APPROVED

# Fitchburg State University

# Minutes

## Board of Trustees

**Date and Time**
Tuesday March 31, 2020 at 8:00 AM

Notice of a Meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees

This meeting will be held via teleconference as approved by Governor Baker.

For public comments only:
978-665-3698

For public listening and viewing:
https://stream.meet.google.com/stream/511142d9-117d-495a-912e-93e06283a568

**Trustees Present**
A. Clementi (remote), C. Aneke (remote), C. Stimpson (remote), D. Irving (remote), D. Nieto (remote), D. Phillips (remote), D. Tiernan (remote), F. O'Donnell (remote), L. Barrieau (remote)

**Trustees Absent**
M. Nicholson

**Ex Officio Members Present**
R. Lapidus (remote)

**Guests Present**
G. Doiron (remote), Members of the Executive Cabinet, S. Swartz (remote)

## I. Opening Items

### A. Record Attendance and Guests

### B. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Irving called a meeting of the board of trustees of Fitchburg State University to order on Tuesday Mar 31, 2020 at 8:00 AM.

### C. Public Comments

There were none.

### D. Approve Minutes from the Board of Trustees January 28, 2020 meeting - VOTE (12-19/20)

D. Phillips made a motion to approve the minutes from Joint Board of Trustees meeting with the Foundation Board of Directors on 01-28-20.
L. Barrieau seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

| **Roll Call** | |
|---|---|
| D. Nieto | Aye |
| D. Tiernan | Aye |
| D. Irving | Aye |
| D. Phillips | Aye |
| L. Barrieau | Aye |
| F. O'Donnell | Aye |
| C. Stimpson | Aye |
| M. Nicholson | Absent |
| A. Clementi | Aye |
| C. Aneke | Aye |

## II. Tenure

### A. Tenure- VOTE (13-19-20)

The President next presented the candidates for tenure. The candidates presented were recommended and supported by the candidate's respective department, Department Chair, Dean and Provost.

D. Phillips made a motion to grant the faculty and librarian presented to receive Tenure status effective September 1, 2020.
L. Barrieau seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| L. Barrieau | Aye |
| M. Nicholson | Absent |
| C. Aneke | Aye |
| C. Stimpson | Aye |
| D. Irving | Aye |
| A. Clementi | Aye |
| F. O'Donnell | Aye |
| D. Nieto | Aye |
| D. Tiernan | Aye |
| D. Phillips | Aye |

## III. Strategic Planning

### A. Letter to Trustees

D. Irving discussed the Strategic Plan information in the packet. The president explained the process. He said the Commissioner addressed the campus community in the fall to share the importance of strategic planning. He stated that the BHE is requiring a slightly more prescribed plan from each campus than in prior iterations. This time around the DHE main focus is centered around issues of equity. The president further explained the work thus far undertaken by the five Theme Committees and the Steering Committee. The committees are made up of a cross section from all sectors of the campus community that included faculty, staff and students. There were focus groups conducted with business leaders and politicians from the city and region. All of the information produced was collected and was used to inform the work of the Steering Committee. The president said that ideally, when the campus returned from winter break, we were prepared to hold campus forums and provide other opportunities for all to provide feedback on the document. Some of this work happened and some did not. The COVID-19 virus has disrupted and derailed our business of education. The feedback opportunities have been converted to online conversations and other feedback mechanisms to allow the campus community to participate. He said he was hopeful that the online format would give those that might not have participated the opportunity to do so. We are generating a healthy response already. He stated that the process will progress forward as long as it makes sense to do so. It is important not to lose continuity. He also stated that he was sure that the Commissioner would be flexible with timelines given the current situation.

The president next reminded the board of the NECHE accreditation process that will abut the Strategic Planning process. He stated a concern if the campus had to work on both projects simultaneously.

D. Phillips, Trustee representative on the Steering Committee, informed the board of the virtual meeting last week. The Steering Committee received a great deal of information from the themed committees and are sharing information in a fast and furious way. She

stated how incredibly impressed she was with the faculty, administration, staff and all the representatives on the committees. Everyone is contributing. She would appreciate it if the board members review the materials and send any comments to her or P. McCafferty to bring their voice to the Steering Committee.

C. Aneke asked about student representation on the Steering Committee. P. McCafferty will confirm with the student representative regarding undergraduate and graduate student participation.

There was a discussion on the Themed Committees work, the timeline and the formal process.

The president added that the overall exercise has provided much good insight into the foundational principal of equity. He said there have long debates that revolved around equality and equity. He emphasized that not all students need the same supports so their needs to be variation for all to be successful.

**B. Envisioning Fitchburg State University in Five Years**

**C. Strategic Plan Goals**

## IV. Notifications

**A. Personnel Actions (N05-19-20)**

The personal actions were submitted for informational purposes. The president noted the hiring of a new fulltime head  Football coach that previously worked at WPI. This campus has never had in a meaningful way a fulltime athletic coach. The coaches play an important part of the recruiting process and play a crucial part of making our enrollment numbers. We are going to test this to see how it goes.

**B. Promotions - (N06-19-20)**

The president notified the board of the faculty who were promoted. He stated two individuals who applied were not successful. Their work is progressing, but falls short of early promotion. The decision does not impact future decisions.

A. Clementi asked about the faculty in the nursing department. There was a discussion.

## V. Student Trustee Report

**A. Crystal Aneke will provide the Student Trustee Report**

C. Aneke informed the board of the students perpective on how the university has handled the global pandemic currently taking place. The students appreciate the transparencies and the recent pass/fail adjustments to grading that was recently approved by the governance system. The flow of information to students regarding housing, academic affairs, and other services has been invaluable. Although, the students are concerned about when they will be recieving their refunds.

## VI. Chair's Report

### A. Donald Irving will provide the Chair's report

D. Irving attended the recent virtual meeting with board chairs and presidents. They did discuss refunds to students. This will leave a bid deficents to every campus. He hope is that the legislator will help. The residence halls and the dining hall is not being used but the institutions still have to pay the debt service. We are all breaking new ground.

## VII. President's Report

### A. COVID-19 Campus Actions

The president stated that the campus had a very short amount of time to change completely the way it does business. He noted that faculty, staff, administration and students have worked tirelessly to transition to remote learning within days. There have been some small glitches, but overall the transition was remarkably smooth. The executive team meets almost every day to share best practices in an effort to make this conversion as positive as possible. A coronavirus webpage was built in an effort to be as transparent as possible and will continue to be updated as new information becomes available. He anticipates the Governor will continue to have state employees work remotely. All of our classes are now remote. The campus is calling itself remote as opposed to online because faculty are using Blackboard, courses are being taught on Zoom, or google hangouts, or by conference call or in some cases conference phone lines. We are using all kinds of tools with the goal of delivering quality educational content. There are currently 21 students on campus housed in one location all of which have extenuating circumstances. Chartwells is providing them with meal service. Graduation and other events have been postponed. A survey was sent to seniors letting them know that the university is not going to deprive them of a graduation and that their input was sought for future planning.

There was a discussion on the grading policy, and the extension of the incomplete process until the fall.

The president reported that counseling services, tutoring and mentoring are all online and available as students need services. Student Affairs is working hard to create opportunities for online social interaction and are trying to provide quality alternative

substitutes. The student refund process is underway and the date for disbursement is mid-April. This is consistent with our sister institutions. We are thinking of ways to recruit for the fall semester.

The president said this has been tough and he cannot say enough positive things about how everyone has stepped up, including students. It's been as good as it can be.

L. Barrieau asked if community members or health care providers have reached out to the campus for supplies or services. The president responded that early on we received a few requests, but now MEMA is the point of contact for anyone requesting services or assistance from us. There was a discussion.

### B. NECHE 2022 Accreditation Review

The president presented the timeline for the NECHE process. He stated that two Co-Chairs had been appointed, Dr. Catherine Canney and Dr. Daneen Deptula. They are both highly skilled individuals and will help kick this process off in the fall. He anticipates a successful review. The review is time consuming and full of pressurized tasks.

### C. 2020-2021 Academic Calendar

The calendar was presented for informational purposes.

### D. News Articles

The news articles were presented for informational purposes.

### E. Amended 2020 Spring Academic Calendar

The amended 2020 Spring Academic Calendar was presented to reflect the changes needed to be made due to the coronavirus.

## VIII. Closing Items

### A. Adjourn Meeting

The trustees each expressed how impressed they were with the transition to remote learning and commend the faculty for meeting the needs of the institution. They appreciate the information that they have received. They thanked the president and the administration for their leadership and commitment to the campus community.

A. Clementi recognized Governor Baker's leadership.

The president thanked the board and again recognized the faculty, staff, librarians, and students who have been working hard to keep the institution moving forward. Our maintainer group, who is still on campus are working tirelessly. He commended his leadership team.
There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:09 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
L. Barrieau

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**Documents used during the meeting**

- VOTE Minutes.pdf
- VOTE Tenure 2020.pdf
- Lapidus memo to BOT 3-18-2020.pdf
- VISION draft 2-26-20 (rev.3) (1) (1).pdf
- DRAFT GOALS 2-26-20 (1).pdf
- BOT Notifications 03312020.pdf
- BOT Promotion Notifications 03312020.pdf
- TIMELINE FOR NECHE 2022 REVIEW, notification to AUC and Grad Council (1).pdf
- 2020-2021 Academic Calendar.pdf
- Clips for March 2020.pdf
- Amended 2019-2020 Academic Calendar.pdf