

LOCAL NEWS

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FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY



COURTESY FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Students from Fitchburg High School and Leominster High School completed a CPR/AED course as part of their training with the Future Educator Academy at Fitchburg State University recently.

College initiative aims to train future educators of color

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » A new initiative at Fitchburg State University is designed to address the nation's changing demographics by recruiting and training fu-

ture educators from traditionally underrepresented populations.

The Future Educator Academy is designed to address ongoing demographic shifts, according to Lourdes Ramirez, coordinator of field place-

ments, partnerships and recruitment for Fitchburg State's School of Education. About 40% of the state's public school students are people of color, but only 8% of their teachers come from minority groups.

Research has shown that

students of color are less likely to drop out if they have at least one teacher of color, Ramirez said. "We know that students who attend urban schools, regardless of their ethnic or socioeconomic background,

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Educators

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bring important knowledge and experiences from living in a diverse environment," she added.

The academy's programs will focus on culturally relevant education that values students' cultural, linguistic and ethnic contributions as future teachers.

"We are excited about engaging high school students with our community at Fitchburg State," Ramirez said. "This is a great opportunity for students who are considering becoming an educator in the future, or those who want to further explore education. This initiative will impact the diversity gap in the teaching population and ultimately benefit all students."

The first cohort of students, hailing from Fitchburg High School and Leominster High School, recently gathered on Fitchburg State's campus for CPR/AED training. The

course, taught by Fitchburg State University Police Officer Timothy Grant, resulted in certification for all of the participants.

The academy is still accepting students from Fitchburg High and Leominster High. Academy students will earn a leadership certificate from Fitchburg State, as well as university credits that can be applied to their first year of college. They will also earn badges to build their resumes and gain knowledge and experience working with groups. Some of the badges include learning how to facilitate group activities; how to support students with mental health issues; working with underserved, traditionally marginalized, and disenfranchised students; and career planning. The future educators will be participating in internships and community engagement.

To learn more, contact Ramirez at 978-665-3685 or by email lr Ramirez1@fitchburgstate.edu.

College Town: FSU program aims to increase teacher diversity

Scott O'Connell Telegram & Gazette

Published 3:48 p.m. ET May 5, 2021

FITCHBURG — A new program at Fitchburg State University aims to produce more educators of color to meet a need for more diversity in the local teaching workforce.

According to the university, 40% of the state's public school students are minorities, but only 8% of public teachers are people of color.

The Future Educator Academy, which accepts students from Fitchburg High School and Leominster High School, will help those students earn a leadership certificate from Fitchburg State as well as credits they can apply to their first year of college.

"We know that students who attend urban schools, regardless of their ethnic or socioeconomic background, bring important knowledge and experiences from living in a diverse environment," said Lourdes Ramirez from Fitchburg State's School of Education, who added studies have also shown minority students are less likely to drop out if they have at least one teacher of color.

"This is a great opportunity for students who are considering becoming an educator in the future, or those who want to further explore education," she said. "This initiative will impact the diversity gap in the teaching population and ultimately benefit all students."

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

‘To have this ... to celebrate is so important’

Class of 2021 graduates able to walk across the stage – by appointment

By Danielle Ray

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FITCHBURG » The familiar notes of the iconic melody “Pomp and Circumstance” was heard, a palpable feeling of excitement could be felt, and a lot of happy smiles were seen at the Falcon Graduation Walk at Fitchburg State University on Friday.

Close to 400 members of the FSU Class of 2021 participated in the in-person, by-appointment commencement experience held in the Athletics and Recreation Center on North Street that was spread out over three days — April 29, April 30, and May 1. The bonus graduation option was offered in addition to the virtual commencement ceremonies that will take place in May.

FSU Director of Public Relations Matthew Bruun is on the Commencement Committee made up of students and faculty that organized the event and the upcoming virtual ceremonies. He said they are not having a traditional in-person commencement ceremony due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions as a result of it.

“The Falcon Graduation Walk (was) a complementary experience for those graduates who wanted an in-person celebration,” Bruun said. “We were happy to create an opportunity for graduates and guests to share a safe but joyful acknowledgement of their accomplishment.”



DANIELLE RAY / SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE

Neve Palmier from Uxbridge is graduating from Fitchburg State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications Media and is on the Commencement Committee as student representative. She participated in the Falcon Graduation Walk on Friday which gave graduating seniors a chance to make appointments to cross the stage and pose for photos with family present.

Bruun said the Falcon Graduation Walk went “great” on Thursday.

“People were really happy,” he said.

Participating graduates signed up for an appointment time on one of the three days and could bring up to four guests with them to watch them walk across the stage, whether it be family members or friends.

The graduates’ names were called by Vice President for Academic Affairs Alberto Cardelle and they were greeted on stage by Chief Information Security Officer Sherry Horeanopoulos before collecting a diploma cover.

Neve Palmier from Uxbridge is graduat-

FSU

FROM PAGE 1A

ed with a bachelor's degree in communications media and is on the Commencement Committee as student representative.

"It is amazing," Palmier said when asked how it felt to be able to walk across the stage with her family and friends watching, beaming with pride. "To have this as a way to celebrate is so important."

Palmier brought her mother Julie McMurray, her aunt Jean McMurray, her grandmother Genevieve McMurry, and her best friend, Kathleen Gallahue, an FSU education major and fellow graduate who said she was doing the Falcon Graduation Walk on Saturday.

"Thank you for sharing Neve with us," Bruun said to Palmier's family at the event.

After getting their official graduation portrait taken on stage by professional photographer Ed Collier, the graduates got the chance to pose for photos solo and with their guests and take some selfies by life-size cardboard cutouts of school mascot Freddy the Falcon and FSU President Richard S. Lapidus.

"We will be sending the digital photos to the grads as a gift," Bruun said.

In addition, all walk participants were gifted with graduation swag that included a stainless-steel tumbler emblazoned with the FSU logo containing a keychain, a pin, letters from the president and alumni association, and a 2021 gold tassel.

"We have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the graduates and their families, who are grateful to have the opportunity to walk across the stage and be cheered on by their loved ones," Bruun said.

"The many volunteers from the ranks of university staff and faculty have also been glad to congratulate our graduates in person," he said.

Traditionally, the undergraduate commencement ceremony takes place on



DANIELLE RAY PHOTOS / SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE

The family and friends of graduate Neve Palmier who were able to watch her participate in the Falcon Graduation Walk on Friday at Fitchburg State University include, from left, her grandmother Genevieve McMurry, her aunt Jean McMurray, her best friend and fellow FSU Class of 2021 graduate Kathleen Gallahue, and her mother Julie McMurray.



DANIELLE RAY / SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE

Leominster resident Lynn Ayers was all smiles after walking across the stage while photographer Angela Ryan captured a photo of her and her three children, James, Katelyn, and Ryan.

the main quad and the graduate ceremony in the Athletics and Recreation Center.

FSU held virtual commencement ceremonies last year for both spring and winter Class of 2020 graduates and the ceremonies premiered online in December for both sets of

graduates. The commencement ceremonies are once again being conducted virtually this year for the 900 graduates total in the Class of 2021, with graduate degrees being conferred at 6:30 p.m. on May 13 and undergraduate degrees at 10 a.m. on May 15.

"We are excited to share

the virtual commencement ceremonies in May, where all of the members of the Class of 2021 will get their well-deserved spotlight," Bruun said.

FSU faculty members from academic support, student life, human resources, professors, and more pitched in to help



Graduation swag included a stainless-steel tumbler emblazoned with the FSU logo that contained a keychain, a pin, letters from the president and alumni association, and a 2021 gold tassel.

with the walk, all smiles watching the graduates participating, and will be doing the same for the commencement ceremonies. "We are fortunate to have a committed team that develops our commencement celebrations, all of whom go above and beyond their regular daily duties to create these occasions," Bruun said. "The work of the university is

about much more than graduation day, but it's a powerful symbol of accomplishment and a chance for us to pay tribute to the graduates who have worked so hard."

For more information visit <https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-affairs-division/commencement>.

OPINION

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FITCHBURG-LEOMINSTER, MASSACHUSETTS

FITCHBURG SENTINEL, 1838 LEOMINSTER-ENTERPRISE, 1873 INCORPORATED 1973

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Editorial

Saluting college grads, no matter their sendoff

With the number of fully vaccinated Massachusetts residents now surpassing 2.5 million, commencement constraints imposed by many of our area colleges and universities may seem overdone, especially to those grads who won't be able to enjoy tossing those mortarboards with their classmates.

If the public-health environment continues to improve as a result of further inoculations, 2021 should be the last COVID-19 class, giving way to traditional graduations next spring.

That's no consolation for the thousands of this year's grads and their tuition-paying parents.

In their defense, the state's improving COVID-19 picture came too late for those institutions of higher learning to significantly alter their commencement-related plans, an intricate exercise that takes months to formulate.

But a nimble few did manage to insert some normalcy into their ceremonies, for which they deserve credit and recognition.

At Fitchburg State University, close to 400 members of the Class of 2021 chose to take part in an appointment-only, in-person commencement program held in the Athletics and Recreation Center.

Spread over three days — April 29, April 30 and May 1 — the bonus graduation option served as a complement to the virtual commencement ceremonies taking place later in May.

"We were happy to create an opportunity for graduates and guests to share a safe but joyful acknowledgement of their accomplishment," FSU Director of Public Relations Matthew Bruun told the newspaper. Participating graduates could bring up to four guests to watch them walk across the stage, where they were greeted by Chief Information Security Officer Sherry Horeanopoulos before collecting a diploma cover.

"It is amazing," said grad Neve Palmier when asked how it felt to have her family and friends on hand for this special moment. "To have this as a way to celebrate is so important," added the student representative on the FSU Commencement Committee.

Other schools will hold commencements tailored to their particular circumstances. That includes the University of Massachusetts system, where the Amherst campus will hold in-person graduations in May.

At UMass Lowell, seven ceremonies will be held, offering in-person and fully remote options. Graduates of both master's and bachelor's degree programs will be able to bring two guests with them to a series of brief, small ceremonies on Thursday, May 13, and Friday, May 14, at the Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell. They will be able walk in, receive their diploma covers and have an official photo taken before departing. An in-person ceremony for graduates receiving doctoral degrees is set for Wednesday, May 12.

UMass Boston will hold a virtual ceremony this spring, but after an outcry from students frustrated that they would still be charged the usual \$200 graduation fee, school officials announced this past week that it would also hold an in-person graduation in September.

Anticipation mixed with frustration might be the theme of this spring's commencement season. At Boston College, the school's decision to limit commencement attendance to graduating students and school officials angered the more than 2,000 parents who've signed an online petition urging administrators to reconsider the guest policy.

Boston University took its commencement exclusion policy to the extreme. Graduating seniors at its ceremony at the school's athletics stadium can't invite any guests.

But some other area colleges also came up with imaginative ways to satisfy both grads and parents.

Northeastern, Suffolk, and Bentley universities are all separately holding in-person commencements for graduating students and a small number of their guests at Fenway Park, where caps and gowns will be the official uniforms of the day.

No matter the method, commencement, as the word suggests, signifies a new beginning, the next step in one's life journey.

Graduation Day, as the song of the same name reminds, "... is a time for joy, a time for tears, a time we'll treasure through the years ..."

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

VAX MANDATE EASES WORRY

Concerns over daily student life addressed

By Danielle Ray

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FITCHBURG » After the leaders of the state's nine universities decided last week to require all students to have been vaccinated against COVID-19, a Fitchburg State student and professor said it was the correct decision to return the campus back to a relative sense of normal.

FSU history and secondary education major and resident adviser Joseph Cautela III said he was "relieved" when he heard the news about state universities and colleges requiring a COVID-19 vaccination.

"With the accessibility of the vaccine, the student body was starting to wonder what the state schools' stance would be on the matter," he said. "I am glad the state schools made their decision early on."

Cautela, a member of the FSU Class of 2022, was recently elected the student representative to the university's Board of Trustees. As such he will have full voting powers as the voice of the student body when his term begins July 1. He said he agrees with the vaccine requirement decision.

"As someone who has been very vigilant regarding the pandemic, I undoubtedly support mandating the COVID vaccine," Cautela said. "Requiring immunizations isn't unprecedented for Massachusetts state schools, as a multitude of other vaccines are required for students to attend these public institutions. I think it's very reasonable to add another vaccine to that list, especially the COVID-19 vaccine as we are currently in a worldwide pandemic. Requiring the vaccine will make the campus much safer for the faculty, staff, student body, and the overall Fitchburg community."

Cautela received his second Moderna vaccine on April 30.

"I had a 99 temperature and I felt fatigued after my first vaccine, however the side effects only occurred for a day or two," he said.

The Massachusetts State University system, which includes Fitchburg State University, recently joined a growing number of colleges and universities across the country and state requiring students to be vaccinated against COVID-19 before attending in-person classes this coming fall.



COURTESY JOSEPH CAUTELA III

Fitchburg State University junior Joseph Cautela III got his second COVID-19 vaccine on April 30 and said he 'undoubtedly' supports the state universities requiring students to be vaccinated before attending in-person classes next fall.



DANIELLE RAY / SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE

Leaders of the state's nine universities, including Fitchburg State University, decided last week to require all students to have been vaccinated against COVID-19 to return to campus.

According to a press release, the presidents of the nine universities in the system unanimously decided to require undergraduate and graduate students who are attending in-person classes, conducting

research on campus, living in residence halls, or participating in campus life activities to become fully inoculated with an approved COVID-19 vaccine prior to the start

MANDATE » BA

Mandate

FROM PAGE 1A

of the 2021 academic year. The presidents expect that all employees will also be fully vaccinated prior to the start of the fall semester.

“Prior to the beginning of the fall semester and following state, federal and legal guidance, the Massachusetts State Universities will require all students to be fully immunized before returning to campus for the start of the fall semester,” James Birge, president of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and chair of the Massachusetts State University Council of Presidents, said in the press release. “Student safety and the safety of our communities remains at the forefront of our planning as we prepare to return to in-person learning and campus life in the fall.”

All state universities will offer a traditional schedule of in-person classes in addition to online and hybrid options for both residential and commuter student populations.

The nine campuses in the system are Bridgewater, Fitchburg, Framingham, Salem, Westfield and Worcester State Universities, Massachusetts College of Art & Design, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, and the Massachusetts Maritime Academy.

“We are sharing this information now to give students, their families and our employees ample time to make plans to be vaccinated prior to the start of the fall term,” Birge said.

FSU Director of Public Relations Matthew Bruun

said all students who will be living and or studying on campus this fall, or involved in any on-campus activities, “will be required to be inoculated with an approved vaccine by the beginning of the fall semester in September.” In addition, weekly COVID testing is required for FSU student athletes, commuter students taking on-campus classes, and residential and nursing students.

According to the press release the state universities have been leaders in the Stop the Spread Campaign and throughout the year have made COVID-19 testing and contact tracing a priority on the campuses. Since returning to campus last year, the nine state universities have operationalized a robust on-campus COVID testing and tracing system for students, staff and faculty, which successfully resulted in helping to identify and contain the COVID virus in campus communities.

FSU associate professor of biology Sean Rollins is “grateful and relieved” that the vaccine will be required.

“I agree with this decision,” he said. “First off, it will reduce case numbers. Secondly, it will let students and teachers concentrate on learning, instead of constantly dealing with changes in the way courses are taught and worrying about how to distance our interactions. I teach a lot of lab techniques — it is impossible to remain 6 feet apart and show a student fine details on a lab diagnostic.”

Rollins, who has taught at FSU for nine years, said he has primarily been

teaching nursing students since the vaccine became available.

“They became eligible early in the process due to patient interactions,” he said. “Most of them were enthusiastic to receive the vaccine. I feel most students are really just interested in returning to normal as soon as possible and see vaccination as a means to get there. It is the post-college age people that are more concerned about requiring the vaccine.”

Rollins said he is “double dosed already” with the Pfizer vaccine, having received his vaccine at Lawrence East Elementary School in March. He said he had no side effects after the first shot. After the second one, he “felt a little achy and lethargic” for a day, although he still took his 9-year-old daughter skiing.

“I absolutely think vaccination will get us back to normal sooner,” Rollins said. “I am really looking forward to just concentrating on teaching.”

As for Cautela, he said he is looking forward to “a vibrant campus community when we return to some sort of normalcy.”

“My favorite semester in my college career so far was the fall semester of my sophomore year, fall 2019, because the campus reached its peak with student involvement and engagement in the community,” he said.

“Although I don’t anticipate the same lively FSU that we once had, I hope we build back to that point. FSU requiring the COVID vaccine is the only way to get us to FSU’s once vibrant campus community,” he said.



DANIELLE RAY / SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE

Weekly COVID-19 testing is required for Fitchburg State University student athletes, commuter students taking on-campus classes, and residential and nursing students.

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FITCHBURG STATE

College's Moot Court nationally ranked

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » The American Moot Court Association has released its annual rankings of college and universities and again Fitchburg State University is among the top 20 in the U.S., according to an announcement from the university.

MOOT » 6A

Moot

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The moot court competition pits teams of students against one another on opposing sides of a legal case, as in an appellate court proceeding. Students must argue both sides of the case in the course of the competition, making timed arguments as well as fielding questions from a panel of legal experts, as well as submitting written briefs, according to the university.

Fitchburg State, whose program was founded in 2000 by Professor Paul Weizer of the Economics, History and Political Science Department, has competed with distinction every year.

Weizer said Fitchburg State is the smallest public institution to crack the top 25 in the nation.

"This is a great testament to the hard work of our students and the support of the institution," he said. "More than 500 teams competed in the last season, and our students were able to excel in all aspects of the ac-

tivity. We had two teams qualify for the national tournament in oral advocacy and also had one team earn national recognition in brief writing. While the level of competition continues to rise, our students continue to show great results."

The American Moot Court Association's Top Program Scores recognize schools based on their performance in both the AMCA National Tournament Oral Advocacy competition and the AMCA National Tournament Written Brief competition. The scores are weighted at 67% for the oral advocacy competition and 33% for the written brief competition.

More than 200 Fitchburg State students have competed in the tournament since the local program was founded. Many graduates of the program return to campus each year for the regional tournament on the Fitchburg State campus.

Their ranks include police officers, lawyers and court clerks, though Weizer said the skills developed through moot court are applicable far beyond the legal profession.

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FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATION

‘Do not be afraid to take a chance on yourself’

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University recently held its 125th commencement exercises, with virtual ceremonies honoring the graduating class.

Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus saluted the graduates for persevering through the challenges of a global pandemic.

“You’re transitioning into a very different world from the one that you had been planning for when you started college, and find yourself at a pivotal time in our country’s evo-

lution,” Lapidus said. “The pandemic has changed all of our lives in significant ways. It has impacted the way we live and work, think and behave. It has raised questions of uncertainty about the financial future, it has enhanced political polarization and magnified ongoing issues of inequality and injustice.

“The experience has, at times, been chaotic, stressful and often fatiguing,” Lapidus continued. “In many ways, how you respond to this current situation will define your generation. You are well trained and possess the talent and skills to do great things. So,

use your education wisely, summon your knowledge, insight, creativity, and courage. It’s your time to challenge what is, effect real change, and realize what can be in the world.”

At the graduate ceremony, Graduate Student Leadership Award recipient Christopher S. Brooks talked about his journey from serving in the U.S. Navy to becoming a physician assistant, and the decision to continue his education with an MBA from Fitchburg State. He said he was encouraged to go back to school by a patient who was recovering from a

FSU » 6A



COURTESY FSU

Fitchburg State university undergraduate Valedictorian Joseph Bourgeois offers his thoughts on the college and how it prepared him for the next chapter of his life during the virtual commencement ceremonies held Saturday. **See a list of grads on Page 6.**

CLASS OF 2021

Fitchburg State University graduates

Ashburnham: Michael L. Amblo, BS Business Administration; Alicia M. Cournoyer, BS Nursing; Brooke S. Czasnowski, MBA Business Administration; Melaina L. Duval, BS Psychological Science; Brooklyn L. Gardner, BS Communications Media; Adam R. Goguen, BS Business Administration; Daniel R. Hall, MBA Business Administration; Stacy M. Lapierre, MBA Business Administration; Andrew J. MacNeil, MED Education 5-12; Owen D. Napolitano, BS Communications Media; Michael J. Riley, BS Interdisciplinary Studies; Johnna L. Roy, BS Nursing; Laura M. Storm, CAGS Interdisciplinary Studies; Patricia R. Woodliff, BS Criminal Justice.

Ashby: Joshua T. Goliber, BS Business Administration; Amanda M. Haley, MS Counseling; Kyle R. Kelsea, BS Industrial Technology; Makenzie M. MacDonald, BS Business Administration; Madison A. Marchese, BS Biology; Ashley A. Osborne, BS Criminal Justice.

Athol: Jillian M. Euvrard, BS Nursing; Summer B. Lafortune, BS Criminal Justice.

Ayer: Benjamin R. Hebert, BS Industrial Technology; John H. Matthews, MED Special Education; Jarrod T. Oberg, BS Business Administration; Mario F. Sousa, BS Occupational/Vocational Education.

Fitchburg: Danielle Acevedo, BSE Early Childhood Education; Valerie R. Alejandro, BS Business Administration; Kasey C. Babbitt, BS Interdisciplinary Studies Education; Nolan J. Baird, BS Criminal Justice; Jennifer A. Belli, BS Biology; Adrien D. Brodeur-Edmonds, BS Computer Science; Colline D. Butler, BS Exercise and Sports Science; Catherine M. Carden, BS Nursing; Jonathan K. Carlson, BS Game Design; Sophia A. Ciampaglia, BS Communications Media; Randely E. Fernandez, BS Sociology; Connor Fitzsimons, BS Business Administration; Nicholas D. Fortin, BS Economics; Renee M. Gladu, BS Nursing; Jocelyn M. Hains, MED Special Education; Evan A. Hanson, BS Communications Media; Jody Holden, BS Nursing; Karen L. Jackson, BS Mathematics; Debra M. King, MED Curriculum and Teaching; Madison R. Laliberte, BS Interdisciplinary Studies Education; Kristy L. Landine, MS Counseling; Mathew Lor, BS Human Services; Kangsen M. Masango, BS English Studies; Jillian T. Nowd, BSE Elementary Education 1-6; Ryan E. O'Neil, BS Psychological Science; Adrian J. Olivera, MBA Business Administration; Alondra Y. Pedraza, MED Early Childhood Education; Danielle B. Pratt, BS Interdisciplinary Studies; Erin M. Primeau, BS Psychological Science; Megan C. Ptak, BS Communications Media; Jame-

son W. Quirk, BS Business Administration; Erin N. Reffitt, BS Human Services; Katrina R. Reilly, BS Psychological Science; Florencia J. Rivas, BS Criminal Justice; Eliezer Rivera, BA Biology; Micaela Rodriguez, BS Criminal Justice; Madison B. Russo, BS Biology; Sylvia Salcedo, BS Psychological Science; Christina M. Sauer, MED Special Education; Hannah J. Sheldon, BS History; Kade L. Shipley, BS Business Administration; Rachel Shipp, MBA Business Administration; Bradleigh S. Shultz, BS Mathematics; Bianca E. Suero Mendez, BS Computer Science; Susan C. Thompson, BS Nursing; Michaela K. Valois, BSE Early Childhood Education; Brenda M. Vandal, BS Nursing; Mariah A. Vanderveer, BS Environmental & Earth Science; Sean Veronesi, BS Business Administration; Timothy M. Whalen, BS Business Administration; Bob A. Williams, BS History; Tara V. Witzgall, MED Special Education; Nhia Xiong, BS Business Administration; Johny T. Xiong, BS Economics; Miranda L. Zeidler, BS Psychological Science; Casadie A. Zeltsky, BS Criminal Justice.

Gardner: Ross J. Adams, BS Business Administration; Crystal A. Bopha, MED Educational Leadership/Management; Joseph A. Bourgeois, BS Business Administration; Christopher S. Brooks, MBA Business Administration; Julie A. Foster, BSE Early Childhood Education; Heather A. Girouard, BS Interdisciplinary Studies; Shane P. Grenier, BS Exercise and Sports Science; Ellen S. Honsa, MS Counseling; Christoph A. Knoll, BS English Studies; Jeremy R. Nash, BS Business Administration; Sarah E. Olson, MBA Business Administration; Kristin R. Phelps, MS Counseling; Sahil N. Prajapati, BS Business Administration; Michael T. Sadowski, BS Psychological Science; Frances Sanchez, BS Criminal Justice; Cristian Sanchez, MBA Business Administration; Calvin C. Wong, BS Psychological Science; Jillian L. Woodward, BS Business Administration.

Lancaster: Eric E. Fahim, BS Biology; Pamela Knop, MBA Business Administration; Matthew J. Legere, BS Psychological Science; Abigail C. Mackillop, BSE Early Childhood Education; Kaitlyn M. Rouleau, BS Psychological Science; Nicole M. Vautour, MED Early Childhood Education; Zachary Zarrella, BS Environmental & Earth Science.

Leominster: Omnia M. Abouhassan, BS Computer Science; Cesar Acosta, BS Psychological Science; Waldemar Agostini, MBA Business Administration; Timothy J. Anderson, MED Special Education; Benjamin L. Ashton, BS Criminal Justice; Lynn

M. Ayers, BS Business Administration; Kaelyn M. Bastarache, BS Interdisciplinary Studies; Natalie R. Bergeron, BSE Early Childhood Education; Jessica A. Bibeault, CAGS Interdisciplinary Studies; Joshua M. Blair, BS History; Beau M. Brassard, BS Business Administration; Louis M. Brown, MBA Business Administration; Brendan V. Byrne, BS Exercise and Sports Science; Hailey R. Carter, BS Criminal Justice; Matthew Casaubon, MBA Business Administration; Ashlyn A. Cormier, BS Biology; Edgar J. Dedos, BS Human Services; Aislinn R. Dehorsey, BS Sociology; Isabella M. Denio-Miller, BS Psychological Science; Meghan L. Donlan, MBA Business Administration; Kayla I. Douglas, MBA Business Administration; Selina T. Fascioli, BS Business Administration; Diana L. Fitch, MBA Business Administration; Sylvia Forku, BS Nursing; Louna B. Francois, BS Psychological Science; Renee R. Fratanonio, MS Applied Communication; Marissa L. Gemma, MBA Business Administration; Jenniffer D. Goncalves, BS Communications Media; Ashley R. Grant, BA English Studies; Emily J. Howard, BS Industrial Technology; Katelyn A. Jenson, MBA Business Administration; Christopher M. Jollimore, BS Comp Info Systems; Dana R. Jones, BS Business Administration; Brittany A. Kaldis, BS Computer Science; Erika M. Kirby, CAGS Educational Leadership/Management; Xhulja Kola, BS Business Administration; Brandon T. Lefebvre, BS Business Administration; Chad F. Linstruth, MED Special Education; Jordan D. Long, BSE Special Education; Zachary A. Lorkiewicz, BS Computer Science; Candice M. Ludden, BS Biology; Elizabeth M. McNiff, BS Business Administration; Austin J. McDonald, BS Exercise and Sports Science; Sharon C. Mendes, MED Curriculum and Teaching; Deliciana R. Montoya, BS Communications Media; Julia A. Moran, BS Nursing; Fernanda Munari, BS Environmental & Earth Science; Dario J. Nieves, BS Criminal Justice; Jenna M. Norstrom, MED Curriculum and Teaching; Emily C. Patella, BSE Elementary Education 1-6; Ashley N. Perez, BS Educational Studies; Brooke H. Phaneuf, BSE Elementary Education 1-6; Sarah J. Plouffe, MED Special Education; Alexander Ramos, BS Political Science; Ti-ana A. Roman, BA Biology; Zachary A. Romero, BS Computer Science; Thomas F. Rooney, MED Curriculum and Teaching; Stacia J. Stevens, MED Educational Leadership/Management; Nicholas R. Thornton, MBA Business Administration; Karyn D. Van Guilder, BS Nursing; Rosemarie W. Wamugunda, MBA Business Administra-

tion; Teigan R. Weissman, BS Environmental & Earth Science; Cassandra M. Winiakainen, BS Criminal Justice; Shayla M. Works, MED Special Education.

Lunenburg: Michelle A. Abbascia, MBA Business Administration; Benjamin P. Algarin, MED Occupational Education; Jennifer M. Cassidy, MED Special Education; Jennifer M. Cassidy, CERG Autism Spectrum Disorder; Liam D. Celuzza, BS Political Science; Amy L. Cortezia, MED Special Education; Anthony A. Crowley, MS Applied Communication; Tanya M. Crowley, MS Applied Communication; Michelle DellaValle, CAGS Educational Leadership/Management; David J. Fors, BS Criminal Justice; Nicole L. Fors, MED Special Education; Sarah L. Henry, MS Counseling; Bradley F. Pudsey, BS Computer Science.

Princeton: Kelina Smith, BS Communications Media.

Rutland: Heather Fiato, MBA Business Administration; James P. Grady, BS Criminal Justice; Devon A. Hawley, BS Game Design; Jakub J. Sawczuk, BS Game Design.

Shirley: Michael K. Brown, MBA Business Administration; Thomas J. Consalvo, BS Business Administration; Julia E. Howard, BSE Elementary Education 1-6; Sarah L. Mello, BS Criminal Justice; Muaau Pau, MBA Business Administration.

Sterling: Luiza N. Camelo, MS Counseling; Christopher J. Graves, BS Comp Info Systems; Michael J. Misilo, BS Business Administration; Shelly F. Saben, MED Arts Education.

Townsend: Bailey Breen, BA Psychological Science; Casey L. Breen, BSE Early Childhood Education; Jessica J. Croft, BS Interdisciplinary Studies; Anna L. DeLeo, BSE Elementary Education 1-6; Brett Poindexter, MBA Business Administration; Clancy A. Ronan, BSE Elementary Education 1-6; Elizabeth A. Schatia, BS Nursing, LPN to BS; Jessica D. Watson, MBA Business Administration.

Westminster: Barbara J. Albert, MED Special Education; Chelsea E. Carey, BS Interdisciplinary Studies Education; Patrick I. Doyle, BS English Studies; Bryanna N. Hache, MBA Business Administration; Jillian E. Iacobone, MED Curriculum and Teaching; Brendon M. Kelleher, BS Industrial Technology; Kathryn M. Leger, MED Special Education; Kimberly A. Lier, BS Communications Media; Ian M. McGuirk, BS History; Jarrod R. Moeckel, BS History; Jared A. Moore, BS Communications Media; William O. Morgan, MBA Business Administration; Eva M. Tolman-Brown, MBA Business Administration; Cody T. Walter, MS Criminal Justice.

‘You’re transitioning into a very different world from the one that you had been planning for when you started college, and find yourself at a pivotal time in our country’s evolution. The pandemic has changed all of our lives in significant ways. It has impacted the way we live and work, think and behave. It has raised questions of uncertainty about the financial future...’

— Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus



Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus.

FSU

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stroke, who was also a teacher.

“To make a long story short, for every excuse that I had on why I could not go back to school, the teacher had given me a positive answer on how and why I should,” Brooks said, encouraging others to follow the teacher’s example. “Help guide or teach someone that may be feeling stuck. Lead others to help them achieve their goals.

Lastly, do not be afraid to take a chance on yourself, whether it is continuing your education further, or possibly applying for that job that you saw, but did not think you’d get.”

Undergraduate Valedictorian Joseph Bourgeois recounted the challenges all of the members of the Class of 2021 had faced in pursuit of their degrees. “As the brilliant Albert Einstein once said, ‘In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity,’” Bourgeois said.

“This past year has been filled with challenges

brought on by COVID. Our lives have been changed drastically, especially in terms of our academics,” he said. “The transition from in-person classes to online was not easy by any means but we were able to push forward and cross the finish line. When we face difficulty in life, we must adapt to the changes and make the best out of a bad situation.”

The complete virtual ceremonies can be viewed online at fitchburgstate.edu/commencement.

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Grant will benefit FSU students

University working to increase free educational resources

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University is among a consortium of colleges that were recently awarded more

than \$440,000 from the U.S. Department of Education to increase the number of free, open educational resources that are designed with a di-

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FSU

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versity, equity and inclusive lens and used in lieu of more expensive traditional textbooks, according to an announcement from the university.

This work is driven by “the increasing diversity of the public higher education student population and the desire to provide students and faculty accessible, intentionally inclusive textbooks that reflect and honor their lives,” according to the grant application, according to the university.

The open educational resources (OER) movement is designed to bring down costs for students pursuing higher education.

The recently announced grant will support a six-campus project that seeks to support under-represented students through the use of free, culturally relevant course materials. Librarians and faculty at each of the campuses will receive training and assistance in the creation and adaptation of OER materials that are accessible, intentionally inclusive and representative of the student populations at the six consortium member colleges. Once these OER materials are created, it is expected student savings on textbooks over the life of the project will exceed \$800,000 with a goal of continued savings into the future.

“The approach of creating or adapting OER using an equity lens to better serve under-represented students is exciting and

novel,” said Jacalyn Kremer, dean of the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library at Fitchburg State. “In addition to Fitchburg State faculty receiving training and support for the creation of these culturally relevant materials, librarians at the university will take the lead in tracking the project’s outcomes including its impact on student success.”

Framingham State University was the lead institution in pursuing the grant. In addition to Fitchburg State, other participating institutions are Holyoke Community College, Northern Essex Community College, Salem State University and Springfield Technical Community College.

The member institutions will form a consortium with representatives collaborating to create new OER textbooks and adapt existing resources using a diversity, equity and inclusion lens. The program will target courses in high-enrollment disciplines as well as those supporting major employment sectors like health, education and criminal justice.

At Fitchburg State, OER projects have saved students more than \$30,000 in the past academic year. The university’s Open and Affordable Education Committee supported more than 20 OER proposals in 2020 and 12 OER proposals in 2021 thanks to funding from the Davis Educational Foundation Presidential Grant, the Academic Affairs Office, the School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education and the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library.

College Town: Fitchburg State rolling out student housing program this fall

Scott O'Connell Telegram & Gazette

Published 4:32 p.m. ET May 26, 2021

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FITCHBURG — Fitchburg State University and its partners will be trying out a new initiative this fall intended to combat student housing insecurity.

The Moving to College program, which is part of a statewide initiative recently launched by the Department of Higher Education, will see Fitchburg State house up to five students a year from either its campus or Mount Wachusett Community College.

The aim is to test out different ways to address homelessness among college students in the state, an issue that affects public four-year and two-year institutions like Fitchburg State and Mount Wachusett in particular.

“Fitchburg State has long been a student-centered campus, nationally recognized for supporting social mobility,” Fitchburg State President Richard Lapidus said. “The Moving to College Program will open doors of opportunity for more students, and we are honored to be a part of it.”

“We look forward to supporting our partners in this initiative as we strive to remove barriers to higher education,” Mount Wachusett Community College President James Vander Hooven said. “Housing and food insecurity are significant problems for college students, and this program is a positive move toward addressing these issues.”

While Fitchburg State will cover housing and meal plans for participating students, LUK Inc., a local social service agency, will provide case management and other services to further help them. The Fitchburg school system will also be involved in the project by identifying potential applicants.

FITCHBURG

Abolitionist Park nearing completion

By Matthew Bruun

Special to the Sentinel & Enterprise

FITCHBURG » A green space paying tribute to Fitchburg citizens who fought to abolish slavery is taking shape on Snow Street. Sponsor support has made the Abolitionist Park nearly complete, but organizers are looking to the public to help finish the project.

When finished, the Abolitionist Park will stand as a permanent reminder of Fitchburg's role in one

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Park

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of the nation's greatest struggles, helping current and future residents and visitors understand a vital piece of American history.

The Friends of the Fitchburg Abolitionist Park have secured several small grants to get the project this far.

"Too often history is not contextualized, which results in people feeling disconnected from the amazing stories and valuable

lessons that can be learned through the study of community-based history," said Danette Day, co-chair of the Friends of the Fitchburg Abolitionist Park and a member of the Education Department faculty at Fitchburg State University.

"Ideally, the creation of this Abolitionist Park in Fitchburg will give individuals and groups a place to gather and learn about local citizens who before the Civil War were anti-slavery and created methods to disrupt slavery, and who supported the ratification of the 13th Amendment to

the U.S. Constitution that abolished slavery after the Civil War," Day said. "Authentic community-based learning opportunities that take place at the park can increase knowledge about the past, improve current community relationships and motivate future civic engagement."

Fitchburg's role in the anti-slavery movement dates to the 1830s, when city residents participated in local, regional and national efforts, with multiple homes serving as stations or depots on the Underground Railroad.

The Trinitarian Church was established in 1843 as an anti-slavery church, and the home of Benjamin Farwell Snow Jr. (1813-1892) was located nearby at Day and Waverly streets.

Snow's estate was one of Fitchburg's stations on the Underground Railroad, which provided temporary shelter for escaped slaves making their way to Canada from the 1840s to the 1860s.

Several other homes in Fitchburg were stations, and Snow hosted speeches from prominent abolitionists including Frederick

Douglass, Lucy Stone, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, and Wendell Phillips.

To keep this history alive, the Friends of the Fitchburg Abolitionist Park scoured neighborhoods to identify possible lots for a "pocket park." Fitchburg State University donated a patch of land at 42-50 Snow St. to serve as the park's future home.

To learn more about the park and to support its continued development, visit www.abolitionistpark.org/donate.

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FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Learn about bias in the workplace

Submitted Article

FITCHBURG » Fitchburg State University's Center for Professional Studies continues its series of offerings on equity and social change this October with a course exploring the complexity of culture and bias in the workplace.

The course, Exploring the Complexity of Culture and Bias in the Workplace, will provide employers and employees with engaging

opportunities to explore, examine and assess how they identify themselves to the world, how biases and misconceptions interfere with understanding others around them, and what systems limit diversity, inclusion and equity, according to an announcement from the university.

Throughout the course, participants will respond to the content and reflect on how it has influenced and impacted their per-

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Bias

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spectives, their personal interactions and their professional relationships, while also focusing on people's shared humanity.

The program will be offered online with self-paced modules, videos, articles, inquiry-based questions and assessments, as well as a one-hour remote live diversity orientation. Among the learning objectives:

- Participants will learn foundational terms such as diversity, equity, inclusion, racism, prejudice, discrimination and bias.

- Participants will consider where they are receiving messages about

others and how those messages impact their interactions with others.

- Participants will explore how intersections of identity traditionally have more or less power. They will examine where power corrupts justice and limits inclusion and how positive relations build community.

- Participants will expand their understanding of diversity, traveling throughout the world to interact digitally with other cultures.

- Participants will be able to embrace the humanity of others and choose new avenues to invite dialogue.

- Based on course content, participants will be asked to share their reflections, takeaways and action items going forward.

The course is taught by instructor Angele Goss, who has more than 20 years of professional experience connecting low-income and first generation students (middle, high school and college) to resources and experiences that improve their access to and through post-secondary education.

"I welcome participants to be reflective and curious about the messages and dynamics of culture," Goss said. "This course is designed to be interactive, informative, and inviting."

"Employees value working for a company that strives toward inclusiveness and cultural responsiveness," said Associate Dean Lisa Moison of Fitchburg State's School of Graduate, Online, and

Continuing Education. "We all want to be treated fairly, be part of decision-making, feel safe, and be seen for our authentic selves during the workday. The Center for Professional Studies' upcoming training will help employers to understand the importance of cultural and equitable responsiveness, and the impact it has on their workforce and organization as a whole."

The course will begin with a one-hour remote orientation session at 9 a.m. on Oct. 22, followed by three hours of self-paced online modules (for a total of four instructional hours). The cost for the course is \$70 and registration can be completed online at fitchburgstate.edu/cps.

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY, FITCHBURG ART MUSEUM

University, art museum plan to enhance cooperation

Staff Report

FITCHBURG » A newly reauthorized pact between Fitchburg State University and the Fitchburg Art Museum will deepen the collaboration between two of the city’s most important and enduring institutions, enriching

opportunities for programming and professional development for both organizations that are designed to enhance the quality of life for all city residents, according to an announcement from the university.

The agreement, signed Thursday, April 29, by Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus

and FAM Director Nicholas Capasso, calls for both institutions “to engage in activities that are mutually beneficial, as well as activities that help support the economy, livability, and quality of life in the city of Fitchburg and North Central Massachusetts,” according to the announcement.

“Fitchburg State University and the Fitchburg Art Museum have enjoyed a long and significant history of mutually beneficial collaboration, and this new agreement further formalizes opportunities for us to work together on projects that will have meaningful impacts on students, faculty, and the broader commu-

nity,” Lapidus said. “I am grateful for the partnership and excited about the potential for growth the updated agreement will help facilitate.”

“Our strengthened agreement will help to more firmly embed the Fitchburg Art Museum within the Fitchburg State communi-

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Art

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ty,” Capasso said. “We want to make FAM part of the overall campus experience for students, faculty, and staff alike. This enhanced partnership also recommit both institutions to community and economic development work for our city and region. The possibilities are endless!

“I extend my thanks to President Lapidus and the university administrators and faculty who have worked to support our collaboration,” Capasso said.

Among other facets, the pact will make FAM the de facto art museum for Fitchburg State, with free admission for all universi-

ty students, faculty and staff, along with FAM’s participation in class and curriculum planning for a variety of university disciplines from art, art history and communications media to business administration, education, history and the humanities.

FAM will also provide university students with additional high-quality internship opportunities in fields including management, curation, conservation and exhibition planning.

Fitchburg State will also work with the museum on developing new undergraduate and graduate programs using the museum as the applied learning context, such as degrees in arts management or museum studies, or a graduate certificate in digital curation.



COURTESY FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Fitchburg Art Museum Executive Director Nicholas Capasso and Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus pose after signing the memorandum of agreement at the museum last week.



COURTESY FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus (sitting at table) speaks before FSU signs a memorandum of agreement with the Fitchburg Art Museum.