

Approved

Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, May 2, 2017
Fitchburg State University
Presidents' Hall, Mazzaferro Center
291 Highland Ave., Fitchburg, MA 01420
4:00 p.m.

SEP 12 2017

Fitchburg State University
Board of Trustees

Members present

Anna Maria Clementi, Martin F. Connors Jr, Carolyn Crowley Stimpson, Donald Irving, Michael Mahan, Anthony Mercadante, Frank O'Donnell (via telephone), C Deborah Phillips, Abigail Cochran

Members absent

Delfi Nieto, Gladys Rodriguez-Parker

Others present

Richard S. Lapidus, Gail Doiron, Cathy Canney, Jay Bry, Jessica Murdoch, Chris Hendry, Marilyn Siderwicz, Mary Beth McKenzie, Heidi Swift, Yvonne Malcolm, Steve Swartz

1. Opening of Meeting

A. Call to Order

Chairman Irving called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

2. Public Comment

A. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3. Consideration of Minutes

A. Consideration of Minutes from the April 4, 2017 Board of Trustees meeting VOTE (31-16/17)

Motion: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees of Fitchburg State University approve the minutes from the April 4, 2017 meeting.

Motion by Martin F. Connors, Jr.; second by Debbie Phillips.

Roll Call vote:

Yea: Martin F. Connors, Jr., Anna Maria Clementi, Michael Mahan, Abigail Cochran, Donald Irving, Anthony Mercadante, Frank O'Donnell, Debbie Phillips

Final resolution: Motion Carries

4. Finance and Administration Committee

A. FY2018 Budget Discussion

Mr. Mercadante discussed the budget. The Finance & Administration Committee met on April 25 and reviewed and discussed the various reports and voted. He expressed his appreciation to the president for putting together the budget narrative. How the budget fits into the strategic perspective is very well done. He discussed the budget sheet, restricted assets and annual operating budgets FY16-18. He noted that enrollment for the upcoming fall appears to be solid. The fee increases are built into the budget.

B. Student Fee Increase – VOTE (32-16/17)

Motion: It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve the following annual student fees, effective for the fall semester 2017:

Technology Fee

Technology Fee: \$20.00 increase for FY2018

Motion by Abigail Cochran.; second by Debbie Phillips.

Roll Call vote:

Yea: Martin F. Connors, Jr., Anna Maria Clementi, Michael Mahan, Abigail Cochran, Donald Irving, Anthony Mercadante, Frank O'Donnell, Debbie Phillips

Final resolution: Motion Carries

Ms. Stimpson entered the meeting at 4:11 p.m.

There was a discussion on fees in comparison to our sister institutions. The consensus was to vote the following votes as one item.

C. On-line RN to BSN program fee – VOTE (33-16/17)

Motion: It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve a fee of \$311 per credit hour for the on-line RN to BSN program.

D. On-line M.Ed. Curriculum and Teaching program fee – VOTE (34-16/17)

Motion: It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve a fee of \$372 per credit hour for the on-line M.Ed. Curriculum and Teaching program.

E. On-line M.Ed. Educational Leadership and Management program fee – VOTE (35-16/17)

Motion: It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve a fee of \$372 per credit hour for the on-line M.Ed. Educational Leadership and Management program.

F. Extended Campus Programs Fee Increases for the Wilson Language Training Program – VOTE (36-16/17)

Motion: It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve the following proposed rate structure for the Wilson Language Training Program.

- Graduate
- 3-credit course - \$325
- 2-credit course - \$285
- 1-credit course - \$240

- Undergraduate
- 3-credit course - \$270
- 2-credit course - \$230
- 1-credit course - \$185

G. Extended Campus Programs Fee Increase for Research for Better Teaching (RBT) – VOTE (37-16/17)

Motion: It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve the following proposed rate structure for Extended Campus Programs with RBT.

- Graduate
- 3-credit course - \$375
- 2-credit course - \$335
- 1-credit course - \$290

- Undergraduate
- 3-credit course - \$320
- 2-credit course - \$280
- 1-credit course - \$235

Motion by Debbie Phillips.; second by Martin F. Connors, Jr.

Roll Call vote:

Yea: Martin F. Connors, Jr., Anna Maria Clementi, Michael Mahan, Abigail Cochran, Donald Irving, Anthony Mercadante, Frank O'Donnell, Debbie Phillips, Carolyn Crowley Stimpson

Final resolution: Motion Carries

H. FY2018 Budget- VOTE (38-16/17)

Mr. Mercadante presented the budget. There was a discussion.

Motion: It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve the FY2018 Budget as presented by the President.

Motion by Debbie Phillips.; second by Michael Mahan.

Roll Call vote:

Yea: Martin F. Connors, Jr., Anna Maria Clementi, Michael Mahan, Abigail Cochran, Donald Irving, Anthony Mercadante, Frank O'Donnell, Debbie Phillips, Carolyn Crowley Stimpson

Final resolution: Motion Carries

I. Deferred Maintenance – VOTE (39-16/17)

Mr. Mercadante stated that the transfer was to receive matching funds for some maintenance projects. The money would come out of the reserves.

Motion: It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve the president's recommendation to transfer \$1,000,000 from reserves to the capital project fund (CPRO) as a match to Commonwealth deferred maintenance funds.

Motion by Debbie Phillips; second by Carolyn Crowley Stimpson.

Roll Call vote:

Yea: Martin F. Connors, Jr., Anna Maria Clementi, Michael Mahan, Abigail Cochran, Donald Irving, Anthony Mercadante, Frank O'Donnell, Debbie Phillips, Carolyn Crowley Stimpson

Final resolution: Motion Carries

J. Roll Forward of Funds to FY2018 Budget – VOTE (40-16/17)

Motion: It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve that ongoing capital projects roll forward into the FY2018 University Budget.

Motion by Debbie Phillips; second by Carolyn Crowley Stimpson.

Roll Call vote:

Yea: Martin F. Connors, Jr., Anna Maria Clementi, Michael Mahan, Abigail Cochran, Donald Irving, Anthony Mercadante, Frank O'Donnell, Debbie Phillips, Carolyn Crowley Stimpson

Final resolution: Motion Carries

5. Administrative Appointments

A. Administrative Appointments – VOTE (41-16/17)

President Lapidus said, as part of their package, the newly appointed academic deans would be provided with tenure. They are given the right to request tenure if they go back to an academic department and must follow the process outlined in the contract. They have the right to take up a faculty position if they elect to do so.

Motion: It is requested that the Fitchburg State University Board of Trustees vote to approve that the newly appointed Deans have the right to take up a faculty position in the specific department related to their discipline with tenure subject to any obligation for evaluation pursuant to the MSCA Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Motion by Debbie Phillips; second by Martin F. Connors, Jr.

Roll Call vote:

Yea: Martin F. Connors, Jr., Anna Maria Clementi, Michael Mahan, Abigail Cochran, Donald Irving, Anthony Mercadante, Frank O'Donnell, Debbie Phillips, Carolyn Crowley Stimpson

Final resolution: Motion Carries

6. Notifications

A. Personnel Actions (N08-16/17) (Attached)

The personnel actions were included in the packet for informational purposes. There was some discussion around the recent early retirement program.

7. Chair's Report

A. Thank you to Martin F. Connors, Jr. and Anthony Mercadante

Chairman Irving formally thanked Mr. Connors and Mr. Mercadante for their service to the board and the institution. He noted that Mr. Connors has been on the board since 2007, served two terms on the Foundation, which shows tremendous dedication. It was also noted that he had been generous financially. Mr. Connors has done a wonderful job as Chairman.

Mr. Mercadante has been on the board since 2011 and served two terms on the Foundation. His expertise with regard to financial matters has been much appreciated. Both were recognized for their involvement in many other community organizations and work to make our community a better place, and they have made a difference. Chairman Irving quoted a Latin phrase that was applicable to both Mr. Connors and Mr. Mercadante, "Non sibi sed aliis" Not for ourselves, but for others.

Chairman Irving discussed giving in general stating that a letter will going out shortly to the Board asking for financial support. We are all stewards of the University. He asked that every board member consider contributing something.

8. Student Trustee Report

A. Breakfast with the Board

Ms. Cochran thanked everyone that attended the Breakfast with the Board event held in the spring. There was a discussion on other possible events as a means of increasing interaction with students.

9. President's Report

A. Response from NEASC (Attached)

President Lapidus formally thanked Mr. Connors and Mr. Mercadante for their service. He had informed the board at the last meeting of the NEASC report submission. The University received their response and it is extremely positive. We are in a good position for the next five-year review. He publicly thanked Cathy Canney, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and the committee that worked so hard on the report. They all did a great job. We were conservative with some of the strategic planning leaving us in a good place moving forward.

B. Admissions Update

We are cautiously optimistic and the trends are very positive for the fall. Deposits are used as a surrogate measure for enrollment numbers. The numbers are also strong for the residence halls. At a prior meeting, the board approved the Simonds Hall acquisition, which is now completely sold out. The president stated he found that to be encouraging given that students who are connected with their institution tend to have higher graduation rates. There was a discussion.

C. FSU Supporting Organization Update

The president provided an update on recent property purchases. Some of the acquisitions will be used for parking and others will be used as green space. He stated that the University is close to securing property on Day Street that will be used for a day care center. Our goal is to renovate the space as a way to support the Education Department and their K- 8 programs adding another laboratory environment. In addition, we can help those in the city that need quality day care. In the fall, we can discuss the campus master plan and review the long-term strategic plan.

D. Commencements

The president invited all board members to participate in the Commencement Ceremonies on May 18 and May 20. There are healthy numbers for graduates at both events. We are ahead of schedule on planning and there is a weather plan if we need to move indoors.

E. Nursing Pinning

The Nursing Pinning Ceremony will take place on May 17. We have 75 nurses graduating which is an increase in number from past years.

F. End-of-year Activities

The president informed the board on a variety of events that take place this time of year. The Convocation Ceremony went well; we hosted the Special Olympics and held a Naturalization Ceremony. There is a great deal of activity at the end of the spring semester.

Mr. O'Donnell left the meeting at 4:42 p.m.

Ms. Clementi noted the support given to students and professors that traveled to Italy. They live in apartments and have to fend for themselves. As always, she would like to see more students traveling. The president reported on the recent program that funds passports for students, which is a first step.

G. News Articles

Recent news articles were included for informational purposes.

10. Adjournment

A. Adjourn the Meeting

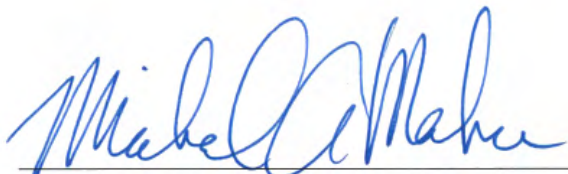
The Chairman asked if there were any additional comments.

Ms. Cochran reported on senior week activities.

Mr. Connors thanked everyone for their kind words and said it was an honor to serve on the Board. Mr. Mercadante echoed his comments and stated it was a pleasure to be on the board. He went on to mention that one of the things that impressed him the most was the management and staff. There is good team in place.

With no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael A. Mahan, Clerk

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
Board of Trustees
NOTIFICATIONS

TO: Board of Trustees	DATE: May 2, 2017
FROM: The President	REQUEST NUMBER:
SUBJECT: Personnel Actions	N08-16/17

New Hire

Franca Barricelli, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	Dean of Arts and Sciences Academic Affairs	\$140,000.00
Karina Bautista, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	Assistant Professor Humanities/Spanish	\$65,500.00
Laura Bayless, Ph.D. Effective: 7/2/17	Vice President of Student Affairs President's Office	\$155,000.00
Lyndsey Benharris, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Education/Early Childhood	\$64,500.00
Becky Copper-Glenz, Ph.D. Effective: 7/2/17	Dean of Graduate & Continuing Education Academic Affairs	\$125,000.00
Karen DeAngelis, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Education-Special/Elementary Education	\$67,000.00
Laurie Link, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Education/Elementary Education	\$75,000.00
Yvonne Malcolm, MBA Effective: 4/9/17	Comptroller Finance and Administration	\$116,000.00
John Schaumlöffel, Ph.D. Effective: 7/2/17	Dean of Health & Natural Sciences Academic Affairs	\$142,000.00

Eric Williams, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Biology/Chemistry	\$65,000.00
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Mark Williams, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Behavioral Sciences	\$60,000.00
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Resignation

Dena Reuben, BA Effective: 4/28/17	Staff Assistant International Education	\$53,190.02
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Retirement

Lawrence Guth, Ph.D. Effective: 8/31/17	Associate Professor Earth and Geographic Sciences	\$88,822.30
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Peter Hogan, Ph.D. Effective: 8/25/17	Professor Psychological Science	\$114,555.05
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Stephen Taylor, Ph.D. Effective: 5/31/17	Professor Computer Science	\$105,783.40
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Joseph Turner, BS Effective: 7/19/17	Director Information Technology	\$134,653.62
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Change in Supervisor/Department

Kelly Norris, MBA Effective: 4/16/17	Director of Marketing From: GCE To: President's Office	\$73,347.05
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Salary Adjustment

Karen Barrows, MS Effective: 4/9/17	Director of Student Accounts Student Accounts	From: \$78,683.27 To: \$84,000.00
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Promotion

Patricia Arend, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	From: Assistant Professor To: Associate Professor Behavioral Sciences	From: \$64,304.63 To: \$68,507.63
Bruce Duncan, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	From: Associate Professor To: Professor Earth & Geographic Sciences	From: \$74,202.95 To: \$78,891.95
Steven Edwards, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	From: Assistant Professor To: Associate Professor English Studies	From: \$65,738.34 To: \$69,941.34
Laura Garofoli, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	From: Associate Professor To: Professor Psychological Science	From: \$73,534.39 To: \$78,223.39
Beverley Hollingsworth, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	From: Associate Professor To: Professor Business Administration	From: \$81,798.50 To: \$86,487.50
Jane Huang, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	From: Associate Professor To: Professor Earth & Geographic Sciences	From: \$73,394.61 To: \$78,083.61
Kay Kim, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	From: Associate Professor To: Professor Business Administration	From: \$86,595.25 To: \$91,284.25
Megan Krell, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	From: Assistant Professor To: Associate Professor Behavioral Sciences	From: \$66,478.05 To: \$70,681.05
Erin Rehrig, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	From: Assistant Professor To: Associate Professor Biology/Chemistry	From: \$70,786.82 To: \$74,989.82
Sean Rollins, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	From: Assistant Professor To: Associate Professor Biology/Chemistry	From: \$65,463.28 To: \$69,666.28

Renee Scapparone, D.B.A.
Effective: 9/1/17
From: Assistant Professor
To: Associate Professor
Business Administration
From: \$71,910.95
To: \$73,113.95

Hildur Schilling, Ph.D.
Effective: 9/1/17
From: Associate Professor
To: Professor
Psychological Science
From: \$74,587.83
To: \$79,276.83

Peter Staab, Ph.D.
Effective: 9/1/17
From: Associate Professor
To: Professor
Mathematics
From: \$76,559.78
To: \$81,248.78

David Svolba, Ph.D.
Effective: 9/1/17
From: Assistant Professor
To: Associate Professor
Humanities
From: \$66,478.05
To: \$70,681.05

Samuel Tobin, Ph.D.
Effective: 9/1/17
From: Assistant Professor
To: Associate Professor
Communications Media
From: \$66,478.05
To: \$70,681.05

Amy Wehe, Ph.D.
Effective: 9/1/17
From: Associate Professor
To: Professor
Mathematics
From: \$72,632.00
To: \$77,321.00

Tenure with Promotion

Christopher Adams, Ph.D.
Effective: 9/1/17
From: Assistant Professor
To: Associate Professor
Psychological Science
From: \$72,633.43
To: \$76,836.43

Marcel Beausoleil, Ph.D.
Effective: 9/1/17
From: Assistant Professor
To: Associate Professor
Behavioral Science
From: \$75,095.58
To: \$79,298.58

Audrey Pereira, Ph.D.
Effective: 9/1/17
From: Assistant Professor
To: Associate Professor
Business Administration
From: \$86,133.49
To: \$90,440.16

Kisha Tracy, Ph.D.
Effective: 9/1/17
From: Assistant Professor
To: Associate Professor
English Studies
From: \$66,900.47
To: \$71,103.47

Heather Urbanski, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	From: Assistant Professor To: Associate Professor English Studies	From: \$63,259.65 To: \$67,462.65
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Tenure

Yasser Derwiche Djazaerly, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	Associate Professor Humanities	\$74,447.83
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Megan Krell, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	Associate Professor Behavioral Science	\$70,681.05
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John Ludlam, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	Assistant Professor Biology/Chemistry	\$75,063.37
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Erin Rehrig, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	Associate Professor Biology/Chemistry	\$74,989.82
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Jason Talanian, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	Associate Professor Exercise & Sports Science	\$72,601.22
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Samuel Tobin, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17	Associate Professor Communications Media	\$70,681.05
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3rd Year Reappointments

Soumitra Basu, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Industrial Technology	\$74,161.93
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Catherine Buell, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Mathematics	\$64,346.38
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Danette Day, Ed.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Education	\$68,708.84
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Steven Fiedler, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Biology/Chemistry	\$67,618.23
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Kyle Moody, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Communications Media	\$61,631.81
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Les Nelkin, MA Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Communications Media	\$64,346.38
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Billy Samulak, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Biology/Chemistry	\$67,618.23
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Ricky Sethi, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Computer Science	\$81,796.24
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Joseph Wachtel, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Economics, History & Political Sciences	\$61,114.49
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4th Year Reappointments

Jonathan Amakawa, MA Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Communications Media	\$67,747.33
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DeMisty Bellinger-Delfeld, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor English Studies	\$60,646.25
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Andrew Chan, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Business Administration	\$76,780.31
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William Cortezia, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Education	\$64,924.52
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Asher Jackson, MLS Effective: 9/1/17 End: 8/31/18	Assistant Librarian Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library	\$54,898.76
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Abdel Mustafa, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Industrial Technology	\$79,038.55
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Reid Parsons, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Earth & Geographic Sciences	\$64,924.52
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Daniel Welsh, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Biology/Chemistry	\$64,359.96
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5th Year Reappointments

Patricia Arend, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Associate Professor Behavioral Sciences	\$68,507.63
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Steven Edwards, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Associate Professor English Studies	\$69,941.34
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Lisa Grimm, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Biology/Chemistry	\$65,463.28
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David Heikkinen, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Exercise & Sports Science	\$63,853.81
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Katherine Jewell, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Economics, History & Political Science	\$64,766.76
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Mathangi Krishnamurthy, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Biology/Chemistry	\$73,554.06
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Denise LaFrance, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Education	\$69,735.10
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Monica Maldari, Ed.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Exercise & Sports Science	\$66,872.23
Kevin McCarthy, MFA Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor Communications Media	\$64,878.79
Joann Nichols, Ed.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Associate Professor Education	\$70,324.32
Sean Rollins, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Associate Professor Biology/Chemistry	\$69,666.28
Renee Scapparone, D.B.A. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Associate Professor Business Administration	\$76,113.95
David Svolba, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Associate Professor Humanities	\$70,681.05
Elisabet Takehana, Ph.D. Effective: 9/1/17 End: 5/31/18	Assistant Professor English Studies	\$61,560.21



Founded in 1885

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES, INC.
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

April 11, 2017

Dr. Richard S. Lapidus
President
Fitchburg State University
160 Pearl Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Dear President Lapidus:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on March 3, 2017, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education considered the interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Fitchburg State University and voted to take the following action:

that the interim report submitted by Fitchburg State University be accepted;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Spring 2022 be confirmed;

that, in addition to the information included in all self-studies, the self-study prepared in advance of the Spring 2022 evaluation give emphasis to the institution's continued success in implementing and assessing its strategic plan and assuring the effective integration of strategic planning, operational planning, and budgeting.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The interim report submitted by Fitchburg State University was accepted because it responded to the concerns raised by the Commission in its letters of November 19, 2012 and May 14, 2014, and addressed each of the nine standards, including a reflective essay for Standard 8: *Educational Effectiveness* on student learning and success.

The Commission commends Fitchburg State University (FSU) for submitting a comprehensive interim report that documents the substantial progress FSU has made over the last five years. The report includes evidence that FSU has increased faculty support through course release time and microgrants to support scholarship and teaching innovation; increased the diversity of its student body from 9.73% in 2009 to 22.69% in 2014; completed several capital improvements, notable of which are the Antonucci Science Complex and the Hammond Campus Center and Library; and accomplished a number of academic initiatives, including the creation of a new Psychological Science

DAVID P. ANGEL, Chair (2018)
Clark University

DAVID QUIGLEY, Vice Chair (2018)
Boston College

KASSANDRA S. ARDINGER (2017)
Trustee Member, Concord, NH

THOMAS S. EDWARDS (2017)
Thomas College

THOMAS CHRISTOPHER GREENE (2017)
Vermont College of Fine Arts

MARY ELLEN JUKOSKI (2017)
Three Rivers Community College

PETER J. LANGER (2017)
University of Massachusetts Boston

DAVID L. LEVINSON (2017)
Norwalk Community College

PATRICIA MAGUIRE MESERVEY (2017)
Salem State University

G. TIMOTHY BOWMAN (2018)
Harvard University

THOMAS L. G. DWYER (2018)
Johnson & Wales University

JOHN F. GABRANSKI (2018)
Haydenville, MA

CATHRAEL KAZIN (2018)
Southern New Hampshire University

KAREN L. MUNCASTER (2018)
Brandeis University

CHRISTINE ORTIZ (2018)
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

JON S. OXMAN (2018)
Auburn, ME

JACQUELINE D. PETERSON (2018)
College of the Holy Cross

ROBERT L. PURA (2018)
Greenfield Community College

ABDALLAH A. SFEIR (2018)
Lebanese American University

REV. BRIAN J. SHANLEY, O.P. (2018)
Providence College

HARRY EMMANUEL DUMAY (2019)
Saint Anselm College

JEFFREY R. GODLEY (2019)
Groton, CT

STEPHEN JOHN HODGES (2019)
Hult International Business School

COLEEN C. PANTALONE (2019)
Northeastern University

MARIKO SILVER (2019)
Bennington College

GEORGE W. TETLER (2019)
Worcester, MA

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department and the implementation of a five-year review cycle for graduate programs to align with the undergraduate program review cycle. The University has also expanded the number of online and hybrid courses and programs offered, and transitioned graduate-level Special Education degree programs to an online/hybrid format. We are further heartened to learn that the University has enhanced its existing resources for faculty and students to include 24/7 technical support, online access to library resources and support services and online tutorials, and “a host of other online services for students.” In addition, we are gratified to note the participatory strategic planning process that started in 2013 with seven working groups, each with a faculty chair, and resulted in the *2015-2020 Strategic Plan* that was approved by the Board in April 2015. We understand, however, that implementation of the plan was delayed due to a turnover in leadership that began with the inauguration of a new president in July 2015. Over the last two years, FSU has also hired a new Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs and Associate Vice President, and the University’s administration was reorganized to include a structure of six deans – four of which are new positions. We understand a national search is currently underway with a goal to fill three of the dean positions by July 2017.

The Commission also commends Fitchburg State University for its thoughtful and informative reflective essay that details the many ways in which the University has strengthened its ability to gather and analyze data to better understand student learning and achievement, and to use assessment results to inform decision-making, planning, and resource allocation. The recent creation of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, staffed with a Director of Assessment and a Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research, is evidence of FSU’s commitment to student success. We are particularly pleased to learn that the University’s “evidence-based” approach to assessment has played a “vital role” in academic program revisions, general education curriculum review, and the development of its *2015-2020 Strategic Plan* that “has student success at its core.” To achieve the student success goals outlined in its plan, FSU has implemented a number of initiatives, including: developmental math revisions; freshmen pre-enrollment; DegreeWorks; Guided Pathways to Success in STEM; the Student Success Collaborative; creation of a Student Success Taskforce; and the Reimagining the First Year project. We are further heartened to learn that FSU’s knowledge and understanding of “the method and substance of student learning” has greatly increased due, in part, to the experience the University has gained through programmatic accreditation (e.g. ABET and CCNE), and FSU is now allocating resources and “vigorously” applying lessons learned to shape strategies aimed at improving student retention and graduation rates across the institution. According to the report, overall retention rates increased from 73% in 2011 to 75% in 2015, with a high of 78% in 2013. An increase in six-year IPEDs undergraduate graduation rates from 47% in 2011 to 51% in 2015 demonstrates that the institution’s student success initiatives are taking hold, and an increase in the graduation rate for students of color from 33% in 2011 to 51% in 2015 is especially commendable. We also appreciate FSU’s candid acknowledgement that the University “will need to develop clear strategies to meet the strategic plan’s [graduation] goal of a 5% increase.”

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Spring 2022 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years. The item the Commission asks to be given special emphasis within the self-study prepared for the comprehensive evaluation is a matter related to our standards on *Planning and Evaluation* and *Institutional Resources*.

We recognize that Fitchburg State University delayed the implementation of its *2015-2020 Strategic Plan* due, in part, to changes in the executive leadership team. We also understand from the report that the University decided to curtail spending on strategic initiatives because of its existing structural deficit and the uncertainty regarding the state’s annual allocation. While, as mentioned above, we are gratified that FSU has made substantial progress in its strategic planning and budgeting efforts, we also seek assurance, through the self-study submitted in

advance of the Spring 2022 comprehensive visit, that the University is implementing and assessing its strategic plan and assuring the effective integration of strategic planning, operational planning, and budgeting as evidence that “[t]he institution has a demonstrable record of success in implementing the results of its planning” (2.5). Our standards on *Planning and Evaluation* and *Institutional Resources* are also relevant here:

Planning and evaluation are systematic, comprehensive, broad-based, integrated, and appropriate to the institution. They involve the participation of individuals and groups responsible for the achievement of institutional purposes and include external perspectives. Results of planning and evaluation are regularly communicated to appropriate institutional constituencies. The institution allocates sufficient resources for its planning and evaluation efforts (2.1).

The institution plans beyond a short-term horizon, including strategic planning that involves realistic analyses of internal and external opportunities and constraints. The results of strategic planning are implemented in all units of the institution through financial, academic, enrollment, and other supporting plans (2.3).

The institution’s financial planning, including contingency planning, is integrated with overall planning and evaluation processes. The institution demonstrates its ability to analyze its financial condition and understand the opportunities and constraints that will influence its financial condition and acts accordingly. It reallocates resources as necessary to achieve its purposes and objectives. The institution implements a realistic plan for addressing issues raised by the existence of any operating deficit (7.14).

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by Fitchburg State University and hopes its preparation has contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation in the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education in New England.

You are encouraged to share this letter with all of the institution’s constituencies. It is Commission policy to inform the chairperson of the institution’s governing board of action on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Martin F. Connors, Jr. The institution is free to release information about the report and the Commission’s action to others, in accordance with the enclosed policy on Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions.

If you have any questions about the Commission’s action, please contact Barbara Brittingham, President of the Commission.

Sincerely,



David P. Angel

DPA/jm

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Martin F. Connors, Jr.