

## FSU named a top school for serving black students

By Amanda Burke  
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FITCHBURG — A report out Wednesday ranks Fitchburg State University among the best public institutions of higher learning in the nation for equity for black students.

President Richard Lapidus said the ranking reflects several factors, including a wide-ranging effort to diversify the campus and provide individualized support to students after classes begin.

“The effort really was to try to increase

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# FSU named among top schools for serving black students

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diversity broadly across the campus, and start to move to a state where the campus population started to mirror the region,” he said. “While we’re not there yet, we’re definitely moving in the right direction.”

The report released by the University of Southern California Race and Equity Center assigned 506 public, four-year institutions of higher learning an “equity index” based on how the colleges and universities performed in four key areas.

The report did not study historically black colleges or universities, tribal colleges, military academies, graduate schools or community colleges.

It gauged the extent to which the black students’ share of enrollment

matches the demographic breakdown statewide, whether the school enrolls the same proportion of black men and woman of all races and ethnicities who attend college nationwide, whether the six-year graduation rate for black

students matches the school’s six-year graduation rate overall, and the ratio of full-time black undergraduate students to full-time black faculty members.

Massachusetts was named the top state in the nation in equity for black students enrolled in public universities and colleges. The Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts landed in a three-way tie for the highest possible score of a 3.5.

FSU tied with Framingham State University and the UMass Boston as having the second-highest “equity index” in the state, at 3.25.

At FSU, the 342 black students who were enrolled in 2016 made up 9.7 percent of the undergraduate student body, compared to 9 percent of 18- to 20-year-olds in the state, according to the study.

The university’s graduation rate for black students is 55.6 percent, compared to 53.6 percent for the school overall.

According to Lapidus, the college uses tailored the strategies including the “purposeful targeting of high schools” to find and recruit more minority students.

“Rather than waiting for students to apply to us were being much more proactive in reaching out to them,” he said. “We’re looking to aggressive reach out to all studs but in part some of the underrepresented groups that have been missed.”

Where FSU is lacking is in the number of professors who are minorities, said Anthony Berry, an exercise and sports science major who serves as president of the campus’ Black Student Union, which has a membership of about 90 students.

“As a whole there’s basically all white professors,” he said. “There’s a couple

outliers, but for the most part, with my major and discipline, there’s only white professors.”

Berry’s observation was supported by findings of the study University of Southern California study out Wednesday, which found that for every black full-time faculty member employed in 2016 there were 33 full-time black students enrolled — a “C” grade.

According to the report, in 2016 FSU employed 10 full-time faculty who are black, of over 200 total full-time faculty members.

Berry said a diverse student body creates a more comfortable learning environment, a more fun campus environment and encourages “interchange” between students of different backgrounds.

He believes FSU’s low number of black full-time faculty members is partially attributable to higher salaries available to professors at private universities and colleges.

Berry wasn’t surprised that FSU cracked the top 10 schools with equity for black students, given the “sheer size of minorities in Massachusetts and New England” and the implementation of campus programs to welcome and support minority students and students who are the first in their families to go to college.

He said the Black Student Union will continue advocating for increased enrollment of students of color at FSU, whose daytime student population was about 71 percent white in 2016.

“We try to speak on a general level for all minorities so we can feel more represented to the administration,” he said. “We’ve been very vocal, from the beginning about getting more students of color into the school.”

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Fitchburg State University Food Service Director Jeff McVoy looks over supplies in the new Falcon Bazaar food and needs pantry for students after a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Tuesday.

See a slide show at [sentinelandenterprise.com](http://sentinelandenterprise.com).

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE PHOTOS / JOHN LOVE

## Food for thought: Fitchburg State cuts ribbon on food, needs pantry

By Amanda Burke  
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FITCHBURG — After nearly half of the students who responded to a survey last spring reported experiencing food insecurity, a food and necessities pantry was unveiled Tuesday at Fitchburg State University.

“If (students) aren’t nourished they’re not able to pay attention, and then it’s a domino effect,” said President Richard Lapidus. “It eventually starts to impact their performance in the classroom.”

Lapidus spoke after an official ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new food and necessities pantry that drew more than 50 people to its location on the second floor of Hammond Hall.



The sign across from the pantry shares a statistic that underscores its need.

The pantry is called the Falcon Bazaar, where items, from dry and

Please see **PANTRY/8**



The new Fitchburg State University Falcon Bazaar food pantry to help students in need held a ribbon-cutting on Tuesday. Here, state Rep. Natalie Higgins, right, chats with Administrative Assistant for Housing and Residential Services Heather Massafferro and FSU President Richard Lapidus during her visit to the pantry.



Shelves in the Falcon Bazaar food pantry hold an assortment of goods to help needy students at Fitchburg State University.

See a slide show at [sentinelandenterprise.com](http://sentinelandenterprise.com).

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE PHOTOS / JOHN LOVE

## Food for thought: Fitchburg State cuts ribbon on food, needs pantry

**PANTRY/**From Page 1

refrigerated food to toiletries, are stocked and available for any student free of cost, said Shane Franzen, associate director of Student Development.

Franzen said that 12 students have used the Falcon Bazaar since it was rolled out this school year.

“We’re finding out that

our students really and truly (are in) need. In order for them to get their degrees, they really need to have food so we’ve opened this pantry,” he said.

The university had a food pantry in the same location a few years ago that was discontinued as administrators researched best practices for operating

an on-campus food pantry, he said.

Another program new to the university this year allows students with meal plans to donate guest meals to “bank” for distribution to hungry students, said Hank Parkinson, associate dean of Student Development.

Over 230 meals have been donated this year and

have benefited 17 students, he said, some of whom may not be hungry all the time, but who don’t have regular access to balanced meals.

“This gives them an actual square meal in the dining hall,” he said.

State Rep. Natalie Higgins, a former executive director of the Public Higher Education Network

of Massachusetts, an advocacy group pushing for debt-free college in the state, said hunger is stigmatized on college campuses.

She commended FSU for opening the Falcon Bazaar, because some students will be forced to make hard decisions on how spend their money as long as student debt per-

sists.

“Until we move toward debt-free higher education, we’re going to have kids, students and adults making decisions about do I pay for tuition, do I pay for textbooks, or do I feed myself,” she said. “And that’s unacceptable.”

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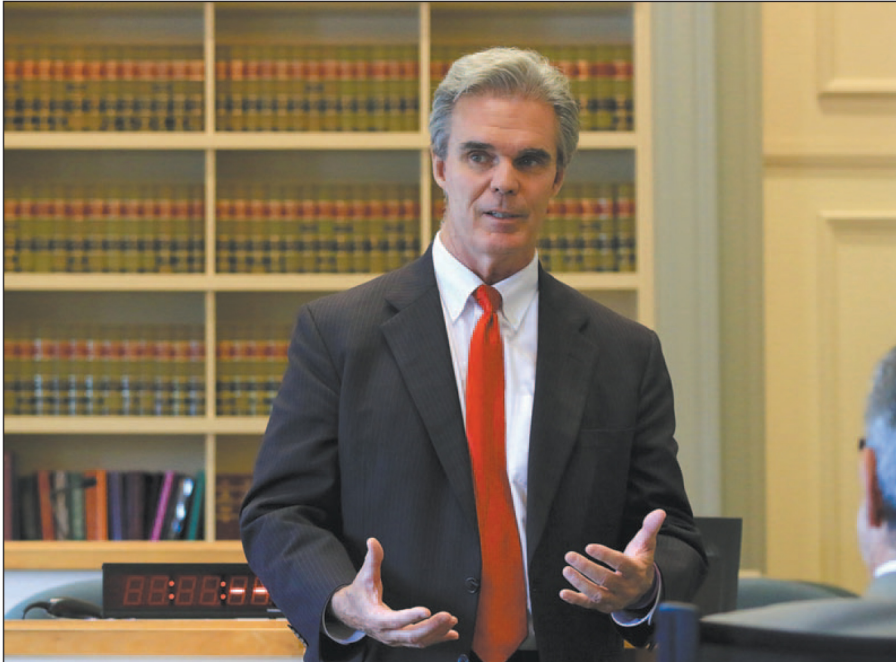
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## DA ANNOUNCES \$860G FOR OPIOID BATTLE



Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr., at Leominster District Court Thursday, announces \$860,000 in federal grants that will help divert substance abusers into treatment programs.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE / JOHN LOVE

## Dollars to help save lives

By Peter Jasinski

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LEOMINSTER — Worcester County District Attorney Joseph Early Jr. announced Thursday that his office has been awarded \$860,000 in federal grants that will help divert substance abusers into treatment programs if they are arrested and pay for a new study through Fitchburg State University

that will map opioid use in the region.

Early, who made the announcement at Leominster District Court alongside local elected and police officials, said \$500,000 of the money from the federal Bureau of Justice Assistance will be used to pay for substance abusers facing criminal prosecution to have the option of entering a treatment program

Please see **GRANTS/8**

# DA announces \$860G to wage fight on opioids

GRANTS/From Page 1

through AdCare Hospital in Worcester.

“When we have someone in need of services for substance abuse disorders, specifically opioid addition, we’re going to get a call and we’re going to get AdCare involved. And then we’re going to divert that person away from the criminal justice program,” he said.

A pilot version of the program has been operational in Leominster and Gardner’s district courts since May and AdCare hospital has enrolled 17 people in treatment since then. Of those 17, 13 are still enrolled.

The grant money awarded to Early’s office last month will now expand the program to the district courts in Fitchburg, Clinton and Milford.

Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale said he looked at the new funding as a sign of good faith that the federal government is helping with the area’s struggle against addiction.

“I hope this is the example of the beginning of a commitment because we all know, unfortunately, it’s all about the money. It always is. And this is an important component of what we have to do every day,” he said.

Rather than beginning in a larger city like Worcester, Early said he wanted to launch the program in the northern county first because it would be an easier population size to start with.

“We were limited in how big of an area it could be. There were geographical and population con-



Fitchburg Police Chief Ernest Martineau, center, joins Mayor Stephen DiNatale, right, at Leominster District Court as Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr. announces \$860,000 in federal grants that will help divert substance abusers into treatment. The grants will also pay for a study through Fitchburg State that will map opioid use in the region. SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE / JOHN LOVE

cerns as well, but we knew we could bring this up here and have a great chance of success,” he said.

The remaining \$360,000 of the grant money is going to be used to pay for a new study through Fitchburg State University that will track overdose deaths, non-

fatal overdoses, and crime to create a map of local opioid activity. The mapping will initially cover Fitchburg, but possibly expand to other parts of the state depending on available funding.

Early said its findings will be especially useful in helping his

office and local police investigate overdose deaths as possible homicides.

“This is going to allow us to say to the dealer that there is an awful lot to lose here,” he said.

Fitchburg Police Chief Ernest Martineau praised both initiatives,

referring to them as two more tools in his department’s toolbox for combating the opioid epidemic.

“We’re not afraid to say we have a problem, but we’re tackling the problem head on,” he said.

Follow Peter Jasinski on Twitter @PeterJasinski53.

## Revitalizing downtown key in Fitchburg plan

### City Council unanimously adopts economic development blueprint

By Amanda Burke

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FITCHBURG — Economic development will now be guided by a strategic plan the City Council unanimously adopted on Tuesday.

“We’re hoping to bring people from a larger radius to Fitchburg, whether it be for family-friendly activities or recreation,” said Monica Lamboy, a consultant with UMass Boston’s Collins Center for Public Management.

The Economic Development Strategic Plan is the result of feedback given by business leaders, members of the community, city staff and elected officials.

The document lists actions that the city could

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An artist’s rendering shows one vision of what Main Street could look like between the Fitchburg Theater Block and the old City Hall. Fitchburg State University, which bought the building in fall 2016, is transforming it into a multi-purpose space that includes a computer lab for game design students and an entrepreneurship center.

A.T. LEONARD & ASSOCIATES

## Revitalizing downtown key in new Fitchburg development strategy

**DEVELOPMENT/**From Page 1

take over five years would. Among them are improving infrastructure, and encouraging “transit-oriented” development on Main Street and a “few key parcels” in east and west Fitchburg, said Director of Economic Development Mary Jo Bohart.

The plan comes as investors including the city, Fitchburg State University and NewVue Communities are funneling millions into four key projects: The Fitchburg Arts Community (BF Brown), old City Hall, the Theater Block and the Public Library.

“This is the time to move,” said Ward 3 Councilor Joel Kaddy. “If we miss it now, we’re 20 years down the road again.”

The plan adopts eight broad-end goals:

- Create a vibrant downtown;
- Embrace the city’s role as a college town;
- Expand family-friendly attractions;

- Maintain “high-quality” housing stock;
- Support a mix of businesses;
- Enhance “neighborhood commercial districts”;
- Build the city’s reputation as a destination for recreation and culture;
- Improve transportation.

It updates and puts into action aspects of another document, Fitchburg Vision 2020, a master plan that was adopted in 1999, said Community Development Tom Skierawski.

Both documents, he said, encourage downtown development and strengthening ties between the city and Fitchburg State University.

“Our office is of the mindset that we’ve been doing a whole lot of planning, and it’s really time to act,” he said.

Many action items the plan recommends taking in the first two years “are downtown rooted,” said Bohart. She noted a proposal to amend zoning to ease the process of break-

ing up large Main Street storefronts into smaller venues that she said would be more attractive to business owners.

Another recommended action is to rezone Central Plaza to encourage mixed-use development and to build out “underutilized sites” like the former Kmart on Carriage Road/Whalon Street.

The Economic Development Office will also work closely with prospective restaurant owners to provide guidance on code compliance, said Bohart.

City residents, she said, spend \$80 million at restaurants annually, but just \$30 million of that is spent at eateries in the city, suggesting “leakage” of economic potential into surrounding communities.

Skierawski said the city should prioritize completing projects that community leaders and residents voted as most important during a February forum.

Those projects include encouraging amenities like co-working spaces and outdoor dining, making transportation easier between FSU and Main Street, marketing the city and managing parking challenges in dense neighborhoods.

“I see those as some of our areas that we need to start on first, and at the end of the day, when this report is all said and done, I want to be able to say we addressed all of those items,” said Skierawski.

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## DAY OF PRIDE FOR FSU POLICE ACADEMY GRADS



Cadet Nicole Patterson has her badge pinned by her father, Littleton Deputy Chief Jeff Patterson, during Fitchburg State's first Police Academy graduation Thursday.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE / JOHN LOVE

# Every diploma an oath to serve

By **Mina Corpuz**

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FITCHBURG — Claritza Taylor has always wanted a job where she could help people.

The Westminster resident, who comes from a family of nurses, was studying to become a certified nursing assistant

until she learned about a pilot program at Fitchburg State University that would let her study criminal justice and become a police officer.

"I want a job where I can feel productive in society and help others," she said. "What better job is there than to serve and protect?"

Taylor is one of nine recruits

who were the first to graduate Thursday from the university's Police Academy, a five-year criminal justice program where students earn a bachelor's and master's degrees and complete police certification through a mix of classroom time, physical train-

Please see **ACADEMY/5**

# Day of pride for first FSU Police Academy grads

**ACADEMY**/From Page 1

ing and skills training.

Class leader Ryan Richard said he was happy to have gotten to know the members of the recruiting officer course and to learn and grow with them.

"I would walk into any situation with you not knowing the outcome because we are one family," he told his fellow graduates.

They received their badges, took the oath of honor, and received certificates of police training while surrounded by friends, family, criminal justice students, and those who serve in law enforcement.

Fitchburg State Presi-

dent Richard Lapidus said the program is the first of its kind in the nation and can be a way to shape police education and training.

The goal of the program is to train recruits who are ready to work for city and town police departments around the state.

Most of the graduates have secured employment or are looking for a department that is a fit for them.

Nicholas McLaughlin of Fitchburg has a lot of family members in law enforce-

ment. Like many of the graduates, he wanted to become an officer to help others.

"I also didn't want to do the same thing every day,"



Imani Varris, a 2018 FSU graduate, sings the national anthem during the ceremony.



Cadet Ryan Richard salutes as the national anthem is sung during Fitchburg State's Police Academy graduation on Thursday. **See video and slide show at [sentinelandenterprise.com](http://sentinelandenterprise.com).**

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE PHOTOS / JOHN LOVE

McLaughlin said.

He will start as a dispatcher at the Westmin-

ster Police Department and will eventually serve as a reserve officer while he finishes his master's degree at the university.

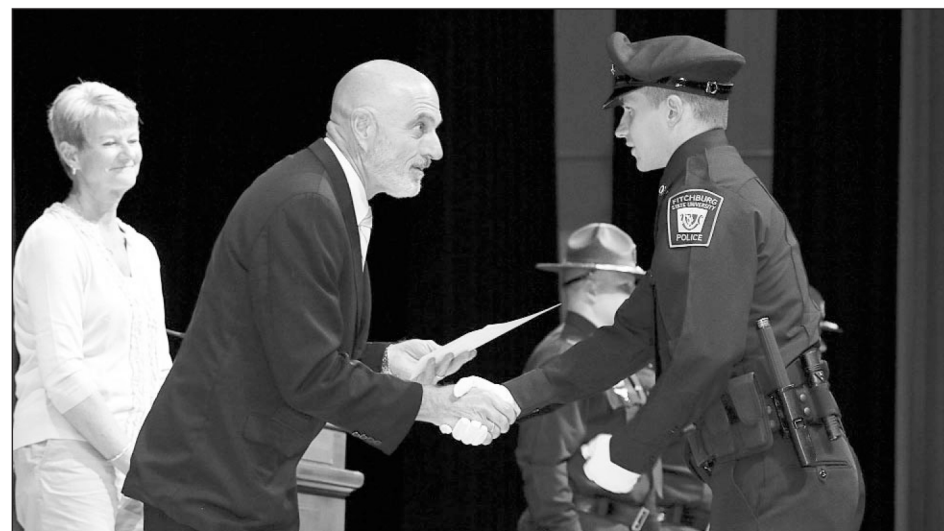
The Massachusetts Police Training Committee — which oversees training for all municipal, university, or environmental police officers in the state — partnered with Fitchburg State to develop the program and train the recruits.

Daniel Zivkovich, executive director of the MPTC, challenged the graduates to serve with honor and courage and to seek excellence to be the best they can be for their communities and the profession.

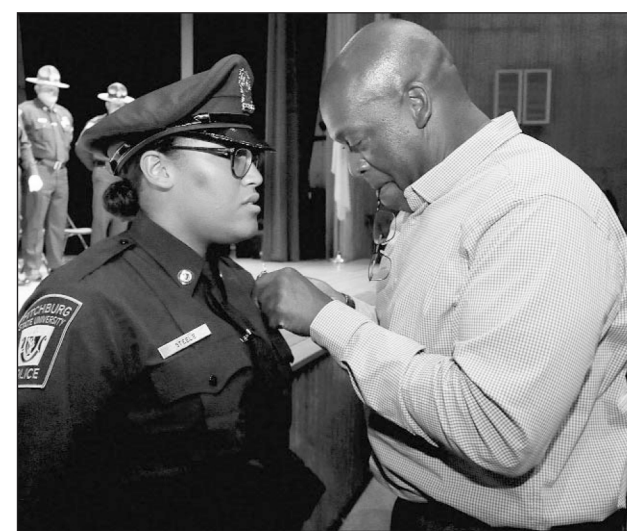
"The final exam will be when you put on the badge and head to your first

shift," he said.

Follow Mina on Twitter @mlcorpuz.



Cadet Nicholas McLaughlin of Fitchburg gets his certificate from Municipal Police Training Committee Executive Director Daniel Zivkovich.



Cadet Morgan Steele has her badge pinned by her father, Raymond.

# LOCAL

## COLLEGE TOWN

### *FSU's police program celebrates first graduating class*

**By Bonnie Russell**

Telegram & Gazette Staff

The tie that binds police officers is something the first recruit officer class of Fitchburg State University's police program got a taste of as they took the oath of honor recently, marking a milestone in the program believed to be the first of its kind in the nation.

Among them was Jami S. Parker of Leominster.

"I always wanted to be a police officer and when I heard about the program I said, sign me up," Ms. Parker said, adding that she had never even thought about getting a master's but since it was an option, decided to go for it.

Fitchburg State created the five-year police program in close collaboration with the state's Municipal Police Training Committee. Graduates of the program will finish with bachelor's and master's degrees as well as certification to work full time in municipal police departments across Massachusetts.

After years of academic study, the recruit officers spent the last 17 weeks in a comprehensive program of physical training and tactical skills development that included qualification at the firing range and emergency vehicle operations.

Class leader Ryan J. Richard of Shirley told his fellow graduates he would follow them into any situation not knowing the outcome. "We are not nine individuals anymore. We are a team," he said.

Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus told the graduates to be proud of their accomplishments

## COLLEGE

*From Page B1*

and their embodiment of the university's motto of perseverance.

Academy Director Lisa Lane McCarty said the graduates should feel great pride for the achievements. "We're bonded for life for what we've been through together," she said.

MPTC Executive Director Daniel Zivkovich said the graduates will be unrivaled candidates for police posts as they enter the labor force.

However, it isn't an instant process for those applying to departments that are under civil service and hire officers from a list provided by the state.

Leominster is one of those offices, Ms. Parker said. Her long-term goal is to take the civil service exam and apply to the Leominster police department. If she is placed high enough on the list, she will already have a leg-up over other candidates without police certification training, but for non-civil service departments, "I could just go and apply now," she said.

Right now though, another round of rigorous training is on the agenda for Ms. Parker, who has enlisted in the Army National Guard, and is preparing to leave next Thursday for basic training at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri.

The officers who were sworn in are: John A. Francis of Quincy; Tyler H. Frati of Hubbardston; Nicholas J. McLaughlin of Fitchburg; Jonathan R. Paiva of Marlboro; Jami S. Parker of Leominster; Nicole T. Patterson of Littleton; Ryan J. Richard of Shirley; Morgan R. Steele of Somerset; and Claritza L. Taylor of Westminster.

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## FSU OK'd for nationwide online courses

**By Amanda Burke**

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FITCHBURG — Fitchburg State University last month became the first four-year, public university in the state to receive clearance to offer online courses to students nationwide, an official said.

The university was

approved to participate in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement, known as SARA.

SARA is an interstate agreement that allows colleges and universities located in a member state to offer online courses to students located in other SARA member states, according to the

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

Massachusetts was approved to join SARA on June 7, according to the state higher education office.

Alberto Cardelle, FSU provost and vice president for academic affairs, said previ-

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## FSU OK'd for nationwide online courses

**FSU/From Page 1**

ous to joining the agreement FSU negotiated with each state in which it wished to offer online courses individually.

Fitchburg State University had won approval to offer its online courses to students in 30 states, he said.

“Now, with SARA, we’re authorized everywhere” that participates in the interstate agreement, he said.

According to the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements, the only state not participating in SARA is California.

Fitchburg State University joins 11 other colleges in the commonwealth that are authorized to enroll students from other SARA states, according to the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

With the agreement, Fitchburg State can begin



A sign welcomes golfers to the 15th annual Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc. Tournament at Oak Hill Country Club in Fitchburg. The university became the first four-year public university in the state to be approved to offer online classes nationwide.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE FILE PHOTO

recruiting students from 49 states to enroll in the school’s online courses, said Cardelle.

The college can also begin offering financial aid to these students, he said, adding that SARA also makes it easier for students enrolled in online courses that require real-world, practical experi-

ence, to find internships.

Currently, about 1,000 students enrolled in Fitchburg State University degree or certificate programs take courses entirely online, said Cardelle.

With the authorization, the college will begin marketing its online programs including that for a Mas-

ters of Business, nursing and education to a wider audience, he said.

FSU has been offering online courses since 2008, said Cardelle, earlier than many other higher education institutions.

“That puts us ahead of a lot of our sister institutions and competitors,” he said.

## FSU gets grant for nursing transfers

With the need for baccalaureate level nurses continuing to rise, Fitchburg State University has received a \$29,000 Higher Education Nursing & Allied Health Grant from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education that makes it easier for nursing students from three Massachusetts community colleges to complete their bachelor's

degrees.

The grant is to develop admissions agreements between Fitchburg State and Quinsigamond, Bristol and Middlesex community colleges.

The project will allow associate degree-earning registered nurses to matriculate into Fitchburg State's online RN to BS in Nursing program while they remain in the workforce.

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Tayjaun McKenzie from Lynn moves his supplies into his dormitory Monday at Fitchburg State University with help from his father. SENTINEL&ENTERPRISE PHOTOS /SCOTT LAPRADE

## Teamwork helps smooth move-in day at Fitchburg State University

By Mina Corpuz  
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andenterprise.com

**F**ITCHBURG — Erin Mader will be less than an hour away from her family in Tewksbury as she attends Fitchburg State University, but she will always have a piece of home with her.

The 18-year-old will share a dorm room with a fellow Shawsheen Valley Technical High School graduate, Leah Sheehan, of Billerica, who is also 18, as the two study nursing.

“It’s very overwhelming, but I’m excited,” Sheehan said Monday morning as students moved into their dormitories. With the help of the school’s sports teams, she and Mader got all of their belongings into their room to begin unpacking and decorating.

On Labor Day, first-year students from around the state moved into their new homes on the Fitchburg State cam-



Peelar Forde, right, and her sister, Zoe, from Springfield, move into Fitchburg State Monday. Football players at rear help with the cause.

pus. Most will settle into the Helen Ross-Russell towers, which houses about 450 first-year students.

Teams from Housing and Residential Services worked with the sports teams to help move students in.

At Russell towers, a campus officer directed up to four cars up a hill and into a parking lot at the foot of the dormitory.

Within minutes, football players donning their green and yellow jerseys helped the families unload the student’s plas-

tic totes, fans, and other items into green carts.

During the rush, a line formed from the parking lot to the dorm’s one elevator to bring students upstairs. Once there, the move-in crew helped unload their belongings.

Please see **MOVE/6**



Michayla Hosmer and her mom Irene from Belchertown get Michayla's room location from a Fitchburg State University helper.



Michael Sellards (middle) from East Boston gets help from a football player unloading the family truck

SENTINEL&ENTERPRISE PHOTOS / SCOTT LAPRADE

## Teamwork helps move

**MOVE**/From Page 1

Vinny Ermano, a freshman on the football team, helped other first years move in. He and team members arrived at 9 a.m. and were scheduled to work in shifts through the afternoon.

"It's good when we're all here," the Shirley resident said. "It makes things easier."

The first wave of move into Russell Towers was in full swing around 9 a.m. and started up again an hour later. Move-in was scheduled to last until 3 p.m.

Next door at Aubuchon Hall was less crowded. The dormitory is mostly for upper classmen.

Tayjaun McKenzie, 20, of Lynn was moving in with the help of his parents, family, and members of the cheerleading squad.

He will play on the basketball team and study business management.

"It's fun being here," McKenzie said in his new room that is part of a suite. "It's about an hour drive in and I made it half an hour."

His mother, Subrina, said it has been hectic getting prepared for the move and to drop off her only child.

"It's been rough on the family, but we're proud of how hard he's worked," she said.

Follow Mina on Twitter @mlcorpuz



Erin Mader from Tewksbury and her mom, Lisa, start to unpack in her dorm.

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The North Central Coalition hosted the 3rd Congressional District debate with, from left, Mike Mullen (I-MA), Lori Trahan (D-MA) and Rick Green (R-MA) at Fitchburg State University on Thursday.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/JOHN LOVE

## Policy talk takes center stage

### Candidates stay civil in 3rd District debate

By Chris Lisinski  
clisinski@lowellsun.com

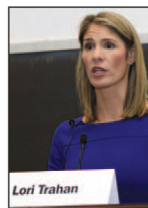
FITCHBURG — Policy talk took central stage at a 3rd Congressional District debate Thursday night as candidates navigated questions ranging from how to solve the opioid epidemic to the growth of student-loan debt.

Democratic nominee Lori



Mike Mullen

Trahan, Republican nominee Rick Green and independent candidate Mike Mullen, who was appearing in a general-election debate for the first time, focused mostly on the topics at hand, rarely attacking one another or engaging in rebuttals. Many of the questions at the debate — hosted at Fitchburg State University by the Elect North Central Coalition and part-



Lori Trahan

ners including *The Sun* and the *Sentinel & Enterprise* — focused specifically on federal legislation. Candidates shared stances on the federal budget deficit (Green said he will not vote for any budget that adds to the national debt, Trahan criticized Republican tax cuts that added to the debt and Mullen said the issue is a problem but that deficit spending has some utility), on energy infrastructure (Green



Rick Green

said if elected, he would help advocate for the state legislation to lower energy costs, while Trahan and Mullen called for investment in renewable energy) and on several other topics.

The only major back-and-forth came during a question about how to restore civility in Washington. During her answer, Trahan called for

Please see **DEBATE/8**

# Policy talk takes center stage at 3rd District debate

**DEBATE/**From Page 1

campaign-finance reform as a way to ensure voters' voices are heard and specifically called out Green.

"Money in politics is a huge problem," Trahan said. "There's a lot of corporate money in this system. In fact, my opponent here wants to see more corporate money in our election. That's the corruptive influence we need to get out of our democracy."

Trahan's criticism of Green did not go into detail, but it is likely a reference to the Republican candidate's business and the Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance, an organization he founded. Earlier this

year, Green's company, 1A Auto, was a plaintiff in a case challenging a Massachusetts law that blocks corporate donations to political candidates. The state Supreme Judicial Court upheld the law, and the plaintiffs are mulling a challenge to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance is also suing the state over a law requiring it to disclose its top donors on advertisements.

Given a chance to rebut Trahan's remarks during the debate, Green did not answer directly. He noted the "irony" that the first direct attack of the night came during a question about civility, then spoke

about his business experience conducting negotiations to "make everybody win."

The two also disagreed on immigration. Green said he supports treating undocumented immigrants humanely, but that they should "go to the back of the line" seeking permanent residence behind legal immigrants and that so-called sanctuary cities have violated the "rule of law." Trahan said those communities ensure that lawbreakers are punished and that anti-immigrant sentiment is damaging to the country.

"This is the job of Congress," Trahan said. "This is why you send people

down there, roll up your sleeves, and find common ground on what's going to work for our future. We are a country of immigrants."

Many of Mullen's answers included numerous policy details. When asked about trade agreements, he worked in references to automation, China joining the World Trade Organization, the Trans-Pacific Partnership and tariffs during a two-minute answer.

Mullen noted that he was running as an independent candidate specifically to counter what he described as damaging effects of the two-party system.

"It's been too divisive,"

Mullen said. "The party structure itself creates that 'us-versus-them' (attitude) as well as the means to finance that."

Several of the questions saw Trahan and Green rehash points familiar to those who have seen them speak on the campaign trail before. Asked about how to grapple with growing student debt, Trahan stressed the importance of vocational schools and community colleges and said an "arms race" of amenities at private institutions was driving up excessive costs. Green again said his experience overseeing a distribution makes him "uniquely qualified" to disrupt the trade

of fentanyl.

The Republican candidate had a new bit of information to share on two other topics, though. When discussing opioids, he had previously said he'd appoint a staffer to focus exclusively on the issue, and on Thursday night, Green said he already did so. He also said, if elected, he would personally ensure Route 2 — a state highway — is expanded to six lanes, building on previous promises to fix the Concord rotary.

Another debate is scheduled for 3rd District candidates next Tuesday night in Haverhill.

*Follow Chris on Twitter @ChrisLisinski.*

# LOCAL

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## Congressional candidates stake out positions

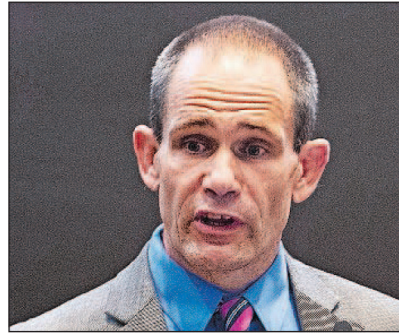
By Paula J. Owen  
Correspondent

FITCHBURG – During a mostly civil debate Thursday night between three candidates vying for the Third Congressional District seat in the House of Representatives, the candidates fielded questions from panelists and the audience.

The new Elect North Central Coalition hosted the 90-minute debate in Kent Recital Hall

in the Conlon Fine Arts Building at the Fitchburg State University. Elect North Central is a coalition of leaders in media, education, community and business organizations dedicated to making the democratic process accessible and assuring that local and regional issues are examined and addressed by candidates running for office.

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Independent candidate Mike Mullen  
[T&G STAFF PHOTOS/ASHLEY GREEN]



Republican candidate Rick Green



Democratic candidate Lori Trahan

### POSITIONS

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Democratic candidate Lori Trahan of Westford, Republican candidate Rick Green of Pepperell and independent candidate Mike Mullen of Maynard responded to questions on economic development, student debt, immigration policies, the opioid epidemic, international trade, public transportation, the mounting national debt, energy strategies and transgender rights laws.

The Third Congressional District stretches from Haverhill in the northeast through Lawrence and Lowell in the Merrimack Valley, to Gardner and Fitchburg in the west, and southward through Concord and the Nashoba Valley to Clinton, Hudson and Marlboro.

The three candidates are competing in the Nov. 6 general election to succeed Rep. Niki Tsongas. In 2007, Ms. Tsongas was the first woman elected to Congress from Massachusetts in 25 years, to the same seat held three decades earlier by her

husband, Paul E. Tsongas.

Ms. Trahan, who grew up in Lowell and went to Georgetown University on a volleyball scholarship, said families in Lowell, Fitchburg and other communities in the district are “disproportionately harmed” in the state by the opioid epidemic, wage stagnation and lack of public transportation.

“Washington does need to go back to work,” Ms. Trahan said.

She said higher education needs restructuring to make it accessible to those who cannot afford it, and a pathway is needed for undocumented immigrants living in the U.S.

“We’ve done it before. We did find agreement before,” Ms. Trahan said. “We need to give a pathway to people living here and paying taxes and that includes DREAMers. We made a promise to them years ago.”

Mr. Mullen, who works as an information technology leader in the health care industry, spoke about the growing number of voters who are unenrolled in political parties in Massachusetts.

“Voters are looking for an alternative to the two-party system. ... I think today’s system is too

divisive,” he said.

Mr. Mullen said reduced fees for public transportation are needed, the federal government should not make money from interest on student loans and political parties should not use immigration to divide the country.

“We are a country of immigrants ... it has made us strong,” he said. “We need to address immigration right away and make a path for those here contributing to the communities. (We’ve) all benefited from them being here. They are our friends and neighbors.”

Mr. Green, a co-founder of the Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance and co-founder and CEO of an online auto parts business that he started with his brother 20 years ago, becoming the largest employer in Pepperell, said governing is analogous to running his successful business. His business employs more than 500 people.

Mr. Green said he knows what it takes to get the economic engine of the Third Congressional District running.

“I have done it,” he said. “I can bring economic development to the region. People here are capable of producing if given the chance.”

# LOCAL

## COLLEGE TOWN

### *FSU professor will share secrets of immigration law*

**By Bonnie Russell**

Telegram & Gazette Staff

The word immigration is well-known to most Americans and just hearing it these days can cause some people's blood pressure to rise and fists to clench, but much of American immigration history is less familiar, something Fitchburg State University professor Benjamin Railton hopes to help correct in a lecture on Sept. 19.

Kicking off FSU's Community Read of 2018-19 — Celeste Ng's acclaimed novel "Everything I Never Told You" — Mr. Railton will present, "Everything They Never Told You about Immigration Histories and Stories," at 3:30 p.m. in the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library.

In Ng's novel, a family's secrets are closely tied to themes of immigration and ethnic identity. Much of American immigration history also has its secrets, and in this talk,

Mr. Railton will share some of the histories and stories that are rarely told.

One example is the history of American immigration law, which is largely misunderstood on multiple levels,

Mr. Railton said, adding that he will also address the parallel history of anti-immigrant exclusion and violence, including Chinese Exclusion.

He explained in an email that this later history "goes through cycles at least every half century with much of the same rhetoric and narratives (ie. Ben Franklin's anti-German sentiments in the 1750s, anti-French sentiments in the 1790s, and so on), and that becomes more overt throughout the 19th century and into the early 20th (not just Chinese Exclusion, but anti-Jewish and 'anarchist' violence in the late 19th century, eugenics arguments in early 20th century, etc.)"

He also plans to share "the stories

### See COLLEGE, B3

of immigrant communities that have always been part of American history and endure through and after those exclusions (ie. Chinese Americans like Yung Wing, Filipino Americans like those who fight in the War of 1812, Japanese Americans who fight in WWII, to name just a few Asian American communities)."

The Community Read continues at 3:30 p.m. Oct. 2 in the Falcon Hub in Hammond Hall. Roundtable discussions of themes in the book will be facilitated by students in the English Honors Society. Both events are free and the public is welcome.



**Railton**



## CONCERT

# Music first, labels optional

**'Alt-grassy' all-female band Della Mae to perform Oct. 20 at Fitchburg State**

By **Richard Duckett**  
Telegram & Gazette Staff

FITCHBURG — Della Mae vocalist and guitarist Celia Woodsmith doesn't especially like labels. On the other hand, "there is something to be said for telling people what they're going to get," she said.

So defining her terms, Woodsmith said that with Della Mae we've got a "contemporary alternative Americana bluegrass band." Or, as some people say affectionately, "alt-grassy."

When the band comes to Fitchburg State University on Saturday as part of the Fitchburg State CenterStage arts and culture series, the audience will be getting "our usual high-energy performance with a ton of original music," Woodsmith said.

Formed in Boston in 2009, Della Mae is an all-female string band, something that's also important to its definable identity. "The core of Della Mae is to promote female musicians," Woodsmith said.

The music can be described using a number of terms, such as inviting, defiant and captivating. The original material often has a historic feel to it with images of women mill workers challenging the hierarchy by becoming part of the labor movement (as in the song "Boston Town," written by Woodsmith). At the same time, something like "Boston Town" also sounds very current. Meanwhile, all the songs are underpinned by tight harmonies and superb musicianship.

Della Mae consists of Woodsmith, Kimber Ludiker (fiddle, vocals), Jenni Lynn Gardner (mandolin, vocals) and

## Della Mae

**When:** 8 p.m. Oct. 20

**Where:** Fitchburg State University, Weston Auditorium, 353 North St., Fitchburg

**How much:** \$28; \$25 Fitchburg state alumni, seniors and staff; \$5 students. Tickets can be purchased online at [fitchburgstate.edu/centerstage](http://fitchburgstate.edu/centerstage)

Zoe Guigueno (bass, vocals).

"We all have different backgrounds," Woodsmith said. But they're united by bluegrass music, "which is something that we love to play together."

These days, the band is technically "based out of Nashville, but only one of us lives there," Woodsmith said. Woodsmith lives in Maine.

Ludiker and Gardner are original members, while Woodsmith came aboard in 2011 and Guigueno in 2015 amid a few changes of personnel.

For Woodsmith, being a key member of a bluegrass group (she writes a lot of their compositions as well as being lead vocalist) wasn't how she might have initially defined herself.

She grew up in Vermont and later was playing blues and rock 'n' roll in the Boston area.

"I don't think I picked this type of music, I think it picked me," she said. She met Ludiker at a Wednesday-night jam session in Somerville.

"Kimber (Ludiker) picked me out and asked me if I would like to sing with Della Mae, and now here I am with a pretty successful career in bluegrass. It's not something I expected."

Della Mae has released three albums so far — "I Built This Heart" in 2011, "This World Oft Can Be" (a Grammy nominee in 2014), and "Della Mae" in 2015. Rolling Stone named Della Mae one of "10 bands to watch for in 2015."

In 2016 the band took a



**Della Mae will be performing Oct. 20 at Fitchburg State University.** [COURTESY PHOTO/TERRA NOVA]

break from touring after having been averaging 220 days on the road per year.

"We did take a little time off. We decided we wanted some family time. We never really quote-unquote 'quit,' which is kind of a rumor I'd like to dispel," Woodsmith said. "We took that time to write and go with family and have new adventures." This year, Courtney Hartman (guitar, banjo, vocals) left the band to pursue new directions, but the parting was amicable, Woodsmith said.

Now Della Mae is planning on a new album. "We have a lot of new material. We've been writing a lot together and listening of other people's stuff," Woodsmith said. The

band has also been "recording songs people request from us."

As for touring, "this year we've pretty much flat out," including performances in Russia.

"I think it's a struggle for every band sometimes. It can depend on things as fickle as the weather. We have a pretty amazing group of fans that follow us and show up. We've had a lot of support," Woodsmith said.

Out on the road, Della Mae "decided to get back to the roots of promoting women in music." Top female musicians have been making special guest appearances. "It's been a lot of fun to invite these women out with us," Woodsmith said.

Asked if the band would

ever invite male musicians to work with them, she said, "We have kind of thought about that in the last year or so. We have nothing against men, of course. But the idea of Della Mae is to see (female) musicians who aren't in the limelight so much as men."

Still, a male group such as the Boston-area bluegrass band Barnstar! could be a collaborator on a project, Woodsmith said.

"So we would collaborate but not go out on the road with a guy because of who we are." Seeing can be defining.

"It really is an honor of my life to look out at the audience and see a little girl who might think, 'This is something I could be,'" Woodsmith said.