

**Richard S. Lapidus, Ph.D.**

PRESIDENT

## **President's Report to Trustees: Goals for 2017-18 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 continued to reduce its structural deficit.
- The University produced a flat budget in support of fiscal conservatism.
- The University was able to hold student fees stable.
- Implemented a financial dashboard for the Board of Trustees.
- The University implemented the Marketplace module of TouchNet software that allows for on-line payment of non-student account activity thus reducing the number of cash transactions on campus.
- The University has established a project team to work on the revitalization and financing of the theatre block.
- University Development raised in excess of \$438,000.
- Grants and Sponsored programs generated approximately \$2 million of support (some grants span multiple years).

#### Information Technology Upgrades

- The University upgraded Banner.
- Blackboard was migrated from an internal system to a system hosted by Blackboard.
- The University upgraded its emergency messaging system.
- The University installed Acalog API.
- All analog cameras were replaced with IP-based digital cameras in support of campus police.
- A new management system was installed for the Linux management system.
- The University installed an ArcGIS server in the datacenter to share mapping projects with outside cities and towns.
- Electronic document imports. All digitized documents that are needed for university operations or are part of the student permanent record are now read and indexed into our Banner system automatically overnight.

- Closed-captioning. A system and workflow were developed to provide closed-captioning for live televised events.
- Mobile app upgrade. The university's mobile app (both iOS and Android) was upgraded with new shuttle-tracking software and an update to the Registrar's module.
- Seats-list update. A new "seats-list" was created specifically for students in the accelerated online program.
- Internet upgrade. One of our two internet connections was upgraded from 500mb to 1gbps.
- Theatre block connectivity. A 1 GB fiber link now connects our main campus with the new building on Main Street.
- Wireless expansion. The wireless system was expanded with new outdoor antennas to cover shared activity areas on campus.

## **2. 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:

- Two new academic major proposals were supported by the All University Committee (Environmental Public Health and non-licensure Education Studies). Proposals will now go to the BHE for review and final approval.
- A STEM living and learning community was redesigned and has over 35 participants for the next academic year.
- The Center for Faculty Scholarship was created which held over a dozen events throughout the year to promote and support faculty scholarship.
- The University was awarded a Special Projects Grant (The number of major grants doubled from the previous year).
- Developed and approved a new concentration in Strength and Conditioning under the Sports and Exercise Science major.
- Renewed articulation agreements with both Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) and Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) in support of ease of student transfer.
- Developed a new Interdisciplinary American Sign Language Concentration with QCC.
- Increased the number of language courses offered via Distance Language Learning.
- Conducted faculty workshops on the use of varied technologies to enhance online course offerings.
- Restructured international student events and processes to promote greater transition and retention.
- The University renewed its articulation agreement with Media University in Stuttgart Germany (3 Years).
- The Costa Rica partnership established in 2017 resulted in a group of nursing students participating in faculty-led program to San Jose.
- A faculty-led program to Ghana resulted in over 13 nursing students having an opportunity to deliver health care in a foreign country.
- The University began the implementation of BHE HS GPA Pilots for introductory mathematics courses in an effort to reduce student reliance on developmental mathematics.
- Successfully launched the 1<sup>st</sup> Police Academy culminating the first cohort of students in the 4+1 criminal justice police concentration.
- The University worked on interdisciplinary collaborations between Humanities and Science faculty to put forth a General Science concentration proposal for an IDIS major, and a new minor between

geography and criminal justice in Crime Mapping.

- Launched two new accelerated online programs in education (Instruction and Teaching and Educational Leadership.)
- Held the first student business plan competition event on campus.
- Held the first ever faculty research symposium to celebrate faculty scholarship on campus.

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

- Financial Aid, Housing and Food Services have implemented the Student Success Collaborative (SSC) Campus for the scheduling of appointments.
- The Athletic Department is using the SSC platform to run deficiency grade and attendance campaigns.
- The University received a Performance Incentive Funding (PIF) grant for Math-Pathway and co-requisite program development.
- Developed quantitative analysis mathematics pathway courses and scaled up the use of co-requisite sections to increase student completion of pathway math course in their first year.
- Developed a Math Lab, which will open in fall 2018 for students to complete remedial math requirements.
- Established a new academic standing policy that will identify students earlier in the academic warning process.
- A campus-wide forum was held to develop the institutional-wide learning objectives that will be used to help general education and the departmental majors develop and refine their program learning outcomes.
- A new general education core was proposed by the general education council, and was vetted by all departments in a summer working group.
- The First Year Experience (FYE) Committee developed a general syllabus for all FYE courses.
- Eight sections of the new FYE will be offered in fall 2018 as a scale-up implementation process of the FYE.
- A Digital Learning Working Group was formed to discuss and make recommendations for a draft campus-wide policy on online and digital learning initiatives.
- A mathematics course substitution policy for students with specific identified mathematics disabilities was drafted.
- The Community Assessment and Risk Evaluation (CARE) team has moved towards a more holistic model that examines academic, behavioral, and environmental factors of students.
- An Accessibility Committee for Electronic Content examined digital accessibility (especially videos) ensuring FCC compliance.
- Summer Bridge, a program designed to provide academically at-risk students additional support as they launch their college career, added a residential component to attract non-local students.
- A “Use of Space” policy was drafted providing structure for free speech and demonstrations on campus.
- An initiative around student food and housing insecurity was launched (“Swipe it Forward” a voucher program in collaboration with Chartwells, and an Economic and Food Insecurity Pantry.)
- The University Police Department strengthened their personal safety classes on an ongoing basis for the campus community by offering Civilian Response to Active Shooter Event (CRASE), Violence Identification, Prevention, and Response (VIPR), Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) and CPR/1st Aid/AED Training
- The University developed a “Belonging” campaign titled *You Fit Here*, that showcases students who have overcome challenges associated with feelings of disassociation or loneliness.
-

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

- Received a VISTA Volunteer grant that has allowed the University to increase its presence in the community specifically at Fitchburg High school.
- Began implementation of a Campus Compact Civic Engagement Action Plan.
- Hosted the Board of Higher Education's Civic Engagement Conference.
- Provided funding opportunities to the Crocker Center to facilitate student service learning work within the community.
- Held the first the community outreach of the Community Scholarship Group, which links faculty expertise with community groups and organizations needing technical experience.
- The University became the backbone institution for the Reimagine North of Main project. Among many other initiatives, the institution will develop a Resident Leadership Institute, which will increase the campuses visibility in the community.

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

- Currently the University is analyzing 1600 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) programs to assist in the possible reprioritization of program offerings.
- Received authorization, as the first public four-year institution in Massachusetts, to become a member institution in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA).

### **3. Continue to work on the improvement of student enrollments.**

- Undergraduate enrollment was similar to the prior year, which was a strong year.
- Graduate enrollment increased.
- 42% of the incoming student class self-identified as first generation.
- Diversity of the undergraduate class continues to be strong (37% self-identified as a member of an underrepresented group).
- The University further rolled-out the SLATE software platform to communicate with prospective students.
- Designed and printed a new University View Book
- Designed and printed Spanish language recruiting materials and are working on a new version.
- Continued the updating of the campus website.
- Stories developed for Contact Magazine have been better leveraged this year as a purposeful effort is being made to share the magazines storytelling through online integration with web pages and in social media posts for broader exposure and readership.
- Google AdWords campaigns have been used this year as a cost-effective method of increasing messaging to important targeted constituencies.
- Social media communication has increased on the outlets the university currently manages (Facebook, Twitter). Also testing began with Snapchat by messaging existing university students already using the platform.
- The University began reviewing its brand with an audit this year. Focus groups and quantitative surveys have been conducted and will continue with all constituencies as a means of refreshing the University value proposition, creating key institutional messages and ultimately rolling-out a new visual identity for the school to deploy in all marketing and communications.

**4. Initiate and complete a national search for a Business and Technology Dean, Dean of the Library, and an Admissions Director.**

All searches were successfully completed. Candidate pools were strong and diverse.

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

- Over fifty searches were completed this year.
- Contracted with a new Employee Assistance Program, AllOne Health, at a reduced price per a PACE initiative.
- Implemented E-Verify to include all employees and student hires, to meet compliance requirements as an institution that employs immigrant workers.
- Secured a new online training module for employees per a PACE initiative.
- Purchased an onboarding module in Interview Exchange to expedite and make more efficient the new employee onboarding process.
- Centralized event planning and its related support functions.
- Began a slight reorganization of Capital Planning and Maintenance.
- Began a slight reorganization of Student Affairs
- Continue to review other units and their processes for efficiency and effectiveness opportunities.

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

- Continued participation in the Accelerated Energy Project in conjunction with the Department of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) further increasing energy efficiency by reducing energy expenditure, the carbon footprint and replacement of worn-out equipment and aging infrastructure.
- The University established a joint venture with MSCBA to expand options for faculty/staff housing.
- The University implemented an electronic package notification system for the student mailroom. Further exploration of self-serve mailboxes is underway.
- The University upgraded the former pizza station at the North Street Bistro to a new rotating concept for increased variety.
- The University continued its work with Reimagine North of Main, the City and NewVue Communities in support of continued revitalization efforts in neighborhood and downtown.
- Completed construction of the Game Design Intern Studio and the ideaLab on Main Street in Fitchburg. This project has been referenced by Secretary Ash as a model project in which an anchor institution works within their community to meet joint needs.
- Completed construction of the Edgerly Elevator project. All campus buildings now have automated vertically accessibility.
- The Percival Renovation – phase I infrastructure has been completed. Phase II which includes faculty offices, case rooms and classrooms is scheduled to complete December 2018.
- The Landry Arena Renovation has been completed. The building now houses a strength training facility for varsity athletics and teaching facility for Exercise and Sports Science Department. The building also contains a multipurpose sports surface for use by varsity sports, students and the City of Fitchburg Recreation Department.

## **7. Continue to strengthen university/community relationships.**

- 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
- Cushing Academy - Board of Trustees
- The University served as a moderator for a number of local political debates.
- The University has placed significant effort on strengthening alumni relations with support of the Alumni Association.
- Strengthened our connection with the Fitchburg Art Museum by placing university signage in the lobby of the museum.