

Richard S. Lapidus, Ph.D.

PRESIDENT

President's Report to Trustees: Goals for 2016-17 Academic Year

Overview:

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

Goals:

1. Maintain sound financial management and [Operational] controls.

- The University had a clean financial audit this year with no findings.
- The University reduced its structural deficit by 47%
- The University budgeted at a 5% reduction in support of fiscal conservatism.
- The University offered and successfully managed an early retirement program resulting in annual salary savings of approximately \$500,000.
- The University continued to implement new on-line payment options to facilitate financial transactions (Market Place Modules).
- All credit card readers were replaced to add chip functionality and limit liability.
- The University separated Procurement and Accounts Payable to better align work functions and increase efficiency of operations.
- A new comptroller was hired.
- A design and bidding process was completed, and the university was awarded the opportunity to participate in the Accelerated Energy Project in conjunction with the Department of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM). This energy efficiency upgrade project will greatly reduce the university's energy expenditure, carbon footprint and replace worn out and costly to maintain equipment and infrastructure across 22 buildings. As part of this effort, a new chiller plant was installed in the Conlon Complex this year.
- Solar Net Metering Credits were explored to reduce utility costs and support local solar energy development.
- University Development efforts increased endowed funds toward scholarships (\$200,000), increased grant and sponsored funding by \$714,000, and increased funding of other targeted activities (\$173,00).
- The University implemented a new streamlined workflow process for part-time day and graduate continuing education employment.
- The University implemented the official E-Verify process for compliance with federal immigration standards and regulations.
- Web-application firewalls were installed and configured to protect web-based systems from attack.
- Education certification files were digitized as part of the student permanent record.
- Identity Finder was implemented to search systems for protected information.

2. Complete and submit the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) fifth year self-study report.

- The University completed the NEASC mid-term report in a timely fashion. Feedback from NEASC on university performance was strongly positive.

3. Continue to work in support of the strategic plan goals.

- Academic strategic plan goals saw positive progress or completion this past year. A select few are presented below:

➤ Strategic Goal 1. Strengthen Academic Programs:

- An interdisciplinary research group was formed and a student summer research program was launched.
- Both a Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) and Criminal Justice 4+1 living and learning community were designed and will be available to students Fall 2017.
- The Education Department restructured their freshman curriculum to improve student retention.
- Interdisciplinary Team Teaching guidelines were developed and programming offered in philosophy, psychology, game design and history.
- The Center for Faculty Scholarship was designed and formalized.
- A Special Projects Grant increased stipends and course releases in support of faculty/librarian professional development.
- A new concentration in Cyber-Security and Data Science was developed and approved.
- Articulation agreements were renewed with Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) and Quinsigamond Community College (QCC).
- A new Interdisciplinary American Sign Language Concentration with was developed.
- An MOU with the Municipal Police Training Committee for the 4+1 PC Concentration was memorialized.
- Four new minors were developed: Film Studies, American Sign Language, Latin, and Graphic Design.
- Additional language courses were offered via Distance Language Learning technology.
- An articulation agreement with Shanghai University, China was signed facilitating acceptance of approximately 20 Chinese students to Fitchburg State annually.
- A Costa Rican partnership was established in an effort to send students abroad.

➤ Strategic Goal 2. Promote Student Success by Breaking Down Barriers:

- Both the Career Counseling and Academic Advising Center and Peer Services have implemented the Student Success Collaborative Campus for the scheduling of appointments. These departments are also using the platform to run deficiency grade and attendance campaigns.

- The math co-requisite program was expanded to include business statistics.
- An alternative math placement pilot was developed and implemented.
- Pre-calculus was redesigned to an emporium model using the evidence and best practices developed through our developmental math redesign.
- The Career and Advising Centers were merged into one comprehensive entity and their size was doubled.
- With the aid of the Student Success Task Force, an annual calendar of student success interventions was implemented.
- The First Year Experience (FYE) Committee proposed the learning outcomes for a new high-impact "first-year experience" course.
- The Community Assessment and Risk Evaluation (CARE) Team was established. Administrators from the Dean's Office, Student Conduct, Counseling, Housing and Residential Life, the Office of Student Development, the Campus Police Department, Student Accounts, and Financial Aid, as well as Academic Deans, met weekly to review concerns and issues that arise involving student welfare, academic progress, and community safety.
- The Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) was renegotiated resulting in a \$6 per student administrative fee increase.
- The university was identified as a Veteran Friendly campus.
- The campus coordinated with the Fitchburg and Leominster Veterans Administration to offer additional veteran services.
- Four veteran student work-study positions were secured from the Veterans Administration.

➤ **Strategic Goal 3. Build a University Community that Embraces Civic and Global Responsibility:**

- A Campus Compact Civic Engagement Action Plan was developed and received recognition from the Massachusetts Campus Compact.
- New funding opportunities were provided from the Crocker Center to facilitate student service learning work within the community.
- A faculty-based Applied Research Group was launched.
- Further collaborations with the McKay Arts Academy were established.
- A new Faculty Service Award was created to encourage and recognize service to the campus and broader community.

➤ **Strategic Goal 4. Grow and Strategically Align Fitchburg State's Resources:**

- Academic programs offerings were reprioritized resulting in the elimination of multiple degree programs that were not serving the needs of the Commonwealth.
- Moved Technical Theater from Industrial Technology to the Communication Media Department.
- A number of accelerated fully on-line programs (Business, Education and Nursing) were refined and expanded.

- Additional personnel were hired in Graduate and Continuing Education to work on state authorization and in support of Massachusetts membership in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA).
- A Distance Language Learning meeting was hosted on campus and discussions initiated on the establishment of a consortium in support of remote language learning.

4. Continue to work on the improvement of student enrollments.

- Undergraduate enrollment increased (second largest incoming class).
- Graduate enrollment increased.
- Diversity of the undergraduate class increased (most diverse incoming class with 34% self-identified as a member of an underrepresented group).
- Further rolled-out the SLATE software platform to communicate with prospective students.
- Designed and printed a new University View Book
- Designed and printed the first Spanish language recruiting materials
- Continued the updating of the campus website.

5a. Initiate and complete a national search for a Vice President of Student Affairs.

- A national search resulted in the hiring of a Vice President of Student Affairs.

5b. Initiate and complete a national search for an Executive Director of Marketing and Integrated Communications.

- A national search resulted in the hiring of an Executive Director of Marketing and Integrated Communications.

5c. Initiate and complete national searches for three academic dean positions.

- Three national searches resulted in the successful hiring of deans in the areas of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Health and Natural Sciences and Graduate and Continuing Education.

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

- Hired 11 faculty and librarians plus six one-year temporary faculty
- Hired 48 staff members.
- Centralized Marketing and Communications.
- Moved event management to the President's Office.
- Began a slight reorganization of duties within the payroll function.
- Began a slight reorganization of Capital Planning and Maintenance.
- Continue to review other units and their processes for efficiency and effectiveness opportunities.

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

- Worked with the Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA) to add the 132 bed Simonds building to the campus residence hall portfolio. All beds are sold for the coming academic year.
- Continued to update townhouses (vestibules, windows, exterior work and landscaping completed).
- McKay building “C” second floor renovation completed (student study space, student and faculty research space, and staff and faculty offices).
- Completed the Percival Phase I renovation project (Business Department). This phase also addresses much of the headend infrastructure building elements along with bringing conditioned air into the facility.
- Completed the Thompson Hall Dean’s Suite project.
- Completed the phase 1 chiller plant project that will serve the south side of campus. This chiller plant will eventually serve the four original university buildings with an energy efficient central plant.
- The University began the renovation of the Landry Arena, which will result in a varsity indoor training facility with multi-sport practice field space and a dedicated strength and conditioning area. Included in the project is office space for the City of Fitchburg Parks and Recreation Department.
- Completed a partial office renovation in Sanders (co-location of senior administration).
- The University purchased the Main Street Theater block and has begun the first phase of renovation (Game Design Studio and Idea Center).
- The University purchased a property at 66 Day Street in support of the strategic initiative to build a day care center. This building will also support the Education Departments’ Birth through Eight non-licensure program.
- Upgraded the sound system at the main athletic field.
- Replaced all 1,200 wireless access points on campus to enhance network connectivity in classrooms and residence halls.
- Replaced all edge-switches on campus.
- Installed fiber connectivity to Simonds Hall for security, networking and phone traffic.

8. Continue to strengthen university/community relationships.

- Continued college neighborhood revitalization efforts. Also, continued work with Reimagine North of Main and their focus on community revitalization.
- Initiated a new sidewalk and lighting project on Pearl Street. This is a partnership with the city and will increase both safety and university identity from the campus to Coolidge Park on John Fitch Highway.
- Sizer School - Board of Trustees
- Our Fathers House - Board of Directors
- Fitchburg Art Museum - Board of Trustees
- Chamber of Commerce - Board of Directors
- Fitchburg Plan - Co-Chair

- United Way - Board of Directors
- UMass Memorial Health Alliance Hospital - President's Council
- Moderated a number of local political debates.