APPROVED

Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Board of Trustees

Date and Time
Tuesday May 4, 2021 at 8:00 AM

Location
This meeting will be held remotely.

Notice of a meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees
Tuesday, May 4, 2021 at 8:00 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:

Live stream
stream.meet.google.com/stream/eea6ff37-2eb0-4360-b1a0-c9f4f2ee0c46

Trustees Present
C. Stimpson (remote), D. Irving (remote), D. Phillips (remote), D. Tiernan (remote), F. O'Donnell (remote), K. Spinelli (remote), L. Barrieau (remote), M. Fiorentino, Jr. (remote), M. Nicholson (remote), S. Olson (remote)

Trustees Absent
None

Ex Officio Members Present
R. Lapidus (remote)

Guests Present

A. Alberto (remote), C. Bullis (remote), C. Canney (remote), C. Estrella (remote), G. Doiron (remote), J. Bry (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 May 4, 2021 at 8:01 AM.

C. Public Comments

There were none.

D. Approve Minutes from the Board of Trustees March 30, 2021 - VOTE (24-20/21)

F. O'Donnell made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees on 03-30-21.
D. Irving seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

II. Finance and Administration Committee

A. FY2022 Budget Narrative

The Chair officially welcomed Dr. Michael Fiorentino, Jr. to the Board.

M. Fiorentino expressed his pleasure to returning to Fitchburg State and looked forward to working with everyone.

D. Phillips next presented the Finance and Administration Committee report. She reported that the committee met last Tuesday. The committee discussed in detail the budget narrative and reviewed the financial documents. She stated the president reported

at the meeting the budget cycle was extremely challenging as the result of COVID-19 and the need to conduct classes in a predominately remote format for the entire year. She said with a tradition of strong budget management, fiscal belt tightening and the implementation of an early retirement program, the institution remained reasonably healthy. She indicated that the university was fortunate that the state came through with level funding and COVID-19 relief. She indicated that the COVID-19 protocols put in place by the institution, helped to mitigate the infection rate. She expressed kudos to the president and the administration and to everyone that worked to develop and implement the COVID-19 protocols. She reported that it was the university's intention to return in the fall semester with in-person classes. She noted however, that planning is fluid as the university awaits guidance from the state. She indicated that expenses related to COVID-19 would continue to be significant.

D. Phillips stated that there was some good news in the information packet. There was currently an increase in undergraduate applications and deposits compared to the prior year, but cautioned about becoming too optimistic at this early date. The institution does anticipate an increase in the residence halls occupancy from last year but, is still planning for a deficit. She reminded the board that debt service must still be paid to the MSCBA whether students reside in the residence halls or not. She reported that at the committee meeting, the current financial situation was reviewed. Liquidity calculations indicate the campus could operate for 5.9 months. She stated that the university is in good financial shape compared to other institutions in the system. The outside study done by Parthenon, confirmed our current financial stability and the committee was pleased to hear that.
D. Phillips next discussed the budget narrative and expenses. She indicated that the largest share of expenses stemmed from personnel. She highlighted COVID-19 relief information and the anticipation of long-term COVID expenses. She noted the decline in college age students due to the decrease in birth rates. The university has been working to diversify its revenue streams. The Finance and Administration Committee reviewed the budget details with the president and the administration, and they felt the university did a fantastic job under extraordinary circumstances. She reported that the Finance and Administration Committee voted to recommend the budget and to roll forward funds for capital projects into the next budget cycle.

The president thanked the Chair for her thorough job of summarizing the information. It was indicated that the university anticipates three pools of money from federal relief, two have arrived to date. Again, it was indicated that the university anticipates bringing everyone back face-to-face in the fall and planning has begun. COVID-19 costs will continue to roll into the next year with testing, cleaning and sanitizing and will be moderated by the state of the pandemic at the time. In looking ahead regarding the state appropriation, the university continues to plan based on flat funding. At this time, enrollment looks positive but, we are cautious. Enrollment is a little ahead of last year but overall, we continue to trend downward. It is believed that residence hall occupancy will be above last year, but will also be trending down overall. Some relief in debt service was

provide in FY21 but obligations return in the fall. The bottom line is the university will be operating with a deficit anticipated to be at least $4.5 million.

A discussion ensued.

There was a discussion on what the impact of furloughs would be on the institution. The president indicated that he did not want to take that approach.

There was a discussion on liquidity and how it varies across all sectors including the Community Colleges. The president indicated that the university was currently at the higher end of the liquidity calculation.

There was a discussion on the merger of institutions. The work by Parthenon was discussed.

The president noted that the university was aggressive in reaching out to Becker College and creating academic pathways to assist students to transfer here.

B. Budget Summary Revenue

C. Budget Summary Expenses

III. FY2022 Budget Votes

A. FY2022 Budget - VOTE (25-20/21)

L. Barrieau made a motion to approcve.
C. Stimpson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

B. Roll Forward of Funds to FY2022 Budget - VOTE (26-20/21)

D. Irving made a motion to approve.
L. Barrieau seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

IV. Notifications

A. Personnel Actions (N07-20/21)

The personnel actions were submitted for informational purposes.

B. Financial Statements (N08-20/21)

The financial statements were submitted for informational purposes.

V. Student Trustee Report

A. Steven Olson will provide the Student Trustee Report

S. Olson said this was his last meeting as student trustee and it was bitter sweet. Students are excited to get back to face-to-face learning in the fall. He did note there was some push back regarding the mandate for the vaccine by students, but he did mention that most schools in the state are requiring the same. He stated his time as a student trustee has been a tremendous experience, it’s been hard but a lot of fun learning from everyone. He thanked everyone. The Chair responded with gratitude and thanked S. Olson for his service.

VI. Chair's Report

A. C. Deborah Phillips will provide the Chair's Report

C. Phillips summarized that there was nothing to report regarding the bylaw review. She is still hoping to have a retreat later this summer after graduation. A great deal of time has gone into our virtual graduation. Our outside contractor is doing a great job working with Information Technology and the administration. She thought they did an outstanding job. She next shared a nice note from former student trustee, Crystal Aneke who will be going to law school at Boston College. The chair said that receiving the note warmed her heart and it was a pleasure to hear from Crystal. We should all be very proud and she’s looking

to hear how Crystal's future unfolds. She expressed thanks to all the students for persevering during this difficult year and stated that the board was very proud of them.

VII. President's Report

A. COVID-19 Update

The president next gave his report. The last day of classes is on Wednesday and the next week will start the exam period. He said the university continues with COVID-19 testing and will finish the year strong. He said that if you add up all the weeks of testing, the overall positivity rate on campus was below 1%. This was particularly impressive given that the City of Fitchburg spent a considerable amount of time as a high COVID-19 positive region. He gave credit to the student body who followed the university COVID protocols. He noted that students were wearing their face masks whether they were being observed or not. We will continue to COVID test through the summer with faculty and staff. He anticipates that the university will begin in the fall with a similar testing protocol. The state has not yet provided an operational plan moving forward. We are currently set up with 6 ft distance, a change in densification would have a great impact on how we operate. We anticipate that guidance will come shortly and we will configure operations to meet requirements. He mentioned that face coverings will most likely be required for fall.

B. Falcon Walk

The president reported on the Falcon Graduation Walk. He explained the event and the virtual commencements. The university received good feedback from our 2020 graduates that they appreciated the virtual commencement. Our vendor, Davis Advertising, is doing a great job with our commencement videos. He expressed his appreciation to Dr. Catherine Canney and Mr. Frank Campo, the commencement committee co-chairs as well as the commencement committee.

C. Fall Enrollment and Reopening

The president said that fall application numbers were significantly up from last year, but that yield is the important metric. We are currently ahead by about 150 students compared to last year when looking at deposits. We need to remain cautious because compared to 2018, and 2019, we are still behind. We will have to see where we land further into the process. Typically, we would have a large in person Future Falcon Day, which typically produces a spike in deposits that we are unable to hold this year. We did provide an opportunity for students to come to campus and tour the buildings. We have increased on campus tours and increased the numbers that can participate in the tours. We have extended the deadline for deposits which is traditionally on May 1st. The admissions department has been aggressively reaching out to students that have expressed an interest in coming to school. He said the national trend is that students have been slow in making decisions regarding enrollment in school.

There was a discussion.

The president reported on the renewal of the MOU with the Fitchburg Art Museum. We have a great deal of interactive programs. The faculty, staff and students have an opportunity to use the museum. It's a good relationship and it speaks well to our collaborative nature which also benefits the city.

S. Olson suggested that incoming students, that are hesitate to committing to Fitchburg State, receive current student testimonials of the benefits of attending. There was a brief discussion.

S. Olson will speak with the Student Government Association and report back.

D. 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 9:22 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
D. Tiernan

Documents used during the meeting

- VOTE minutes.doc.pdf
- Budget Narrative FY2022 Final RSL.pdf
- BOT Budget Summary Revenue 4.13.21.pdf
- BOT Budget Summary Expenses 4.13.21.pdf
- VOTE Budget FY2022.doc.pdf
- VOTE Roll forward of funds to FY2022 budget (1).pdf
- Notifications 5-4-21.pdf
- Mar 21 Executive Summary (2).pdf
- FSU_ Mar 2021 Quarterly Financial statement.pdf
- May 2021 News Clips.pdf