

A DECADE OF
Transformation





“We are a strong and vital institution that fulfills an important mission, and it is crucial that we believe in ourselves and the inherent quality of Fitchburg State.”

“Confidence in the [university] and its future prospects isn’t established by simple declaration. It is the result of accumulated actions: shared decision-making, improved facilities, increased technologies and trust.”

“Also crucial to our success is a willingness to change. I will work hard to inculcate a culture where change is not simply accepted, but welcomed.”

Dear friends,

The above phrases are excerpted from my first annual report. It is my view that they remain key values, and I hope they have served us well in the years since I began my presidency in 2003.

One thing is certain: our progress has been impressive. Consider, for example, that the fall 2013 class is the largest in the history of the university. It’s also the most diverse. Our full-time undergraduate faculty has increased 17 percent over the course of the decade, and a host of programs have been added or revised: video game design, chemistry, and cognitive science, for example, as well as online offerings in business administration, forensic nursing, and RN to bachelor of science in nursing. Significant changes have been made to undergraduate early childhood, elementary, middle school, special education and other disciplines. We earned university status. We completed an expansive self-study in preparation for a New England Association of Schools and Colleges visit and were rewarded with a full 10-year reaccreditation. We established a Center for Teaching and Learning, where pedagogical theory is explored and our outstanding faculty is showcased.

“There is always more to be done, of course, but I firmly believe that our remarkable transformation will continue.”

Campuswide, we have used technology to transform the traditional classroom—the world is changing and success will go to those colleges and universities that are prepared to respond. Our facilities and infrastructure have changed as well, with a new science center and countless interior and exterior renovations, many made possible by the largest capital campaign in the institution’s history.

This publication illustrates our accomplishments in broad brushstrokes, since to chronicle all of our activities would be daunting. Our success has been a team effort, a team comprising diligent and committed faculty, students, staff, alumni and friends who believe in this institution and have demonstrated that belief through extraordinary contributions to campus and community.

Community has been a key component of our goals and achievements. First, there is the close-knit academic family we have created, one centered on interaction among faculty and students. Widening the circle, we can point to our extensive partnership with the local community, an ambitious internship program that takes learning beyond textbooks, and international opportunities that expand our connections to a global level.

I express my gratitude and admiration to all who have worked so hard and accomplished so much. There is always more to be done, of course, but I firmly believe that our remarkable transformation will continue. The opportunities we offer and our engagement beyond the confines of the campus are changing lives for the better in the region, the state and beyond. Our goals are noble, our strength formidable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Robert V. Antonucci". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial 'R'.

Robert V. Antonucci
President

FACILITIES *Upgrades*



A NEW VIEW

VISITORS TO THE FITCBURG STATE CAMPUS WHO HAVE BEEN AWAY FOR EVEN A FEW YEARS ARE ROUTINELY STUNNED BY WHAT THEY SEE WHEN THEY STEP BACK ONTO THE GROUNDS. THE PAST DECADE HAS BEEN A TIME OF UNPRECEDENTED TRANSFORMATION FOR THE CAMPUS, REDEFINING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY AND DEEPENING THE COMMITMENT TO THE CITY IN WHICH IT RESIDES.

The challenge for university leadership has been to retain the character and history of the campus while updating facilities and amenities for students and faculty.

Two campus destinations have proven particularly likely to turn heads in the past few years—the renovated Hammond Hall and the new science center.

The Hammond project marked the capstone of an effort to revamp the entire North Street corridor. Formerly lined by dilapidated triple-deckers, the Fitchburg State University Foundation purchased more than two dozen parcels along the street in order to create an entryway to the campus. While the purchases were begun before President Antonucci's tenure, the final vision came to pass on his watch.

As this project neared completion, a long-planned renaissance of the Hammond Campus Center was launched. The first phase of the project, a \$25 million overhaul of the building, created a new front door to the campus. Where a wide brick wall had once bounded the

university and the city, in its place is a six-story glass tower facing the intersection of North and Pearl streets. The space is an ideal forum of learning and living, and quickly became a vibrant hub of campus activity.

The science center is its own campus jewel. Built where the Parkinson Gymnasium once stood, the center is the most advanced building of its kind.

"This new building represents opportunity," Biology/Chemistry Department Chair Margaret Hoey said at an open house for the center in the fall. "It represents the hope of good things to come. However, to truly make this building come alive, we need to populate it with both outstanding faculty and outstanding students. Fortunately, we happen to have both."

Hoey credited faculty for their cooperation and vision in realizing an incomparable facility.

"With their expertise, their enthusiasm and their leadership, along with the students, we will fulfill the promise this building offers," Hoey said. "Together, we will give this building a heartbeat."

Even as the university sought to nurture the North Street corridor, it established a presence on Main Street by leasing space within the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority's intermodal station. The Center for Professional Studies offers professional development opportunities and collaborates with school districts, business and other professional groups to serve their continuing educational needs. The university's footprint at the station has expanded to include another previously vacant storefront that will house other community engagement efforts, such as the Central Massachusetts Readiness Center.



Renovations to Conlon Hall have created new lab space.



The new plaza in front of Edgerly Hall quickly became a gathering spot for students.



The Campus Police station, built between Clinton and North streets, has improved safety for the university and the neighborhood.



Across from the train station, the foundation purchased a former music store that had been closed for years and was falling into disrepair. The boarded-up structure was demolished and replaced with fenced-in green space, and talks are moving forward for commercial and residential development on the site. The former eyesore will be replaced by a taxable revenue source for the city.

Community investment was also evident in the siting of the university's Campus Police station on Clinton Street. The university's 24/7 professional police force was formerly housed in one of the campus residence halls, but was moved into an adjoining neighborhood to improve quality of life for the university's neighbors as well as its students. The force enjoys a strong collaboration with the Fitchburg Police Department.

On the other side of campus, the Mara Village complex of residence halls welcomed an eighth building in 2009. The hall, known as Mara 8, became the university's first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)-certified structure, using less energy and resources than other buildings of similar size and function.

Green building principles also guided the development of the Exercise and Sports Science Building on North Street, across from the Athletics and Recreation Center, in 2010. The former house was purchased and transformed into a space for offices and classrooms, and is home to the campus' first geothermal heating and cooling system.

This reinvention of space has also occurred at the campus core. Thompson Hall, built in 1897, still boasts its historic façade and its main lobby has been restored to resemble its original condition, but the remainder of the building is transformed. In addition to modern classrooms throughout, the third floor is home to the university's state of the art nursing laboratories.

Miller Hall, built as a women's dormitory, has long housed the English Studies and Economics, History and Political Science departments. But the space has been reborn in the past few years, its formerly cramped offices completely remade. A similar metamorphosis has taken place in the mathematics and computer science offices at Edgerly Hall, another of the campus' oldest buildings.

And Conlon Hall, built in the 1970s, received its own significant renovation in 2013 as the university prepared to launch its game design major within the site.

RESPONDING TO A WIRELESS WORLD

The stunning changes to the physical campus of Fitchburg State are not the only capital investments that have improved the experience for the university's students, faculty and staff. The transformation has extended to state-of-the-art technology as well.

Chief Information Officer Steve Swartz credits President Antonucci's vision for remaking the information technology (IT) infrastructure at the university. Swartz arrived at Fitchburg State in 2008. The wireless network in those days was nearly non-existent.

Not so anymore. President Antonucci authorized the first comprehensive wireless network on the campus, and it's expanded greatly in the last few years thanks to continued investments in the infrastructure. This wireless network encompasses all buildings and green spaces on campus, including parking lots and the athletic fields. The campus now sees an average of 13,000 users of its network, with over 2,500 accessing the wireless system at peak times each day.

Fitchburg State also employs Voice Over Internet Protocol networks (referred to as VOIP) for its telephone system, using the campus network instead of traditional telephone circuits. Among the benefits of the VOIP system is multiple devices can be configured

"Our technology on this campus, with all the cutting edge products and services we've implemented, puts us among the very top leaders in New England and in some areas, the nation."

— STEVE SWARTZ,
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

to run off one cable, which saves money, and also allows for wireless handheld phones to provide coverage for mobile employees even in areas that cell phones can't receive a signal.

"From an IT perspective, he's the best president I've ever worked for because he understands how technology can transform education," Swartz said. "Our technology on this campus, with all the cutting edge products and services we've implemented, puts us among the very top leaders in

New England and in some areas, the nation."

Fitchburg State was among the first institutions in the nation to partner with ModoS Labs to create a mobile version of its website. The mobile site—visible at m.fitchburgstate.edu—gives visitors to campus access to the university's online resources in a format that automatically adjusts for smartphones, tablets and even desktop screens. The mobile site features a virtual campus tour, complete with photographs and videos, and links to campus news, athletics and alumni event listings. The latest feature is real-time tracking of the shuttle buses that traverse the campus, allowing visitors to know exactly when they can catch the next bus downtown or to the Wallace Civic Center. Modules are in the works that will allow students to add or drop classes and access the learning management system via the mobile site.



“Ultimately, mobile will be the main source of communication with our students,” Swartz predicted. “We’re way ahead of this and our students are learning in a world-class environment.”

Swartz said the institution’s forward-thinking on technology issues has reaped savings, as vendors looking to expand into new markets welcome clients willing to test out new platforms. Fitchburg State was the first four-year university in the nation to

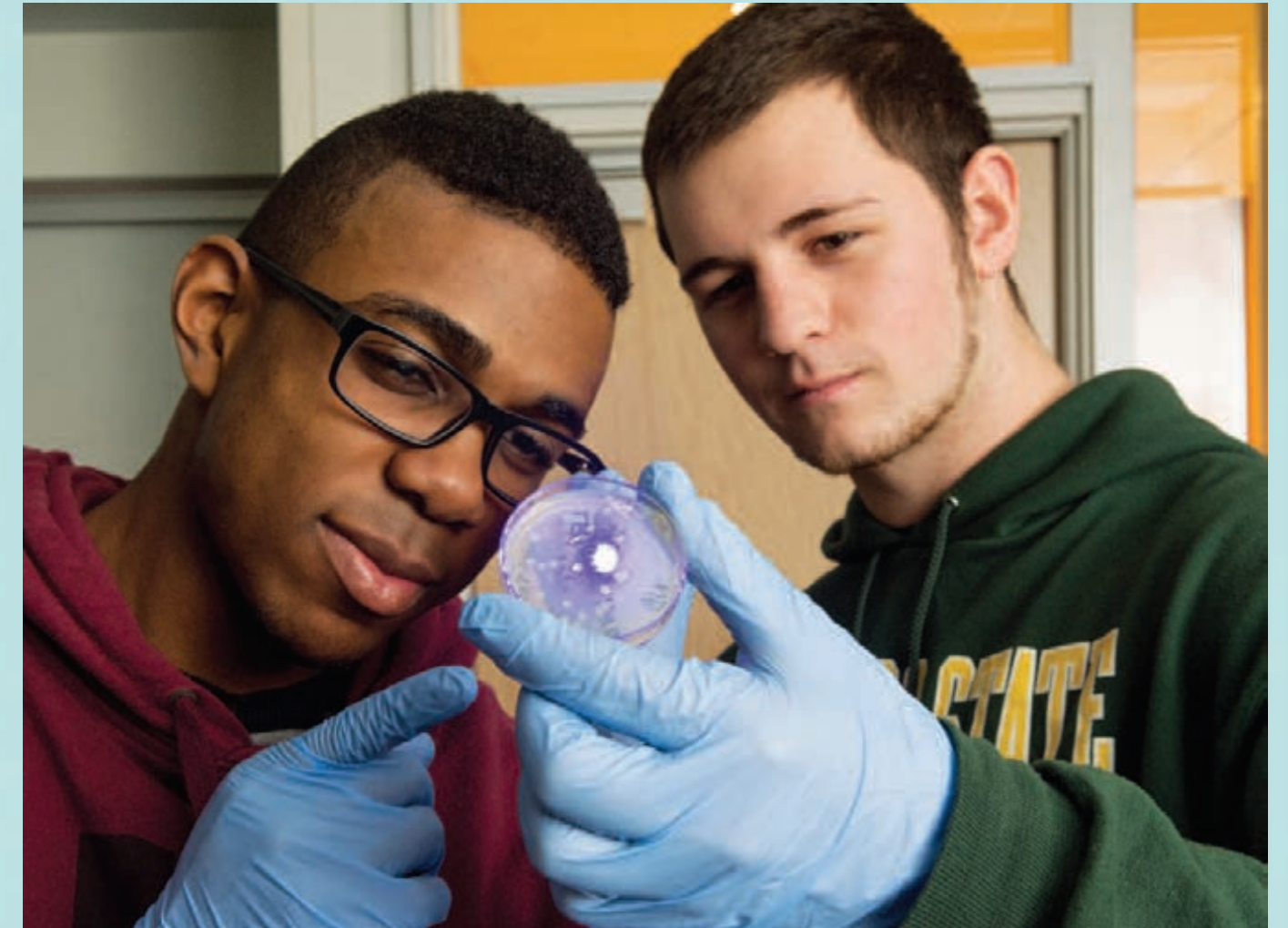
let Google map campus building interiors, for example, and Fitchburg State was chosen as one of eight sites in the world to test a new wireless system from Enterasys.

“We’re a neat size,” Swartz said. “We have all the problems of a much larger place, but we can move much faster than most other schools and that all starts with a president who supports us.”



The heart of the university’s wireless network is in the Information Technology portion of Conlon Hall.

FOCUS ON *Academics*





A NEW WORLD OF LEARNING

IT'S CLEAR THAT WITH THE EVER-CHANGING ECONOMY, THE WORK FORCE AND JOB LANDSCAPE HAVE CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS. AND FITCHBURG STATE HAS KEPT UP, CONSTANTLY EVALUATING ITS ACADEMIC OFFERINGS TO MAKE SURE ITS STUDENTS DEVELOP THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND EXPERIENCE THEY NEED FOR THE JOBS THAT WILL BE AVAILABLE UPON GRADUATION.

GAME DESIGN

Last fall, Fitchburg State became the first public institution in New England to offer a bachelor's degree in game design, preparing students with immediately marketable skills in a fast-growing industry. This baccalaureate program is part of the university's heralded Communications Media Department.

"The video game industry is well established in Massachusetts, with dozens of game studios operating in the commonwealth," President Antonucci said. "Even in the midst of economic difficulties, the video game industry, in New England and nationwide, continues to grow and to search for talented and well-prepared applicants. With this new major, Fitchburg State continues to move forward with a spirit of innovation and an emphasis on preparing students for rewarding careers."

According to the Massachusetts Game Design Institute, the state is one of the largest digital games clusters in the United States, representing a \$2 billion industry and employing approximately 4,000 people.

Fitchburg State professors Jeffrey Warmouth and Samuel Tobin, both from the Communications Media Department, played a major role designing the university's game design curriculum.

Additional faculty members were hired to help teach courses in the major, and work with students in newly-created game design laboratory space within Conlon Hall. Students explore game design and development, art and visual design, computer programming, 3D modeling and animation, level design, creative writing, and game studies. Other course topics include serious games, mobile platforms, history of games, and aesthetics.

A unique feature of Fitchburg State's game design program is a required one-semester 12-credit-hour internship. The internship has been a hallmark of the university's communications media program for years, providing practical experience often cited by students—and employers—as one of the key distinguishing elements of a Fitchburg State education.

CHEMISTRY

And for the second time in as many years, Fitchburg State is adding another major to its offerings: last fall, the state Board of Higher Education approved the rejuvenation of the university's chemistry major. The chemistry major will launch this fall after years in development and the university is now hiring additional faculty members for the program.

"The chemistry major comes at an opportune time for Fitchburg State University, as we near the completion of our \$57 million science center construction and renovation," President Antonucci said. "The new major will allow us to prepare students for a growing and vital sector of the state's economy."

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— ROBERT V. ANTONUCCI
PRESIDENT

“The chemistry degree will be a great complement to the new science center,” said Margaret Hoey, chairman of the university’s Biology/Chemistry Department. “We have planned for this while designing the chemistry labs and the facilities will be able to support the program into the foreseeable future. Chemistry has seen unprecedented interest among all the state universities, and we expect the same kind of growth into the future.”

The new, 55,000-square-foot laboratory wing of the science center opened last summer and work is ahead of schedule for the renovation of the existing Condike Science Building, which will reopen this summer.

The university has offered chemistry courses for decades, but it was discontinued as a major in the 1990s. The proposal to reintroduce the major has been years in development by faculty members and administrators and was designed to support the university’s efforts to prepare students to meet the workforce needs of Massachusetts.

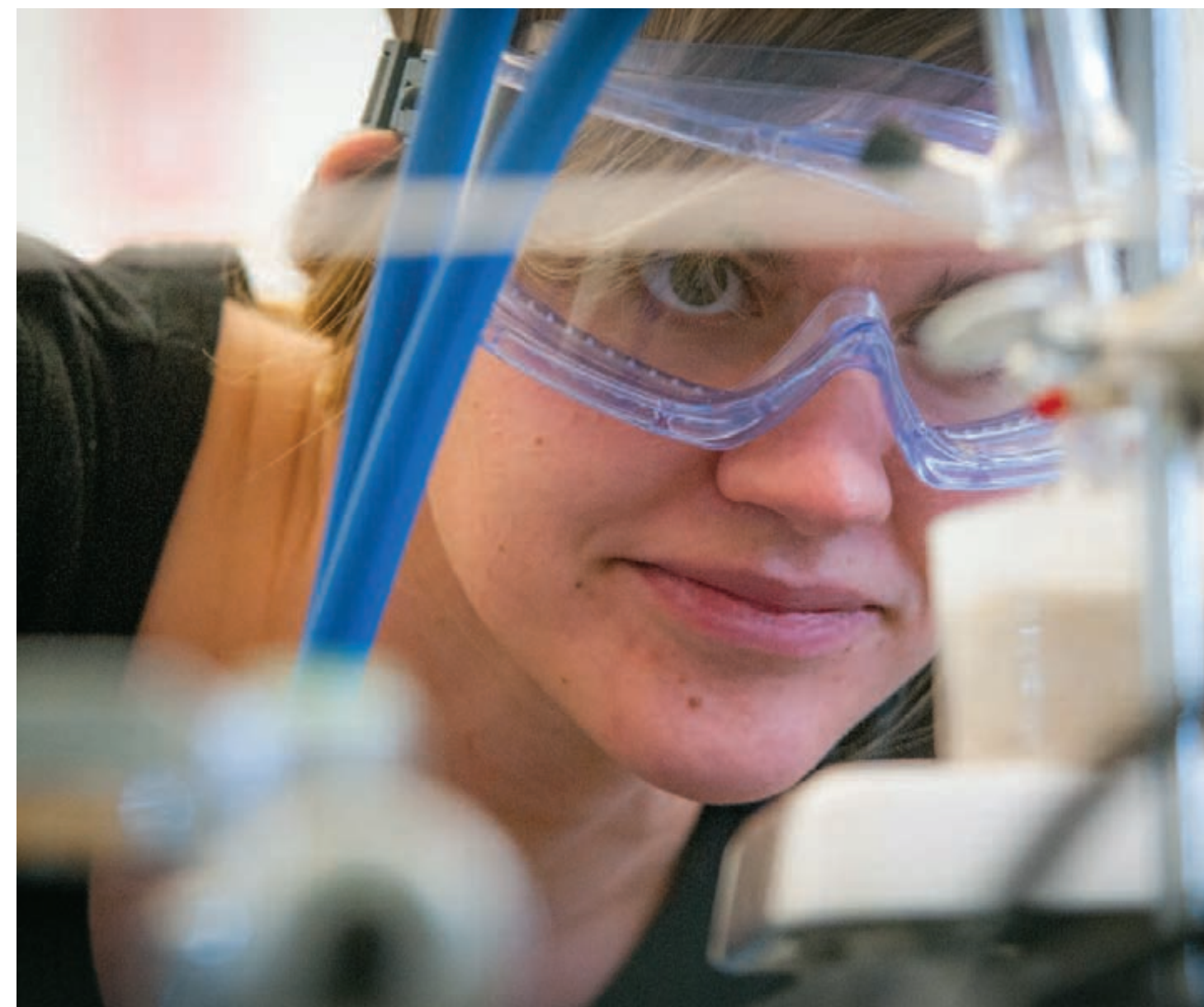
Massachusetts employers are looking for well-trained individuals in biotechnology, chemical, and pharmaceutical firms, and as high school teachers. Graduates of Fitchburg State’s new chemistry program will be prepared to assume many of these positions.

The demand for life sciences workers in the state is expected to grow nearly 45 percent faster than for workers in the state economy as a whole, while occupations in the life sciences cluster are expected to grow at a 1.3 percent annual rate between 2006 and 2014, according to the Life Science Talent Initiative (LSTI). LSTI also reports that almost 80 percent of the new life sciences jobs in Massachusetts will require, at minimum, a four-year degree. Other industry watchers predict similarly growing needs for trained chemists in the state, and Fitchburg State’s program will help local students fill that void.

LPN TO BSN

Another Fitchburg State program meeting workforce development needs is its licensed practical nurse to bachelor of science in nursing bridge program. Graduates of this program are prepared to meet societal healthcare needs in a variety of settings.

During a recent visit to campus, Massachusetts Commissioner of Higher Education Richard Freeland applauded Fitchburg State for its role in creating this innovative, first of its kind program. He noted that the health care industry employers, especially hospitals, are demanding more and more nurses with higher training. This bridge program gives working LPNs credit for their professional experience which can be applied to their bachelor’s degrees.



The resurgent chemistry major’s arrival is well-timed to the completion of the new science center, where students learn in bright, state-of-the-art laboratories.



ALFA

Also marking its 10th anniversary is Adult Learning in the Fitchburg Area (ALFA). Soon after his inauguration in 2003, President Antonucci was approached by community members seeking to start a lifelong learning institute on the campus. The program, inspired by similar efforts at other colleges and universities in Massachusetts, would provide a community resource while serving Fitchburg State's goals of strengthening outreach. The group—including Fitchburg State alumna Shirley Pick and former Fitchburg Public Schools Superintendent Philip Fallon—were greeted with strong and consistent support.

The first courses were offered in March 2004, with Fitchburg State professors Joshua Spero and Susan Williams presenting classes on the Middle East and “consuming the past,” respectively. The professors—and ALFA—were a hit. The lifelong learning institute is sponsored by the university's Office of Academic Affairs and Office of Graduate and Continuing Education. It offers non-credit daytime classes and special events, where members are encouraged to volunteer and participate in program leadership and development as well as social and recreational activities.

Presently, ALFA serves 17 communities and offers over 25 classes each semester, and boasts a growing enrollment. Its regular course offerings are complemented by lecture series that are open to the general public and the group sponsors trips to area museums and cultural centers. Most of the classes take place at the McKay Complex, which also hosts a city public school.

The program now has a demonstrated history of success and a strong following, with hundreds of students enrolling for courses at each session, many of whom attend ALFA day trips. The program offerings are also strong, representing a diverse array of subjects and interests. From drawing to stretching and geology to film, there is something for everyone in ALFA's proverbial bag.

ONLINE EDUCATION

Fitchburg State Professor Paul Beaudoin is recognized for his innovative teaching practices and beloved by his students. And he connects with them without a classroom or ever meeting in person.

That's because Beaudoin's specialty is online education, where bricks and mortar are replaced by internet connectivity.

“Have you ever used Google, Wikipedia, Facebook, or YouTube?” Beaudoin asks. “If so, you have already experienced what learning on the web is like. We live in an age of information and knowledge abundance. This abundance is creating a world of richer experiences and with deeper meaning. Web-based resources bring my students scientific research long before it is published, it offers my students lectures by the world's leading subject experts, it allows them virtual tours of the Sistine Chapel or the Louvre and it brings them live video feeds from the Hubble spacecraft or the deep-sea explorations of the Nautilus. We can see social, political and economic events unfold right before our eyes.”

Beaudoin also sees the Internet's capacity for dialogue as an advantage: “The web is not one-sided. My students receive multiple points of view giving them an opportunity to develop valuable decision-making skills. They are also able to contribute to the wealth of online material by producing their own digital artifacts, often in collaboration with others.”

While Beaudoin enjoys working in a new paradigm for academia, he knows that a skilled teacher is still crucial to the educational experience. A skilled teacher helps scaffold knowledge acquisition allowing a student to navigate the often rugged terrain of a skill, problem or subject.



“Whether you want to learn how to grow heirloom tomatoes or want to learn about artificial intelligence, the online learning environment is open and waiting for you.”

Fitchburg State offered just 36 online courses a decade ago; last fall there were more than 125 online courses (with roughly 1,700 students enrolled), according to Michael B. Leamy, the university’s director of distance education.

The university offers several programs and certificates completely online: the Master of Science in forensic nursing; master of business administration (with tracks in human resources or management); registered nurse to bachelor of science in nursing; business administration; and certificates in forensic nursing, web development and business. Additional programs are also being reviewed for on-line delivery.

Leamy said most of the online students hail from Massachusetts, but also attend from 20 other states while another recent graduate of the online MBA program studied from Vietnam.

“When I think about the future of online education, I am excited,” Leamy said. “I am excited because of both the opportunities and the challenges that lie ahead of us. I think we are at a historical

time in higher education. We have a better understanding of how people learn and what they need to be successful. We have a robust set of technological tools that make online learning an engaging and academically rigorous experience. I have been involved in online learning for more than a decade and I am proud of the work we do in this field at Fitchburg State.”

Students find the online experience fulfilling and convenient.

“Because of my busy life and work schedule, I didn’t have many alternatives and searched around for an affordable program that met my needs in pursuing my bachelor’s degree in nursing,” said Amber Collins of Pocasset. “I decided on Fitchburg because of the affordability as well as the pre-requisite requirements and the options I’d have for pursuing my master’s in forensic nursing. The online program gives me the flexibility I need to be present with my family and friends, and juggle two jobs, and maintain my sanity.”

Collins said the professors she had for her online courses—including Beaudoin—were helpful and accessible when she had questions or concerns.

“Professor Beaudoin made the material very accessible and his style of teaching worked perfectly for the material,” she said. “It felt like I got to develop a relationship with him despite the fact that I have never set eyes on him in person. I am more comfortable with my routine of studying and juggling the day to day of life, and I am grateful to be on the path to advancing my career and bettering my future through Fitchburg State.”

Beaudoin received a 2013 Massachusetts Colleges Online Course of Distinction Award for “From Woodstock to the iPod,” and is also the recipient of the prestigious 2013 Blackboard Exemplary Course Award for his “Commonwealth of the Arts” course. The award identifies and honors best practices for designing engaging online courses from around the world.

THE STUDENT *Experience*





CAMPUS LIFE

A DEFINING ELEMENT OF PRESIDENT ANTONUCCI'S VISION FOR FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY HAS BEEN TO PUT STUDENTS FIRST. THAT PHILOSOPHY HAS GUIDED THE UNIVERSITY'S PROGRAMMATIC ENHANCEMENTS OVER THE PAST DECADE, BUT IT HAS ALSO INFUSED THE INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH TO CAPITAL PLANNING AND CAMPUS LIFE.

"THE CHANGES AROUND THE UNIVERSITY IN THE PAST 10 YEARS HAVE TRULY BEEN TREMENDOUS," SAID NATHAN GREGOIRE, THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNIVERSITY'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES. "IT LOOKS LIKE A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT CAMPUS AND FOR THE BETTER. STUDENTS SEEM TO FIND IT EASIER TO MANEUVER AROUND CAMPUS, WHETHER TO CLASSES, THE DINING HALL, THE CAMPUS CENTER, OR JUST TO HANG OUT WITH FRIENDS. WITH THE ADDITION OF THE NEW SCIENCE CENTER, IT BRINGS A WHOLE NEW MODERNIZED LOOK TO CAMPUS THAT I PERSONALLY BELIEVE STUDENTS ENJOY."

HAMMOND HALL— The Living Room of the Campus

The student-centric approach is reflected in the renovated Hammond Hall, which has truly become the thriving hub of the campus. The ongoing reinvention of the facility has been designed to maximize the amount—and quality—of gathering space for students, both academically and socially.

The university boasts a wide slate of commuter-directed programs and spaces within the campus center. The new commuter lounge is always abuzz with activity and the new game room—featuring pool tables, board games and televisions—is more centrally located, providing students with a prime location to relax. Several lounge spaces allow students ample opportunities to gather in small groups or study quietly in bright, welcoming environments. And the Hammond Hall Art Gallery has been completely renovated, yielding yet another opportunity for cultural enrichment for the building's thousands of visitors.



The renovated Hammond Hall is a prime spot for studying and relaxation. Its open design and abundant glass reinforce a welcoming environment.

The campus center in Hammond Hall is run by students, providing opportunities to learn responsibility, customer service and management skills.

“Being a completely student-run building on campus, we take great pride in both the job opportunities the campus center offers and the fact that there are several places where students can interact with each other in a more relaxed and fun environment,” Gregoire said. “You will never go into the campus center on a weekday and find it empty. There are always students studying or in the game room, or even just enjoying something to eat in the North Street Bistro. Everywhere you go, there are always students taking full advantage of that building.”

“President Antonucci is the most student-centered president I know,” said Assistant Dean of Student Development and Housing Hank Parkinson. “He would do anything for the students. He has invested a lot of money and resources in student development that ultimately result in student growth and success.”

More than half of the university’s undergraduate students commute from off-campus. President Antonucci, who commuted to the campus during his own undergraduate days, has worked tirelessly since the start of his presidency to bring those students into the campus fold.

“When we provide the president with an idea, he helps us make it happen,” Parkinson said. “He understands the purpose of a campus center and the impact a true campus center has on our students. He is very passionate about commuter students, as we are. He shows this by hiring a professional commuter affairs staff member, creating a new commuter lounge, and personally attending commuter events.”

THE WORLD IS THEIR CLASSROOM

Not all learning takes place in the classroom. Students need to get out into the world and explore to become well-rounded individuals. Because of this, among the numerous student support services in Hammond Hall is the Office of International Education. Dozens of students each year have gone beyond the borders of the U.S. to learn about the world around them and get a sense of global citizenship.

In addition, the university’s Center for Italian Culture (CIC) has opened many international doors, providing thousands of dollars annually in scholarship support for students heading to Italy, according to Study Abroad Advisor Tracey Sarefield. “Verona, Florence, Sorrento and Rome are among the spots in Italy that students have explored,” Sarefield said. Many of the Italian trips include Fitchburg State faculty members who teach for-credit courses on topics like photography, Italian cuisine and world history.

The university also partners with overseas institutions, with London being the second-most visited country among Fitchburg State students. And a recently signed agreement with a university in Stuttgart, Germany, will bring communications students from that campus to Fitchburg State (and vice versa).

The Office of International Education works with the international partners to make sure courses taken overseas apply to Fitchburg State graduation requirements, enabling students to keep on track while availing themselves of unique experiences abroad.

“President Antonucci really tightened up that process,” Sarefield said. “He’s made sure students receive credit for what they’ve done, and they can use their financial aid to go abroad. Because of what he’s done, he’s made it possible for students to have these experiences.”



Fitchburg State students take their studies across the globe, led by university faculty or through programs approved by the campus.

FAVE

Building a better world starts at the local level, and creating a safer community is at the heart of Fitchburg Anti-Violence Education (FAVE). The university launched FAVE in 2011 as a campus-wide effort to prevent interpersonal and relationship violence, and sexual assault, and to support those affected by violence. President Antonucci has been a stalwart supporter of the effort, from a proclamation announcing FAVE's founding to continued financial backing of the program.

A key component of FAVE is mandatory educational programming for incoming first-year and transfer students. The intent of the training is to create a community of responsible bystanders on the Fitchburg State campus, who will feel empowered to speak up and intervene before a situation escalates. To date, more than 2,700 Fitchburg State students have gone through FAVE training, which is conducted by a cross-section of campus personnel, including faculty, staff and administrators.

FAVE is directed by Fitchburg State professor Jannette McMenemy and Erin Travia M.A., LMHC of Fitchburg State's Counseling Services, is assistant director. FAVE collaborates with the YWCA of Central Massachusetts/Battered Women's Resources to meet training needs and to link survivors with community-based resources. In addition to bystander training, FAVE hosts events and offers awareness activities throughout the year to underscore the campus commitment to a safe community.

The project launched with a grant awarded from the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women through its Grants to Reduce Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Stalking on Campus Program.

AN ENDURING LEGACY

President Antonucci has done so much for this university, and has put his heart and soul into everything he does for Fitchburg State," said Student Trustee Gregoire. "To him, this is not



Nathan Gregoire

a job but a passion and something he holds dear. He is Fitchburg State and believes very strongly that we are the number one state university. In my eyes, and in the eyes of the students here, I can safely say that we do have the best state university, but furthermore we also have the best university president."

"President Antonucci has done so much for this university, and has put his heart and soul into everything he does for Fitchburg State."

—NATHAN GREGOIRE
STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ATHLETICS

Falcons soar in eventful decade

The Fitchburg State Falcons have flown high over the past 10 years, continuing and expanding a tradition of excellence and experience for the talented student athletes who compete at high levels and represent the university with distinction.

Athletic Director Sue Lauder shares the credit with President Antonucci, a strong sports booster and a member of the board of the National Collegiate Athletics Association.

"The support that President Antonucci has given to each and every one of our athletic programs is unparalleled; he is our greatest cheerleader," Lauder said. "His concern for our student athletes and our coaches is evident to all of us."

"Over the past decade, the improvement of our athletic facilities has been the best in the state, which in turn attracts student athletes," Lauder continued. "With his support, we have increased the size of our rosters so that we have more students taking advantage of the opportunity to continue to participate and compete at the college level."

Fitchburg State's student athletes continue to succeed at the state, regional and national levels, with NCAA championship participation in track and basketball in recent years.

"Just as success breeds success, President Antonucci's support and enthusiasm for our intercollegiate athletic programs breeds increasing support and enthusiasm from the campus and greater Fitchburg community," Lauder continued. "Our student athletes are beginning



In the past 10 years, the Elliot Field athletic complex has experienced major improvements including a new turf field. The complex is home to football, soccer, field hockey, track and field, and women's lacrosse teams, as well as a number of community events.

to believe that we are the number one state university because we believe it. They take pride in being Fitchburg State Falcons, just as President Antonucci does."

One recent example of Falcon pride came courtesy of Garrett Dellechiaie, the Leominster native and freshman quarterback who was named the Eastern College Athletic Conference Division III North Offensive Rookie of the Year for 2013. In his first season for Fitchburg State, Dellechiaie threw for 1,930 yards on 149-of-249 passing (59.8 percent), while passing for 25 touchdowns through the air, breaking the Falcons' single-season touchdown pass record of 21 (set in 2008 by former Fitchburg State standout Jim Miller).

Veteran ice hockey coach Dean Fuller has witnessed the good, bad and everything in between during his prestigious coaching career.

But Fuller, now in his 30th season as head coach, certainly is thrilled with all the wonderful things currently going on at Fitchburg State.

"Obviously this has been a huge portion of my life," said Fuller, who is nearing 500 career victories, which ranks him in the top 10 of



all active Division III coaches. “It’s great to see the university going in the right direction and getting better. To get student-athletes to come, I say get them on campus to see Fitchburg State. When they see the campus, facilities and the academics, you’re in the hunt right there to get those top recruits. Before, I always felt like we were playing catch-up.”

The programs at Fitchburg State have experienced a rise in success, and Fuller is quick to direct the credit at President Antonucci.

“To me, I wouldn’t still be coaching if it wasn’t for Bob Antonucci,” Fuller said. “He’s doing everything possible for our teams. He’s upgrading facilities and helping put us in a position to win. Things keep getting better and better here. There are a lot of good things going on and it’s all Bob Antonucci-driven.

“Winning isn’t easy. To get the good athletes to come to Fitchburg State is a challenge, but he’s given us the chance. I’m really pleased with what’s happening here.”

Winning also took Fitchburg State by storm last winter, as coach Derek Shell’s men’s basketball team went on a magical ride and garnered the program’s first NCAA tourney berth, upsetting Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, 80-72, to win the Massachusetts State Athletic Conference championship.

The underdog Falcons had to win three straight road games over Bridgewater State, Westfield State and MCLA to secure the title.

“The basketball team found lightning in a bottle,” Lauder said. “They got better and better as the season progressed.”

After winning the MASCAC title, the Falcons were awarded an automatic berth in the NCAA Division III tournament. The Falcons lost in first round to the University of Rochester, 91-86, but it was an experience the players and coaching staff will never forget.



The women’s basketball team has played in the NCAA tournament during its storied run over the past 10 years.

“The run we had was unbelievable. What a way to go out,” said 2008 Fitchburg High and 2013 Fitchburg State graduate Jeremy Kimber, a captain on the team. “It was an unbelievable feeling. It’s something I’ll look back on for the rest of my life. I will never forget that experience. To go to Fitchburg High and Fitchburg State and to end my career like that, I can’t ask for a better ending than that.”

The softball team (2003) and women’s basketball team (2007) also have made NCAA tournament appearances in the last 10 years.

Fuller has won a lot in his time leading the Green and Gold, but recently he can reflect back on his 2010-11 team that stunned No. 2 Salem State University as the fourth seed with a 6-5 overtime victory at Rockett Arena in Salem to win the MASCAC championship.



The men's basketball team went to the NCAA Tournament in 2013.

Fitchburg product Trevor Lawler took a feed from Cory Callen and potted the game-winning goal 1:08 into OT to spark a wild celebration.

“Winning the championship in 2011 was a terrific experience,” Fuller said. “Now, we’re trying to get back to that level.”

Fuller said that conference title impacted the program “because kids want to go somewhere you can win.”

He added: “We’ve been consistent with our level of play since I’ve been here, but I want to get to the national level. That’s my goal here.”

Fitchburg State University teams have also appeared in the ECAC Tournament several times in the last 10 years. The football, softball, field hockey, women’s basketball and women’s soccer teams have all advanced twice each, while baseball and men’s basketball advanced once during that span.

“I think we’re catching a lot of peoples’ eyes with the recent success,” said Kimber, a two-sport athlete in football and basketball at Fitchburg State. “People want to go to Fitchburg State.”

In the last two years, four Fitchburg State student-athletes—Zach Desrochers, Joseph Caveney, Matt Muolo and Anthony Bizzotto—have been tabbed All-Americans.

In 2012, former Leominster star linebacker Bizzotto earned BSN College Network Division III All-American third team honors, while Muolo starred on the track and field team in the weight throw.

Last season, Fitchburg hockey product Caveney was an All-American and led all of Division III in points per contest, assists per game and power-play goals. He was the MASCAC Player of the Year. Zach Desrochers powered his way to All-American status as a thrower this season.

Taylor Van Ahnen became an All-American in field hockey in 2009, while women’s basketball player Amy Fahey, who scored her 1,000th career point during the 2013 season as a junior, was named All-Region. Fahey has since become the Falcons’ all-time leading scorer.

Lauder calls Fitchburg State’s recent team and individual successes “just a starting point for us. We’re building success and winning creates interest.”

This article was adapted from a piece by Sentinel & Enterprise reporter Chad Garner that was published in a special section of the newspaper in recognition of President Antonucci’s 10th anniversary at Fitchburg State.

COMMUNITY *Engagement*



A COLLEGE TOWN AT LAST

The front entrance of Fitchburg State University used to be the expansive brick face of the Hammond Campus Center. But as the institution—with the support of the Fitchburg State University Foundation—sought to transform the North Street corridor connecting the campus to Main Street, more than just abandoned factories were knocked down.

The past 10 years have represented a profound change in how the city and the university regard each other, an orientation that is reflected in the glass and steel of the renovated Hammond Hall and is echoed in action across the campus and beyond.

“This new tower really symbolizes what we have been about for the last 10 years, and that’s collaboration with the city of Fitchburg,” President Antonucci recently told visitors to Hammond. “We are one and the same. Though it’s symbolic, it really has a true meaning. We’re part of the city and we’re here to support it.”

Fitchburg Mayor Lisa Wong echoed the philosophical change at an open house for the new science center.

“For too long, Fitchburg State and Fitchburg have been almost two different entities,” Wong said. “All the work in the past decade with support of the trustees, with support of the councilors and other

political leaders and the residents, we’ve really united the college campus and the city. And that has made for a great college and a great city.”

Wong said the science building, itself the topic of discussion for years before taking physical shape, was a dream realized and a harbinger of good things to come.

“It’s here, it’s alive, and this is going to be the kind of place we’re going to attract and continue to retain great students and great faculty,” she said. “It’s going to help us attract businesses. I want to thank all of you for making this dream that were lines on a paper a reality.”

Here are some of the ways Fitchburg State is working to reimagine the city as truly a “college town.”

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

President Antonucci began a long and distinguished career in public education as a teacher. His journey took him to the school office and, later, to become commissioner of education for the state of Massachusetts.

His background in K-12 education has served him well at Fitchburg State, which was founded as a Normal School and still boasts teacher training as one of its cornerstone programs. Fitchburg State student teachers report to districts across the region each year to practice their craft and hone their skills under the tutelage of willing educational partners.

“This new tower really symbolizes what we have been about for the last 10 years, and that’s collaboration with the city of Fitchburg.”

—ROBERT V. ANTONUCCI
PRESIDENT





At the McKay Arts Academy, hundreds of Fitchburg Public School students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade are on the Fitchburg State campus each day. And university students pursuing degrees in all areas of elementary, middle school and secondary education practice their skills at public schools across the region under the watchful eyes of seasoned teachers.

The university is extending its reach into the public schools with an innovative new program that will bring some of Fitchburg High School's most talented students to the campus. An Honors Compact signed in the fall will give students in the high school's recently-launched Honors Academy a host of privileges at Fitchburg State, from access to the university's library collections to priority admission and scholarship support.

"This is one of the programs I really get excited about, because I was a K-12 educator before I came here," President Antonucci told visitors from the Fitchburg Public Schools when the Honors Compact was signed. "I understand K-12 and I understand high schools, and this is a partnership that brings together the best of both institutions. The opportunity you students are going to have is an opportunity a lot of others won't have."

Fitchburg Schools Superintendent Andre Ravenelle has enjoyed a long professional relationship with President Antonucci, and the two men meet for breakfast each month to discuss challenges and opportunities.



Fitchburg High School Principal Jeremy Roche, left, joined President Antonucci and Fitchburg Public Schools Superintendent Andre Ravenelle, right, to sign the Honors Compact.

"It's been great for me to have an educator who was in K-12 before, because it really creates a seamless link that others in the nation were late in getting," Ravenelle said, describing a vision of education that starts at kindergarten and stretches through four years of college. The Honors Compact grew out of that notion.

"When I brought that idea to Bob, there was nothing but, 'OK, how can we make this happen?'" Ravenelle said. "I think this has potential to really be a model for other high schools and universities, especially state schools that have such an incredible product to offer."

Fitchburg High School Principal Jeremy Roche, who graduated from Fitchburg State in 1994, said the Honors Academy arose out of a desire to meet the needs of the city's gifted students. The Honors Compact will be another means of doing so.

"What we're doing is really unprecedented," Roche said. "I don't see any schools doing quite what we're trying to do for students in Fitchburg. We're just so thankful to Fitchburg State to work with us on an idea and the promise that we have students who have untapped and unbelievable potential who will move forward over the course of their four years. It's truly astounding the opportunities that are going to be afforded to students and teachers, too."

A NEW VISION FOR FITCHBURG

The university has encouraged students, faculty and staff to make a difference in their communities and beyond through several mechanisms. From Alternative Spring Break trips that have sent contingents across the country to build Habitat for Humanity houses to more local efforts through the Volunteer Center and the Douglas and Isabelle Crocker Center for Civic Engagement, the Fitchburg State community is engaged at many levels.

Close to campus, long-standing structural concerns recently forced city officials to relocate municipal offices, leaving the future of Fitchburg's historic City Hall in doubt. A committee, including representatives from Fitchburg State, has been tasked with determining the best future use of the building.

Fitchburg State students got into the act last fall when Professor Keith Chenot's architectural design class seized the opportunity to develop their own ideas for the city center. The renderings and concepts developed by the students dazzled city leaders, who saw in the proposals a vision for a bright future that honored Fitchburg's storied past. The committee tasked with charting the future of City Hall is continuing its work.

The university has also enhanced its relationship with the Fitchburg Art Museum. Most recently, students from Professor Rob Carr's professional communications course logged many hours at the downtown institution last fall, designing the layout, installation and promotion of a mid-career retrospective exhibition of faculty member Jeffrey Warmouth's artwork. The exhibition runs through the spring of 2014.



Architecture students envisioned a new downtown corridor.

And the university is in its third year of a free film series offered at the Fitchburg Public Library on Main Street. The Third Thursday Film Series features movies at the library auditorium, typically presented by members of the university faculty and staff. The screenings are followed by a discussion of the issues raised in the film.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

With a strong history of rich internships, Fitchburg State has long believed in the value of experiential learning. Some recent projects have taken that lesson further, expanding beyond the classroom into settings that benefit the surrounding communities.

Fitchburg Access Television (FATV) has hosted many university interns at their Kimball Street headquarters over the years, but a seemingly routine internship placement blossomed in unexpected ways this past fall.

FATV Executive Director Dave Svens recalled being surprised at a recent intern's lack of familiarity with multiple-camera production equipment, knowing Fitchburg State's Communications Media Department was outfitted with the latest technology.

Faculty member Ann Mrvica, who was supervising the intern, noted that the university does indeed have studio space, but not the type of television production environment that FATV maintains. Seeing an opportunity, Mrvica and Svens got to talking, and the elective course on multi-camera television production was born.

Fifteen Fitchburg State students journeyed each week to the FATV studios for the class, taught by Mrvica with plenty of hands-on instruction from Svens and FATV Community Access Coordinator Scott May. The first several weeks of the course were devoted to learning the studio's new equipment, and Svens said the students were quick studies.

From there the students developed public service announcements as group projects, which were written, recorded, and edited for broadcast, incorporating material captured in the field as well as from within the FATV studios.

One such project included Mayor Wong, who introduced a segment on downtown revitalization and the corridor's connection to the university community.

"I think it bodes well for the future of both institutions," the mayor said after the taping. "I just like these very interesting collaborations, built from the bottom up."

Fitchburg State student Phil Sandy, who directed the mayoral project, said the entire class was a great experience.

"There's a lot of hands-on experience with the equipment, a lot of interaction with students," Sandy said. "We have tens of thousands of dollars' worth of equipment at FATV that we don't have on campus. To share in this way is beautiful for everyone."

FATV's staff was also pleased with the collaboration. One requirement of the course was for students to volunteer 15 hours of time to the studio, which included assisting with off-site productions like high school and university football games.

"That's been a godsend to us," Svens said. "It just adds so much."

Communications Media Department Chairman Randy Howe said the collaboration has been a great success.

"It's wonderful and it's been a long time coming," he said. "We've been talking about doing something with FATV and it took Ann to bring to together. Our students are getting a lot from it and it's looking like we'll offer it again."



Students learned multi-camera television production at FATV's state of the art studio.



The University Project brought students into the city as tutors and mentors.

THE UNIVERSITY PROJECT

Fitchburg State is in the second year of its two-year partnership with the Cleghorn Neighborhood Center, bringing some of the institution's resources of time and talent to the service of an agency that supports one of the city's most diverse sections. The effort is known as The University Project and involves Fitchburg State students, faculty, administrators and staff.

The University Project has brought children from Cleghorn to campus for numerous events, from the holiday tree lighting in December to the Taste of Fitchburg dinner that featured offerings from local restaurants. And it has sent Fitchburg State into the community, through initiatives like:

- The Science Club for Girls, wherein university students and faculty work with girls at the center to enrich and promote an appreciation of the sciences.
- Business students and faculty set up shop at the center during tax season to offer free income tax preparation assistance.

- Members of the university's Executive Cabinet and Upward Bound program served more than 200 meals at the center's Thanksgiving Community Dinner. The university also handed out "Future Falcons" T-shirts to children in attendance.
- The university's Crocker Center for Civic Engagement, the Center for Diversity and Inclusiveness and Expanding Horizons offices are creating a Latino Mentor Program in which Latino students from Fitchburg State will work with their peers at the center to discuss academic success and how to prepare for college.
- The Upward Bound program has a close working relationship with the center, attending bi-monthly community dinners and assisting in regular tutoring sessions.
- Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Robin Bowen has joined the center's board of directors.
- Graphic designer Pamela Boudreau from the university's Print Services office is designing a new logo for the agency.
- An interactive media class is building a new website for the center.
- The Alpha Sigma Tau fraternity is taking on the center as a client for its volunteer program.

NURSING THE NEXT GENERATION

The future health professionals studying nursing at Fitchburg State know that a healthy lifestyle is the best way to prevent medical problems. It's a lesson that is underscored for nursing students through their work as community educators.

A group of student nurses recently visited the Gardner Academy for Learning and Technology (GALT), the alternative high school for Gardner's public school system. Senior Sarah Minton, president of the university's Class of 2014, had been spending a week at the school as part of a course on chronic illness and community health.

"I saw there was a lot of need here," Minton said. From that vision grew the "Healthy Choices, Healthy Life" event that brought Minton and fellow nursing students Shaylee Bowman, Katelyn Fereshetian, Ashley Flinkstrom, Megan Godfrey, Rebecca Spiro and Zachary Wright to GALT for a morning health fair. The underlying message of the morning was to teach the teens and young adults in the alternative high school the importance of diet and nutrition.

Minton was mentored by Heywood Hospital diabetes instructor Douglas H. Miller, who also attended the GALT health fair and was impressed by the rapport the nursing students struck with their younger peers. Miller has welcomed Fitchburg State students to his office for years and has taken his own efforts beyond the hospital campus and into the schools, where healthy habits need to begin.

Allison Shields, R.N., the Fitchburg State nursing instructor who oversaw the GALT project, beamed about the good work of her students.

"These future nurses recognized a real need here," she said. "They wanted to do a teaching project not just to meet the needs of the class, but to make a difference. I'm just so proud of them. They want the kids in this school to know someone cares about them."



BURNING IDEAS

F451 and the community

Fitchburg State has embraced its role as a cultural resource for the region, bringing national and international performers to the stage, celebrated authors for readings and lectures and talented artists to its galleries.

Many of these disciplines merged in the fall of 2013, when the CenterStage at Fitchburg State University arts and culture series presented a month-long, multimedia exploration of the ideas and issues behind Ray Bradbury's celebrated dystopian novel *Fahrenheit 451* on the 60th anniversary of its publication.

Film screenings, live performances, art exhibitions, panel discussions and a community read-aloud of the novel formed the spine of this unique partnership between Fitchburg State and the city of Fitchburg's historic and cultural institutions.

The university launched its cultural series in 1996 under the direction of Mary Chapin Durling, the recently retired cultural affairs director who was guided by the principle that CenterStage is Fitchburg State University's front door for the community.

Legendary performing artists like Judy Collins, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Ladysmith Black Mambazo and James "Superharp" Cotton are among the musicians who have performed on the university's stages. The Alvin Ailey dance troupe and the lauded Irish theater company Gare St. Lazare Players have also moved audiences, among many, many others.

The university's own theater program recently relocated to the Communications Media Department, helping unite several disciplines. For years, student theater productions have been featured and recognized by the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, and several performers and productions were once again nominated for awards from the fall 2013 season.

The power of the arts to inspire and provoke thought was fully realized with the *Fahrenheit 451* project. In his novel, Bradbury created an imaginary world that would come to pass in our daily lives today. From the technology of flat screen monitors, interactive devices and ear buds to the blurry line between censorship and apathy, Bradbury's work was stunningly prescient.

Associate Professor Daniel Sarefield, a member of the Economics, History and Political Science Department faculty, was attached to the *Fahrenheit 451* project as its resident humanities scholar. He said Bradbury's death in 2012 and the 60th anniversary of the novel's publication made the time right to use the piece as a starting point to discuss society, technology and censorship. And an array of community partners expanded the program's reach far beyond the confines of the campus.



Cultural programming at Fitchburg State included a performance by actor Conor Lovett, pictured above in his solo adaptation of "Moby Dick."



A community read-aloud of Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 was part of the month-long celebration of the novel's 60th anniversary. The events comprised a wide-ranging discussion of issues related to censorship, book-burning and free expression.



Fitchburg State students had a major role in the events, developing promotional collateral including posters, news releases and radio advertisements

that earned them credits while building a sizable audience for a sprawling project.

“This confluence of willing and active participants, including members of Fitchburg State University’s faculty, librarians, and students, the Fitchburg Public Library, the Fitchburg Historical Society, the Fitchburg Art Museum, the Fitchburg Cultural Alliance working through Rollstone Studios, other local arts organizations, artists, and concerned citizens, enabled the *Fahrenheit 451* Community Read project to reach out into every part of the community and bring together over 1,400 people at one and often many more of the project’s 19 events,” Sarefield said.

The project blossomed from Durling’s booking of the New York-based Aquila Theater Company, which was mounting a national tour of Bradbury’s own stage adaptation of the novel. She saw the potential for a CenterStage main event, as well as a broader community effort. Grants paid for 700 students from local schools to see a daytime performance of the Aquila show, while the evening performance was preceded by a talk with Sarefield and members of the company on the issues the text explores. The project was also aligned with the state’s curriculum standards and grants paid for hundreds of copies of the novel, graphic novel and play scripts of *Fahrenheit 451* which were distributed to schools and community outlets.

A staged reading of the play was directed and performed by volunteers from the Fitchburg theatrical community at the public library. Book discussions of Bradbury’s novel, moderated by Fitchburg Public Library staff and Fitchburg State faculty, were held on-campus and in the library downtown. The 1966 film adaptation of *Fahrenheit 451* by François Truffaut was also screened at both locations, and both were followed by public discussions. For weeks, read-aloud events held at the public library were recorded and rebroadcast on Fitchburg Access Television.

Book club discussions of the novel were held at the public library, while altered book workshops took place at the Fitchburg Art Museum and Rollstone Studios.

“From the many people I spoke with at the events, I can say that participants were struck by many different aspects of Bradbury’s story,” Sarefield said. “Many found his dystopian fantasy to be an eerily prescient depiction of a reality that is much more like our own than that of the 1950s when it was written, a realization that was both troubling and cause for introspection. Again and again, the conversations have turned to contemporary manifestations of the issues involved, such as censorship of the Internet and social media in the United States and abroad, on-line surveillance by governments and the secret collection of data.”

The month’s events concluded with a roundtable discussion on censorship and freedom of speech that included President Antonucci, *Sentinel & Enterprise* Editor Charles St. Amand and Fitchburg Public Schools Assistant Superintendent Paula Giaquinto.

The community read will be emulated again in 2013-14, when the campus takes on “The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness” by Michelle Alexander. A committee of faculty and staff has been working for months to plan events, speakers and films that can be used to drive a multi-faceted, community-wide conversation about issues of crime, punishment and social justice.

ALUMNI *Affairs*



SPEAKING OF TRADITION

FITCHBURG STATE HAS OBSERVED MANY TRADITIONS OVER ITS LONG HISTORY, AND ONE OF ITS NEWEST IS WELCOMING BACK DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI TO SERVE AS THE FEATURED SPEAKER AT THE SPRING COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY. HERE ARE SOME PEARLS OF WISDOM THAT NOTABLE ALUMNI HAVE SHARED WITH GRADUATES AND THEIR FAMILIES.

MICHAEL J. DEITEMEYER '86

The president of Omni Hotels & Resorts studied accounting as an undergraduate at Fitchburg State. For his senior-year internship he went to the Worcester Marriott hotel. The internship turned into a full-time job, which turned into an amazing career. Deitemeyer shared his story of hard work and tenacity with graduates as the university's 2013 commencement speaker.

"In simple terms, create a foundation for success that works for you and what you want to accomplish. It's easy to be recognized if you excel at what you do. So build your brand, understand what makes you unique. So if you know your strengths, quickly grasp on to them and work with what you've got. You create, evolve and reinforce your brand everyday on both a personal and professional level.



Michael J. Deitemeyer '86 discussed the importance of a strong work ethic.

Be cognizant in understanding how your identity, attitude and approach affect the many opportunities available to you. I still have a lot of hard work ahead of me, as do all of you. Remember one thing: You always have the ability to do more, reach for more—and you will be rewarded for it. With that, you can achieve almost anything."

R.A. SALVATORE '81, '91

The best-selling author was studying technical writing at Fitchburg State when he discovered an appetite for fantasy and science fiction, and famously took pen to paper by candlelight and launched his writing career. Salvatore now has 17 million copies of his books in print, many of which chronicle the exploits of his original character Drizzt Do'Urden, the dark elf. In his address at the 115th commencement exercises in 2011, Salvatore recalled the too-short life of his brother, who was remembered by multitudes at his memorial service and who made an impact by touching other lives.

"Because success is measured in little things, in how many genuine smiles cross your face. Because success is measured by how many people will truly miss you when you are gone. Because true success in life is not about public accolades or awards, or even giving commencement speeches. Because true success in life is not about applause. True success in life is in your heart, not your wallet. I hope you all see the truth in that before you figure out what road you wish to travel."



R.A. Salvatore '81, '91 noted that success is measured by more than book sales.



Patrice K. Nicholas '77 described how her world was broadened beyond the campus.

DR. PATRICE K. NICHOLAS '77

The director of global health and academic partnerships at Brigham & Women's Hospital in Boston, Dr. Nicholas studied nursing at Fitchburg State and ignited a passion that has sent her across the world. She teaches and advises students at Massachusetts General Hospital's Institute of Health Professions. A two-time Fulbright Scholar, Dr. Nicholas focuses on end-of-life care and chronic illness. She spoke at the university's 114th commencement exercises in 2010.

“I ask you to look to your right and look to your left. If your life is like mine, these bonds that you share with those around you—or perhaps that you build with Fitchburg State graduates as your lives progress—can be among the most important friendships and professional relationships that you forge. My advice: don’t overlook any opportunity for meeting new people and nurturing current relationships with those who can help you launch your careers, advance your lives professionally and personally, or bring you a sense of satisfaction as you keep yourself open to possibilities.”

MELANIE PERKINS '91

The Emmy-winning documentary filmmaker got her start at Fitchburg State, where she completed a double major in human services and communications media. She explored a painful chapter from her childhood in Lawrence when creating her acclaimed documentary “Have You Seen Andy?” examining the 1976 disappearance of her friend Andy Puglisi. Perkins’ emotional and uplifting address at the 113th commencement exercises in 2009 discussed the challenges of making that film and the difficulties she has faced in her own life.

“I know today that I couldn’t have made that film if I didn’t first believe that I could. Try to remember, as Michael Jordan famously said, you have to expect things of yourself before you can do them. You never know what the future holds. Some of the most enriching experiences of my life have been the most painful; it’s only now I can see they made me who I am today. That is my wish for you—that your heart dances, that you live a full and happy life, that what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger, that you believe in yourself and that life’s clichés become more and more meaningful with every experience that you have.”



Melanie Perkins '91 told her audience that many clichés contain pearls of wisdom worth remembering.

For more information on alumni and fundraising news, see the recent annual donors list publication (call 978-665-4555 for a copy), or visit our website at www.fitchburgstate.edu/alumni.

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