APPROVED

Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Fitchburg State University

Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee Meeting

Date and Time
Monday December 2, 2024 at 2:00 PM

Location
This is a virtual meeting and will be live streamed

Committee Members Present
E. Gregoire (remote), J. Flanagan (remote), L. Barrieau (remote), M. Morris (remote)

Committee Members Absent
None

Guests Present
Nathalie Torres-Serrano (remote), Patricia Marshall (remote), Richard Toomey (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

J. Flanagan called a meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee of Fitchburg State University to order on Monday Dec 2, 2024 at 2:07 PM.

C. Approve Minutes from the November 7, 2023 Meeting - VOTE (06.2024-2025)

Motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee Meeting on 11-07-23.

The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Academic Affairs

A. Review and Discuss Subcommittee Charge

1. **Review and Discuss Subcommittee Charge – Patricia Marshall**
    - Bi-Laws excerpt was reviewed regarding powers and duties of this subcommittee.
        - Considering policies regarding the quality, character, and extent of instruction.
        - To consider policies related to the educational purposes and responsibilities of the University and evaluate the same on a long-range basis, and to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees with respect thereto.
        - To advise the President on any matter within the scope of the Committee's duties.
        - Past Focus Areas:

• Introduction of new programs: Three new programs were introduced, with the rationale for each presented, highlighting the connections to the academic plan and the university’s strategic goals.
• Public service activities, including civic learning and engagement services, were outlined.
• Sabbatical leaves were identified as a possible discussion topic for future meetings.
• Presentations were delivered on personnel actions related to faculty.
• Admissions – Richard Toomey
• Updates on Admissions requirements and guidelines that are influenced by state rules but university-specific exceptions are also shared.

B. OER Update by Connie Strittmatter and Jackie Kremer

1. OER Update– Connie Strittmatter and Jackie Kremer
    - Initiative based on equity and affordability, that increases access to no-cost and low-cost textbook resources that started back in 2018. Fitchburg State formally established its OER program in Fall 2019.

• Highlighted efforts to promote open pedagogy, where faculty collaborate with students to develop curriculum materials.
• Performance Metrics:
• Achieved $7.6 million in savings for students across the Commonwealth.
• From AY22 to AY24, FSU students saved a total of $2,911,434, including

$1,106,802 in AY24 alone.

- Nearly half of general education courses now fall into the no-cost category.
- Faculty Participation:
- From Fall 2020 to Spring 2024, 73 adoption grants were awarded to 47 faculty members, covering 66 courses, 218 course sections, and covering all academic departments.
- Established four Communities of Practice to support faculty in adopting OER.
- Upcoming Projects:
- Course Markings: Implement searchable course markings to help students make informed registration decisions (e.g., cost-free/no-cost courses).
- ROTEL Project: Department of Ed secured a grant to create and adapt textbook material that incorporates DEIB concepts. (10 books published by FSU authors)
- Other Points Discussed:
- Current data collection primarily focuses on undergraduate courses, with plans to expand to graduate and online programs.
- Richness of data allows for departmental analysis of high-cost programs and opportunities to reduce costs.
- Faculty have varying levels of comfort when deciding on transitioning to OER due to individual preferences.
    - Academic freedom remains a priority, as faculty retain the right to select their course materials.
- Admissions – Opportunities to leverage OER as a differentiator for FSU by demonstrating financial benefits to prospective students.

C. Discussion of Potential Topics for Future Meetings

Discussion of Potential Topics for Future Meetings
Eric Gregoire

- Suggested a yearly refresher on the status of the Academic Plan and active projects.
- Strategic preparations in response to Massachusetts' free community college initiative.

Patricia Marshall

- Proposed updates on NECHE projections and enrollment planning for the School of Graduate, Online, and Continuing Education.
- Emphasized the need to address admissions strategies and advertising in a post-COVID world.
- Overview of the Early College initiative and its financial implications.
- Sabbatical presentations (2–3 per year)

III. 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 3:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. Flanagan