APPROVED

Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday September 13, 2022 at 8:15 AM

Location
Presidents' Hall, Mazzaferro Center, 291 Highland Ave., Fitchburg, MA 01420

Notice of a meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees on Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at 8:15 a.m. in Presidents' Hall, Mazzaferro Center, 291 Highland Ave., Fitchburg, MA 01420

Trustees Present
A. Turner, C. Stimpson, D. Phillips, D. Tiernan, E. Gregoire, K. Spinelli, L. Barrieau, M. Fiorentino, Jr. (remote)

Trustees Absent
J. Flanagan

Ex Officio Members Present
R. Lapidus

Guests Present
A, Tourigny, F. Barricelli, G. Doiron, G. Doiron, J. Bry, J. Murdoch, J. Wolfman, L. Bayless, M. Bruun, P. Marshall, P., McCafferty, R, Dinda, R. Toomey, S, Swartz, S. Levine

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 Sep 13, 2022 at 8:21 AM.

C. Public Comments

There were none.

D. Approve Minutes from the May 3, 2022 Meeting - VOTE (01-22/23)

L. Barrieau made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 05-03-22.
D. Tiernan seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Fiorentino, Jr.	Aye
C. Stimpson	Absent
K. Spinelli	Aye
L. Barrieau	Aye
E. Gregoire	Aye
A. Turner	Aye
J. Flanagan	Absent
D. Phillips	Aye
D. Tiernan	Aye

II. President's Assessment and Goals

A. President's Goal Performance 2021-2022 Academic Year

The President welcomed the Board to the first meeting of the academic year. He next introduced Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, Dr. Patricia Marshall who began her tenure in July.

He highlighted a few of his accomplishments from the last year. He indicated that the University community had weathered another year of COVID. Overall positivity rates were low last year. The financial audit was clean with no concerns expressed by the auditors. He also noted that there was significant money in the grant pipeline. He highlighted the work being done on cyber security and protection and stated that two factor authentication had been implemented. The academic plan was approved which is a subset of the strategic plan. Another institution was added to our early college consortium. He also noted, with pride, the new “Tomorrow’s Educators Scholarship

Program." This is a pilot program for students interested in education. The program provides financial assistance to students who earn a teaching degree and in return agree to teach in the local school system. It is designed to create increased diversity within the ranks of K-12 teachers. A recent financial allocation in the budget passed by legislators will be provided to the DHE to support state-wide efforts for this program. This program supports the equity agenda, an initiative the new commissioner has stated will continue to be a priority. On September 22, the President and others will attend a meeting with the NECHE Commissioners. After that meeting, the President will receive the official decision regarding accreditation. He stated that our NECHE report was quite good. The University continues to work on enrollment and capital projects. Supply chain issues have slowed some of the work in Thompson and Miller. We have a HVAC problem in Hammond that will most likely conclude in November. A mobile chiller for the building needed to be ordered until the main chiller is repaired. He informed the Board of his efforts around community building. He informed the group that he had been elected to the NCAA President's Council which is the highest Division 3 policy and governance group.

Trustee Stimpson arrived at 8:31.

D. Tiernan asked about the status on the Theater Block.

The President responded that it's now in the silent phase of philanthropy work. He noted that the state has not been funding new construction.

B. Accept the President's Goal Assessment for AY2021-2022 - VOTE (02-22/23)

K. Spinelli made a motion to accept the performance appraisal summary of the president by the Chair for AY2021-AY2022 in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Commissioner of the Board of Higher Education. And It is requested that the Board of Trustees recommend to the Commissioner of the Board of Higher Education the maximum allowable compensation adjustment.
C. Stimpson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

J. Flanagan	Absent
C. Stimpson	Aye
M. Fiorentino, Jr.	Aye
E. Gregoire	Aye
A. Turner	Aye
L. Barrieau	Aye
D. Tiernan	Aye
K. Spinelli	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye

C. President's Goals AY2022-2023

The President stated that the key activity for this next year is going to revolve around enrollment management and marketing in an effort to grow future enrollment. Focus on retention will also be a priority as the pandemic has impacted this area. Additionally more aggressive efforts will be made in support of increased residence occupancy. As enrollment continues to decline, a review of all aspects of the university will be undertaken to fully understand how to best match resources to the most essential needs of the University and its students. He noted that undergraduate day school enrollment was down. It is still unclear as to the extent to which enrollment can be regained. Enrollment patterns are not consistent with what has been experienced in prior years. Nationally, students within the Black and Latino communities have been slower to return to higher education. The community colleges are experiencing significant declines in enrollment across the state which is negatively impacting transfer numbers. Our graduate enrollments are slightly up and our international on-campus enrollment is significantly up.

A discussion ensued.

D. Accept the President's Goals for AY2022-2023 - VOTE (03-22/23)

L. Barrieau made a motion to accept the President's goal for AY2022-2023.
D. Tiernan seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. Tiernan	Aye
E. Gregoire	Aye
J. Flanagan	Absent
L. Barrieau	Aye
A. Turner	Aye
K. Spinelli	Aye
C. Stimpson	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye
M. Fiorentino, Jr.	No

III. Notifications

A. Personnel Actions (N01-22/23)

The personnel actions were submitted for informational purposes.

E. Gregoire inquired if the salary adjustments are consistent with the collective bargaining agreements. M. Fiorentino asked if the salary increases were performance based or job responsibilities that lead to those changes.

The President responded generally speaking, yes to both questions. The President highlighted the process and challenges associated with replacing those that retired or resigned and equally the challenges associated with retaining good employees.

A discussion ensued.

IV. Student Trustee Report

A. Allison Turner will provide the Student Trustee Report

A. Turner provided the student report. She informed the board of her major and clubs and organizations she is associated with. She explained her intentions for this year and would like to schedule events with the Trustees to bridge the gap between the Board and students. She looks forward to working on the Board this year.

V. Chair's Report

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

The Chair welcomed everyone to the start of the academic year and those who support the institution. She expressed her appreciation to the faculty, staff, and students who have weathered these hard times over the past couple of years.

The Chair took a moment to express her appreciation to everyone and suggested that we all take a breath and recognize where others are given these stressful times post pandemic. She asked everyone to be flexible and bring empathy to the table when dealing with each other. She reflected on her own COVID experience. She reiterated that everyone at Fitchburg State is here to help and support students.

B. Committee Assignments

The Committee assignments were distributed and discussed. D. Phillips stated if anyone had any questions or input to please let her know. She next asked L. Barrieau to be the chair of the self-evaluation committee. Also, she is almost ready to present a draft of recommended changes to the By-Laws.

C. Board Retreat date - June 6,7 or 8, 2023

It was agreed that the best date for the Board Retreat is June 6, 2023 but, all were asked to please hold June 7 & 8 until the date is finalized.

The Chair and President asked if there were particular topics that the board was interested in reviewing in greater depth. If so, please let them know.

D.

Board Giving

Board giving was discussed. There are many grants and programs that the University applies for and the degree of board participation, in the form of giving, is often a question. D. Phillips stated that it is not how much one gives, but rather that you participate in some way. All are encouraged to give annually and that any amount is greatly appreciated.

E. Conflict of Interest

The annual Conflict of Interest form will be circulated for completion electronically.

VI. President's Report

A. Opening of the university

The President informed the Board of the fall semester opening. He stated that things went smoothly and that the traditional activities took place. He noted that the incoming class is very enthusiastic about being on campus. They are coming out to events and students are participating in the activities offered in large numbers. Similarly, he noted that the faculty are excited about coming back to the classroom. Most classes are in person with about 12 percent being fully online.

He next discussed the Faculty Excellence event and thanked Trustees Barrieau and Gregoire for attending. The 5th ROC Graduation took place. The 5th ROC was the largest graduating class to date with many students already having employment contracts. The President stated that the University continues to have strong support from the MPTC. The annual Rock the Block event was held with strong attendance and serves to create early semester student engagement with the broader campus community.

The President talked about the incoming class. There are approximately 2600 undergraduate day students this fall with approximately 700 being new. The campus is down about 200 undergraduate day students from what was initially budgeted. The honors student population is also showing positive growth. A brief explanation was provided regarding day and evening undergraduate students. On the graduate side, overall registrations are up about 150 from last year. The accelerated graduate program registrations are slightly down, but the in-person graduate registrations are slightly up. The international student population is significantly up.

The new recruiting season has started. The University has elected to enroll in the Common App program which has its strengths and weaknesses. It is expected that this will result in a larger application pool this coming year. However, the University focus will be on yield. The Enrollment Management team has 430+ high school visits scheduled or in the process of being scheduled. High Schools are once again accepting visitors in person. Recruiters will be spending more time in Southern New Hampshire and more time with transfer students this year. Additionally, more emphasis will be focused on community based organizations (CBO’s).

There was a discussion on retention and thoughts on why students are not returning.

B. COVID

The President provided an update on COVID protocols. We are a mask optional campus.

C. NECHE Update

The President will meet with the NECHE Board on Sept. 22 for a final review. We should receive formal notification of accreditation status a couple of weeks after the review.

D. Approval of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Digital Media Innovation

The formal approval notification was presented.

E. Housing

The President noted that housing occupancy is at approximately 55%. This has implications for the budget. The target housing percentage relative to budget was 66%. Students that enrolled for housing were offered rooms as premium singles which many students opted for. The University is currently reviewing the possibility to collaborate with MOC in an effort to convert Herlihy Hall into a day care center. He also discussed various properties that have been purchased and that two of them were scheduled to be demolished and there is an intention to sell another.

F. Game on Fitchburg

Game On Fitchburg is a large athletic facility that the President described in detail. The facility anticipates about 3 million guests this year. The University will be advertising at the venue and will be represented in high visibility locations. The Game On Fitchburg contract provides an exclusivity clause allowing only one higher education institution the right to advertise at any point in time.

There was a discussion.

G. Main Street Properties

The President reported on the new window advertising at the Professional Development Center designed to highlight the University and to add vibrancy on Main Street. He also mentioned the theater and its continued progress as a multi-phased project. He reminded the Board of the game design studio and ideaLab already operational in the space. He also talked briefly about the Fidelity Bank Building currently being leased as studio space for artists. Additionally the four store fronts on the block will soon be available for occupancy. One has already been selected and will become a restaurant and another a

gallery for the campus community to display and sell work. It is hoped the other two spaces will be leased to small minority or woman owned businesses.

During general discussion, M. Fiorentino suggested that it would be good idea to incorporate enrollment strategies going forward. He mentioned how helpful the information provided was when presented at the retreat. He suggested through the committee structure or at a full boarding. D. Phillips said we have planned to do that and will put that on the top of the list.

H. Informational Articles

The items were submitted for informational purposes.

VII. Executive Session

A. Executive Session - VOTE (04-22/23)

E. Gregoire made a motion to enter into executive session in accordance with MGL c. 30A, Section 21 (a)(1) to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual in relation to the sabbatical leave provision within the terms of Article XV, Section C of the MSCA and BHE collective bargaining agreement. (other information withheld under MGL c. 214, Section 1B right to privacy) The Board will return to open session.
L. Barrieau seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

J. Flanagan	Absent
M. Fiorentino, Jr.	Aye
L. Barrieau	Aye
A. Turner	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye
D. Tiernan	Aye
E. Gregoire	Aye
C. Stimpson	Aye
K. Spinelli	Aye

Open session reconvened at 9:51 a.m.

VIII. Executive Session discussion

A. VOTE(5-22/23)

L. Barrieau made a motion to excuse a faculty member from the requirements of Article XV, Section C of the MSCA and BHE collective bargaining agreement relative to the completion of service following a sabbatical and approves the request.
E. Gregoire seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

A. Turner	Aye
C. Stimpson	Aye
M. Fiorentino, Jr.	Aye
E. Gregoire	Aye
L. Barrieau	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye
J. Flanagan	Absent
D. Tiernan	Aye
K. Spinelli	Aye

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 9:53 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
D. Tiernan