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Fitchburg State University graduate Claire Cabanillas, 76, stands as she is recognized by President Richard Lapidus as an outstanding student during his address at FSU's 121st Annual Commencement on Friday. **See a slide show at photo.sentinelandenterprise.com.**

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE PHOTOS / JOHN LOVE

Journeys celebrated at Fitchburg State graduation

383 students graduate

By Elizabeth Dobbins

edobbins@sentinelandenterprise.com

FITCHBURG — It wasn't about platitudes Fitchburg State University's 121st commencement. It was about the students.

University President Richard Lapidus shared the stories of several of the 383 graduates during his commencement address in the school's recreation center Friday night.

"These student interactions show me everyday I can make a difference," he said. "I would like to share with you this evening three of many student stories that celebrate the unyielding spirit of purpose

Please see **GRADUATION/10**



Fitchburg State University President Dr. Richard Lapidus addresses the graduates at the school's 121st commencement on Friday.

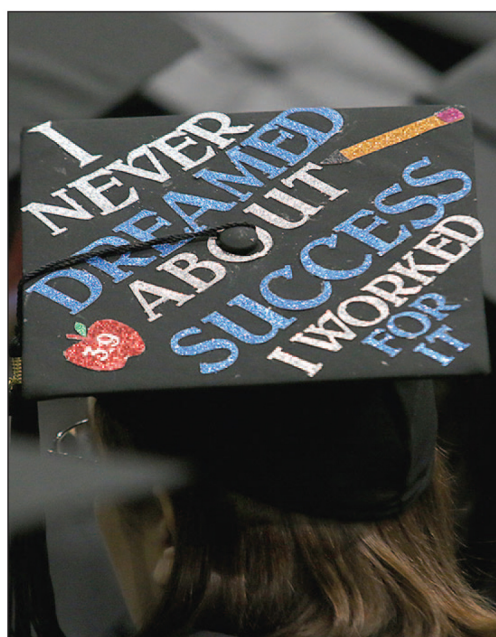


Graduates line up to receive their diplomas during Fitchburg State University's 121st Annual Commencement on Friday.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE PHOTOS / JOHN LOVE



ABOVE: Courtney Bell of Leominster looks at her diploma on Friday night. **RIGHT:** The mortarboard of one of Fitchburg State's graduates.



Journeys celebrated at FSU

GRADUATION/From Page 1 that is our Fitchburg State University body."

Among the graduates: Souleymane Wane, a nearly seven-foot-tall former basketball player.

Wane grew up in Dakar, Senegal and came to the U.S. over 15 years ago when he was 19. Following a college and international basketball career, Souleymane began coaching and teaching French at Haverhill High School in 2008. He later started a graduate degree in curriculum and teaching at Fitchburg State, according to Lapidus.

"He sees his job as a motivator, telling his students and athletes that

they have to work hard to make good things happen," Lapidus said.

Then there's Claire Cabanillas, who retired from her civil service job at age 59 and used her retirement to "(broaden) her horizons." Over a decade after starting classes at Mount Wachusett Community College, Cabanillas graduated from Fitchburg State Friday at age 76 with a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies.

Lapidus also spoke about a group of educators from Martha's Vineyard who approached Fitchburg State about starting a masters degree program for island teachers.

"This community of educators joins our grow-

ing community of Falcons, from varied backgrounds but all committed to realizing their dreams the Fitchburg State way," he said.

Two students also delivered addresses. Valedictorian Alexander Steacy, who studied biology after nearly a decade in human services, reminded students that they are leaving their education and entering into a divided world.

"We should admonish hate when we encounter it," he said. "We must work together, acknowledge each other and value our shared moments."

Raneé Mareé Wright, recipient of the Graduate Student Leadership Award, discussed her choice to pursue a masters

degree in forensic nursing.

Wright, who worked as a nurse in Wisconsin for 14 years, came to this decision after a late night of reading while on duty in a prison's maximum security unit.

"Recognizing violence as a health care issue is the first step," she said. "We can see the impact that less nurturing environments have had over the generations. The environments in which children are raised affects them, and their genes."

She urged her fellow graduates to never forget their passions.

"It is one thing to be happy once you achieve your dreams and goals, but to appreciate your dedication and investments will continue that desire for inspiration and passion," she said. "That is when you can create change."

Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale asked students to consider using that drive and knowledge in their own communities.

Follow Elizabeth Dobbins on Twitter @DobbinsSentinel.

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATION LIST - FALL 2017

Ashburnham: Steven P. Drury, BS, Exercise and Sports Science; Christine A. Keslake, BS, Psychological Science; Matthew W. Marchetti, MA, English; Makayla M. Porter, BS, Biology; and William J. Stanhope, BS, Criminal Justice

Ashby: Josephine A. Dorazio-Giardi, BS, Business Administration; Melanie R. Saari, MED, Elementary Education 1-6; and Jade Salvatore, BS, Nursing, RN to BS

Ayer: Andrew J. St. Germain, BS, History; Clara E. Watson, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies Education; and Hayley R. Wilcox, BS, Psychological Science

Fitchburg: Waleed Ahmad, BS, Business Administration; Robina P. Ahmad, BS, English Studies; Zoe Amanatidis, BS, Sociology; Morgan M. Awtry, BS, Human Services; Claire L. Cabanillas, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies; Douglas J. Carmichael, BS, Business Administration; Kerryann Coppinger, CAGS, Educational Leadership/Mgmt; Jamison T. DiGeronimo, MBA, Business Administration; Jeffrey V. Fanelli, BS, Business Administration; Christopher M. Faulkner, BS, Criminal Justice; Yomayra C. Figueroa, BS, Human Services; Venkatesh Gangiseti, MS, Computer Science; Carlos J. Garcia-Rivera, BS, Business Administration; Kara L. Gravel, BS, Communications Media; Tyler C. Hopp, BS, Game Design; Sai P. Jettigari, MS, Computer Science; Christina A. Karis, MED, Special Education; Harish Kumar Reddy Kondreddi, MS, Computer Science; Christine D. Leamy, CAGS, Interdisciplinary Studies -GR; Abigail D. Leclair, BS, Communications Media; Pothuganti M V N M Sai Ram, MS, Computer Science; John A. Maki, BS, Communications Media; Kyle R. Prudhomme, BS, Communications Media; Debra A. Rennick, MED, Special Education; Lyndrunette A. Ross, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies; Annette C. Saddler, BS, Nursing, RN to BS; Frank T. Schembari, BS, Political Science; Elyzabeth A. Taylor, BS, English Studies; Lawrence A. Teague, MBA, Business Administration; Sarah S. Tuomala, BS, Biology; Venkata Jyothsna Varadhi, MS, Computer Science; Michaela F. Vecchiarelli, BA, Biology; Lakshmi S. Vegesna, MS, Computer Science; Matthew P. Wheeler, BS, Business Administration; Nou Yang, BS, Industrial Technology; Paying Yang, BS, Biology

Gardner: Amy A. Clayman, BS, Business Administration; Jozlin E. Diaz-Patterson, BS, Game Design; Angela M. Mossey, BSE, Special Education; Andrew D. Pierce, BS, Business Administration; Deidre Raboin, BS, Biology; Adam D. Stephano, BS; Economics; Nicholas L. Stvartak, BS, Psychological Science; Catherine A. Woods, MAT, English

Lancaster: Sven Anderson, BS, Exercise and Sports Science; Carmella A. Di Verdi, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies Education; Julie M. McCormack, BS, Comp Info Systems

Leominster: Kathleen M. Alera, MED, Early Childhood Education; Nicolette J. Alves, BS, Human Services; Courtney A. Bell, MED, Curriculum and Teaching; Andrea E. Charpentier, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies Educ; Hannah K. D'Alessandro, MED, Special Education; Anthony J. D'Olimpio, BS, Business Administration; Sheri R. Dellogono, MED, Early Childhood Education; Nicholas R. Fadden, MAT, English; Marisa E. Galloway, MS, Applied Communication; Joseph Grullon, BS, Industrial Technology; Danielle M. Haas, BS, Criminal Justice; Eugene J. Halbrooks, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies; Haley J. Koskinen, BSE, Elementary Education 1-6; Daniel Lafond, BS, Economics; Kaylee J. Lanza, BS, Biology; Joseph C. Mailet, BS, Psychological Science; Mikayla L. Martinez, BS, Exercise and Sports Science; Sean T. O'Neil, BS, Computer Science; Matilda Okyere, BS, Business Administration; Ashley E. Plamondon, BS, Communications Media; Hoeub Pou, BS, Sociology; Colleen A. Regan, BS, History; Meghan R. Roberge, MED, Elementary Education 1-6; Edward I. Sanchez, BS, Communications Media; Hannah E. Tonry, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies Educ; Nina J. Trobaugh, MED, Elementary Education 1-6; Tyrone M. Twerefour, BS, Biology; Danielle M. Vallee, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies Educ; Thomas R. Vargeletis, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies; Nicole J. Walker, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies; Akhiel D. Willis, BS, Exercise and Sports Science

Lunenburg: Amy L. Cowley, BS, Human Services; Julianne E. Delahunty, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies Educ; Christine D. Fanning, BS, Biology; Phillip M. Karampatos, MBA, Business Administration; Sheila M. Lapointe, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies; Lynn M. Marabello, MED, Elementary Education 1-6; Carissa M. Thebeau, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies; Jennifer K. Trocquet, BS, Business Administration

Princeton: Chelsea Jackson, MED, Middle School Education; Nicholas C. Savell, MED, Special Education

Rutland: Connor P. Daigle, MBA, Business Administration; Erin A. Molnar, MED, Special Education

Shirley: Cherie Chartier, BS, Environmental & Earth Science; Nicholas Hearne, BS, Business Administration; Kyle Owens, MED, Special Education; Deanna E. Wood, BS, English Studies

Townsend: Justin M. Keohane, BS, Communications Media; Danielle C. Mannion, BSE, Elementary Education 1-6; Shane P. Martin, BS, Business Administration; Cheryl Meserve, BS, Industrial Technology; Cynthia L. Messina, BS, Communications Media; Krissy L. Olson, MED, Early Childhood Education; Christopher M. Schiavo, BS, Computer Science; Brittany A. Thomas, BS, Human Services; Lindsay M. Wilkins, MED, Early Childhood Education

Westminster: Nicole R. Boucher, MED, Special Education; Jessica L. Daigle, MAT, English; Ashley Erskine, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies Educ; Michael A. Fontaine, BS, Business Administration; Andrew C. Nalewski, BA, English Studies; Claritza L. Taylor, BS, Criminal Justice

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On-Island masters program graduates its first class

By **Jack Shea** - December 6, 2017

Sixteen Island residents will travel to Fitchburg State University (FSU) on Dec. 22 to receive masters of education degrees from the state program. Next June, four more Island teacher/residents will receive masters of education.

The graduates are the first in decades who did not leave the Island to pursue higher education, courtesy of a new program developed by Adult and Continuing Education (ACE MV) and FSU to bring education to the Island.

ACE MV and FSU celebrated their first class of masters' candidates on Nov. 30 at the Harbor View Hotel, attended by the grads, their on-Island professors, ACE MV staff, and FSU representatives, led by Lisa Moison, who directs the FSU educational outreach program.

"FSU has 40 off-campus partnerships, of which only six are degree-conferring. Sam Hart and the superintendent of schools [Matt D'Andrea] articulated the Island need clearly," Ms. Moison said this week.

FSU offered students a combination online and classroom curriculum, selecting four veteran

on-Island educators with teaching experience at the college and university level. Lynn Ditchfield, Margaret (Peg) Regan, Marge Harris, and Suzanne Alberich were vetted and selected by FSU as adjunct professors.

Sam Hart, executive director of ACE MV, said the program benefits prospective students, the Island educational system, and the community. It began in January 2016.

“The program complies with new state laws regarding teaching licensure, and allows our professionals to advance educationally without having to leave the Island at significant cost to them, the schools, and the towns which support them,” Mr. Hart said. “My master’s cost me \$36,000. The FSU/ACE MV program costs \$12,000, and saves on tuition and travel reimbursement, hiring substitute teachers to take classrooms when candidates are off-Island.”

The teacher graduates and their Island schools are Jennifer Fournier and Ryan Leandro (Edgartown School); Melissa Braillard, Mary Lee Carlomagno, Olsen Houghton, Jane McGroarty Sampaio, Tiffiney Shoquist, Elsbeth Todd (MVRHS); Emily Anderson, Julie Brand, Sean DeBettencourt, Hope Fecitt, Reuben Fitzgerald, Meredith Goldthwait (Tisbury School); Kristen Parece, Brian Roesler (West Tisbury); Brooke Evans, Kathryn Phelps (Bridge program), Lorena Crespo (Head Start) and Janet Holladay (not teaching).

COMMENTARY

T&G/FACULTY FORUM

Approaches for helping bridge the national divide

Welcome to an occasional feature of the Telegram & Gazette, the T&G/Faculty Forum, showcasing local perspectives on important issues from the faculties of the many institutions of higher education in Worcester and Central Massachusetts. Last year, we focused on the consequences of the Brexit vote that reach into Central Massachusetts. Today's forum addresses our national divide and what can be learned from the experiences and approaches at local colleges and universities. Our question was: "Given the country's serious political divisions, what approaches are succeeding on your campus or in your classrooms in bringing together a diverse student population that may serve as examples to help heal our divided society."

Resolutions to political differences

At our public institution enabling access to all and as public servants, we try to instill a public and community service spirit to help our students learn, adapt, and advance knowledge, understanding, and determination to contribute



Joshua Spero

to society. Forging generations of graduates to succeed academically and professionally, we help build or their strengths, abilities - so they might better help others.

For nearly two decades across a wide student/societal political spectrum, my teaching/mentoring combines theory-to-practice in developing, honing, expanding student skills for high-quality public or private sector careers.

In international relations/security courses, my methodology focuses students on key international advisory role-playing - actively learning, pushing them to step inside other mindsets globally - considering many sides to issues, viewpoints, factually-based arguments.

They role-play how real world public and private sector leaders in institutions, organizations, nations struggle when challenged by crises - as foreign policymaking, business, or non-governmental leaders.

By writing cutting-edge research papers or analytical policy memoranda, students expand talents from team simulated role-played crisis management decision-making weekly.

They're challenged to grapple in discussions, debates, negotiations, simulations with war and peace's complexities, crafting multiple answers to well-framed questioning, objective-based prioritizing.

Importantly, they test international theories and applied case studies for how they might better contribute locally, regionally, nationally, internationally in exciting careers regarding our rapidly changing world.

To get beyond frequent political differences, we help one another avoid descending into name-calling, yelling past one another, racing from compromise - underscoring well-conceived potential for conflict management, resolution.

Leadership stems from critical, constructive thinking, reading, research, analysis - and gives each student chances to improve, excel individually in team-based crisis management.

By participating, "doing" actively, students analyze, synthesize, evaluate, critique as constructively as possible. These skills allow students more effectively inside/outside the classroom to: organize time, resources; coordinate, collaborate, cooperate; negotiate, tolerate, compromise; manage and, hopefully, prevent daily conflicts.

Joshua B. Spero, Ph.D., is professor of Political Science/International Politics, coordinator of the International Studies Minor Program, and internship coordinator, Political Science & The Washington Center Programs in the Department of Economics, History, and Political Science at Fitchburg State University.

COLLEGE TOWN

By Bonnie Russell

Telegram & Gazette Staff

FSU creates portal to help students find part-time jobs

Fitchburg State University recently launched a new website that will connect local businesses looking for part-time help with the university's students.

The service will be free for students as well as businesses.

At studentjobs.fitchburgstate.edu, local employers may submit their part-time job openings for review by the university. Once posted, students can search for jobs or upload their own information for businesses to review.

Employers interested in the jobs portal should contact Erin Kelleher at ekelleher@fitchburgstate.edu or (978) 665-3151.

Local *News*

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE, FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2017

Fitchburg State aims to connect students with local employers

University unveils online job board

By **Elizabeth Dobbins**

edobbins@sentinelandenterprise.com

FITCHBURG — A new job board will connect Fitchburg State University students looking for employment to local businesses.

University President Richard S. Lapidus said the board is meant to provide contacts for students who want to stay in Fitchburg on the weekends, but still work a part-time job.

“What I was constantly hearing was students wanted to have a traditional college experience,” he said. “We’re seeing growth in residence halls. We’re seeing an interest in extra-curricular activities, yet there seemed to be a little bit of a disconnect.”

The disconnect: many students are going home on the weekend.

“Initially I thought maybe you’re going home to see your parents or to see a boyfriend or a girlfriend or something of that nature, but many expressed the need to just go home and work to earn a little bit of cash to get them through the next week,” Lapidus said.

The online job board — studentjobs.fitchburgstate.edu — rolled out this semester and focuses on part-time positions. Some recent postings include open positions clearing snow or working as a valet or bank teller.

Steve Swartz, the school’s Chief Information Officer, said the website is based on one created for a class by two students at the University of Vermont.

The students, Peter Silverman and Max Robbins, have gone on to work with other schools to help set-up similar sites, he said.

With a few tweaks, the site went live this fall and the college is in the process of advertising the service to connect the first students to jobs, according to Swartz.

Lapidus said the university plans to reach out to chambers and cities about the service and has already begun working with the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber President and CEO Roy Nascimento, said the board fills a workforce need in the region.

“I think it’s a nice opportunity for the students,” Nascimento said.

Follow Elizabeth Dobbins on Twitter @DobbinsSentinel.

DECEMBER 7, 2017

Fitchburg State reaches QCC, MWCC articulation agreements



COURTESY

Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus, left, and Mount Wachusett Community College President James Vander Hooven signed a nursing agreement Wednesday.

BY GRANT WELKER

Fitchburg State University has signed articulation agreements with Quinsigamond and Mount Wachusett community colleges to help students earn a bachelor's degree.

Mount Wachusett Community College and Fitchburg State have signed in agreement in which students in Mount Wachusett's registered nurse program will have guaranteed admission to Fitchburg State's online nursing program.

The two colleges signed the agreement Wednesday.

On Friday, Fitchburg State and QCC will sign an agreement in which Quinsigamond students who graduate from the deaf studies associate degree will have guaranteed acceptance into the deaf studies and American Sign Language bachelor's programs at Fitchburg State.

In the Mount Wachusett program, students will be able to register for classes at Fitchburg State during their final semester. They will be invited to participate in all health and nursing-related special events at Fitchburg State during their registered nurse studies at Mount Wachusett, the community college said.

Employers are increasingly looking to hire nurses with bachelor's degrees, Mount Wachusett said.

The agreement will be effective with the spring 2018 semester.

Quinsigamond, FSU sign agreement on Deaf Studies transfers

WORCESTER — Students in the Deaf Studies program at Quinsigamond Community College will be able to more easily continue their studies at Fitchburg State University thanks to an articulation agreement signed by both schools on the QCC campus in Worcester, according to a press release.

“This agreement offers QCC students enhanced educational and career opportunities, further demonstrating QCC’s continued commitment to student’s success,” QCC president Dr. Luis Pedraja said. “Deaf studies is a fast growing career field

with high growth rates and average salaries starting over \$44,000.”

The agreement guarantees acceptance into the deaf studies and American sign language baccalaureate programs at Fitchburg State for QCC students who meet the criteria. This includes GPA requirements and adherence to the Fitchburg State’s transfer admissions process.

Of the 41 graduates and 24 students currently enrolled in the program at QCC, all are eligible for the transfer program, according to a spokesman for the community college.

Fitchburg State President Richard Lapidus said associate degree offered by QCC aligns with the school’s expanded deaf studies and American sign language programs.

“This agreement pro-

vides a unique opportunity for students to advance their studies and gain valuable career credentials,” he said. “Students who complete these two degree programs will have a solid liberal arts foundation and skills that

will serve them on a variety of career paths.”

The programs develop

students’ skills to work with deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

Sunday, December 10, 2017

COLLEGE TOWN

By Bonnie Russell

Telegram & Gazette Staff

FSU, MWCC sign nursing agreement

Mount Wachusett Community College President James Vander Hooven and Quinsigamond Community College President Richard S. Lapidus recently signed a new agreement that offers students more opportunities to pursue rewarding careers in nursing.

The agreement, effective for the spring 2018 semester, confirms that all students admitted to Mount Wachusett's registered nurse program will have the option of guaranteed admission to Fitchburg State University's online RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, pending successful degree completion and entrance examination.

Admitted students will be able to register for classes at FSU during their final semester at MWCC. This will also allow MWCC RN graduates to work as registered nurses while completing their B.S. in Nursing degree online.

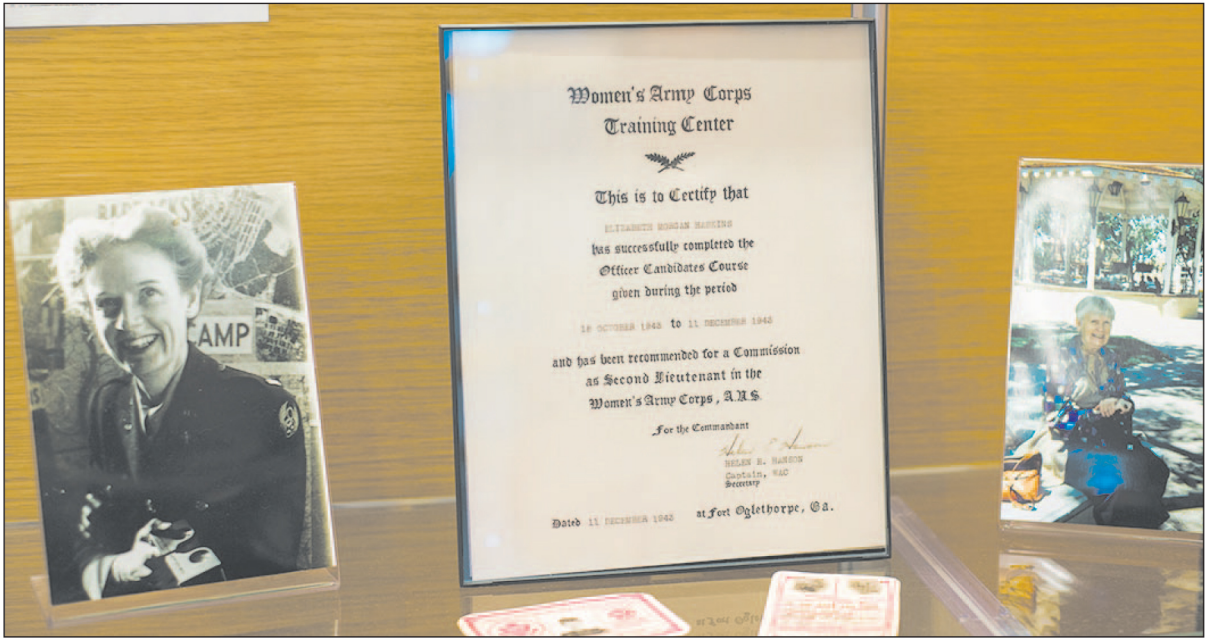
Sentinel & Enterprise

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FRIDAY, November 10, 2017

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Artifacts from local female veterans Anna Zimmerman, Elizabeth Morgan Haskins and Lt. Annie B. Wurts on display during the opening of the “World War II-Era Women of Fitchburg and Leominster” exhibition at Fitchburg State University.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE / ASHLEY GREEN

FSU exhibit focuses on women who served during World War II

By Elizabeth Dobbins

edobbins@sentinelandenterprise.com

FITCHBURG — The book selected for this year’s Community Read program, “The Girls of Atomic City,” tells of a group of women who supported war efforts from American soil during World War II.

Not all women stayed home.

“The women who worked in factories during World War II have been covered pretty well, but not the women who served,” said Fitchburg State University Archivist Asher Jackson.

These women are the subject of the latest Fitchburg State University exhibit, which opened Wednesday.

The exhibit displays items and papers from three women who served in World War II that will be available for viewing through the end of March in the university’s library in Hammond Hall.

Jackson and Public Services Librarian Connie Strittmatter compiled the exhibit from the university’s archives with help from the Leominster Historical Commission.

“We wanted to really underline through this exhibit that the women mentioned in ‘Atomic City’ were not only supporting the men who went to war, but the women who went to war too,” Jackson said.

Among the women: Lt. Annie B. Wurts. Wurts — a Leominster resident and daughter of an owner of Sholan Farms — joined the Army Nurse Corps in 1941 and went to the Pacific Theater, according to Jackson.



A poster and photos from the “World War II-Era Women of Fitchburg and Leominster” exhibition at Fitchburg State.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE / ASHLEY GREEN

Please see **WOMEN/6**

FSU exhibit highlights women in WWII

WOMEN/From Page 1

She was in a tunnel when it was captured by Japanese forces nearly a year later.

Before the capture, she and other nurses were offered one of 20 seats on airplanes out of the area.

“She was one of the 20,” Jackson said. “However she and another nurse that were selected for evacuation refused to leave. They said there are people who are sicker than we are. ... Which meant that she basically knew she was going to be captured, but did it anyway.”

She spent three years as a prisoner of war before her release from the Santo Tomas POW camp in 1945. In 1946, she returned to civilian life in Leominster.

Elizabeth Morgan Haskins was an aerodynamics researcher at Massachusetts Institute of Technology when she

enlisted in the Women’s Army Corps in 1943.

“Because of her familiarity with airplanes they used her to interpret aerial photographs.” Jackson said. “She was also a mathematician, so she could estimate distance and size.”

After leaving the military in 1946, she taught math and physics at Fitchburg State until her retirement in 1978.

What exactly the third woman, Anna Zimmerman, did during her military service is unclear, according to Jackson.

“We know she started out at Fort Custer and then went to the Pentagon, which is probably why we don’t know exactly what she did,” he said.

Zimmerman graduated with a degree in education from Fitchburg State before serving and she later endowed an Irish Studies fund at the university.

Leominster resident



University Archivist Asher Jackson speaks during the opening of the “World War II-Era Women of Fitchburg and Leominster” exhibition at Fitchburg State University.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE / ASHLEY GREEN

Roberta Serafini stopped by the opening Tuesday. She said her own mother, while not in the military, served in the Pacific Theater through the Red Cross.

When she heard about the exhibit, she said she

was intrigued.

“I thought my goodness,” she said. “I know my mother, but I don’t know anyone else hired in that regard.”

Follow Elizabeth on Twitter @DobbinsSentinel

Local News

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE, FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2018

Registration now open for FSU's ALFA program

FITCHBURG — Learn to play the harmonica, explore regional and international history, pick up some fitness tips or take a virtual culinary trip to Italy through Fitchburg State University's Adult Learning in the Fitchburg Area (ALFA) program.

Registration opens Wednesday, Jan. 3 for ALFA's spring programs, offering a robust array of non-credit daytime courses taught mostly at the McKay Complex at 67 Rindge Road. Visitors may register online at fitchburgstate.edu/ALFA.

ALFA is a lifelong learning institute that offers non-credit daytime courses and special activities. It provides an opportunity for lifelong learners with similar interests to meet in an informal setting and pursue learn-

ing for enrichment and personal growth.

This spring courses include explorations of Autism Spectrum Disorder, the impact of economic and social inequality, Fitchburg's industrial history and the Italian-American experience. Other offerings include fitness classes, guided meditation and courses on art and film.

The ALFA offerings also include group outings and free lectures. For a full list of spring programs and to register, visit fitchburgstate.edu/alfa.

ALFA is sponsored by the Center for Professional Studies and the Office of Graduate and Continuing Education at Fitchburg State University, in collaboration with volunteer representatives of the community. Classes generally will be held in the C-wing of the McKay Campus School located at 67 Rindge Road.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Restoration of City Hall part of broader downtown revitalization

The city of Fitchburg's downtown corridor is primed for a renaissance.

At Fitchburg State University, we have begun a multimillion-dollar renovation of the Main Street theater block that we purchased in 2016. The first phase of the project will include an interdisciplinary idea lab that will nurture collaboration among students, faculty and the community. Following the restoration of retail storefronts on the block, we will begin the renovation of the theater itself, a project that has transformative potential for the campus and our host city.

Nearby, the university is supporting the redevelopment of the former B.F. Brown School into a live-work community for artists. This project, backed by NewVue Communities and the Fitchburg Art Museum, will bring renewed vitality to the heart of the city.

We believe the restoration of Fitchburg City Hall is an important element in the broader vision of a revitalized downtown. The entities making significant investments in this corridor will inspire further private development, and our elected officials now have an opportunity to lead by example. In addition to reclaiming a historic building, the restoration of City Hall will send a clear message that Fitchburg is a smart investment.

**RICHARD S.
LAPIDUS
President
Fitchburg State
University**

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2017

Arredondo Family Foundation hands out turkeys to local veterans at FSU



FITCHBURG — Veterans and their families came to the Fitchburg State campus Saturday to receive Thanksgiving turkeys courtesy of the Arredondo Family Foundation.

The charitable foundation was founded by Carlos Arredondo, the Boston Marathon bombing hero seen in an iconic photo wearing a cowboy hat as he helped rescue victims.

In addition to the giveaways on Saturday at Fitchburg State, the foundation gave away turkeys in Holyoke, Boston, Norwood and Bedford over the weekend.

The foundation was established in 2015 by Carlos and Melida Arredondo in honor of Carlos' sons Alex, a U.S. Marine who died in Iraq on 2004, and Brian, who took his own life in 2011.

From left, Brian Malone and Melida Arredondo from the Arredondo Family Foundation, Fitchburg State University Vice President for Institutional Advancement Christopher P. Hendry, Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus and David Demosthenes from the Fitchburg State Alumni Board were on hand while turkeys were being distributed on campus on Saturday.

COURTESY PHOTO

LOCAL

Gerard Russell, Assistant managing editor
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Colleges face drought of high school grads

Local campus officials remain optimistic they will remain competitive in recruiting

By Scott O'Connell
Telegram & Gazette Staff

Colleges in the region that have been waiting for the shrinking number of local high school graduates to finally rebound will have to wait even longer, a new state report suggests.

According to the latest college enrollment trend analysis from the state's higher education department, the annual high school graduate count in Massachusetts,

already down over the past few years, will continue to decline over the next two decades. That revised projection is less optimistic than earlier reports that estimated the numbers would trend upwards again after 2025.

"We knew (the high school graduate population) would be going down," said the state's Commissioner of Higher Education, Carlos Santiago. "The pessimism here is that we thought there would be a recovery a lot earlier. It's very disappointing, but it's just the reality."

The state's latest enrollment

See COLLEGES, B3



Worcester Polytechnic Institute is among area colleges that have prepared to meet the challenge of fewer high school graduates. [T&G FILE PHOTO]

Annual high school graduates

According to the state higher education department's recent 2017 enrollment report, the latest demographics projections show the annual number of new high school graduates in Massachusetts will decrease over the next 15 years:

2016 (actual): 75,203
2017 (projected): 73,335
2020 (projected): 72,534
2025 (projected): 73,420
2030 (projected): 67,586
2032 (projected): 67,006

COLLEGES

From Page B1

report says that this past year there were just over 75,000 new high school graduates in the state, a number that is expected to shrink next year but still hover in the 71,000 to 74,000 range over the next decade. But in 2026 – right around the time earlier projections forecast the start of a recovery – the number of new graduates is now expected to fall off even more sharply, dropping to just under 67,000 by 2031, which would be the lowest amount since 2003.

Officials at local colleges contacted by the Telegram & Gazette last week said the latest student population projections did not come as a real surprise; several said the state's latest report was reiterating data that had been circulating previously. Some schools said they also haven't seen much negative fallout so far from the leveling off of high school graduate numbers over the past few years.

The state university system, for example, which enjoyed a steady increase in applicants up until around five years ago, when its enrollments started to plateau, has nearly maintained enrollment since then. Between 2013 and this fall, for instance, Worcester State University's enrollment slipped only from 5,556

students to 5,496, according to the state higher education department's records, while Fitchburg State University went from 4,245 to 4,135.

Community colleges, however, have seen a precipitous decline in students, although that has a lot to do with the country's economic rebound since the start of the decade. In the region, from 2011 to this fall, Quinsigamond Community College's enrollment dropped from 9,130 students to 7,370, and Mount Wachusett Community College's fell from 4,755 to 3,854, state data shows.

Fall enrollment data for local private colleges, meanwhile, was not readily available from most campuses contacted by the Telegram & Gazette. Some, like Worcester Polytechnic Institute, said they've seen flat to modest gains the last few years, which they expect to continue.

Andrew Palumbo, WPI's dean of admissions and financial aid, acknowledged that the latest demographic data projections means "we've sort of climbed the mountain and reached the peak – now we're on our way down."

But WPI, he said, "has been preparing for this for years," focusing much of its efforts on trying to bring in more applicants from groups that have traditionally been less represented in the sciences, like women and people of color.

"We want to make sure we're continuing to break

down those barriers," he said, noting as an example WPI's recent grade-school level programming it offers on its Institute Road campus, the intention of which is to introduce a new generation of students to the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields.

In the public higher education realm, local campuses also see diversifying their recruiting efforts as a possible counter to the expected decline in high school graduates – out-of-state and international students and adult learners are some of the populations they'll be leaning more on. They also expressed confidence their evolving degree offerings will continue to attract applicants – "programs like game design and our criminal justice police concentration continue to attract high numbers of applicants, for example, and we are confident that new programs launching now and in development will help us remain competitive," said Matthew Bruun, the director of public relations at FSU.

Student retention will also be an important goal over the next two decades, according to Ryan Forsythe, WSU's vice president for enrollment management, who said officials at the university "are optimistic we'll be able to maintain our enrollment." But the predicted demographics changes in the state have also motivated them to undertake

a new "large-scale positioning study," he said, that will help them get a better understanding of "what the future of Worcester State looks like" in that more competitive environment.

Community colleges, meanwhile, are not as beholden to swings in high school graduate numbers, given they already serve a more diverse population than their four-year counterparts. Their struggles the past few years are tied in part to the stabilizing of the local economy, which has allowed many would-be students to find work or keep their current jobs without having to go to college.

"I think that's always going to be the key determinant for us," said Luis Pedraja, the new president at QCC. "I think we're better positioned to respond to that decline (in high school graduates)."

Mr. Pedraja added QCC has been able to weather its ongoing enrollment contraction. "I don't see an immediate impact at this time," he said of this fall's numbers specifically.

MWCC communications specialist Sam Bonacci, meanwhile, pointed to the college's variety of degree and certificate programs "designed to meet the wide array of needs in the region, from traditional college-age students, those returning to school after some time away, or professionals looking for continuing education," as a source of confidence for college officials as

they continue to deal with the declining high school-age demographic.

That trend is still impacting even community colleges, however, he said – "we are happy with our (fall enrollment) numbers given the stagnation" of the local high school graduate population.

While the community colleges' continued enrollment decline is "a source of concern," Mr. Santiago said, Central Massachusetts' two campuses at least "are probably in better standing" than the two-year schools in some other parts of the state, like Western Massachusetts and the South Shore. "They're adjusting within their resource base" to deal with the financial impact of their lower student counts, he said of the state's community colleges, as well as cooperating more to share facilities. "I think we're seeing more of those collaborative efforts."

In general, Mr. Santiago added, to get through the next 15 years, the state's public higher education system will "need to respond more as a collective of institutions, rather than 29 separate ones."

"I think we've been moving in the direction that I think will help us respond better" to the state's demographic changes, he said.

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Local leaders make their predictions for 2018

Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus

“I predict that Fitchburg State University and our host community will continue our positive progress and fruitful collaboration. With the university’s investment in the downtown theater block, combined with ongoing efforts to revitalize City Hall and the B.F. Brown project, the city’s future



Richard
Lapidus

is bright. We will see more students visiting the city center, assisting in this revitalization. A shared vision of Fitchburg as a “college town” will be a boon for all.

More rapes reported at local colleges

Survivor advocates fear new government guidance could put chill on future reporting

By Scott O'Connell
Telegram & Gazette

WORCESTER – Once again, the number of reported rapes on college campuses in the region ticked up last year, with some colleges reporting twice as many incidents in 2016 than the year before.

Rape survivor advocates say those increases are generally an encouraging sign that more survivors are comfortable reporting assaults. But new guidelines recently coming down from the U.S. Department of Education could have a chilling effect on men and women who come forward in the future, some of those advocates fear.

According to data provided by all of the colleges in the region in their annual Clery Act reports,

See RAPES, A8

Reported rapes

Central Mass. campuses

College	2015-16	2016-17
Anna Maria	0	0
Assumption	8	7
Becker	1	2
Clark University	3	3
Fitchburg State	2	4
Holy Cross	3	6
Nichols	4	5
MCPHS University	0	0
Mount Wachusett	0	0
Quinsigamond	0	0
UMass Medical	0	0
WPI	1*	1
Worcester State	3	6
Total	25	34

*Listed as fondling in report

Source: 2017 Campus Clery Act reports

DON LANDGREN JR./T&G STAFF

RAPES

From Page A1

34 rapes were reported on Central Massachusetts campuses last year, up from 25 in 2015 and 21 the year before that. Worcester Polytechnic Institute also had several off-campus rapes reported last year.

Individually, some campuses saw significant increases in reported rapes from 2015-16 to 2016-17: Worcester State University went from 3 to 6, Fitchburg State University went from 2 to 4, and the College of the Holy Cross went from 3 to 6, according to their Clery reports.

"I think that often tends to happen, as we increase the visibility of the Title IX office" said Tracy Kennedy, Holy Cross director of Title IX initiatives. Expanded educational programming, enhanced training and other efforts tend to make survivors more likely to come forward, and make their classmates more likely to support

At a glance

While the Clery reports, which all higher education institutions are required by federal law to submit each year, don't show the outcomes of those incidents – they don't indicate whether there was a criminal conviction, for example, or whether the alleged perpetrator was removed from campus – colleges across the country have been operating with a heightened awareness of their role in handling sexual assaults over the past few years.

and help them, experts say.

While the Clery reports, which all higher education institutions are required by federal law to submit each year, don't show the outcomes of those incidents – they don't indicate whether there was a criminal conviction, for example, or whether the alleged perpetrator was removed from campus – colleges across the country have been operating with a heightened awareness of their role in handling sexual assaults over the past few years.

Under guidance provided by the Obama administration, many schools have taken rape reports from students more seriously and have established a larger role for themselves in administering justice in those cases.

That trend could come to a halt, however, now that President Donald Trump's education secretary, Betsy DeVos, has rescinded the Obama-era policy. The government is now encouraging colleges to better balance the rights of the accuser and accused in rape cases. Critics of the old guidance argued that it led some schools to have a tribunal system in which the accused was put at an automatic disadvantage.

The new guidance is just temporary, however, until the Education Department can gather feedback on the revisions and make new permanent rules. While the interim instructions allow colleges to change how they approach sexual assault cases, several colleges in the region said they plan to stick with their current system.

"The college is concerned with the administration's

proposals with regard to Title IX, however (Assumption) will maintain its current policy of vigorously investigating such incidents should they occur," Daniel DiTullio, the Title IX coordinator at Assumption College, said last week.

Becker College in a statement also said it intends to "follow the rules and guidelines previously put in place by the Obama administration, and continue to monitor the Department of Education information and guidelines."

Fitchburg State said it will "review the ever changing landscape as it relates to awareness and prevention regarding acts of violence" in general. "The university wants to make sure that an impartial process remains and that either party has the same opportunity to address the alleged behaviors that were brought forward," Fitchburg State said in a statement.

Holy Cross is also largely keeping its current practices in place, although Ms. Kennedy said the college, in response to the new federal guidance, has changed some language

in its policy to more clearly convey the rights afforded to both parties involved in sexual assault accusations.

"We're continuing to just ensure we're educating the community about their options," she said, adding that Holy Cross is "really committed to supporting a respectful environment" on campus.

But some survivor advocates worry about how the shift in the government's approach to the issue will be received by assault survivors.

"It's pretty damaging, in a number of ways," Marie Vazquez, a campus advocate for Worcester-based Pathways for Change, said of the Education Department's latest rules. "If you're a survivor trying to come forward, it complicates things even more for you."

Specifically, she was concerned the new guidance will once again put survivors on the defensive in assault cases. Ms. Vasquez, who works with students at Assumption College through her role with Pathways, said there's "been a lot of fear" about

the government's shift in approach to the issue under President Trump.

Alison Carr, a student at Assumption and member of the college's Peers Advocating Wellness for Students program, said students have asked the college president, Francesco Cesareo, to submit his comments on the new guidance to the Department of Education, and that PAWS in general has tried to highlight the issues surrounding sexual assault on campus. Bystander intervention education offered on campus has made a difference, she said. For example, at a recent party, when a couple of students looked to be in a potentially dangerous situation, "people actually stepped in to break it up."

Ms. Carr said she hopes that progress won't be stalled by new guidance that could allow college officials to think "it's not our problem anymore, so we don't have to pay attention to it."

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Weekender

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2018

The Who's 'Tommy' gone bluegrass to play at FSU



Experience The Who's classic rock opera "Tommy" reborn as an unforgettable bluegrass work by the progressive Missouri-based band The HillBenders at 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 10, at the Falcon Hub in Hammond Hall, 160 Pearl St.

COURTESY PHOTO

FITCHBURG — Experience The Who's classic rock opera "Tommy" reborn as an unforgettable bluegrass work by the progressive Missouri-based band The HillBenders when Fitchburg State University Center-Stage welcomes the band Saturday, Feb. 10, at the Falcon Hub in Hammond Hall, 160 Pearl St.

Nearly 50 years after the original release of "Tommy," this classic of rock has now been fully realized as a full-length bluegrass tribute featuring The HillBenders. Conceived and produced by SXSW co-founder and longtime musician/producer Louis Jay Meyers, this "Bluegrass Opry" brings a new perspective to "Tommy" while paying total respect to its creators.

The HillBenders are one of the few bluegrass groups that recognize their ability to bridge the gap between the

common music consumer and the bluegrass genre, selecting material that defies any hillbilly stigmas. With their widely varied influences, they are trying to bring to bluegrass songs that unify.

"We wanted to pair bluegrass with the other music we grew up with — rock 'n' roll," says HillBender Nolan Lawrence.

"Tommy" was originally composed by guitarist Pete Townshend as a rock opera that tells the story about a deaf, dumb and blind boy, including his experiences with life and the relationship with his family.

The original album, released in 1969, has sold 20 million copies and has been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame for "historical, artistic and significant value." In 2003, Rolling Stone magazine ranked "Tommy" number 96 on its list of the

500 greatest albums of all time.

Meyers had been looking for the right band to pull off the high-wire bluegrass approach for several decades, and The HillBenders are the right band. With a perfect mix of virtuoso musicianship and rock-star vocals, The HillBenders bring Townshend's original vision to life in a new and exciting way.

Tickets are \$28 for adults, \$25 for senior citizens and Fitchburg State alumni and staff, and \$5 for Fitchburg State students. Doors open at 7 p.m. for the 8 p.m. performance. Tickets can be purchased at the Weston Box Office in Weston Auditorium, 353 North St., or by calling 978-665-3347. The box office is open Thursdays and Fridays, from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. Tickets can also be ordered online at fitchburgstate.edu/centerstage.

FSU, high schools plan free concert

FITCHBURG — The Fitchburg State University choirs will be joined by local high-school vocal ensembles for the free performance, Choral Kaleidoscope, on Monday, Dec. 11, at 7 p.m., in Weston Auditorium, 353 North St.

The concert will include the Fitchburg State Concert Choir and Chamber Choir under the direction of professor Jonathan Harvey.

The university groups will be joined by the Fitchburg High School Concert Choir, directed by Tabitha Greenlees; the Gardner High School Select Choir, directed by Joanne Landry; the Narragansett Regional High School Concert Chorus, directed by Bobby Rathbone; and the university's a-cappella group Harmonic Velocity.

"The six choirs will each perform a set of their own, and the concert will close with several selections performed by everyone all together onstage," Harvey said. "There's a huge variety of music on this program, and that's why it's called 'Choral Kaleidoscope.' It's going to be a constantly shifting performance involving many different groups and styles."



Glenn Miller Orchestra puts ready to put FSU 'In the Christmas Mood'

FITCHBURG — Fitchburg State University invites the community to get into the holiday spirit with the Glenn Miller Orchestra's "In the Christmas Mood," on Saturday, Dec. 9, at 7 p.m., in Weston Auditorium, 353 North St.

With its celebration of swing and jazz, the Glenn Miller Orchestra is one of the greatest bands of all time. With traditional holiday classics like "Winter Wonderland," "Jingle

Bells" and "Let it Snow," it will surely get you In the Christmas mood.

Featuring an ensemble of 18 musicians, this holiday concert spectacular brings the season to life with timeless sound and iconic melodies of Miller's unmistakable music. The Glenn Miller Orchestra delighted a packed house when it last visited Fitchburg State, and you won't want to miss this chance to see them again.

Tickets for "In the Christmas Mood" are \$30 for adults, \$28 for seniors and FSU staff and alumni, and \$5 for students and guests 18 and younger.

The Weston Box Office, located inside Weston Auditorium, is open Thursday and Friday, from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m., and can be reached at 978-665-3347. Tickets may also be purchased online at fitchburgstate.edu/centerstage.



Fitchburg State University Professor Richard McElvain's will perform his acclaimed one-man adaptation of Stefan Zweig's short story *The Chess Player* at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 20 at the Performing Arts at the McKay Complex, 67 Rindge Road.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

'The Chess Player'

FITCHBURG — The curtain rises on Professor Richard McElvain's final production at Fitchburg State University next week, and the accomplished actor and director is going out with a flourish.

Just days after the successful run of the McElvain-directed *Into the Woods* — the university's first musical theater production in more than a decade — he will bring his acclaimed one-man adaptation of Stefan Zweig's short story "The Chess Player" to the Wallace Theater for the Performing Arts at the McKay Complex, 67 Rindge Road, at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 29.

Admission is \$20 for the public and \$10 for students, with all proceeds going to support students' upcoming trip to Scotland for the

Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the world's largest theater festival.

It was in Edinburgh that McElvain first performed "The Chess Player," a one-man play about a man struggling to maintain his sanity in solitary confinement at the hands of the Nazis. Reviewers described McElvain's performance as "masterful," and "astonishing," and called the show "an absolute must see."

McElvain plays five major characters in the 75-minute show, along with half a dozen smaller roles. It's a high-wire act, but one he relishes. "It's a personal dare, and something you can only do in theater," he said. "There's real magic. It's a game of catch you're playing with the audience."

That immediacy is the power of live theater in general, he contin-

ued. "It's really there, it's really happening," he said. "It's something that is unique to every performance. It's a precious thing to have, and to engage in."

McElvain helped shape live theater at Fitchburg State for 20 years, mounting annual productions in addition to his teaching, from farcical comedies to gut-wrenching dramas, with titles from Shakespeare to new works, some written by Fitchburg State alumni.

McElvain is retiring from Fitchburg State, but not from the footlights. "I'm returning to my professional career," he said. Thanks to a Fulbright scholarship, he will spend five months in Finland and London with "The Chess Player," and is looking at other international engagements for the production.