DRAFT

# Fitchburg State University

# Minutes

## Special Session of the Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees Meeting

**Date and Time**
Tuesday April 28, 2026 at 4:30 PM

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

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

**Trustees Present**
D. Tiernan (remote), E. Gregoire (remote), J. Byrne (remote), J. Flanagan (remote), L. Barrieau (remote), M. Fiorentino, Jr. (remote), S. King-Goodwin (remote), S. Rodriguez (remote)

**Trustees Absent**
K. Spinelli, M. Gill, M. Morris

**Ex Officio Members Present**
D. Hodge (remote)

**Guests Present**
Franca Barricelli (remote), Jannette McMenamy (remote), K. Lundgren (remote), M. Bruun (remote), Matt Burke (remote), Matt Lechter (remote), Michael Cloutier (remote), Pam McCafferty (remote), Stacey Luster (remote), Stefan Dodd (remote), Tim St. John (remote), Travis Chambers (remote)

**I. Opening Items**

### A. Call the Meeting to Order

M. Fiorentino, Jr. called a meeting of the board of trustees of Fitchburg State University to order on Tuesday Apr 28, 2026 at 4:33 PM.
Announcements

- The final regular meeting of the Board of Trustees for the academic year will be conducted virtually at 12:00pm on Thursday, May 7th. The agenda will be streamlined and include updates from President Hodge and CFO Travis Chambers, along with a final vote on the 2027 budget.
- Commencement is a one-day affair on May 16th, with the graduate ceremony at 8:00am and the undergraduate commencement beginning at 2:00pm. Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll will be the commencement speaker.

### B. Record Attendance

## II. Special Presentation: Men's Lacrosse

### A. Presented by President Hodge and Athletic Director Matt Burke

Key Discussion: Proposed Addition of Men's Lacrosse (19th Varsity Sport) and Response to Anna Maria College Closure

- The university has been actively working with Anna Maria's leadership and faculty, quickly moving from a "what-if" scenario to a signed contract to support transitioning students. The approach is guided by a "student first mindset," focusing on helping each student finish their academic program.
- Since approximately 65% of Anna Maria students are student athletes, the university saw an opportunity, given its capacity, to help these students.
- The closure creates a gap in the MASCAC conference around men's lacrosse. Men's lacrosse was already being considered for addition down the road, and this new opportunity is timely and possible.
- The Board was asked for support to explore and stand-up men's lacrosse as the 19th varsity sport, allowing flexibility to launch as early as next year or follow the established women's ice hockey playbook (search for a coach in the fall, recruiting all next year for play in 2028).

Presentations on Men's Lacrosse

Athletic Opportunity (Matt Burke)

- Men's lacrosse is increasing in popularity across all levels, with Massachusetts ranking third in the country for youth participation. Division III participation has grown by about 1,200 participants over the last 10 years.
- Anna Maria College was a full-time MASCAC member sponsoring men's lacrosse. Its closure leaves the MASCAC without the four core members required to sponsor the sport.
- Fitchburg State can get ahead of its peers by becoming the fourth full-time member to sponsor the sport, allowing the MASCAC to partner with affiliate members for a 17-team lacrosse conference and an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament for the conference champion.
- Existing facilities, including the current turf field and multi-purpose locker rooms, can support the team.

Enrollment and Student Experience (Pam McCafferty & Tim St. John)

- Enrollment: The sport presents a significant opportunity to recruit and retain successful, engaged students, and differentiate the university.
- The average squad size is 25–30 students, most of whom are expected to be non-local and become residential students.
- 33 students have already expressed interest in playing men's lacrosse at the club level for Fall 2026.
- The addition strategically makes sense from an enrollment management perspective.
- Student Experience: Adding 20–30 more residential students and varsity home games will drive fan engagement and enhance the overall residential experience. The current club program has been successful, including a New England club level championship.

Financial Impact (Travis Chambers)

- The program is projected to generate approximately $392,000 in gross revenue annually, based on roughly 30 new residential students.
- Annual operating costs are estimated at $71,000 (including a new coaching position and $25,000 for travel/operating costs).
- One-time startup costs are projected at $54,000.
- The program is expected to yield a net positive revenue of approximately $321,000 annually.

Discussion and Feedback

- Anna Maria Transfers: Pam McCafferty reported having 49 undergraduate applications from Anna Maria students as of that morning, with strong interest in

graduate programs as well. The total enrollment of Anna Maria was approximately 1,400 students, including graduate students.

- Coach Recruitment: Lynn Barrieau asked about recruiting a coach. The President/Cabinet Team stated they would conduct a search to hire the right coach for Fitchburg State's culture rather than taking on the existing Anna Maria coach or program "as is".
- Recruitment Areas: Jennifer Flanagan inquired about recruitment beyond Anna Maria. The focus will be primarily on the Northeast, particularly Massachusetts (where the sport is growing), New York, Maryland, and Connecticut.
- Process Documentation: Sheila King-Goodwin suggested the cabinet templatize and document the successful, student-centric transition process, noting that college closures are a continuing trend. Michael Fiorentino agreed it was a great suggestion.

### B. Vote: Men's Lacrosse (12.2025-2026)

J. Flanagan made a motion to Add Men's lacrosse as the 19th varsity sport at Fitchburg state.
S. King-Goodwin seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

| | |
|---|---|
| E. Gregoire | Aye |
| L. Barrieau | Aye |
| K. Spinelli | Absent |
| J. Flanagan | Aye |
| S. Rodriguez | Aye |
| M. Morris | Absent |
| D. Tiernan | Aye |
| J. Byrne | Aye |
| S. King-Goodwin | Aye |
| M. Gill | Absent |
| M. Fiorentino, Jr. | 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 5:07 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Fiorentino, Jr.