APPROVED

Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Board of Trustees

Date and Time
Thursday October 17, 2024 at 1:00 PM

Location
Hammond Hall - Main Lounge

Notice of a meeting of the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees on Tuesday, October 17, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.

The meeting will take place in the Main Lounge, Hammond Hall, Fitchburg, MA 01420

Public Live Stream
Live stream link: https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/live

Link to meeting recording: https://www.youtube.com/live/y6Mn6rKZt7E

Trustees Present
C. Stimpson (remote), D. Phillips, D. Tiernan, E. Gregoire, K. Spinelli, L. Barrieau, M. Fiorentino, Jr. (remote), M. Gill, M. Morris, S. King-Goodwin

Trustees Absent
J. Flanagan

Ex Officio Members Present
D. Hodge

Guests Present

Campus Community, K. Lundgren, M. Bruun

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

M. Fiorentino, Jr. called a meeting of the board of trustees of Fitchburg State University to order on Thursday Oct 17, 2024 at 1:15 PM.
Chair Mike Fiorentino welcomed attendees and introduced new Board member Michael Morris.
President Donna Hodge was officially welcomed to the university and her first Board meeting.
The new format and technology of the meeting was outlined to the Trustees and university community. The new format allows for a more transparent, open meeting type.

C. Public Comments

There are no public comments.

II. Board Chair's Report

A. Approval of Minutes, May 9, 2024 VOTE (01.2024-2025)

L. Barrieau made a motion to approve the minutes from May 9, 2024.
C. Stimpson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
M. Gill	Aye
L. Barrieau	Aye
K. Spinelli	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye
E. Gregoire	Aye
S. King-Goodwin	Aye
M. Morris	Aye
D. Tiernan	Aye
M. Fiorentino, Jr.	Aye
J. Flanagan	Absent
C. Stimpson	Aye

B. Approval of minutes, June 24, 2024 VOTE (02.2024-2025)

L. Barrieau made a motion to approve the minutes from June 24, 2024.
M. Morris seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Fiorentino, Jr.	Aye
K. Spinelli	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye
J. Flanagan	Absent
E. Gregoire	Aye
M. Morris	Aye
L. Barrieau	Aye
M. Gill	Aye
C. Stimpson	Aye
D. Tiernan	Aye
S. King-Goodwin	Aye

C. Assignments: Committee Membership

Chairman Fiorentino reviewed the Board of Trustee committee assignments.

D. Committee Structure, President Hodge

- **President Hodge** outlined the administrative liaisons for each committee:
  - **Student Life:** Dr. Laura Bayless and Matt Burke
  - **Academic Affairs:** Pat Marshall and Rich Toomey
  - **Budget, Finance, and Facilities:** President Hodge and Michael Cloutier
  - **Bylaw Review:** Stefan Dodd
  - **Nominations Committee:** Matt Bruun and Jeffrey Wolfman
  - **Human Resources:** Kelli Lundgren

President Hodge informed the Board that the structure of the committee meetings would be coordinated by the Cabinet Liaisons along with the Board to assure meetings are posted appropriately with any supporting documentation.

For any committees that do not have a Chair, President Hodge and Chairman Fiorentino will work with those individual committees to identify a chair based on interest of committee members.

III. President's Report

A. Division Updates

President Hodge notified the board of the detailed individual cabinet department overviews located in the packet.

She thanked her Cabinet, the technology department, the Chartwell's staff and additional key staff and students.

The President gave a special welcome to Mr. Joshua Dodds, our new Executive Director of Diversity, Equity and Belonging Programs.
She acknowledged Rhine Waahl Representatives from Germany; Dr. Klaus Hegemann, Dr. Alexander Brand, Dr. Irmgard Buder and Fitchburg State Professor Dr. Josh Spero, Economics, History and Political Science and Nelly Wadsworth, Director of International Education.

President Hodge gave her report to the Board of Trustees outlining key initiatives and accomplishments over her first 100 days at Fitchburg State University. A slide show played of various pictures that outlined Dr. Hodge's accomplishments, conferences, meetings and gatherings at the presidential residence, the Iver Johnson House.

- **President Hodge** presented a comprehensive report on the past three months, highlighting key achievements:
  - **Organizational Changes:** Changes to the president's cabinet, including the addition of University Police and Athletics.
  - **Hispanic-Serving Institution:** Progress towards achieving HSI status and the creation of an Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.
  - **Community Partnerships:** New partnerships with Fitchburg Public Schools, the Boys and Girls Club, and other local organizations.
  - **Student Success Initiatives:** Enrollment initiatives, including Falcon Express, and support programs for student athletes.
  - **Campus Improvements:** The theater block project, dining services enhancements, and the creation of the Fitchburg State University cup and $5 meals at the dining hall for faculty and staff.
  - **Presidential Ambassadors and Fellows Programs:** Launch of new programs to engage students and faculty in university leadership.

B. Richard Toomey, AVP Enrollment Management

Key Points:

- **Enrollment Performance:**
  - Fall 2024 enrollment exceeded budget projections by 57 students.
  - Transfer student enrollment increased by 38 students.
  - Undergraduate day freshman and returning student enrollment decreased.
- **Demographic Cliff and Future Enrollment:**
  - The demographic cliff will continue to impact future enrollment.
  - The university is adapting by exploring partnerships, scholarship strategies, and residential life enhancements.
  - Focus on yield efforts to convert admitted students into enrolled students.
- **Financial Aid and FAFSA:**
  - The delay in FAFSA availability impacted enrollment.

    - The university is actively monitoring and preparing for potential delays in the upcoming year.
    - Strategies are being implemented to communicate effectively with students and provide financial aid support.
- **Community College Partnerships:**
    - The rise in community college enrollment due to free tuition programs may impact traditional college enrollment.
    - The university is exploring partnerships with community colleges to facilitate seamless transfer and enhance student pathways.
- **Military and Veteran Student Recruitment:**
    - The university is committed to supporting military and veteran students.
    - Strategies to enhance services and recruitment efforts are being developed.
- **Strategic Enrollment Planning:**
    - A comprehensive five-year strategic enrollment plan is being developed to address challenges and opportunities.
    - This plan will focus on various student populations, including adult learners and international students.
    - The university will prioritize recruitment efforts in the local area and explore partnerships with community colleges.

Action Items:

- Develop a 5 year enrollment management plan.
- Continue to monitor enrollment trends and adjust strategies as needed.
- Enhance communication and support for students throughout the enrollment process.
- Strengthen partnerships with community colleges and other institutions.
- Develop strategies to attract and retain adult learners and international students.
- Implement a comprehensive plan to support military and veteran students.

Overall, the discussion emphasized the importance of a strategic approach to enrollment management, including targeted recruitment, financial aid support, and student success initiatives.

C. Dr. Patricia Marshall, Provost and Executive Vice President

Key Points:

- **Academic Priorities:**
    - Integration of day and evening programs.
    - Internationalization initiatives.
    - Academic program review and assessment.
- **Program Review Process:**
    - Eduventures has been selected as a potential partner for a program strengths assessment.

    - The assessment will evaluate programs based on internal and external metrics.
    - The goal is to identify programs for investment, monitoring, or potential discontinuation.
- **Faculty and Staff Involvement:**
    - Faculty and staff will be involved in the program review process.
    - Feedback and input will be sought to ensure a collaborative and transparent approach.
- **Alignment with Strategic Plan:**
    - The program review process aligns with the university's strategic plan and academic plan.
    - It will help to shape the future of the university's academic offerings.

Action Items:

- Finalize the selection of Eduventures as the vendor for the program review.
- Develop a timeline for the program review process.
- Engage faculty, staff, and administrators in the review process.
- Utilize the findings of the review to inform strategic planning and decision-making.

Overall, the discussion emphasized the importance of a rigorous and data-driven approach to academic program review. The goal is to ensure that Fitchburg State offers high-quality programs that meet the needs of students and the labor market.

IV. Student Trustee Report

A. Student Trustee Report

Presenter: Matthew Gill, Student Trustee

Key Points/Events:

- **Rock the Block:** Successful event with strong freshman turnout.
- **Student Government Association:** Elected new members and formed committees.
- **Ride Share Program:** Exploring a potential ride-sharing program with e-scooters and e-bikes.
- **Election Results Party:** Planning an event to foster discussion and support.
- **Voter Registration:** Promoting voter registration and encouraging student participation.
- **Budgetary Challenges:** Addressing a $25,000 deficit and exploring solutions for future budget constraints.

Action Items:

- Continue to promote student engagement and involvement.

- Explore the feasibility of a ride-sharing program.
- Plan and execute the election results party.
- Support voter registration and education initiatives.
- Develop strategies to address budget constraints and ensure student funding.

Overall, the Student Government Association is actively working to enhance the student experience, promote civic engagement, and address financial challenges.

Upcoming events:
SGA - Town Hall coming up with panel. Trustees can sit on panel if interested.
Halloween
Homecoming
Center for Italian Culture Trivia night
Dwali Night

V. Annual Physical Plant Report

A. Presented by JD Head, AVP Capital Planning and Maintenance

Key Points:

- **Building Portfolio:** Fitchburg State University has a significant building portfolio, including academic buildings, residence halls, and support facilities.
- **Facilities Condition Index (FCI):** The university is actively monitoring the condition of its buildings and implementing necessary repairs and improvements.
- **Decarbonization:** The university is committed to reducing its carbon footprint and is exploring various strategies to achieve decarbonization goals.
- **Capital Planning Process:** A comprehensive capital planning process will be implemented to prioritize projects and allocate resources effectively.
- **Financial Sustainability:** The university will continue to explore funding opportunities, including state funding and private donations, to support capital projects.

Action Items:

- Develop a long-term capital plan.
- Prioritize projects based on need and impact.
- Explore opportunities for energy efficiency and sustainability.
- Seek funding for critical repairs and improvements.

Overall, the university is committed to maintaining its facilities and ensuring a safe and sustainable campus environment for students, faculty, and staff.

VI. Preview Updated Budget Reporting FY25

A. Updated Budget Reporting FY25

Presenter: Dr. Donna Hodge, President
Key Points:

- **Past Fiscal Year:**
  - The university ended the fiscal year with a $5 million surplus.
  - Previously reported deficits were inaccurate due to accounting discrepancies within SGOCE revenue reporting.
- **Current Fiscal Year:**
  - The university is operating with a more accurate budget that reflects actual costs and revenues.
  - Significant changes have been made to the budget presentation, including separating tuition and fees, highlighting SGOCE revenue and expenses, and detailing capital expenditures.
  - A focus on financial sustainability and long-term planning is essential.
- **Future Financial Strategy:**
  - The university will continue to monitor expenses and explore opportunities for cost savings.
  - A comprehensive approach to capital planning will be implemented.
  - The impact of enrollment trends and state funding on the university's financial health will be closely monitored.

Action Items:

- Review the detailed financial reports provided by the Finance team.
- Participate in the joint finance committee meeting to discuss the budget in detail.
- Provide feedback on the proposed budget and financial strategies.
- Support efforts to improve financial transparency and accountability.

Overall, the university is committed to fiscal responsibility and long-term financial stability. By implementing a more accurate and transparent budgeting process, the university can make informed decisions and allocate resources effectively.

VII. Personnel Updates

A. Report

The board received a briefing on personnel updates, which did not require a vote.

VIII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

Conclusion of Meeting

- **Personnel Updates:** The board received a briefing on personnel updates, which did not require a vote.

- **Meeting Format:** The board thanked attendees for their participation and encouraged feedback on the new meeting format and structure.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Fiorentino, Jr.
L. Barrieau made a motion to Adjourn the meeting.
C. Stimpson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Fiorentino, Jr.	Aye
K. Spinelli	Aye
J. Flanagan	Absent
M. Morris	Aye
E. Gregoire	Aye
D. Phillips	Aye
L. Barrieau	Aye
S. King-Goodwin	Aye
M. Gill	Aye
C. Stimpson	Aye
D. Tiernan	Aye