

Fitchburg State University Today

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Commencement honorees announced

The university will celebrate its [118th Commencement Exercises](#) this week, and among the honorees to be recognized are several members of the Fitchburg State faculty.

Contributions to the Graduate Program Award



Anne M. Howard

Anne M. Howard will be presented the Contributions to the Graduate Program Award at the [Graduate Commencement](#) on Thursday, May 15 at 6:30 p.m. in the Athletics and Recreation Center.

Howard began her career at Fitchburg State University in 1992, when she was appointed assistant professor in the Special Education Department. She arrived here with one goal in mind: to prepare teachers help individuals with severe disabilities exceed

the limitations placed on them by society and help them thrive both academically and as individuals.

Her commitment to this cause did not go unnoticed. In 1995, she was named Graduate Chair of the Special Education Graduate Programs in Severe Disabilities and Guided Studies, a title she still holds today.

In 1997, Howard was promoted to associate professor and was able to further her involvement with program development, teaching, advising, and supervising students.

In 2000, she took a sabbatical to learn about the new laws and advances in assistive technology. When she returned, she was able to make recommendations on how to further integrate this technology into the curriculum and teaching practices employed within the Special Education Department.

Howard was promoted to professor in 2001 and in 2002 also

assumed the position of director of the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence, which she held for two years. Through her dedication and hard work the center grew significantly and is now thriving as the Center for Teaching and Learning.

In 2003, Howard was coordinator for the Massachusetts Department of Education Paraprofessional Training Institute and in 2005 was named faculty coordinator of the TK-20 assessment project for the Fitchburg State Education Unit.

She was named chair of the Education Department Undergraduate Curriculum Committee in 2008 and served in that position for two years. She is currently co-director for the Behavior Analyst Certificate program, a post she assumed in 2010. Howard has been a member of the departmental Graduate Curriculum Committee throughout her tenure at Fitchburg State.

In 2013, Howard was recognized for her outstanding contributions to the Education Unit National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) process for compiling the NCATE reports for the undergraduate program in severe special education as well as its counterpart at the graduate level.

Howard received a bachelor's degree in physical therapy from the University of Connecticut in 1977. She went on to complete a master's degree in education focusing on special education and severe special needs from Boston College in 1981, and finished her doctorate program in social policy with a concentration in developmental disabilities at Brandeis University in 1990.

Faculty awards to be presented at Undergraduate Commencement

The [Undergraduate Commencement](#) exercises will include the presentation of the Vincent J. Mara Award for Excellence in College Teaching and the Faculty Award for Research to **Dr. Sean C. Goodlett** and the Faculty Award for Research and Scholarship to **Dr. Benjamin Railton**.

Mara Award: Dr. Sean C. Goodlett



Goodlett, professor of European history and chairman of the university's Economics, History and Political Science Department, has taught at Fitchburg State University since 2001. For him, teaching is a passion that affords him the privilege of interacting with and mentoring students.

Goodlett's students have saluted his commitment to making history relevant and approachable. They note his willingness to offer individual attention, thereby helping them achieve their educational goals. He holds students to high standards without being unapproachable and challenges them to think critically. His guidance and tutelage have inspired many students to pursue advanced degrees and develop a love of learning.

Goodlett has worked to strengthen the teaching of liberal arts and sciences at Fitchburg State while also embracing the use of technology to enhance the classroom experience. He

Sean C. Goodlett has been a strong advocate for the teaching profession and for public higher education.

His area of specialty is the cultural and social history of print and the periodical press in early modern Europe, and he has a continuing interest in the history of philosophy.

Goodlett received his Ph.D. in early modern and modern European history from the University of Oregon in 2000. He completed two master's degrees, the first in British and American literature from Texas Tech University and the second, in the history of Britain and its empire, from the University of Oregon. He completed his bachelor's degree in history and classical studies from the University of Texas at Arlington.

At Fitchburg State he has served on numerous committees, including academic quality, and for more than three years was the faculty director of the Center for Teaching and Learning. He also served four years as president of the faculty and librarians.

The Dr. Vincent J. Mara Award for Excellence in Teaching was established in 1989 to honor the former president of the university. All full-time and tenured Fitchburg State faculty are eligible to receive the \$3,000 award and citation. The award is presented by the Fitchburg State University Alumni Association and the honoree is selected by a jury including a member of the Mara family, a representative from the Student Government Association and all past Mara Award recipients who are still teaching at Fitchburg State.

Faculty Award for Research and Scholarship: Dr. Benjamin Railton



Benjamin Railton

Railton, associate professor in the English Studies Department, has taught at Fitchburg State University since 2005.

He is a prolific scholar who has won acclaim for contributions to the field of American Studies and American literature. His first published book since arriving at Fitchburg State was *Contesting the Past, Reconstructing the Nation: American Literature and Culture in the Gilded Age, 1876-1893* (University of Alabama Press, 2007), which investigates how Americans constructed their identities during the post-Civil War age of industrial and cultural change. Praised for its in-depth analysis and close readings, the volume was lauded by one reviewer as an "insightful and finely researched work" that helped to "illuminate the complexity of Gilded Age culture."

His next book, *Redefining American Identity; from Cabeza de Vaca to Barack Obama* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), probed the ways in which our national identity is perpetually fashioned and refashioned. The work was praised for an approach that was "fresh and compelling," in the words of one reviewer, while another noted that, "Sometimes defining a topic is itself a significant intellectual accomplishment, and that's what it is here. Railton's definition will help us understand where we live."

Railton's third book, *The Chinese Exclusion Act: What it Can Teach Us About America* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), uses that legislation from 1882 as a means to explore at two critical strands in American studies: policy conversations on immigration, and social and educational conversations on diversity and multicultural studies. The volume was lauded for "insights about what we can learn from the Chinese Exclusion Act," and how it serves as a "pivoting fulcrum to look forward and backward in our immigrant history."

Railton received his Ph.D. in American literature from Temple University and his bachelor's degree in history and literature from Harvard University. His research interests include American historical literature, American ethnic literature, American studies, American identity, public

scholarship, the Gilded Age, modernism, and contemporary literature.

He writes the daily [American Studies](#) blog and has created a new website, the [Hall of American Inspiration](#) where members of the public are encouraged to nominate figures for inclusion.

Student awards to be presented at commencement

Student awards will also be presented at this week's commencement exercises. At the [Graduate Commencement](#) on Thursday, May 15, the Graduate Student Leadership Award will be presented to Nathan Rand.

Nathan Rand teaches his students at Weymouth High School about the importance of community service and civic engagement, and he speaks from global experience.

Rand graduated with honors from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1996 after finishing his college career on exchange at the Albert Ludwigs University in Freiburg, Germany. He served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Samoa in the village-based development program after college, and joined the Weymouth Public Schools system as a social studies teacher in 2003. He started teaching at Weymouth High in 2005, where he is the faculty adviser for the junior class, the Amnesty International Club, and the WHS Freepress student news website. He also taught during summer programs in Wuxi in the Jiangsu Province of China and in Ulan Bataar, Mongolia.



Nathan Rand

As an educator he has led a team of more than 150 Weymouth High Students for Project Bread's Walk for Hunger, raised funds through the Amnesty International Club for organizations including UNICEF, Save Darfur and Nothing But Nets. He also organized dances at the high school that raised funds for Haitian earthquake relief.

For his studies, Rand's capstone research project included investigating the need for civic education to promote civic engagement among high school students. The results of this study showed significant improvement in the civic knowledge of students on a U.S. citizenship test as compared to students who were not enrolled in classes that included a civic component.

The second part of the project revolved around the idea that community service would also prove to increase the civic knowledge of high school students. The research shows that although young people are less engaged than previous generations when measured by voting statistics, they are far more engaged in community service than ever before. Toward that end, he helped create the Volunteers in Practice (VIP) Program to showcase the community service achievements of students at Weymouth High. That effort led to collaboration with the New England Patriots that brought players and cheerleaders to the school, and has since expanded into a town wide project.

Rand completed his Master of Education in Curriculum and Teaching in January through the Catherine Leahy Brine partnership with Fitchburg State University.

Rand lives in East Bridgewater with his wife and baby boy.

At the [Undergraduate Commencement](#) on Saturday, May 17, the Robert V. and Jeanne S. Antonucci Student Leadership Award will be presented to Joseph P. Flanagan.

Joseph P. Flanagan has been an outstanding student leader and mentor during his career at Fitchburg State. As an

orientation leader for two years, and then in his service as an orientation leader staff assistant overseeing others, he helped thousands of fellow students become acclimated to university life. He has also been an ambassador for the university in his role as building manager at the Hammond Hall campus center, holding the highest student position in the building, taking on the responsibilities of student safety and efficiency of operations.

He has also used his skills and effort to foster leadership skills in his fellow students. As an active member of the university's Leadership Program, he has helped facilitate sessions where his peers enhance their self-image, build communication and teamwork skills, and learn time and stress management techniques that will benefit them as individuals and citizens. Flanagan has three times served on the team that developed the annual Emerging Leaders Retreat, creating and executing a life-changing weekend experience for up and coming Fitchburg State leaders. He was also instrumental in the process of creating a local chapter of the National Society of Leadership and Success, serving as its president for the first year.



Joseph P. Flanagan

Flanagan also served as president of the Dance Club in 2013-14, leading the biggest club on the Fitchburg State campus. As an active member of the club, he danced in many routines at each of the group's major performances and also taught several classes. His work built on the successful club's foundation to bring the shows to new heights this year, helping raise thousands of dollars for charity. Flanagan's efforts helped boost the club's profile by bringing members to perform at other campus events. He also helped launch the successful "Dancing with the Staff" show that paired students and Fitchburg State employees for a special evening performance. The event is expected to turn into an annual event.

An English Studies major with a concentration in literature and a minor in middle school education, Flanagan has worked as a writer's associate for Dr. Judith Budz, assisting her in lectures and working with students on their writing for a course called The Short Story. He plans to further his studies this fall in the Student Development in Higher Education graduate program at the University of Maine. He will pursue his master's degree while continuing to foster his passion for supporting student leaders.

Minton spotlighted as one of 29 Who Shine



The 29 Who Shine in public higher education in 2014 included Fitchburg State student Sarah Minton, pictured in the front row, center.

Sarah Minton, graduating this Saturday with a degree in nursing, was among the students recognized last week by the state Department of Higher Education at the annual "29 Who Shine" celebration at the Statehouse. The award honors civic and academic achievement.

"These students represent the very best our public colleges and universities have to offer," said Governor Deval Patrick. "On top of being outstanding students these young people have shown what it means to give back to their communities in a meaningful way. I congratulate each of these award recipients and I eagerly look forward to what they decide to do next."

"The 29 Who Shine are stars of our public higher education system," said Secretary of Education Matthew Malone. "I'm inspired by how these graduates are volunteering their time, whether on campus or in their local cities and towns, while also earning great grades and in many cases, working full time to support their families. These are the types of people you want as your neighbors. I'm very proud of each of them."

Minton has been an engaged and passionate student leader since the earliest days of her career at Fitchburg State University. Since the spring of her first year, Minton has been president of the class of 2014, and has used her leadership position and authority to make a difference on campus and in the wider community. She started the Fitchburg Anti-Violence Education Club, building on the university's own efforts to combat issues of dating violence and sexual assault, and organized an ongoing campaign to make Fitchburg State a smoke-free campus. Minton's advocacy has gone beyond the classroom, as a leader on several Alternative Spring Break journeys to build houses for Habitat for Humanity and advocating for support of public higher education at the Statehouse. A future nurse, Minton has been the student representative to the university's Nursing Curriculum Committee since the fall of 2013. Also last fall, Minton expanded upon her clinical rotations as a diabetic educator and school nurse to create a day-long health fair for underserved populations in the city of Gardner. This work, which incorporated the talents of her fellow student nurses, demonstrates Minton's embodiment of Fitchburg State's values of community engagement and public service.

The ceremony also include the acknowledgement of Professor Allison Shields of the university's nursing faculty.

"When I first met Professor Shields, I knew that she was going to be someone that I looked up to, as a nurse, leader and role model," Minton said. "Her positivity, enthusiasm and passion for nursing encouraged me to make a difference, advocate for my ideas and become a leader in the field of nursing."

Oral history of Fitchburg State to be featured at "coffeehouse" May 15



Experience the history of Fitchburg State University through the memories of former students this

Thursday, May 15, at 3:30 p.m. in Hammond Hall room 314.

Students in Professor Laura Baker's oral history class worked to record the stories of several Fitchburg State alumni who witnessed the transformation of student culture on campus in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The campus community is invited to join in this "coffeehouse" gathering to celebrate these individuals' stories and the university's rich history. Several of the alumni will be on hand to discuss the project.

The coffee house is sponsored by the Department of Economics, History and Political Science.

Business students shine at conference

Several Fitchburg State seniors attended the 20th annual Massachusetts Statewide Undergraduate Research Conference on April 25, showing their talents alongside



Faculty member Renee Scapparone, left, and senior Daniel LaFond at their UMass presentation.

more than 1,000 presentations from 22 colleges and universities.

Among them was senior Daniel Lafond, who gave an oral presentation on economic development research, which explores "the economic rebirth of downtown Fitchburg." The project is a collaborative effort between the university and the city, looking at providing affordable housing for Fitchburg State students that incorporates the preservation of historic mills and the use of hydropower from a local reservoir.

LaFond has been mentored in his research by faculty member Renee Scapparone. The pair recently met with Fitchburg Mayor Lisa Wong and Economic Development Director Jerry Beck to discuss the feasibility and implementation of the project.

Education honor society inductees impress guest speaker



The latest class of inductees at the [Kappa Delta Pi](#) international honor society in education was Carrie Stack, M.Ed., certified life coach, author and trainer, and the founder of the [Say Yes Institute](#).

Stack posted about the warm reception she received on the institute's [Facebook page](#).

"What an incredible group of educators we have getting ready to step up and take over," she wrote. "So, in case you were worried about your children, you don't need to e. They've got this. They've SO got this!"

Faculty Notes

Eric Budd (Economics, History and Political Science) served as the external reviewer for the Political Science Department at Salem State's program review. He also served as a panelist for the United Way of Central Massachusetts Youth Ventures reviewing proposals from high school students. One of the proposals was to create a Model UN team at Ayer-Shirley High School.

James Colbert, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, (Humanities) gave a paper on "The Emotions in St. Augustine" in April at the Sewanee Medieval Conference, held at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn.

Michael Hoberman (English Studies) was awarded a Tikvah Institute in Jewish Thought Summer Fellowship for this coming July/August, in New York City. He also recently had an article accepted for publication in the journal *American Jewish History*, which will appear in the publication's Fall 2014 edition..

Newsletter will return this fall

This issue of Fitchburg State University Today marks the final edition of the newsletter for the academic year. The newsletter will return this fall.

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