



Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito joins Mayor Stephen DiNatale, far right, Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus, second from right, state Sen. Dean Tran, R-Fitchburg, left, and state Rep. Stephan Hay, D-Fitchburg, at the ideaLab at Fitchburg State University, where nine grants totaling \$500,000 in economic development grants were announced. Fitchburg received \$60,000.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/JOHN LOVE

Fitchburg gets \$60G economic development grant

By **Mina Corpuz**

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FITCHBURG — A half a million dollars in state grants divvied up among the city and other urban communities in the state will help support projects that drive economic development.

“If you stack them up, they add up to a lot,” said Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito, who joined city officials and nonprofit leaders from the across the state at Fitchburg State University’s ideaLab in the Theater Block Thursday.

A total of nine grants totaling \$500,000 were awarded to Fitchburg and other communities through the Urban Agenda Grant Program, which focuses on economic vitality and building safer

and stronger urban neighborhoods.

Polito awarded a \$60,000 grant to Fitchburg State that will support programming at the ideaLab and provide resources for entrepreneurs to develop businesses.

She called the university an asset to the city for producing graduates who want to start their businesses and stay in the community after completing their education.

FSU President Richard Lapidus said the last time Polito visited the ideaLab was when it was just a shell. He was pleased to have her see the finished space and receive the grant that will help revitalize downtown.

“It all boils down to having strong, local leadership and creation of an impactful program that changes the way your community

operates,” Lapidus said.

Mayor Stephen DiNatale said the grant is another tool in the city’s toolbox that can help Fitchburg stand out.

Award recipients from as far as Barnstable and other cities like Worcester, Boston, and Springfield accepted them from Polito. The other communities plan to use the Urban Agenda funding for programs and support services.

Fitchburg is among more than 50 communities across the state — those defined as urban centers, gateway cities, and those with a median household income below the state average — that are eligible for the grant.

Follow Mina on Twitter @mcorpuz.

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Trahan gets to work in Fitchburg



U.S. Rep. Lori Trahan signs her name on the wooden truss at the BF Brown School renovation, where other dignitaries had signed it at the start of the work on the site.

SENTINEL&ENTERPRISE/SCOTT LAPRADE

Takes tour of downtown Theater Block and Arts Community

By Mina Corpuz

mcorpuz@sentinelandenterprise.com

FITCHBURG — Lori Trahan's first day as congresswoman representing the 3rd District brought her to the city Monday to see economic development efforts in the downtown.

She toured the Theater Block and Fitchburg Arts Community — which are part of efforts to revitalize downtown and the North of Main neighborhood — and spoke with city leaders about ways she can help Fitchburg.

“There are lots of opportunities we should be on the lookout for to

bring funding to Fitchburg,” Trahan said. “We can always use more.”

She was sworn in last week to represent the district that spans from the Merrimack Valley to North Central Massachusetts.

Her visit began at the city offices at Putnam Place to meet with Mayor Stephen DiNatale.

Afterward, Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus met them at the Theater Block. He led a tour of the renovated second floor, which is a computer lab for the university's game design program and the Idea Center space for

Please see **TRAHAN/8**



From left, U.S. Rep. Lori Trahan, Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale and Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus look over the ceiling painted by students in the university's Idea Center's second floor during a tour on Monday.

SENTINEL&ENTERPRISE PHOTOS / SCOTT LAPRADE



U.S. Rep. Lori Trahan chats with Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale after leaving the Idea Lab at Fitchburg State University during her tour of the city's downtown on Monday.

Trahan takes tour of downtown Fitchburg

TRAHAN/From Page 1
entrepreneurs to meet.

Lapidus said the project has been a way to bring the university to Main Street and provide a place for people in the community to develop business ideas.

"If we can find another

place to plant the flag and make Main Street look good ... it will take care of itself," he said.

DiNatale added that the Theater Block project has been a partnership with the city that has been transformative for downtown.

Lapidus also offered Trahan the ability to hold office hours at the university like her predecessor, Niki Tsongas, did.

Last, Trahan walked with the mayor and city officials down Main Street to the former B.F. Brown School, which will be

transformed into a complex of affordable housing and studio space.

That building is across the Street from the Fitchburg Art Museum, which plans to work with the artists living at the arts community, said Director Nick Capasso.

Elite Construction and Design is working on the renovation project. During the tour, Trahan met several workers at the construction site, including the firm's president, Matt Fournier, who gave her a hard hat with her name on it that she wore to tour the

inside of the building.

She and city officials climbed three flights of stairs past halls of old lockers and former classrooms to get to the roof, where she signed a truss that was placed there when construction began in November.

Taking stock of the district



U.S. Rep. Trahan, D-Westford, who represents the 3rd Congressional District, meets with Fitchburg officials for an economic development tour Monday afternoon. [PHOTOS/PAULA J. OWEN]

US Rep. Lori Trahan tours Fitchburg to assess local needs

By Paula J. Owen
Correspondent

FITCHBURG – After a tour of key areas of the city Monday afternoon, newly seated U.S. Rep. Lori Trahan said one of her priorities is supporting an infrastructure package in 2019 that would meet the needs of Fitchburg.

Ms. Trahan, D-Westford, represents the 3rd Congressional District, which 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.

She beat a Republican and an independent candidate in the Nov. 6 election to succeed 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.

On Monday, Ms. Trahan, who grew up Lowell, spent part of her first day in the district since being sworn in as a member of the 116th



U.S. Rep. Trahan, D-Westford, who represents the 3rd Congressional District, signs a roof truss inside the former B.F. Brown School in Fitchburg. NewVue Communities is renovating the building into artist housing.

Congress on an economic development tour in Fitchburg with Mayor Stephen L. DiNatale; Fitchburg State University President Richard S. Lapidus; Marc Dohan, executive director of NewVue Communities, and other officials. Stops on the tour included the city offices on Boulder Drive, the Fitchburg State campus, the Theater Block on Main Street

that the university is renovating, and the former B.F. Brown School on Elm Street, which is undergoing a transformation into a 62-unit artist community by NewVue Communities. The tour also stopped at the Fitchburg Art Museum across the street from B.F. Brown.

See TRAHAN, A4

TRAHAN

From Page A3

“There’s a lot of opportunity here,” Ms. Trahan said after the tour. “You have a community with a common vision working together to achieve it including with private businesses, non-profits, and state and federal partners. It is important for me to come out and hear the needs of Fitchburg, whether it is better bridges and roads or laying broadband and fiber optics to attract employers. Those are things I will lobby for in Washington as part of an infrastructure package.”

Lowell and Fitchburg are similar cities, Ms. Trahan said, with their old mill buildings, and successful public colleges. The city’s unique history and demographics are used to leverage historic and low-income housing tax credits that help spur economic development, she said.

“Everyone is working together to change the trajectory of the city, and I am excited to be part of it,” she said.

Investments in the creative economy such as the B.F. Brown complex are exciting,



U.S. Rep. Trahan, D-Westford, who represents the 3rd Congressional District, talks with Fitchburg Art Museum Director Nicholas Capasso on a tour of the city Monday afternoon, with Fitchburg State University President Richard S. Lapidus in the background. [PHOTO/PAULA J. OWEN]

she said, and FSU’s revitalization of the Theater Block adds a new dimension to downtown Fitchburg.

Ms. Trahan, who went to Georgetown University on a volleyball scholarship, campaigned on helping families in Lowell, Fitchburg and other communities that she said are disproportionately harmed by the opioid epidemic, wage stagnation and lack of public transportation.

Additionally, during her campaign 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 United States.

Monday morning, Ms. Trahan visited the UMass Lowell Innovation Hub in Haverhill to meet with community leaders regarding the partnership between UMass Lowell and private businesses on cybersecurity awareness for small- and medium-sized businesses.

After leaving Fitchburg, she stopped at her district office in Lowell to meet with federal government employees affected by the continuing federal government shutdown.

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FSU GRADS HAVE EXTRA REASON FOR CHEER THIS SEASON



SHE EARNED IT: Ada Ivette Bonneau of West Townsend gets help with her Masters graduate hood from Becky Copper-Glenz, dean of Graduate and Continuing Education, during Fitchburg State University's 122nd Winter Commencement Friday night. **See a slide show at sentinelandenterprise.com.**

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE / JOHN LOVE

With every diploma, a milestone

By Stephen Landry
Staff writer

FITCHBURG — Standing before the Class of 2018 Friday night, Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus singled out one class member whose story inspired

him, and serves as an example for others to follow.

He spoke of Kristin Laura King, a Fitchburg resident who entered FSU after serving in the military.

“The first airplane trip of her life was to go to basic

training in South Carolina,” Lapidus said in his commencement address.

After the military, including a tour in Iraq, King decided to enroll at FSU, a decision that Lapidus said changed many lives for

the better.

“Kristin doesn't give up. She sought out other veterans on campus and immediately recognized the potential support system that could be offered,” Lapidus said, singling King out

Please see **GRADS/8**

Graduate list/8

FSU grads celebrate special gift: bright tomorrows

GRADS/From Page 1

for a round of applause from the audience. "You stand as an inspiration to all of us, who you have already taught so very much."

Lapidus said the graduates should prepare for difficulties, challenges, and loss. "Be resilient because these are the moments that might build your character and serve as a catalyst for others," he said.

It was one of many inspirational stories that marked Fitchburg State's 122nd Winter Commencement, at the Athletics and Recreation Center. The 492 graduates were urged to enjoy their triumph, prepare for new challenges, and share the knowledge they have acquired over the past four years with others.

Lapidus said the night represented a milestone for the graduates as they prepared to take the next step in their lives.

"This will become one of the most memorable nights of your life, the beginning of one journey and the completion of another," he said.

Valedictorian Quinn Staley told her fellow graduates not to be afraid as they went out into the world. She urged them to remember that the best things come to those who have patience.

"I hope you think of every failure as a hurdle and not a roadblock," said Staley, of Wareham. "You deserve this and you've earned this. Congratulations, Class of 2018."

Before the ceremony, several graduates reflected on their time at the school.

Geoffrey Hines of Leominster said he was shocked to have finally made it to graduation.

"I didn't think I was going to make it to this point, but Fitchburg State has prepared me well to go into the workforce, so I'm very excited," Hines said.

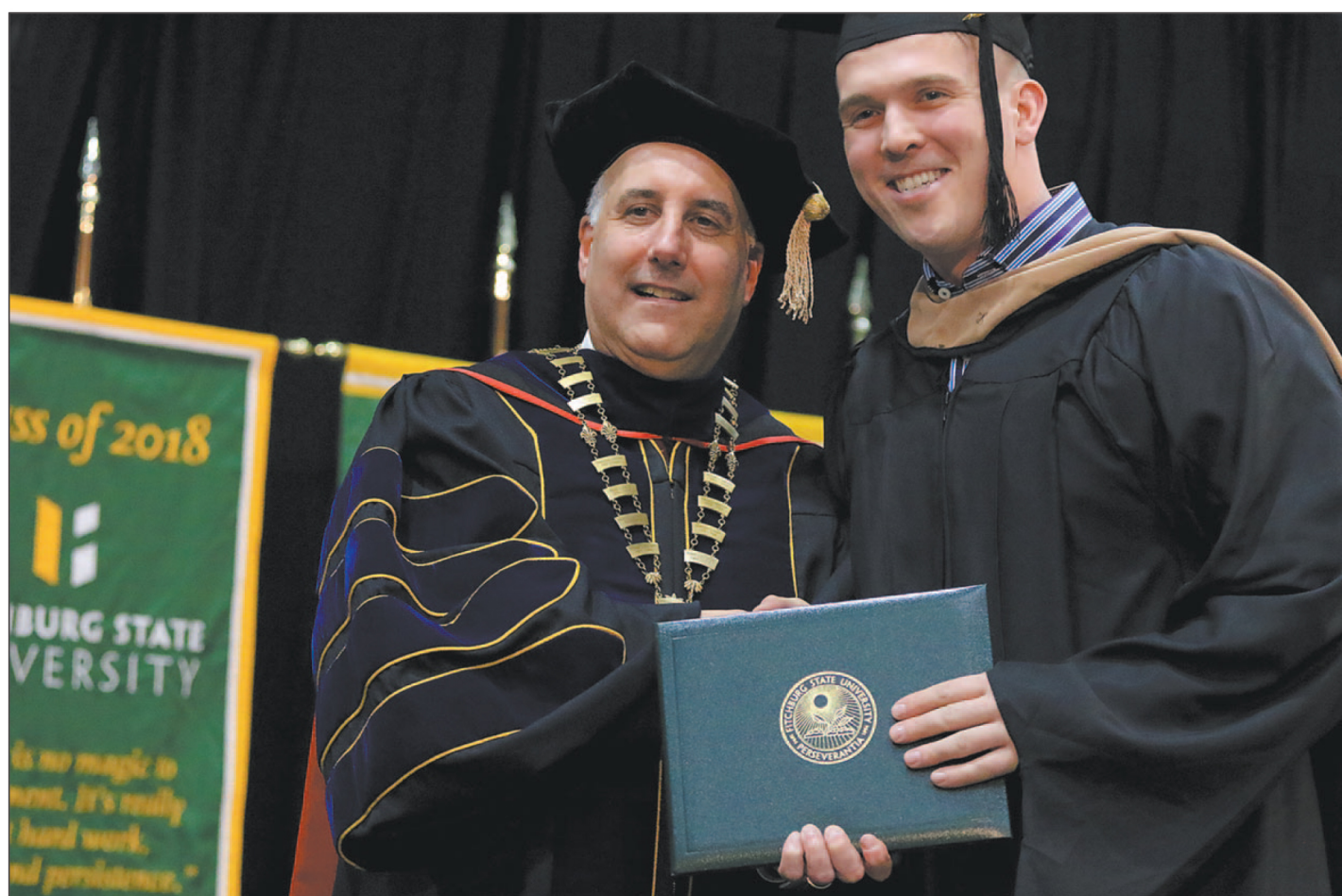
Duncan Anthony Martinez, of Hudson, said he felt a sense of relief as he prepared to receive a diploma.

"All the pressure of the past four years is finally done, so it's exciting," he said.

Nicole Elizabeth Rossi of Leominster said it was a bittersweet night.

"I'm very excited but it's a little sad to be leaving because I loved my four years here," Rossi said. "But it's a relief that we made it."

Follow Stephen on Twitter @Stephen-Landry17.



NIGHT OF PRIDE: Shane Donnelly of Fitchburg stands with FSU President Richard Lapidus after receiving his diploma during Fitchburg State's Winter Commencement at the FSU Athletics and Recreation Center Friday night. Below left: Decorated mortarboards were all over. Below right: Faculty make their way into the ceremony, led by Academic Adviser Elizabeth Swartz.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE PHOTOS / JOHN LOVE



FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY GRADS — FALL 2018

Ashburnham: Frederick Caswell, MED, Special Education; William R. Hoeksema, BS, Criminal Justice; Erin B. Leamy, BS, Communications Media; Thomas S. Patty, MED, Curriculum and Teaching; Sadie J. Zbikowski, MBA, Business Administration

Ashby: Gabriella N. Brodeur, BS, E, Elementary Education 1-6; Kimberly A. Calandrella, BS, Psychological Science; Lauren M. Godin, BS, Human Services; Trevor C. Murphy, BS, English Studies

Fitchburg: Gina M. Angelini, MED, Special Education; Brittany A. Bickford, BS, Human Services; Sean A. Burke, BS, Political Science; William A. Canterbury, BS, English Studies; Olivia A. Collette,

BS, Nursing - BS; Alissa R. Desilets, MED, Special Education; Shane Donnelly, MBA, Business Administration; Britney Evans, MED, Early Childhood Education; Michael K. Fossa, BS., Industrial Technology; Elaina F. Fournier, MED, Special Education; Carlos J. Garcia-Rivera, BS, Business Administration; Mackenzie E. Gray, BS, Economics; Clarisse Ishimwe, BS, Human Services; Adam J. Jacques, BS, Industrial Technology; Kelly A. Johnson, BS, Political Science; Beatrice M. Kayigwa, BS, Human Services; Kristin L. King, BSE, Early Childhood Education; Michael R. Knight, MED, Curriculum and Teaching; Erica M. Knoll, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies Educ; Peter T. Kougas, BS, Communications

Media; Christian P. LaRoche, BS, Business Administration; Elena Labovitis, MBA, Business Administration; Sandra Leger, BS, Business Administration; Scott D. Maguire, MBA, Business Administration; Sean S. Maki, BS, Criminal Justice; Hector D. Martinez-Rivera, MBA, Business Administration; John J. Murin, BS, Industrial Technology; Jami S. Parker, MS, Criminal Justice; Alondra Y. Pedraza, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies Educ; Camila V. Perlas De Leon, BS, Nursing - BS; Evan A. Pierce, BS, Biology; Andy S. Ren, BS, Criminal Justice; Nicole M. Rodriguez, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies; Tashira M. Rodriguez-Alvarez, BA, Sociology; Mamour S. Samb, BS, Business Administration; Tyler J. Scipione, BS, Biology;

Glen S. Shapland, MED, Special Education; Marvin T. Sylvain, BS, Business Administration; Christopher J. Thibodeau, MED, Curriculum and Teaching; Shannen N. Tormey, MBA, Business Administration; Susan M. Wilson, MED, Curriculum and Teaching

Gardner: Joseph A. Arsenaault, BS, Biology; Stacie R. Brown, MBA, Business Administration; Meaghan L. Chase, MED, Special Education; Brian J. Connors, BS, English Studies; Chelsea M. Gentile, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies Educ; Lynda L. Goodale, BS, Nursing, RN to BS; Riley L. Grinkis, BS, Criminal Justice; Stefani L. Munoz, BA English Studies; Tracy J. Salem, MED, Early Childhood Education; Felicia A. Weaver, MED, Special Education; Felicia A. Weaver, CERG, Behav-

ior Analyst Certification; Jacklyn E. White, BS,E, Elementary Education 1-6

Lancaster: Kimberly Liddell, BS, Business Administration

Leominster: Jake T. Allain, BS, Exercise and Sports Science; Samantha N. Boudreau, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies Educ; Catherine M. Brow, MED, Special Education; Taylor-Lynne V. Brown, BS, Nursing - BS; Tara P. Burke, BS, Communications Media; Ryan J. Cali BS, Psychological Science; Tyler J. Chellis, BS, Mathematics; Ashley H. Crank, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies; Yamilka M. Crespo, BS, Human Services; Melissa K. Cunningham-Aubuc, BS, Business Administration; Ashley M. Donahoo, BS, English Studies; Sarah E. Doyle, MED, Special Education; Linda M. Ferris, MBA, Busi-

ness Administration; Sydnee R. Gallant, BS, Nursing - BS; Nicole Geoffrey, BS,E, Early Childhood Education; Jocelyne D.

Goncalves, BS, Psychological Science; Geoffrey E. Hines, BS, History; Gary Inthirath, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies; Katelyn A.

Jenson, BS, Sociology; Veasna T. Kea, BS, Business Administration; Nicole A. Landry, MED, Special Education; Jonathan Lanza, MED, Middle School Education; Felicia R. LeClair, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies; Timothy P. Luksha, BS, Business Administration; Kelsey M. Martino, MBA, Business Administration; Kerry A. McCann, MED, Special Education; Khomphet L. Nanthavong, BS, English Studies; Daniel J. Neal, BS, Criminal Justice;

Nathan B. Paquette, BS, Biology; Carolyn Perla, MBA, Business Administration; John M. Person, MBA, Business Administration; Zachary Presto, MBA, Business Administration; Yamilette Ramos Lopez, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies; Alexandra Rodriguez, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies Educ;

Taylor W. Skinner, BS, Biology; Nicholas C. Starr, MED, Curriculum and Teaching; Raquel M. Tabales, BS, Biology; Lindsey O. Tait, MED, Special Education;

Annie D. Tetteh, MBA, Business Administration; Romeo Tetteh, MBA, Business Administration; Alec Van Wagoner, BS, Sociology

Lunenburg: William T. Cooney, BS, Criminal Justice; Heather L. Dancause, MED, Elementary Education 1-6; Joshua D. Gentilella, BS, Biology; Tonya J. Jarrett, CAGS, Educational Leadership/Mgmt; Lauren R. Letarte, MED, Special Education; Whitney S. Mansfield, BS, Criminal Justice; Karly V. Marshall, BS, Human Services; Benjamin P. McGuire, BS, Biology

Rutland: Jessica M. Joyce, MED, Special Education

Shirley: Sean T. Keller, BS, Business Administration; Christopher F. Langford, MBA, Business Administration; Mary Ann Mestrepice, MED, Curriculum and Teaching; Samantha A. Tedford, BS, Business Administration

Sterling: Dustin A. DelleChi-
aie, MED, Elementary Education 1-6; Tanya M. Rowan, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies Educ

Templeton: Tina L. Dale BS, Business Administration; Erick M. Eiben, MA History; Julia K. Getz, BS, Communications Media

Townsend: Nicolette A. LeClair, BS, Psychological Science; Bita Reilly, MED, Early Childhood Education

West Townsend: Joshua E. Page, BS, Business Administration

Westminster: Dominic M. Barrette, BS, Exercise and Sports Science; Jonathan Duran, MBA, Business Administration;

Nicholas R. Frederick, BS, Communications Media; Kevin M. Murphy, BS, Computer Science; Micayla J. Varieur, BS, Interdisciplinary Studies Educ; Christian A. Vogel, BS, Industrial Technology

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Nursing students from Fitchburg State University hand out clothing to the homeless in the parking lot behind Rye & Thyme in Leominster on Thursday afternoon. From left, seniors Krysten Ross, Keri Joyce, Melissa Rodrigues, Catherine Brennan, Jordan Ayotte and, Rachel Danso chat with Donald Dauphinais Jr., who came for help.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/JOHN LOVE

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

By Peter Jasinski

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L EOMINSTER — Donald Dauphinais Jr. was wearing a set of puffy, Army green coveralls when he greeted the nursing students from Fitchburg State University in a Mechanic Street parking lot Thursday morning.

The warm padding gave him a slight Michelin Man appearance and protected him from the biting wind. But he gladly accepted the sleeping bag and extra gloves the students offered.

He told them he was 55 years old and didn't know where he'd be sleeping that night.

"I haven't figured that out yet," Dauphinais told one of the students.

It was just before noon and the day's temperature had already dipped below 40 degrees. The sun would set in less than five hours.

"I might go down into the woods behind Barnes & Noble

FSU students learned about homeless people in Leominster. They set out to help.

and make a campfire," he said.

Dauphinais was just one of about a dozen people encountered by the Fitchburg State students on Thursday. They set up shop in the parking lot behind Rye & Thyme before moving on to Carter Park to see if there were any homeless people there.

The group, about 10 students, had been collecting winter clothes since late September and Thursday was the day they were finally going to hand them out.

"I had lived in Lunenburg for about 10 years and I never thought this was an issue," said Kerri Joyce, a senior in FSU's nursing program.

"I would never think twice that

there were homeless in the area, or that it was even a problem."

Fellow classmate Grace Muturi said she had often wondered about the people who seemed to congregate in Monument Square every day, standing at the bus stop but never

Please see **HOMELESS/8**



Nursing students from Fitchburg State University collected blankets for the homeless.



Tim Smart picks out a pair of pants.

Nursing students from Fitchburg State University handed out clothing to the homeless on Thursday afternoon. Mary Begley looks for a jacket to stay warm in this winter.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/JOHN LOVE

FSU students aid Leominster's homeless

HOMELESS/From Page 1

boarding the vehicle when it pulled to the curb.

"Every time I've driven by, there are so many people on the common," she said. "We started talking to them and that's when we learned that Leominster has a huge homeless population."

As part of their ongoing studies, the students were assigned a project in which they had to identify an explore a local public-health issue. They chose homelessness and have spent two months interviewing the homeless population living in and around

downtown Leominster.

Joyce said she and her classmates would regularly meet with six individuals. Others, she said, were less inclined to talk to them or weren't in the area as frequently.

The responses they received from these interviews motivated the students to collect winter clothing for the people they had been meeting with, but it's also pushed them in the direction of advocacy.

Joyce explained that some of the people she met with said they are able to get hot meals through soup

kitchens run by non-profits like the Spanish American Center, however she was also told that there are not enough hot meal services in the area to provide food every day.

"Most of them are able to get two meals a week and that's different from other areas," she said. "I went to Lowell and they have meals every day, breakfast, lunch, and dinner."

Muturi and FSU nursing student Selia Cox presented the group's findings to the City Council during its Nov. 13 meeting to ask what the city is doing to help its homeless population.

City Council President Rick Marchand praised the students for their efforts, but also warned them of

possible impacts a homeless shelter might have on Leominster.

"There was discussion years ago with the Leominster Downtown Association. Their feeling was you have to be very careful of what you bring because if you build it, they will come," he said. "You could become overpowered with people you can't serve."

Muturis said she was not encouraged by the response she received from the council.

"The answer we felt we got was they don't want to encourage people to come to Leominster by opening up a shelter," she said.

Follow Peter Jasinski on Twitter @PeterJasinski53



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Arts, culture? Fitchburg's well on the way

Officials lead tour of Arts and Cultural District boosted by state grant program

By **Amanda Burke**

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FITCHBURG — City officials pounded pavement Tuesday morning on a walking tour of the newly designated “Fitchburg Arts and Cultural District,” which for the next three years will benefit from a program aimed at spurring development in Gateway Cities.

The program, called the Transformative Development Initiative, is run by MassDevelopment, the state’s quasi-public agency that works to stimulate economic growth in the state.

“It’s like a business accelerator, but for places,” said executive

Please see **CULTURE/18**



Tom Skwieraski, Fitchburg’s executive director of Planning and Development, addresses the crowd before they took a tour of the Arts and Cultural District Tuesday.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/JOHN LOVE

Arts, culture? Fitchburg's well on the way

CULTURE/From Page 1

director of the program, Noah Koretz, of the Transformative Development Initiative.

MassDevelopment last spring chose Fitchburg, Chelsea, Lawrence and Worcester to participate in the initiative.

It's a three-year program that will give Fitchburg opportunities for technical assistance, direct capital investment and grants to develop a particular area in the city.

Over the duration of the program, the initiative's partner organizations — the city of Fitchburg, Fitchburg State University, NewVue Communities, the Montachusett Opportunity Council, the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce and Elite Construction — will focus on developing real estate and the arts within the "Fitchburg Arts and Culture District," said Koretz.

The district is shaped like a circle. Its midpoint is near City Offices at 166 Boulder Drive and expands outward to the edge of Crocker Field, Lowe Playground, Prichard Street and Laurel Hill Cemetery.

As part of the program, the city received a grant to hire economic development professional Francisco Torres for three years.

Torres, who has offices in the Fitchburg Theater Block, started in the job in September. His sole job it to move the district closer to becoming a destination for arts and culture, and connect current or potential business owners with opportunities to begin or flourish.

Officials pointed out a number of development projects already underway in the "Fitchburg Arts and Cultural District."



State and local officials surround Tom Skwieraski, Fitchburg's executive director of Planning and Development, before a tour of the Fitchburg Arts and Cultural District.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/JOHN LOVE

Jay Bry, vice president of finance and administration at Fitchburg State University, said the Theater Block isn't open to the public yet. But meetings are already being held on the second floor, home to the ideaLab.

Students will be taking classes on the second floor in the spring, he said, though renovation of the theater itself will be completed later.

The Theater Block will link downtown with the university, furthering the goal of making the about 1-mile stretch from FSU and Main Street the "most walkable and bikeable" area in the city, Economic Development Director Tom

Skwierawski said.

Elite Construction, led by Matthew Fournier, will turn 409 Main St. into apartments and a restaurant at street level.

Up the street, old City Hall will be renovated and restored to municipal headquarters, freeing up the old General Electric building at 166 Boulder Drive, he said. The old Bank of America building next door, which is owned by the city, will also be municipal space.

Private developer Rick Boscardin has pulled building permits to turn the old Fitchburg Gas and Electric building into condos, according to Skwierawski.

On the final leg of the walking tour, officials stopped at the Fitchburg Art Museum. Across the street, construction was underway on the Fitchburg Arts Community, which is taking shape inside the old B.F. Brown school.

Once completed, the mixed-income community will house 70-80 tenants who each work in the field of the arts, as well as studio space.

According to the project's contractor, Fournier, the fire damage inside the building has been cleaned up, and a new roof will be put on in time for winter's snow.

Museum's Executive

Director Nick Capasso said the Fitchburg Arts Community will attract arts entrepreneurs. Once completed, it and the FAM across the street will create something of a campus for the arts visually linked by outdoor art and sculptures.

Marc Dohan, executive director of NewVue Communities, which bought the long-vacant property this summer, said the artists colony will move the city closer to achieving its goal of becoming the destination for arts and culture in North Central Massachusetts.

"We have a promise to really create a hub for arts and culture that we've

talked about for a long time," he said.

Koretz, the MassDevelopment executive director, said developers thinking about buying or rehabbing a building in the "Fitchburg Arts and Cultural District" should reach out to Torres for guidance. (Torres can be reached at ftorres@massdevelopment.com.)

"What this isn't is MassDevelopment coming in and saying, here's what you need to do," Koretz told city officials. "What this is is MassDevelopment coming in as a partnership and saying, what do you want to do and how can we help connect you with resources to make it happen."

December 10, 2018

Colleges rethink MBA programs amid application decline

BY LIVIA GERSHON



FSU growth

MBA applications to Fitchburg State University have increased since 2016, with most growth coming from the online program.



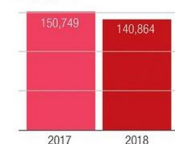
Currently enrolled MBA students:

Online 900
On campus 75

Source: Fitchburg State University

U.S. decline

Total applications for U.S. MBA programs



Source: Graduate Management Admission Council Application Trends Survey Report 2018

Applications for MBA programs across the country fell 7 percent between 2017 and 2018, according to the Graduate Management Admissions Council, a global association of graduate business schools.

The decline is not a new story for graduate-level business programs, particularly traditional ones. Over the past three years, a majority of full-time, two-year MBA programs in the U.S. have seen declining applications.

To fight this national dip, local colleges and universities approach the needs of potential MBA students in new ways.

Fitchburg State University saw a similar 7-percent decline as the national trend from 2017 to 2018, but that one-year figure belies the surge in growth since 2016, as MBA applications jumped from 172 two years ago to 366 a year later. The growth has come almost entirely from the university's online MBA program, which now enrolls 900 students, compared to 75 who attend class on campus.

“The market that we're reaching out to tends to be working professionals who cannot take that time off and do in-person programs,” said Alberto Cardelle, vice president of academic affairs at FSU. “Focusing on skills that they can acquire online gives them a credential that will help them move up in their current jobs.”

Nichols College in Dudley has grown its MBA program an average of 40 percent annually over the past five years thanks partly to a slightly different use of technology.

“We went to something we call high-flex,” said Kerry Calnan, executive director of graduate and professional studies at Nichols.

The idea, Calnan said, is students can do some of the coursework at home whenever they have time, but there are 90-minute live classes each week. Students can either show up on campus for these sessions or, if they're stuck at the office, connect remotely from there.

“You can choose week-to-week if you want to drive to campus and participate,” she said.

Assumption College in Worcester offers an option where students attend classes twice a month and work online the rest of the time.

“What we're finding is students today want flexibility,” said Robin Frkal, director of Assumption's MBA program. “They don't want to give up the in-person educational experience — every student I talked to finds so much value in the interactions they have with the professors and other students that they get in a classroom experience.”

All three schools said they serve students in a range of career situations. But Frkal said Assumption has found success in recent years with a program geared specifically to new graduates. The college's one-year accelerated MBA targets people who've decided to stay in school after completing a bachelor's degree. The idea is early-career professionals who may not yet have family commitments are often willing to sacrifice a year of work at a starting salary to enhance their options when they do hit the job market.

“Just like at one point a bachelor's degree was the gold standard, as we are becoming more and more competitive in the marketplace an MBA is seen as a necessary degree,” Frkal said. “If they spend one year and they complete their MBA degree it may open up doors for them.”

As the national decline in applications suggests, MBA programs face a certain level of headwinds. That's partly because the economy is strong, which can make it easier for many professionals to focus on their jobs rather than retooling to become more competitive.

But Assumption has found the strong economy can work in its favor. Frkal said the college is increasingly marketing to employers rather than just potential students.

“We can partner with firms to use education as a benefit that helps to attract and retain their talent,” she said.

FSU has seen increased interest in its MBA program among employers including local credit unions and hospitals. Some offer reimbursement to workers for continuing their education, or seek out interns from the program.

“We're seeing a lot of small to medium-sized companies that are becoming learning institutions,” said Keith Williamson, dean of business and technology.

Ties with local business are crucial for all three MBA programs. With hospitals and other health providers as a crucial part of the Central Massachusetts economy, Assumption launched a healthcare-oriented concentration, and FSU is considering a similar move.

Nichols created an external advisory board made up of corporate leaders to help ensure its students were receiving the kind of education that would make them attractive as employees. In response to employers' needs, Calnan said, it has expanded its focus on soft skills, conflict resolution and leadership development, supplementing more traditional MBA components like finance and strategic management.

Despite the national decline, Frkal said, MBAs continue to appeal to many students looking for a practical path to career success. For example, Assumption's accounting track provides the credits students need – above and beyond what they receive in a bachelor's program – to receive a CPA license. Students can focus specifically on areas like marketing, banking or operations. But, Frkal said, the bottom line is, regardless of industry, an MBA prepares professionals to find their place helping whatever business they work for to thrive.

“When you graduate with an MBA, you understand all the functions of business operations,” she said.

FSU faculty to teach in China for summer

FITCHBURG — Fitchburg State University faculty members will take their talents to China as part of a new agreement with the AUIA International Summer School.

AUIA collaborates with American universities to provide credit-bearing summer courses, taught in English, to Chinese students during the summer months. The students are typically enrolled at other U.S. universities during the aca-

ademic year but use the summer sessions to keep their English language skills sharp and to catch up on credits while still visiting family in China.

Under the new agreement, Fitchburg State faculty will teach students at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics in China during the summer sessions.

“This agreement will create amazing opportunities for our faculty to broaden their own horizons by teaching in another country, and those experiences will enhance their teaching of our own students when they return,” Fitchburg State President Richard S. Lapidus said.

“We are honored to collaborate with Fitchburg State on this new partnership and look forward to their faculty members making an impact on our students’ lives,” said AUIA President Yefei Xu.

The first cohort of Fitchburg State faculty will be teaching classes in China next summer.



AUIA President Yefei Xu, left, and Fitchburg State University President Richard S. Lapidus sign an agreement that will bring Fitchburg State faculty to China next summer to teach.

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FSU takes action to help Latinos

University hopes to retain students, raise graduation rates through mentors hired courtesy of \$61G grant

By **Mina Corpuz**

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FITCHBURG — A first-year Latino student at Fitchburg State University knew he had to register for spring classes, but didn't know how to get started.

School officials understand that those who are the first in their families to attend college don't always have the same passed down knowledge about how to navigate college and are often on their own to figure it out. To address that, the

university is using state grant money to help first-year male Latino students stay in school and earn their degrees.

"It's a great opportunity for us to begin to provide services that we feel will make our students more successful," said Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Alberto Cardelle, whose office is overseeing efforts supported by a state grant.

Please see **GRANT/10**



Sean C. Goodlett, Fitchburg State University's assistant to the provost for student success, speaks about a grant awarded to the school to help keep Latino students in college and graduating.

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JOHN LOVE

FSU aims to help Latino students

GRANT/From Page 1

Mentors funded through a grant from the state Department of Higher Education connected the student with an advisor who helped him register for classes and change to a major that was better suited for him.

Fitchburg State plans to use the \$61,000 grant to improve retention and graduation rates for male Latino students during the school year and look at how the university can build a supportive environment for its growing Latino population.

“We need to be the ones ready for them,” said Sean Goodlett, assistant to the provost for student success, who is among university officials leading the effort.

The funding the university received is from a Performance Incentive Fund grant, which is available to the 12 state universities and community colleges. They support efforts to close opportunity and achievement gaps, improve college completion rates, and make college more accessible to Massachusetts residents.

At Fitchburg State, faculty and peer mentors can provide interaction and support for first-year male Latino students and help them navigate college life, Goodlett said.

The university received the grant money and began faculty mentorship in October, he said. Student mentors will begin the spring semester.

There are four faculty members and staff from the Provost’s office are serving as mentors, including Cardelle and Goodlett.

The mentors are either fluent in Spanish or have Spanish language skills, Goodlett said.

Among the 720 first-year students, about 50 are male Latino students. Those students are divided up amongst the mentors.

Cardelle has been working with five students. He likes the individual support he can provide.

“Some students like to know they have someone to talk to,” Cardelle said. “Others need more support.”

Students from his group have asked for help with scheduling or how to register for next semester’s classes, he said. One talked with Cardelle about career interests and the provost recommended an internship.

The support and interventions are geared to help first-year students continue with their studies.

Fitchburg State’s overall retention rate, which is a measure of a student advancing from the spring of their freshman year to the fall of their sophomore year, is about 75 percent, Goodlett said. For male Latino students, the retention rate can be as low as 65 percent.

The university is doing well for other student demographics, like African American males, he said, but there is an achievement gap for male Latino students.

“Right now if we can change the story for five or 10 students, that is important,” Goodlett said.

School officials say focusing on this population of students and providing these supports are in response to changing demographics across the state, in Fitchburg, and university.

“Our region here is changing rapidly and the demographically like the whole country,” Cordelle said. “The community has changed faster than the institution and we need to be proactive.”

Within the next dozen years, Latino students could represent a quarter of the university’s student population, Goodlett said. If Fitchburg State is strategic about enrollment, that could happen sooner.

Students from Puerto Rico and of Mexican descent are the top Latino groups at the university, he said.

A goal is to have the largest enrollment of Latino students among the nine state universities, Goodlett said, which would put Fitchburg State on track to seek status as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, which is similar designation as Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

The university’s work to help first-year male Latino students also aligns with its larger, ongoing efforts to improve the first year experience for all students, Goodlett said.

Those efforts include a first year seminar, academic coaching, and workshops to develop skills like time management and goal setting.

He also mentioned the tutoring center that helps at about a thousand undergraduate students throughout the year.

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COLLEGE

From Page B1

Ideas sought for FSU ideaLab

A “think tank” for members of the Fitchburg State University campus and wider community to discuss potential uses of the ideaLab at the Main Street Theater Block will be held at 5:30 p.m. Nov. 15 in the newly renovated site at 717 Main St.

The free event will also include discussion on what types of events the community would like to see at the ideaLab, as well as how to motivate people to explore downtown and take part in supporting the city.

Visit <https://fitchburg-think-tank.eventbrite.com> to register.

FSU has at least 2 in moot court tourney

Regional qualifiers headed to nationals

FITCHBURG — Fitchburg State University will send at least two students to the national competition of the American Collegiate Moot Court tournament in Florida in January following their performance at the regional qualifying contest held last weekend.

The campus hosted nearly 100 student competitors and more than 80 members of the local legal community served as judges during the regional tournament.

Matthew Murphy of Milton, a junior majoring in political science, and Riley Grinkis of Gardner, a senior majoring in criminal justice, made it to the regional final and will compete in the nationals at Florida A&M University College of Law in Orlando, Florida. Those teams that made it to the regional quarterfinals advance to the national tournament, while Murphy and Grinkis won two additional rounds

Please see **FSU/4**

FSU has at least 2 in moot court tourney

FSU/From Page 3

beyond that mark.

“We compete against some very elite schools and more than hold our own,” said Professor Paul Weizer, the longtime coach of the university’s moot court team

“Matt and Riley will be a serious force at nationals,” he added.

Other Fitchburg State students may make the tournament as alternates after the other regional competitions are completed in the coming weeks.

The competition has teams of students on opposing sides of constitutional issues making timed arguments to panels of judges, as in a federal appellate court.

In addition to six teams of students from Fitchburg State, regional tournament participants included students from Bentley University; Bridgewater State University; College of the Holy Cross; Framingham State University; Merrimack College; Patrick Henry College; St. Thomas University; Suffolk University; SUNY Cortland; U.S. Air Force Academy; Wheaton College; and Williams College.

The fictional case being argued this year concerns a woman suing the Olym-



Fitchburg State’s moot court teams, from left in front row: Crystal Aneke, Theresa Klobucher, Kajahna Matos, Riley Grinkis, Lauren Poirier, Sean O’Halloran-Ciccolo and Matthew Murphy; back row from left: Matthew Badagliacca, Benjamin Butkus, Webster Bokoo, William Travers, William Cooney and Alexander Ramos.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

pus State University School of Law, alleging their admissions policy

that gives preferential weight to male applicants violates her right to equal

protection under the law. The plaintiff, who in this case also teaches part-time

at the institution, also argues her First Amendment rights were violated

when she was fired for complaining about the admissions policy.

Remembering the women of World War II

Fitchburg State archivist touts the contributions of females in WWII

By **Julia Sarcinelli**
Correspondent

FITCHBURG — Asher Jackson, archivist at Fitchburg State University, held a talk at the Historical Society Thursday night about the brave women who served in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and the Army Women's Corps during World War II.

The inspiration for his presentation began a year ago when "The Girls of Atomic City: The Untold Story of the Women Who Helped Win World War II," by Denise Kiernan was the book selected for all FSU members to read as part of the Community Reads program.

"That's a familiar narrative," said Jackson about the novel that focuses on the women who worked in factories during the war. "When I started doing research in our archive, I did not find a lot of information on women who worked in the factory, but what I did find was a number of women who fought."

He added that many women who served in the military during this time came from Massachusetts.

Jackson talked about how restrictions on women serving



Fitchburg State University archivist Asher Jackson holds a picture of 1st Lt. Isabel Demmon, who was an Army Nurse from February of 1943 to June of 1945 and from Fitchburg. Demmon was featured in Jackson's program on the women of World War II at the Fitchburg Historical Society on Thursday.

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changed during World War II, and about a few Central Massachusetts women who served their country.

Anna Hyland Zimmerman was the first woman to enroll in the WAAC; Elizabeth Morgan

Haskins was a captain and photography interpreter in England and took a position at Fitchburg State upon returning home; Anne B. Wurts was a Leominster native who was a nurse POW for three years; and

Fitchburg native Isabel Demmon served as a nurse and first lieutenant.

With images of dog tags, newspaper clippings and enlistment papers Jackson painted the picture of local women who

proudly served their country.

Jackson emphasized the importance of sharing stories of veterans, especially those that might not often be told.

"We need to write our own history," he said.



The Calamari Sisters perform Saturday, Nov. 3, at FSU.

COURTESY PHOTO

Cooking and cackling with Calamari Sisters

FITCHBURG — The comic culinary stylings of two larger-than-life Italian women will come to life when the Fitchburg State University CenterStage arts and culture series presents *Cooking with the Calamari Sisters* on Saturday, Nov. 3, at 8 p.m., in

the Falcon Hub, Hammond Hall, 160 Pearl St.

Hilarity, failed dishes and food fights ensue during this live “broadcast” of a public-access cooking show hosted by Delphine and Carmela Calamari.

Tickets are \$28 or \$25 for FSU alumni, seniors

and staff, and \$5 for students, and can be ordered online at www.fitchburgstate.edu/centerstage or by calling 978-665-3347, or bought at the box office.

This production is sponsored by the Center for Italian Culture at Fitchburg State University.

Depression-era ‘Diviners’ at FSU

FITCHBURG — The story of how a small, Depression-era town in southern Indiana is shaken when tragedy strikes is told in “The Diviners,” the fall main-stage production at Fitchburg State University.

The play, written by Jim Leonard Jr., and directed by professor Cap Corduan, will feature 10 performances between Wednesday, Nov. 7, and Saturday, Nov. 17, at the Wallace Theatre for the Performing Arts, McKay Complex, 67 Rindge Road.

Admission is free and open to the public.

“The Diviners” is about

a disturbed young man and his friendship with a disenchanted preacher in the fictional town of Zion, Ind., in the early 1930s.

The student cast includes Daniel Hankins, Cheyenne Winley, Ken Roberts, Liam Griffin, Belle Flint, James Estes, Sydney Morin, Natalie Scott, Sydney Lipsett, Amado Malec and Brooklyn Tawyea.

Fitchburg State alumnus Dan Daly is the scenic designer while the rest of the design team is composed of all technical theater students. Lighting design is by Amilee Do, costume design by Brian Wright, property master is

Meaghan Cunningham, sound design by Stef Tivnan, assistant technical director Fouad Nasr, and Lucas Cardwell stage manager. The assistant director is Rebecca Joseph, and assistant to the scenic designer is Jem Morales.

Performances will be Wednesday, Nov. 7, at 6:30 p.m.; Thursday, Nov. 8, at 6:30 p.m.; Friday, Nov. 9, at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Nov. 10, two shows at 2 and 7:30 p.m.; Wednesday, Nov. 14, at 6:30 p.m.; Thursday, Nov. 15, at 6:30 p.m.; Friday, Nov. 17, at 7:30 p.m.; and Saturday, Nov. 17, two shows at 2 and 7:30 p.m.



The Fitchburg State University Main Stage Theater program rehearses recently for their play “The Diviners,” which opens tonight. Rehearsing a scene are Cheyenne Winley, playing Jenny-Mae Layman, Daniel Hankins, center, playing Buddy Layman, and Ken Roberts, playing Ferris Layman.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE PHOTOS /JOHN LOVE

For FSU theater prof, career in stage was a ‘Diviner’ intervention

By **Julia Sarcinelli**
Correspondent

FITCHBURG — Cap Corduan, technical theater professor at Fitchburg State University, has been setting the stage for her students’ post-graduation careers for the past 18 years.

Corduan is directing the FSU fall main-stage production of “The Diviners,” opening Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. at the Wallace Theatre for the Performing Arts, McKay Complex, 67 Rindge Road. There will be 10 free performances between today and Saturday, Nov. 17.

She was first introduced to the life of theater when she was a child growing up in Connecticut. Her mom was involved with a musical theater group and once Corduan got up on stage for her first play, she knew it wasn’t for her.

Corduan was taken in



Brooklyn Tawyea, left, playing Dewey Maples, works through a scene with Charlie Barbera, playing Basil Bennett.

by the tech team and was hooked. She continued to do it all through junior high and high school. But even though her sets were always well put together, her student life wasn’t.

“I was a horrible student when I was in high school. I have dyslexia and other learning disabilities so I was like, ‘Sit still? Forget that crap,’” said Corduan.

She never really con-

sidered going to college before being told to think about it. She attended Central Connecticut State University, where an adviser turned things around for her and encouraged her to earn her bachelor’s degree in fine arts in theatre design.

After earning a master’s degree in fine arts in design and technology from the University of Illinois, Corduan worked

as technical director for the Empire State Institute of Performing Arts before moving on to various freelance jobs, such as working at Disney and laying out the full design system for Mohegan Sun.

But once she was in the professional world, she hated how cut-throat it was and how she couldn’t do all the different aspects she wanted to.

“I actually went back to my college adviser and he said, ‘You know, you should think about teaching,’ and I said, ‘You’ve got to be kidding me,’” Corduan said with a laugh.

She decided to give it a try, and hasn’t gone back since.

“Even on days when I feel like I can’t even get out of bed, I think, ‘No, I’ve got the kids — they’ll liven me up,’ and they always do,” she said.

Corduan came to FSU

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A 'Diviner' intervention for Fitchburg State prof

FSU/From Page 3

in 1999 to teach technical theater when the theater program was just coming together. Since then, she has completed several sabbaticals. When she's not teaching, Corduan likes to play base drum for a fife and drum core. She is also the director of an international junior fife and drum camp during the summer.

When school's in session, though, Corduan makes sure her students understand all parts of the production aspect, and she definitely sets them up for success — she has a 99 percent placement rate for her students in their field and always keeps in touch with each one.

"It's all about how I can help the kids. These guys have enough problems trying to figure out the world. If it can be a little bit more interesting and more fun to follow a dream, I want to help them do it," said Corduan.

One of her past students, Dan Daly, is coming back to FSU to be the scenic designer for "The Diviners." He graduated from FSU in 2009 and works in Brooklyn as a scenic designer and visual artist.

"The Diviners" is about a disturbed young man and his friendship with a disenchanted preacher in a small, Depression-era town in southern Indiana, and how everyone is

"It's all about how I can help the kids. These guys have enough problems trying to figure out the world."

Cap Corduan, technical theater professor at Fitchburg State

shaken when tragedy strikes.

"I just felt that it said something to me and I think it will say something to the audience," said Corduan.

Between the different directing styles of herself and the other theater professors, she said the students get a better understanding of what it's like to work in the professional world.

"I'm not an actor so I rely a lot on their artistry," she said. "They've had to do a lot of work on their own."

Despite how much she teaches her students, Corduan said directing for "The Diviners" has reaffirmed how much she learns from them.

"It will be really fun this time to just sit in the back of the theater and be proud of the whole production team," she said. "Now I get to see them just blossom."

Foundation provides turkeys to veterans

By **Mina Corpuz**

mcorpuz@sentinelandenterprise.com

FITCHBURG — Veterans and their families came to Fitchburg State University Saturday to receive a free Thanksgiving turkey from the Arrendono Family Foundation.

“It warms my heart,” said Diane Beaudoin, who came with her husband, Norman, who served in the Air Force in Vietnam. “It’s really a blessing with these type of events. It helps the veterans and it feels great.”

The Beaudoins were one of 80 families who

Please see **TURKEYS/5**



Volunteer Roi Armstrong, a member of Fitchburg State’s Alumni Board, talks with Marines veteran Tommy O’Malley while carrying a turkey to his car on Saturday.

SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/MINA CORPUZ

Foundation gives turkeys to veterans

TURKEYS/From Page 1

received a turkey and a Market Basket gift card.

By noon, about 20 collected their 16-pound birds. Some came on their own, others came with their spouses or with children.

Volunteers from the foundation, FSU, and the Red Cross greeted the veterans and thanked them for their service.

Some wore hats or shirts with the branch of the armed forces they served featured.

When veterans and families opted to carry the turkey to their car on their own, the volunteers insisted that they help. Many of them obliged.

Tommy O’Malley, who served as a medic with the Marines in Vietnam, saw an article in the newspaper about the giveaway. He wasn’t sure if he would be able to receive a turkey if he didn’t sign up beforehand.

The foundation had extras available and gave O’Malley one.

“I’m glad I stopped by,” he said.

FSU alumni board member Roi Armstrong carried the turkey to O’Malley’s car and talked with him about his work at

the university maintaining buildings.

Brian Malone, a board member for the foundation, said this is the second year it has partnered with Fitchburg State to host the giveaway.

“We started the partnership because of Fitchburg State’s many students and faculty and because they’re a veterans and military-friendly university,” he said.

The Arrendono Family Foundation helps military families and aims to prevent military-related suicides through support services.

As part of that partnership, the foundation looks to create an endowed scholarship at FSU next year, Malone said.

Carlos Arrendono, a co-founder of the organization, lost his son Alex, a U.S. Marine, in Iraq and son Brian to suicide. He and his wife, Melinda, run the foundation.

In 2013, Arrendono was at the Boston Marathon near the finish line when two bombs went off. He was photographed wearing a cowboy hat while helping rush survivor Jeff Bauman to help.

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