



# Fitchburg State University

## Minutes

### Fitchburg State University

Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee Meeting

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#### Date and Time

Monday December 2, 2024 at 2:00 PM

#### Location

This is a virtual meeting and will be live streamed

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#### 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)

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### 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