APPROVED

Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Academic Affairs Committee Meeting

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday April 10, 2025 at 11:00 AM

Location
This is a virtual meeting and will be livestreamed

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

Committee Members Absent
M. Morris

Ex Officio Members Present
D. Hodge (remote)

Guests Present
Becky Copper Glenz (remote), Joanne Rivard (remote), K. Lundgren (remote), M. Bruun (remote), M. Fiorentino, Jr. (remote), Patricia Marshall (remote), Peter August (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 Thursday Apr 10, 2025 at 11:06 AM.

C. Approve Minutes from the December 2, 2024 Meeting - VOTE (10.2024-2025)

E. Gregoire made a motion to approve the minutes from Fitchburg State University on 12-02-24.
L. Barrieau seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

L. Barrieau	Aye
M. Morris	Absent
E. Gregoire	Aye
J. Flanagan	Aye

II. Academic Affairs

A. General Overview of Enrollment Management

Richard Toomey provided a general overview of enrollment management, noting that more detailed information would be presented at the upcoming board meeting on April 17th. Key introductory points included:

- The Candidate Reply Deadline (CRD) for undergraduate day admission was approaching.
- Incoming new first-time full-time freshmen deposits were tracking 2% above the same date last year.
- Residential deposits were 10% higher compared to the previous year.
- Significant adjustments to the financial aid process had resulted in timely and efficient packaging for students who submitted their ISERs.
- Two successful Future Falcon Days (open house events for admitted students) were held:
    - March 22nd: 575 guests, 100% show rate for the honors reception.
    - April 5th: 475 guests, 100% show rate for the honors breakfast.
- The university was exploring and launching a direct admission offering within the Fitchburg community to partner with local schools for a smoother transition for students.

II. Questions for Richard Toomey

- **Eric Gregoire** inquired about the current deposit trend compared to a more traditional cycle. Richard Toomey noted the difficulty in benchmarking due to COVID-19 and a statewide dip in transfer deposits due to free community college initiatives. However, undergraduate deposits were up compared to Fall 2023, potentially due to the launch of the Common Application.

- **Eric Gregoire** asked for details on the direct admission process. Richard Toomey clarified it as a local high school pilot for 11th and 12th graders with a 2.5 GPA or higher, aiming for earlier communication and seamless transition, potentially with Fitchburg Promise incentives.
- **Jennifer Flanagan** questioned credit transferability for early college and dual enrollment students. Richard Toomey confirmed various transfer methods, with students classified as freshmen initially but advancing upon transcript evaluation. Patricia Marshall added that state-designated early college programs ensure credit transferability to state universities, including Fitchburg State.

B. SGOCE Strategic Enrollment Management Plan

Provost Patricia Marshall initiated the discussion on enrollment planning within the **School of Graduate, Online, and Continuing Education (SGOCE)**. She commended Dean Becky Copper Glenz and Assistant Dean Peter August for their comprehensive annual strategic enrollment management plan, which outlines goals, marketing strategies, challenges, and recruitment initiatives. Provost Marshall emphasized that the **2025 plan** also incorporates a five to seven-year outlook. She highlighted SGOCE's substantial enrollment growth, noting its current size surpasses traditional undergraduate programs and is vital to the institution's financial stability.
II. Strategic Enrollment Management Planning Presentation
Dean Becky Copper Glenz and Assistant Dean Peter August delivered a presentation on SGOCE's strategic enrollment management plan. Key aspects included:

- **Marketing Plan Partnership:** Peter August noted the collaborative efforts with the **Fitchburg State marketing office** for recruitment initiatives.
- **Program-Specific Action Plans:** Strategies are customized for different program audiences, utilizing a framework that includes programmatic and quantitative enrollment goals, recruitment/outreach, and marketing plans.
- **Examples of Program Action Plans:**
    - **Bachelor's in Business Administration (online, domestic):** This program focused on increasing inquiries by targeting diverse populations through community and chamber events, strengthening community college partnerships (Mountain Quinn SIG, Middle Sex), and engaging in workforce development and employer tuition assistance. Marketing efforts included LinkedIn, radio ads, and local digital/poster campaigns. The program **exceeded its total registration goals**.
    - **Master's in Criminal Justice (online, regional/industry):** The aim was to establish a presence with police departments, corrections facilities, and other criminal justice employers via expos and conferences (e.g., Chief of Police Expo). The plan also targeted undergraduate 4+1 students with aligned industry and undergraduate marketing. Enrollment goals were **slightly below target**.
    - **Master's in Computer Science (online and on-campus, international):** Efforts concentrated on increasing enrollment in both modalities. This

included leveraging the large on-campus international student population for online growth through agent partnerships, online graduate application workshops, outreach to English language schools, and targeted international marketing in Busan (South Korea), Hyderabad (India), and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), based on data analysis of top feeder nations and schools. Enrollment goals were **slightly below target**.

- **Annual Goal Setting:** Enrollment goals are set annually in consultation with recruiters, faculty chairs, and department leaders, aiming for achievable but challenging targets. Achieving or exceeding goals leads to the establishment of new, more ambitious targets.
- **Recruitment and Outreach Activities:** There is a strong alignment between recruiter activities and marketing efforts. Each program has a dedicated recruiter, with one specializing in identifying external opportunities.
- **Broader Strategies:** SGOCE utilizes third-party vendors such as **Carnegie (for SEO), Halda (for inquiry forms/chatbot), and Spark 451 (for inactive student communication/surveys)**. **Rise Point** serves as an OPM for online programs. Core recruitment events include fall/spring open houses and "Ask Me Anything" events.
- **Data-Driven Assessment:** The partnership with Halda provides monthly reports on inquiries and subsequent admitted/enrolled students to assess effectiveness.
- **Retention Strategies:** The strategic enrollment management plan encompasses student retention from orientation to graduation. SGOCE acts as a central information hub for students. Two annual call campaigns target "stopout" students (those not continuing semester-to-semester) to understand reasons for stopping out (e.g., financial, course load, advising) and encourage re-enrollment. The last call drive resulted in **over 50 new registrations**.
- **Financial Strategy (Becky Copper Glenz):** Unlike undergraduate programs, most SGOCE students pay out-of-pocket or via employer reimbursement. Key strategies involve maintaining affordable and competitive tuition/fees and student-friendly payment processes in collaboration with student billing. Fitchburg State's tuition is currently the **lowest among state institutions** and even lower than SNHU's list price.
- **Continuous Improvement:** The plan uses measurable outcomes for annual evaluation and adjustments. Future plans include developing a five to seven-year long-term plan and increasing collaboration with undergraduate enrollment efforts.

III. Questions and Discussion

- **Jennifer Flanagan** inquired about the impact of the current political landscape on international student recruitment. Becky Copper Glenz acknowledged the uncertainty and emphasized the strategy of diversifying recruitment efforts beyond international students. Patricia Marshall added that the university is monitoring the situation daily and remains focused on its mission. Donna Hodge, attending a Council of Presidents meeting, confirmed this was a major discussion point, with

institutions coordinating communications and adapting recruitment strategies while staying true to their mission.

- **Jennifer Flanagan** asked if a degree could be earned online in the US without a visa. Becky Copper Glenz confirmed this was possible, allowing for broader international reach beyond F1 visa holders. Peter August cited an example of a student in the Applied Communication master's program accessing it from BISE. Donna Hodge noted potential limitations due to platform blocking in certain countries.
- **Eric Gregoire** asked about the evaluation of program capacity and the ability to grow, particularly in popular or under-enrolled programs. Becky Copper Glenz explained the annual discussions with program chairs regarding capacity issues (e.g., faculty limitations in Computer Science) and the sustainability of smaller programs (e.g., closing the undergraduate early education program). Patricia Marshall linked this to the overarching portfolio review. Donna Hodge emphasized the importance of strategic staffing for SGOCE and the increasing reliance on full-time faculty, noting ongoing contract implications and broader state-level discussions about sub-120-degree programs and potential shifts in degree offerings between state universities and community colleges.

III. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

E. Gregoire made a motion to Adjourn the Meeting.
L. Barrieau seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Morris	Absent
E. Gregoire	Aye
L. Barrieau	Aye
J. Flanagan	Aye

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 12:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. Flanagan