

Contact

SUMMER 2020

ISING TO THE CHALLENGE

See how students, faculty, staff, and alumni are responding to the pandemic.—pp. 4–23

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Mallory-Anne Perron '14, a nurse at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, provided care to patients with COVID-19



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Alumni and Friends,

We are living through a remarkably trying time, one that tests all of us. And it is one where our institutional motto, *perseverantia* – perseverance – is needed more than ever.

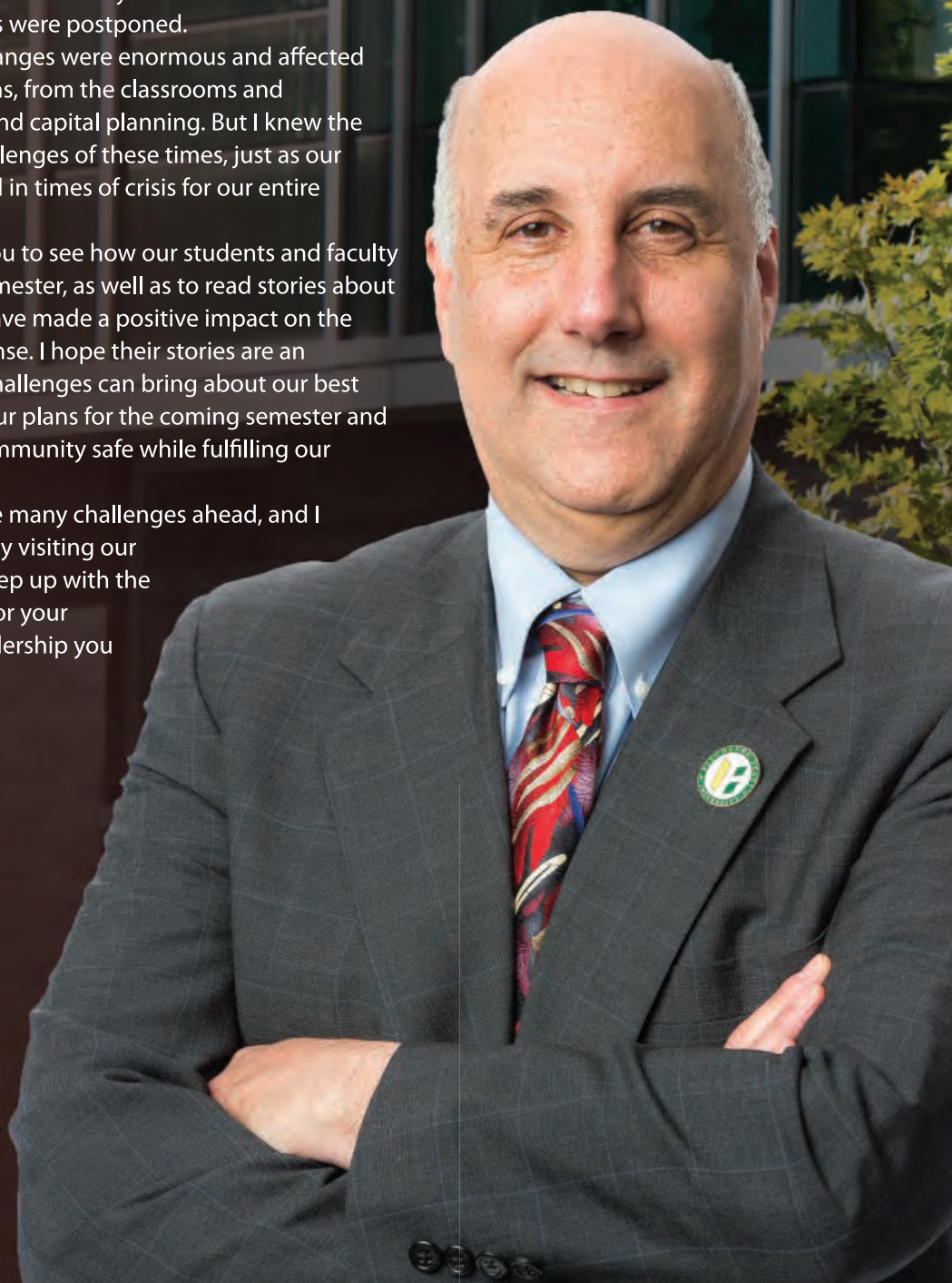
The COVID-19 pandemic has been the single most disruptive force in our time. Its impact is still being calculated across continents and industries, its human toll impossible to fathom. At Fitchburg State, we began formulating our institutional response in January, watching closely as state and federal officials clarified their guidance on how to keep all of our community members safe. Ultimately the residence halls were closed and our semester was finished by remote instruction and our largest on-campus gatherings were postponed.

The ripple effects of these changes were enormous and affected every aspect of campus operations, from the classrooms and laboratories to support services and capital planning. But I knew the community would rise to the challenges of these times, just as our 48,000 graduates have responded in times of crisis for our entire history.

In the pages ahead, I invite you to see how our students and faculty adapted to an unprecedented semester, as well as to read stories about Fitchburg State graduates who have made a positive impact on the front lines of the COVID-19 response. I hope their stories are an inspiration and a reminder that challenges can bring about our best selves. You will also learn about our plans for the coming semester and how we will strive to keep the community safe while fulfilling our mission.

Looking forward, we still have many challenges ahead, and I encourage you to keep in touch by visiting our website, fitchburgstate.edu, to keep up with the latest developments. Thank you for your ongoing support, and for the leadership you embody every day.

Richard S. Lapidus



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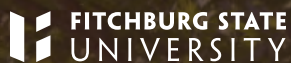
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CAMPUS NEWS

CONTINUING PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

As the country grapples with a discussion on racial justice and the future of policing, Fitchburg State's police program students are already taking a hard look at issues of equity and justice.

Harvard Police Chief Edward Denmark '98, who was one of the architects of Fitchburg State's 5-year program, addressed members of the third recruit officer course this summer.

"We're human beings, we have biases," Chief Denmark said. "The important piece is to recognize our personal biases and not mistreat people because of them. We're part of a greater, broader system. The police didn't cause it, but we're part of it. We have a responsibility to do our part to make things better."

Chief Denmark's visit occurred as nationwide protests about police and race were unfolding. "Until we can have those tough conversations with each other, we can't solve it," he said. "Everyone is talking past each other. It's all blame and no solutions."

While there is no short-term fix, he said, encouraging officers to be reflective and have empathy will be important.

"We have three choices: We can continue to do things the way we always have; we can change, or try to change; or we can decide this job isn't for us," he said.

The university has engaged in ongoing discussions on these topics. As part of Black History Month in February, the Black Student Union sponsored a candid conversation about the relationship between police officers and the Black community, with panelists including Police Academy Director Lisa Lane McCarty, University Police Lt. Robert Gilman, and Lorenzo Boyd, director of the Center for Advanced Policing at the University of New Haven. In a discussion moderated by Student Trustee Crystal Aneke, the panelists discussed the importance of police officers' knowing their communities, and community members' getting to know their police officers. A recurring theme of the discussion was the importance of education and recruitment.

The campus also hosted an online series entitled "Courageous Conversations" in June that focused on the theme that All Lives Can't Matter until Black Lives Matter. The discussions set the stage for dialogues that will continue in the next academic year and beyond.

Graduates from Fitchburg State's police program complete, in five years, bachelor's and master's degrees plus certification to work as police officers in municipal departments across the state and in New Hampshire. Several members of the third



recruit officer class already have jobs waiting for them when they complete the academy in September.

The university's agreement with the Municipal Police Training Committee was renewed this spring. "The graduates this program is producing are incredible," said interim MPTC Executive Director Robert J. Ferullo. "Leaders in this profession are buying into this program that is turning out well-educated, fully trained police officers."

GRANTS SUPPORT CAREER ADVISING AND ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS

Fitchburg State's efforts to remake career advising for students took a step forward this summer with a grant of more than \$250,000 from the Davis Educational Foundation. The funds will enable the university to build a comprehensive model of career advising and services. Over the next three years, the Career Services and Advising Center will work with faculty to develop core career competencies and map them to curricula in 11 academic departments and the general educational curriculum. The grant will also support the creation of a comprehensive internship and employer relations model.

Director of Career Services and Advising Melisa Alves said the funds will help connect academics to the world of work while supporting plans to build career communities and internship programs.

Students in the Engineering Technology Department will be benefiting even more from the university's long-standing collaboration with the Associated General Contractors of

Massachusetts (AGCMA). The organization has long provided internships and jobs to Fitchburg State students and graduates, and this spring donated \$100,000 to the university to support curriculum and provide additional lab support. These investments will help students with licensure requirements to meet the industry's workforce needs for construction managers and engineering technologists.

"This generous donation from AGCMA is an endorsement of Fitchburg State's ongoing commitment to preparing students for successful careers in Massachusetts and beyond," President Lapidus said. "We are grateful for AGCMA's continued collaboration that has created unparalleled opportunities for our students."

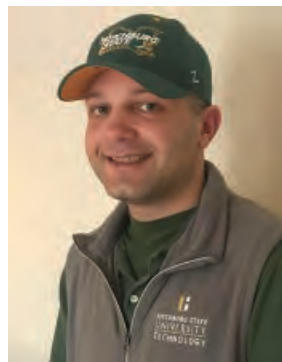
AGC MA President and Chief Executive Officer Robert L. Petrucelli said the donation was made possible by a gift from several AGC construction firms and an industry advancement fund from the Greater Springfield region. "These contactors wisely believed in the necessity of ensuring the continuation of quality construction management education programs for students at our public institutions of higher education," Petrucelli said.

HONORING THE CLASS OF 2020

While the in-person spring commencement ceremonies were postponed because of the pandemic, the university did not pass up the opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of the Class of 2020. From video congratulations featuring faculty, staff and administrators to social media campaigns and billboards in the city and beyond, graduates knew they part of a group to remember.

The undergraduate valedictorian of the Class of 2020 is Stanley Louis Choruzek of Lancaster, who completed his Bachelor of Science in computer information systems. A U.S. Marine Corps veteran, Choruzek hopes to transfer his new degree into a career in cybersecurity.

The Graduate Student Leadership Award was presented to Paul A. Thibodeau of Royalston, who completed a Master of Science in counseling. Thibodeau now works as a counselor for the Montachusett Opportunity Council and looks forward to getting his own license to practice on his own.



Catherine Buell



Daneen Deptula



Jenn Berg



Paul Weizer

RECOGNIZING FACULTY EXCELLENCE

The 2020 Faculty Awards, presented in recognition of excellence in the profession, were announced virtually this year because of the pandemic. The accolades represent excellence by inspiring students, amplifying the university's scholarship mission, advancing graduate programs, and providing service that helps to strengthen not only the campus, but the wider community.

The Contributions to Graduate Program Award was presented to Professor Daneen Deptula of the Psychological Science Department and chair of the Graduate Counseling Program.

The Faculty Research and Scholarship Award was presented to Associate Professor Catherine Buell of the Department of Mathematics and Honors Program Coordinator.

The Faculty Service Award was presented to Professor Jenn Berg, chair of the Mathematics Department.

The Vincent J. Mara Excellence in Teaching Award was presented to Professor Paul Weizer of the Economics, History and Political Science Department.



A TIME OF TRANSITION

Spring on the Fitchburg State campus is typically a celebratory time. The campus erupts in color as flowers bloom and the buildup to commencement creates a joyful mood. This year everything typical was thrust aside. Faculty, staff and administrators adapted on the fly to support students in an extraordinary time.



PROFESSOR RANDY HOWE — COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

I have been working with online instruction since 2000, starting when higher education was just beginning to embrace remote teaching. A benefit that I see is that online teaching can move faculty and students into deeper connections with the subject matter than classroom teaching. I feel I am a better professor all around if I teach at least a few courses online.

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Members of the Fitchburg State community—including students, faculty, staff, and alumni—have all stepped up in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



LAURA BAYLESS—VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

We launched a program this spring called Falcons Supporting Falcons, where 80 staff and faculty generously volunteered their time to make direct contact with students to see how they were adapting to the challenging times. We reached 2,500 students and were able to follow up with those who needed assistance from a variety of campus offices, and it really showed that we are part of a caring community.

GETTING A KICK OUT OF LEARNING



Linnea D'Acchille '21 wanted to visit her sister and her newborn nephew over spring break, so she headed from home in upstate New York to Virginia. While she was

visiting, the pandemic forced the cessation of face-to-face classes for the rest of the semester. D'Acchille, a biology major, stayed in Virginia to help watch her nephew and continue her remote studies.

"What disappointed me most was I just loved all my professors," said D'Acchille, who recently switched majors from criminal justice to biology. "It felt like I actually found what I want to do, so I was disappointed that we weren't coming back to campus."

But she was pleasantly surprised by how successful remote instruction was for her program. "I can't say enough good things about my professors," she said. "They have been so understanding. I'd rather be in the classroom learning, but the faculty are definitely on top of their stuff."

D'Acchille transferred to Fitchburg State last fall, recruited as a kicker for the men's football team. "The guys were all very nice, and reached out to me over the summer last year and said to let them know if I needed anything," she said.

She looks forward to the day athletic competitions can resume. In the meantime, she said she appreciates how understanding the faculty have been of the disruptions experienced this semester and hopes her fellow students are as accommodating. "I hope everyone will appreciate each other more," she said. "Everybody should be more understanding of each other."



PROFESSOR J.J. SYLVIA IV— COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

For me, a sense of community in an online class comes through when students feel the instructor's presence in the course and are able to engage in meaningful discussions with one another. To create a sense of instructor presence, I've found that weekly announcements paired with short videos introducing the material for each week helped a great deal. Expanding collaborative digital annotations as a form of discussion also helped create community.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

Johanna Viteri '20 had long ago abandoned dreams of finishing her education. She enrolled at Atlantic Union College in 1988, but after one year of school, she withdrew to care for the ailing grandmother who raised her. "I had to put my education on hold, then I got pregnant with my son," she recalled. "Life happened. But I always had that dream of finishing my degree."

Viteri had a job that would pay for college classes, so she took a few online courses in finance and eventually found her way to Fitchburg State. "A good friend of mine told me, 'Just take one course at a time and you'll get there.' I said, 'That will take me forever.' But as I moved along, there were opportunities when I could take two courses, or even a summer class. As I went along, I just wanted to get it done."

Viteri had enjoyed her online classes, but she was in fear of her final mathematics course. She opted for an in-person class, where she felt she could get more support,

if she needed it. Then the COVID-19 pandemic struck, and all courses were moved to a remote model. Viteri can laugh now, but she was very apprehensive at the time.

"It was an adjustment, but the instructor was there for us and gave us resources when we didn't understand the content," she said. "The professors were always there to answer questions, and that's one of the things I really love about Fitchburg State. The professors are really vested in your success. It's like a family."

Viteri also enjoyed how applicable her classes were to her work at Care Central VNA & Hospice, where her title is "executive assistant" but her reality is wearing many hats.

With her degree complete, Viteri is elated at the completion of a long-held dream. "It's never too late," she said. "Learning is a process that should be a lifelong experience. When you stop learning, I think you die. Every day you have to learn."



GETTING TO THE POINT

Alexa Nogueira '20 took the news of switching to a remote instructional model this spring in stride. As a commuter student, she welcomed the lack of stress associated with getting to an early class as well as the independence of learning on her own schedule.

And she had a lot to manage. In her final semester as an English Studies major, Nogueira took six classes and served as managing editor of *The Point*, the student-run newspaper. "I expected to be constantly afraid," she said. "I was definitely shy and thought, 'I'm going to have to talk to all these people.'"

She rose to the challenge. "I made a goal for myself that I was going to take on challenging stories and try my best," she said. "I loved covering things happening in the city."

The pandemic created new challenges for *The Point* staff. "I'm definitely proud of our response," Nogueira said. "What we really wanted to do was get answers for students."

The Point staff worked on topics ranging from refunds to graduation to what the university's future held, along with ideas on how to decompress.

This year *The Point* had returned to its roots with a print edition. "The print edition is my greatest love and also my worst enemy," Nogueira said. "It's a process that takes hours and hours and hours, but it's so worth it."

Switching to a digital edition was the only way to keep publishing, and Nogueira also credits Assistant Professor Wafa Unus, who teaches college newspaper production and advises *The Point*, for making it work.

"They've done a great job as student journalists and have shown admirable spirit and dedication to the craft," Unus said, complimenting Nogueira and her classmates.

With her degree finished, Nogueira hopes to continue her career in journalism.



KAT MCLELLAN—DIRECTOR OF ACADEMIC COACHING AND TUTORING CENTER

The need to support students with new modes of instruction meant rethinking operations. We created "Ask a Tutor," where students could submit written questions online, in addition to being able to drop-in or make appointments. Our goal was to make an online tutoring system that was easily accessible, could replicate the feel of drop-in appointments, and didn't cost any money to implement.

WHAT I WAS MEANT TO DO

For Taylor Nelson '20, a career in healthcare has been a longtime calling. She lost her mother to cancer and that, combined with Nelson's own experiences, inspired her to pursue that path. "I wasn't sure if I wanted to go to medical school or study nursing, but when I visited the Nursing Department at Fitchburg State I just knew it's what I wanted to pursue," she said. "I knew this path would let me work in a hospital and I could interact with people. It's like being a therapist at the same time."

The switch to remote instruction this semester was manageable for Nelson, who as a commuter student was used to studying at home. Taking exams online was a bit trickier, she said, and the pandemic has delayed when she can take the NCLEX licensure exam required of all nurses.

Nelson was in her final semester practicum and working as a tech and phlebotomist at an area hospital when the pandemic struck. After consulting her supervisor, she agreed it made sense to continue her studies rather than jump into direct care of COVID-19 patients. But just being in a hospital setting during these times has shown Nelson the impact of the crisis. "It's crazy busy and exhausting," she said. "It's stressful, but at the end of the day I still want to go back. I just love nursing. It's what I was meant to do."



STEVE SWARTZ—CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

Our campus migrated to Google Enterprise for Education earlier this year and that turned out to be a lifesaver. The video conferencing and recording systems were built-in, and there were no applications to install or update. We loaned Chromebooks and mobile internet "hot spots" to boost connectivity for students who needed them. We have been designing redundancy and the ability to scale rapidly into our projects over the past few years.

IN THE ZONE

Laurie Furtado '22 was a newcomer to remote instruction when the spring semester transitioned in March. "I always preferred to be in the classroom with face-to-face connections than completing work online and waiting for email responses," said Furtado, who is majoring in special education for moderate disabilities pre-K to 8. "Remote learning has given me a bit more flexibility to listen to what I am feeling compared to typical in-person classes. When I was in the zone, even if it was at 2 in the morning, I was able to crank out all the work I could. Or at other times when I needed a break to step away and go for a walk or take a nap, I could do that too."

The change came with a learning curve, however, as Furtado navigated the emotional rollercoaster of being

separated from her job and friends on campus. "I feel that the university responded to the pandemic about as well as anyone could expect. This is such a time of uncertainty and absolutely everyone has questions they want answers to. Everyone is really just trying to do the best they can."

Furtado said she was grateful for frequent communications from the campus about safety measures and refunds, as well as opportunities for recreation that were shared by the Office of Student Development. And she felt supported by the campus offices where she works as a tour guide, orientation leader, and alumni phon-a-thon caller. "They have all consistently reached out and checked in, and it is the things like that that make me feel taken care of by the university throughout the pandemic," she said.



A REMARKABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Brendan O'Flaherty '20 was performing his senior nursing practicum in an area emergency room when the COVID-19 pandemic struck this spring. The outbreak meant the cancellation of the practicum, which was a disappointment. "The transition from in-person lectures to remote instruction was made easier by the faculty. I was able to ask a multitude of questions, listen to recorded lectures about the material and have remote classes through Google," he said. "After I watched the recorded lectures, I knew my professors would be readily available if I had any questions."

O'Flaherty lamented the end of his practicum, which he described as a remarkable learning experience, but said he was grateful for his instructors' commitment to keeping courses on track. "My nursing faculty clearly explained their expectations regarding assignments, quizzes and exams, and they had meetings for me and my classmates to answer any questions," he said.

His interest in the profession came from his sister, who has been a registered nurse for three years. "I often tagged along with her and my family when she visited college open houses," he said. "I always loved science, but I became fascinated when I saw the simulation labs and the medical equipment the nursing profession uses."

He studied health assisting in high school and got his nursing assistant certification and briefly worked as a CNA. "Understanding how the human body works and how to care for patients is extremely interesting to me and makes me want to learn more about my profession," said O'Flaherty, who is preparing for the NCLEX exam.

NEW STUDY HABITS

Christopher Sutcliffe '23 was enjoying his first year at Fitchburg State when the pandemic upended it. "The hardest part of the transition was moving back in with my whole family," said Sutcliffe, a Rhode Island native majoring in Communications Media. "With both my dad and my sister working from home, we had some competition on where to set up for our work days. I was usually the one that got kicked out and had to sit at the kitchen counter."

But Sutcliffe was able to adapt to his new surroundings and keep up with his studies, which included six classes in the spring semester. Looking ahead, Sutcliffe predicts he will benefit from the study habits he developed this spring, even if he missed the company of his peers. "The social interaction was a big piece I missed and I will enjoy working in groups for my major once I can get back onto campus," he said.

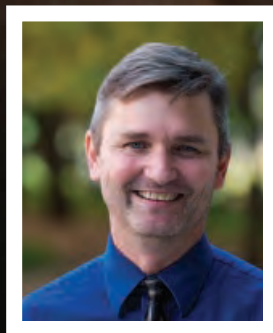


A LIFELONG PASSION

Queenstar Abekah '23 was navigating her first year of college life when the pandemic thrust her routine into a new gear. Abekah was born in Ghana and moved to the U.S. four years ago. She was enjoying life on campus and found herself back with her mother and younger brother in Pittsfield for the rest of the spring semester.

"It was difficult in the beginning, but after a week or two we got a hold of it," she said, noting the learning curve was there for students as well as some professors. "Most of my classes were better online, in a way. If I had questions, I could get a hold of my teachers at any point, because they were always checking their email or contacting us to make sure we were OK."

Abekah is majoring in education and looks forward to a career as a teacher. "I've always known I wanted to teach," she said. "I'm going to go for that."



ROB HYNES—DIRECTOR OF COUNSELING SERVICES

None of the clinicians in the office had much experience providing 'telehealth' services, and it was a very busy week creating the sort of safe, private, and supportive mechanisms to enable remote counseling to work. The demand for services was robust. Counselors routinely commented on the incredible poise, patience, and resilience evidenced by our students through all of this. Their strength and courage helped to sustain us, the professionals, through this time.

GAINING INSPIRATION

Bridie Wolejko '20 was a non-traditional student, arriving at Fitchburg State to finish her undergraduate degree about 20 years after starting her college career studying music in Boston. "I was excited and scared, because I was older than most everyone else in the undergraduate day program," said Wolejko, who nonetheless enjoyed getting involved with the student-run radio station, WXPL 91.3 FM.

A visual artist, Wolejko was taking multiple studio art classes in her final semester when the university transitioned to remote instruction. It was a major shift. "One of the things that's been a change is not having that peer feedback that we normally would have in classroom

meetings," she said. "Normally we'd all work on our paintings together in the same room, and you're welcome to walk around and see what other people are doing and gain inspiration that way. Then we'd have group critiques when the instructors would set aside time where we could all offer positive feedback, and a little constructive criticism. That feels like it's missing, but it doesn't feel impossible."

Wolejko enjoyed the online discussions and weekly virtual meetings with fellow students in her contemporary art class. "It's been nice to reconnect in that way," said Wolejko, who hopes to pursue a career as an art teacher. "It worked, for the most part."



LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



When the university switched to a remote instructional model this spring, Director of Digital Learning Nicole Chelonis found herself at the center of a new reality. She worked closely with other campus experts to help faculty members adapt quickly to a very different delivery model.

"These past months I got to see exactly what our Fitchburg State community is, and I'm humbled and impressed by the way we came together as a campus to offer assistance and support to our students, faculty, and staff," said Chelonis, who has been in her role since 2018. "Colleagues stepped outside their normal roles to offer support to me and to our faculty and the number of faculty who volunteered to assist their peers was inspiring."

The rapid change this spring meant the typical development and review process for courses delivered remotely couldn't happen.

"Our students and our faculty were asked to be flexible in their thinking about what quality teaching and learning looked like," Chelonis said. "We asked faculty to rethink assessments and content delivery, to start with their learning objectives and adapt those goals to the tools they had at hand while also assessing the unusual needs of their students this term. It was really encouraging to see how willing the faculty were to try something and shift to something else if it didn't work the way they wanted it to."

More professional development was scheduled for the summer months to help faculty prepare for the fall.

"I think that the experiences of many educators this term has brought to light all the different available resources and ways that knowledge can be shared," she said. "As uncomfortable and challenging as the spring term was, I think it will ultimately help advance the accessibility of educational experiences."

Professor Erin Rehrig (Biology/Chemistry), shown here advising students online, said her experience this Spring affirmed her belief in flexible deadlines and keeping open lines of communication with students.



IT'S GOING TO CHANGE US

Korry Dow '07 has worked in healthcare for more than a dozen years but has never seen anything like the COVID-19 pandemic. President of Nashoba Valley Medical Center in Ayer, Dow said community hospitals like hers

will be feeling the ramifications of the pandemic for years.

"It's going to change us dramatically," she said, explaining the challenges created by the downturn in elective procedures during the pandemic. "We're planning on, 'What's it going to look like when we open up for elective cases, and the amount of personal protective equipment we're going to need.' I can see us forever wearing masks, potentially. If it's not this strain of COVID, it's going to be the next one."

Operationally, the hospital has been adapting through technology, and Dow thinks that is the way of the future. "It's our new way of life," she said. "I'm always on a conference call instead of being in a boardroom. I think that's going to stick. I think telemedicine within our primary care offices is going to change, and we will be able to reach out to a population of people we couldn't before because of demographics and geography. This could potentially help us."

Dow's journey to her leadership role came about with a combination of opportunity and readiness. She began her MBA after the birth of her daughter and finished her last class just before the birth of her son. "I fit that MBA in. It was something I just wanted to do," Dow said. "Now that I'm where I am, it was very necessary that I had that background."



PROFESSOR DANETTE DAY—EDUCATION

Without online learning I could not have continued to teach my students during this pandemic. However, I believe that shift to online learning was successful because my students and I had already developed a connection. There are many ways I create community using an online format. First, the discussion posts allow students to connect to one another. If students are asked to read and respond to one another on the discussion board, students begin to hear each other's voices, think about different ideas, and learn from one another's perspectives.

THE NEW REALITY

Mallory-Anne Perron '14 has worked as a nurse at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston for three years. Perron had seen a lot in her time working at one of the biggest hospitals in a major U.S. city, but knew the COVID-19 pandemic would present new challenges. When the hospital was preparing to convert certain units into COVID intensive care units (ICU), Perron volunteered to relocate to care for these patients.

"I'm young and I'm healthy and I thought I could help my co-workers," she said. "I've never seen sicker patients in my life, and it was a surge of patients who were so critically ill. Even the veteran nurses are amazed. A large number of COVID ICU patients are intubated and need a machine to support their breathing. As nurses, we're all learning to be flexible and adapt to the new reality. It's just part of being an ICU nurse."

Perron studied exercise physiology at Fitchburg State and was active on campus, serving as president of the Student Government Association running the Volunteer Center. She decided to pursue a degree in nursing after graduating from Fitchburg State, and said the interdisciplinary work that is so central to nursing has been

informed by her experiences on campus. "All the leadership roles helped me gain more confidence in myself and my ability to speak to other people," Perron said. "They helped mold me into being the person that I am."

The challenges of working in medicine during a pandemic hit home for Perron in March. "I woke up one day and just didn't feel well at all," she said. "I thought maybe I'd worked out too hard." But after finding she had a fever, she was tested for COVID-19 and the results were positive. "It was scary, but I kind of knew I had it when I started feeling the symptoms," she said. "I was afraid, but I knew I was in the best place to be."

She lay low for a few weeks at home, with her roommate – also a nurse – keeping an eye on her as she isolated herself.

The experience has not shaken her commitment to her path. "I'm just trying to do my job," said Perron, who is looking at going back to school to pursue a career as a certified registered nurse anesthetist. "I don't feel like a hero. I took an oath to take care of people and that's all that I'm trying to do."



PROFESSOR DEBORAH STONE—NURSING

I was used to teaching online courses, but this semester our whole Nursing Department had to change our clinical experiences to an online platform as well. This was a challenge and could not have been done without the support of our chair, Professor Debbie Benes, and our simulation expert, Professor Rose Kronziah-Seme. Using the Google Hangout/Meet features enabled us to meet and see each other real time in a grid formation so you could see everyone in the class. I liked this and students also provided positive feedback.

Rising to the CHALLENGE



REDUCING THEIR RISK

Watertown Fire Chief Robert “Biff” Quinn ’81 has been a firefighter for more than 30 years, but has seen nothing like the COVID-19 pandemic. “It’s been most of my day for the last few months,” he said. “From the get-go, we had to establish a lot of procedures internally for the firefighters to keep them safe.”

Those measures include multiple temperature checks per shift and assessments to make sure none of his firefighters has been exposed. As of early May, two members of the department had tested positive, so they and the firefighters with whom they were on duty had to be quarantined for two weeks.

Chief Quinn is also the emergency management director for the town of Watertown, with a population of 36,000. In that role he’s been meeting daily with other municipal departments on their response to the pandemic, including the public school’s efforts to feed students and working to keep the populations of senior housing complexes and group homes from being exposed. In the first two months of the pandemic, more than 200 cases and 11 deaths had been confirmed in the town.

“It’s been a tough thing to deal with,” he said. “For the most part, people have been very cooperative. I’m lucky that everybody’s been on board and working hard to keep themselves from getting exposed.”

Chief Quinn, who was appointed to his current role in 2018, studied medical technology at Fitchburg State. He was working at a blood bank in Cambridge when his brother-in-law encouraged him to take the firefighter’s exam. “I was ready for a change and said, ‘Let me give this a try. I can always go back to lab work,’” he recalled. “I got hired in Watertown and here I am, 33 years later. It’s turned out to be a very rewarding career for me.”







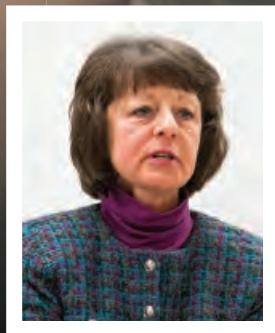
DOING MY PART

Marissa Arseneau '17 graduated from Fitchburg State with a degree in Exercise and Sports Science and soon set her sights on a career as a physician assistant (PA). "I think it's one of the most incredible fields in medicine," she said. "I wanted to be a PA because they are great liaisons between the physician and the nurse or the clinical staff. Wherever we're needed, we're able to step up and provide."

Arseneau had a job offer at a New Hampshire urgent care facility even before she finished her PA program last December. By her third week at work this spring, the COVID-19 pandemic had struck. "In March our clinic had new guidelines for COVID-19, and any patient with upper respiratory symptoms was not allowed inside the clinic and we were seeing them in the parking lot," Arseneau said. "I was swabbing multiple COVID patients a day. It was definitely overwhelming for every member of the clinical staff. As an urgent care, we're trying to care for patients who we can keep out of the emergency room, because the ERs are needed for more critically ill patients."

And while her clinic had sufficient personal protective equipment like masks and respirators, Arseneau said she knows not everyone on the front line has been so fortunate. "I have friends that are working at local hospitals and family health clinics where they have to wear the same N95 masks for a week straight, because there just aren't enough supplies," she said.

Arseneau said she never expected to encounter such a singular public health crisis so early in her career. "It's definitely been hard and anxiety-provoking."



PROFESSOR RENEE SCAPPARONE— BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

I have been teaching online with Fitchburg State since the "beginning of time," the pre-Blackboard days, and currently oversee our 100 percent online business degree. The biggest advantages to remote instruction are really for the students, allowing them to attend class that is most convenient with their schedules. From a teaching perspective, I am able to see if students are getting it based on their discussion board posts. Often students are more talkative online than face-to-face.

TOTAL NON-NORMAL



Educators across the country found themselves having to radically reinvent their professions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. For Norton Public Schools Superintendent Joseph Baeta '92, the challenges will be enduring.

"We're in total non-normal right now," he said, expressing concerns that staff members who are nearing retirement age

may decide they have had enough of what was already a stressful profession. "It's a whole different dynamic, for the students, for the staff, for the families."

While many are concerned about students' regressing in their learning, Baeta is confident that students can learn in a variety of settings. "I'm more worried about their social/emotional well-being," he said. "I'm worried about the long-term implications of this period and what it means."

For Baeta's district, that includes trying to find ways to honor graduating students and reschedule rites of passage like the prom. He's confident that today's students will be resilient enough to weather these challenging times.

Baeta's own career began soon after he graduated from Fitchburg State, where he was choosing between a life in education or pursuing a law degree. He took the entrance exam for law school but a friend's father offered him a job as a full-time, one-year substitute teacher, and he had found his path. "I got to see the world as a teacher," I got to see the world as a teacher," said Baeta, who has worked in districts across the financial spectrum.

REACHING EACH OTHER



Heidi Cowley '11 has teaching in her blood. Cowley has taught art for kindergarten to 5th grade at Page Hilltop School in Ayer for the past 14 years, and her grandmother, Mildred (Crooker) Hassett, a 1917 graduate of the Normal School at Fitchburg (known today as Fitchburg State University) was also an educator. In those days, teachers weren't allowed to be

married (for one thing). But Cowley learned about an unexpected parallel in her family history this spring.

Her grandmother was teaching in Athol when the influenza pandemic of 1918 shuttered schools. In one of the detailed journals that Cowley recently discovered, Crooker wrote on Sept. 24 of that year that nine of her 14 students were absent. The following day the school was closed, and Crooker was out of work. She took the train home, found another job, and eventually married and started a family.

Cowley, who completed a master's degree in visual arts education at Fitchburg State, is grateful she had other options when she was separated from her students. "I had to think about how to reach my students online, and that's when I started with the idea of a book," she said. The result was a self-published book, *Just Stay Home*, now available via Blurb.com in standard and coloring book formats.

Cowley encourages students to record their experiences of the current time, just as her grandmother did. "Maybe there's a hopefulness in seeing this has happened before, and we've come through it."



PROFESSOR ROBERT SHAPIRO— EDUCATION

I've had quite a bit of experience with online/remote instruction over the years. I think the essential benefits to online courses center around the flexibility they offer. Because the amount of time needed to travel to and from class is eliminated, they can be a lot more efficient. Further, with asynchronous classes, there is a tremendous amount of flexibility in when students can access the material. Students can log on at midnight, or on a weekend, and still contact the material.

OUR NEXT STEPS

Preparations for the fall semester are always an exciting time at Fitchburg State. In these unprecedented times, however, that work has become more complicated than ever.

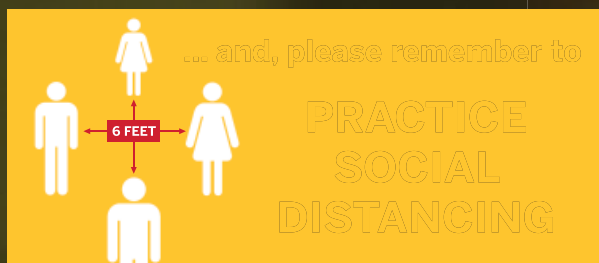
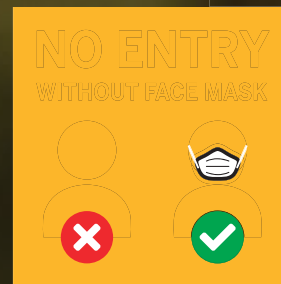
For the past several months, the development of a safe reopening plan has been a top priority. The ever-evolving plan has taken shape with input from all corners of campus operations and in strict compliance with state and federal guidance. The guiding principle is to honor our mission and commitment to students while also keeping members of the campus community safe.

The plan calls for classes to resume in September in a variety of formats, from online and hybrid models to smaller in-person sessions where necessary. To make this work safely, signage has been installed throughout the campus this summer that will help guide the flow of traffic. Further accommodations are being made in residence halls and other spaces that are being reconfigured in light of public health concerns.

Sadly, continued restrictions on large gatherings have kept us from hosting our in-person commencement ceremonies for students who completed their studies in May. And we have had to cancel this fall's Homecoming celebrations out of an abundance of caution.

In short, it will not be the typical fall semester on our – or any – campus this year. But we will endure. Our faculty will teach, our students will learn, and our robust support services will make sure our Falcons have the resources they need to soar.

Please visit fitchburgstate.edu/reopening to see the latest information about the fall semester.



Welcome

We take our responsibility to keep our campus safe very seriously.

We ask you to do your part as well by **WEARING A FACE MASK** and **MAINTAINING PHYSICAL DISTANCE** with others.

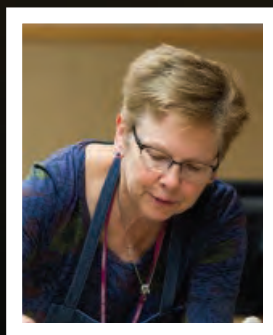
Please be assured we have taken the following list of steps to comply with state mandatory safety standards for workplaces. ▶

Richard S. Lapidus, President

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

FSU Environmental, Health and Safety, and Risk Management: 978-665-4801
Fitchburg, MA Health Department: 978-829-1870
MA Department of Public Health: 617-624-6000

-  ☒ Our employees are wearing face coverings
-  ☒ We've put physical distancing measures in place
-  ☒ We provide hand washing and disinfecting capabilities
-  ☒ We are regularly sanitizing high touch areas
-  ☒ Our employees have received training regarding physical distancing and hygiene protocols.
-  ☒ We have established cleaning and disinfecting protocols.

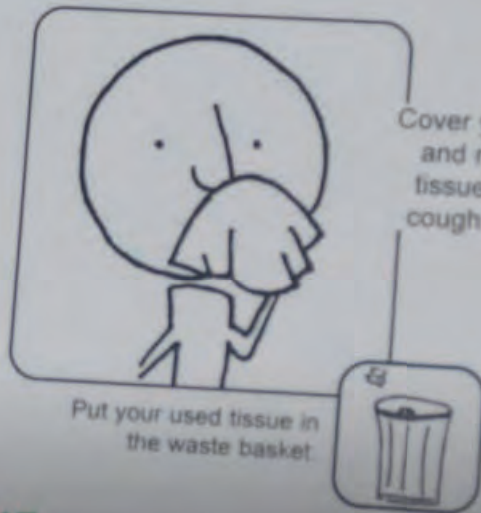


PROFESSOR SALLY MOORE—HUMANITIES

Teaching online was completely new to me, and in the beginning I found myself scrambling to figure out the possibilities. The method I used was to make video demos for each project and an image presentation with a voiceover to show a mix of old masters' and contemporary artists' working with the same process, materials, or idea. I also posted a thread on the discussion board where they could show work in progress and ask questions or get advice, and then, another thread where they could post the finished project and comment on each other's work.

Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick!

Cover your Cough



Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or

cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.



Clean your Hands after coughing or sneezing



PROFESSOR PETRI FLINT—HUMANITIES

One challenge we had was simply to provide appropriate materials for students that would allow them to complete the remaining class projects, so the art faculty gathered together and spent a day assembling course-specific supply kits for students to pick up. Then we had to figure out how best to present the concepts and techniques that students would be tackling. I rethought the assignments that I had originally planned in response to the situation that we all suddenly found ourselves in.

IN MEMORIAM

FACULTY

RICHARD F. CONDON, II '55, '59, of Fitchburg, on February 25, 2020. Mr. Condon's career in education began in 1955 at White Plains, N.Y. as a 4th grade teacher, then to Ashby Elementary, Fitchburg State College Jr. High School then as the Principal/Dean of the McKay School in Fitchburg before assuming the role of Registrar of Fitchburg State College, a position he held until his retirement in 1991. Throughout his career he held many positions and was awarded many accolades in education including being awarded Professor Emeritus Status at Fitchburg State College in 1993 as well as being named to the Fitchburg State College Athletic Hall of Fame in 2008.

JAMES E. CONLIN, of Milford, N.H., on May 10, 2020. Conlin was a graduate of Dartmouth College in 1954, served his country during the Korean War, and completed his graduate degree from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. He worked at the former J.F. McElwain Company in Nashua through 1981 when he embarked on a second career as a college professor. He taught for 18 years at Fitchburg State, from 1982-2000, in the Business Administration Department.

1940s

HELEN G. (GIBSON) PURCELL '40, of Wellfleet, on February 20, 2020.

MARJORIE (KILLELEA) O'NEIL '43, of Fort Belvoir, Va., on January 25, 2020.

EUNICE M. (YENNACO) BOUDREAU '46, of Windam, N.H., on May 11, 2019.

ROSEMARY R. (CROWELL) ZSCHUNKE '46, of Germantown, Tenn., on May 16, 2020.

ANTHONY J. POLITO '48, '49, of Worcester, on May 13, 2020. He was predeceased by his wife **FLORENCE M. (DONNELLY) POLITO '50** just nine days earlier on May 4, 2020.

1950s

NELSON B. CRAVER '50, of Webster, on October 28, 2019.

PATRICIA M. GRIFFIN '53, of Enfield, Conn., on January 10, 2020.

ELIZABETH V. (HOWARD) LEETE '53, of Athol, on August 29, 2019.

CLAIRE T. (SHEEHAN) JOYCE '55, of Fairfield, Calif., on June 18, 2019.

ELOISE F. (PACKARD) MAGISTRO '55, of Watkins Glen, N.Y., on May 2, 2020.

ROBERT M. FINNERON '57, '60, of Leominster, on September 25, 2019.

BRUCE G. GREALEY '57, of Ashland, on April 21, 2020. He was inducted into the Fitchburg State Hall of Fame in 2012 as an outstanding student athlete in basketball.

GEORGE DUNN '58, of Glastonbury, Conn., on March 1, 2020.

THOMAS J. KIRBY '59, of Bourne, on March 7, 2020.

1960s

ROBERT R. SWEET '60, '73, of Hudson, on April 3, 2020.

BEVERLY A. (KELLEY) GAGLIARDI '62, '66, of Milford, Conn., on February 7, 2020.

SANDRA G. (BARNES) WEISS '62, of Naples, Fla., on January 7, 2020.

MATTHEW W. ABBOTT '64, of Eastham, on December 30, 2019.

LOIS J. (LINDEN) BELAIR '65, of Essex Jct., Vt., on April 13, 2020.

HENRY A. HAROIAN '66, of Los Altos, Calif., on November 18, 2019.

LARRY D. PAYNE '66, of College Station, Tex., on February 7, 2020.

JAMES A. CATALINI '68, '71, of Lakewood Ranch, Fla., on March 3, 2020. He leaves behind his wife, **DORIS "EMMA" (FORESMAN) CATALINI '71**.

PAUL W. CELUZZA '68, of Fitchburg, on May 13, 2020.

1970s

PATRICIA A. (MURPHY) ANDERSON '75, of Yarmouth Port, on December 1, 2019.

JOSEPH V. CLONAN '78, of Fitchburg, on May 12, 2020. He leaves behind his wife **JUDITH A. (MALONE) CLONAN '91**.

STEPHEN W. URBANEK '78, of New Bedford, on April 29, 2020.

GEORGIA K. BRAKKE '79, of Carmel, Ind., on November 1, 2019.

1980s

ROGER L. PRESTON '80, of Seabrook, N.H., on May 20, 2019.

JULIA D. (WILSON) STEVENS '81, of Brunswick, Maine, on March 28, 2020.

W. PAUL MCDONALD '86, of Woburn, on October 17, 2020. He leaves behind his wife, **MICHELLE (DABRIO) MCDONALD '86**.

CECILIA E. (TAVARES) RILEY '86, of Dartmouth, on February 8, 2020.

MICHAEL J. LEBLANC '87, of Dorchester, on May 9, 2020.

1990s

MICHAEL R. TIERNAN '94, of Leominster, on November 4, 2019.

LIONEL D. REINFORD '95, of Fitchburg, on April 24, 2020.

2000s

DAVID C. DIONNE '07, of Rochester, on April 26, 2020.

BRIAN G. SHIFRIN '09, of Southborough, on November 16, 2019.

KAREN FRANK MAYS '09, of Fitzwilliam, N.H., on June 2, 2020. Frank Mays was a valued member of the Fitchburg State advancement staff for nearly two decades. In her role as Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs, her talents were instrumental in raising millions of dollars annually to advance University priorities, support academic programming, research, student support services, and ensuring first generation and low-income college students remain in school and succeed in completing their degree. Her passion for the students we serve, the University's mission, and her colleagues contributed to the tremendous dedication she put into her craft. Her friendship and contagious happiness will be sorely missed.

2010s

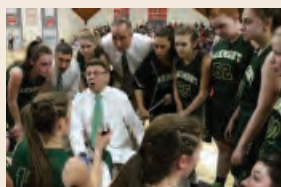
ERIN B. (KODYS) MACKAY '10, of Templeton, on June 10, 2020.

CLASS NOTES

This Class Notes section includes news that was received between November 1, 2019 and June 1, 2020. Because of the nature of a bi-annual publication and the volume of notes we receive, you should expect to see your note about six months after you submit your information.

1970S

JEFFREY O'NEILL '72, '81, Oakmont Regional High School's girls' basketball coach, was recognized as Massachusetts Basketball Coaches Association Central Mass. Division 3 Coach of the Year for the 2018-19 season. Oakmont finished the season 22-1.



THOMAS A. ALLINGHAM '77, anesthesiologist and intensivist at Cumberland Medical Center, Crossville, Tenn., was recently elected to his second term as president of the medical staff.

ANNA M. (TOMASEK) FARRELL '78, '93 retired from her position as Fitchburg city clerk after a 25-year career.



ANNYE C. (SPENCER) ANDERSON '79 penned and published an intimate memoir about her stepbrother, blues legend Robert Johnson, titled *Brother Robert: Growing Up with Robert Johnson*. Anderson is a retired Boston Public Schools teacher.

ROBERT S. CULKEEN '79, general manager and executive director for WSRE-TV, in Pensacola, Fla., was chosen to be the president and chief executive officer for the PBS station WTCI, in Chattanooga, Tenn. He brings with him 45 years of experience working in public television.



1980S

CHRISTINE (D'ANGIO) BARANOVSKY '82 is the 2020 president of Granite State South Board of REALTORS®. She currently works for Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage as a sales associate.

DANIEL R. SULLIVAN '83 was one of 500 independent booksellers nationwide to receive a "Holiday Bonus" this Christmas from best-selling author James Patterson. Sullivan's store Book Oasis was nominated for this exceptional prize.

JEAN E. LEBLANC '86 had her 10th collection of poetry published in the spring of 2020. The poems in *Ancient Songs of Us* (her second volume from Aqueduct Press) were inspired by her students in a course on the literature of the ancient and medieval world. She has taught at Sussex County Community



College in Newton, N.J., since 1999.

1990S

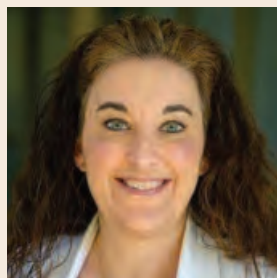


KATHRYN A. (SMITH) MOODY '92, department head for Guidance and School

Counseling at Lynnfield High School, is proud to be among a number of Fitchburg State grads leading the institution: Michael R. Boulay '81 is the department head for Social Studies, Maryellen (Spellman) Iannibelli '90 is the department head for English and Brian C. Bates '00 is the assistant principal.

ANDREA G. MULLIGAN '92 was named the head of customer success at Paytronix Systems, Inc., an advanced digital guest experience platform.

TRACI A. (CONTILLI) O'CONNOR '92 was promoted from assistant nurse manager to chief nursing officer for New England Sinai Hospital.



MICHELLE A. (POULIOT) BALBAT '94 celebrated six years with Charles River Laboratories this fall. She is a senior content strategist and was recently named marketing's 2020 Collaborator of the Year at the organization, supporting content development for discovery, laboratory sciences and safety assessment operations.

KEVIN K. LIZOTTE '98, '00 was named hockey coach for the Littleton High School Tigers.

2000S

LISA A. POIRIER '02 was promoted from assistant vice president to vice president for Clinton Savings Bank. Poirier has been with the bank since 1998, starting as a teller.

GARRETT L. ZECKER '04, '09 was a recent semifinalist in the Machigonne Fiction Contest for his short story, Rachel, which will be featured in *The New Guard Literary Review Volume IX* (November 2020). His writing has also been recently featured in *Assignment Magazine*, *Porridge Magazine* (U.K.), and *Black Dandy Magazine* (N.Z.).

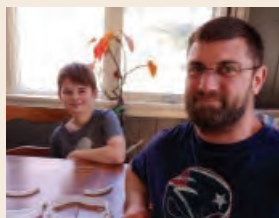
DAVID R. NEWLAND '05 was featured in the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* for his work with Northampton Open Media. As the production coordinator, he has been leading classes on the technical aspects of filmmaking and videography.



COREY J. HETHERMAN '06 was hired as the defensive coordinator for James Madison University's football team. His first season was deemed a success with the team's defense being ranked in the top 10 in nine statistical categories and leading the nation in total and rushing defense.

ALUMNI news

ANDREW D. LEBLANC '06, '10, a Nashoba Regional High School teacher, and his son, Trevor, were featured in the *Telegram & Gazette* for creating 3D printed masks for first responders and healthcare workers.



EDWIN J. ROSENTHAL '06 joined the AdCare Hospital team as a program manager. Prior to joining AdCare Hospital, he worked at the Multicultural Wellness Center as the program manager and clinical supervisor, and at Community Healthlink as the director of adult detox services.

SHAWNNA A. (ROBERT) VON BLIXEN '06 was recently appointed as the program coordinator of a European network, Council of the Baltic Sea States in Stockholm, Sweden, establishing the Child Advocacy Center model, the standard service model, for child victims of sexual abuse and other violence.

MICHAEL V. CICCONE '08, a U.S. Postal Service carrier, was awarded a Meritorious Action Cross by the Leominster Fire Department for running into a burning home and escorting its residents to safety.



JUDE P. CONNELLY '09, an impassioned outdoor enthusiast, founded Nirvana Upfitters in 2018, a customized specialty camper van design and build company. Connelly pursued his post-graduate education in specialty woodcraft and design at the famed Yestermorrow School in Waitsfield, Vt., after spending six years as a scientist at a pair of innovative biotech companies in Boston.



2010S

MATTHEW DOWNING '11 was promoted to executive director of Sterling-Lancaster Community Television Inc., the non-profit corporation that provides public access television to cable subscribers on Comcast channels 8 and 99.

MATTHEW J. GOGUEN '12 recently joined Geosyntec Consultants as an environmental historian. Working from the firm's Columbia, Md. branch, Goguen conducts historical research in locations including the Library of Congress and National Archives in support of litigation cases involving environmental contamination.



NICOLE KALLOCH '12 was promoted to assistant vice president in the commercial lending

division of Rollstone Bank & Trust.

STEPHANIE A. (LEACH) LEBLANC '13 recently joined the team at Fitchburg State as payroll director.

JESUS MOORE '13 and longtime girlfriend/college sweetheart **LAURA M. COTE '15** welcomed a daughter, Giavanna Luz Moore. They call her Gigi.



NIKOLLA LABOVITIADHI '13, '17, also known as Nicolas Labovitis, opened Bion, a new authentic Greek food restaurant in downtown Fitchburg. A venture started with his parents, Bion currently is open for take-out but will be adding seats for formal dining in the near future.

CAM J. ROPER '13 was hired as the new varsity baseball coach for Methuen High School. For the past five years, Roper was the pitching coach for Lowell High School.



KEVIN J. JAMES '14 and **THOMAS P. CHALIFOUR-DRAHMAN '10** screened their 2019 film *Not for Resale: A Video Game Store Documentary* for Communications Media students in November. The film has garnered attention at festivals like the Independent Film Festival Boston, PAX East, and the Seattle Transmedia & Independent Film Festival.

TIMOTHY J. MICHALAK '14 completed his Master of Public Affairs degree from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas. He was enrolled in their accelerated 18-month program, which required attending one year in Austin, Texas and then six months in Washington, D.C., where he worked at the Partnership for Public Service, a nonprofit focused on executive branch efficiency. Having graduated this past December, Michalak began a Policy Fellowship in House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn's office on Capitol Hill.

ALEXANDRA VALDEZ '15 was named to the El Mundo Boston Latino 30 Under 30 this fall. This award honors young individuals making an impact on the Massachusetts Latino community in a variety of fields including, but not limited to, business, sports, community service, and fine arts. The list serves to highlight the growing and invaluable impact of the Latino community in Boston, the state and world. She is currently the director of engagement in the city of Boston's Economic Mobility Lab.

SUBMIT A CLASS NOTE

To place a Class Note, Celebration, Introduction, or In Memoriam in *Contact*, please visit <https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/alumni/resources/alumni-updates-and-requests-form/> and fill out the form online. *Contact* reserves the right to edit for length and clarity. Notes can also be mailed to *Contact* magazine, Fitchburg State University, 160 Pearl Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420.

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

Photos should be at least 3.5 inches wide and have a resolution of at least 300 dpi. If you mail a glossy print to us, please make sure to include your contact information and the names of any people in the photo.



KELLI J. ROONEY '16 of Leominster has been promoted to senior vice president for

community engagement and marketing at Leominster Credit Union, where she is responsible for leading strategic relationship development, community engagement, advocacy and marketing.

FRANK T. SCHEMBARI '17 started working with the *Nashua Telegraph* in January as an account executive.

JAMES T. LALLI '18 changed roles at television station WMUR-TV in New Hampshire from production assistant to digital editor. Before joining WMUR-TV, Lalli worked as a production assistant at WGBH in Boston.

CAROLYN PERLA '18 was promoted to senior vice president for IC Federal Credit Union. Perla has been with the bank for 12 years, starting as a retail operations trainer.

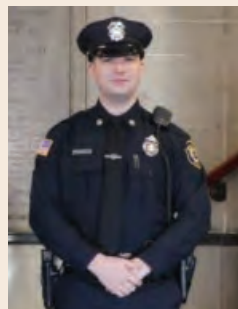
NICHOLAS R. DINICOLA '19 joined the Danbury Hat Tricks of the Federal Prospects Hockey League.

RICHARD P. KRAMER '19 joined the Knoxville Ice Bears of the Southern Professional Hockey League.

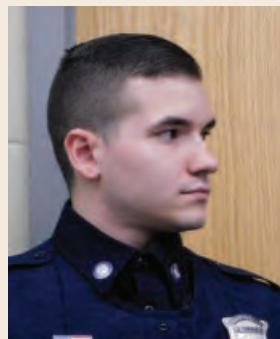
YIONGCHIASIDER "BEA" LEE '19 was named economic development and loan administrator for the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce. Prior to joining the Chamber, she was the client relationship manager for Panther Group and an assistant branch manager for Rollstone Bank & Trust.



RYAN P. MANGANELLI '19 was recently sworn in as an officer in the Waltham Police Department.



NICHOLAS J. MCLAUGHLIN '19 was recently hired as an officer for the Ashburnham Police Department.



ADAM E. STONE '19 received the Safe Homes/Open Sky Person of Courage Award in May for his work as president of the Gay Straight Alliance his senior year at Fitchburg State. Some examples of Stone's leadership included the implementation of the ability for students and employees to officially designate a chosen name; the decision to embark on implementing a gender-neutral housing policy for new students to augment the one in place for returning students; and advocacy for ongoing training about serving people who identify as transgender/non-gender-binary, particularly in Health Services, Counseling Services, and University Police. Stone is a family service provider at South Bay Community Services in Leominster.

FIND OUT MORE at fitchburgstate.edu/alumni, and keep an eye on your inbox and mailbox for invitations to these and other activities. *If your workplace employs a lot of Fitchburg State alumni, let us know, and we will come and throw an appreciation event for you!

ARE YOU A LEADER? JOIN THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD.

We are looking for passionate, service-oriented alumni willing to commit their time and expertise to serve on the Alumni Association Board! Contact alumni@fitchburgstate.edu for more information or to nominate someone. Nominations may be submitted at any time.

OFFICERS

Jim Walsh '75, President
Dawn Morton '90, President-Elect
Paula Stefanakos '92, '02, Treasurer
Stephanie Marchetti '07, '10, Secretary

DIRECTORS

Seferine Baez '18
Allison Bunnell '03, '07
Rose Cardarelli '81
Rob Comeau '93
Micaela Crowley '11
Beverly Farias '52
Mark Fearer '93, '99
Mike Fiorentino '71
Raymond Gallagher '15
John Garten '89
Eric Gregoire '11
Stephen Hogue '16
Ian James '09
Debra Joy '09
Francine Meigs '83
Jennifer Melanson '18
Amy Merriam '14
Frank O'Donnell '93 (alumni trustee)
Daniel Seaman '07
Nicholas Smith '11

MET & MARRIED



KATHRYN A. (POLANIK) CLARK '90, '96 met **JAMES W. CLARK '89** on Halloween 1987 at a party. He came as the Pillsbury Doughboy and she was a scarecrow. They married Aug. 13, 1994 and have two sons. Kathryn has taught in the Lowell Public School District since 1994.

THOMAS G. HAMILTON '93 and **KRISTEN (DOWNEY) HAMILTON '92** met in Russell Towers in the fall of 1988. He was visiting a friend on Kristen's floor when he first saw her and had a strong feeling that he was going to marry her. Soon thereafter he learned she was already in a long-term relationship. Slightly disappointed, he moved on. The following spring they both had English Comp 2 class together and found out they had a lot in common ... and that Kristen was newly single. They briefly dated, nothing serious, and then went their separate ways for the summer. When they returned to school in the fall of 1989 she was dating someone from her hometown and once again, Tom moved on.

In the fall of 1991, they ended up in the music minor program together (a minor that Kristen initiated on campus) and in a music arts class a few times a week. Toward the end of the semester they began dating, but once the semester ended, they again went their separate ways.

In 1995, Tom gave Kristen a call out of the blue, even though he was dating someone else at the time. To his surprise, Kristen was single and revealed to him that she now knew she wanted to marry him. For whatever reason, he turned her down to stay in the relationship he had just begun with someone else. Kristen wrote Tom a letter not too long after that phone call saying if he was ever to look for her in the future to find her father because he'd know where to find her. Fast forward to the spring of 2007, both were now divorced from other people and Tom decided to give it another shot. Tom called her and they have now been married for almost 12 years with four children and two dogs.

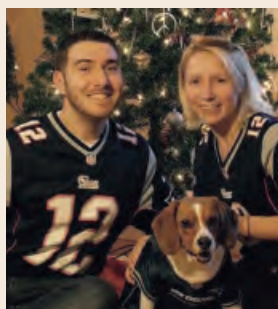
Their two oldest children both attend Fitchburg State and are enrolled in the criminal justice and computer science programs. They are also proud that their kids consistently make the dean's list. Their two little ones are already planning their time at The 'Burg! Tom maintains that he knew the very first time he saw Kristen, she was the love of his life. He just didn't know the road was going to be so long and winding.

APRIL L. CARR '00 and **KEVIN P. CARR '00** met in 1996 at the beginning of her freshman year and his sophomore year. Kevin was her resident assistant. Even though she was smitten with him on day one, it took a couple months for April to agree to go out with him. Their first date was in November at the nearby apple orchard where they stayed talking until the wee hours of the morning. A month later, on Dec. 5, 1996, they officially became a couple. Three years later, July 15, 1999, Kevin proposed on the swings at the McKay Campus School after a campus-wide scavenger hunt to their favorite places. They got married on July 2, 2000. This year, they will be celebrating 20 years of marriage after two cross-country moves and three kids.

AMANDA J. (PATRICK) DUGGAN '09, '11 and **ROBERT J. DUGGAN '09** met on Spree Day in 2007 at the wonderful Sig Pi house. She was there with some of her roommates and burped really loud. Bob walked over to her group and said, "A girl who can burp like that, I'd marry." They've been together ever since.

REBECCA L. (FODEN) MCNAMARA '10, '15 and **JAMES V. MCNAMARA '10** met on the first day of school, freshman year 2005. They were in the Conlon Fine Arts building taking the first course towards their graphic arts degrees. It was love at first sight, and a couple weeks into the class, he asked her for her screen name. This year they will be celebrating 15 years together and 10 years married. Inspired by his wife, Jim is currently working on becoming a double Falcon.

JOSEPH E. BALBONI '14 met **DANIELLE M. (POLCARI) BALBONI '14** their freshman year (2010). They both played sports at Fitchburg State and have been together for nine years. They married in 2019 and are coming up on their one year anniversary, looking forward to many more.



ALUMNI EVENTS



Once again, the Mohawks pulled off a terrific Xmas Pasta Fest despite the snow day. They surprised staff from the alumni office with a stained glass hanging decoration of the former Fitchburg State logo crafted by Paul J. White '79. This beautiful piece of art, shown at left being held by Director of Alumni Relations Emily Austin-Bruns while Vice President for Institutional Advancement Jeffrey Wolfman looks on, will be displayed in the University archives.



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ALUMNI EVENTS



Our last two face-to-face events before social distancing were the Falcons in Florida events at the end of February. Pictured are alumni gathered for the 6th annual Red Sox Spring Training Game and Picnic in Ft. Myers (above) and a luncheon cruise in Naples (below).



Dawn Morton '90 poses with Freddy the Falcon at one of the fall Admissions Open Houses. She participated in the alumni-admissions program, representing the Communications Media Department.



This February we celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the 1994 Championship Ice Hockey Team at a dinner with Coaches Dean Fuller and Malcolm Macpherson at Slattery's. Pictured L-R: Matt Park '95, Steve Lyden, Bill Mastrangelo '98, Steve Lowney '95, Ken Erickson '00, DJ Conte '98, Coach Dean Fuller '78, Dale Kimball '97, Brian Fagan '96, Coach Malcolm Macpherson, Steve Baldassare '96, Scott Livingston '95



In celebration of the University's 125th Anniversary the Athletics Department highlighted the end of their winter season with a great turnout for the Alumni Ice Hockey Game.



Tim Bauman '56 gifts Men's Basketball Coach Titus Manderson his State Teachers College at Fitchburg letter jacket at the Alumni Men's Basketball Reunion & Reverse Raffle.



Members of the Alumni Association Board of Directors participated in an alumni Google Meet and Greet during this year's virtual Future Falcons Day.



In celebration of the University's 125th Anniversary the Athletics Department highlighted the end of their winter season with a series of commemorative games. Alumnae took to the floor during half time at the Women's Basketball Game for a friendly shoot-out.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Go to fitchburgstate.edu/PlannedGiving or contact Jeffrey Wolfman, Vice President for Institutional Advancement at 978.665.4933 or jwolfman@fitchburgstate.edu

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
CELEBRATING 125 YEARS *of changing lives*

GEORGE AND JEANNE AWAD

George Awad and Jeanne Ziegler met at the Fitchburg State cafeteria on their first day of school in 1965. They graduated in 1969 and were married on July 25, 1970. This year they will celebrate their 50th anniversary. "We have always felt that a comprehensive education is essential for any person to have a full, rewarding, and successful life." This is why double Falcons ('69 & '73) George and Jeanne Awad have made provisions in their estate plans to create the George M. Awad and Jeanne M. Awad Industrial Technology Scholarship Fund becoming founding members of the Saxifrage Society.

At Fitchburg State, George earned his BS in Technology Education (now known as Engineering Technology) and his Masters degree in Industrial Education, while Jeanne earned

her BS in Education and her Masters in English Education.

"We both attribute our career and financial success to receiving a comprehensive education at Fitchburg State College." After graduation, both George and Jeanne became teachers for most of their careers. George taught at Wachusett Regional High School in Holden for 29 years, where he also served as Department Head of Technology Education. Jeanne taught English at Gardner Junior High school for 33 years and directed many school plays during her tenure.

George shares this "My accrued skills and education made me a better teacher and then department head. Our intent was to have a family, but after 7 years it was obvious it wasn't in God's plan. We worked with children every day and loved watching them learn and mature. We were both very patient with students and worked hard to be very good teachers. We had hoped our legacy would be funding the future training of Technology Education and English teachers."

Jeanne's education at Fitchburg State gave her a background in writing, and she is a talented and published author. Her book *Life Put to Rhyme, 396 Poems with a Purpose*, is sold on Amazon and Kindle, and she recently completed a children's book, *Alliteration and Assonance*, which is a fun to read book of tongue twisters to help familiarize young students with the letters of the alphabet.

Because George came from a low income family, he made the decision to start planning for his and Jeanne's retirement as soon as they were married. He told her they would retire at age 55 and would be financially independent. Jeanne just looked at George and smiled, but George wasn't joking. He made an Excel spreadsheet on a 7" Apple Mac. He found that careful investment of 20% of their income into mutual funds allowed their investments to grow substantially over time. George attained his goal in 1996, but they chose to continue teaching until 2001 when they moved to Punta Gorda, Florida where they now reside.

George and Jeanne hope other alumni will join them in reflecting on the time they spent at Fitchburg State and consider giving back.

George benefited from the assistance he received from the Fitchburg grant and loan programs. He worked a part time job in the campus library and as a draftsman at local design firms. George and Jeanne appreciate the assistance George received, and they would like to help other students so they can enjoy the same wonderful and rewarding opportunities that they had. Fitchburg State exists to help people better themselves and to prepare them to achieve their own goals. George and Jeanne Awad feel privileged to be able to help enhance that mission.



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