APPROVED

# Fitchburg State University

# Minutes

## Academic Affairs Committee Meeting

Academic Affairs Committee Meeting

**Date and Time**
Wednesday March 25, 2026 at 1:00 PM

**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), M. Morris (remote)

**Committee Members Absent**
S. King-Goodwin

**Ex Officio Members Present**
D. Hodge

**Guests Present**
Andrew Chan, Andrew Woods, Christa Marr, Franca Barricelli, Jannette McMenamy, K. Lundgren, Mahmoud Al-Odeh, Nate Robichaud, PJ Norton, Pam McCafferty, Sara Levine, Stefan Dodd

### 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 Wednesday Mar 25, 2026 at 1:03 PM.

### C. Approve Minutes

E. Gregoire made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Affairs Committee Meeting on 01-22-26.
M. Morris seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

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

## II. Academic Affairs

### A. Academic Affairs Update

F. Barricelli provided an update, noting that herself and J. McMenamy are working to build momentum within academic affairs and reported accomplishments of students and faculty presenting nationally.

- General Education Program Reform:
  - F. Barricelli reported that a proposal, jointly sponsored by the President's Office and Academic Affairs, was submitted to the AUC today to constitute a committee for general education reform.
  - Goal and Timeline: The committee will meet during the remainder of the spring semester to discuss the scope, review five years of collected data, and consider national best practices, ensuring they are ready to begin work in early September. The goal is to develop initial recommendations by the end of the fall semester.
  - Revised recommendations will be circulated campus-wide for feedback, with a revised proposal submitted through AUC by the March 2027 deadline.
  - The goal is to implement the revised general education curriculum for the incoming class of September 2027.

Commencement and Graduation Fair:

- Commencement is scheduled for May 16th as a single-day event for both graduate and undergraduate students.

- The University is hosting a new two-day "graduation and commencement fair" in Hammond. This event is a celebration for graduates picking up regalia and provides information on graduate opportunities, alumni benefits, and allows the career counseling office to implement the first destination survey.

**B. Finance Major**

The primary focus of the meeting was the proposed interdisciplinary Bachelor of Science degree in Finance.

Presenters: Christa Marr (Associate Professor of Economics), Andrew Chan (Professor of Accounting), Andrew Woods (Student, Economics), PJ Norton (Student, Business/Accounting).

- Mission and Core Values: The program aims to provide an accessible, high-quality, and inclusive education with core values focused on technical/practical skills, an interdisciplinary approach blending business and liberal arts, and financial literacy.
- Justification and Market Demand: The major is seen as a vehicle for social mobility, providing competitive compensation and defined growth paths. Job postings in Massachusetts and New Hampshire exceeded 8,000 per month with 12–20% projected growth, and nearly two-thirds of financial positions seek a bachelor's level candidate.
- Competitive Advantages:
    - The major requires only 45 credits, compared to 61–105 credit hours at other institutions, which allows students to pursue double majors (e.g., Business Administration and Finance).
    - Fitchburg State will be one of only three MSCA colleges to offer a Bachelor of Science in Finance.
- Curriculum: Includes standard courses (e.g., international finance) and three new unique courses:
    - Required: Corporate Finance and Investments.
    - Elective: Financial Statement Analysis.
    - Experiential Learning: Opportunities include the Fed Challenge competition and the elective Econometrics, as well as internships and potential co-ops.
- Budget and Enrollment: The departments utilized existing resources to keep costs low, with a full-time faculty hire not anticipated until Year 5, based on enrollment demands. Conservative enrollment estimates project $430,000 in net revenue by Year 5.
- Student Perspective: PJ Norton and Andrew Woods attested to the strong student demand and the lucrative nature of finance careers, noting that finance is currently the number one surging major by enrollment. Andrew Woods highlighted the opportunity cost of inaction, noting that students take their enrollment dollars to schools that already offer the program.

Discussion: Committee members, including M. Fiorentino and E. Gregoire, praised the interdisciplinary approach and the potential for the program to attract new students.

### C. Approve the Bachelor of Science in Finance - VOTE

E. Gregoire made a motion to Recommend the Bachelor of Science in Finance Major to the full Board.
J. Flanagan seconded the motion.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

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

## 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 1:54 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. Flanagan