APPROVED

Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday November 9, 2021 at 10:00 AM

Location
This meeting will be held remotely.

Notice of a meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees on Tuesday, November 9, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

For public comments dial (when announced in the meeting): 978.665.3698

Public streaming:
Live stream
stream.meet.google.com/stream/1f978788-31ed-45ae-8b13-2374f6eaf45f

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

Trustees Absent
None

Ex Officio Members Present
R. Lapidus (remote)

Guests Present

C. Canney (remote), C. Estrella (remote), F. Barricelli (remote), G. Doiron (remote), J. Bry (remote), J. Murdoch (remote), J. Wolfman (remote), K. Ngan (remote), L. Bayless (remote), M. Ferrucci (remote), M. McKenzie (remote), M. Snyder (remote), P. McCafferty (remote), R. Toomey (remote), S. Swartz (remote), Y. Malcolm (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 Nov 9, 2021 at 10:03 AM.

C. Public Comments

Dr. Rala Diakité read a prepared statement which was a resolution to address enrollment decline, financial deficits, and their threat to the academic mission. The MSCA Fitchburg Chapter President urged the President and his administration to communicate with more transparency and accountability. They urged the President and Board of Trustees to provide concrete support – financial and institutional – for growth and innovation within academic majors, minors, concentrations, and program areas. She thanked the Board for their time.

D. Approve Minutes from the October 19, 2021 meeting - VOTE (09-21/22)

M. Nicholson made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 10-19-21.
D. Irving seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

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

II. Finance and Administration

A.

Presentation by the auditors

D. Phillips provided the Finance and Administration report. She stated the committee met earlier in the day and had an in-depth discussion with the auditors. The committee accepted the audit.

Introductions were made. The following auditors from CohnReznick discussed the university audit PowerPoint presentation:

Ms. Melissa Ferrucci, Audit Partner
Mr. Mark Snyder, Audit Director
Ms. KimNgan Le, Audit Senior Associate

The auditors presented a PowerPoint. M. Ferrucci said the audit is being presented with a clean unmodified opinion. The university has adequate internal controls.

D. Philips noted that with a clean unmodified opinion, it means that the university is operating well financially. The auditors affirmed her statement.

M. Ferrucci said they found no incorrect allocations and there are no findings. D. Phillips reiterated that the university is all set with guidance.

There are no findings on any of the reports issued. M. Ferrucci discussed the audit results in detail.

M. Ferrucci thanked the entire finance team of J. Bry, Y. Malcolm and D. Brindle. She stated everything that the auditors asked for from the university was provided in a timely fashion.

M. Snyder discussed the statement of net position, statement of revenues, expenses, cash flows and changes in net position. He discussed the footnotes and disclosures.

There was a discussion.

M. Ferrucci summarized financial statements and what that means looking forward. The university has done a good job on working on the expense side ledger.

D. Phillips asked if the auditors considered Fitchburg State to be in a fiscally healthy position moving forward? M. Ferrucci responded that the institution is healthy financially and that they have no concerns moving forward.

D. Phillips noted that the auditors would be required to bring to the Board and to the Commonwealth any issues of concern. The auditors responded that there are no such issues.

M. Ferrucci discussed the impact of COVID within the financial statements. She discussed the upcoming GASB Accounting pronouncements.

J. Bry asked that the auditors mention the changes made due to the reclassification of funds to federal grant funding. M. Ferrucci noted the change on page 23 of the audit which did not change the bottom line.

The President thanked CohnReznick, and he recognized the comprehensive and complicated audit, and the work that goes into the materials. He expressed his sincere thanks to J. Bry, D. Brindle, and Y. Malcolm.

B. FY2021 Audit - VOTE (10-21/22)

D. Irving made a motion to accept the FY2021 audit.
C. Stimpson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

III. Dashboard

A. The current dashboard will be discussed.

J. Bry presented and discussed the financial dashboard. He indicated that the number of faculty and staff has remained stable despite the decline in enrollment. He reminded the board that information presented is based on the budget that the board approves and any modifications would be reviewed moving forward. The university is anticipating the supplemental portion of funding from the Board of Higher Ed. He indicated that there are other state appropriations coming. He stated that the institution has rebounded financially due to the Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) that have been coming in.

There was a discussion. Questions and answers ensued. There was a discussion on the Commissioner's equity agenda.

IV. Sabbatical Requests

A. Act on President's recommendation for faculty sabbatical requests - VOTE (11-21/22)

The President presented the sabbatical requests. He indicated that they were all strong proposals. He noted the formal process that ensues prior to the recommendations being sent to him. The President recommended that the proposals be approved by the board.
D. Irving made a motion to approve the sabbaticals presented.
K. Spinelli seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

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

V. Notifications

A. Personnel Actions (N03-21-22)

The personnel actions were submitted for informational purposes.

B. Financial Statements (N04-21/22)

The financial statements were submitted for informational purposes.

VI. Student Trustee Report

A. Joseph Cautela will provide the Student Trustee report.

J. Cautela updated the Board on the SGA survey designed to gather data on student concerns. He stated there were not enough completed responses so he was unable to report on student responses. He did note that one of the biggest concerns is parking and there is a student petition circulating on this issue. SGA will bring their parking concerns to the university parking committee.

VII. Chair's Report

A.

Debbie Phillips will provide the Chair's report.

D. Phillips reported on the DHE Trustee Conference. This was the second year that it has been held virtually and she indicated it was very good. She summarized the conference content that included five key areas that the Commissioner focused on. They are as follows:

1. Policy audit
2. Student experience
3. Data and evidence
4. Community of practice
5. Sustained transformation

D. Phillips encouraged board members to reread the strategic plan. She noted that the university is focused on areas that are being emphasized by the DHE. She discussed the various initiatives taking place at the DHE level.

She discussed the breakout sessions at the conference which were rich and meaningful. She encouraged everyone to take a look at the materials presented at the conference.

D. Phillips reminded the Board that DHE Trustee Training is mandated and must be completed by December 1, 2021 or by law their term as Trustee ends. Also, Board members were reminded to complete the annual conflict of interest form and to donate to Fitchburg State University to achieve 100 percent board participation

VIII. President's Report

A. COVID Update

The President provided an update on COVID. The university continues to do well on campus with only one or two outbreaks involving multiple individuals. He updated the Board on vaccination status (90% of students and 95% of faculty and staff are vaccinated.) He thanked everyone for their compliance and continually adhering to the mask mandate on campus. The campus is far outpacing the city with regard to COVID vaccination rate and is well below the city with regard to the positivity rate.

B. DHE Trustee Convening Meeting

The topic was covered by Chair Phillips in her presentation.

C. Open House update

The President reported on the Open Houses. He stated that the COVID world has changed the way students and parents are looking at and evaluating institutions. The institution is seeing less attendance at Open Houses, but increased participation on

guided and self-guided campus tours. He noted that people are looking for more individualized experiences. He mentioned the increased number of visitors registered for the Open House on Nov. 14.

D. Commencement Ceremonies

The President stated that the winter commencement was scheduled for Dec. 17, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. and will take place in person at the recreation center. All Trustees are invited to participate. The event will be shortened and ticketed to reduce the maximum attendance.

E. Early College

The President informed the Board of the early college programs in place that include dual enrollment. The goal is to bring more high school students into the university classroom. Historically, first generation students are intimidated by higher education, by bringing them into the college classroom early, we can show them that they can be successful. He noted that this initiative is part of the Commissioner's Equity Agenda.

F. News Articles

The news articles were submitted for informational purposes. The President noted the article regarding the Fitchburg State police program which in his opinion was an honest representation. The university has a progressive program. He stated it was nice to have local and regional support from various police divisions.

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 11:27 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
D. Tiernan