APPROVED

Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Academic Affairs Committee Meeting

Board of Trustees - Academic Affairs Committee

Date and Time
Thursday January 22, 2026 at 3:00 PM

Location
This is a virtual only meeting and it will be livestreamed

Public Live Stream:
http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/live

Committee Members Present
E. Gregoire (remote), J. Flanagan (remote), M. Morris (remote), S. King-Goodwin (remote)

Committee Members Absent
M. Fiorentino, Jr.

Committee Members who arrived after the meeting opened
S. King-Goodwin

Guests Present
Franca Barricelli (remote), Jannette McMenamy (remote), K. Lundgren (remote), Matt Bruun (remote), Nate Robichaud (remote), Pam McCafferty (remote), Stacey Luster (remote), Stefan Dodd (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 Jan 22, 2026 at 3:01 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

E. Gregoire made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Affairs Committee Meeting on 10-15-25.
M. Morris seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Fiorentino, Jr.	Absent
J. Flanagan	Aye
S. King-Goodwin	Absent
M. Morris	Aye
E. Gregoire	Aye

S. King-Goodwin arrived at 3:04 PM.

II. Academic Affairs

A. Academic Affairs

President Hodge introduced Dr. Franca Barricelli and Dr. Jannette McMenamy, who are currently serving as Acting Provost and Acting Associate Vice Provost, respectively, while Dr. Patricia Marshall is on leave. The core focus of the Academic Affairs report was on curricular reform as a strategy to address recruitment and retention issues.

New Major: Bachelor of Science Degree in Finance

- Nature: New interdisciplinary major developed as a collaboration between the Economics program (School of Arts and Sciences) and the Business Administration program (School of Business and Technology).
- Goal: To prepare students for careers in the financial sector and meet a workforce need, leveraging existing institutional strengths.
- Curriculum Highlights: It is designed to be highly interdisciplinary and require fewer credits than some comparable degrees at other state institutions.
- Workforce Data: A feasibility study conducted in Spring 2024 with EAB showed a "healthy monthly job posting average" for finance degree holders in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.
- Timeline: The degree will come before the Board for consideration and approval at the April meeting. Following Board approval, it will go to the state (BHE) for final approval. The ideal goal is to have the program available for enrollment in the Fall semester, contingent on fast-track approval from the BHE.

Middle School Mathematics Education Major

- Nature: A major curricular revision to create a focused Middle School Mathematics Education major.
- Current Structure: Students currently complete a general mathematics degree with a middle school concentration, which is a protracted and circuitous route requiring 13 upper-level courses.
- Proposed Revision: The new major will focus exclusively on the Subject Matter Knowledge (SMKs) required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESIE) following their revised licensure requirements. It requires no new courses but is a creative restructuring of existing ones.
- Key Goal: To significantly increase student retention. The current graduation rate for this group is low (approx. 20%), with upper-level math courses identified as a major barrier.
- Workforce Need: The revision also addresses a substantial and urgent workforce need for middle school math teachers, which is a difficult position to fill across the state.
- Status: The faculty intend to send their AUC proposals through campus governance this spring.

General Education (GenEd) Program Discussion

- Context: The current GenEd curriculum, launched in 2021, is up to a 51-credit program with a multi-year assessment protocol.
- Issue: There is an emerging sense among faculty that the curriculum is large, confusing for students, and can be difficult for advisors to navigate.
- Priority: Academic Affairs has identified reducing the complexity of the General Education program as a curricular priority for the current academic year.
- Goal: To maintain the breadth of a liberal arts education while providing an "academic roadmap" that eliminates barriers, increases clarity for students, and aids in retention efforts.

B. Update - AVP

Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAA) Role

- Introduction: Dr. Jannette McMenamy, who is serving as the Acting AVPA, introduced herself, noting her 20+ years at Fitchburg State and her current role as Dean of Health and Natural Sciences.
- Role Scope: The AVPA role supports faculty and university-wide initiatives, implements the strategic vision, and has recently expanded to include student support (contributing to the CARE team). The role is also included on the President’s Cabinet to provide an additional voice for Academic Affairs.

C.

Aligning Academic Affairs goals to institutional priorities

All addressed in the previous discussions.

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 3:59 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. Flanagan