APPROVED

Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday October 19, 2021 at 8:15 AM

Location
This meeting will be held remotely.

Notice of a meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees on Tuesday, October 19, 2021 at 8:15 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 viewing:

Live stream
stream.meet.google.com/stream/6415c233-3f99-4a5a-ad3f-efc983c0dd28

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

Trustees Absent
D. Tiernan

Ex Officio Members Present
R. Lapidus (remote)

Guests Present

C. Canney (remote), C. Estrella (remote), D. Deptula (remote), F. Barricelli (remote), G. Doiron (remote), J. Bry (remote), J. Wolfman (remote), L. Bayless (remote), M. McKenzie (remote), P. McCafferty (remote), R. Toomey (remote), S. Swartz (remote), W. Cummings (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 Oct 19, 2021 at 8:16 AM.

C. Public Comments

There were none

D. Approve Minutes from the September 14, 2021 Meeting - VOTE (04-21/22)

M. Fiorentino, Jr. made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 09-14-21.
D. Irving seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

F. O'Donnell	Aye
M. Fiorentino, Jr.	Aye
C. Stimpson	Aye
J. Cautela III	Aye
D. Tiernan	Absent
D. Phillips	Aye
K. Spinelli	Aye
D. Irving	Aye
L. Barrieau	Aye
M. Nicholson	Abstain

II. Overview of Accreditation Process

A. Committee Co-Chairs Dr. Cathy Canney and Dr. Daneen Deptula will discuss the draft self study.

The President thanked the NECHE Committee Co-Chairs, Dr. Catherine Canney and Dr. Daneen Deptula for their dedication and hard work. He recognized Vice Chair Lynn Barrieau for serving on the NECHE Steering committee as the Trustee representative. He thanked everyone on campus that actively contributed to this exercise. This process is a

significant undertaking and it is an intensive process to look back over a ten-year time frame. The university is continuously working on areas that it can improve. The self-study document had been provided to board members in advance for their review.

C. Canney introduced a PowerPoint (attached). As the Co-Chairs overseeing the accreditation process, they want to acknowledge the work of the 90 plus individuals that have been working on this for over a year. In particular, the members of the Steering Committee, who have dedicated significant time to researching and writing reflections that accurately depict the work done and the commitment to continuous improvement in the future.

D. Deptula provided an overview of the NECHE process. The two purposes of the accreditation is to foster university improvement and to assure the quality of the institution. Through the process of preparing the self-study over the last year, the university has had the opportunity to reflect on areas of high quality and identify areas for improvement. The accreditation process also assures that the university and its programs have value. It tells the public and potential employers that the university meets high educational standards.

There are the nine NECHE standards by which the university will be evaluated:

1. Mission and Purposes
2. Planning and Evaluation
3. Organization and Governance
4. The Academic Program
5. Students
6. Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship
7. Institutional Resources
8. Educational Effectiveness
9. Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure

D. Deptula stated that changes in the standards since the last review in 2012 have resulted in the standards being much more outcome driven. In particular, they are looking for the university to present evidence and data to show how the standards are being met. Each standard was addressed with a committee composed of a balance of faculty and staff, along with two student members. Each committee carefully examined their standard and wrote narratives based on data and evidence to demonstrate how the university is meeting those expectations. The topics of the standards range from reflecting on the mission, how the university is organized, how students are being served, the status of institutional resources, the effectiveness of the education being provided, to the integrity in which the university conducts itself. In particular, the standards pay careful attention to financials, enrollments, and Board oversight, to demonstrate the capacity to remain a strong institution for the next ten years. The report is limited to 100 pages.

C. Canney stated as part of the accreditation process, based on the report of the evaluation team and review of the self-study, the Commission will acknowledge strengths of the institution and highlight areas that they believe the university that can continue to improve upon. In our 2012 visit, they raised two areas, one regarding implementation and assessment of our strategic planning and the assessment of the effectiveness of the Board of Trustees.

C. Canney informed the Board that a NECHE staff member read a draft of the report and that feedback was positive and deemed to be conforming to expectations. The self-study has been reviewed by university colleagues. University editor, Ben Railton from the English Studies Department has done two rounds of editing. The document has been reviewed by campus “content” experts focused on particular sections of the report. Last week, open forums were held for the entire campus to provide further feedback.

L. Barrieau commented that it has been a real eye-opening experience. She commented, what stood out the most, is the respect for each other and dedication to each other and felt lucky to be part of the process.

D. Deptula highlighted the areas of data and analysis. She invited board members to ask questions or comments as she moved along the presentation. She discussed each standard in detail and the metrics associated with each standard.

F. O’Donnell asked if there were areas that the university was deficient and how has the process changed, and what is now more important. D. Deptula responded that the focus on outcomes and financials has been increased. C. Canney commented that a commitment to equity and inclusion has been emphasized.

M. Fiorentino commented that considering that he has sat on both sides of this process, it seems enrollment and finances will be looked at very closely. C. Canney responded that he was correct, and there will a narrative written in front of the document regarding our deficiencies. M. Fiorentino noted that it is important that Trustees do their part.

There was a discussion.

D. Phillips expressed her appreciation for the work done and recognized the extensive effort devoted to seeing the process through. She said if any Board member would like send her or L. Barrieau feedback, to please do so anytime.

M. Fiorentino complimented the Co-Chairs and the President. He said the report reads very well and achieves one voice. He asked the President if there are any areas that the Board should place close attention too. The President echoed comments made by others, which is to focus on enrollment and finances.

There was a discussion.

III. Budget Update

A. Approve proposed budget revision.

The President discussed the previous budget that had presented and noted that given changes he wanted to present a revised budget that more accurately reflected the current situation.

J. Bry discussed the budget that was previously approved. He next discussed the updated budget for consideration. On the revenue side of the budget there are no changes. On the expense side, there have been savings stemming from the Early Retirement Incentive Programs and designed delays in those positions that were rehired. There have also been reductions in central service areas. The budget also proposes a 3% reduction in operational budgets to be implemented at the divisional level.

He noted that areas of greatest concern include enrollment in the undergraduate day division, low housing occupancy and ongoing COVID expenses. He concluded with the financial impact of collective bargaining successor contracts.

There was a brief discussion on credit card fees. M. Fiorentino asked how often the Board Receives budget updates. The President responded that financials are presented to the Board quarterly.
D. Irving made a motion to approve the revised budget as presented by the President.
K. Spinelli seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

IV. Campus Security Authorities and Title IX

A. Acknowledgement of Amendments to Massachusetts State Universities' Segmental Affirmative Action Plan.

The President stated that the Board will receive a tutorial and that they will need to understand and review the action plan.

The President introduced Dr. William Cummings, Director of Compliance.

W. Cummings presented a PowerPoint (Attached). He discussed the amendments to the plan. The Board was informed if they were to be approached by someone or aware of any violations to contact W. Cummings the next day or, if urgent, to contact University Police immediately.

There was a discussion.
M. Fiorentino, Jr. made a motion to accept Acknowledgement of Amendments to Massachusetts State Universities' Segmental Affirmative Action Plan.
J. Cautela III seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

V. Notifications

A. Personnel Actions (N02-21/22)

The personnel actions were presented for informational purposes.

VI. Student Trustee Report

A. Joseph Cautela will provide the Student Trustee Report

J. Cautela informed the Board that the deadline for student compliance for the COVID vaccine was Oct. 15, 2021. He stated there was a strong consensus in favor of the mandate. However, Student Government was not pleased that when this policy was made, there was no student input. He commented that in the future, when such policies are initiated, SGA will work with Dr. Laura Bayless. He said surveys have been sent out to students regarding any concerns they may have. He plans to present the survey outcomes at the next Board meeting. He also noted that there is a section in the SGA newsletter for a student trustee report. In addition, flyers, and social media will include board meeting reports. He believes that it important to promote transparency. He formally

invited board members to participate in a networking event and/or attend an SGA meeting
in person or virtually.

VII. Chair's Report

A. Debbie Phillips will provide the Chair's Report.

D. Phillips promoted the remote DHE Trustee Convening scheduled to take place on October 27. She noted that attendance would fulfill the governance portion of our training. She reminded Board members to commit to donating to the University to ensure 100% participation.

D. Phillips next asked if any Board member would like to serve on the Vice President/Provost Academic Affairs search. M. Nicholson volunteered.

VIII. President's Report

A. COVID Update

The President recommended that those have not participated previously in the Trustee Conference should consider attending. He thought the program information was worthwhile. He next thanked the Board members for completing the modules setup for training. He reported that the mandated COVID vaccination deadline concluded, and that approximately 10 students did not comply with the requirements. He was appreciative for all those that complied. He reported that nearly 100% of employees (faculty and staff) were fully vaccinated. He reinforced the idea that a high level of compliance does not ensure that no one will contract COVID, but did indicate that it has provided some piece of mind on campus. He reminded the board that COVID testing continues on campus five days per week for those that must test and for those that elect to do so. He mentioned ongoing discussion regarding out-of-state athletic travel for teams that play preseason games in the spring.

B. Provost Search

The President informed the Board of two high level searches taking place that include the Provost/Vice President Academic Affairs, and the Dean of Health and Natural Sciences. The University does have partial committees formed. He welcome M. Nicholson to the Provost search. He noted that Dr. Laura Bayless, Vice President Student Affairs will facilitate the process to recruit students on each of the search committees. The process will begin shortly and the university would like the positions filled by the end of the academic year.

C. Health Services Update

The President informed the Board that CHC Health Services are being used by both residential and off campus students. The university hired a dedicated nurse at CHC for Fitchburg State University students with a dedicated phone number. Students have been taking advantage of medical, optometry and behavioral health services. He mentioned that national data has highlighted that dental and eye care are often neglected by students resulting a variety of health issues that could impact academic performance. He noted that the university held vaccine clinics on campus. The traditional educational health informational activities are taking place along with a number of student leader trainings. The local grocery store, Hannaford's, held a flu clinic on campus due to supply chain issues with CHC. He noted F. O'Donnell's concerns with mental health challenges. The university has seen an increase in this area. The university has added a number of interns in addition to a full-time staff member in Counseling Services. There have been evening hours added for students as well.

D. News Articles

The news articles were submitted for informational purposes.

The President said the University is providing more programming in the community. He stated students have been following protocols on campus and there have not been issues with students complying to with COVID requirements. To date, no large outbreaks have occurred.

D. Phillips echoed the President's sentiments and appreciates the cooperation and the seriousness that students have taken in regards to the COVID mandates.

The President noted the article included in the packet announcing an Emmy award winner who is a Fitchburg State alum.

F. O'Donnell suggested that at the next Board retreat, that it be offsite and every Board member bring an idea for discussion.

IX. 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 9:57 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
D. Phillips

Documents used during the meeting

- VOTE Minutes.pdf
- NECHE Self Study Narrative DRAFT, October 4, 2021.pdf
- VOTE Revised Budget FY2022.pdf
- FY22 BOT Budget Summary Presentation 10.19.2021 - REVISED 1.pdf
- FY22 BOT Budget Summary 8.31.2021 PRESENTED TO BOARD (1) REVISED 2.pdf
- Fitchburg State Responsible Employees Guide (4) (1).pdf
- Pp38 Conflict of Interest 7.1.2020.pdf
- VOTE Campus Security Authorities and Title IX.pdf
- BOT Notifications 10192021.pdf
- News Clips Oct 2021.pdf