visit fitchburgstate.edu.

March 18, 2021

Fitchburg State, QCC to hold fall semester in-person



PHOTO COURTESY FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
Fitchburg State University's Hammond Hall

By Grant Welker

Fitchburg State University is planning to have a fully in-person fall semester, while Worcester's Quinsigamond Community College is expecting a return to normalcy after a more than a year of remote learning.

Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus cited an increase in COVID-19 vaccines and a downward trend in cases, and QCC President Luis Pedraja said it hoped to expand upon flexible learning methods it quickly picked up during the pandemic.

Fitchburg State and QCC were the second and third Central Massachusetts college to make that announcement this week, along with the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester. The Fitchburg school is hosting spring athletics but is not planning an in-person graduation ceremony.

Lapidus said the university will continue to operate within government health guidelines and review plans in response to any changing conditions.

Fitchburg State has processed nearly 10,000 mandatory tests on campus since the start of the year, with 75 positive tests, for a 99.2% negativity rate.

QCC was unusual in staying almost entirely remote throughout the 2020-'21 school year while many others held classes largely in-person this spring. The community college, which doesn't have dorms, cited a responsibility to help keep the community safe with many students also living and working in the community.

Before the pandemic, about one in five QCC courses were online. Nearly all were during the pandemic except for a small number of clinical courses and labs.

"We hope to build on our experience in these areas to provide more services and flexibility for our students," Pedraja said in a statement. "While we believe that we will have a robust in-person presence this fall, we are constantly monitoring the situation, and will continue to follow the best advice available and adapt accordingly."

LISTS > SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION [SUBSCRIBER CONTENT](#)

Largest MBA Programs in Massachusetts

Ranked by Total MBA enrollment as of Fall 2020

Locally Researched by: Sean McFadden and Hilary Burns, Boston Business Journal

Mar 18, 2021, 6:00am EDT

Total current enrollment for all MBA programs includes online students.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management declined to participate this year.

SORT: RANK ↑

Rank	School/Prior Rank (*Unranked In 2020)/	Total MBA Enrollment As Of Fall 2020	No. Of Full-Time MBA Students	No. Of Part-Time MBA Students	% Of Male MBA Students	% Of Female MBA Students
1	Harvard Business School Soldiers Field Road Boston, MA 02135 617-495-6000 hbs.edu	1,670	1,670	NA	56.0%	44.0%
2	University of Massachusetts Amherst (Isenberg School of Management) 121 Presidents Drive Amherst, MA 01003 413-545-5608 isenberg.umass.edu	1,538	88	1,450	49.0%	51.0%
3	Boston University (Questrom School of Business) 595 Commonwealth Ave. Boston, MA 02215 617-353-9720 bu.edu	1,331	308	1,023	57.0%	43.0%
4	Fitchburg State University 160 Pearl St. Fitchburg, MA 01420 978-665-3000 fitchburgstate.edu	1,102	243	859	42.0%	58.0%
5	University of Massachusetts Lowell 1 University Ave. Lowell, MA 01854 www.uml.edu	943	105	838	57.0%	43.0%

FITCHBURG STATE

College scores rise in retention rates

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » The COVID-19 pandemic has created many challenges for college students, but recent data shows Fitchburg State University is having success keeping students on track. The number of students who started in fall 2019 and returned the following year actually rose, despite the pandemic, according to a release from the university.

That statistic, referred to as the retention rate, rose by 3% from fall 2019 to fall 2020, according to the release.

Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said retention rates are an important metric for higher education institutions, because students who remain at the university from their first to their second year are more likely to graduate than students who take a break in their studies after their first year.

“We want to graduate as many students as possible, because a college degree will change the lives of our students in many ways, including social mobility,” Lapidus said.

The university’s retention rates increased over 3%, with

FSU

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77.6% of first-year, full-time students returning for a second year last fall. This is the highest retention rate increase among all of the state colleges and universities in Massachusetts.

Fitchburg State Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Alberto Cardelle said the success can be attributed to institutional measures instituted just over three years ago.

These include a focus on peer mentors, peer tutors, a first-year seminar for incoming students, faculty mentoring for underrepresented groups, and improved support for first-year courses. These initiatives, backed by efforts by the university’s Student Development and Housing and Residential Services offices, have helped to promote a sense of belonging among students.

The university’s retention efforts have “lifted all boats,” Cardelle said, benefiting more than one or two student demographic groups. Rather, there has been an overall positive shift among retention of all students, including males,



SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE FILE PHOTO

Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus applauded the positive retention rate news, stating, ‘We want to graduate as many students as possible, because a college degree will change the lives of our students in many ways, including social mobility.’

females, and underrepresented groups. “We obviously have work to do, but none of our populations are being left behind in our retention pushes,” Cardelle said.

To learn more, visit <https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support>.

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COMPUTER SECURITY

CYBERSPACE PARTNERS

Fitchburg State, Cyber Range Solutions to help students

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University is partnering with Cyber Range Solutions Inc. to offer cutting-edge cybersecurity training and workforce development programs. The alliance complements Fitchburg State's existing cybersecurity training programs with additional technology and expertise, including the ability to simulate various network environments, according to an announcement from the university.

Cyber Range Solutions is providing its proprietary cybersecurity training solutions including a hyper-realistic range platform for Fitchburg State's Center for Professional Studies, according to the announcement.

According to CyberSeek.org, there are over 500,000 cybersecurity job openings nationwide and over 15,000 in Massachusetts alone and those numbers are expected to increase by 18% by 2024, according to the announcement.

The programs will be offered entirely online.

A cyber range is a hands-on training facility that provides virtualized hyper-immersive, experiential training where individuals and teams receive instruction on how to respond to and defend real-world cyberse-



ED COLLIER / COURTESY OF FSU

Cyber Range Solutions Inc. is partnering with Fitchburg State University to provide students real-world tools to detect and stop cyberattacks on computer networks.

curity attacks in a simulated, virtual environment.

CRS uses a fully licensed enterprise network from vendors such as Microsoft, McAfee, Palo Alto, Check Point, Splunk among others. The range is both NICE and MITRE ATT&CK Framework-compliant and offers the opportunity to experience, identify, isolate and remediate real-world malware attacks such as the ransomware attack WannaCry, according to the announcement.

"We use customized cybersecurity training platforms and

curriculum to train individuals and teams on current threats that can help them build muscle memory for mitigating and thwarting prevailing cyber risks," said Bash Kazi, CEO of CRS. "We are excited to offer a unique executive education and leadership course in cybersecurity risk management. This is a valuable and unique public-private partnership that provides a much-needed offering for students and employee training in the region."

"The partnership with CRS continues Fitchburg State's

longstanding commitment to lifelong learning, including workforce development training," University President Richard S. Lapidus said. "By providing training opportunities around critical cybersecurity issues, we will help keep our entire region strong."

Since the cyber range can simulate various network environments and tools, employers may provide access to training and skills-testing in safe conditions so their employees do not experience the first "attack scenario" while on the job.

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NORTH CENTRAL

Anti-violence grants awarded to police, FSU

Staff Report

BOSTON » The Baker-Polito

administration announced nearly \$13 million, including \$446,403 for Fitchburg, in Violence Against Women Act, Ser-

vices Training Officers Prosecutors (VAWA STOP) and Senator Charles E. Shannon Jr., Community Safety Initiative

state and federal grant funding that will help communities across Massachusetts address,

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Grants

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prevent, and respond to violence against women and gang violence.

“Our administration remains committed to using every public safety tool available to protect residents and communities from violence,” Gov. Charlie Baker said in the announcement released Monday.

“For victims and survivors affected by these crimes, especially women and young people, these grants will help to equip victim-support organizations, criminal justice agencies, and community-based partners to respond effectively and compassionately.”

Included in the grants was \$59,375 for the Fitchburg Police Department to continue its VAWA STOP program and a combined grant for the cities Fitchburg and Gardner of \$336,400 for Shannon Community Safety Initiative Sites. Fitchburg State University also received a Shannon grant of \$50,628, according to a press release from the Baker administration.

As a local action research partner on the Shannon Community Safety Initiative, Fitchburg State will continue its partnership with the City of Fitchburg in a coordinated effort, according to a release from the university about the grant

funding.

Fitchburg State faculty members Dara Drawbridge and David Weiss from the Behavioral Sciences Department will act as a local action research partner to assist the Shannon Site (the city of Fitchburg) with strategic, analytic, technical and research support. This year’s activities include three focus groups with Shannon youth and young adults, trainings on evidence-based practices for reducing delinquency and crime, and assisting partner sites with quality improvement endeavors to enhance programs and practices during COVID-19.

“Fitchburg State is proud to serve as a community partner in this important work that will improve public safety,” University President Richard S. Lapidus said. “This collaboration is a powerful way to put the university’s academic skill sets to work toward addressing community issues.”

“We are excited to be working with our funded partners on this project for another year,” said Drawbridge, who will serve as project director. “In our work on the Shannon Grant, we aim to really engage with our community partners, build shared goals, and assist our partners with achieving desired outcomes. This work is not only incredibly rewarding but also has the potential to address issues, which drive delinquency, crime, and gang violence.”

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FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

College celebrating Black History Month

By **Cliff Clark**

cclark@sentinelandenterprise.com

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University will celebrate Black History Month in February with a series of events exploring themes centered on the Black family. The programs are free and open to the

public, and details on how to view them can be found at fitchburgstate.edu/bhm.

The theme for the university events was inspired by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. The Black family has been explored through many disciplines, including history,

literature, the visual arts and film studies, sociology, anthropology, and social policy. Its representation, identity, and diversity have been revered, stereotyped, and vilified from the days of slavery to the present day.

For the university's exploration of these topics, Fitchburg

State's Black History Month committee, including cross-sectional representation within the institution, solicited programs from across all campus constituencies. The result is a diverse array of events including speakers from the university faculty and student

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History

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body, as well as alumni and invited guests.

Events begin this week with a virtual presentation by Rev. Dr. Grainger Browning Jr., a Fitchburg native and son of a celebrated Fitchburg State faculty member, who is now the senior pastor of Ebenezer AME Church in Fort Washington, Md. Browning will discuss growing up Black in the city of Fitchburg and moving forward to become one of the most prominent religious leaders in the United States. Browning's address will be conducted virtually at 6 p.m. on Wednesday. Visit fitchburgstate.edu/bhm for details on how to view online.

Other presentations will include a talk by Fitchburg State alumna Yla Eason '71, a professor at Rutgers University, who founded a multicultural toy company that featured the first Black superhero

To learn more, visit fitchburgstate.edu/bhm throughout February.

toy created to promote positive self-images for her son and other children. There will also be a presentation by the rapper and motivational speaker Red Shaydez, a 2014 Fitchburg State graduate, who will discuss her evolution from artist to "artpreneur."

Other events will include students reflecting on the works of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., explorations of Black representation in culture, the evolution of hip-hop, and celebrations of the Black experience. Several of the events have been made possible through the financial support of the Newman Center Trust.

To learn more, visit fitchburgstate.edu/bhm throughout February.

**Diaspora
Resilience
Culture
Legacy
Excellence**

**BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH**

February 2021

THE BLACK FAMILY
Representation, Identity, and Diversity
JOIN THE CELEBRATION AT: FitchburgState.edu/BHM

COURTESY FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

The poster being used by Fitchburg State University for Black History Month.

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FITCHBURG STATE'S CENTER FOR ITALIAN CULTURE

Virtual book club pushing buttons

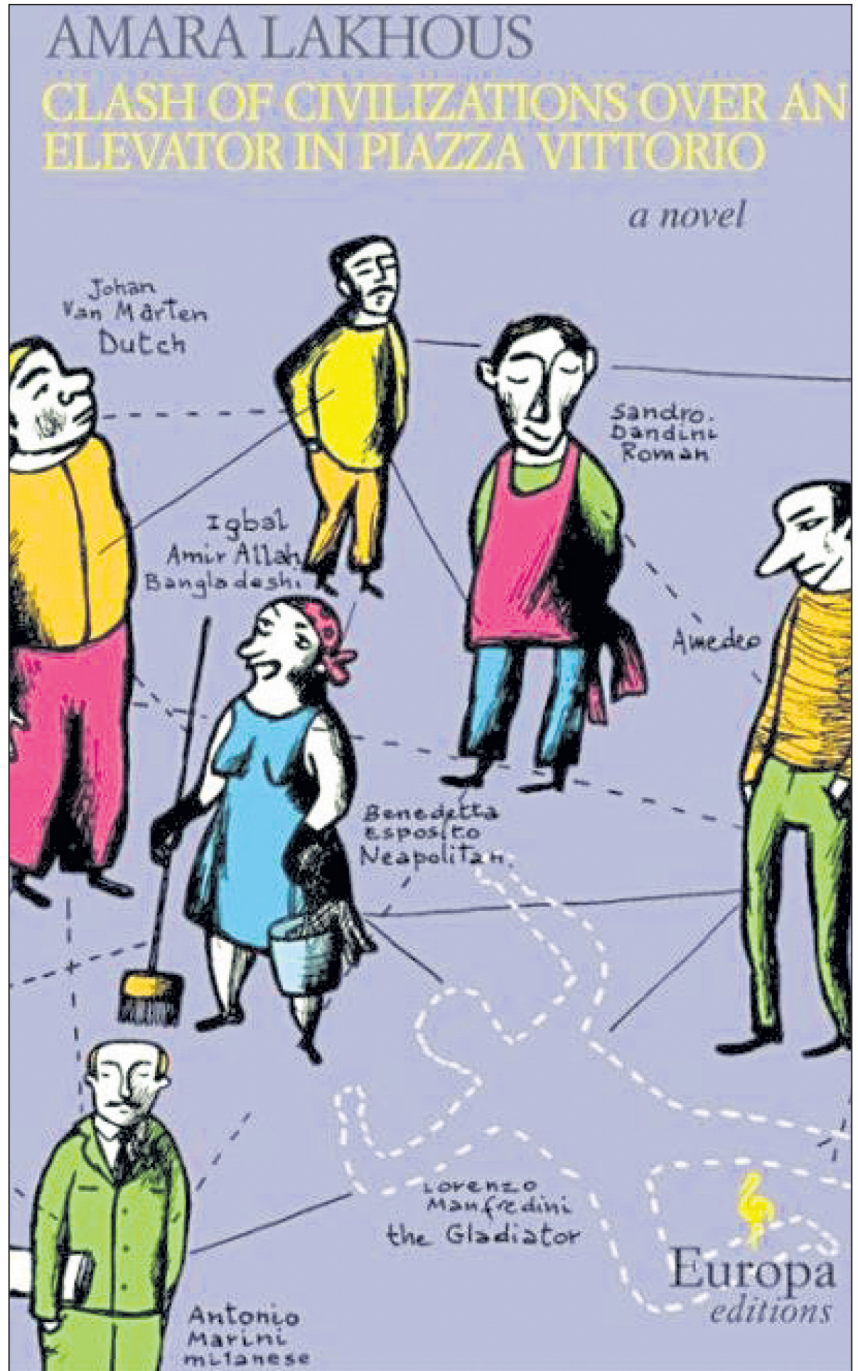
Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » The Center for Italian Culture (CIC) at Fitchburg State University is continuing its 2020-21 virtual book club with Professor Rala Diakite of the Humanities Department leading a discussion of “Clash of Civilizations over an Elevator in Piazza Vittorio” by Italian author, journalist, and anthropologist Amara Lakhous, according to an announcement by the university.

The award-winning novel was described by Publishers Weekly as a social satire and murder mystery concerning an immigrant-filled apartment complex in Rome.

After a murder in the building elevator, each occupant of the Piazza Vittorio gets a chapter to relate the truth as he or she knows it (or wants it known), apparently to the police. The tenants are by turns outraged, disillusioned, defensive and afraid, and their frequently wild testimony teases out intriguing psychological and social insight alongside a playful whodunit plot, exposing the power of

CLUB » 6A



COURTESY FSU/

A presentation of the book ‘Clash of Civilizations over an Elevator in Piazza Vittorio’ will be held on March 25 with a virtual book club featuring author Amara Lakhous.

Club

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fear, racial prejudice and cultural misconception to rob a neighborhood of its humanity.

The virtual discussion

will be held on Thursday, March 25, at 3 p.m. To join the discussion, go to meet.google.com/ahy-bkiq-rgk or join by phone at (US) +1 413-298-2638 PIN: 803 215 450#.

The CIC, founded in 1999 with an initial gift from Amelia V. Gallucci-

Cirio, encourages the understanding and appreciation of all aspects of Italian language and culture, including ancient and contemporary studies, and the Italian experience in the New World.

Learn more at fitchburgstate.edu/cic.

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FITCHBURG STATE



Women's 'Herstory' Month set


Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University is celebrating Women's Herstory Month in March with a series of virtual events in-

FSU » 6A

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HERSTORY MONTH







Celebrating Black Women in Politics!
TUESDAY, MARCH 2 | 3:30 PM

Black women have been breaking barriers (and ceilings) for a long time, and now the landscape of politics will never be the same! Presented by Faustina Cuevas.
Sponsored by Center for Diversity and Inclusiveness


▶ **JOIN ONLINE HERE:** <https://meet.google.com/awt-lyxs-qxd?authuser=0>



International Women's Day Lecture
THURSDAY, MARCH 11 | 3:30 PM

Radwa Elsaman is a professor at Cairo University in Egypt and a visiting scholar at Boston University School of Law. She will discuss the current situation of gender equality in the Arabic countries, challenges and recommendations for promoting women's rights in the region.
Sponsored by the Office of International Education, and the Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program


▶ **JOIN ONLINE HERE:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88661714253?pwd=UjluNGZscFJTYXJlVWZ-2VG9ycXZqQT09>



Need/Want A Community For All? Here's How We Get There
TUESDAY, MARCH 16 | 3:30 PM

A talk with Melissa Harris-Perry, the Maya Angelou Presidential Chair at Wake Forest University where she teaches courses on American politics and elections at the intersections of race, place, and gender. For nearly two decades, Harris-Perry has contributed to American public life through her distinct combination of scholarly analysis and grounded wisdom applied to analysis of race, gender, politics, and power.
Sponsored by Leading for Change Committee, and the Newman Center


▶ **JOIN ONLINE HERE: (to participate)** <https://meet.google.com/czm-ipze-kwb>
or **(to stream only)** <https://stream.meet.google.com/stream/d46866d2-bad7-4c89-bcea-c68f7c1f34eb>



The Economic Case for LGBTQ+ Equality: Changing the World with a New Idea
THURSDAY, MARCH 25 | 2 PM

The Nancy Kelly Memorial Lecture by M. V. Lee Badgett, author and professor of economics at UMass Amherst, and Williams Distinguished Scholar at UCLA's Williams Institute. Her research focuses on economic inequality for LGBTQ+ people, including wage gaps, employment discrimination, and poverty, and on the global cost of homophobia and transphobia.
Sponsored by the Economics, History and Political Science Department, Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program, and The Center for Faculty Scholarship


▶ **JOIN ONLINE HERE:** meet.google.com/owh-cnnp-mhv



Women in the Arts
THURSDAY, MARCH 18 | 4 PM

Musicians, dancers, poets, actors, visual artists, and more. A virtual celebration of women-identified artists and performers.
Sponsored by the Humanities Department, and Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program

▶ **JOIN ONLINE HERE: (to participate)** meet.google.com/wyu-czco-bdx
or **(to stream only)** <https://stream.meet.google.com/stream/68e34010-4017-493c-88c7-9c8b93363e6f>



Calling In the Calling Out Culture
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7 | 6 PM

Loretta Ross is a visiting associate professor at Smith College in the study of women and gender. She teaches courses on white supremacy, human rights, and callout culture. Author of the forthcoming book *Calling In the Calling Out Culture*.
Sponsored by the Office of Academic Affairs

▶ **JOIN ONLINE HERE: (to participate)** <https://meet.google.com/mni-wdwt-vps>
or **(to stream only)** <https://stream.meet.google.com/stream/21e26be3-7934-430d-b7e9-147451641d6a>

COURTESY FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Promotional flier shows the schedule of events for Women's Herstory Month.

FSU

FROM PAGE 3A

cluding celebrated guest speakers and performances. All of the programs are free and open to the public, according to an announcement by the university.

Cairo University Professor Radwa Elsaman will deliver the International Women's Day keynote presentation on Thursday at 3:30 p.m. Elsaman will discuss gender equality in the Arab region and will include International students' responses to the keynote.

Students will share the current gender equality situation in their home countries. Fitchburg State Provost and Vice-President of Academic Affairs Alberto Cardelle will give the welcoming remarks. To take part, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88661714>.

The university is welcoming Melissa Harris-Perry, the Maya Angelou Presidential Chair at Wake Forest University, on Tuesday, March 16, at 3:30 p.m. for a talk entitled, "Need/Want a Community for All? Here's How We Get There."

Harris-Perry teaches courses on American politics and elections at the intersections of race, place, and gender. For nearly two decades, she has contributed to American public life through her distinct combination of scholarly analysis and grounded wisdom applied to analysis of race, gender, politics, and power.

To participate, go to <https://meet.google.com/czm-ipze-kwb>.

Harris-Perry's talk is sponsored by the university's Leading for Change Committee and the Newman Center.

The events continue with the Nancy Kelly Memorial Lecture on Thursday, March 25, at 2 p.m., featuring M. V. Lee Badgett with a talk entitled, "The Economic Case for LGBTQ+ Equality: Changing the World with a New Idea."

Badgett is an author and professor of economics at UMass Amherst and Williams Distinguished Scholar at UCLA's Williams Institute.

Her research focuses on economic inequality for LGBTQ+ people, including wage gaps, employment discrimination, poverty, and the global cost of homophobia and transphobia.

To see Badgett's presentation, go to meet.google.com/owh-cnnp-mhv.

Badgett's talk is sponsored by the university's Economics, History and Political Science Department; the Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program; and the Center for Faculty Scholarship.

Musicians, dancers, poets, actors, visual artists and more will gather for the annual Women in the Arts program at 4 p.m. Thursday, March 18.

This celebration of women-identified artists and performers is sponsored by the Humanities Department and the Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program. To participate, go to meet.google.com/wyu-czco-bdx.

The month's events conclude with "Calling in the Calling Out Culture" at 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 7, an address by Loretta Ross, visiting associate professor at Smith College in the study of women and gender.

Ross teaches courses on white supremacy, human rights, and the callout culture. She is author of the forthcoming book "Calling In the Calling Out Culture."

To hear Ross' presentation, go to meet.google.com/mni-wdwt-vps.

Ross' talk is sponsored by the university's Office of Academic Affairs.

The university's observances began on March 2 with a talk entitled "Celebrating Black Women in Politics," which was presented by Faustina Cuevas and sponsored by the university's Center for Diversity and Inclusiveness.

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FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Community Read launched

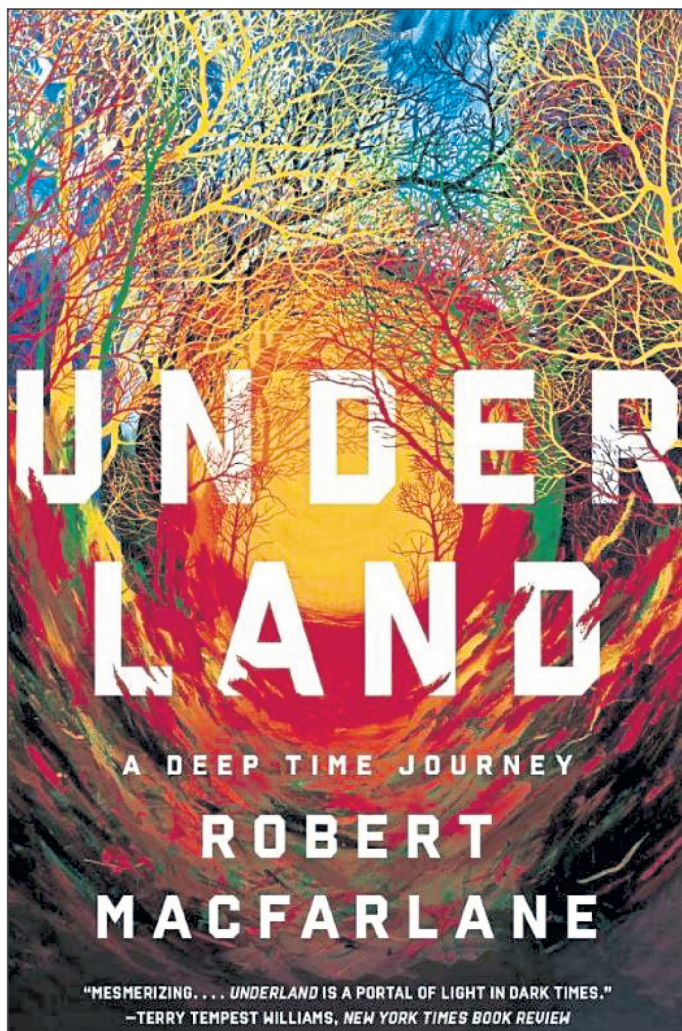
Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University's Community Read, which brings the campus and wider community together for discussions and explorations of a shared text, this year delves into Robert MacFarlane's acclaimed non-fiction book "Underland: A Deep Time Journey."

MacFarlane takes readers through caverns and cisterns, root systems and glaciers, tombs and mines, opening our sense of wonder while also revealing the damage we have done and are doing to the heart and lungs of our planet. He weaves together poetry and geology, science and mythology, as he mines the earth and explores mysteries we usually assign to the stars.

Fitchburg State faculty will lead a discussion of MacFarlane's text at events throughout the semester. The first installment, covering part one of the book, will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 3, with Professors Steve Edwards (English Studies), Chris Picone (Biology and Chemistry), Ben Railton (English Studies), Collin Syfert (English Studies), Kisha Tracy (English Studies), and Diego Ubiera (English Studies) leading a discussion that explores

READ » 6A



COURTESY FSU

FSU's Community Read this spring will focus on Robert MacFarlane's 'Underland: A Deep Time Journey.'

Read

FROM PAGE 3A

the major insights and stakes of MacFar-

lane's timely work.

To join the discussion, register at <https://forms.gle/o426YTCCZJnQpRma8>.

Keep up with the latest news and events at [fitchburgcommunityread.com](https://www.fitchburgcommunityread.com).

'PANDEMIC PLAYBOOK'

Book gives tweens a place to turn, and laugh

Authors use humor in effort to help kids cope with health crisis

By Danielle Ray

dray@sentinelandenterprise.com

FITCHBURG » One of the groups of people that has suffered the most in many ways during the global pandemic is children, especially in regard to their social and emotional health and well-being.

Authors Katharine Covino and Elizabeth Englander address this issue in a lighthearted, comical and relatable way in their recently published book, "The Insanely Awesome Pandemic Playbook: A Humorous Mental Health Guide For Kids," a guide aimed at helping pre-adolescents as they continue to navigate the pandemic.

"Our kids are struggling right now," Covino said. "They've been struggling for almost a year. They are experiencing higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression than ever before. (Our) book uses humor to help kids ages 8 through 11 think about and process their experiences during the pandemic. Children and tweens are experiencing the same stressors that we are, but there is not much written specifically for them."

The book shares information about how to take a break from screens, strategies for focusing on schoolwork, ways of reflecting on feelings of anxiety, rec-

BOOK » 8A



COURTESY KATHARINE COVINO

Co-author Katharine Covino, an assistant professor at Fitchburg State University, proudly displays 'The Insanely Awesome Pandemic Playbook: A Humorous Mental Health Guide For Kids,' which she wrote with Elizabeth Englander, a Bridgewater State University professor, to help tweens cope.

Book

FROM PAGE 1A

ognition that others are also feeling isolated and alone, and suggestions for steps to take to feel better.

“It is positive, funny, and accessible,” Covino said. “It helps kids, and their families, understand, process, and address the challenges that they are facing in an age-appropriate and kid-friendly way.”

Covino is an assistant professor of English Studies and co-chair of the Undergraduate Research Conference at Fitchburg State University. Englander is psychology professor and executive director of the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) at Bridgewater State University.

“Elizabeth and I have been writing partners for years,” Covino said. “In the past, we’ve applied our approach of mixing humor and science to topics related to the ways kids use digital technology. Though we hadn’t initially thought about writing a book about the pandemic, as the months dragged on, we saw the need for a resource that could help children and tweens understand and process the ways that their lives were different. We wrote the book to support kids and their families during this difficult time.”

Covino said that as a mother of three school-age children, she feels it is “critical” to provide support for children and tweens during these challenging and unprecedented times.

“While all kids have faced different challenges during the pandemic, changes in the ways that kids go to school is something that has affected almost all children,” she said. “It’s important to address issues related to school, screen time, and stress. That said, suggestions, guidance, and support need to be offered in the right way. Kids don’t want to read serious, scary information. That’s where the humorous tone comes in.



COURTESY ELIZABETH ENGLANDER

Psychology professor Elizabeth Englander displays the book she co-authored with Katharine Covino.

Helping kids understand that stress is a messy combination of different feelings by envisioning a brown glop of mixed paints or helping kids learn about risk and benefit by imagining an attempt to break the longest slip ‘n’ slide record — these are places where research, science, and humor come together to give kids important information and support in a way that feels easy to access and also sometimes really funny.”

The book came out mid-December, and Covino said the reaction to it has been “so positive,” adding that she has heard from many parents about how their kids have been able to apply what they learned in the book.

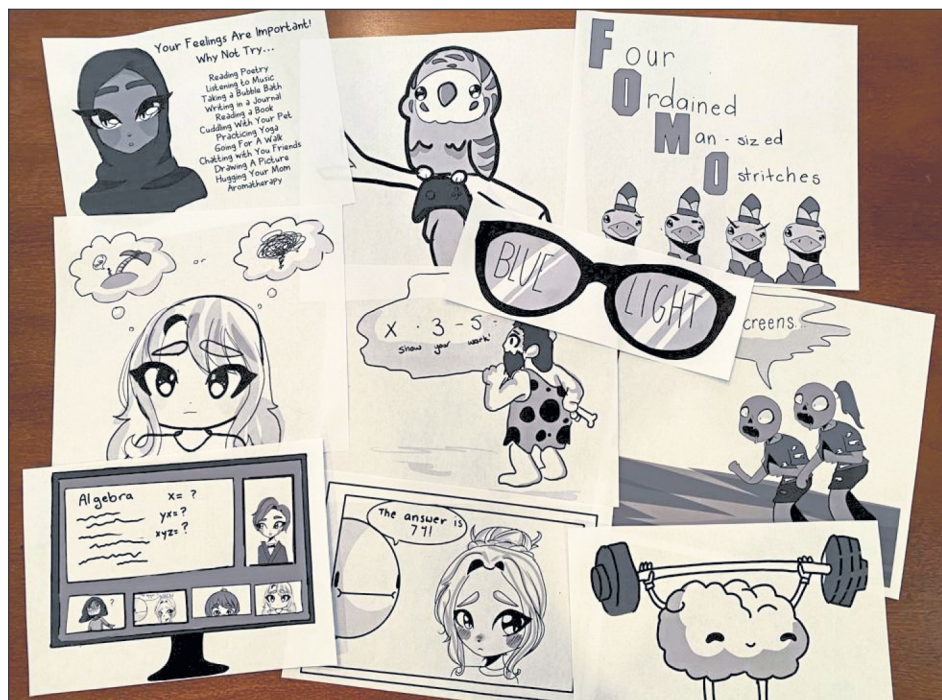
“I heard from a mom the other day that her son read the book multiple times and told his teacher about it,” Covino said. “That makes us happy to hear.

Even better are stories from parents about how their kids giggled their way through the book. Anytime you can support kids by sharing important information and have the kids laugh while they are reading about it then you’ve hit a good combination of research, science, and humor.”

The book is illustrated by 12-year-old Caroline Charland.

“The book is for kids, by kids, as it is illustrated by a wonderfully talented seventh grade student from Central Massachusetts,” Covino said of the young artist. “Elizabeth and I knew that we wanted our book to be funny, accessible, and totally kid-friendly. We wanted kids to want to read it. We knew that having a kid illustrate the book would add so much appeal and authenticity.”

Covino said she and



COURTESY KATHARINE COVINO

Caroline Charland, 12, illustrated the book.

Englander were “thrilled” when Caroline agreed to provide the illustrations for their book — the icing on the cake, so to speak.

“I knew Caroline to be a talented artist,” Covino said. “The quality of her work is excellent, and the humorous nature of her illustrations compliments the tone of the book so well. We are pleased with the way the illustrations enrich the writing. Her hard work, talent, and commitment have been such a great addition to the book.”

Covino said she and Englander have collaborated on books for kids since 2016.

“For years, we would meet in person or online to share our ideas and to work together on our drafts,” Covino said. “Now, of course, all our collaboration is online. Our partnership has always been very collegial and supportive. Elizabeth brings her wealth of experience and expertise as a psychology professor and the leader of MARC. I bring my experience and expertise as an English professor and a ‘master of kids’ humor,’ as Elizabeth likes to say.”

While “The Insanely Awesome Pandemic Playbook: A Humorous Mental Health Guide For Kids” is

not their first book, it is the first one to be published.

“Every time I write with Elizabeth, I learn so much,” Covino said. “This time around, I learned a lot about the effects of too much screen time. My daughter gets headaches from being on screen so much during the day. I’m happy to say I learned more about why that happens and steps she and I can take to limit the negative effects of attending school remotely.”

They are offering virtual, free programming related to the book to schools, libraries, scouting groups, and community centers. Covino has done a number of programs for students at many local elementary schools, including McKay Arts Academy in Fitchburg, as well as for students nationally.

“I meet remotely with students almost every day,” Covino said. “Getting to share this book with kids across the country has been such a joy, it’s so fun to get to read the book to kids. I’m able to read virtually at any school that’s interested, and we’ve had schools, libraries, and scout groups in Massachusetts and all over the country send requests in for me to read. It’s been wonderful to get to visit with stu-

dents remotely.”

The writing duo have an activity book and an audiobook coming soon, are already hard at work on a follow up book, “The Insanely Awesome POST Pandemic Playbook: A Humorous Recovery Guide for Kids’.

“This book will help children and tweens as they ‘go back,’” Covino said. “Back to school, back to sports, back to activities, back to their friends’ houses, and back to the way life used to be. We’ve all been wanting to go back to normal for so long, but normal is going to look different and feel different than we remember. My daughter felt nervous going to the doctor’s office to get her flu shot. I felt nervous going to the dentist. As much as we miss the way life used to be, we’ve all gotten used to living in a more distanced way. Going back will be wonderful, but it might feel a bit scary, too. That’s what “The Insanely Awesome POST Pandemic Playbook” is all about.”

For more information visit <https://www.insanelyawesomebooks.com> and to sign up for the free, virtual programming visit <https://buff.ly/3olBvg3>.

Erin Donelan a trailblazer as one of first female Eagle Scouts in Mass.

Nicole Shih [Telegram & Gazette](#)

Published 5:53 p.m. ET Feb. 9, 2021 | Updated 6:09 a.m. ET Feb. 10, 2021



Eagle Scout Erin Donelan of Fitchburg poses with one of her comfort kits, her Eagle Scout service project. *Submitted Photo*

FITCHBURG — Becoming the first Eagle Scout at Sturbridge-based Troop 163 and one of the first female Eagle Scouts in Massachusetts, 18-year-old Fitchburg native Erin Donelan, a first-year student at Fitchburg State University studying special education with a concentration in teaching students with severe disabilities, has always enjoyed outdoor activities and hanging out with her brothers on various Boy Scout adventures.

“My main takeaway from being an Eagle Scout is I’m glad to be a trailblazer and show other girls that it is possible and that girls can do everything that boys can do,” Erin said.

So far, Boy Scouts of America confirms that, including Erin along with other eight young women who have earned the rank of Eagle Scout across the five local councils that serve Massachusetts. But that number may change since young women have through Feb. 8 to conduct their boards of review to be eligible for the inaugural class.

Also, about 25,000 young men and women, ages 11 to 17, are enrolled in the Scouts BSA program in Massachusetts, with about 2,000 girls in Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA, ages 5 to 10 and 11 to 17 respectively, according to BSA.

Erin started her Scouting journey since she was 8 in Girl Scouts, and transitioned to the Boy Scouts when she was 14.

"Through the Scout programs, you get ready for the situation on how to act in certain situations comes upon," Erin said about what a Scout should do in a troop. "Living upon being the best citizen that you can be, the best person you can be."

Erin developed her interests in Boy Scouts more than in a Girl Scout troop. While she gave Girl Scouts a try in her younger ages, she said that Girl Scouting is for younger girls and not very challenging.

"I'm more interested in what Boy Scouts are doing: camping, fire starting and learning the outdoor stuff, rather than my girl troop doing things like arts and crafts," she said.

Chrissy Chamberland, Scoutmaster of Scouts BSA Troop 163 who has known Erin since she was 13, gave praise to Erin on her firsthand knowledge in Chamberland's program Senior Patrol Leader and her natural leadership serving on the National Youth Leadership Training staff.

"Without her help I know I would not have been as successful in my role as Scoutmaster," Chamberland said. "She [also] knew what needed to be done to help the youth new to Scouts succeed."

But being a normal teenager just like any Scout on the path to Eagle, Erin had times doubting herself and not sure if she wanted to continue. She was a full-time student, had a part-time job and was applying to college - and then the pandemic hit. But eventually she still did it.

"She did it though, not that I'm surprised, but I know it wasn't easy," Chamberland said. "She is nothing short of amazing."

Chamberland said Erin is also an amazing role model that the Scouts always look up to her as being the oldest in the troop when she was 17. Even though sometimes the age gap was hard for her, she never let it show to the Scouts. Instead she was able to relate to the younger Scouts, get down to their level and make things fun and memorable for them, Chamberland said.

For her Eagle Scout service project, Erin created "comfort kits" for teenagers making the transition into the Department of Children and Family Foster Care because she had seen the challenges some of her peers faced when engaged with the social service system.

The kits included daily necessities like hygiene items, shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrush to COVID-related items such as hand sanitizers and face masks.

With the support of donations both physically and monetarily, Erin's project expanded from the original 20 bags of comfort kits, 10 females and 10 males, to 117 bags, eventually distributing to the Leominster and Sturbridge DCF offices.

It's not easy to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout.

The Eagle Scout rank is Scouting's highest rank, which only about 6% of Scouts achieve on average, according to BSA. To earn it, an individual has to take on leadership roles within their troop and their community; earn a minimum of 21 merit badges that cover a broad range of topics including first aid and safety, civics, business and the environment; and research, organize and complete a large community service project.

Erin said she earned most of the merit badges during Scouting summer camps.

With her rank achieved, Erin is looking forward to the Eagle Scout Court of Honor, where her status will be formally bestowed, even if it has to wait until the pandemic is under control.

"It's like a wedding," she said of the ceremony. "They're pulling out all the stops."

College Town: FSU student among first to become female Eagle Scout

Scott O'Connell Telegram & Gazette

Published 5:28 p.m. ET Feb. 3, 2021



FITCHBURG – A Fitchburg State University student is among the first female Eagle Scouts in the state, the school announced this week.

Erin Donelan, 18, a first-year special education major at Fitchburg State and a Fitchburg High School graduate, is part of the inaugural class of female Eagle Scouts, after recently completing her service project to attain the rank.

“Growing up with two brothers, I found myself wanting to do what they were doing,” said Donelan, who joined Sturbridge-based Troop 163 when the Boy Scouts opened its membership to girls in 2019.

For her service project, Donelan created more than 100 comfort kits for teenagers entering into the state foster care system. According to Fitchburg State, she delivered around 50 kits each to the Leominster and Sturbridge Department of Children and Families offices.

The next step for Donelan in her path towards attaining Eagle Scout rank is her upcoming Court of Honor ceremony, which is on hold during the pandemic.

“It’s like a wedding,” she said of the event. “They’re pulling out all the stops.”

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VIRTUAL EVENT

FSU to again join in Global Game Jam

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University, home to the only

game design major at a public institution in Massachusetts, will once again be part of the Global Game Jam this month.

In the free virtual event, participants from around the world gather to create a game from scratch in 48 hours.

The game jam is designed to celebrate creativity while exploring programming, iterative

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design, narrative exploration and artistic expression. The jam primarily features videogames, but board games can also be designed.

“As a Game Design program, we really value the Global Game Jam because it gets students out of their bubble,” said Professor Jeffrey Warmouth, a member of the Communications Media Department faculty and local game

jam site coordinator. “It makes them realize that they’re not alone, that there are people all over the world all working toward the same goal at the same time. For a few days, game developers around the globe are part of one big community, creating games. Not for money, not for a paycheck or because they have to, but because they love it, they believe in it, and it makes them feel connected. We need this more than ever.”

Ryan Hallisey, a 2019 Fitchburg State graduate, works as an associate software engineer

for WB Games, where he interned two years ago as a student. He first participated in the game jam as a student and will be taking part in this year’s event as an industry professional.

“The most distinct thing I remember from my game jams is how quick they go by and how efficient our team had to be with every aspect of the project,” Hallisey said. “Planning was the most important time in the process, by a lot.”

Hallisey said the game jams were important to his growth as

a developer and were powerful bonding experiences with his teammates.

“Participants learn the benefit of organization and planning, and making sure teammates are never blocked from doing work while they wait on someone else,” he said. “I also hope everyone gains a sense of pride in the skills they’ve been building up prior to the event that allowed them to finish a project in so few hours.”

Last year’s event led to the creation of 9,601 games at 934 locations — including Fitch-

burg State — in 118 countries.

This year’s event will be run virtually, starting at 4 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 29, and running through Sunday, Jan. 31.

Fitchburg State’s site is open to students, alumni and guests, age 18 and over.

For more information or to register, visit <https://global-gamejam.org/2021/jam-sites/fitchburg-state-university>.

To see a collection of games produced at Fitchburg State’s previous jams, visit <https://itch.io/c/645955/global-game-jam>.

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FITCHBURG STATE

Adult learning hailed amid pandemic

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University's Adult Learning in the Fitchburg Area (ALFA) program is helping to foster a sense of community despite the ongoing pandemic, according to a press release from the university.

ALFA is a lifelong learning institute that serves adult learners in Fitchburg and the surrounding communities. Because of COVID-19, all of ALFA's latest offerings have been presented in a virtual format.

With many ALFA students being retirees, there was skepticism that the sense of community they had experienced with in-person classes would translate into the digital world.

They were happily surprised.

"I never imagined that during my first six months of retirement I would not be traveling, visiting friends and exploring new recreations, but ALFA via Zoom has offered some unexpected pleasures," said Barbara Freidman of Ashburnham. "I'm surprised to

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see old friends and acquaintances in class, I explored nature through a microscope via technology, I returned to taking a weekly yoga class and I started one of my retirement goals: to write more. All without leaving my house."

"I was worried online programs would contribute to my sense of isolation but was I surprised," said Joyce Hinckley of Sterling. "The fall programs showed me it's possible to maintain old connections and make new ones online."

"In this time of isolation ALFA is providing cultural and educational food for thought enriching our lives with shared experiences," said Sharon Donahue of Lunenburg.

ALFA is sponsored by the School of Graduate, Online, and Continuing Education at Fitchburg State in collaboration with volunteer members of the community.

It offers non-credit daytime classes, trips, special events, and a free speaker series. ALFA students are encouraged to volunteer and participate in program leadership and development, as well as social and recreational activities.

Most courses are just \$40 (and free for students over age 90). A limited number of scholarships are available.

"My ALFA virtual classes brought me a respite from the humdrum," said longtime ALFA student Carol DeCarolis of Leominster. "Classes equaled communication, companionship, colleagues, and company. It's a bright spot in my day."

This spring's classes, for which

registration is now open, will let adult learners brush up on their conversational French or Spanish, learn about scientific principles that affect our daily lives, get tips on how to de-clutter their lives or learn how to play the ukulele. See the complete course listing and register online at marketplace.fitchburgstate.edu/alfa. Most courses are just \$40 (and free for students over age 90).

"During the 'Learning about the iPhone' class, I discovered I'm not the only one struggling with an iPhone, apps and Siri, and had many belly laughs with the other students who were all remarkably kind and patient," said Debra Faust-Clancy of Ayer. "ALFA online rocks and the commute is great."

"Would I recommend ALFA classes? I have and I will," said Susan Peacock of Alhambra, Calif.

"This spring my sister who lives in the Washington, D.C., area will be joining me in one Zoom class. The idea of online classes teaching and reaching seniors across the country, opening channels of discussions, and giving voice to those of us who feel in isolation, because of COVID specifically and age in general, has provided me with both much needed learning and socialization. Thank you for allowing this program to expand beyond the Fitchburg area. I am anxiously looking forward to spring classes beginning this week," Peacock said.

This spring's varied offerings include crosswords for beginners, Native American basketry, an introduction to yoga, a guide to winter botany, and the history of folk music, along with classes on creative writing, the art and culture of Islam, ancient lore in modern times, and the cinema of

Oscar-winning director Bong-Joon Ho, among many other topics.

There will also be a free "Food for Thought" lecture on March 30 about abolitionism, emancipation and Civil War memory in Central Massachusetts in the mid-19th and early 20th centuries.

For the full list of programs, and information about the instructors and schedule, please visit fitchburgstate.edu/alfa.

Also, ALFA is always on the lookout for new instructors and new subject matter to share with its students. Anyone with a specialty that they think others would be interested in should contact the program directors at alfa@fitchburgstate.edu for details about becoming an ALFA instructor. Also, direct any questions to the ALFA office at 978-665-3706, or email at alfa@fitchburgstate.edu.

Published 8:41 a.m. ET Mar. 9, 2021

Higher education faculty, staff completely ignored in Massachusetts vaccine rollout

Aruna Krishnamurthy

2020 was annus horribilis: we watched helplessly as the COVID-19 virus raced across the planet creating suffering and death for countless people and reshaped our lives in a blink of an eye. As we slowly took stock of our situation and understood the realities of living through a pandemic, we looked to the speedy development of a vaccine as an urgent and reliable cure for our ills.

We studied the workings of the mRNA, followed the progress of Moderna, Pfizer and Oxford vaccines daily, all in the hope of deliverance and a return to normal. This story has a good ending, of course, but an anticlimactic one if you happen to be working in public higher education in Massachusetts.

Decades of state disinvestment and underfunding of public higher education seeded problems made worse by the pandemic, and students, faculty and staff are being made to unfairly pay for that poor public policy decision.

Faculty and staff have been threatened with furloughs and layoffs. And how have faculty and staff responded to this dire moment? As we always do, by putting the needs of students and the institution first! Perhaps the best kept secret of our times is that despite the considerable health risks, many faculty and staff are present daily on campus, gambling with their lives, teaching face to face classes to ensure student success and to help with the institution's financial dependency on housing students on campus.

The needs of higher education and the sacrifices of faculty and staff have been completely ignored in the state's plan for vaccine rollout. Faculty and staff are as much at risk of contracting COVID-19 as the K-12 teacher, who has been prioritized for vaccine access. In fact, higher education faculty are at a greater risk, as we are exposed to 18-29 year old students who can be asymptomatic carriers at high rates and may socialize at higher rates than individuals in other age groups. This is borne out by the many campus COVID-19 outbreaks we have been witnessing in the last few months.

Despite numerous calls and petitions from faculty, staff and general public for vaccine access for higher education, and the offer of using campuses as vaccine centers for the general public and university employees, the Baker administration has chosen to defy CDC's recommendations for higher education and relegated us to the last phase of access to the vaccine. Unlike Massachusetts, 32 states have prioritized vaccine access for higher education along with preK-12 educators, perhaps anticipating stabilizing influence of this access on public health and finances of higher education institutions.

Why have higher education faculty been moved to the back of the line to the last section of Phase 3 with the general public in MA? Why are our needs not important enough, our risks not compelling enough? One can only see it as part of a larger picture of wilful state neglect of public higher education in the last three decades. Before the pandemic, chronic state underfunding of public higher education had already put us on the brink of financial disaster.

Now that we have vaccines available, we are denied access to it in Phase 2, underscoring the state's indifference to our needs. One telling story of how little the state cares about us is that while Worcester State University has been serving as a site for vaccines, Worcester state university staff, faculty and students are not given access vaccines in their university!

If the state is serious about its equity agenda, it is vitally important that higher education, especially staff and faculty on campus, gain access to vaccines soon.

Our speedy return to campus is urgent: our students are struggling with the remote formats and they are juggling various needs of their household as they face the economic pressure of contributing to the family income during the pandemic. Many don't have access to high-speed internet to participate in remote classes.

When the structure falls away and everything moves remote, their academic success is under threat and their mental health is strained greatly. Our students will benefit greatly from returning to campus, meeting and networking with peers and faculty, accessing student support services, and developing vital social skills needed to further their economic prospects.

Public colleges and universities will play a crucial role in revitalizing our state's economy. But to best provide the necessary opportunities for students, we need not only adequate resources from federal and state sources but also timely access to COVID-19 vaccines.

Aruna Krishnamurthy is professor of English studies at Fitchburg State University.

OPINION

Kevin Corrado, Regional Publisher
Tom Shattuck, Senior Editor
Michael Sheehan, Regional VP of Circulation

Dennis West, Circulation Director

FITCHBURG-LEOMINSTER, MASSACHUSETTS

FITCHBURG SENTINEL, 1838 LEOMINSTER-ENTERPRISE, 1873 INCORPORATED 1973

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VACCINATIONS

Include FSU staff and faculty in Phase 2, Group 3 roll out

By DeMisty Bellinger-Delfeld

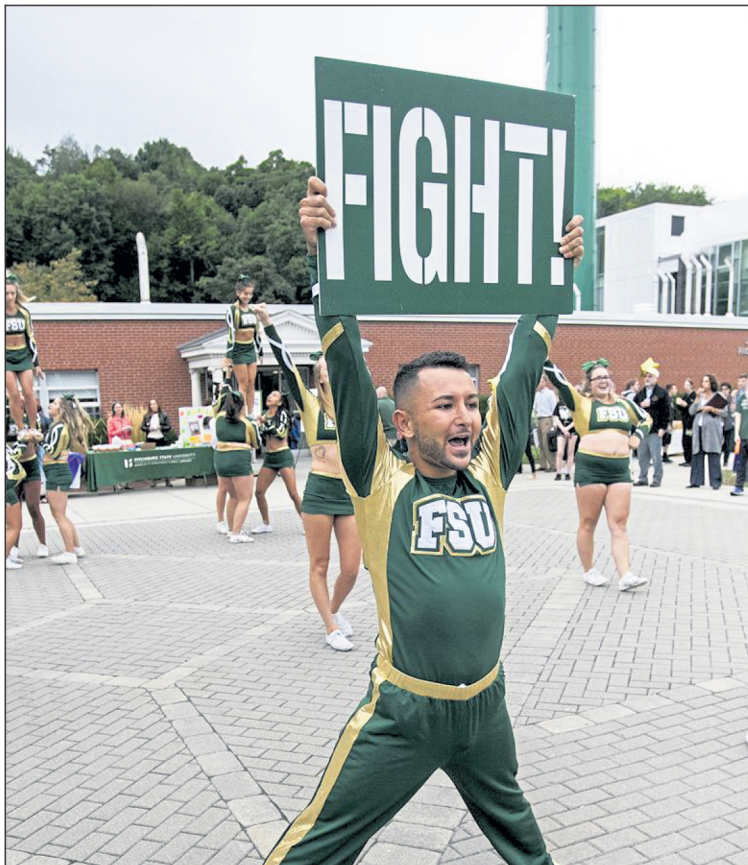
I believe that Fitchburg State faculty and staff should be vaccinated in the Phase 2, Group 3 vaccination roll-out. College educators are essential to maintaining our growth and economy. We should not be low priority.

Fitchburg State University, our regional campus, serves students from Central Massachusetts, many of whom are from Fitchburg and Leominster. My colleagues and I support our community by providing a quality education for students locally and encouraging them to stay in the area when they graduate.

Prior to COVID, I taught exclusively in the classroom. I had an attendance policy which enforced in-class participation, partly to make sure students stayed on task, and partly to connect with my students.

Education is always personal. When students come to class, I know how they are doing. I can tell if they are fully present or if they are distracted with life outside of the classroom. And there are many things that can interrupt learning. Fitchburg State students are from diverse backgrounds. They are intelligent students who, very often, are the first to attend college in their family. Many of them have jobs to help support their studies. Many of them come from working-class backgrounds. Some are returning students and nontraditional students, back for a second chance at life, and they have families of their own — they are the breadwinners and attend school while their children finish up their educational goals.

Education is stronger face-to-face. Just as with K-12 students, online college classes



JOHN LOVE / SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE

The annual Fitchburg State University Rock the Block is an event to showcase student clubs and campus organizations along with some off campus local jobs students could apply for. Here, senior Nicholas Mon-salve from Holyoke helps entertain the crowd at the September 2019 event.

may lack in vital personal connection. So we need the ability to return to the classroom. And we need to be able to reach students where they are without the risk of COVID-19.

Professors and staff — part-time and full-time — should be vaccinated so that they may better serve their students at Fitchburg State and, in turn, serve the broader community. Without vaccination, many professors feel compelled to hold classes online. Many of us want to protect our students and our homes, so will not take

the risk of in-person learning.

We cannot safely reopen our campus without vaccination. It's time for Gov. Charlie Baker and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to support its public universities and colleges — as is done with K-12 educators — by including higher education faculty and staff in Phase 2, Group 3 of vaccinations.

DeMisty Bellinger-Delfeld is an English professor at Fitchburg State University and a resident of Fitchburg.

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FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

CenterStage presents virtual art exhibits

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » A searing collec-

tion of testimonials on the experiences of racial minorities and a thought-provoking analysis of an artist's own journey

are the topics of Fitchburg State University CenterStage's spring art exhibits.

The pieces are on display in

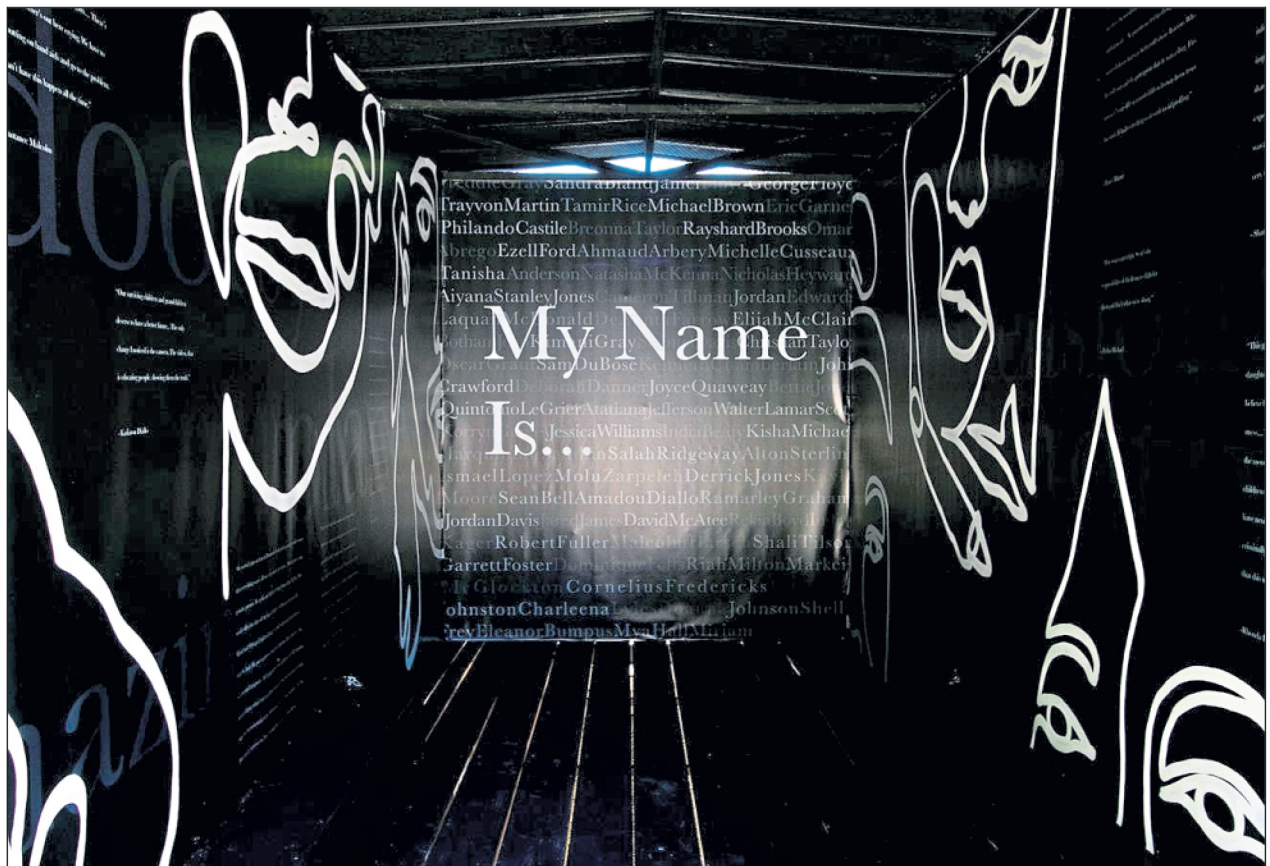
Hammond Hall for members of the campus community and can be viewed virtually by the

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6A

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OBITUARIES/CONTINUED FROM ...



COURTESY FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

'VOICE' was created by Fitchburg State 2020 graduate Amanda Loebelenz. This educational, interactive art piece is composed entirely of the voices of racial minorities and one of the many artworks that will be on display.

Art

FROM PAGE 3A

public at large. Go to fitchburgstate.edu/centerstage to learn more and view the digital exhibits in their entirety.

"VOICE" was created by Fitchburg State 2020 graduate Amanda Loebelenz. This educational, interactive art piece is composed entirely of the voices of racial minorities.

"The goal of this project is to act as a tribute to those who had their voices stolen from them and can no longer tell their story, as

well as to provide an uncensored platform for those who still have a voice and want to use it to spread awareness and to educate others," Loebelenz said. "I believe that an important first step in ending racism is identifying exactly what it looks like and acknowledging the different forms that it can take through thoughts, experiences, and stories from people who face racial discrimination. In this way, people can be educated by the unbiased voices of their friends, neighbors, peers, and colleagues that face the struggles of social and systematic racism ev-

ery day. My intention is for people to read the stories from this art project and walk away with a deeper, more mindful understanding when it comes to identifying racism and ways we can do our part to end it," she continued.

VOICE is on display through March 12 and can be viewed at fitchburgstate.edu/centerstage.

Also featured in the gallery is "Raging Youth: Installations" by artist Jean Luc Alexandre. The artist describes his work as a process-based series of installations amassed from 2D drawings, cutouts, and 3D sculptures placed

amongst repurposed found objects. Influenced by interest in human anatomy and histories of human activity were major influences on the process.

The installation was born of an exploration of larger societal questions and the artist's personal responses to elements like struggles with social relationships, mental health, adverse situations, drug/alcohol consumption, and traumas fueling personal instability.

"Raging Youth: Installations" is on display through March 12 and can be viewed at fitchburgstate.edu/centerstage.

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FITCHBURG STATE



COURTESY FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

David Petrucci enjoyed a surprise celebration last week at Fitchburg State University after retiring from the institution after more than 40 years of service.

Power plant chief retires

Staff Report

FITCHBURG » David Petrucci, who worked in capital planning and maintenance, retired last week after more than 40 years with Fitchburg State, according

to a release from the university.

Because a traditional retirement party wasn't possible, members of Petrucci's family arranged for a surprise celebratory parade outside the power plant last week.

In addition to family and friends, emergency vehicles slowed with lights flashing as they passed, while an emotional Petrucci waved and smiled. A large contingent of his university colleagues also gathered to

wish him well.

"Everyone who knows Dave would say that he is one of the hardest working employees that has worked at this institution," said Assistant Vice Presi-

RETIREMENT » 8A

Retirement

FROM PAGE 3A

dent of Capital Planning and Maintenance Joseph LoBuono. "Dave has always been someone that works behind the scenes making sure this university is up and running for students and staff. Dave has been a true asset to this university since he started here in 1979, as a HVAC tech. I personally have worked next to Dave for over 10 years and through ice storms, snow storms, or any other emergency I could always count on Dave to be here

when the university needed him the most."

Petrucci, the university power plant chief and CPM trades manager, began his career at Fitchburg State as an HVAC technician in 1979. He was 23 years old and expected to work here for a few years before moving on, but found a rewarding career path. He looks forward to traveling with his newfound free time.

"Dave is truly one of the unsung heroes of Fitchburg State University," LoBuono said. "This place has truly been a better place because he devoted his life to it and he will be missed."