APPROVED

Fitchburg State University

Minutes

Enrollment Management and Student Success Committee Meeting

Enrollment Management and Student Success Committee Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday March 25, 2026 at 9:00 AM

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

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

Committee Members Present
E. Gregoire (remote), J. Flanagan (remote), M. Fiorentino, Jr. (remote), S. Rodriguez (remote)

Committee Members Absent
L. Barrieau

Ex Officio Members Present
D. Hodge (remote)

Guests Present
K. Lundgren (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

E. Gregoire called a meeting of the Enrollment Management and Student Success Committee of Fitchburg State University to order on Wednesday Mar 25, 2026 at 9:05 AM.

C. Approve Minutes from the 1/20/2026 Meeting

J. Flanagan made a motion to approve the minutes from Enrollment Management Committee Meeting on 01-20-26.
S. Rodriguez seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

L. Barrieau	Absent
E. Gregoire	Aye
J. Flanagan	Aye
S. Rodriguez	Aye
M. Fiorentino, Jr.	Aye

II. Enrollment Management and Student Success

A. Enrollment Management

P. McCafferty provided an update on undergraduate day admissions for freshmen for Fall 2026, noting there are about five weeks left until the traditional May 1st deposit deadline.

Future Falcon Days & Accepted Student Events
The first Future Falcon Day is scheduled for Saturday, March 28, with the second event on April 11th. These accepted student events include an Honors Breakfast, academic school welcome by deans, academic presentations by major, a welcome from President Hodge, and opportunities to connect with student support staff.
As of the day prior, 141 students and 377 total guests were registered for the first event.
Three new accepted student visit opportunities were introduced this spring, focusing on local high-yield schools, including Leominster High and direct admission schools, which brought approximately 100 students to campus. This regional focus aims to increase local and regional student interest.

Admissions Funnel Overview
The admissions funnel for next fall is trending above last year but below the Fall 2024 numbers.
Applications: Over 4,400 freshman applications have been received. Applications are up 9% over last year, but down 12% from the year before.
Acceptances: Over 3,250 students have been accepted.
Deposits: Current deposits stand at 180, which is level with the last two years.

Yield: The current yield (accepted to deposit) is 5.5%, which is one percentage point above the 4.5% seen in the prior two years at this stage, with direct admissions contributing to this increase.
Student Origin: 84% of applications are from Massachusetts. Applications from outside New England have dropped from 14% two years ago to 8% this year, presenting an opportunity for future strategic recruitment in states like Alabama, Georgia, Texas, and Florida.

Direct Admissions and Fitchburg Promise
Direct Admissions is purely about admissions for students from Fitchburg High, Monty Tech, Sizer, St. Bernards, and Goodrich Academy, guaranteeing admission with a 2.5 GPA.
Fitchburg Promise is specific to Fitchburg residents, covering tuition and fees after all other aid is applied, requiring the completion of a FAFSA.
Applications from direct admission high schools are up 72% over last year. Their yield is currently 15%, compared to 7% last year for the same population. Currently, 40% of seniors from these high schools have applied to the university. The goal is to reach 100% of students in these high schools applying to the university.

Nursing Program Capacity
The accepted student number for the nursing program was increased from 70 to 80 this year. This increase was possible due to a strategy to onboard three new nursing faculty.
J. Flanagan noted that the admissions team successfully helped her nursing student navigate credit transfer from a dual enrollment program, which was a determining factor in the student choosing the university.

Financial Aid Initiatives
As of March 16th, the financial aid team had sent out 2,128 awards, compared to 1,299 at the same time last year, an effort achieved without a Financial Aid Director.
The strategy is to package scholarships upfront to aid recruitment.
A new initiative, "Future Falcon Financial Aid Week," will launch next week, offering virtual appointments Tuesday through Thursday between 8:00AM and 8:30PM for families to review their awards.
Staff are actively traveling to local high schools and the Fitchburg Public School Welcome Center to help direct admission students complete the FAFSA by the May 1st deadline, which is a critical point of the Fitchburg Promise.

Recruitment and Alumni Engagement
The handwritten postcard initiative saw 450 cards sent to accepted, non-deposited students, resulting in 36 deposits.
The Alumni Board will be holding a postcard event on April 16th and is planned to be leveraged as recruiters in local high schools to talk about their positive experiences.

Admissions Office Transition

The university is currently searching for three new admissions recruiters (two for vacancies and one police academy recruiter funded by a state grant).
Tony Trodella, Director of Admissions, is leaving on April 17th but agreed to stay through the two Future Falcon Days.

B. Student Success

E. Gregoire inquired about the melt and retention rates to gauge the likely returner class for the fall.
Enrollment Prognostication
The returning class is projected to be approximately 140 students fewer than last fall. Achieving 700 new students (freshmen and transfers combined) would potentially result in level enrollment compared to this fall.
Melt and Retention Rates
The Fall to Spring melt rate was 9%, which was lower than the conservative budgeted expectation of 15%.
The retention rate for the Fall 2024 cohort increased to 73% (up from 69% the prior year).
The persistence rate for the newest cohort (Fall 2025 freshmen, from Fall to Spring) was 90%, up from 87% last year. This improvement is partly attributed to a policy change that creates a pathway for students to reclaim academic credit and improve their academic standing.

Student Support Initiatives
The "Falcons Helping Falcons" initiative was replaced by assigning a staff member in student success to the entire freshman and sophomore cohort. This person proactively texted students regularly to connect them to necessary resources, such as help with staying enrolled or registration.
The university is preparing to stand up a new Success Coaches program, which will add six new coaches funded by success grants from the state.
Although the funding has not been received, the university is proceeding with plans to measure the impact of the coaches, modeling the effort on the data-driven TRIO program. Metrics will track student touch points, interventions, and retention, utilizing the Navigate system and a dedicated staff person for student success data. Beth Swartz, Executive Director of Grant Funded Student Success Programs, is leading the effort.

C. Next Steps

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 10:00 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
E. Gregoire