APPROVED

Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Student Experience Committee

Student Experience Committee

Date and Time
Tuesday March 24, 2026 at 11:00 AM

Location
This is a virtual only meeting and will be live streamed:

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

Committee Members Present
D. Tiernan (remote), L. Barrieau (remote), M. Fiorentino, Jr. (remote), S. Rodriguez (remote)

Committee Members Absent
M. Gill

Ex Officio Members Present
D. Hodge (remote)

Guests Present
J. Byrne (remote), K. Lundgren (remote), Matt Burke (remote), Nate Robichaud (remote), Stefan Dodd (remote), Tim St. John (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. **Record Attendance**

B.

Call the Meeting to Order

L. Barrieau called a meeting of the Student Experience Committee of Fitchburg State University to order on Tuesday Mar 24, 2026 at 11:00 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

S. Rodriguez made a motion to approve the minutes from Student Experience Committee on 01-09-26.
The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. Tiernan	Aye
M. Gill	Absent
M. Fiorentino, Jr.	Aye
L. Barrieau	Aye
S. Rodriguez	Aye

II. Student Experience

A. Student Affairs Report

Student Affairs Update
T. St. John provided an update on new initiatives focused on enhancing the student experience and supporting well-being.

- Housing Initiatives
  - Family Housing: The university finalized a housing agreement and is in the marketing phase to launch four five-person units of family housing at 185 North Street in the fall. This pilot program is intended to support students navigating their education while raising a family.
  - Graduate Housing: Eight current graduate students are moving from 185 North Street to a graduate housing floor in Simond's Hall, which offers 12-month, year-round housing with air conditioning. This change is expected to increase the graduate student population in residence and allow them to be counted in the MSCBA occupancy.
  - Retention: Retention efforts have shown progress, with the decrease in MSCBA reported occupancy from fall to spring reduced from 9% (Spring '24 example) to approximately 3% this past year.
  - Staffing and Occupancy: A new Director of Residence Life is scheduled to join Fitchburg State in May. Assistant Dean Ben Kadamus was acknowledged for leading the Residence Life team during the five-month vacancy. Current actual local occupancy is 73.85%, compared to the MSCBA reported occupancy of 52%.
  - 12-Month Housing Discussion: The university is working with the financial aid and student accounts teams to simplify billing for DCF-oversight students and others who require 12-month housing, such as the 12 Mount Wachusett

Community College students currently housed through partnership programs.

- Basic Needs Support
  - Falcon Bazaar Transition: Operations of the Falcon Bazaar food pantry and clothing closet are transitioning from the Office of Student Engagement to the new Office of Care and Case Management to holistically support basic needs.
  - Break Support: Proactive support during breaks included extended Falcon Bazaar hours, moving supplies into residence halls, and providing grant-funded gift cards and meal swipes.
  - A new software will launch with a soft implementation this spring/summer, allowing student mobile ordering and scheduled pickup to reduce stigma and improve convenience.
- Mental Health and Wellness
  - President Hodge announced that Fitchburg State achieved recognition as a JED Campus for its commitment to improving student mental health and wellness programs.
- Student Engagement and Military Services
  - Programming efforts focused on leadership development, inclusive events for online learners and cross-campus collaborations.
  - Current spring enrollment of students using military/veteran benefits increased by 90 students, from 109 last spring to 199.
  - A student story highlighted the work of Nolan Buck, Director of Military and Veteran Services, who helped a veteran student receive 20 years of backdated VA benefits, which subsequently enabled her son to enroll as a Falcon using VA dependent benefits.
  - Upcoming events include a bus trip to a Boston Fleet Professional Women's Hockey League game and the second annual Grand Royal Suare this Friday, which will include performances by Fitchburg High School student clubs.

B. Athletics Report

- Academic and Program Success
  - MASCAC All-Academic Team: 132 Falcons qualified with a 3.2+ GPA, an increase from previous years. This included 22 of 29 athletes from Men's Ice Hockey and 12 of 17 from Field Hockey.
  - Alumni Networking: An alumni networking event for student athletes is scheduled for March 30th in partnership with the Alumni Office and Career Services.
  - She Soars Initiative: The department launched this first-ever fundraising initiative specific to women's athletics to increase philanthropic giving for women's varsity programs. The launch featured Olympian Gigi Marvin as the keynote speaker.

- Staffing
  - The search for the new Head Women's Ice Hockey Coach is in the final stages to begin recruiting for the program's Fall 2027 launch.
  - The university welcomed new Women's Volleyball and Sports Information Director.
- Sports Medicine and Community Service
  - Athletic Trainers: The staff has been expanded to four athletic trainers, resulting in improved care, including direct medical coverage for track teams for the first time. The accelerated return-to-play process has decreased injury recovery time by an average of three days.
  - Community Service: The annual Hockey Day in the Burg raised about $20,000 for the Jake Thibeault Rehabilitation Trust in January. The Falcon Friends program, which links student athletes with peers from the Fitchburg public schools' extended classroom program, has been relaunched.
- Club Sports: Oversight of club sport programs was transitioned from SGA to the Athletic and Recreation Department to align them with athletics and recreation expertise. The Cheer team is headed to a national competition in Daytona.

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 11:53 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
L. Barrieau