APPROVED

Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Board of Trustees

Date and Time
Monday June 29, 2020 at 8:30 AM

Location
This will be a remote meeting.

Notice of a meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees
Monday, June 29, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. This meeting will be held via teleconference as approved by Governor Baker.

For public comments dial (when announced in the meeting): 978.665.3698
Public streaming: https://stream.meet.google.com/stream/21e2f9f5-03a8-4fa7-82a4-35415739ed06

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

Trustees Absent
D. Nieto, D. Tiernan, M. Nicholson

Guests Present
A. Cardelle (remote), A. Krishnamurthy (remote), Campus Community (remote), G. Doiron (remote), G. Doiron (remote), G. Feckley (remote), J. Bry (remote), Members of Executive Cabinet (remote), R. Lapidus (remote), 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 Monday Jun 29, 2020 at 8:32 AM.

C. Public Comments

A. Krishnamurthy, MSCA Chapter President, read a prepared statement. She urged the board to not consider furloughs. The Board will need to work with the Unions which can be a lengthy process. She suggested offering retirement incentives instead, for furloughs damage institutions. Adding furloughs to the budget is not prudent.

G. Feckley, AFSCME Union Steward, spoke on behalf of the ASFCME employes. She was surprised that furloughs are being dicussed. Our members are very dedicated to the University. She noted during the months that many were working remotely, and on campus, under difficult conditions, kept the University operating. She expressed her concerns, and said the Board needs to work with the Unions. She requests that furloughs be excluded from the budget.

A returning student stated that the Technology Fee is too high. He asked the board to vote against all fee increases.

D. Approve Minutes from the Board of Trustees June 10, 2020 - VOTE (25-19/20)

D. Phillips made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees on 06-10-20.
L. Barrieau seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

E. Approval of June 10, 2020 Executive Session Minutes - VOTE (32-19/20)

D. Phillips made a motion to approve the minutes from approve the June 10, 2020 Executive Session Minutes.
A. Clementi seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

II. Finance and Administration Committee

A. FY2021 Budget Narrative

D. Irving discussed the budget narrative. He said the team has done a great job putting the budget together.

The president provided a general overview of the budget. He thanked Jay Bry and his team, Mary Beth McKenzie, Christian Estrella, and Carin Bullis. He indicated that they had worked hard to refine and anticipate the complicated variables during this time period so that a realistic possible budget could be presented. The rationale for presenting the budget at this late date is because of the tremendous volatility and unknowns that exist. It was suggested that if the budget had been presented earlier, a significant change might have required a complete revision. It was noted that this possibility still exists.

The president highlighted three variables that have significant impact on our financial stability. First, is the state appropriation which is currently unknown. The state currently does not have a budget. A place holder was used in this budget with a reduction of 10% relative to last year's appropriation. Second, enrollment is currently unknown, although it is anticipated to be down as students are unsure what impact the pandemic will have on the ability of the institution to deliver academic content and support services. Third, are the unknown occupancy numbers connected with residence life and associated food service.

The president next discussed the residence hall debt. He presented information regarding debt restructuring from the Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA). A significant portion of debt will be deferred in FY21 and the fall of FY22. This relief will be spread across future time periods resulting in slightly higher payments in later years. The president reminded the board that regardless of the number of students in the Residence Halls, the university is always responsible for covering its full debt load each year.

Student enrollment was next discussed. The president indicated that the date of student deposits had been pushed back and that the university will accept every qualified student

up until the first day of classes. Currently, he noted, that first-time student enrollment was relatively flat and transfer enrollment was down. He also reported that the returning student population is down.

He concluded that the budget presented is an educated guess and that there was still much uncertainty. He reinforced the broad-based approach to cost mitigation, including the consideration of furloughs, as a means of reducing a significant deficit in the budget. He cautioned about the universities ability to sustain successive allocations from financial reserves and the long-term dangers associated with doing so.

D. Phillips wanted the board to draw their attention to the FY18 - FY20 budgets and the pre-COVID budget. She reported that the Finance Committee met and held an extremely lengthy meeting. She stated that the finance team did an amazing job making assumptions on the best information from the Commonwealth and predicting what the next year will look like. The Finance Committee did vote to recommend to the Board the budget which includes a small increase to the technology fee. She noted that there is no other alternative at the Board's disposal. This is a crucial budget and we need to be conservative this fiscal year to remain financially healthy going forward.

J. Bry highlighted the key lines on the budget sheet. He provided details on operational expenses, and the Massachusetts Housing Authority's actions regarding the deferment of debt. He indicated that data indicated that the campus was already trending down with regard to student residence life. He mentioned that he understands the concerns with the Technology Fee increase, but noted if you look at total student fees, the institution will remain at the lowest or second to the lowest compared to our sister schools. He explained out-of-state tuition, accelerated programs and the GCE fee increase. He said the vast majority of the budget is full-time personnel. The only way to reduce this amount is a hiring freeze and furloughs. Departments have been asked to submit level funded budgets, no travel, and no food orders to reduce the expenses.

B. Budget Narrative Appendix

J. Bry discussed the Summary of Operating Funds sheet.

D. Phillips commended the work it took to make the budget presentation to the Board. She said every industry is going through a financial stress test.

There was vigorous discussion on fees, retirement packages, and enrollment as it relates to out-of-state tuition.

C. Aneke stated these are very challenging times for students and they are experiencing instability at home. She does not support the fee increases.

D. Irving explained how the institutions are funded and the constraints and challenges that exist of keeping the schools running. Our revenue coming in is not enough and the only way to balance the budget is by raising fees. He stated that it is a horrible system and we don't want to burden the students, but there are no alternatives.

C. Annual Operating Budgets FY18-FY21

They were discussed in detail.

D. Technology Fee Increase - VOTE (26-19/20)

C. Stimpson made a motion to approve the following technology fee increase, effective for the fall semester 2020: Technology Fee Day Undergraduate Technology Fee: $75.00 per semester increase for FY2021. The new annual total will be $500.00. GCE Undergraduate and Graduate Technology Fee: $2.00 per credit increase for FY2021 for a total fee of $9.00 per credit.
D. Phillips seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. Nieto	Absent
L. Barrieau	Aye
C. Stimpson	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye
D. Irving	Aye
F. O'Donnell	Aye
D. Tiernan	Absent
M. Nicholson	Absent
C. Aneke	No

E. GCE Student Fee - VOTE (27-19/20)

D. Phillips made a motion to approve the following Graduate and Continuing Education fee increases, effective fall semester 2020: • An increase of $11.00 per credit for the GCE undergraduate program for FY2021; the new total per credit fee will be $319.00. • An increase of $13.00 per credit for the GCE graduate program for FY2021; the new total per credit fee will be $332.00.
C. Stimpson seconded the motion.
There was a brief discussion on the students that this fee increase effect.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. Phillips	Aye
C. Aneke	No
F. O'Donnell	Aye
D. Tiernan	Absent
D. Irving	Aye

Roll Call

D. Nieto	Absent
L. Barrieau	Aye
C. Stimpson	Aye
M. Nicholson	Absent

F. ALFA Fee - VOTE (28-19/20)

D. Phillips made a motion to approve the following fee increase, effective for the fall semester 2020: ALFA Program ALFA Program: an increase of $10.00 per course for FY2021; the new per course fee will be $40.00.
L. Barrieau seconded the motion.
Adult Learning in the Fitchburg Area (ALFA) is a Lifelong Learning Institute that offers non-credit daytime courses and special activities designed and implemented by the members of the ALFA in coordination with the professional staff at Fitchburg State. This fee increase will impact a small population of adult learners
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

G. FY2021 Budget - VOTE (29-19/20)

D. Phillips made a motion to to approve the FY2021 Budget as presented by the President.
L. Barrieau seconded the motion.
D. Phillips reminded the Trustees that the fees are calculated within the budget numbers. Given we are not sure of the future, we may need to revisit the budget in fall.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Aneke	No
L. Barrieau	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye
D. Tiernan	Absent
M. Nicholson	Absent
D. Irving	Aye
D. Nieto	Absent
F. O'Donnell	Aye
C. Stimpson	Aye

H. Roll Forward of Funds to FY2021 Budget - VOTE (30-19/20)

C. Stimpson made a motion to approve that ongoing capital projects roll forward into the FY2021 University Budget.
A. Clementi seconded the motion.
J. Bry explained the roll forward of funds, which is current budget construction projects, that any funding that was not expended, those funds can continue roll over into the next fiscal year.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

III. Slate of Officers

A. Slate of Officers - VOTE (31-19/20)

The chair discussed the slate of officers. For reasons of continuity and stability, the current slate of officers will remain in place and be revisited in the fall.

C. Stimpson made a motion to approve the following slate of officers: Chair —Donald Irving Vice Chair — C. Deborah Phillips Clerk — Lynn Barrieau.
D. Phillips seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

IV. Notifications

A. Personnel Actions (N08-19/20)

The personell actions were submitted for informational purposes.

V. Student Trustee Report

A. Crystal Aneke will provide the Student Trustee Report

C. Aneke read a prepared statement regarding the impact of COVID19. She stated minority groups have been especially impacted. The disparities should be noted. She does not support the increase in fees. She said the university needs to make an explicit guarantee to how these fees will be used. She discussed the racism taking place across the country. She urged everyone to listen, learn and speak up against racism. She stated that it was an honor to serve as a Trustee and she is very proud of her Fitchburg State University education.

The Board expressed their appreciation for the work C. Aneke performed as Student Trustee. She will do well in any endeavor she undertakes. They urged her to keep in touch with them and Fitchburg State.

VI. Chair's Report

A. Don Irving will provide the Chair's Report

D. Irving reported that the actions taken today are difficult and critical. He indicated that he thought that there is going to be some Higher Education consolidation in the future. He said if we keep drawing down from our reserves each year, noting that this year we dipped into it twice, it will be unsustainable. He thought this budget does what it needs to do and we must focus on the long-term. He is confident we will get though this extremely difficult time period in the institution’s history, but it will not be easy.

B. Introduce new Student Trustee Steven Olson

D. Irving introduced and welcomed new Student Trustee Steven Olson from Lunenburg, MA.
S. Olson said he is excited to serve under these unique circumstances. He will do his very best for his fellow students and for the school. He is looking forward to getting to work.

VII. President's Report

A. COVID-19 Update

The president welcomed Steven Olson and is looking forward to having him join us. He indicated that S. Olson would be sworn in prior to the first formal fall board meeting and would be given the equipment and resources to be a successful student trustee.

He next reported on COVID19. The administration and others have spent a tremendous amount of time getting the repopulation plans in place. The union leadership, faculty and staff, have been part of that plan. We have all our signage up around campus as required. We have supplies, such as hand sanitizer and disinfectant distributed, and physical spaces have been mapped out. He discussed room layouts, common spaces and bathrooms. He discussed student schedules, and face to face classes and fully remote classes. Most classes he thought would be completely online or in some hybrid form. He discussed the work that Human Resources is doing. He discussed the challenges with Athletics. He concluded by discussing the tremendous number of moving parts to get the fall semester up and running.

B. Fall Enrollment

The president said he had already covered enrollment and, as he indicated previously, we will be down 15%, or approximately 400 students. The university will continue to accept qualified students.

C. Courageous Conversations Forums/Anti-Racism Programming

The president reported on the Courageous Conversations Forums/Anti-Racism Programming. He commended C. Aneke for her voice on this matter. He explained the three events that had been scheduled for students, faculty, staff and alumni. He stated that the campus will continue to have frank conversations about race and how to aggressively continue working on this sensitive issue. He stated he will support initiatives that move this agenda forward.

D. Strategic Planning/Touchpoint II

The president thanked D. Phillips and all those that worked on the strategic plan. We have a compelling plan and the draft plan has been submitted to the Board of Higher Education for feedback. We hope to get it back in the summer and then have the plan ready go back to the faculty and staff for a final review. Ultimately, the board will need to approve the final plan before going to the BHE for its approval.

C. Phillips commended the president for his outstanding work. She noted that he rarely ever uses the word “I” but instead gives credit to others and wanted everyone to know of his contributions. She also did extend her appreciation to the whole team, from the faculty, librarians and staff, from the top down, and stated that they are all here for the students, especially during this unprecedented time.

The other board members echoed C. Phillips' sentiments. They all appreciated the hard work that everyone is doing, and especially the president's leadership during this global health emergency.

A. Clementi commended the administration and faculty having to rework everything to deliver a quality education. She mentioned the continued affiliation with the Fitchburg Art Museum, and that it's one of the campuses strongest partnerships.

E. News Articles

The news articles were submitted for informational purposes.

VIII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 10:12 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
L. Barrieau

Documents used during the meeting

- VOTE Minutes.pdf
- BOT Executive Session June 10, 2020.pdf
- VOTE Minutes Executive Session June 10, 2020.pdf
- Budget Narrative FY2021 .pdf
- 6 Year Net Price_Disount Rate.pdf
- Note on CARES Act aid to Fitchburg State Students in FY2020.pdf
- Summary of Operating Funds FY21.pdf
- Summary Budget FY21.pdf
- VOTE Technology Fee Increase.pdf
- VOTE GCE Fee Increase.pdf
- VOTE ALFA Fee Increase.pdf
- VOTE Budget FY2021.pdf
- VOTE Roll forward of funds to FY2021 budget.pdf
- Slate of Officers vote.pdf
- BOT Notifications 06292020 (1).pdf
- Clips for June 29 2020.pdf