

Fitchburg State University Today

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Winter Commencement ceremony this Friday

We will celebrate our 123rd [commencement](#) exercises, winter ceremony at **6:30 p.m. Friday** at the Athletics and Recreation Center.

President Lapidus will deliver the main address, and the additional speakers will include Valedictorian Nicholas Powell (graduating with a degree in English Studies) and Graduate Student Leadership Award recipient Eman Warraich-Gibson, who is completing an MBA.



We are anticipating a record-setting crowd at the ceremony, so satellite viewing stations will be set up in Hammond Hall where the event will be live-streamed and refreshments will be served.

[Learn more](#)

Lt. Gov. Polito announces downtown improvements at ideaLab

The university's investment in the Main Street theater block was celebrated when Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito came to Fitchburg to announce a \$3 million MassWorks infrastructure grant that will, among other improvements, convert Main Street and Boulder Drive into two-way roads.

The announcement was made in the ideaLab at the theater block.

President Lapidus welcomed Lt. Gov. Polito and local leaders including Mayor Stephen DiNatale, State Sen. Dean Tran and State Rep. Stephan Hay to present the project.



The conversion of the traffic pattern is designed to increase traffic safety and circulation, and creating a walkable, bikeable business district.

[Learn more](#)

Student journalists explore the opioid epidemic in new series

A new collaborative project between the university and the *Sentinel & Enterprise* newspaper launched this weekend, exploring the regional impact of the opioid epidemic.

The project features work by student journalists studying with **Professor Wafa Unus** (English Studies).

The first article in the series is a profile of licensed social worker Sarah Pinkerton. Read it [here](#).



New pact with MWCC creates pathways for business students

Students in Mount Wachusett Community College's associate degree program in business administration will be guaranteed admission to our own bachelor's program in business under a new agreement signed by the presidents of the two institutions.

"We both agree that regionalization is important," President Lapidus said. "The smoother we can make the transition for our students, the better it is for them. Providing clear pathways makes sense."



"This region is really on the cusp of a renaissance in local business," Mount Wachusett Community College President James Vander Hooven said. "We need to have opportunities for budding entrepreneurs to have that educational component."

[Learn more](#)

Strategic planning process moving forward

Members of the campus community gathered last week to reflect on the university's accomplishments since its last [strategic plan](#) and to discuss the issues that are driving the development of the [next iteration](#).

The steering committee for the upcoming strategic plan is in place, and subcommittees have been formed exploring the five

themes identified by the campus this spring. They include:

1. Excellent and distinctive academic and co-curricular programming that leads to student success
2. Our campus community (people, climate and culture)
3. Campus identity (branding, differentiation, enrollment management, and student support services)
4. Business practices (strong financials, transparent practices, and efficient infrastructure)
5. An anchor institution and steward of place (public and private partnerships and the development of an educational ecosystem)



The committees are charged with engaging the campus community in generating critical input and recommendations related to each theme, with a goal of producing white papers that summarize findings and recommendations by the end of January.

[Learn more](#)

Six Falcons among MASCAC's sportsmanship honorees

The 2019 Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference (MASCAC) Fall Sportsmanship Teams were recently announced by the league office as 56 MASCAC student-athletes were recognized.



Among those honored for their outstanding sportsmanship were six Fitchburg State student-athletes: junior Timothy Sheehy (Wakefield, R.I.) (men's cross

country), senior Vera Ziegler (Stuttgart, Germany) (women's cross country), junior Drew Ridenour (Mashpee, Mass.) (football), junior McKenzie Tenney (Orange, Mass.) (women's soccer), junior Sean Nugent (Dracut, Mass.) (men's soccer) and senior Jaquelyn Manyak (Bolton, Mass.) (women's volleyball).

The MASCAC Sportsmanship Team recognizes student-athletes who display outstanding sportsmanship on and off the field. As an important piece of the MASCAC and NCAA philosophy, the representatives on the team display what it means to have good sportsmanship in the MASCAC.

[Learn more](#)

CenterStage and cultural events

Coming in February: B.B. King Blues Band performs Feb. 8

[Fitchburg State](#)

[CenterStage](#) welcomes

The B.B. King Blues band featuring Michael Lee and Claudette King

at **8 p.m. Saturday,**

Feb. 8 in Weston

Auditorium. For over half a century, B.B. King and B.B. King's Band defined

the blues to the world, averaging over 250 sold out concerts per year, with classics like "The Thrill Is Gone," "Every Day I Have The Blues," "How Blues Can You Get," and "Why I Sing The Blues." Members of the original band have gotten together to continue touring in the remembrance of B.B. King, now joined by Michael Lee, a contestant from the 2018 season of *The Voice* on NBC.



Tickets are \$28 for adults; \$25 for alumni and seniors; and \$5 for students. Learn more and buy tickets [online](#).

In the Galleries

The sculpture of artist [Pamela Blum](#) will be featured as part of the [CenterStage](#) arts and culture series this fall. "Dolls & Other Things" will be on display in the Hammond Hall Art Gallery through **Friday, Dec. 27**.

At the Conlon Hall Media Wall, "The Paper Hat Game" by Torry Bend is on display through December.

Faculty Notes

Professor Michael Greenwood (Business Administration) is featured in a public video promoting the [Wachusett Business Incubator](#), where he is a founding board member. Watch the video [here](#).

Newsletter will return in January

This is the final edition of Fitchburg State University Today for the calendar year. The newsletter will return with the start of the spring semester. Keep up to date with campus events in the meantime by visiting fitchburgstate.edu/news.

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