

Fitchburg State University's Civic Action Plan

Action Statement 1				
We empower our students, faculty, staff and community partners to co-create mutually respectful partnerships in pursuit of a just, equitable, and sustainable future for communities beyond the campus – nearby and around the world.				
Goal	FSU Strategic Plan Alignment	Objectives	Action Steps	Constituents/Assets
Build partnerships within our community to provide real-world opportunities for our students and collaborative solutions to community issues.	3A2. Enhance efforts by faculty, staff and administrators to use knowledge and expertise in community service to appropriate regional partners. 3A3. Develop strategies to increase and coordinate community partnerships and alumni capacities, particularly as they might embrace changing demographics, in order to provide structure and capacity for civic learning, internships, and career development. Connect with alumni early in their careers to get them involved with current students and to keep them engaged with the university.	Enhance existing community partnerships with faculty, staff, and administrators.	Increase partnerships both internally and externally; breaking down “silos.” Reach out to faculty, staff, and administrators to develop co-curriculum civic learning opportunities in the community. Need to re-establish relationships internally (with all constituents). Need to formally recognize current external community partners (i.e. honor at a meeting); decals for businesses identifying them as “Community Partners with FSU” Create inventory of partnerships from faculty, staff, administrators, librarians serving on boards in the local community. Provide [internal] training/education on how to identify and reach out to partners and develop curriculum.	All community partners Faculty, Staff, Administrators, Librarians Alumni Office Volunteer Center Center for Diversity and Inclusion Student Development Office Center for Teaching & Learning

		Create a better process in place for creating new partnerships. Engage alumni in the process of creating alumni-focused partnerships. Better coordinate and communicate multiple partnerships across campus.	Create a list identifying current partners. Establish a contact point for partners seeking FSU assistance for civic engagement opportunities, internships, and/or career opportunities. Possibly create link for internal access to assist with identifying possible partnership opportunities and past projects to be used as examples in developing future partnership projects. Establish better communication with the Alumni Office; have departments notify them of any opportunities with alumni. Involve alumni in classroom and other activities on campus. Review of partnership inquiries and communication process for existing partnerships.	
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Action Statement 2 We prepare our students for lives of engaged citizenship, with the motivation and capacity to deliberate, act and lead in pursuit of the public good.				
Goal	FSU Strategic Plan Alignment	Objectives	Action Steps	Constituents/Assets
Fitchburg State University prepares students to lead, serve, and succeed fostering lifelong learning and civic and global responsibility.	2B3. Increase opportunities for community-based student research, service learning, and community-based learning and develop a central university point of contact for internships under the expanded mission of the Crocker Center for Civic Engagement. 3A1. Support educational initiatives that extend and apply civic learning to regional, national and international settings. Stress the role of reflection in experiential learning so students are aware of and articulate about their knowledge. Promote student development of civic competencies through service or applied learning to address social, public and community concerns.	Create a process for developing and supporting student civic engagement courses and opportunities within majors.	Review and verify existing opportunities for civic engagement. Outreach to departments by the Civic Engagement group to promote civic engagement and learn about existing opportunities: • Provide departments with the definition and specificity of civic engagement as we interpret it at Fitchburg State University; • Create resources (including sample syllabi, assignments, and a logistics guide – e.g. university van, liability considerations, and confidentiality agreements) for faculty to facilitate the creation of civic engagement opportunities; and, • Members of the Civic Engagement group will serve as mentors to help support interested faculty in promoting civic engagement. Targeted professional development: • Host a conference to connect Fitchburg State University with other higher education institutions who are currently incorporating civic engagement requirements; and, • Host an annual campus workshop on civic engagement.	Civic Engagement Group Academic Departments Academic Affairs Other higher education institutions currently participating in civic engagement Crocker Center for Civic Engagement

		Create a place in the LA&S curriculum or major curriculum to encourage civic engagement opportunities.	Create a Fitchburg State University-specific definition of civic learning courses, including learning objectives and outcomes. Support LA&S Council's effort to infuse civic engagement into curriculum. Engage with First Year Experience (FYE) Group to infuse civic engagement into FYE curriculum. Collaborate with the International Education Office to help identify and incorporate civic learning opportunities. Outreach to departments by the Civic Engagement group to promote civic engagement and learn about existing opportunities.	LA&S Council First Year Experience (FYE) Group International Education Office Civic Engagement Group
		Create a process for developing and supporting civic engagement opportunities within extracurricular (non-credit) activities.	Review and verify existing extracurricular opportunities for civic engagement. Outreach to extracurricular offices to promote civic engagement and learn about existing opportunities. Explore process for including extracurricular student civic engagement participation on transcripts.	Student Government Association Office of Student and Academic Life Registrar's Office Civic Engagement Group
		Establish and manage a central point of university contact and outreach for internship referrals and other civic engagement partnerships.	Explore alternate models for civic engagement offices (e.g. Salem State University, Framingham State University, etc.). Communicate with the departments to understand and determine internship needs at the department level. Establish a process for community outreach for finding new opportunities.	Civic Engagement Group Academic Departments Office of Student and Academic Life Crocker Center for Civic Engagement

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Action Statement 3 We embrace our responsibilities as place-based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities - economically, socially, environmentally, educationally and politically.				
Goal	FSU Strategic Plan Alignment	Objectives	Action Steps	Constituents/Assets
As a community resource, we provide leadership and support for the economic, environmental, social, and cultural needs of North Central Massachusetts and the Commonwealth.	3B1. Explore the creation of an entrepreneurship center to spur job creation.	In coordination with the theater block project inventory and prioritize entrepreneurship opportunities from the campus and community.	Place the Music Lesson Program (now at CPS) and its activities at the Entrepreneur Center with support of students to oversee daily operations, and in some cases organize free lessons or activities/recitals; concerts would promote "Arts business." The same could be expanded/developed to achieve a community ARTS school which would fill community need. Students would be involved in this also. Assess and catalog existing resources that are engaged in this type of activity in the area currently. Identify and recommend operational model and the leadership needed to run an entrepreneurial center.	Faculty in music and art; local professionals already on board in music program; students in Art and Music Minors, or Education City/Mayor's Office Economic Development Office Montachusett Opportunity Council (MOC) Chamber of Commerce Crocker Center for Civic Engagement Business Department Humanities Resources developed by the Creative Economy project

	3B2. Explore childcare opportunities at the university and in the community.	Create childcare opportunities that serve both local community needs and our Fitchburg State students and employees.	Volunteer center could oversee tutoring at such a center; Humanities students could participate. Check on status of project that was previously in development with MOC to support the FSU Early Childhood program. Review and assess previous history with childcare center operations (was closed in 2007) – why wasn't program successful and what changes are needed for today's clientele. Conduct a needs assessment of current campus staff, faculty, and students, and well as local community.	Humanities students desirous of tutoring Montachusett Opportunity Council (MOC) Education Department/Dean Fitchburg Public Schools McKay Arts Academy
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	3B3. Promote the City of Fitchburg's designation as a cultural arts district.	Capitalize on the work of the Fitchburg State University Center Stage, the development of the Theater Block Building and other campus resources to support Fitchburg's designation as a Cultural Arts District.	Humanities Department's many yearly concerts (Band, Orchestra, and Chorus) as well as recitals, and community-inspired programming could take place at the theatre block, as well as musicals which would be a collaboration between Theatre and Music areas. In the past, Center Stage conferred with academic departments regarding some programming. This would be great to initiate again, so that events are linked to music curriculum and community initiatives at the same time. The same can happen for Visual Art. The current gallery space on campus is not sufficient, and would be much enhanced by opportunities for shows and talks at the Theatre Block. Students could participate in organization and planning of such shows and talks. Fitchburg's designation as a Cultural Arts District was previously established. What does this mean? Identify any current/active groups that either act in or might participate in an advisory group. Identify means for gathering and publicizing event and activity information for the community.	Already existing concerts, music groups, and curriculum Already existing Art faculty, and many studio students Center for the Arts Fitchburg Art Museum Cultural Alliance Center Stage Academic Departments Public Relations/Marketing Sentinel & Enterprise
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	3B4. Expand housing opportunities for faculty, students, and staff in the university neighborhood.	Expand housing opportunities for faculty, students, and staff in ways that are sensitive to the housing needs of the local community, and the potential impact on property tax revenue.	Spanish language students and Heritage Spanish class students could participate in outreach to local neighborhoods; logistical planning needed. Review existing market demand surveys that have been completed regarding student housing needs. Conduct needs assessment of faculty/staff – include and understanding of needs as new faculty/staff join the university community. Identify resources for faculty/staff and students seeking housing in the local community that also provide transit, service, school, community organizations, crime data, etc. Provide landlord tenant relation support for students living in the local community.	Students in Spanish classes Spanish-speaking faculty members Local landlords Property management agencies Real estate agents Neighborhood associations Ward councilors Student Government Association Human Resources Housing & Residence Life
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	3B5. Establish goals and clear procedures for welcoming community members to university facilities and cultural events.	Create goals and procedures that increase community utilization of Fitchburg State facilities and cultural events.	Establish an events calendar that contains all our events so that community members can access them easily. Numeric street addresses and signs for all our buildings. For example, Conlon Fine Arts does not have a modern green sign out front to designate it and let community members know where Kent Recital Hall is. Some signage could be in Spanish. That would be very welcoming! Explore outreach and communications process so that events and resources targeted for community use are identified and shared. Develop a policy for use prioritization for campus facilities.	Assets would be our marketing area for calendar and capital planning for signs Capital Planning & Maintenance Public Relations/Marketing Center Stage Center for Professional Studies and Adult Learning in the Fitchburg Area (ALFA) Fitchburg Public Schools City of Fitchburg/Mayor's Office
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	3B6. Emphasize and expand the university's commitment to reducing our carbon footprint, and educate the community about the commitment.	Develop, implement, and publicize a comprehensive plan to reduce the campus' carbon footprint.	Share news about current activities – such as PV, geothermal, boiler replacement project, locations of water bottle filling stations. Add outdoor recycling as a sign of commitment to environment. Coordinate interests/efforts of student clubs. Restart an engagement campaign and activities – i.e., annual education effort on recycling program, energy saving contest, etc.; reporting on carbon emissions reductions activities. Key undertaking would be to work on strategies for reducing emissions from commuting – which accounts for approximately 30% of our emissions profile.	Public Relations/Marketing Office FSU Today & other electronic and published resources Capital Planning & Maintenance Sustainability Committee MassPIRG Student Government Association Academic Departments
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Action Statement 4				
We harness the capacity of our institutions – through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practices to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequalities that threaten our democratic future.				
Goal	FSU Strategic Plan Alignment	Objectives	Action Steps	Constituents/Assets
Create a culture of diversity to meet the needs of the region and enhance the personal and academic lives of the college community.	1D1. Initiate a process to identify appropriate, feasible methods for faculty and staff hiring and student recruitment from underrepresented groups; adopt appropriate implementation strategies to increase faculty, staff and student diversity and retention.	Create greater opportunities for underrepresented groups within the FSU staff, students and faculty.	Facilities Current Action Steps: Three of the last four maintainers hired have been representative of the FSU student Hispanic community. All three are City of Fitchburg residents as well. This better represents the student and community demographic and helps create opportunity within the community we serve. Maintainers are the closest point of contact to our customers. Housing maintainers in particular interact with students in residence halls, their on campus homes. Capital Planning and Maintenance has worked with the City and local entities in support of community improvement projects, Project Cleanup, Re-Imaging North of Main and Growing Places Gardening Project. Capital Planning and Maintenance has and will continue to employ as many student worker as we are able to. They are a source of valuable assistance to help augment our capacity and enable us to provide needed employment to students working and earning money to sustain their education. Facilities New Action Step: Integrating elements into our organizational structure that create greater opportunities for underrepresented groups within the FSU staff, students, and faculty. Specifically, opportunities for upward advancement and positions of greater responsibility.	

			Humanities Department: Provide Spanish language staff in all offices which are the face of Fitchburg State to the community (Admissions, Registrar, Student Accounts, Financial Aid, Health Services, Disability Services) Students with good Spanish and English skills can be hired as work study to assist. This would create a sense of value for these students' language abilities and potentially lead them towards careers that require bilingual skillsets. If students and parents are not able to navigate admissions and financial aid, they may not even find a way to afford Fitchburg State. If they cannot navigate student accounts, they may not be retained. Offer free lessons in Spanish to staff and faculty, through some sort of a grant. This would create a more welcoming environment for Hispanic students and faculty. English Studies Dept.: Continue to diversify our faculty and staff to attract and recruit more diverse students, as well as develop a broader range of courses that reflect global perspectives, particularly in the area of Latin American literature and culture.	Humanities: Provide Spanish language staff in all offices which are the face of Fitchburg State to the community (Admissions, Registrar, Student Accounts, Financial Aid, Health Services, and Disability Services). Students with good Spanish and English skills can be hired as work study to assist. This would create a sense of value for these students' language abilities and potentially lead them towards careers that require bilingual skillsets. English Studies Dept.: Diverse faculty If students and parents are not able to navigate admissions and financial aid, they may not even find a way to afford Fitchburg State. If they cannot navigate student accounts, they may not be retained. Offer free lessons in Spanish to staff and faculty, through some sort of a grant. This would create a more welcoming environment for Hispanic students and faculty.
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			Housing Current Action Steps: We have committed to analyzing our processes through a social justice lens. We have made a key change to the way that first year housing is assigned based on this examination. Standard practice at our institution was to assign first year housing on a first come, first served basis. Essentially, the earlier one submits their housing deposit, the closer they are to the top of the list. At the same time, we have struggled with over-occupancy (forced triples). This means that the students who pay their deposit the latest are the ones who are assigned to triple rooms. We have watched this and quickly came to realize that due to socioeconomic reasons, the students who were paying “last” were often the students from underrepresented populations; the same students who had a number of barriers to their potential success as a university student. The additional barrier of a “triple” could absolutely be the tipping point for a student in this category and impact persistence. This process also did not align with upper-class housing selection that randomized numbers for selection as the student chose housing each year (after their first). Housing New Action Step: This year, we will be randomizing the first year student housing selection. As long as you deposit by the deadline, you are guaranteed a bed – and socioeconomic factors are eliminated from the process. Student Development Current Action Step: Staff member serves on the Equity and Diversity Committee, which is charged with increasing minority faculty hiring.	
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	1D2. Identify and support appropriate and ongoing efforts to further develop multi-cultural competencies in students, faculty, and staff.	Foster multicultural competencies including Global Learning and Intercultural knowledge through curriculum, programs and professional development.	Humanities Dept.: Support Language area in the Humanities Department, as all these courses promote global learning. Allow smaller classes to run at upper levels. English Studies Dept.: Promote language courses and courses on diverse literary traditions and cultures to all students, especially English majors, through advising and other means, and increase the number of BA degrees (English Studies students already account for at least a plurality of BA degrees). Student Development Current Action Steps: Staff members of Student Development sit on the Board of Directors of the United Neighbors of Fitchburg. Center for Diversity & Inclusiveness (CDI) and Office of Student Development supports and advises the following groups: • Asian Cultural Society; • Black Student Union; • Focus on Faith; • Gay Straight Alliance; • Latin American Student Organization; and, • World Integrated Nations. Programs include but are not limited to: • Chinese New Year; • My Black Is (photo campaign on social justice); • Ostara-spring equinox; • Drag Show; • Dominican Independence Day; and, • Around the World-wrap your flag.	Humanities: Language area is a current asset English Studies Dept.: Literature, writing, and film studies courses focused on various global cultures
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			Student Development created a multicultural competencies diversity framework through which all programming is action and goal based. Detailed document can be provided in an addendum. Student Development New Action Steps: CDI introduced Inclusive Dialogues which brings together faculty, staff, and students to discuss social issues resulting in action steps. Center for Professional Studies (CPS) Current Action Step: Currently CPS offers two cultural competency courses: <i>Introduction to Cultural Competency for Educators</i> and <i>Becoming Culturally Competent in the Classroom</i>. Smaller versions of these courses were developed into workshops for GCE Professional Development Day and for Development Day by Lynn D’Agostino. CPS routinely opens its Main Street classroom to local community groups for use as a free meeting space. We’ve supported NewVue Communities, Growing Places, Domestic Violence Roundtable, Fitchburg Public Schools, North Central Massachusetts Superintendent’s Group, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and Congresswoman Niki Tsongas. Center for Professional Studies New Action Step: CPS is in the process of developing an Early Childhood and Young Adult Literature Cultural Competency Professional Development course with the English Studies Department.	
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	1D3. Increase the international student population by 20% at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. 1D4. Increase opportunities for study abroad partnerships, faculty exchanges, and trips.	Increase the international student population through recruitment and retention efforts. Increase number of, and enrollment in, study abroad trips and faculty exchanges.	Humanities Dept.: Language faculty already participates fully in this area. English Studies Dept.: English faculty are teaching two all-new study abroad courses in the spring and summer of 2017, and we will continue to develop new study abroad courses in a variety of culturally rich sites in the future. As in the past, English faculty will also pursue and receive grants from Fulbright, the Whiting Foundation and the FSU Center for Italian Studies, among others, in order to pursue research projects and teaching opportunities abroad.	Humanities Dept.: Language faculty English Studies Dept.: Faculty and courses
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	1D5. Increase the enrollments of Hispanic students to equal or surpass our state peers in order to better reflect and represent the local community. 1D6. Increase the six-year graduation rate of Hispanic students to halve the current achievement gap.	Build on prior efforts such as Upward Bound, Expanding Horizons, Summer Bridge, Latino Scholars program, Dual Enrollment, and the 30K Commitment to increase Hispanic enrollments and graduation rates.	Student Accounts Current Action Steps: Currently Student Accounts has sessions at Orientation with both students and parents. (This past year was the first time our office had a session with the students; the year prior was the first time we started sessions with parents.) The goal is to educate and inform both parents and families on what their payment options are to meet their financial responsibility. Many of our students are “need based” and “first generation” students/families. We want to help ease their anxiety about this one area. Parents and students are encouraged to call, email, or stop by our office anytime if they have any questions or concerns about their payment options or if they are experiencing financial difficulty. They are given the Department’s contact information and can contact us directly. New this year was a Fall orientation where we held a separate session on “Financial Literacy.” This presentation spoke to students about topics such as building good credit, managing a budget, and giving students information about borrowing and if they “really need” those loans if, in fact, they are getting a refund. Student loan debt in this country is a concern for all of us and students need to hear the impact of over-borrowing and loan repayment. Another topic discussed was how to choose who you want to donate your money to. I thought this was important for students to hear that if they have any excess funds it is important to give back to help others. We communicate with students all summer long regarding their account, what they might still need to do, and also give continuous information on their payment options.	
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			Student Accounts works collaboratively with Admissions, Registrar, & Financial Aid. Our department wants to be consistent in our message to ALL students; to treat them all fairly & equally. Student Accounts New Action Steps and Suggestions: We are continuously reviewing what our department can do better to reach out to students. We are going to work harder on calling students who have not responded to any of our emails. We will try to implement information about our message when we have staff meetings. At our yearly college meetings the message should continuously be how we treat our students and that the expectation is for the entire University to achieve stellar customer service. We are all responsible for getting students to the finish line. Moving forward with the development of a First Year program, we are hopeful that financial literacy will be part of that curriculum. Understanding money and how to be financially responsible now will help them when they leave college to start their life. Develop the mindset of giving back with time, talent, or treasure. Not everyone will have money, but some of us can contribute our time or talent. Classes can incorporate this message to help students develop and move away from the mindset of “it’s only about me.” Professors might also be able to choose reading material to help students think more about our community and country and being involved. English Studies Dept.: Increase course offerings in the area of Latin American literature and culture. The first (exclusively) Latin American Literature course will be offered in Fall 2017.	
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Fitchburg State University's Civic Action Plan

Action Statement 5				
We foster an environment that consistently affirms the centrality of the public purposes of higher education by setting high expectations for members of the campus community to contribute to their achievement.				
Goal	FSU Strategic Plan Alignment	Objectives	Action Steps	Constituents/Assets
A Fitchburg State education extends beyond our classrooms to include residential, professional, and co-curricular opportunities (mission).	All of the Strategic Planning Actions cited above.	Build a campus culture of prioritizing civic learning and engagement.	To better engage Fitchburg State University students in civic learning and engagement, we: • Support training of faculty and staff; • Allocate financial and physical resources; • Coordinate and diversify programming to ensure accessibility for all students; • Publicize efforts of students, faculty, and staff involved these activities; • Measure the impact of such events on student recruitment, retention, and graduation; and, • Recognize and celebrate our students, faculty, staff, and community partners regularly.	Constituents: • Students • Faculty • Staff • Library • Community organizations Assets: • Climate survey • Crocker Center for Civic Engagement • Volunteer Center • Center for Diversity & Inclusiveness • Academic clubs • Greek life • Habitat for Humanity and Alternative Spring Break • Leadership Development Program • Honors Program