



**FITCHBURG STATE
UNIVERSITY**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2013–14







Dear friends,

As most of you are aware, I will be retiring from the university in June, making this my final report to you.

While this is not a good-bye message—there is much to do in the coming semester—I want to take a moment to offer my deepest thanks to the extended campus community for their unwavering support during my years as president. It has been an honor of the highest order to have served as the leader of this remarkable university. I will always look back on my time here with a sense of gratitude, a sentiment that dates back to 1963, when I arrived on campus as a freshman, the first in my family to attend college.

“Always leave a job on a high note,” it has been said, and thanks to all of you I believe that to be the case. Together we have accomplished much, with no achievement more satisfying than our impact on the lives of countless students.

As you will read in these pages, I began my presidency with a pledge to focus on “teaching and learning,” a shorthand term for the complex interactions that combine to form a meaningful educational environment. It is fitting therefore, that this report illustrates the varied aspects of that phrase: an unprecedented number of new faculty joining our community, innovative pedagogical approaches being developed, and a reconstructed library that will offer new paths for student and faculty scholarship.

Our ambitious agenda for the years ahead will be documented in the sweeping new strategic plan now being prepared for presentation to the trustees. We are well positioned to face the challenges of the future, and I will watch with keen interest as new chapters of our long and storied history are written.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert V. Antonucci". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert V. Antonucci
President

LAPIDUS NAMED 11TH PRESIDENT



As we were going to press, Dr. Richard S. Lapidus, dean of the College of Business Administration at California Polytechnic University, was selected by the Board of Trustees to become the institution's 11th president.

Lapidus will assume the presidency on July 1.

The board's unanimous vote followed a national search that winnowed a pool of 85 candidates to three finalists who visited campus to meet with various constituencies.

"We are thrilled to have attracted such a talented and visionary educator as Dr. Lapidus," Trustee Chairman Carol T. Vittorioso said. "He has the leadership skills and experience to bring this already strong institution to the next level. He will be in the vanguard of academic leaders who are assuming new roles in a time of great challenge and opportunity for colleges and universities."

"This is an exciting time to join Fitchburg State," said Lapidus. "Thanks to the extraordinary accomplishments of President Antonucci, the university enjoys a formidable reputation in the region and the state. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the search committee and the Board of Trustees for the confidence they have placed in me. I am honored to have been chosen to lead this group of dedicated faculty, staff and students."

Lapidus earned a bachelor's degree from the Indiana University, a master's degree in marketing from CSU Long Beach, a doctoral degree in marketing from the University of Nebraska and a certificate in management and leadership in education from Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Lapidus was previously associate dean of administration and associate professor in the College of Business at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and served as chair of the marketing department.

A full profile of our next president will be published in this summer's edition of *Contact*.

LEADERSHIP A FAMILY AFFAIR

Fitchburg State senior Nathan A. Gregoire of Ludlow was sworn in during the fall as student representative to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education after being appointed to the position by Gov. Deval L. Patrick.

"I am honored to represent my fellow students on the Board of Higher Education," said Gregoire, who is also president of Fitchburg State's Student Government Association and formerly served as the elected student representative to the university's Board of Trustees. "It's going to be an exciting time."

The Board of Higher Education is the statutorily created agency in Massachusetts responsible for defining the mission of and coordinating the Commonwealth's system of public higher education and its institutions.

"It is an honor for the school and it's more of an honor for Nate and the impact he's had statewide," President Antonucci said.

Gregoire is the second Fitchburg State student to serve as a student representative to the Board of Higher Education. The last Fitchburg State student to hold the post—which rotates between community colleges, state universities and the University of Massachusetts—was Eric Gregoire, Nathan's brother, who graduated from Fitchburg State in 2011.

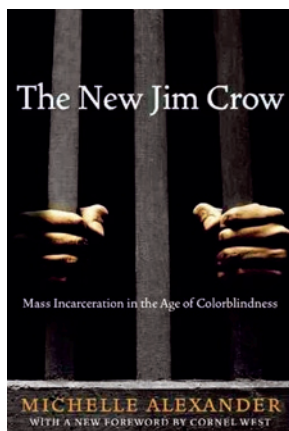
Nathan Gregoire's term on the Board of Higher Education will expire April 30.



Like his brother before him, Nathan Gregoire will represent university students on the Board of Higher Education.

COMMUNITY READ LOOKS AT RACISM, JUSTICE

The campus started a sprawling dialogue on issues of race, crime and punishment with its second Community Read, centered on legal scholar Michelle Alexander's controversial book *The New Jim Crow*. Alexander's text challenges the notion that the election of Barack Obama signals a new era of colorblindness, arguing instead that racial caste in America has not been ended, just redesigned. The book explores the concept that the U.S. criminal justice system functions as a contemporary system of racial control, relegating millions to a permanent second-class status.



The university's Constitution Day observances in September focused on the book. Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs Paul Weizer moderated a panel discussion that included Worcester District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr., Deputy Commissioner Michael Grant of the Massachusetts Department of Corrections' prison division, Worcester Superior Court Public Defender's Office Attorney in Charge Michael S. Hussey and Assistant Professor Eric Boehme of the Economics, History and Political Science Department.

Early disputed some elements of the book, maintaining that prosecution and sentencing recommendations were not dependent on race, but also said prevention of drug and alcohol abuse were likely to be more meaningful to preserving communities than police actions.

"I don't think we can arrest our way out of the problem," he said. "I'd much rather try to prevent a crime than solve a crime."

Other speakers stressed the importance of education in creating opportunities across socioeconomic barriers.

The Community Read also featured a presentation by alumna Lisa Redmond, currently the deputy chief parole supervisor for the Massachusetts Parole Board. Redmond, who studied human services and psychology, planned a career in social work. But a practicum at the

minimum security state prison in Shirley planted a seed.

Redmond said her staff works to help offenders transition from the corrections system to the community, providing the training and support to let them succeed. Like the experts who spoke on Constitution Day, Redmond described the heavy toll that drug abuse has taken on offenders.

The Community Read has also featured several film screenings and art exhibits that will continue into the spring. The series continues on a lighter note with a performance by comedian W. Kamau Bell on Thursday, Feb. 26 at 8 p.m. in Kent Recital Hall in the Conlon Fine Arts Building, 367 North St. His presentation, entitled "The W. Kamau Bell Curve: Ending Racism in About an Hour," is a humorous exploration of the current state of America's racism, using stand-up comedy, video and audio clips, personal stories and solo theatrical performance. Tickets can be purchased online at fitchburgstate.edu/centerstage.

More on the Community Read events can be found at fitchburgstate.edu/communityread.



On Constitution Day, from left, Assistant Professor Eric Boehme, Worcester Superior Court Public Defender's Office Attorney in Charge Michael S. Hussey, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs Paul Weizer, Worcester District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr. and Deputy Commissioner Michael Grant of the Massachusetts Department of Corrections' prison division discussed crime and punishment.

LAW AND ORDER

Starting last fall, students interested in careers in the law have an opportunity to earn their bachelor's and law degrees in just six years, thanks to a new articulation agreement between Fitchburg State and the University of Massachusetts Law School.

The agreement, signed over the summer by President Antonucci and UMass Law School Dean Mary Lu Bilek, will allow qualifying students to complete three undergraduate years at Fitchburg State before proceeding directly to UMass Law for a three-year juris doctor program (completing their bachelor's degrees while on the UMass Law campus). Qualified Fitchburg State students will be guaranteed admission to the law school.

"The joint three plus three program offers qualified, ambitious, and motivated undergraduate students an accelerated course of study that maintains high academic standards while saving students one year's worth of tuition and time," the agreement states. "This partnering academic program allows both institutions to better serve the citizens of the Commonwealth and lend an advantage to their individual efforts to recruit outstanding students."

"This agreement is about institutional collaboration that puts students first," President Antonucci said. "We are opening doors that will bring affordable, high-quality law degrees within reach of our students."

"We want students from this region to know we have a public school law school," Bilek said, adding the program is designed for students with a clear vision of their future. "A person who gets on a path and stays on a path has the qualities that a good lawyer needs."

"I wish this program was in existence 30 years ago when I was in school," said Fitchburg State Board of Trustees Chairman Carol T. Vittorioso, herself an attorney. "It's a fantastic opportunity, especially for first-generation students."

Under the articulation agreement, qualified Fitchburg State undergraduates will be permitted to substitute the first year law school for the senior year at the university, thus earning the bachelor's degree and the juris doctor degree in six years instead of the normal seven. The program is aimed primarily at students who enter the university with a strong interest in law already formed, or who develop such an interest early on, and whose career goals and legal education needs can be well served by UMass Law.

Fitchburg State was founded as a teacher training school in 1894 and has grown into a comprehensive public university offering more than 50 undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the arts, humanities, sciences, social sciences, and professional fields to more than 7,000 students annually, including approximately 3,000 graduate students.

UMass Law was established at the UMass Dartmouth campus in 2010 as the state's only public law school. The institution, which has its roots in the Southern New England School of Law, is committed to providing access to students who might not otherwise have the opportunity to study law.



President Antonucci and UMass Dean Mary Lu Bilek sign the "3+3" articulation agreement.

THE DOCTOR IS IN

Fitchburg State graduates will be able to expedite their studies in several areas of osteopathic medicine as a result of a new Early Acceptance Program (EAP) agreement signed by President Antonucci and President John M. Ferretti, D.O. of the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) in Pennsylvania.

The agreement outlines early acceptance opportunities for Fitchburg State students interested in LECOM's programs, including doctor of osteopathic medicine, doctor of dental medicine and doctor of pharmacy.

LECOM is a private institution with a main campus in Erie, Pa. as well as branches in Greensburg, Pa. and Bradenton, Fla. Its mission is to prepare students to become osteopathic physicians, pharmacy practitioners, and dentists through programs of excellence in education, research, clinical care, and community service to enhance the quality of life through improved health for all humanity. The professional programs are dedicated to serve all students through innovative curriculum and the development of postdoctoral education and inter-professional experiences.

"This agreement will open doors of opportunity to our students," President Antonucci said. "With our new, state of the art science facilities, and a rejuvenated chemistry major, we are well-positioned to prepare students for careers in the health sciences. This agreement with the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine provides yet another avenue for our students to succeed."

"The Early Acceptance Program is a win-win for both the undergraduate school and LECOM," Dr. Ferretti said. "This gives the undergraduate school an additional tool to attract new students to pre-health degree programs. At LECOM, we know that the EAP students who matriculate from an affiliated undergraduate institution have received professional counseling and

guidance, properly preparing them for the academic rigors of professional school while instilling in them a strong passion for improving healthcare."

Under the agreement, Fitchburg State students must apply for admission to LECOM programs either before matriculation or during their first two years on campus. Successful students will be given provisional acceptance to the program, and upon meeting final requirements will matriculate at the LECOM campus of their choice.

Fitchburg State Professor Mel Govindan, chairman of the university's Biology/Chemistry Department, advises dozens of students considering careers in health sciences, including physician assistant, pharmacy, allopathic medicine, osteopathic medicine, physical therapy and dentistry, among other tracks. The university has seen an increase in the number of graduates pursuing further education in these fields over the past 10 years, including two students currently accepted to LECOM.

Fitchburg State Dean of Health and Natural Sciences Margaret Hoey commended Govindan's work opening doors to professional programs like LECOM's. "This agreement allows us to take our commitment to the students to the next level," Hoey said.



A new agreement with a Pennsylvania osteopathic college will create new opportunities for students.



HELEN ROSS RUSSELL, FIRST FEMALE DEAN

Dr. Helen Ross Russell, who taught for many years at Fitchburg State and later served as its first female dean, died Friday, Nov. 7 in Jersey City, N.J. She was 99 years old.

Dr. Russell was the valedictorian of her high school class and was an early PhD graduate of Cornell University's Nature Study Department. She joined Fitchburg State's faculty, serving as a science professor, department head and dean until 1966. She was also a successful author and consultant. The Helen Ross Russell residence hall is named in her honor.

Fran Ludwig of Lexington knew Helen Ross first as a neighbor on Blossom Street, and then as a third-grade student at the Edgerly School (which operated as a city public school in those days, before the construction of the McKay Complex on Rindge Road). Their relationship deepened into a friendship and mentorship that shaped Ludwig's own life and career as a teacher.

She recalled Dr. Russell as ahead of the curve, both for her project-based teaching methods as well as breaking gender barriers.

"She'd come to class with snapping turtles and other creatures," Ludwig recalled. "She enlisted the whole Edgerly School in tapping the sugar maple trees on the campus, and boiling the sap down into maple syrup. Students really responded to it. At that time it was a very different way of learning."

Dr. Russell encountered some resistance to her methods, and some people weren't prepared to see a woman in such positions of authority as she held.

"When she'd answer the phone as the dean, people would insist she was the secretary," Ludwig said.

Dr. Russell left Fitchburg State in the mid-1960s and continued an illustrious career in education. Her book *10-Minute Field Trips* is still in circulation, and continues to inspire an appreciation for the outside world.

"It's still a classic," Ludwig said. "I became a science teacher because of Helen."

Dr. Russell is survived by her husband of 54 years, Dr. Robert Russell, and their extended family and many close friends.

The university's sprawling residence hall complex honors Helen Ross Russell.





TEACHING AND LEARNING

on the cutting edge

“Soon after arriving on campus ... I announced my guiding principle: that the cornerstone of this institution will be teaching and learning. From that, all else will follow.”

—from President Antonucci's inaugural address

NEW FACULTY ENERGIZE CAMPUS

a changing landscape



Teaching and learning has indeed been the cornerstone of Fitchburg State University since the institution's inception in 1894, when the state Board of Education voted to open the Normal School at Fitchburg to serve a rapidly growing community of students in need of qualified teachers.

The university has grown continually over the past 120 years, by adding programs, majors and facilities—designed to prepare students for changing times. While Fitchburg State's core campus has radically transformed over the past dozen years, the central work of teaching and learning has evolved as well.

Today, Fitchburg State has more than 200 full-time faculty members and librarians, and more than 30 tenure-track positions have been filled just in the past two years. Each of these professionals brings new insights and fresh perspectives to this campus.

BEGINNINGS

Just as the students who have pursued their degrees at Fitchburg State hail from diverse backgrounds, so too do the faculty members who now apply their skills on the campus. The common element is a devotion to the craft.



DEMISTY BELLINGER-DELFELED'S

journey to Fitchburg State's English Studies Department is rooted in a lifelong passion for writing. It wasn't until she got to college, however, that she realized she wanted to teach. And there was another realization – there

were few other students of color. That in itself can be an obstacle for diverse students who wish to pursue academic careers. She was determined to change that.

"They don't have role models or people that look like them in the academy," she said.



Growing up in Natick, **CATHERINE BUELL** had a knack for mathematics. "As a student in middle school, I always

tutored,” she recalled. When she got to Springfield College, she started a math center to help her peers brush up on their math skills. Today, she’s in her second semester as a mathematics professor at Fitchburg State.



KYLE MOODY, who started this fall in the Communications Media Department, worked in his college radio station and was a graduate assistant at his local National Public Radio affiliate. The experience taught

him that making the theoretical practical was the key to learning.

“Education isn’t just limited to the classroom,” said Moody. “It’s constant application, and motivated learning.”



DANIEL WELSH, in his second year teaching in the Biology/Chemistry Department, grew up with a lifelong love of animals. Planning to be a veterinarian, he was thrilled to land a summer job as a veterinary technician.

“I learned very quickly I didn’t want to be a veterinarian,” he said, recalling the discovery that his interest in animal evolution, ecology and behavior didn’t translate to the typical clinical environment. Not that he regrets the experience. “There’s value in knowing what you like, and there’s value in knowing what you don’t like.”



Growing up in rural Colorado, **REID PARSONS** developed a love for the Earth and its features. He lived near a mining town as well as an exposed array of dinosaur fossils. “That sort of impressed upon me the duality of geology,” he said. “I knew I’d never be bored.” Today he

is a member of the Geo/Physics faculty.

“The great thing about Earth science is that a lot of it can be done outside,” Parsons continued. “Those instructors who took us out on field trips and spoke of the history of the Earth that is recorded in the rocks are the experiences that I remember most. Those are experiences that I aim to share with my students.”



BILLY SAMULAK was on a path to a career in medicine when her journey took a detour. “I know I became a

chemistry major because my first chemistry professor was the most enthusiastic person I’d ever met,” she said. In addition to a new major, she started down a new road, and last fall started teaching in the Biology/Chemistry Department.



STEVEN FIEDLER is also new to the Biology/Chemistry Department. “My overall teaching objectives are to share my passion for science with students and continually seek new ways to make chemistry relevant and exciting,” he said. “As a student, the teachers that I remember best made the subject material approachable and relevant. I’ve borrowed—stolen—some of these approaches,” such as visualizing the vibrations of a water molecule with arm motions, or turning oneself clockwise to illustrate classical electron spin.



JON AMAKAWA grew up surrounded by artists and travelers. “I was always interested in other cultures, other places, and how they became that way,” he said. As a child his family briefly lived in Kingston, Jamaica (and

he retains a fondness for Jamaican breakfast porridge). His own collegiate studies focused on fine arts and history, and after graduating he traveled to Japan (where his father, who worked for UNICEF, originally hailed from). He lived there for three years, and he supported himself by teaching English.

“There was a point I started learning about digital media and interactive media,” he said of his time in Asia, and his interest in creating virtual representations of three-dimensional space blossomed. Today he is a member of the Communications Media faculty, focusing on game design.



RICKY SETHI says his career provides a good counterintuitive example to students. “I know what to tell them not to do, because I did it,” he says with a chuckle, recalling his winding path to the classroom. He studied neuroscience as an undergraduate and went on to complete master’s degrees in physics and business. He worked for several start-up businesses before deciding to continue his education at the doctoral level. “Life takes you in weird places,” he said.



WILL CORTEZIA was raised in Brazil, the son of a diplomat. He was planning to follow a similar course, pursuing his education in the U.S. with an eye on a career in diplomatic service. During his master’s studies in Michigan, however, he became a graduate assistant and taught a class in cultural anthropology.

“Everything clicked,” he said, and education became his passion. Now he is a member of the Education Department faculty, specializing in the training of middle school teachers. “Moving from place to place, I had a few constants in my life—my family, first and foremost; my faith; and always an adult waiting at the door of a new building with a smile on his or her face, saying, ‘Welcome.’ No matter where I went, there was a school. It was always a second home.”

PATHS TO TEACHING

In the course of their academic careers, today’s professors often learned the ropes by working as teaching assistants during their own graduate studies.

Welsh, in the Biology/Chemistry Department, got his first taste of teaching while pursuing his master’s degree

at Bowling Green State University. He had learned from attending lectures with hundreds of students that it wouldn’t be his style.

“I learned very quickly that I never wanted to be that person on a stage, never knowing my students,” Welsh said.

For Buell in the Mathematics Department, her days tutoring fellow middle school students helped inform her professional practice – including how not to teach.

“I liked math so much, I liked it in spite of the way it was taught,” she said, recalling her own school days. “Enthusiasm is the first step. If I’m not excited about it, how can I expect them to be?”

Math-phobic students just need to understand there is a process that builds toward realization, Buell continued.

“These things you hate about math are the building blocks,” she says. And those blocks are key in any discipline. Just as children are first exposed to primary colors before they appreciate Monet, they need to gain an understanding of phonics before trying to tackle Shakespeare. And so it is with math; a glimpse of deeper mathematics helps them appreciate what they’re learning. “I have high expectations for them, but I also have great scaffolding to help get them there.”

Cortezia spent 10 years as a middle school teacher before completing his doctorate. His experiences as a student, even at the master’s and doctoral levels, have infused his own teaching. He was on a path to a career in diplomacy (studying political science as an undergraduate) before switching gears.

“I don’t forget how many people helped me,” he said. “I pass it on, to have that contact with students. Get to know your people first. Then everything begins to fall into place.”

“There’s no such as thing as perfection, especially with the cargo we’re handling, (which is) children. One size doesn’t fit all.”

Moody’s own experiences working in the communications industry have influenced his teaching.

“My approach to teaching has always been new and changing,” he said. “I have a core set of ideas that I try to teach, and then I try to figure out the best way to teach these ideas. Since my research and topics course focuses on social media, this requires changing my approach

every time. Effective undergraduate professors have to be willing to try new ideas and embrace the possibility of greater success with new methods, including gamification and extemporaneous classroom exercises. Students want to interact in class, and teachers who engage that part of learning are more likely to have success.”

Amakawa, who’d had some teaching experience as an American abroad, honed his craft teaching a 3D modeling course at a technical school. “It was a nice complement to my studio work,” he said, and he soon landed a job teaching at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. “It was more arts-focused, and that’s what I was missing at my former job,” he said. “My colleagues were people using the same technology I was.”

Sethi, the computer science professor, was inspired in his own teaching by a professor’s database class. His professor “was the coolest guy you could ever find, and he made it accessible,” he said. “He showed us how to straddle the two worlds – he was an academic, but he had some start-ups on the side.” That model would resonate in Sethi’s own teaching, where classroom work is complemented by tales from the marketplace.

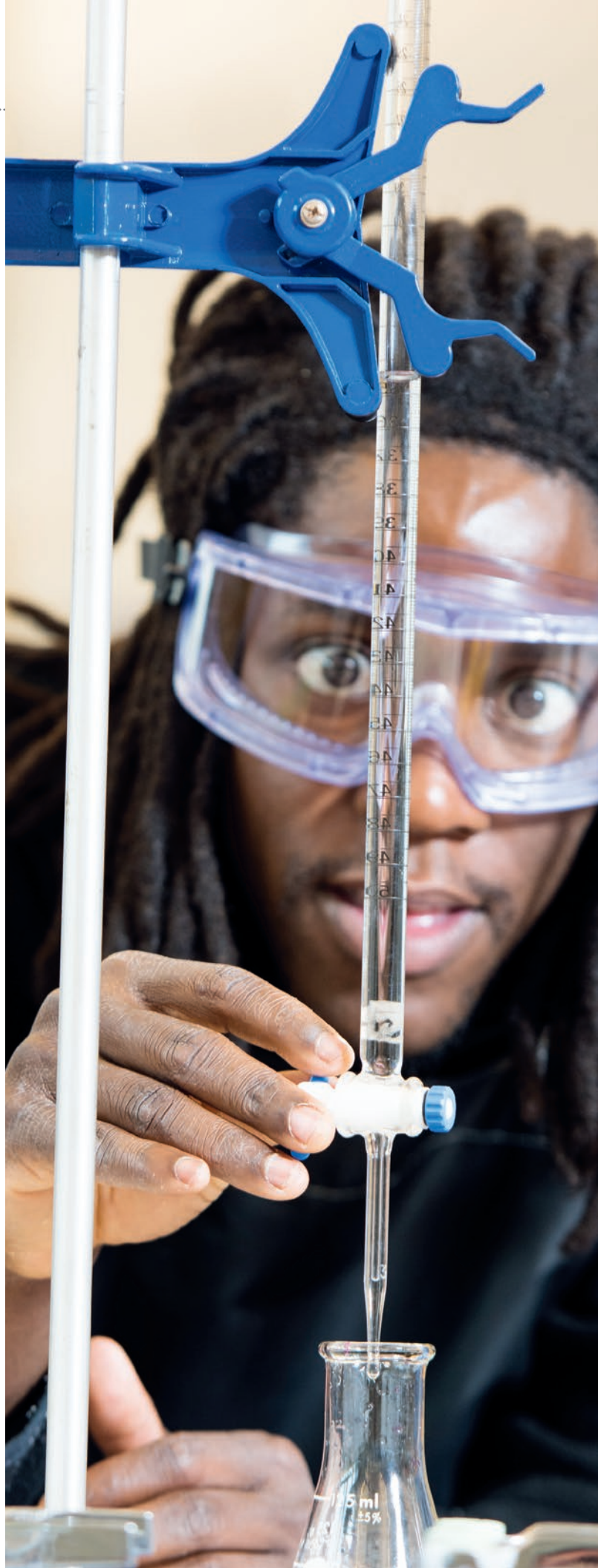
It was when he was working as a teaching assistant at the University of Southern California that Sethi found what would become his calling. “I got in front of the class and I was scared out of my mind,” he recalled. “But then I realized I had an affinity for it.”

KEEPING IT REAL

One of Fitchburg State’s core values is accessibility, and the institution still enrolls a large percentage of first-generation college students every year. For many students, the academic pursuits at the heart of the university experience can be uncertain territory. Successful faculty members help them navigate that path.

The back wall of Cortezia’s office in the McKay Complex features a huge decal of the Fitchburg State academic seal, depicting the saxifrage blooming through rock and its corresponding Latin motto, Perseverantia. Cortezia wants his students to see it when they come to see him, in hopes it will inspire those he’s already come to see as hard-working young people.

“They’re willing to learn,” Cortezia said. “They’ll



come to you and say, 'I know I need to do something, but I don't know what. Teach me.'

"I understand that most people, when they get out of here, they want to get a job," said Bellinger-Delfeld, the English professor. "Even in poetry class, I try to teach about how to apply that beyond the academy."

She does that by showing how poetry resonates in the larger world, as in the teaching of "I, Too" by the celebrated black poet Langston Hughes, with its famous opening and closing lines, "I, too, sing America," and its description of "the darker brother" now forced to eat in the kitchen when company comes, but who will one day be at the table. That story of racial justice – which echoes in the university's Community Read of *The New Jim Crow*, another of Bellinger-Delfeld's texts this semester – loomed large on the cultural radar this year with the shooting of unarmed black teen Michael Brown by a white police officer in Ferguson, Mo.

"I want to be more dynamic and organic in my classes," she said. "If I find something's just not working, I'll revisit it or I'll stop it."

She also sees herself as a champion of her students, looking to provide them feedback that will inspire and support them. As she develops her craft at Fitchburg State, Bellinger-Delfeld is hoping to incorporate some of the excellent student work she has seen into her future classes, to help students learn from their own peers.

"That," she said, "is the best part of teaching."

For Welsh, many of his anatomy and physiology students are already pursuing paths in medical fields for whom the subject matter is essential. Still, he says, he endeavors to have his students emerge from his courses with a meaningful experience.

"Science is going on around us all the time," he said. "It's a way of thinking and way of doing things. You're coming up with as many explanations as you can, and looking at the information that's out there and determining the best one. You're doing that every day."

Parsons agrees. For him, the focus for his geology students is all around them. In just his second year at Fitchburg State, he has already identified several popular field trip destinations in the city for his students, from the Rollstone quarry to Coggs Hall Park.

"The students always love those trips," Parsons said. "That was always the big draw of geology for me. In a

way, those layers of rock represent a book, and it's the history of the Earth. And you can explain that history like the pages of a book."

Parsons' own "reading" transcends the planet Earth, in fact. He is collaborating on ongoing research regarding Martian climate, investigating how the ice caps of Mars have circulated over the planet over hundreds of millions of years. The robotic rovers traversing the Martian surface will provide data to be puzzled over for years to come.

"To a lot of students, the scientific process is a mystery," he added. "We collect observations and we try to find the best explanation. That's the power of science



– we’re always trying to find the best explanation.”

Samulak, another new addition to the Biology/Chemistry faculty, also embraces the hands-on philosophy toward science.

“I think it’s really important for students to have research opportunities,” she said. “I give them a goal, but I don’t tell them how to achieve that goal.”

One early project in Samulak’s class is determining the mass of chocolate chips in a chocolate chip cookie. The students have to devise a protocol to solve that problem, then hand it to another student to try out. It’s a fun and accessible way to learn scientific techniques, she said.

“I’m not a stereotypical scientist,” she explained. “I’m friendly, I have an open door policy. There’s no way a student in my class, if they try hard and do the homework, should fail.”

That welcoming atmosphere goes beyond grading. “I work really hard to know all of my students’ names by the end of week one,” she said. “I know which ones are involved in track, I know which ones have jobs.”

Fiedler believes everyone has a natural curiosity about the world, and therefore a common objective in gaining a more fundamental understanding about the forces of nature. “It just happens that chemistry often considers tiny objects such as subatomic particles, atoms, and molecules that can make certain topics become somewhat abstract,” he said. “It becomes all the more important to relate these abstract concepts to concrete phenomena such as pollution, ocean acidification, electricity, and even, say, the composition of salt and sand. In this manner, the relevance of any given topic becomes a bit more apparent.”

It can be a challenge for students studying science, technology, engineering and mathematics to grasp why the material before them is important, Fiedler continued. “I frequently introduce new topics with an initial discussion of their importance and provide a purpose for learning the material,” he said. “The lectures themselves include a mix of some technology, demonstrations, discussions, storytelling, problem-solving, and hopefully understanding. Students that excel are self-motivated and engaged, which raises the enjoyment of the class for everyone.”

For Moody, whose Communications Media classes include message design and social media, creating a

platform upon which to experiment is key.

“I tell them, ‘Don’t be afraid to fail. This is a safe place to experiment. This is a place where you try new things and figure out what works for you,’” he said. “I’m much more focused on creating agency. I’m frustrated when a student just gives me an answer from the book.”

Sethi seeks to show his students that computer science and computer information systems applications permeate every scientific and technical endeavor. From Google to Amazon to email, the complex systems being taught in the classroom have universal applications in the world beyond.

“I want to make the class empirical and pragmatic as possible,” he said. “It’s great to see students’ level of engagement, especially from students who may not get the practical application.”

Amakawa values the curricular richness of the game design program, with its grounding in liberal arts disciplines as well as the technical components of creating interactive digital media.

“That’s exactly my background,” he said. “I’m not the biggest video game player myself. What drew me to the medium is the potential. For this medium to come into its own and be an art form, people need to be exposed to other areas.”

And that’s where the teaching comes in, he said.

“I tell students, ‘You need to bring something to the table,’” Amakawa said. That means life experience, literary inspiration or exposure to the arts. “I’m teaching an arts medium and helping these students to develop as artists. It’s easy to focus on the tools, as opposed to the tools being a means to make art.”

Buell, the new mathematics professor, is open to challenging questions from students who are skeptical about the coursework. She tries to get to know her students early on, asking about their own study plans so she can tailor some of the work to their interests. Her syllabus leaves the class goals blank, to be filled in during class discussion.

“They’re used to the class being, ‘I’m the professor, and you need to do that,’” Buell said. She favors a more democratizing approach. “There’s always an inquiry element in my courses, so my students feel supported and challenged to think and do things.”

A COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS

The new faculty members are happy to be part of the community at Fitchburg State.

Sethi is enjoying collaboration with his peers from other departments, like the game design program that has underpinnings in computer science as well as communications media. The communications faculty help students to develop the narrative of games and animations, while his department helps design the information systems that will help drive the function of those games.

“My inclination is to favor collaboration,” Sethi said. “The first thing that sold me on Fitchburg State was our department. Everyone that I meet here, it’s people who get along with each other.”

Amakawa senses that innovation across departments. “I feel privileged to be a part of a community where there are people with such a range of specialized knowledge and interests, from exercise science to architectural history,” he said. “I also immediately got the sense, when I first started at Fitchburg State, that the people here cared deeply about the institution, and this is reflected in the campus community’s deep involvement in many aspects of decision making.”

Buell is also used to collaboration, and her own mathematics research has involved peers from diverse fields. She’s enjoyed the diversity of personalities, interests and disciplines she’s seen in her time on campus so far.

Cortezia, the middle school education professor, was attracted to Fitchburg State’s history of preparing educators. He was also impressed by its focus on teaching; while the university encourages research by faculty, the classroom is the main goal. “For me, it’s the perfect balance,” he said.

Bellinger-Delfeld, is enjoying her colleagues and the mix of students in her courses, who hail from diverse backgrounds and majors. “I am always floored by the work I get from students,” she said. “I have some excellent students.”

Parsons, now in his second year teaching at Fitchburg State, acknowledged it was an adjustment to get used to the New England climate after moving here from California. “The community of educators, staff, and students on campus has a warm, close-knit feel that I

really appreciate,” he said. “Small class sizes, and a small institution allows me to get to know people from all departments and it helps me to keep a broad perspective on our students’ education. I love the new science building, and I’m excited for what the future will bring to Fitchburg State.”

Samulak was also drawn to the possibilities of teaching and research with the upgraded facilities available on campus. “Out of all my (job) interviews, my interview at Fitchburg made me the most comfortable,” she said. “It’s a community of excited people. I’m very happy here.”

Welsh agreed. “I have really enjoyed my time here on campus so far. The students in my classes have been very fun to interact with during class, and are very motivated and hard working. The faculty and staff have been great as well; everyone has been very friendly and numerous people—too many to count—have been exceedingly helpful in answering any and all questions that have popped up.”

Fiedler quickly found a sense of community on the campus. “I’m continually amazed by the helpfulness of the students and their willingness to learn,” he said. “It is a pleasure to walk through campus and see the many friendly, familiar faces.”

Moody knew there was something special about Fitchburg State from his experience of being recruited to teach in the Communications Media Department. The university’s embrace of the community at large, and the opportunity to create student projects that would place them in real-world scenarios, thrilled him. In his first semester at Fitchburg State, for example, Moody was working with students on a social media campaign for the Fitchburg Art Museum.

“That creative freedom and opportunity really attracted me,” he said. “Students come here to learn. They like to do things in innovative ways. Students can take advantage of this opportunity, gain confidence in their work, and gain confidence in the course material and their own abilities.





EXCELLENCE *in teaching*

Each year, Fitchburg State University presents two major awards to faculty: the Vincent J. Mara Excellence in Teaching Award and the Faculty Award for Research and Scholarship. Nominations are solicited from the campus community and evaluated by a panel including past winners. Only three members of the university faculty have won both honors. Here, Maria Jaramillo (Humanities), Joshua Spero (Economics, History and Political Science) and Howard Thomas (Biology/Chemistry) discuss their journeys and their educational philosophies.

Maria Jaramillo

DREAMING IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE

MARIA JARAMILLO experienced some culture shock when she moved to the United States from her native Colombia. She barely spoke any English, and her interest in architecture as a student was undone by her inability to grasp the physics of the class. So she turned to another love – literature.

“I had to start all over again,” she said. “I never regretted it.”

For nearly 30 years, Jaramillo has been working with Fitchburg State students in the Humanities Department, encouraging them to appreciate other cultures by learning languages and their underpinnings. “My focus is to make them like the language, like the culture, like the people,” she said. “I tell students, ‘This is the only developed country where language is a handicap.’ It’s better to speak a second language as I do (with an accent) than not at all.”

Jaramillo knows that learning another language can be a painstaking process, but she enjoys watching students make progress. “At the beginning it’s a noise. Then you get a word here, a word there. Little by little, you retain something,” she said. “Do you know when you really know a language? When you dream in it.”

She encourages her students who aren’t native English speakers to hang on to their original tongues. “Keep the language,” she said.

“Learn English, but keep your language. When you have two languages, you have two ways to look at the world.”

Jaramillo’s classrooms often feature a mixture of accents and cultural backgrounds, and that’s the way she likes it. “I think minority students feel empowered in my class,” she said. She also reminds students that the global cultural tapestry is ever changing. She describes Cordoba, Spain: a thousand years ago, it was one of the world’s great cities, with a million books in its library. “In the year 2000, the great city in the world is New York. Who knows what it’s going to be in the year 3000? They come and go.”

But an appreciation for language and culture can help transcend differences. Jaramillo wants nothing less than to cultivate better human beings through her teaching of language. “I think in 10 years, maybe the language is gone, but they remember the culture. They will remember us.”

Jaramillo has published several anthologies of Latin American theatre, Colombian women writers, Colombian literature and culture, Afro-Latin American theatre, Latin American women, and is currently working on a volume about Afro-Latin American women poets. “I always like to work with the

underdog,” she said.

Jeremy Roche ’95 is now the principal of Fitchburg High School, and was recognized last May with the university’s Distinguished Alumnus award. He described Jaramillo as an inspirational force in his life.

“If teaching is supposed to be about awakening a sense of excitement and interest in a topic or field, she most certainly accomplished that in my case,” Roche said. “In fact, I never saw myself as someone strong in languages, but it was Dr. Jaramillo who piqued my interest in study abroad, which I did through Fitchburg State. It was the most memorable experience I had in my undergraduate career. I had many great professors at Fitchburg State, but Dr. Jaramillo was simply amazing.”

Martin Silva ’14 is teaching Spanish at Ayer High School. His time with Jaramillo as a professor in his senior year was transformative.

“She helped me develop my skills as a student and get an idea of how I wanted to run my classroom,” he said. “She also helped me get closer to my culture and to the different cultures that the Spanish language connects. I am very thankful for her influence and for her guidance because it helped me become the teacher that I am.”



PASSION FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

JOSHUA SPERO's dedication to public service and fascination with government is rooted in his upbringing in Washington, D.C.

“My passion to teach started around my family’s dinner table, with discussions about President John F. Kennedy’s call for Americans to devote themselves selflessly to the common good,” he recalled. His parents modeled the civically engaged life: his father was an official in the Kennedy Administration, helping to create the domestic Peace Corps (now known as AmeriCorps) and continues to publish about public service issues. His mother spent nearly 50 years as a public elementary school teacher, and now trains future educators at Hofstra University and the City College of New York.

As an elementary school pupil, Spero engaged in role-playing as world leaders with his schoolmates. He studied international politics in college and studied in the Soviet Union after graduating. Before going into academia he worked for nearly 15 years in U.S. government, including as a civilian strategic and scenario planning staff advisor in the Directorate for Strategic Plans and Policy at the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Pentagon. Those experiences shaped his teaching and research, which focus on international security, international relations, government decision-making and simulation crisis-management decision-making.

Spero believes in the importance of lifelong learning and constant adaptation, considering student input

and peer review. He prides himself on being open to non-traditional or even challenging viewpoints as he leads students through exercises like those he took part in during his own governmental career. Spero developed the simulation crisis-management decision-making (SCMD) methodology for this work, linking other disciplines to international politics. "This critical thinking methodology for our rapidly technologically advancing world challenges our university community to learn even more innovatively," he said.

"The goal has always been to help people so that they may help themselves to advance, defining success in their own ways," he said. "I've always tried to challenge my students to think, research, analyze, write, and role-play critically by immersing themselves in experiential learning. These classroom experiences are transformed, often into paying internships, scholarship-funded graduate school education, and exciting careers in both public service and the private sector – nationally and internationally. My goals combine scholarship with real-world application, to help launch or advance careers."

Ryan McNutt '08 is the current town administrator in Lancaster, finishing up a master's degree in history. He said Spero's real-world experiences help students like himself relate to the content of his lessons.

"He has been a continual resource and friend well after my undergraduate work with him," McNutt said. "You are not limited to the dry text book with Dr. Spero. He has been a part of

United States foreign policy at the practitioner level. Consider the value to Fitchburg State students interested in international relations to have a professor who was there in eastern Europe at the end of the Cold War as part of the transition team. I became involved in more extracurricular activities like Model United Nations because of the increased interest Dr. Spero was able to generate from me."

"Josh Spero's courses were really innovative," recalled Jessica (Guiney) Glover '07. "Instead of lecturing, he really involved students in the process of decision-making by creating 'crisis scenarios' that we'd play out as global leaders."

Glover, who now works as an international relations specialist for NASA, said she didn't realize at the time that she was developing skills in delivering briefings, doing policy research and writing decision memos that would later serve her career.

"The work I did in his classes really gave me a solid foundation to conduct policy research in graduate school and some 'real world' skills that I could bring to internships and employers," Glover said. "Dr. Spero was always ready to mentor students and many, including myself, benefited from that. He helped me obtain an internship in Washington, D.C., and he had great advice for approaching careers in policy and research."

Eric Gregoire '11 arrived at Fitchburg State eager to pursue a career in public service and become engaged in campus life. Spero was one of the first faculty members he met. "From our first

meeting, Dr. Spero encouraged me to be a public servant in my own way and learn not just in the classroom but by being active in the community," Gregoire said. "He showcases his own passion for public service inside and outside the classroom, and is always willing to assist students in mapping their own path."

Gregoire now works in the University of Massachusetts President's Office as a budget analyst. He said Spero's teaching style helped him learn to think on his feet, and apply a baseline of knowledge to changing situations.

"As a mentor, he believed in me and helped me develop my own leadership style in order to make a difference in the world."

THE SCIENCE OF LIVING

Tracking a rare ground squirrel on the verge of extinction,

HOWARD THOMAS was baking in the hot sun of the Laguna Salada in Baja, California, last fall. The temperatures hit 135 degrees. And this is what he calls retirement.

"I'm as busy as I ever was before retirement," said Thomas, a professor emeritus who served on the Fitchburg State faculty for more than 32 years. "It's all research."

Thomas is technically retired, but he has been a research associate for the San Diego Natural History Museum in California, which was sponsoring the ground squirrel project. He's also got a research fellowship pending with the University of Nairobi in Kenya. It keeps him hopping.

The work still suits Thomas, who has harbored a fascination with

animals since his youth. He chalks it up to watching Marlon Perkins on TV's "Wild Kingdom" as a high schooler. "I saw that, and that's what I wanted to do," he said.

But the road wasn't easy. Thomas was not a stellar student growing up in upstate New York. "I majored in football in high school," he recalls. He served in the U.S. Marines in Vietnam and, after being discharged, decided to go college. "Somebody took a chance on me, much to my benefit."

That somebody was his undergraduate advisor at what is now known as the State University of New York at Geneseo, who encouraged Thomas in his early studies.

"I struggled through everything," he said. "It wasn't until I got to zoology that I got my first A in college."

His success continued, however. As he was finishing his doctoral studies at Northeastern University, Thomas learned of an opening at Fitchburg State for a zoology professor. With a growing family to support, Thomas jumped at the opportunity.

"I think most PhD biologists figure their job will be in college teaching at some point," he said, even though many now pursue careers in the biotech industry. Thomas found fulfillment in teaching, even if his research was always in the mix. "The research is what keeps you going as a teacher. That, and caring about the students."

That Geneseo State professor's faith in him helped form Howard's own practice during his decades of distinction as a faculty member at Fitchburg State. He was always able to view his students "in the rough,"

willing to take a chance on their abilities. "Just like someone had to take a chance on me," he said.

For Thomas, that extended to taking undergraduates with him into the field, including voyages to California, Nicaragua and Africa.

"Any time I can get someone to go into the field of conservation biology, I'll take them," he said. And while he enjoyed those experiences with students, he's quick to point out he was never looking for friendship with them. "I tried to give them a sense that they were responsible for their own success."

Key to successful college teaching is being excited about the subject being taught, he said, followed closely by caring about the students. He was also consistent with students, laying out clear expectations for grades and sticking to those standards.

The other mark of a good a teacher, Thomas added, is the constant willingness to learn, even if it means hearing and accepting critiques from students about lectures or exam questions that don't connect. "You learn from your mistakes. You also learn from your students," he said. "That's something that age teaches you."

Charles Lydeard '84 is the chairman of the Biological Sciences Department at Western Illinois University. He is proud to note he was one of Thomas' earliest students at Fitchburg State. While his own interests had been in both fin and shellfish, he said Thomas' interests in mammalogy were contagious, and he soon found himself on another track. Thomas brought him along to

a national conference as a student and the trip made an indelible impression.

"He's an excellent teacher, an excellent role model and an excellent mentor," Lydeard said. "I don't think I could have accomplished what I've done without the guidance of Howard Thomas."

Jacques Veilleux '96 recalls being taken under Thomas' wing after showing an interest in mammalogy as an undergraduate. "That's when it struck me I could do this as a career," he said. Today he is an assistant professor of biology and environmental science at Franklin Pierce University in New Hampshire.

Thomas nurtured Veilleux as an undergraduate by taking him to a meeting of the American Society of Mammalogists in Washington, D.C., and later on two trips to Nicaragua over winter breaks, where he assisted in live research.

"That was an incredible experience," Veilleux said, recalling the research voyages. He continued to collaborate with Thomas on research projects after graduation and looks forward to future opportunities to help his mentor.

"Howie is 100 percent engaged," he said. "If he knew you were passionate about something, he would do whatever he could to help you. I wouldn't be here without him, that's for sure."



Howard Thomas

**RECIPIENTS OF THE DR.
VINCENT J. MARA AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING**

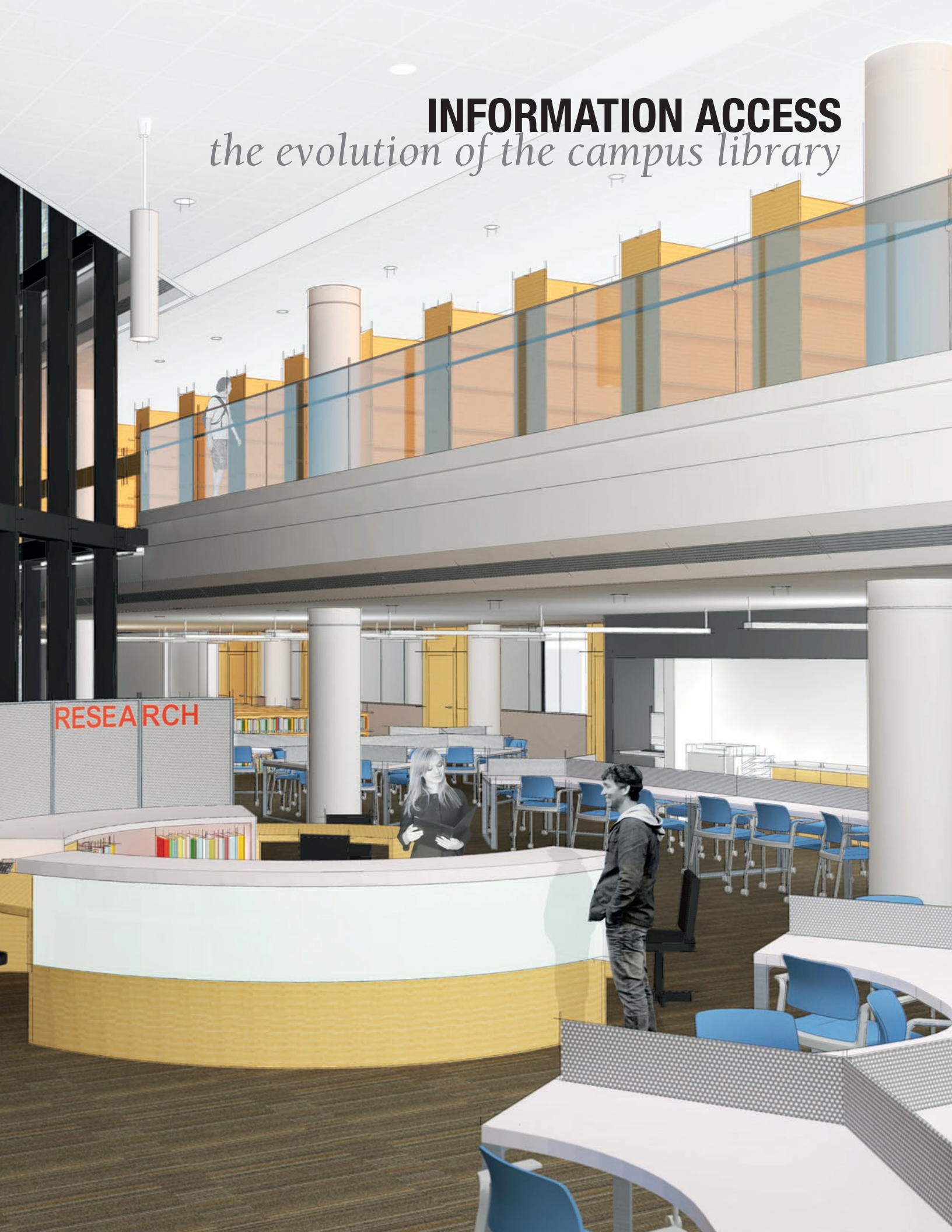
- 2014 Sean Goodlett
- 2013 Joshua Spero
- 2012 George Bohrer
- 2011 Howard Thomas
- 2010 Jane Fiske
- 2009 Christine Cosgrove
- 2008 Peter Laytin
- 2007 John Paul
- 2006 Eric Budd
- 2005 Gerald Higdon
- 2004 Louis Zivic
- 2003 Barbara Cammuso
- 2002 Thomas Battinelli
- 2001 Maria Jaramillo
- 2000 Andrea Wallen
- 1999 Edmund Thomas
- 1998 Lee Cunningham
- 1997 Robert Champlin
- 1996 Colin Bourn
- 1995 Pasquale Micciche
- 1994 Rosemarie Giovino
- 1993 Helen O'Flaherty
- 1992 Caroline Murphy
- 1991 Donald Schmidt

**RECIPIENTS OF THE FACULTY
AWARD FOR RESEARCH AND
SCHOLARSHIP**

- 2014 Benjamin Railton
- 2013 Michael Hoberman
- 2012 Susan Williams
- 2011 Joshua Spero
- 2010 Jannette McMenamy
- 2009 Susan Wadsworth
- 2008 Maria Jaramillo
- 2007 Christopher Cratsley
- 2006 Robert Wellman
- 2005 Benjamin Lieberman
- 2004 Paul Weizer
- 2003 Robin Dinda
- 2002 Cynthia Crosson
- 2001 Nan Wiegiersma
- 2000 Howard Thomas

INFORMATION ACCESS

the evolution of the campus library





“We’re going from, ‘What do libraries do,’ to ‘What do people in libraries do?’ It turns out they’re extremely valuable. The library has gone from a place where things are stored to a place where things happen. We’re creators of context, and the developers of tools.”

—Asher Jackson, archivist

The library is almost always a singular edifice on a college campus, and the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library is no exception. A huge structure, built in tandem with the campus center at Hammond Hall, the library spans five floors, including the newly opened archives and study room.

With its professional staff and sprawling collections, the library’s foundational goal in support of learning may be constant, but the techniques used and opportunities created continue to evolve.

Sean Goodlett, interim dean of the library, believes the facility and its highly qualified staff play an integral if not transformative role in the education of students.

Goodlett has been a member of the Fitchburg State faculty for 13 years, winning the Mara Award for Excellence in College Teaching in 2014. Last fall he took on the role of interim dean, and during his tenure is working to raise awareness about the changing nature of the university library.

“The physical holdings may be accessed less frequently these days, but at the same time, the exact opposite trend is occurring with online periodicals and databases,” he said. “It speaks to a real curricular shift at the university.”

That shift is a new emphasis on research. “It means students are immersing themselves in peer-reviewed literature, which allows them to see expert models of research in their discipline.”

Asher Jackson, above, archivist of special collections and reference and instruction librarian, agrees.

“We’re going from, ‘What do libraries do,’ to ‘What do people in libraries do?’ It turns out they’re extremely valuable. The library has gone from a place where things are stored to a place where things happen. We’re creators of context, and the developers of tools.”

Goodlett explained the student’s journey of discovery has evolved in the digital age. In the classic model, the student wandering the stacks of bound volumes may have “the serendipitous experience” of looking for a particular book but finding an even better resource on an adjacent shelf. In the digital arena, however, virtual shelf space is unlimited.

“In a database I can get 10,000 hits, and I have to be able to evaluate those sources for relevancy, currency, and accuracy,” he said. “The library teaches students information literacy, and in turn this has encouraged the students to think more like researchers.”

The library is in the midst of a sprawling renovation project. Its first two floors were closed in the summer and fall of 2014 as crews gutted the interior. That phase wraps up this winter, when the building’s third and fourth floors will be completely reimaged.

“The goal of the redesign is to be more inviting, to bring patrons into the space so that they have an opportunity to make more use of our

physical holdings; at the same time we will increase access to online resources by doubling the number of computers,” Goodlett said. Contact with the librarians is key. “Students need more and more help with critical thinking, and every opportunity a librarian has to help them think critically about the information that’s in front of them is for the good.”

“It gives us a chance to shift things, to rethink things,” Jackson added. “There’s always original research that can be done in an archive, but it’s been collected. It’s there. Our job is to make it discoverable. The remodel lets us open up new library space, where all kinds of incredibly unique things can happen.”

Goodlett is a strong believer in the university’s recent tradition of the Undergraduate Conference on Research and Creative Practice, held each year on the morning of the Honors Convocation.

“It immerses them in the rigors of the discipline, showing them that, a) we know very little about any given topic, and b) certainty is a very difficult thing to achieve. They walk away with a lot more skepticism about their knowledge. After all, knowledge is not a fixed thing. The students get a real-world experience with the tribulations surrounding research. It is an ever-changing enterprise.”

“Librarians are the ones who are most consistently tasked with teaching these skills, how to evaluate information, and how to think critically,” Goodlett continued. “In this sense, the library supports the overall general education curriculum at the institution. In short, the physical transformation is going to feed the curricular transformation that is already taking place.”

AN ARCHIVAL JOURNEY

Asher Jackson joined the Fitchburg State community in 2013. After leaving his native Minneapolis, Jackson went to college in San Francisco and landed a temporary job working in the records room for an insurance company.

“It was one of the most difficult times I ever had,” he said, recalling the company’s lack of demonstrated interest in the works of its record-keepers. But when the firm was sued and couldn’t find the records they needed to litigate the case successfully, he recalled, their tune changed.

“I thought all of these things could be avoided if they organized these documents like in a public library,” he recalled. “That’s what I wanted to know, and that was the problem I wanted to solve. This information was vital, and no one knew anything about it. It was funny how little regard they held those records that were so



Librarians help students develop critical thinking skills, including how to evaluate information.

Opposite: The first two floors of the renovated library are slated to be open for the spring semester.

important to the company. That was my moment.”

He began learning about archives and records management, and found a calling.

“I want people to discover things, and that’s the part that I like,” Jackson said.

As an archivist, Jackson is looking to increase the university’s collection of materials related to student organizations, such as meeting minutes and other records. Those records, combined with the theses, honors papers and scholarly works by faculty, chronicle the life of Fitchburg State.

“I like the idea of a library being a laboratory,” Jackson said.

A long-term project concerns the digital future of the library’s holdings, including archival materials. “What if something has never been on paper,” Jackson asks, rhetorically. “How do we preserve it? What can we do with it? We have the ability to expand what it’s used for, and that’s an interesting potential for everything we have in the library.”

To pursue that goal, Jackson continued, the library is exploring how to preserve digital files regardless of the platform on which they were created. Imagine finding an old 5-inch floppy disk, for example, and the challenge one would have in finding a computer that

could use it. “The question is, can we preserve files sufficiently that we can open and use them for anything? People think you hit the ‘save’ button and you’re done. And that’s not the case. You have to preserve the documentation about the object.”

Jackson is also hopeful that students will take advantage of the library’s resources to learn about the communities surrounding the campus. “I don’t think many college students realize what they’re coming to,” he said. “Fitchburg, Leominster and the surrounding areas were very important to our history. We are participants in social and political processes here that are larger than the university community.”

That history can be explored in the library’s own collections, from the works of celebrated author – and local native – Robert Cormier, whose novel *The Chocolate War* has been on numerous banned books lists, to the still-resonant court case that pitted the staff of the college newspaper against administrators in 1969. That case – *Antonelli v. Hammond* – resulted in a victory for student journalists that is still cited in free speech cases.

“Our goal is to create as much information as we use,” Jackson said. “That’s how I see the future.”



HISTORY IS ALIVE

Sean Goodlett sees parallels for his practice in the celebrated novel *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (*Dangerous Liaisons*) by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos, published in 1782. It tells of two scheming French aristocrats who seek to bring about a scandalous event by placing obstacles in the paths of their targets. Goodlett's intentions may be more virtuous than Laclos' protagonists, but he employs some of their cunning in his tactics.

"I honestly believe that what inspires students is presenting them with what they see as insurmountable obstacles," he said.

For example, he will assign a challenging text like German philosopher Ernst Cassirer's *Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (1932), where the writer "attempts to capture thought in motion as it progresses over a century and a half," he said. It is a daunting volume, which Goodlett said confounded scholars in the decades after its translation from the original German. Only years later did it come to be regarded as a major work on the period.

"I choose very, very high-level takes on the material," he said. "There's an underlying method to it, to show students they can achieve the highest level of thought. When they get over the hurdle, they realize the core message isn't that hard to understand. And they've achieved



Sean Goodlett

something. There's a sense of belonging."

Goodlett can identify. "Every time I teach this material it's a challenge for me, too," he said.

He strives to make it clear to his students on day one that the study of history is a journey.

"When they walk out of the first day, they know it's going to be challenging, and they know it's going to be fun," he said. "The trick is in showing students that history doesn't take place in the past. It is the act of interpreting the past in the present, and seeing it through diverse perspectives. It's how we make knowledge and how we come to an ever-more-certain understanding of the past. These are interpretive skills that have to

be brought to bear every day. Good historians teach them."

Persistence is key.

"The mind is a muscle," Goodlett said. "It just takes practice. I truly believe almost every student can achieve the highest level of thought."

Ryan McNutt '08, currently the town administrator in Lancaster, describes Goodlett as a teacher and mentor for over 10 years.

"The most important lessons I have learned from him have centered on sources while researching," said McNutt, currently wrapping up a master's degree in history from Fitchburg State. "From him I am a much more effective and disciplined researcher, mindful of the sourcing."

CAMPUS EVOLUTION *transformation and reconstruction*

“The rich heritage that comes with a 110-year-old campus is accompanied by the burden of relentless capital upkeep. I intend to embark on a capital improvement program that will be unprecedented in this institution’s recent history.”

—from President Antonucci’s inaugural address



President Antonucci outlined a sweeping agenda for transforming the Fitchburg State campus. New athletic fields, the renovation of the Holmes Dining Commons, major reconstruction of Hammond Hall and the construction of new science facilities were all laid out in his inaugural address. All were accomplished, along with much more. Among the highlights:



FEATURED ON THE MAP:

[1] HAMMOND HALL is all but unrecognizable from the former campus center. From the four-story glass tower that welcomes visitors to campus from North Street to the open floor plan inside that invites students to gather for work and recreation, Hammond has become the heart of the campus.

[2] THOMPSON HALL is among the university's oldest buildings, yet features state-of-the-art nursing laboratories. The building's first floor, meanwhile, retains historic elements and a large, covered porch now faces the main quadrangle.

[3] MILLER HALL was built as a residence hall, and long ago was repurposed into offices and meeting space. Major remodeling transformed those spaces, however, into modern and welcoming offices for the English Studies and Economics, History and Political Science departments.

[4] EDGERLY HALL, built a century ago as an elementary school, now has up-to-date offices for the Computer Science and Mathematics departments, as well as renovated classrooms and Information Technology facilities. A raised plaza was installed at Edgerly's entrance to the main quad, creating gathering space while improving accessibility to the building.

[5] HIGHLAND AVENUE, in front of Conlon Hall and the Sanders Administration Building, was closed as a public street and converted into a pedestrian plaza with chairs, tables and a small gazebo. It has quickly become a popular gathering spot on the campus.

[6] CONLON HALL, home of the Information Technology, Communications Media, Industrial Technology and Humanities departments, has been renovated to include new classrooms, laboratories and studio space.

[7] The eighth unit of the **MARA VILLAGE RESIDENCE HALL** complex opened, becoming the campus' first LEED-certified building.

[8] WESTON AUDITORIUM'S lobby was completely renovated and a more aesthetically pleasing entrance to the building was installed.

[9] THE SCIENCE CENTER, the university's newest academic building, opened in 2013, followed by the year-long renovation of the adjacent Condike building, now known as the Condike Wing. The completed facility represents 110,000 square feet of laboratory, classroom, office and research space.

[10] The university took over the management and operations of the formerly city-owned **WALLACE CIVIC CENTER**, investing millions to restore the building into a state of the art ice rink. The home for Falcons ice hockey is also used by local schools and outside hockey and figure skating organizations.

[11] THE ANTHONY BUILDING was remodeled into a one-stop student service center, housing Admissions, Financial Aid, Graduate and Continuing Education and the Registrar's office.

[12] AUBUCHON HALL'S interior gathering spaces have been transformed with new windows and elevators. The university's Health Services department was moved to renovated space at street level.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

At **155 NORTH ST.**, a former apartment house was converted into laboratory and office space for the Exercise and Sports Science Department.

CAMPUS POLICE headquarters was moved to new space on Clinton Street, relocating the university's 24/7, professional police force to the middle of the "college neighborhood."

The university's neighborhood investment included the purchase and renovation of the former Cedar Street retirement home into student housing and, in 2014, the purchase of an adjacent home on Highland Avenue for use as the president's residence.

The campus extended its footprint to Main Street with the conversion of space at the intermodal transportation center into university office and meeting facilities.

The university moved its materials management, print shop, financial services and some maintenance functions to Klondike Avenue, where the rechristened Service Center provides more room to conduct business while easing on-campus car traffic.

THE ELLIOT FIELD ATHLETIC COMPLEX received the installation of a new turf field as well as stadium seating and facilities for football, soccer, baseball, field hockey, and track and field. The complex is also a community resource, bringing in scores of regional high school meets as well as Special Olympics.

A sprawling **WIRELESS NETWORK** envelops the campus, with thousands of users accessing it each day.



Randy Meech

WHY I GIVE *alumni & development*

“Giving is something that I enjoy doing. As long as circumstances allow, I want to be able to continue to give at a sustained level and look to grow it and be able to substantially impact the lives of students.”

—Randy Meech, '97

A SMART INVESTMENT

At 40 years old, Mapzen CEO Randy Meech '97 is an established leader in the tech industry and is already a member of Fitchburg State University's Thompson Hall lifetime giving society.

Success, however, wasn't always a foregone conclusion. Coming out of high school, Meech was ready to work for that chance. “It was something that I was going to have to earn, and Fitchburg State gave me that opportunity,” Meech recalled, and he worked a number of blue collar jobs during his collegiate summers. “Like so many other students, I had to work to pay for my education.”

An English and history student, Meech made the most of his opportunity at Fitchburg State and became involved in the Falcon Players theater group. The experience influenced his ability to organize and manage teams of people as well as assemble budgets and raise funds. “In many ways my student experience with the Falcon Players had a transformative and lasting effect on my career,” he said.

On the recommendation of a faculty member at Fitchburg State, Meech pursued his passions in history and earned a master's degree from Harvard Divinity School. After graduating from Harvard, Meech turned his focus to earning a living. With a strong familiarity and interest in technology, he started his working life with tech start-ups.

Before long, he had established himself working for giants like AOL, Patch, and Google. “As I secured myself economically, and had a capacity to give back, I began to think about my philanthropic interests,” Meech said. He was also targeted in what causes he would champion. “State and public education is so important and it needs to be supported. When I look to give back, I want to see how I can make a positive impact on the mission of an institution.

“Giving to Fitchburg State University, I reflect on affordability and accessibility, two key factors that were crucial to me in attending college,” he continued. “Fitchburg State accepts students, like me, who might not have an opportunity elsewhere.”

Now chief executive officer of Mapzen, an open-source mapping lab, Meech sees his undergraduate education as the foundation for his success. “Where would I be today, if I hadn't gone to Fitchburg State University,” he asked. This sentiment led Meech to start support Fitchburg State a decade ago, and he's never stopped.

“Giving is something that I enjoy doing,” he said. “As long as circumstances allow, I want to be able to continue to give at a sustained level and look to grow it and be able to substantially impact the lives of students.”

*“These students are so bright,
but it’s a struggle financially.
I’d like to think that gifts
from alumni and
staff help these students get
over the top.”*

—Dick Ingemie, '73



A GIFT OF TIME, TALENTS, AND TREASURE

For Richard “Dick” Ingemie, Fitchburg State is a second home. Ingemie, a systems analyst in the Information Technology Department, has spent more than half of his life on the campus, giving back to his alma mater through his service as well as in philanthropic support of students.

A 1973 graduate of the education department, Ingemie soon changed direction and pursued a passion for broadcasting. Over the next 10 years, he worked for small radio stations throughout New England as a news broadcaster and play-by-play sports announcer. Following a course in programming, Ingemie returned to the Fitchburg State campus to begin his new career in information technology.

“From my first days on the job, my degree in education helped me to grasp the college culture and understand my role on campus,” he said. “Education is in my blood. Even though my position is in IT, I’ve found a way to keep contributing back to the field.”

Ingemie’s nearly three decades of support for the institution began when he returned to campus as an employee. “I was back where I had graduated from. I felt like it was the right thing to do,” he said, calling his degree a major contributor to his success.

“Over time, I tried to continue to increase the size of my gifts,” Ingemie continued. “I give back thinking that I’m contributing to students’ success along the way. These students are so bright, but it’s a struggle financially. I’d like to think that gifts from alumni and staff like me help these students get over the top. To participate in their journey and success should make anyone feel good.”

Ingemie sees the impact of philanthropy in the growth on campus to the students themselves. “We can learn a lot from our students,” he said. “They help us grow and improve our methods.”

Ingemie has his sights set on retirement in fall of 2015. “I’ve had a great career because of Fitchburg State University,” he said. “Of course I’m going to continue to give back.”



ANNUAL REPORT ON GIVING GOES DIGITAL

The Report on Giving details annual and lifetime private philanthropic gifts to the institution. The 2013-14 fiscal year report has gone digital and is now available to view at fitchburgstate.edu/alumni/report-on-giving.

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