

## Fitchburg State University Today

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### Celebrating the Class of 2020

This week we celebrate the achievements of the Class of 2020 at our first-ever virtual [commencement](#) ceremonies.

While the proceedings may look a little different from the typical ceremony, the Commencement Committee has overseen the creation of a joyful and engaging celebration worthy of these remarkable graduates.

The university will have a virtual ceremony for the **May 2020** graduates at [6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 17](#), and a virtual ceremony for the **December 2020** graduates at [6:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 18](#).

The graduates' names will be shared in individual virtual ceremonies according to the university's academic schools:

- School of Arts and Sciences
- School of Business and Technology
- School of Education
- School of Health and Natural Sciences

[Commencement Details](#)

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### Commencement honorees announced

This week's [virtual commencement](#) ceremonies will include remarks from the corresponding undergraduate valedictorians from May and December, as well as the recipients of the Graduate Student Leadership Award for each semester.

For the May 2020 ceremony, Valedictorian **Stanley L. Choruzek** (Computer Information Systems) of Lancaster (pictured at top left) will deliver remarks, as will Graduate Student Leadership Award recipient





**Paul A. Thibodeau** (Master of Science in Counseling) of Royalston (pictured at top right).

For the December 2020 ceremony, Valedictorian **Caroline Anderson** (Environmental and Earth Science) of Lunenburg (pictured at bottom left) will deliver remarks, as will Graduate Student Leadership Award recipient **Michelle A. Tilden** (Master of Education in Occupational Education) of West Wareham (pictured at bottom right).

[Learn more](#)

## Pacts with Husson University accelerate degrees for students

Students at Fitchburg State can now take advantage of new collaborations with Husson University in Maine that will allow them to complete two degrees in less time.

They can complete their bachelor's degrees in [biology or chemistry](#) along with a Doctor of Pharmacy degree, or their bachelor's degree in [exercise and sports science](#) along with a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree, on an accelerated schedule. This will save students a full year of study.



"This collaboration underscores Fitchburg State's commitment to creating opportunities for students, laying achievable academic paths toward rewarding careers," President Lapidus said. "We are grateful for the collaboration with Husson to open these doors for our students."

[Learn more](#)

## Reminder: Please complete the Campus Climate surveys

The university wants to hear your voice. As part of Fitchburg State's commitment to fostering a welcoming community, where every student, faculty and staff member should be able to thrive in a tolerant environment that ensures all members have the opportunity to benefit fully from the institution's programs and activities, the Campus Climate Survey is now open.

All our community members are asked to complete the survey, whose results will help drive the university's ongoing efforts to address education justice and to be a student-ready campus.

Please select the appropriate link below to access the survey if you have not already completed it.

- Students: <http://survey.fitchburgstate.edu/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=llJnn21>
- Faculty & Librarians: <http://survey.fitchburgstate.edu/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=llJno21>
- Staff & Administrators: <http://survey.fitchburgstate.edu/TakeSurvey.aspx?>



## "Our Reckoning" nominated for Kennedy Center Theater awards

There's an old expression in the theater: the show must go on! That attitude fueled the Communications Media Department this fall, where even the challenges posed by the global pandemic couldn't extinguish the creative spark.

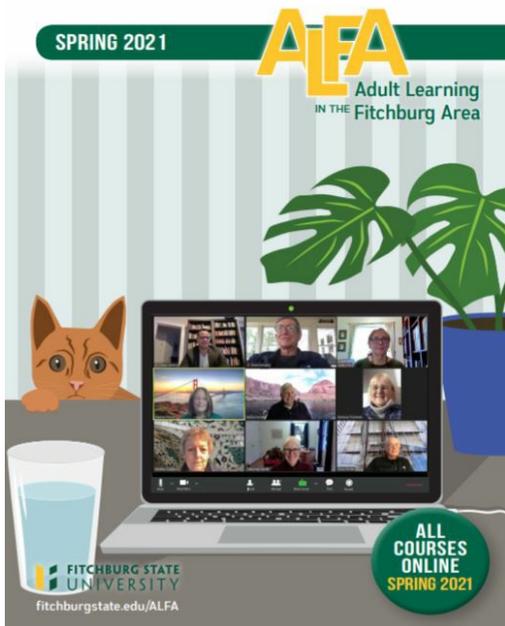
The result was "Our Reckoning," composed of a series of monologues about the pressing issues of the day, and presented virtually this fall. Now, numerous members of the cast and crew have been nominated for the prestigious [Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival](#) awards, including a special recognition to the student writers for their original work.

The full program was directed by **Professor Mary Vreeland** with technical direction from **Professor Cap Corduan**.

**Professor Kelly Morgan** said the videos will be augmented in the spring with new elements that could not be filmed this fall.

[Learn more](#)

## Registration opening Wednesday for Spring 2020 ALFA courses



Brush up on your conversational French or Spanish, learn about scientific principles that affect our daily lives, get tips on how to de-clutter your life or learn how to play the ukulele through Fitchburg State University's Adult Learning in the Fitchburg Area ([ALFA](#)) program.

Registration opens at **8:30 a.m. Wednesday** for ALFA's spring courses, which will be offered in remote format. Visitors may register online at [marketplace.fitchburgstate.edu/alfa](https://marketplace.fitchburgstate.edu/alfa). Most courses are just \$40 (and free for students over age 90).

ALFA is a lifelong learning institute that serves adult learners in Fitchburg and the surrounding communities. ALFA is sponsored by the School of Graduate, Online, and Continuing Education in collaboration with volunteer members of the community.

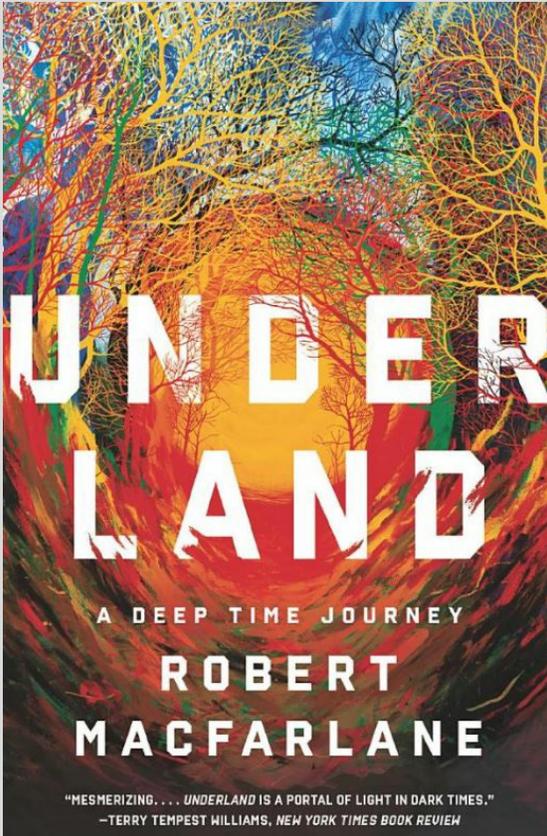
[Learn more](#)

## Watch the Lighting of the Campus

The university kicked off the holiday season with the annual Lighting of the Campus.

This year's celebration was a virtual event that nonetheless honored the many traditions that members of our community enjoy.

You can watch the event on our YouTube page by clicking [here](#).



## Community Read of *Underland* launches in spring

Fitchburg State's [Community Read](#) for 2020-21 is *Underland: A Deep Journey through Time* by Robert MacFarlane.

MacFarlane is the author of seven books of creative nonfiction that explore connections between landscape and the human heart.

In *Underland*, MacFarlane takes us through caverns and cisterns, root systems and glaciers, tombs and mines, opening our sense of wonder while also revealing the damage we have done and are doing to the heart and lungs of our planet. He weaves together poetry and geology, science and mythology, as he mines the earth and explores mysteries we usually assign to the stars. Praised by reviewers, this is a timely and urgent exploration of how humans understand and experience the terrestrial world.

The Community Read Committee hopes this text will inspire faculty across departments to participate in programming. The first event is a facilitated book discussion scheduled for **3:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 3.**

To receive a copy of *Underland*, please fill out [this form](#).

If you're looking for other ideas on how to incorporate this text into your curriculum, please contact the committee members or use [this form](#).

## Staff Notes

**Nathan Emery** (Student Development) received the David A. Ross New Professional Award from the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) Northeast at their recent regional conference.

Emery is coordinator of programs, clubs and organizations at Fitchburg State, where he joined the staff in August 2018. Prior to that, he completed his Master of Science in counselor education with a specialization in student development in higher education at Central Connecticut State University. At Central Connecticut State, Emery spent two years as a graduate intern in their Office of Student Activities and Leadership Development and their Office of Student Center Operations.

The award, named in honor of one of NACA Northeast's founders, recognizes an individual who has made significant contributions to and who demonstrates the potential and commitment for excellence in service to their member institutions and NACA Northeast.

In this most unusual year, Emery has worked hard to help clubs and organizations make the difficult transition to virtual recruiting and event-planning.

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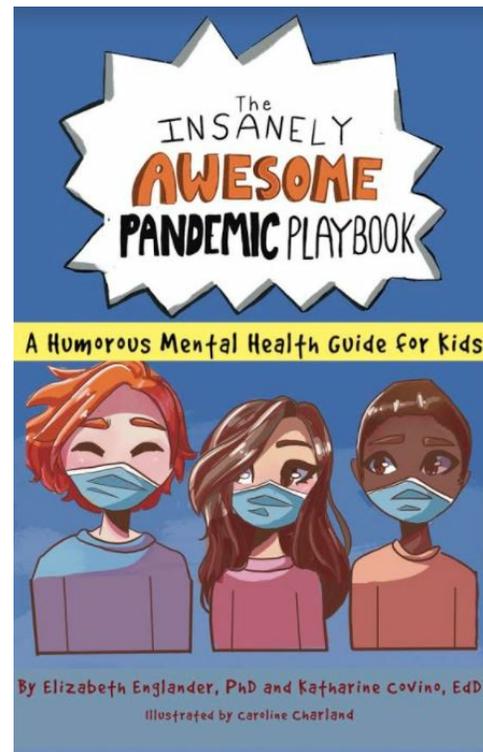
## Faculty Notes

Professor Katharine Covino-Poutasse (English Studies) will this month see the publication of a new book she has co-written, *The Insanely Awesome Pandemic Playbook: A Humorous Mental Health Guide for Kids*.

The book, co-written by Dr. Elizabeth Englander, is intended to use humor to help kids think about the issues they may be dealing with because of the pandemic. The volume, which will be available on Amazon this month, discusses technology use (and overuse), how to take a break from screens, strategies for focusing on schoolwork, ways of reflecting on feelings of anxiety, a recognition that others are feeling isolated and alone, and, most importantly, suggestions for steps to take to help kids feel better.

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Last week, the **Center for Faculty Scholarship** hosted a virtual book talk with faculty members discussing their recent volumes. Watch the program in its entirety [here](#).



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