



PRESIDENTIAL PROFILE





Thank you for your interest in Fitchburg State University's presidential search, and in learning more about this vital institution that has been changing the lives of students for nearly 130 years.

Our 12th president will build upon the legacy of Richard S. Lapidus, who has announced his intention to retire following the 2023-24 academic year. In his nine years leading Fitchburg State, he has prioritized student success, guided the creation and implementation of groundbreaking academic programs, led the expansion of online offerings and strengthened the ties between the university and the city in which it resides.

Since its founding in 1894, Fitchburg State has been a leader in the educational, cultural and civic life of the region. Its 58,000 alumni span the globe, as leaders in their disciplines and pillars of their communities. Following a long period of capital investment in the heart of the campus, recent growth at the institution has centered

on programmatic enhancements that will continue to distinguish Fitchburg State among the public and private institutions that comprise the robust higher education landscape of Massachusetts.

This national search begins with the conviction that Fitchburg State is poised to capitalize on continued growth and innovation in a changing landscape. While the institution has evolved over its long history, its core values endure, and the university will continue its progress with bold leadership and the cooperation of a committed and engaged campus community.

Our search process will continue to engage diverse constituencies of students, faculty, staff and community members to whom Fitchburg State University is so vital. Our goal is to identify a leader who can confidently embrace and promote all that lies at the heart of our endeavor, who is prepared to move us to higher levels, building upon a strong and proven foundation.

C. DEBORAH PHILLIPS, Chair, Board of Trustees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fitchburg State University seeks a forward-looking, engaging leader who is passionate about student success to serve as its 12th president.

A public comprehensive institution with a strong and proud tradition of excellence in teaching, scholarship, and public service, the university is situated on a 60-acre traditional New England campus in North Central Massachusetts, 40 miles west of Boston. Fitchburg State offers more than 50 undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the arts, humanities, sciences, social sciences, and professional fields to more than 6,500 students annually, including more than 3,000 graduate students, and is home to 198 full-time faculty and librarians. The president oversees an annual budget of \$120 million, which includes state funding, federal grants, and gifts from alumni and friends.

Founded as a teachers' college in 1894, Fitchburg State has developed into a highly-regarded university that blends liberal arts and sciences and professional programs within a small college environment. The university prepares students to lead and succeed by fostering lifelong learning and civic and global responsibility. A Fitchburg State University education extends beyond the classroom to include residential, professional, and co-curricular opportunities, with particular emphasis on career preparedness with students engaging in culminating experiences such as internships, research with faculty members, or participation

in national project competitions. Fitchburg State fosters an equitable society by working toward the principle of education justice and being a student-ready campus. The university provides leadership and support for the economic, social, and cultural needs of North Central Massachusetts and beyond. More information about Fitchburg State may be found at www.fitchburgstate.edu.

Fitchburg State, one of 29 institutions in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' system of public higher education, is governed by its Board of Trustees. The next president will be responsible for leading the university to new levels of achievement, and must possess a proven record of successful oversight of complex institutions and the skills to combine well-planned growth with strong fiscal responsibility. The president must possess the ability to attract and retain exceptional faculty and students, boost private philanthropy, demonstrate success in implementing strategic plans, and present a commitment to diversity and international initiatives.

The president will be a highly visible figure who is fully engaged with faculty, students, staff, alumni and extended university family as they build upon a strong foundation. Other requirements include a strong commitment to public higher education and a compelling desire to further the mission and core values of the institution.



MISSION STATEMENT

Fitchburg State University is committed to excellence in teaching and learning and blends liberal arts and sciences and professional programs within a small college environment. Our comprehensive public university prepares students to lead, serve, and succeed by fostering lifelong learning and civic and global responsibility. A Fitchburg State education extends beyond our classrooms to include residential, professional, and co-curricular opportunities. As a community resource, we provide leadership and support for the economic, environmental, social, and cultural needs of North Central Massachusetts and the Commonwealth.



Vision

Fitchburg State University will be nationally recognized for its excellence in teaching and learning in current and emergent fields, for its commitment to transforming lives through education, and for its dedication to public service.

In order to achieve this, we will:

- Prepare students for a global society through curricular innovation and program development.
- Achieve academic excellence by investing in our faculty and librarians in their pursuit of knowledge, professional competency, and scholarship.
- Employ innovative uses of technology in the library and across our campus to maximize student learning.
- Create a culture of diversity to meet the needs of the region and enhance the personal and academic lives of the university community.
- Build partnerships within our community to provide real-world opportunities for our students and collaborative solutions to community issues.

Core Values

ACCESSIBILITY. Offering equitable access to high-quality programs and services to people of varying cultural backgrounds living within and beyond our diverse community of North Central Massachusetts

AFFORDABILITY. Providing opportunities for students of varying socioeconomic backgrounds to pursue an affordable, quality education

COMMUNITY. Forging partnerships with businesses and community organizations within the region to enhance quality of life

ENRICHMENT. Sustaining a supportive campus environment for students, faculty, staff, and alumni in which all members can grow and excel in their personal and professional lives

EXCELLENCE. Striving for excellence in academic programs and services through innovative teaching and professional practices

FITCHBURG STATE FACTS

Institution: Public, four-year, co-educational, offering undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Enrollment (Fall 2023): 6,535 total students: 3,145 undergraduate, 3,390 graduate.

Undergraduate Admissions: For first-time freshmen: 4,353 completed applications, 90% acceptance rate, 16% yield; average combined SAT 1123 (SAT optional, 19% submitting). For transfers: 493 completed applications, 95% acceptance rate and 52% yield.

Graduate Admissions: 946 completed applications, 97% acceptance rate, 57% yield.

Undergraduate student profile: 26% part-time, 20% age 25 or older; 91% in-state residents; 33% live on campus in residence halls; 10% in online programs.

Graduate student profile: 82% part-time, 89% age 25 or older; 70% in-state residents; no on-campus residential population; 54% in online program.

Diversity: Undergraduate: 53% female, 47% male; 35% diverse. Graduate: 68% female, 32% male; 24% diverse.

New student enrollment: 617 first-year freshmen, 242 transfers, 519 graduates.

First-year retention rate: 73%

Six-year graduation rate: 53%

Academic programs offered: 34 undergraduate majors, with 50 concentrations and 60 minors; 21 master's degrees and certificates of advanced graduate studies; 22 undergraduate and graduate certificate programs; numerous online and hybrid options.

Largest undergraduate majors: Business Administration (12%), Communications Media (9%), Criminal Justice (7%), RN-BS Nursing (6%), BS Nursing (6%), Psychological Science (5%), Game Design (5%), Biology (4%), Exercise and Sports Science (4%); Non-degree (10%)

Largest graduate majors: Business Administration (32%) Education (26%), Computer Science (8%); Non-degree (27%)

Degrees awarded (AY23): 1,831: 690 bachelor, 55 post-baccalaureate certificate, 1,071 master, 15 Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies

Total full-time day faculty and librarians: 198

Faculty/librarians with terminal degrees: 92%

Undergraduate student-faculty ratio: 12:1

Athletics: Our varsity teams are members of six intercollegiate athletic associations, and are a member of the Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference (MASCAC), which includes seven other state colleges and universities. NCAA Division III, offering eight men's sports and nine women's sports. Team colors are green and yellow; team name and mascot is Falcons.

Net operating budget: \$120 million

State support: 34% of the budget from state appropriations; 66% from fees and other revenues.

Undergraduate day division tuition and fees: \$11,046 (in-state non-residential), \$22,854 (in-state residential)

First-year freshmen receiving Pell Grants: 45%

Student loan borrowing (AY23): 79% of graduates borrowed with an average debt of \$23,805

Accreditations/approvals: Fitchburg State University is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education, the Council for Standards in Human Service Education, and the Association in Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (pending review completion in February 2024). The university's programs are also approved by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Interstate Certification Compact of Educational Personnel, the State Board of Registration in Nursing, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the Commonwealth Honors Program, and the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology.

Advancement: 58,000 alumni, served by the Office of Alumni and Development. Alumni participation rate is 3.7 percent; total cash fund-raising revenue for fiscal 2023 was \$2.8 million. Federal, State and Private grants generated \$4.3 million in 2023.

Fitchburg State University Foundation Inc.:

An independent non-profit corporation organized under Massachusetts law. Governed by a board of directors. Portfolio: \$38.2 million in both foundation and university. Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc. was organized on June 6, 1978, exclusively for the benefit of Fitchburg State University, to establish scholarships and make awards to educationally talented and needy students; to establish a Distinguished Professor award within the faculty of the university; to subsidize inter-collegiate athletic programs; to subsidize budgets of departments of the university as needed for particular purposes; to encourage public use and support of functions and activities which further the mission of the university.

Fitchburg State University Foundation Supporting Organization, Inc.:

The Supporting Organization was organized on October 29, 1999 under the Foundation with a separate board of directors, to be a supporting organization operated, supervised and controlled for the exclusive benefit of the Foundation and all of its educational and charitable activities. As of June 30, 2023, the Supporting Organization's sole program activity has been to acquire, hold, operate and lease real estate and related improvements for the benefit of the Foundation and university.

Campus: Main campus comprises 48 buildings, several of which are over 100 years old. The university maintains 90 acres of land, including athletic fields and the adjacent McKay Complex. Its newest structure is the 100,000 sq. ft. science center, opened in fall 2013.



SELECTED CHRONOLOGY

- The university was established in 1894 by an act of the Massachusetts Legislature. Opened as the State Normal School in Fitchburg, it first operated in temporary quarters in the city's former high school building. The modern campus took shape with the building of Thompson Hall in 1896.
- Egerly Hall, originally home of the School of Observation and Practice, opened in 1901, and in 1910 became one of the first junior high schools in the country.
- In 1932, the Normal School was renamed the State Teachers College at Fitchburg.
- Graduate programs were established in 1935.
- The nursing program began in 1943 through a cooperative effort with Burbank Hospital.
- The campus footprint expanded beyond the main quadrangle in 1956, with construction of a residence hall (Herlihy) on North Street.
- The State Teachers College at Fitchburg was renamed the State College at Fitchburg in 1960.
- The science building, named for former President George Condike, opened in 1963.
- In 1965, the institutional name changed to Fitchburg State College.
- A special education program was established in 1971, the same year the McKay Campus School opened. McKay houses a pre-school to eighth grade public school as well as university classrooms. Fitchburg State is the only university in the public system with a working school on campus.
- The university celebrated its centennial in 1994 with a variety of special events and completion of a capital campaign.
- Institution is renamed Fitchburg State University in 2010, reflecting the comprehensive scope of undergraduate and graduate programs. The Undergraduate Conference for Research and Creative Practice is held for the first time.
- The renovated Hammond Hall reopens in 2012, creating a "front door" bridging the campus and wider community.
- The Robert V. and Jeanne S. Antonucci Science Complex was dedicated in 2013, named for the President Emeritus (2003 to 2015) and his wife.
- A groundbreaking police program is launched in 2015, whose graduates complete two degrees in five years along with certification to work in municipal police departments across Massachusetts and neighboring states.
- The university's ties to Main Street are furthered with the purchase in 2016 of a long-vacant theater building, renovated into a game design studio and idealLAB. Renovation of the theater itself is in the design stage.
- The Carmelita Landry Arena at Wallace Civic Center is re-dedicated in 2018 as a year-round sports conditioning facility for varsity athletes and students in Exercise and Sports Science program. First class of police program graduates.
- New majors in environmental public health and educational studies launch in 2019, the same year Fitchburg State celebrates 125 years of changing lives.



OVERVIEW

For more than a century, from a rented building with 46 students and five faculty to today's expansive high-tech campus and far-reaching influence, Fitchburg State University has held to its timeless mission of providing access to a quality education.

Today, Fitchburg State enrolls more than 6,500 day and evening students in more than 50 programs of study. The institution successfully completed a comprehensive [accreditation](#) review in 2022, and is guided by a [strategic plan](#) focused on education justice. Its recently adopted [academic plan](#) echoes the theme of education justice and the importance of being a student-ready campus.

The university has also embraced its host community, including robust partnerships with educational, civic and business organizations, along with significant capital investments in the city center. One major acquisition was the purchase of a long-vacant theater building on Main Street. Portions of the theater block have already been redeveloped into a state-of-the-art game design studio for university students, as well as an interdisciplinary ideaLab that has helped launch and support dozens of new businesses, many launched by recent immigrants to the U.S.

The university, as part of the system of public higher education, is also deeply engaged in statewide projects overseen by the [Department of Higher Education](#), which encourages collaboration among educational institutions and increased interaction with business and industry.

Massachusetts Board and Department of Higher Education

The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (“Board” or “BHE”) is the Commonwealth’s higher education authority with coordinating and regulatory authority over all public and private higher education institutions operating in the Commonwealth and authorized to grant degrees. The Board is staffed by the Department of Higher Education (the Department), which is run by a Commissioner who serves as the executive and administrative head of the Department, and Secretary to the Board. Together, the Board and Department are the leading voice and advocate for post-secondary education in the Commonwealth, serving critical roles as the state’s regulator of state authorization and consumer protection.

Fitchburg State University is part of the Massachusetts System of Public Higher Education (“System”). The System serves approximately 290,000 students annually. The System consists of 15 community colleges, nine state universities and five University of Massachusetts (“UMass”) campuses. The System exists to provide accessible, affordable, relevant, and rigorous programs that adapt to meet changing individual and societal needs for education and employment. Each community college and state university institution has its own board of trustees, while the five UMass campuses are overseen by the UMass Board of Trustees.

The Board of Higher Education has coordination and oversight responsibilities for the entire System, including the responsibility to analyze the present and future goals, needs and requirements of public higher education and to establish goals to achieve a well-coordinated, quality system of public higher education. The Board is also responsible for approving the appointments of, and setting the compensation for, all Community College and State University presidents. Under the direction of the Board and Department, the System is committed to the equitable provision of high-quality postsecondary learning opportunities for all of Massachusetts’ residents.

OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

The next president of Fitchburg State University will have the opportunity to build on the long, rich history of the campus and its commitment to North Central Massachusetts. As this successful institution moves into a period of uncertainty facing all colleges and universities, the new president can take advantage of a track record of resilience, innovation, adaptability, and forward-looking leadership that has positioned Fitchburg State University to further advance its mission and impact in the future. The new president will be expected to address the following challenges and opportunities as they undertake this new role.

Collaboratively Envision Future Opportunities and Strategies

Story after story in the national media outlines the challenges facing colleges and universities in the coming years. The next Fitchburg State president must embrace those challenges with energy, drive, and creativity. The president will provide leadership for developing a clear and compelling vision for the future that builds on the university's distinguished history as a liberal arts and teacher-training college and the university's evolution to a comprehensive, regional university. There have recently been a number of assessment and strategic planning efforts—from [NECHE](#) accreditation work to a self-led financial planning exercise—and the university is in the later stages of its current [strategic plan](#). The next Fitchburg State president will be expected to evaluate the data gathered through this work, engage the university's many constituents in thinking about the future, and shape a long-term strategy for the institution. The president will have willing partners across campus and in the community, who want to participate in the university's continued success and this individual must embrace those partners.

Communicate Clearly About New Directions and Move to Implement

Fitchburg State's rich legacy, talented faculty and staff, and commitment to transforming the lives of the diverse student body it serves will anchor the institution in its exploration of new possibilities in curriculum, technology, and student engagement. After developing a clear plan for the short and long term, the next president must move carefully yet swiftly to implement this vision. A number of constituents on campus have invested in the various assessment exercises undertaken in recent years, and while the university continues to experience success, the time for moving forward boldly is now. The next Fitchburg State president will be expected to make decisions about

the future of the university, clearly communicate those decisions, and marshal campus constituents to implement them expediently.

Continue to Explore and Expand New Offerings and Serve Diverse Student Populations

The ongoing challenge that US higher education faces is the decline of the traditional undergraduate student population. Demographic shifts are contributing to a long-term decline in this group, and many campuses are seeing this trend already manifesting. The good news is that Fitchburg State has been forward-looking in online education, development of graduate programs, support of commuter students, and opportunities for students to get practical, hands-on learning experience. The university has created academic programs that are in demand and aligned with the needs of the communities it serves, including offerings in biotechnology, engineering technology, construction management, health professions, digital media innovation, and game design, as well as programs pending approval in creative arts enterprise and expressive arts therapy. The university's Police Concentration Program is the only one of its kind in the nation. This innovation will need to continue and expand to ensure healthy enrollment and a positive impact on the region, including continuing to provide opportunities for first-generation students and students from challenging socioeconomic backgrounds. Potential areas of growth that have already shown promise are international student recruitment, degree completion programs, and adult/mid-career graduate students. Experience in any or all of these areas would be advantageous for the next president. The president will also need to ensure alignment between the School of Graduate, Online, and Continuing Education and the broader university as program offerings and the student population continue to diversify.

Enhance the Fitchburg State Community

As constituents across campus stated repeatedly, the commitment of every staff person and faculty member at Fitchburg State to students and their success has been and continues to be unwavering. This dedication is palpable and reflected in the experiences of students themselves. Following the pandemic, there has been some fatigue in the Fitchburg State community, requiring a president who is sensitive to the experiences of faculty, staff, and students and the ability to rally the community around its shared mission and goals. The next Fitchburg State president must have deep experience building a positive culture that nourishes and supports faculty and staff while ensuring the continued success of a diversifying student body. This individual must be visible, approachable, empathetic, and transparent as the university faces challenging decisions in the future. In addition, the university seeks a president who will model and support a collaborative leadership culture that values contributions from all constituents.

Engage External Partners in Advancing Shared Goals

The university's next president will lead Fitchburg State's efforts to build positive relationships and impactful partnerships with its 55,000-person alumni base, city and regional leaders, local civic and social organizations, education-focused foundations, and businesses employing the accomplished graduates of Fitchburg State, among others. Recent efforts include the university's engagement in the revitalization of downtown Fitchburg through its [ideaLab](#) and the current [Theater Block project](#). The next president must have a commitment to partnering with external constituents to think through creative initiatives that will not only provide academic and curricular opportunities for students, but also support the continued development of the city and the region. Experience and success in building relationships with state and federal legislators will also be vital skills of the new president, as this work has yielded good results in the past. This individual must be able to effectively communicate the university's impact locally and regionally and partner with the university's advancement team and others to identify resources and donors to help support the institution's work.



PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS & PERSONAL QUALITIES

The successful candidate must have:

- A well-documented history of organizational leadership and proven success in meeting specific performance goals and objectives.
- An earned doctorate (including but not limited to a Ph.D., J.D., or Ed.D.), coupled with substantial experience relevant to the segmental mission and needs of the institution. In exceptional circumstances, an earned master's degree, coupled with substantial experience relevant to the segmental mission and needs of the institution, may satisfy minimum educational requirements.
- Substantial experience in a senior management position in higher education or substantial experience in a senior management position in a field outside higher education, where such experience is deemed relevant to, and provides a basis for judging, the candidate's capability to serve as a college or university president.
- An unyielding positive regard for the diverse population of students that Fitchburg State serves and a record of success improving equity and outcomes for all students through high-quality academic programs, impactful support structures and services, and an inclusive, welcoming environment.
- A demonstrable commitment and leadership in anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- A leadership style that seeks the knowledge and expertise of others to solve problems, effectively uses data in decision-making, transparently and effectively communicates decisions and strategies, and empowers others to lead initiatives that will advance the goals of the institution.
- Strong financial and budgetary management skills and demonstrated success effectively utilizing resources to advance institutional goals and ensure financial sustainability.
- Strong communication skills, including the ability to passionately advocate for an institution and effectively tell its story to many different constituents, and a commitment to being a visible, approachable, and positive presence on campus and in the community.
- Intellectual curiosity, humility, empathy, and the highest levels of personal and professional integrity.



Additionally, the next president should have:

- Demonstrated experience working with others to shape a strategy that advances the mission of an institution, implementing that strategy, and assessing progress toward goals, as well as the ability to be agile and nimble in adapting to evolving circumstances.
- A record of aligning academic programs—undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education—with regional and state needs and an understanding of the importance of the liberal arts and professional programs at a regional comprehensive institution.
- Experience with strategic enrollment management, including recruitment of diverse student populations and implementation of programs that ensure a viable pathway to success for all students and the institution.
- Demonstrated experience recruiting and retaining exceptional leaders, faculty, and staff and creating an environment where they feel valued and connected to the mission of the institution.
- The ability to work effectively with the university's Board of Trustees and leverage its experience and expertise; engage and partner within a broader system of higher education; and advocate for the university with the state legislature and leaders.
- Experience engaging alumni, local, state, and regional partners to advance institutional goals and positively impact the communities an institution serves, including a record of success in fundraising.
- A willingness and ability to work collaboratively with union leadership in a collective bargaining environment.



Presidential Selection Process

Interested candidates should review the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education [Guidelines and Procedures](#) for the Search, Selection, Appointment and Removal of State University and Community College Presidents. The application process will be confidential through the first round of interviews, which are currently scheduled to take place in early 2024. After the first round is concluded, the search committee will recommend to the Board of Trustees three to five finalists for consideration. Finalists will be invited to campus for a series of open meetings with various constituencies in Spring 2024. The Board of Higher Education and the Commissioner of Higher Education will have the opportunity to interview finalists as part of the campus visit process. Following the campus visits, the Board of Trustees will vote in open session to recommend to the Board of Higher Education the appointment of a single candidate as president. The Board of Higher Education must approve the appointment, the salary, and all terms and conditions of employment for the president.

Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile and a CV or resume. [WittKieffer](#) is assisting Fitchburg State University in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by **February 16, 2024**. Application materials should be submitted using [WittKieffer's candidate portal](#). Nominations and inquiries can be directed to Greg Duyck, Ryan Crawford, and Randi Miller at FitchburgStatePresident@wittkieffer.com.

Fitchburg State University Presidential Search Committee

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Political Science with a minor in History

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