APPROVED

Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Board of Trustees

Date and Time
Tuesday March 30, 2021 at 8:00 AM

Location
This meeting will be held remotely.

Notice of a Meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees to be held on Tuesday, March 30 at 8:00 a.m.

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

For public comments only:
978-665-3698

For public listening and viewing:

Live stream
stream.meet.google.com/stream/c2c11c03-7bbf-416f-8ccf-079b0460929f

Trustees Present
C. Stimpson (remote), D. Irving (remote), D. Phillips (remote), D. Tiernan (remote), K. Spinelli (remote), L. Barrieau (remote), M. Nicholson (remote), S. Olson (remote)

Trustees Absent
F. O'Donnell

Ex Officio Members Present

R. Lapidus (remote)

Guests Present
A. Cardelle (remote), B. Copper-Glenz (remote), C, Canney (remote), D. Deptula (remote), E. Turchetta (remote), G. Doiron, G. Doiron (remote), J. Bry (remote), J. McNeil (remote), J. Murdoch (remote), J.Wolfman (remote), L. Bayless (remote), M. McKenzie (remote), P. McCafferty (remote), S. Swartz (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Phillips called a meeting of the board of trustees of Fitchburg State University to order on Tuesday Mar 30, 2021 at 8:01 AM.

C. Public Comments

D. Approve Minutes from the Board of Trustees January 26, 2021 meeting - VOTE (18-20/21)

K. Spinelli made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees with the Foundation Board of Directors on 01-26-21.
L. Barrieau seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Nicholson	Aye
D. Irving	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye
S. Olson	Aye
F. O'Donnell	Absent
L. Barrieau	Aye
K. Spinelli	Aye
C. Stimpson	Aye
D. Tiernan	Aye

II. Tenure

A. Tenure- VOTE (19-20/21)

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. Irving made a motion to grant the faculty and librarian presented to receive Tenure status effective September 1, 2021.
L. Barrieau seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Nicholson	Aye
C. Stimpson	Absent
S. Olson	Aye
L. Barrieau	Aye
D. Tiernan	Aye
D. Irving	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye
K. Spinelli	Aye
F. O'Donnell	Absent

The President mentioned that there will be 14 happy faculty members and that he we will send out congratulatory letters after the meeting adjourns today.

III. Admissions Presentations

A. Presentations by Ms. Jinawa McNeil and Dr. Becky Copper-Glenz

The President explained the importance of a strong admissions process. He thought it would be informative to have the admissions team provide a formal presentation of the exceptional work being done regarding the recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students.

A. Cardelle thanked the board for the opportunity to present and reiterated the President’s comments and highlighted that the university has many pressures due to demographic shifts. He introduced the topic and indicated it would provide a brief overview of all the different efforts underway.

He stated that Ms. Jinawa McNeil, Director of Admissions will address the undergraduate strategies followed by Dr. Becky Copper-Glenz, Dean, School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education and Ms. Erin Turchetta, Director of Enrollment, School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education who will discuss graduate admissions. He stated after the admissions discussion, the NECHE Co-Chairs: Dr. Catherine Canney, Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs and Dr. Daneen Deptula, Professor, Psychological Science will give an update of NECHE activities.

J. McNeil presented a PowerPoint that included the history of the transition from paper to online admissions. She provided a look back from Summer 2017 to the present regarding applications and recruitment trends. (PowerPoint attached)

J. McNeil discussed student visit opportunities and a number of special events planned. She noted that the university also hosted events for all the state universities. She

indicated that the university partnered with EAB (Educational Advisory Board) to implement process efficiencies. She expressed her enthusiasm about the AVP Enrollment Management position current in the search process.

A discussion ensued that included student yields, deposit trends, diversity and high performing students where English is not their first language.

D. Phillips congratulated the group for their efforts. She noted that part of the Trustees' charge is to cooperate with other schools. She stated she was pleased that Fitchburg State had a leadership role with hosting events. She thanked J. McNeil and the team in Admissions Office for their hard work.

B. Copper-Glenz next presented a PowerPoint regarding the recruitment work taking place in the School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education. She provided an overview since 2017. (PowerPoint attached)

B. Copper Glenz stated the division changed its support structure and opened a new pathway for students to apply. She also noted a shift in demographics, with fewer number of college age students, and other institutions beginning to increase their online market presence. We highlighted the need to continue to be competitive and the need to more aggressively focus recruitment efforts. She emphasized the need to have solid services in place and currency of programs. Employers were looking for hybrid and online programs. She reported on the name change from Graduate and Continuing Education to the School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education to better reflect the school's services. They have realigned staff and repositioned staff to focus on stronger admissions operations.

She indicated a more specialized focus on the recruitment process. She noted that students' ages range from 19 to 90 and are at different stages of their lives. With the lifelong learner in mind, programming has been repackaged to better align with student need. Certificate programs have been added. She stated work on diversity continues to be on-going.

E. Turchetta next discussed recruitment strategies for FY2022. She said that career fairs and graduate fairs have not been effective so different ways to reach students are being explored. An emphasis on personalization is important. Once students are on board, a focus on the tools for students to be successful is critical. She discussed the virtual events to help students learn about the application process. She explained the open house events and online orientations. Attendance at the various events has been strong.

There was a discussion on retention.

The President asked the Board to think about the presentation and how it relates to the budget process presented at the last meeting. Particularly how the demographic trend

data reflects itself in tuition and fees. He stated that our undergraduate retention is good and that the university outperformed the other state institutions this year on that metric. He shared that from the state university system perspective, that all the universities are a collaborative, and that information regarding the marketplace is shared including with the community colleges.

IV. NECHE 2022 Accreditation Review

A. Update by Dr. Cathy Canney

C. Canney and D. Deptula introduced themselves and presented a PowerPoint on the NECHE accreditation activities to date. (PowerPoint attached)

C. Canney talked about the process. D. Deptula explained NECHE and what accreditation means. She stated that their job was to ensure programs met educational standards. Also, accreditation is linked to the ability to award federal financial aid. About 97% of first-time students receive financial aid at the university. The NECHE visiting team members will come from institutions similar to Fitchburg State.

C. Canney noted that the team chair should be confirmed soon. NECHE has nine standards that must be addressed. They have their own process. She explained the committee structure in place on campus. The co-chairs of each committee are composed of a faculty and staff member. There is representation from all sectors of the campus. She explained the accreditation review cycle. She touched upon the 2012 issues raised and the 2017 progress report. She discussed next steps. In July, NECHE will receive a self-study draft. She reported that the process is progressing smoothly and is on schedule. A faculty member from the English Department will be reviewing the draft and final document prior to submission. In January 2022, the self-study will be submitted prior to the visit in March. She noted the dedication of the campus and anticipates a solid report will be presented.

The President thanked everyone that has been working on NECHE and the reiterated the inclusiveness of the process. He indicated that he was confident that the report would be well prepared and that the review outcome will be positive.

B. Copper-Glenz reported on a prior question regarding retention and graduation rates in the division which are 85% and 91% respectively.

The Chair thanked the presenters for the update.

V. Notifications

A.

Personnel Actions (N05-20/21)

The personnel actions were presented for informational purposes.

B. Promotions - (N06-20/21)

The President notified the board of the faculty who were promoted. All faculty seeking promotion were granted after going through the formal process. The President makes the final decision after careful review.

VI. Student Trustee Report

A. Update from Student Trustee

S. Olson reported that he was very happy to see the campus opening up. He has been out talking and listening to students. Some of the student concerns he has heard are the ability to access the student conduct policy and grading policy. He also asked about what the plans are for September and whether there will be face to face classes.

The President indicated that information on the two policies noted are available on the website and have been distributed by other means. He also indicated that he would provide additional information on September in his report.

VII. Chair's Report

A. Bylaw Review

C. Phillips reported on the bylaw review process and the board retreat. She informed the Board that the Executive/Nominating Committee would meet on March 31 and would have a more in-depth conversation. The committee has started working on reading other universities' bylaws that have been updated in recent years.

B. Trustee Self Assessment

C. Phillips stated the committee has discussed the current self-assessment and it will be a main topic at the summer Board retreat.

C. Board Retreat

C. Phillips asked that if any Board member had any topics for the retreat to send an email to her or the President.

VIII. President's Report

A. COVID-19 Campus Actions

The President reported that we have been doing very well on campus and have moved to a five day a week testing protocol. We have a more rigid testing process. He explained the numbers associated with testing. We have a positivity rate of less than 1%. The

students have been cooperative and there is a multi-step punitive process. We are in good shape. We did have one off week where we had a small cluster in Russell Towers. The state and the local board of health were part of that process and we had to isolate some students. There were a few bumps and all students have recovered and moved back to their original housing assignments. We are a little worried with the nice weather and lax behavior. He indicated the local paper announced that over the last two weeks in Massachusetts, the COVID positive rate has increased by 40%. We will continue to send out reminder messages and continue to push safety protocols. We have loosened up a little bit on campus and some students are excited to get out and there are a significant number of students that are not ready. We will wait and see.

B. Commencement

The President reported that our campus, the greatest majority of our sister institutions, and many institutions across the country will be having virtual commencements. The campus held virtual commencements in December to catch up with the entire 2020 class. Those commencement were well viewed, but what was heard from students is the importance of walking across the stage. The university will be doing that for the class of 2021. He explained the Falcon Graduation Walk event which includes the students name called as they walk across stage and a number of photo opportunities. A selection of dates and times will be provided for the graduate and their family and friends to sign-up and participate. The virtual commencement broadcast dates and times were provided and can viewed repeatedly after the initial showing. They are as follows:

Graduate Commencement, May 13 at 6:30 p.m.

Undergraduate Commencement, May 15 at 10:00 a.m.

C. Intentions for fall semester

The President indicated that the university intends to operate the fall semester as normally as possible depending up what is going on with COVID. The caveat is the need to adhere to state guidelines which will dictate the ability to operate. That said, he indicated, that our intention is to bring students back and have face-to- face classes. He stated that he will keep the Board informed as state guidance is available. Class schedules have started to be built and, and 90% of faculty have indicated that they plan to teach face-to-face. Human Resources will be working over the summer regarding the repopulation of staff to campus.

D. AVP Enrollment Management

The President provided an update on the search for the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management which will oversee a variety of divisions (Admissions, Financial Aid, Marketing and Integrated Communications.) There has been strong candidate interest in this position.

The President announced that Becker College voted to close the campus and will finish their last classes this summer. Over the last couple of weeks, our academic departments and admissions have been closely working with Becker to develop transfer articulations and processes that will assist student transfer to move seamlessly to Fitchburg State.

The President noted the new virtual tour highlighting the campus. The tour takes you in and around buildings to give a better sense of campus.

Other

The President sent a memo to the campus community regarding the bias incident response team. He noted that all have seen in the news the recent senseless attacks on Asian Americans and Asians and felt it was important to remind the campus of the resources available should they be a victim or observe unacceptable behavior. He reiterated that the campus has no tolerance for this behavior.

He invited the Board to join him on April 15 to an event featuring Congresswoman Lori Trahan to talk about Women in Leadership. He indicated that he will have the meeting link sent to the Board.

M. Nicholson expressed appreciation to the students in the nursing program who are volunteering in Gardner to administer COVID vaccines. She commented that the clinic is so successful because of the volunteers. The President noted that the nursing students have also been extraordinary in helping with COVID testing on campus. They are all volunteers. In some cases, they receive credit for clinical hours. The president expressed his appreciation to M. Nicholson for mentioning this.

E. News Articles

The news articles were presented for informational purposes.

IX. Executive Session

A. Executive Session - VOTE (20-20/21)

C. Stimpson made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss Honorary Degrees, and not return to public session.
M. Nicholson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. Tiernan	Aye
F. O'Donnell	Absent
C. Stimpson	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye
S. Olson	Aye

Roll Call

D. Irving	Aye
L. Barrieau	Aye
K. Spinelli	Aye
M. Nicholson	Aye

X. 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 9:40 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
D. Tiernan

Documents used during the meeting

- VOTE Minutes.pdf
- VOTE Tenure 2021.pdf
- BOT Admission presentation.pptx
- NECHE BOT Presentation-March 2021.ppt
- BOT Notifications 03302021.pdf
- BOT Promotion Notifications 2021.pdf
- Clips for March 2021.pdf
- VOTE Executive Session March 30, 2021.pdf