



FITCHBURG STATE
UNIVERSITY

Contact

SUMMER 2018



WHERE THEORY MEETS PRACTICE

A focus on student work
inside and outside the
classroom—pp 6–23

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ALEX RAMOS '19 interned this spring in the city
of Fitchburg's municipal offices.

“NEVER FORGET THAT YOU ARE A FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY FALCON. THE FALCON IS OFTEN SYMBOLIZED FOR ITS SUPREME FOCUS, SPEED, STRATEGIC VISION, AND FEARLESS CHARACTER. THESE ARE ATTRIBUTES THAT WERE INGRAINED IN YOU HERE AT FITCHBURG STATE, AND WILL BE CULTIVATED DURING YOUR JOURNEY LONG AFTER THIS MILESTONE MOMENT. SO, WHEN OTHERS TAKE THEIR EYE OFF THE PRIZE, REMAIN FOCUSED. WHEN THE DOOR OF YOUR OPPORTUNITY IS OPENED, DON'T DOUBT YOURSELF, FALL FORWARD! TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR OPPORTUNITIES WITH CONFIDENCE, AND WITH THE SUPREME FOCUS OF A FALCON.”

Brig. Gen. Frederick A. Henry '84, U.S. Army, retired, undergraduate commencement speaker

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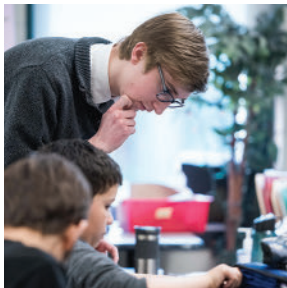
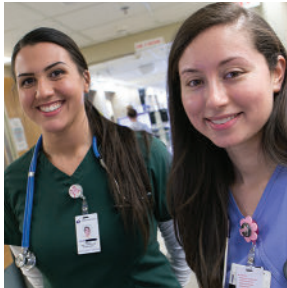
Printing | DS Graphics

Design | Michele Italiano Perla

Photography | Rob Carlin '00 | Ed Collier | Jennifer Gyles '98 | Anna Cannon-Burch '19

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Contact is published by the offices of Marketing and Integrated Communications and Alumni & Development, and is mailed to alumni and other select supporters of Fitchburg State University. Please send correspondence to Contact Magazine, Office of Alumni & Development, Fitchburg State University, 160 Pearl St., Fitchburg, MA 01420, or to contact@fitchburgstate.edu. Visit Contact online at fitchburgstate.edu/alumni



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“EXPLORATORY PROFESSIONAL WORK
HELPS STUDENTS IDENTIFY THEIR
PASSIONS EARLY ON.”

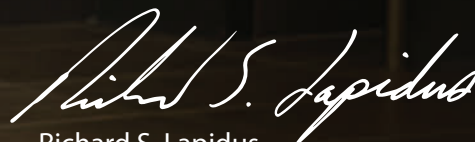
Dear Alumni and Friends,

This issue of Contact explores Fitchburg State's pioneering efforts to put higher education learning into practice. This unique approach to learning while doing is one of our best forms of differentiation. The bulk of our students come from modest backgrounds and already hold one or more jobs while attending school. But exploratory professional work helps students identify their passions early on and test their mettle in a more nurturing and forgiving environment.

The following pages hold just a sample of our programs' immersion experiences, from a student nurse's hospital practicum, to a computer programmer's development project, to an English major's stint helping a non-profit. In all cases, time spent "on-the-job" allows our students to apply their skills and talents in the real world. These achievements also are invaluable when demonstrating potential to future employers or seeking acceptance at graduate school.

The university does not require hands-on work experience for all areas of study. However, we notice that liberal arts majors benefit from internships equally as much as students on defined career tracks. In fact, professional exposure can show the way and provide entry-level footholds for those who find it difficult to project knowledge honed at school into the workplace.

I ask all of you who fondly remember your internships, practicums, study abroad, work-study, and other global exposure opportunities to keep Fitchburg State in mind as you, or your organizations, seek temporary or full time assistance. Your alma mater is proud of your accomplishments and appreciates your support aiding all those who follow you.



Richard S. Lapidus
President



CAMPUS NEWS



SUCCESS IN THE WINGS

The university's purchase of the Main Street theater block in downtown Fitchburg continues to generate enthusiasm from local residents and elected officials. This spring that excitement spread to the Statehouse, as Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito and Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Jay Ash made separate visits to the building to learn more about the project and tour the construction site.

The first phase of renovation will be ready for occupancy this fall with the opening of the idealab. Spanning the second floor of the building, it will include a state-of-the-art studio for students completing their game design studies, along with interdisciplinary meeting space.

"When you see public investments like this, private investment will follow," Polito said as she surveyed renderings of the project that depict a bustling downtown corridor. "This is what people want to see in the city."

"What Fitchburg State is creating is remarkable," Ash said. "We want to help you create what is a transformative project in the downtown."

The second phase of the project will involve the renovation of street-level retail spaces, with the third phase being the restoration of the theater itself. The timing of the second and third phases is still being determined. The university is exploring a variety of funding options to complete the project.



HONORING LANDRY

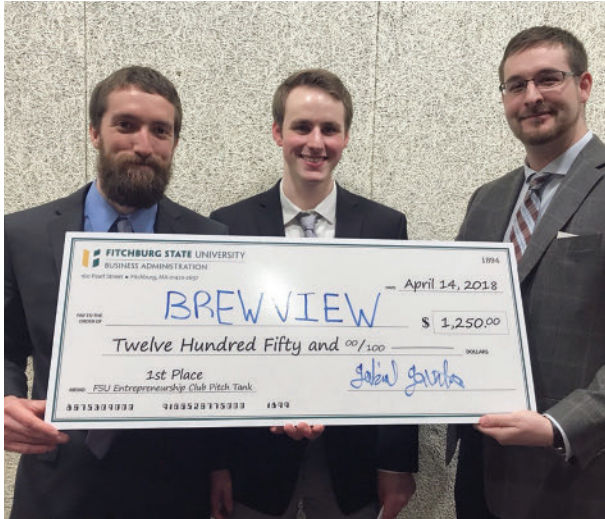
The community celebrated the opening of the renovated Carmelita Landry Arena earlier this year, marking the opening of a new facility for the university's varsity athletes to train while honoring a local legend.

Landry is named for the famed Fitchburg speed skater who competed in the 1930s and 40s. Her daughter, Darlene Westlund, attended the ceremony that marked the facility's return to operations.

In addition to training space for university athletes, Landry will also provide laboratory space for students in the new strength and conditioning concentration within the Exercise and Sports Science Department.

"The renovated Landry Arena will help generations of student-athletes to compete at the highest level," President Lapidus said. "It will also provide hands-on experience for students to learn how to facilitate such excellence and serve as a laboratory of expanding academic programs."

The facility was an instant hit with the university's 330 varsity student-athletes, who are enjoying its strength and conditioning center and the 55- by 25-yard turf field. Landry is also housing the city of Fitchburg's Recreation Department pending the renovation of City Hall, and the community will have access to the turf when not in use by the university.



A WINNING PITCH

The student Entrepreneurship Society wrapped up its inaugural Pitch Tank contest this spring, with Tyler Sullivan '16, '19, taking the top prize for a beer-rating app he is developing called BrewView. The longtime beer aficionado is \$1,250 closer to turning his hobby into a business thanks to his winnings.

"I've brewed beer myself and I like to drink craft beer," said Sullivan, who's partial to IPAs. "I've used a couple apps before and they seemed to be lacking. I wanted to make an app that's better than what's already out there."

Sullivan, who will complete his MBA at Fitchburg State next spring, also earned an undergraduate degree in business administration at the university. He is currently working as an administrative assistant in the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library.

Sullivan said the prize money will help the app developers get some professional assistance to launch the service. Judges for the Pitch Tank competition included Fitchburg State alumni William A. Heitin '90, founding partner, chief financial officer and chief operating officer at Windrose Advisors, and Lee Oviaan '90, manager at Mazak Corporation.



Watch our spring commencement ceremonies on our



YouTube channel, youtube.com/FitchburgState and see our photo galleries at



[Facebook.com/FitchburgStateUniversity](https://facebook.com/FitchburgStateUniversity).

122ND COMMENCEMENT

The Fitchburg State Alumni Association welcomed more than 700 new members at the 122nd commencement this spring.

Brig. Gen. Frederick A. Henry, U.S. Army, retired, from the class of 1984, delivered the address at the undergraduate ceremony.

"Like some of you, I came to this great institution with no real idea of what I wanted to be or what degree program I wanted to pursue," Gen. Henry said. "However, I left this institution with a Falcon spirit and ready to start my journey. I left this institution wiser, as I know all of you will do today. At Fitchburg State, I found a sanctuary that cultivated my intellectual curiosity. More importantly, Fitchburg afforded me, like it has for many of you, opportunities to discover my leadership potential."



WHERE THEORY MEETS PRACTICE

Experiential education has been a cornerstone of the Fitchburg State academic program since the institution's founding in 1894 as a teacher training school. Today, students from almost every academic program take part in some kind of internship or practicum experience wherein they apply their classroom knowledge in the outside world. For many alumni, successful career paths began with their own internships, and today's students are also using these experiences to help clarify their own personal and professional aspirations. In the pages ahead, please see a snapshot.





From left, Germanie R. Gourdet '19, MacKenzie V. Cashin '18, Dr. Michael T. Greenwood, Catherine M. Newman '19, Rachel E. Kersey '19, Abdul-Halim King '18, Joshua D. Victor '19, Evan T. Phillips '18, Gabriel Gavrilov '19, and Evan C. Corrigan '18 at River Styx Brewing in Fitchburg, where they conducted a comprehensive case study for a business policy and strategy class.

BEING THE BEST NURSE I CAN BE

Julia Zamanian '18 has idolized the nursing profession her whole life. The daughter of a nurse, she's seen the impact these important health care workers have on a patient's recovery and is eager to follow in her mother's footsteps.

Zamanian, like her fellow nursing students, completed a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree this spring with an immersive practicum designed to help students strengthen clinical knowledge and skills in preparation for practice.

In the practicum, student nurses work under a registered nurse clinical preceptor as well as a faculty preceptor, helping the students integrate their classroom work into the "real world" setting.

Zamanian completed her practicum at the bustling UMass Memorial Medical Center in Worcester. "I worked under the supervision of my preceptors that allowed me to independently deliver the nursing duties that are done throughout the course of a shift," she said. "I performed patient assessments, administered medication, documented care plans, attended interdisciplinary rounds, communicated with doctors, discharged and admitted patients, and more. Throughout my time in clinical, I was able to assume more responsibility."

Keeping a close eye on Zamanian was her preceptor, Claribell Gomez '12, who has been with the UMass Medical Center for six years.

"I was so excited to learn that my preceptor was a Fitchburg State alum," said Zamanian. "It made me comfortable knowing that she went through the exact same process as I did and that we could relate."

She also found Gomez to be a highly skilled practitioner and educator. "Claribell's knowledge of nursing exceeded my expectations," Zamanian said. "She always had a rationale for every action she performed and made sure I understood it. Her passion for nursing is inspiring."

The feeling was mutual. "Working with Julia was great," Gomez said. "She was the first senior nursing student for whom I had the opportunity to precept, and I loved taking her under my wing and teaching her things I know are going to be important. Julia picked up on things quickly and didn't shy away from those challenging moments. She is going to be a great nurse."

Professor Nancy Duphily, chair of the Nursing Department, said Fitchburg State's program has student nurses making observations in clinical settings in their sophomore year. The hours and responsibilities increase over the rest of their undergraduate careers. In their junior years, for example, students go through seven-week rotations in medical/surgical, mental health, pediatric and maternity wards.

"We try to integrate one theoretical concept to the next, to scaffold their knowledge," she said. "They understand the importance of evidence-based practice, and they see wonderful examples."

By the final semester, Duphily said, the students are completing 250 hours of practicum under the one-on-one supervision of a baccalaureate-level preceptor. "Many of our students are offered jobs right out of their practicums," she said.

Zamanian is ready for the start of her professional career. "Fitchburg State equipped me with all the necessary skills to become the best nurse I can be," she said. "I could not have done this without my instructors. I am so thankful for all of their help and compassion, and I am truly proud to be a graduate of this nursing program."

"I PERFORMED
PATIENT
ASSESSMENTS,
ADMINISTERED
MEDICATION,
DOCUMENTED CARE
PLANS, ATTENDED
INTERDISCIPLINARY
ROUNDS,
COMMUNICATED
WITH DOCTORS,
DISCHARGED AND
ADMITTED PATIENTS,
AND MORE.
THROUGHOUT MY
TIME IN CLINICAL,
I WAS ABLE TO
ASSUME MORE
RESPONSIBILITY."

WHERE THEORY MEETS PRACTICE



COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

Paul Walter '16 sees criminal justice through a holistic lens. "You can't put everyone in jail forever," he said. "The idea of reintegration appeals to me."

Those concepts are central to the community corrections model, in which offenders experience supervised release. Walter has been part of that effort since joining the U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services Office in Worcester as a paid intern in January 2017.

Walter works with offenders who have been convicted in the federal courts of sex crimes, drug offenses and bank fraud, among other infractions. From making sure offenders are drug-free to working with them as they write journals about their experiences and ongoing rehabilitation, it's a diverse work day.

"You've got to push them," Walter said. "A lot of them would rather go back to jail, where it's more structured."

Walter takes satisfaction from helping the probationers navigate the transition to life on the outside.

"There are many aspects of social work in what I do," he said. "You've got to try everything with them before you (find them in violation) and send them back to prison."

Chief U.S. Probation Officer for the District of Massachusetts Christopher Maloney '89 is glad to see the interns getting such a robust look at the workings of the system.

Maloney worked to build a pipeline for Fitchburg State interns after he delivered the university's commencement address in 2014. "We've always used interns in federal probation, but we didn't have a connection with any particular school," Maloney said. "They're all hard working, they're all dependable," Maloney said. "They're getting a great experience and they're filling a valuable need that we have."

Internships are highly recommended in the criminal justice program, and each semester Fitchburg State students go to a variety of settings to apply the skills they've learned in class. They are assigned to police agencies, correctional institutions, courthouses and probation

departments, among other settings.

And this summer, the first cohort of the university's 4+1 police program – wherein graduates will complete bachelor's and master's degrees as well as full certification to serve any municipal police department in the state – will complete a regimen that includes emergency vehicle operations, firearms instruction and physical training. That cohort graduates in September.

As an undergraduate, Maloney was not required to complete an internship but shadowed an uncle who was a probation officer in Boston. He was intrigued by the balance of law enforcement with the high purpose of helping turn others' lives around.

He'd found his career path. Sworn in as a federal probation officer in 1992, Maloney now heads the state office and has helped create opportunities for Fitchburg State students by bringing conferences to the campus and embarking on projects that will incorporate a variety of disciplines.

"The internship program has opened up a lot of other things with the university," he said, "and I'm happy about that."



AT HOME IN THE LAB

Meghan Umbrello '18 has always enjoyed being in laboratories. When she was looking at colleges four years ago she was drawn to the facilities at Fitchburg State's Antonucci Science Complex and the faculty members she met.

Umbrello ultimately landed on a major in chemistry, because of its mix of lab work and mathematical concepts.

As a junior, Umbrello learned about an internship opportunity at New England Peptide in Gardner. The company manufactures custom peptides—chains of amino acids used in a variety of laboratory and pharmaceutical applications—for clients all over the globe. Umbrello got the internship, which turned into a part-time job at summer's end. Umbrello said she proved herself by taking on any task that was assigned and always

demonstrated an interest in learning more.

"I'm using the same skills I learned in general chemistry at Fitchburg State," she said. "I understand the process beyond just the procedure."

She said her time at New England Peptide has exposed her to other career paths within the sciences, which is just one benefit of the internship experience. "I would highly recommend anyone interested in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields to get hands-on research experience or an internship, because it opened my eyes to several opportunities that I didn't even know were options," she said. "I also think it's a great way to

get experience before graduating to put you at an advantage when applying to jobs or graduate school after your undergraduate career."

Umbrello is considering continuing her education down the road.



RIISING TO THE OCCASION



Steve Borges '90 believes the recipe for a rewarding career is a good education, a solid skill set, a little bit of luck and a lot of personal initiative. Now the executive vice president and chief executive officer for Nypro Healthcare, a Jabil company, he's had great success navigating the international business world and is committed to helping others chart their own courses.

One way he has done so is by fostering a robust internship program at his own company.

Borges looks for evidence of drive when he's making hires. "When I look at resumes, I always look for some level of experience," he said. "It shows me they know what teamwork is, and it gives them an opportunity to share their experiences."

Borges grew up in Somerset and learned about Fitchburg State from his sister, who studied education. "I wanted a smaller school where if I wanted to, I could actually know my professors," he said. "I didn't want to be a number."

He studied business management and saw an opportunity to put his studies into practice. "I'm not the smartest guy in the world, but one smart thing I did was get an internship at GTE on Route 128," he said. He started off in the telephone company's stockroom and then learned about its production planning processes.

After completing his degree in 1990, Borges was hired. His responsibilities grew to managing government contracts, and stayed with the company for three years. On the lookout for a job with greater growth potential, Borges applied for a job in Florida with Jabil, Inc., a global manufacturing services company.

"I got the job the same day I interviewed and told my parents I was leaving," Borges said. "You need good skills and a little bit of luck."

The company grew by acquiring other firms, including Nypro's health care operations. He spent a year and a half at Nypro's headquarters in Clinton before returning to Florida, where he's based.

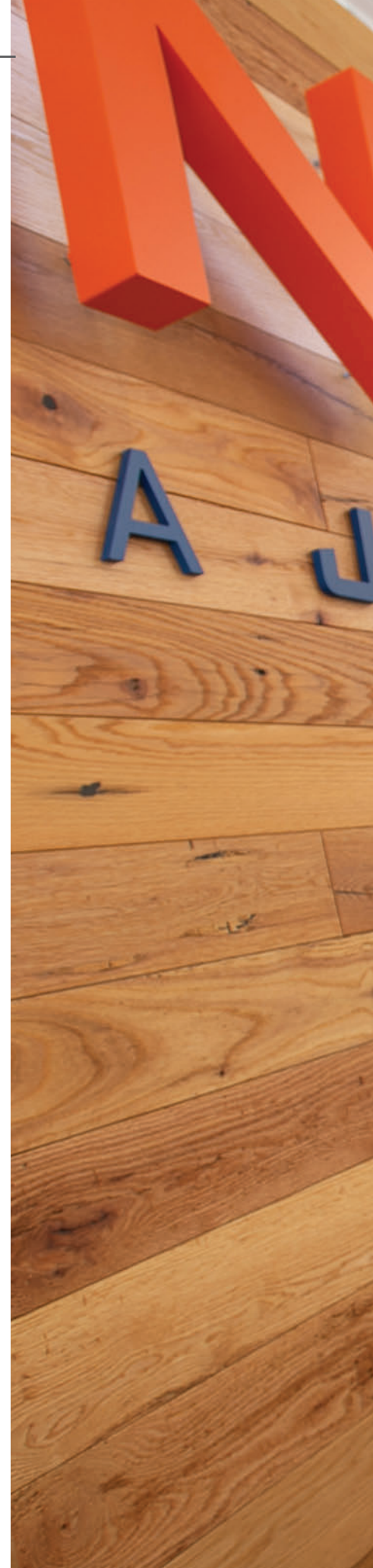
Borges helps pay that spirit forward through the internship programs he has fostered, along with presentations to students. Earlier this year he was the executive-in-residence at Fitchburg State, meeting with groups of students, faculty and senior staff.

Nypro's interns work in different divisions within the company, from finance to engineering to quality assurance. They do valuable work for the company, Borges said, making the relationship mutually beneficial.

"I tell the interns, this is going to be as great as you want it to be," he said.

That's how Rachel Sazonick '20 has approached her experience at Nypro. Sazonick is pursuing a degree in business accounting and learned about the internship at Nypro through Professor Michael Greenwood. Her classroom training came in handy for the financial aspects of the internship, but the experience had other benefits. "I learned how to work on my own as well as with a team, which became very helpful when being on my own during the end of the company's fiscal year when everyone was focusing on meeting deadlines," she said. "I also learned to speak up and ask for help when I needed it."

She also picked up valuable interpersonal skills. "This internship has definitely helped clarify my future plans," Sazonick said.



MY YARD
ABIL COMPANY

“I LEARNED HOW TO WORK WITHIN A TEAM AS WELL AS ON MY OWN, WHICH BECAME VERY HELPFUL WHEN EVERYONE WAS BUSY AND DISTRACTED WITH END-OF-FISCAL YEAR DEADLINES, I ALSO LEARNED TO SPEAK UP AND ASK FOR HELP WHEN I NEEDED IT.”

—Rachel Sazonick '20





HEAD OF THE CLASS

The sixth-graders shuffle into the classroom at Leominster's Sky View Middle School, chatting amiably with each other as they take their seats for the day's lesson. The subject is science, and they will be going over different aspects of weather.

Their teacher, Matthew Daniels '18, is just a few weeks away from graduating with a (bachelor's) degree in middle school education. He captures their attention quickly by asking them to recap some of the material they covered earlier and calling on some by name to define weather fronts and low pressure systems.

Daniels has teaching in his blood. "My mom's a teacher and a lot of my dad's family are teachers," he said. As a high schooler in Newburyport, Massachusetts, Daniels was able to do an internship teaching 8th graders. He loved it.

When he was looking at colleges, Daniels was attracted to the climate he observed at Fitchburg State.

He also loved that he was in a real classroom from his earliest collegiate days, observing 5th graders at the McKay Arts Academy on the university campus. "I got to see different styles of teaching through different techniques," he said. "We were always reflecting on real-life scenarios."

His experience teaching at Sky View Middle School confirmed he's chosen the right path."

OBSERVATION AND REFLECTION

Watching from the rear of the classroom at Sky View, as he has on many occasions this semester, is William McSheehy '70, '82, a program supervisor in Fitchburg State's Education Department. Himself a retired teacher and principal, McSheehy notes how Daniels engages his students' focus and keeps the lesson on track to accomplish the day's learning objectives.

After several formal observations of Daniels' classes this semester, the two share an easy rapport when they debrief after the class wrapped up.

**"THE STUDENT TEACHERS I SEE
NOW ARE BETTER PREPARED
THAN MOST OF THE TEACHERS I
HIRED AS A PRINCIPAL."**

William McSheehy '70, '82

"The student teachers I see now are better prepared than most of the teachers I hired as a principal," McSheehy later recalls. "They hit the ground running."

McSheehy traditionally supervises two to three student teachers each semester. All of the student-teachers he observed received full-time teaching jobs after graduation, and he credits the university's solid education program for making sure the candidates are ready for the workforce.

In addition to mastery of their subjects, McSheehy said the teacher candidates are equipped with excellent classroom management skills. "They have a huge repertoire of strategies," he said. "I tell the Education Department, 'Whatever you're doing, keep doing it.'"

AN EVOLVING PROGRAM

Fitchburg State—which began as the Normal School at Fitchburg in 1894—was founded to prepare teachers. While the institution has diversified and grown in the years since, the Education Department remains a core component of the institution's life. Dozens of teachers graduate from the program every year.

Professor Nancy Murray said getting teacher candidates into classrooms as soon as possible has long been a key component of the program. Starting with hours of classroom observation from their first year, their teaching responsibilities grow until their capstone student teaching experience. Along the way, they are exposed to different age groups and disciplines, along with special education classrooms, Murray said.

"Our course on emotional-behavioral issues and autism spectrum disorder is definitely trend-setting," she said. "We're constantly revamping the program to meet our candidates' needs and the needs of their students. By the time they're into their practicums, they're ready to go."

Teacher candidates are taught to reflect on their practice from day one. Their ability to evaluate their lesson plans and their impact in the classroom will be central to their success as future teachers, Murray said.

The curriculum is also structured so that students are taking—and passing—their state licensure examinations before their final semester of student teaching.

"What's nice as a faculty member is to watch them grow and develop in their skills and their confidence," Murray said. "It's the best part of our job."

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

P.J. Cignarella '18 recognized he had just been given an opportunity for advancement.

While an underclassman in the university's game design program, game design Professor Les Nelken asked for volunteers for the upcoming PAX East game expo in Boston. Nelken, who had joined the faculty directly from the game industry, had a former professional colleague in need of help at his booth.

"I put my hand right up,"

said Cignarella, who had been hearing throughout his time at Fitchburg State that networking was critical to success in his chosen field.

The connections he made at that expo led to a part-time job and then the paid internship Cignarella is completing this summer. He's designing levels for the game "Mothergunship," creating elements of virtual terrain for players. Illustrating the potential of virtual work space, Cignarella will do his

design work from his home in Scituate, because the game company's headquarters are in the Czech Republic.

"The program I'm using to create the game is the same software I was taught to use at Fitchburg State," Cignarella said.

The Game Design major has had a full-time internship requirement since its inception. That immersive experience is fundamental to the game design major, explained Nelken.

"There are certain things and procedures that there simply isn't the bandwidth to reproduce in traditional university classes," Nelken said. "Iteration, for example, is the key to making something good, but there's only so much time in a semester."

The semester-long game design studio capstone course was

designed to facilitate that type of learning experience. Students work in teams to plan, design, develop, test, and prepare for publication a significant game project, in an environment that closely mirrors a professional game studio. The capstone course will be housed at the university's ideaLab on Main Street starting this fall. (Learn more about the Main Street Theater Block project on page 3).

Cignarella said his classroom experience was great preparation. "Fitchburg State's given me a great foundation to prepare me for the professional game designing world," he said. His work experience on the game has taught him a lot about game production and efficiency. "It's been incredible to see the inner workings of how a professional game is put together," he said.



APPLIED SCHOLARSHIP

The university already offers students a strong foundation of applied learning through its existing internship and practicums, and continues to add more academic departments into the mix and opportunities at greater scale.

"As students graduate, they need to show a portfolio that demonstrates they've had some real-world, hands-on experience to be competitive in their post collegiate lives," said Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs Alberto J.F. Cardelle. "The families of our incoming students are asking for these kinds of programs. They want to know that their students will get experiences in which they can apply their learning."

The Douglas and Isabelle Crocker Center for Civic Engagement, founded at Fitchburg State in 2008, helps local organizations thrive and develop competencies

in best practices, empowers people to build a better community, and maximizes collaboration between the university and the surrounding area. Earlier this year, its new Community Scholarship Group launched to help bring faculty expertise to community concerns, and provide meaningful experiences to students in the process. Visit fitchburgstate.edu/crockercenter to learn more.

Here are some of the other community projects already taking place that bridge the talents and efforts of Fitchburg State students and faculty in the area surrounding campus.

SUCCESS IS BREWING

Scott Cullen and his wife, Jackie, are longtime craft brewers. After trying their hand at a number of beer



River Styx Brewing in downtown Fitchburg was the site of a comprehensive case study by Professor Michael Greenwood's capstone business policy and strategy class. From left, Catherine M. Newman '19, Evan Corrigan '18, Rachel E. Kersey '19, Evan T. Phillips '18,

Joshua D. Victor '19, Germanie R. Gourdet '19, Professor Greenwood, MacKenzie V. Cashin '18, Abdul-Halim King '18, and Gabriel Gavrilov '19.

varieties, they decided to open their own business, River Styx Brewing, in Fitchburg last year. "It's busy," Cullen said. "We have 11 beers on tap at a time and food trucks serving every day we're open. I'm trying to work as hard as I can with other local companies to help keep business alive in Fitchburg." Supporting local commerce was also an objective of Professor Michael Greenwood's business policy class, whose capstone project this spring involved conducting a comprehensive strategic analysis and recommendations for the brewery.

Gabriel Gavrilov '19 was the project leader. "It's a real-world project, working with a real client," Gavrilov said. "Scott was very cooperative."

Students interviewed the Cullens and studied the market forces affecting craft brewers as well as the local commercial climate.

The team's recommendations included marketing more to the Fitchburg State community, enhancing the brewery's social media presence to engage customers in conversation, and improving the company's web site.

"We definitely see growth potential," said Gavrilov.

"This is real consulting, real experience, real results," Greenwood said. "After working with these students, I'd go into battle with them anywhere."

A HISTORIC CAMPUS

Professor Elise Takehana (English Studies) looks around the Fitchburg State campus and sees history. From a landmark free speech case that once pitted student journalists against the administration, to the university's launching the first special education program in Massachusetts, she sees stories that deserve to be told to a broad audience. Working with her students in a course called Experimental Writing and Media Conscious Storytelling, dozens of tales about the university and its history were compiled and will be adapted into an augmented reality experience.

"When We Were Normal," expected to launch this fall, takes its name from the university's original moniker, the Normal School at Fitchburg. It will be a digital walking tour of the campus' seven oldest buildings. Students also played a role in creating the design and digital footprint upon which the tour will rest.

A COLLEGE TOWN

Students in Professor Christa Marr's Honors service learning class spent the spring semester exploring ways to recast the city of Fitchburg as a "college town." The students surveyed more than 700 members of the

STUDENTS IN PROFESSOR
CHRISTA MARR'S CLASS SPENT
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WAYS TO RECAST THE
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'COLLEGE TOWN,' SURVEYING
HUNDREDS OF MEMBERS OF
THE CAMPUS AND WIDER
COMMUNITY ABOUT TOWN-
GOWN PERCEPTIONS.

university by email and an in-person "listening project" on topics from desired businesses and events downtown to transportation and safety.

"We also sought to become more involved in community conversations by visiting the Fitchburg Art Museum, learning about the planned artists' community at the former B.F. Brown School, attending a Fitchburg City Council meeting and interviewing members of the community about town-gown perceptions," Marr said. "This course will further examine this question in 2019."

FOR THE CHILDREN

Karen DeCisero touched countless lives in her 34 years of life, said her father Phil DeCisero. Her Down Syndrome posed challenges, he added, but was no match for the joy with which she lived and loved her community in Leominster, including her work at the Johnny Appleseed Elementary School.

After her passing, her parents decided to use the money they would have spent on Christmas gifts that year and instead made a donation to the elementary school to help a child in need.

They soon learned there were additional needs in the school community, and the DeCiseros were ready to help. Their vision has evolved into Karen's Closet, a charity serving children across the city.

The operation engages in a variety of fundraisers each year—including 5K runs and raffles—to support the mission, DeCisero said. But the volunteers who run the events aren't getting any younger, he quipped. "We knew for the operation to last, we needed to set up a financial foundation."

The Karen's Closet Foundation plans to create an endowment of \$650,000 to provide continued long term support and help pay annual expenses. Building that nest egg requires receiving grants from external organizations, but no one within Karen's Closet had fund-raising experience.

To kickstart that effort, one of DeCisero's fellow board members looked to the Crocker Center.

Crocker Center Coordinator Professor David Weiss reached out to the English Studies Department in search of potential student candidates, and that led him to Faith Chesbrough '18. An English major on the professional writing track, Chesbrough was happy to pounce on a potentially valuable experience. But as she learned more about what the organization does, the work took on additional meaning.

"The stories Phil told me touched my heart and inspired me to find people who would support their cause long beyond our lifetimes," she said. "I care about people and organizations who care about the human condition and this internship hit close to home."

She researched the grant opportunities that were available and then wrote the grant applications. She said she was grateful for the assistance of Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs Karen Frank Mays '09 at Fitchburg State as she navigated the complexities and jargon of the process.

"In class I learned a lot about good writing and how to say the most with the least amount of words, and this is the kind of writing that grant readers prefer, because they often have so many requests to review," Chesbrough said. "Through this experience I learned to never give up, even when I was stressing out about juggling school, a part-time job, and an internship."

Weiss said the Karen's Closet partnership is a great example of the work the Crocker Center can do.

"It's all about connecting the dots between the university partners, the faculty and the students," he said.

"I CARE ABOUT PEOPLE
AND ORGANIZATIONS
WHO CARE ABOUT THE
HUMAN CONDITION
AND THIS INTERNSHIP
HIT CLOSE TO HOME. I
WAS DELIGHTED FOR THE
CHANCE TO HELP THEM."

—Faith Chesbrough '18





Jennifer Melanson '18

PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF

For Jennifer Melanson '18, crossing the stage at commencement was the fulfillment of a long held dream.

"I completed two years of college right after high school, and then I got married and had three kids," she recalled. "When they went off to college, I decided it was time for me to go back and finish my degree."

Melanson, a nursing assistant in the intensive care unit at UMass Memorial Medical Center in Worcester, wanted to take advantage of the research opportunities available at the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center at the adjacent UMass Medical School, though they don't typically take undergraduate research interns.

"I showed them that I am self-motivated and willing to work hard, if given the opportunity. My persistence paid off and I had a terrific learning experience."

Melanson helped create a survey for families and caregivers of individuals with the rare disease known as Fragile X syndrome, a condition that causes a range of developmental problems. The survey was designed to gauge whether participants would enroll someone with Fragile X in clinical drug trials, and to identify barriers to participation.

Living with a rare disease herself, the topic struck a nerve. "I've been part of a clinical trial myself, so I know what it's like," she said. She's hopeful her work may inspire others to take part in such trials, and in so doing help advance the understanding of rare diseases.

Behavioral Sciences Professor Lynne Kellner said a 12-credit internship is a requirement for Human Services majors. "It's absolutely essential that they get the chance to apply in the field what they've learned," said Kellner. "It's an incredible confidence-booster for students, and it helps them solidify their goals."

Melanson graduated in May and will continue her search for additional careers in medical research.

"I think the best advice I can give a person seeking an internship is to not let a perceived lack of opportunity stop you from what you want to do," she said. "Persevere."

AN EAGERNESS TO LEARN

Rachel Connor '18 interned at Megan's House in Lowell, a substance abuse residential treatment program for women. "I've had the pleasure of watching the ladies grow and learn from their mistakes, building rapport with them, and just getting to know each on an individual basis," she said.

She was already a certified nursing assistant when she enrolled at Fitchburg State, where she learned about case management, an understanding of substance abuse and the importance of community-based supports. "I started my internship with confidence in myself and an eagerness to learn," she said.

She also knows she's on the right path. "This experience made it clear to me that my passion is with people who have substance abuse and mental health issues," she said. "Before this internship

I was unclear on what population I wanted to serve, but I know now that I want to work with people who are in recovery and are working on rebuilding their lives."



CHANGE OF SCENERY

The university's network of internship sites is widespread, but being able to relocate can present financial hardships. Donor support puts these opportunities within reach.

For years, donor support has helped Fitchburg State successfully partner with The Washington Center, an independent, not-for-profit organization located in our nation's capital that provides internships and seminars for more than 55,000 college students and young professionals from around the world.

Katrina Syrakos '18 interned this spring in the policy office of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Initially, she was torn between a career in criminal justice and the law. "After this experience, I knew that I wanted to pursue law after graduation."

Ethan Comrie '18, also studying criminal justice, spent the spring semester at the U.S. Marshals Service, assessing security systems at courthouses and developing and editing plans for future courthouse projects. The experience has opened new career paths.

"I would encourage anyone who has even briefly thought about doing an internship to at least look into it," Comrie said. "It can have the biggest and most unexpected impact."

Professor Joshua Spero coordinates the university's Washington Center program. "If we want our students graduating with even greater paths toward careers and graduate school training, it's essential for students to intern, and to have internship scholarship support."

To consider making a gift, please contact the Development Office at 978-665-4555.



PUBLIC SERVICE PASSION

Leominster native Alexander Ramos '19 said his parents always told him it's better to give than receive. "I've always had a passion for public service," he said. "It's why I hope to pursue a career in law and politics with the ultimate goal of serving others."

Ramos is starting on that path by studying political science and interned this spring in the office of Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale '79, seeing where the rubber meets the road in local government.

"As a political science major I've learned about the mechanics of politics, how political systems originate and how public policy is formed," Ramos said. "In the mayor's office, I was able to see how the city manages school spending, utility rates and passing of ordinances."

"We're providing students with real world experiences, and they're taking some of the burden off my lean and mean staff," DiNatale quipped. "Alex was a great addition."

A MAGNET FOR STUDENTS

Professor Joshua Spero, supervisor of the political science internship program, said experiential opportunities are essential.

"Fitchburg State was an early pioneer to integrate experiential learning into the curriculum and it's become a real magnet for all types of students," said Spero. "The more the interns can articulate what they've learned and where they're going to take their experiences, the better they will stand out to prospective employers."

Ramos was elected by his peers this spring to serve as the student representative to the university's Board of Trustees for the upcoming academic year.

"I'll take this internship experience with me to the board," he said. "And who knows where all these experiences will lead me to over a lifetime?"

HELPING PEOPLE

Patrick James '18 was looking for a career where he could help others. He had long been an advocate of physical fitness, so when he was looking at collegiate programs he was drawn to the health fields. He began his studies at Mount Wachusett Community College, where he completed an associate's degree and certification in personal training.

"I wanted to see what else was available in the fitness arena," he recalled. "I wanted to mix that with the clinical medical field."

His research led him to Fitchburg State's Exercise and Sports Science program, which in turn led him to focus his studies on cardiac rehabilitation. "It was pretty much everything I wanted," he said.

James got to test that theory in detail this spring during his final semester when he

interned four days a week in cardiac rehab at Heywood Hospital in Gardner. In his work at the clinic, James helped patients who were recovering from heart attacks and coronary artery disease and similar afflictions.

"I get to work with people one-on-one," he said. "It feels good when I can help someone go from a heart attack to back in

control of their lives again."

Exercise and Sports Science students choose from a variety of internship settings as they complete their majors, from occupational and physical therapy to athletic training, coaching, fitness management and teaching physical education, among others.

Jacob Cifizzari '18 did his internship a little closer to home base—the renovated Landry Arena at the Wallace Civic Center. "I've always loved being active and playing sports," he said. He enlisted in the military after high school, but an injury cut that career short. "I decided I wanted to learn more about the body, the different systems of the body, and ways to help train people to prevent and recover from injury. I know what it feels like to be injured and away from doing something that you love."

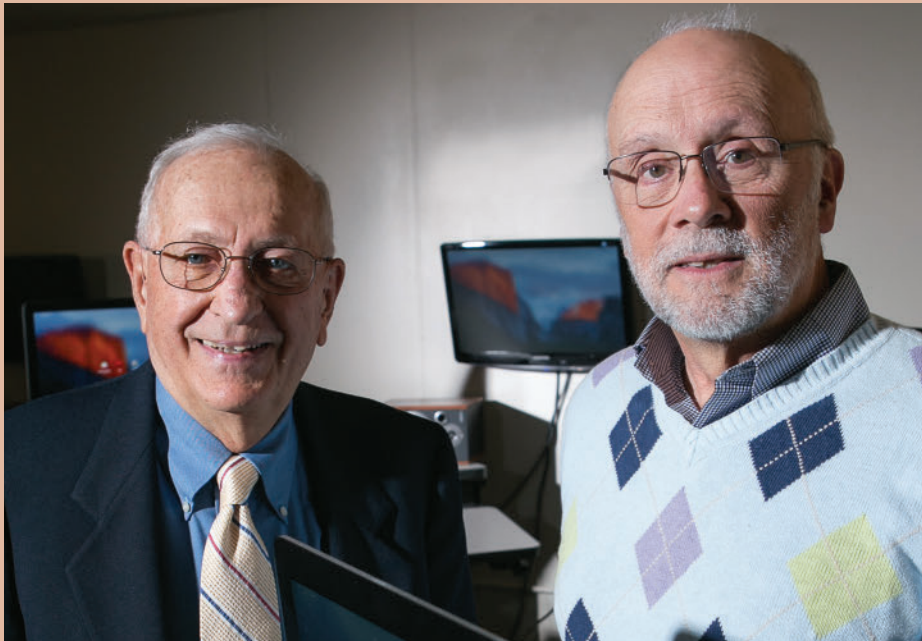
In his internship at Landry Arena, Cifizzari worked with student-athletes and their weight-lifting programs. "The best part was watching the athletes progress over time and playing a part in reaching their goals," he said.

Cifizzari said his classes had shown him the science behind physical training and the adaptations that occur through exercise. Working with student-athletes in person, he said, deepened that understanding. "It's one thing to know the science behind everything, but the important thing is to be an effective communicator and be able to connect with your clients. The internship also helped me realize how rewarding and fun a career in strength and conditioning can be, and it helped me decide to continue my education at the graduate level."

Patrick James '18



A TRANSFORMATIVE VISION



Professor Emeritus Lee DeNike, left, and Professor Charles Sides.

Mention Professor Lee DeNike's name to Communications Media alumni, and they light up as they recall his internship guidance when they were students.

"I consider him the father of the internship program," said Janine Mudge-Mullen '82. "It was rare for a college to offer so much hands-on training when I was studying in the video program. It was just such an extraordinary opportunity to put me in a professional production environment, for a whole semester, where I produced videos alongside employees."

Mudge-Mullen, director of marketing operations

at Stop & Shop, explained DeNike placed her at the video production facility at New England Telephone (now Verizon) where she spent the next 26 years working in various marketing roles in Boston and New York.

"He told me that the phone company was a good fit for me," she said. "I've had an incredible career all set in motion by Professor DeNike."

DeNike was one of seven new faculty hired in the 70s to bring experiential learning in media to Fitchburg State. Students in the Communications Media Department were required to take a full-

semester internship as upperclassmen, as well as a hands-on instructional course their freshmen year to complement classroom theory.

"These types of immersive experiences were pretty revolutionary at the time, although they're becoming more commonplace now," said DeNike. "Finding those internships sites was not easy at the beginning. You'd hear a lot of companies say, 'Oh, you're from Pittsburgh State College?' But the excellent performance by the students helped us build a well-received program."

"The students manifested a strong work

ethic," DeNike continued. "They exhibited humility. They had an eagerness to learn and demonstrated mastery of the entry-level skills required in their specialty. And they displayed a sense of obligation to those students who went before them and to those who would follow. Because of all that, they opened doors of opportunity that were unimaginable."

Professor Charles Sides, DeNike's successor, has kept those core concepts even as the major has grown. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," Sides said.

Communications Media interns today span the globe at sites that include household names like Comcast SportsNet, NBC, National Geographic and Walt Disney Entertainment.

"A lot of the people who are now supervising interns in the field were interns themselves," Sides said. "They're paying it forward and back."

Mudge-Mullen herself hired a Fitchburg State Comm Media rising senior this summer to work in Stop & Shop's new photo studio. "It feels great to give back to the school and to offer this talented senior a chance to learn and grow as a professional. It has all come full circle."

CELEBRATION OF FACULTY EXCELLENCE

President Lapidus and Provost Alberto Cardelle presided over the second Celebration of Faculty Excellence awards this spring, recognizing faculty members on the milestones of tenure and promotion, as well as retiring, emeriti, and special faculty honorees.

Professor Katherine Rye Jewell (Economics, History and Political Science) was presented the Faculty Award for Research and Scholarship.

Professor John Hancock (Behavioral Sciences) received the Contributions to the Graduate Program Award.

Professor Megan Krell (Behavioral Sciences) was presented the Faculty Award for Service.



Professor Beth Walsh (Behavioral Sciences), second from right, received the Vincent J. Mara Award for Excellence in Teaching, named for the former president who served from 1975-1995. Two of President Mara's children attended the ceremony: Clare (Mara) Rowland '88, second from left, and John E. Mara '81, at far right.

CHAMPS OF THE ICE

—By Mia Pare '19

The Falcons ice hockey 2017-18 season was one for the books. Led by Massachusetts State College Athletic Conference (MASCAC) Ice Hockey Coach of the Year Dean Fuller '78, they clocked in 18 wins (11 of them in conference play) to boast an overall win percentage of almost .700 and leading the conference in scoring offense and penalty kills.

"This team had tremendous talent and chemistry, a team that played for each other," said Coach Fuller. "They were a fun team to coach, with great leadership in my senior Captains Evan Byrnes and James Gordon."

Junior forward Nick DiNicola led the nation's DIII ice hockey teams in statistical assists per game, earning him spots on both the MASCAC all-conference first team as well as the 2017-18 New England DII/DIII Men's Ice Hockey All Star Team. Freshman forward Sascha Figi's 39 season points earned him the title of MASCAC Rookie of the Year.

"We were more skilled (this season), and kids bought in and wanted to win," said Gordon.

One of the six freshmen on the team was goaltender Brian McGrath who, along with junior Kirby Saari, combined forces to allow only 76 goals against the Falcons all season. The offense scored 119 goals over the season.

An eight-game win streak carried the team to their first ever NCAA DIII MASCAC conference championship game against the Corsairs of UMass Dartmouth at a packed Wallace Civic Center.

ALL STAR A.D.

After more than 2,000 games, cheering on championship teams and overseeing sweeping renovations to its sports facilities, Athletic Director Sue Lauder closed the book on a successful, 22-year career at Fitchburg State this June.

Lauder's heralded tenure included being named the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III Under Armour Athletic Director of the Year in 2017. That accolade was bestowed in recognition of Lauder's efforts to enhance athletics and recreation opportunities including the addition of women's varsity lacrosse and volleyball.

Lauder is also proud of the facilities improvements she helped spearhead, including the Athletics and Recreation Center on North Street, turf at Elliot Field, a new softball field at Coolidge Park, and upgrades to the Wallace Civic Center and adjacent Landry Arena that resulted in top-tier facilities that will help recruit new student-athletes.

And it is the success of those athletes where Lauder draws the most pride. In Division III, the emphasis is on academics for student-athletes. "We have an opportunity to get know all 350 student-athletes, and they have an opportunity to make a difference on this campus."



ALUMNI INTERNSHIPS

HOW ALUMNI GOT THEIR STARTS

FRANCIS "JOSEPH" PELLETIER '59, '76, an Industrial Arts major, had a choice of practicum in either the second semester of his junior or the first semester of his senior year. He chose the latter, but almost changed his mind when three friends came back to school his junior year with industrial injuries. Pelletier stuck with his practicum at Weston High School and ended up teaching there for the next 40 years.

EUGENE R. GRAY '81 was chosen by Dr. Lee DeNike and Dr. David Ryder of the Communications Media Department to intern at Digital Equipment Corporation. Upon completion of the practicum, he was hired full time, which launched a 35-year career for him into the high technology sector. His last 12 years were with IBM in the Federal Systems Division. Gray felt this was an incredible experience bringing problem solving to a new level, which at times stretched him to his mental limits. He attributes his readiness to his education at Fitchburg State and the efforts of both Dr. DeNike and Dr. Ryder to set him on the right path in business and in life.

ANTHONY "TONY" P. KLUZ '82 did his internship at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) in Boston. Most of the work was in computer-assisted instruction and computer-managed instruction, but he also did a lot of television production. While there, Henry Kissenger came in for triple bypass surgery. Kluz worked the press conference for MGH along with all the local television stations. Kissenger's statement was short, concise and humorous. With his second wife Nancy at his side, Kissenger said, "The doctors have determined two things: First, I do have a heart, and second, it is in desperate need of repair!" Born in West Germany, Kluz was thrilled to have that once in a lifetime opportunity and great story to tell. Living in Florida since 1999, he loves telling others that he attended the "other" FSU.

DUNCAN J. BERRY '82, '87 interned in 1983 with Dr. David Maudsley at the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology in Shrewsbury. He worked on protein extraction, purification and crystallization of histidine decarboxylase from rat stomachs. Berry learned a number of protein purification techniques, radiochemical assays, and other skills that eventually landed him a job as a biochemist at Tufts University Medical Center in Boston. Berry says that he found the experience both exhilarating and challenging despite having a perpetual cold. The enzyme he was purifying degraded quickly at room temperature, so Berry spent more time in a cold room than in Dr. Maudsley's laboratory. Although he did not pursue a career in medical research, he found that the experience complemented his career as a teacher. He is sure that any other intern under Dr. Maudsley would agree that Dr. Maudsley was an excellent teacher and mentor.

MICHAEL J. BARLOW '85 became an Industrial Arts student teacher in the fall of 1985 under Mike Donnelly '77 at Groton-Dunstable Regional Secondary School. When he was accepted, Barlow says he was treated as if he were the number one draft pick in the NFL. Donnelly, a proud Fitchburg State alumnus, was an exceptional student teacher mentor for Barlow. Based on his many years of

educational experience, Donnelly created a workshop for his students that was filled with joy. Donnelly's incredible sense of humor allowed for high levels of engagement with his students. He instilled a sense of wonder in both his students and student teachers alike. Donnelly's sage advice provided Barlow with great confidence when he embarked on his teaching career and many of the leadership lessons he learned he was able to apply to parenting as well. Barlow considers his fortune to have learned from Mike Donnelly, one of the true blessings in his life.

SARA A. (LAMBE) BARNUM '87 is currently a clinical nurse educator for geriatrics at Beverly Hospital. She sees the difference in the new graduates who work for her that have been exposed to an intense practicum experience (200+ hrs). Their confidence and adaptability is noticeable. When friends ask her what nursing school they should think about, she never gives names. She tells them to ask the following questions: What are the NCLEX RN pass rates for the last four years? Does the school have a practicum senior year and how many hours is required? How is the simulation lab utilized in the curriculum? What is the school's job placement numbers after graduation? What will it cost? After this research, Fitchburg State is usually one of the top institutions found and her friends are often extremely surprised. Although Barnum is an alumna from the class of 1987, she cannot emphasize enough how important the nursing senior practicum at Fitchburg State was in shaping her career. Unlike many other programs at the time, Fitchburg State was one of the few that required a practicum of approximately 200+ hours in a clinical setting with a RN working for that facility. As a senior nursing student, shifts were rotated according to the RN's schedule and learned through actual experience at the bedside. This practicum gave Barnum the confidence and competence to obtain her first nursing position and motivated her to be a lifelong learner. She gives Fitchburg State credit for seeing how important experiential learning is and always reflects back to that practicum experience as her career has grown. It is now the trend for all nursing programs to have some emersion, capstone, or practicum in their senior year, but few have the reputation and connections that Fitchburg State established years ago in their vision of required nursing curriculum.

ANDREW J. BAYIATES '97 says that he owes his entire playwriting career to Fitchburg State, where he was able to produce his first full-length play through the Falcon Players as an independent study that took up nearly a whole semester's worth of credits and had the full support of the English Department. That is what launched his career. He had been a film major until something Professor William Barker said in one of his English classes convinced him to change majors to English Literature. Bayiates eventually became a technical writer which led to his career as a business journalist in the Chicago area. He continues to playwright and in recent years, has worked with the Falcon Players, who have performed some of his original works.

JOSHUA D. FARNSWORTH '06 interned with the *Telegram & Gazette* for a semester during his senior year. He was able to get plenty of exposure to all sorts of stories, worked for a great city editor named Mark Ellis, and even got a chance to co-write a large Sunday feature

with another intern. That portfolio of work helped him land a job in April 2007 as editor of the *Millbury-Sutton Chronicle* (a weekly), and ultimately jump-started a career in newspapers with the *Chronicle* and *The Landmark* (Wachusett region). He was fortunate enough to win several New England Newspaper and Press Association awards, including the 2008 Rookie Journalist of the Year. He also won a couple national awards through the Suburban Newspapers of America. It all started with that internship and he thanks his alma mater for that opportunity. Farnsworth currently works for Fallon Health as a communications specialist.

TIFFANY M. (BEGIN) STEARNS '10 spent her internship in Los Angeles, Calif. working on Season Nine of “Scrubs” and Season One of “Cougar Town.”

SAMUEL E. SARFATY-JACKSON '14 interned for Princess Cruises prior to graduation and continued working there for the next three years. Sarfaty-Jackson credits Professor Charles Sides for helping him choose this particular internship as it gave him the hands-on experience to travel the world and tell visual stories that he was looking for.

ASHLEE E. TALBOT '14 always knew she was going to be a teacher. She loved reading Byron and Chaucer, and writing creative essays and narrative poetry. She loved the education classes where she learned how to write a lesson plan, format a unit, and to never, ever grade in red pen. She even loved her internship, where she taught under a teacher she had observed during her pre-practicum and whom she absolutely adored. Everything just clicked. But when she went to grad school that next September, it wasn't to teach, it wasn't even to study teaching. She pursued her graduate degree in Student Affairs. Ashlee now works in Student Activities where she advises clubs and organizations, coordinates leadership programming, and manages college orientation. She chose to change careers not because she didn't enjoy teaching, or because she had a horrible internship experience, but because she wanted to break free from the walls of a classroom. She was a heavily engaged student, and the staff in student development had a major impact on her. She wanted to do what they did - plan retreats, host conferences, and of course, play bingo. She still works with students, just in a slightly different way.

ALEXIS T. PODEDWORNY '16 had the honor of being a marketing intern at the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT) in Boston her senior year. The experience that was gained helped her land a full-time position in marketing, which she has been happily working in for almost two years. Her internship at MOTT also gave her an understanding of what it was like to be a working professional in the city. Coming from a small town in rural Massachusetts, Podedworny noticed a huge difference with city life. She appreciates Fitchburg State for giving her an internship that she loved and one that also made a huge impact on her. Podedworny is currently the marketing assistant for Concentric Energy Advisors in Marlborough.



MADelyn L. CECELYA '17 accepted the position of Case Manager at Montachusett Interfaith Hospitality Network, Inc., the only homeless shelter for families in northern Worcester County, after working there through her practicum and later, her 450-hour internship. Cecelya works closely with Executive Director, Dr. Jon D. Hogue '87.

IN MEMORIAM

FACULTY

DR. JAMES P. BARBATO, of Sterling, on December 30, 2017. Dr. Barbato taught in the Department of Earth and Geographic Sciences at Fitchburg State for 30 years.

PROFESSOR EMERITA ANITA P. HOTCHKISS, of Vineyard Haven, on December 23, 2017. Hotchkiss served the Fitchburg State community with distinction for nearly 20 years. She joined the Fitchburg State faculty as an assistant professor of psychology in January 1981. She was promoted to associate professor in 1983 and full professor in 1985. She retired from the university in June 1999.

1940S

DOROTHY M. (HACKETT) HUNT '41, of Dartmouth, on February 24, 2018.

1950S

NANCY K. (KENNEY) BURTON '52, of Naples, Fla., on March 27, 2018.

ROBERT S. PAINE '53, of Wellfleet, on December 6, 2017.

NORMAN V. GALLAGHER '54, of Leominster, on November 14, 2017.

ROBERT A. NELSON '59, of Stow, on December 13, 2017.

1960S

LEROY “BUTCH” CLARK '61, '73, of Fitchburg, on January 15, 2018. He leaves his wife, Jeanne (Paquette) Clark '62.

HUGO J. GALLI '63, of Shrewsbury, on January 30, 2018.

CAROL R. (GOODWIN) CLARK '65, of Townsend, on March 30, 2018.

1970S

MICHAEL BOURQUE '73, of Fitchburg, on December 28, 2017. He leaves his wife, Mary T. (Mullahy) Bourque '64.

PETER G. BEAULIEU '75, of Centerville, on November 19, 2017.

DIANNE R. (STILLER) CARON '79, of Westminster, in August 2017.

1980S

DAVID H. KASSABIAN '81, of Worcester, on May 26, 2017.

REBECCA J. (ROWE) PANDISCIO '89, of Westminster, on November 17, 2017.

1990S

RITA J. BRETTO '90, '92, of Rochester, on April 26, 2018.

2000S

JESSICA A. (ROY) BEEK '00, of Shiloh, Ill., on November 21, 2017.

BRUCE E. SABOL '06, of Leominster, on December 9, 2017.

2010S

CHANCHAI LOUPKHOME '13, of Leominster, on November 14, 2017.

CLASS NOTES

This Class Notes section includes news that was received between November 1, 2017, and May 1, 2018. Because of the nature of a bi-annual publication and the volume of notes we receive, you should expect to see your note about six months after you submit your information.

1950S

STUART "ROBERT"

MCDERMOTT '58, '63 received Fitchburg Access Television's (FATV) 2018 Boulder Award. The annual award is presented by FATV's board of directors to recognize a local citizen for contributions to civic life through the use of public communications. For over 40 years, McDermott was an integral part of Fitchburg's General Electric manufacturing of steam turbines and generators. He began his career in the testing division. His decades of community engagement in the city include serving Fitchburg State's ALFA program, acting as treasurer of the Alumni Association and membership in the Exchange Club of Fitchburg, where he is currently president. He has also dedicated many years to his duties as treasurer at Fitchburg Access Television. He is married to Jeannette B. McDermott '72, '77, raised six children, has 10 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

1960S

RICHARD PRIESTLEY '65

was inducted into the 2017 West Boylston Middle/High School Athletic Hall of Fame. In 1961, he graduated from West Boylston High where he was a four-year varsity basketball player and captain his senior year. In addition, he also played varsity baseball for two years. After graduating from Fitchburg State he became a staff member at West Boylston Middle/High School where he served as both a teacher and a coach from 1971 to 2001. He coached girls basketball amassing over 300 wins and leading them back-to-back District E Division 3 Championships in 1992 and 1993, was head coach of the 1988 undefeated Division 3 Super Bowl champion football team, coached track and field for over 20 years and was recently voted into the Massachusetts Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

MARTIN J. O'BRIEN '66 and his wife Peggy celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary this February. They will formally celebrate this summer with their five children and seven grandchildren in the Poconos. The couple has had a wonderful 50 years together, which includes having traveled extensively throughout the United States and the world.

BRADFORD K. LAWSON '69 retired after 35 years in the automotive retail business, following 13 years of teaching Industrial Arts.

1970S

SHEILA M. (MCKEON)

O'BRIEN '74, '80 assumed the position of president of the North American Board of Directors for Assistance Dogs International (ADI). This nationwide coalition of non-profit organizations that trains guide, hearing and service dogs for people who are disabled was founded in 1987 and has member organizations in branches in North America, Europe, Australia/New Zealand and Asia. O'Brien resides in New York where she is director of external relations, program development and quality assurance for the Guide Dog Foundation and America's VetDogs. O'Brien joined the foundation and VetDogs team in 2009 and is responsible for introducing the PTSD service dog program to America's VetDogs as well as implementing the VetDogs cooperative Prison Puppy Program with 14 state correctional institutions up and down the east coast.

L. GREGG PICUCCI '74 coached his last season of baseball at Gardner High School, ending a 19-year tenure at the helm of the Stone Field Nine and a 43-year head coaching career. In addition, the summer of 2017 marked his final season as the skipper of the North County Post 129 American Legion baseball team, which he has managed alongside the Black and Orange since 2014. Picucci taught math

in the Gardner school district prior to his retirement in 2009. He was a 2010 inductee to the Massachusetts Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

FREDERICK R. BARAN, JR. '77 was appointed by Governor Charlie Baker to the position of clerk magistrate of the Chicopee District Court and was sworn in on September 20, 2017 by Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. Baran graduated from Suffolk University Law School in 1982 and practiced for eight years with the firm of Ducharme, Moriarty & Wilson in Holyoke. In 1991, he was appointed the First Assistant Clerk Magistrate of the Holyoke District Court. He resides in Holyoke with his wife, Barbara.

1980S

SCOTT E. NELSON '80 was inducted into the Middleboro High School Hall of Fame at its ninth annual induction ceremony last November. After earning a bachelor's degree at Fitchburg State, Nelson, a 1976 graduate from Middleboro High School, returned to the school system where he has served as a high school science teacher and coach for 37 years.

KEVIN W. CANN '82 served the Massachusetts Department of Corrections as a sergeant for 26 years before retiring. While at Fitchburg State, he was a member of the 16th pledge class of Pi Sigma Upsilon Fenwick Society and played four years of baseball, running the intramural programs for two years.



ANDREW J. WHITE '84 has been named deputy chief of

operations at the Worcester Fire Department. White, a 34-year fire department veteran, co-founded the Worcester Firefighters Safety and Survival Seminar, which he led for 10 years in the aftermath of the Worcester Cold Storage warehouse fire that killed six Worcester firefighters in 1999. The seminar provided state-of-the-art safety training to firefighters from 39 states. White later joined the state hazardous material team as a lieutenant, and when promoted to captain in 2013, he was detailed to the training division, where he led the candidate investigations unit. He served as drill master for the firefighters academy in 2014 and was promoted to District Chief of Training in 2015.



LAURA A. (GILLESPIE) AMES '85 was named Recovery Centers of America's new CEO

of its facility in Danvers as of February. Ames is an industry veteran with more than 20 years of hospital and rehab experience at the executive level. Prior to joining RCA, Ames served as CEO of HealthSouth New England Rehabilitation Hospital in Woburn. She is also a former clinical nursing instructor at Quinsigamond Community College, where she provided clinical and didactical instruction to first-year associate degree nursing students. An active member of the community, Ames is a member of the National Association for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (NAADAC), and has served on the committee of the Massachusetts Association of Behavioral Health (ABH) and Department of Youth Services task forces.

MICHAEL R. MOLLA '86, a former executive from Maryland Institute College of Art, was named president of Pennsylvania College of Art & Design.

DONALD J. SAVERY '89 recently became vice president and general counsel at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. He is an adjunct professor at Boston College Law School. He and his wife, Cathleen A. (O'Connor) Savery '89, live in Duxbury with their three sons.

1990s



MATTHEW L. MOISON '90 ran a 50-mile ultra-race in Moab, Utah this fall to celebrate his 50th birthday. (Pictured with his wife, Lisa (Petel) Moison '91.)



JULIA M. DELONG '91 was named executive vice president and chief operating officer at Homefield Credit Union. Prior to joining Homefield as chief financial officer in 2013, DeLong was chief financial officer at Mass Bay Credit Union.

MELANIE (PERKINS) MCLAUGHLIN '91 recently received a master's degree in education policy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She is the policy officer and co-director of the Becker Center for Advocacy at The Arc of Massachusetts.

RODERICK P. MURPHY '93, of Asheville, N.C., is a documentary filmmaker who recently struck a deal with Ananda Media to distribute his feature, "El Chivo," about Barnardsville, N.C. resident and ultra marathoner, Will Harlan.



ROBERT A. HANEISEN '95 said farewell to the Metro West Daily News in Framingham, this January, where he served as

columnist and fulltime journalist for 18 years. His first exposure to newspapers was as a 10-year-old delivery boy in Fitchburg, hustling copies of the *Sentinel & Enterprise* to doorsteps from a cloth bag wrapped around the handlebars of his BMX bike. He credits Professor Tom Murray, Ph.D., for setting him on the path of journalism.

CHERI A. MEHIGAN '95 launched her invention called "Pillover" in December 2017, to enhance one's quality of sleep. While Mehigan already has titles like mom, daughter, sister, BFF, and wife, along with associate director at Harvard Business School, she is excited to add one more: founder.

KERI M. (CURRERI) MORAN '95 assumed the role of assistant director of nursing at Holden Rehabilitation & Skilled Nursing Center last fall.

GINA P. (PROCOPIO) BLAKE '97 was promoted to vice president of programs at Berkshire Children and Families, one of the oldest nonprofit organizations in Western Massachusetts. Its programs provide education, prevention, intervention, and advocacy for and with children and families. Blake has 20 years of experience working with children and families in residential treatment facilities, the foster and adoptive processes, and home visiting support programs. She has provided clinical supervision and training for staff in the areas of trauma, skill building, and vicarious traumatization.

SHANNON (SONTAG) SYLVIA '97 saw the expansion of Shancakes, the bakery she founded in Leominster in 2011. This year, after three expansions, Shancakes moved into a new downtown location making it Leominster's biggest bakery featuring a cafe. Sylvia also worked as an actress on the hit SyFy hit television show "Ghost Hunters International" in 2008.

SUSAN T. COTE '98, a retired Massachusetts superintendent and former interim principal at Community School, was named interim principal at Cumberland High School in Rhode Island. Previously she was a math and science teacher, high school science department chair, and elementary school principal. Cote was the assistant

superintendent in the Swansea Public Schools from 2001 to 2005. She went on to serve as assistant superintendent in the East Bridgewater Public Schools from 2005-2009 before being named Superintendent of East Bridgewater from 2009 to 2013.

JEFFREY T. ZANGHI '98 assumed the role of superintendent of schools for the Berlin and Boylston school districts.



CHRISTINE M. (MUMFORD) LANE-MONETTE '99, '03 was promoted to the position of senior vice president and CFO at IC Federal Credit Union in Fitchburg. Lane-Monette has been at ICFCU since 2005.

2000s

BESSIE K. (GREENBERG) SADOWNICK '01 gave birth to a new baby girl on December 15, 2017 with her husband David.

BRAD E. FINK '02 was promoted to property manager of Springfield Housing Authority's largest district.

LISA A. POIRIER '02 was promoted to officer level as an Accounting Supervisor at Clinton Savings Bank. She has been with the bank since 1998.

DANIEL C. DALY '09 designed the scenery for Odyssey Opera's production of Gilbert & Sullivan's "Patience" at the Huntington Theatre. It was ranked one of the top five classical music performances of 2017 by *The Boston Globe*.

DANA M. KELLY '09 was hired to serve as vice president of Worldwide Facilities' new office in Boston.

JASON M. KENNEY '09 is a fairly new addition to Fourth, a leading hospitality operations platform, as their U.S. Business Development Representative. Previously, he worked for The Ritz-Carlton.

CAITLIN E. (FERREIRA) LANG '09 premiered her one-woman short play, "Our Last 10 Minutes," at this year's Winterfest Theater Festival in New York City. The project showcased Lang's writing. She has been working with her brother on developing the play into a pilot for a television series.

ANDREW K. POTTEL '09, dean of students at Northeast Maritime Institute and director of policy and legal affairs at Dominica Maritime Administration, was this year's International and Conflict Studies keynote speaker at Fitchburg State. His talk highlighted international maritime law and shipping.

2010s

RENAE K. (LESSARD) TORNATORE '10 graduated with her Master of Education degree in Post-Secondary Administration and Student Affairs in December 2017. She and her husband, **JOSEPH S. TORNATORE '10**, an editor at Create Advertising in Los Angeles, welcomed their first child, daughter Cayleigh Jane in February 2018.



HAYLEY M. CARLONI '11 started working last May as the senior art director of VidMob, a post-production creative agency and tech platform located in Manhattan, N.Y. She is currently working on the rebrand of VidMob's visual identity, which includes everything from their logo, brand guidelines, website and all marketing assets. She has been responsible for the concept, edit and animation of all the company's demo reels and promo videos. Along with executing VidMob's internal video/graphic needs, she has also served as an art director, animator and video editor for some of their biggest clients, which include Facebook, Snapchat, Samsung, Wag, Star Wars (EA Games), Virgin Mobile, Delta, Instagram, Twitter, Budlight, Caudalie,

Airbnb, Casper, Bowflex, NBC, Amazon Studios, Sprinklr and Coachella. Recently, she created a video that helped to win Twitter's #Promote competition, securing the company \$100,000 and a coveted spot on Twitter's preferred vendor list.

MELISSA M. PROFFITT '11 took up the role of girls basketball coach at Gardner High School this season. In the fall, Proffitt became an English language arts teacher at the Gardner Middle School.

JASMINE L. (WILDER) YANG '11 joined the advancement team at Fitchburg State University as administrative assistant this April.

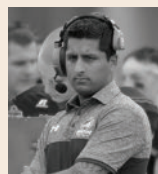
TAWHEED ABDUL-RAHEEM '12 AND ALEXANDER A. FERRO '12 co-founded tripBuddy in November 2017 as an answer to their commuting needs. tripBuddy is a ride-sharing app that lets people carpool together, thus reducing the number of cars on the road. Abdul-Raheem and Ferro worked together at Oracle Corporation in Burlington after graduation. When Abdul-Raheem created an algorithm to connect drivers and riders in the same area, he approached Ferro with the business idea and tripBuddy was born.

MICHELLE E. (CREE) BIASELLA '12 serves as vice principal at the Mary E. Stapleton Elementary School in Framingham.



SAMANTHA C. DEMANBEY '12 joined the Communications Media Department as administrative assistant in March.

ALEXANDRA MANCINI '12, alumna and local artist, participated in the university's programming for the Journey to Equality: The LGBTQ Civil Rights Movement. Her profile and interview exhibit, "Beyond the Binary," showcased 22 non-binary and gender non-conforming individuals.



SAJAN R. THAKKAR '13, '15 was hired this March by Harvard Football to coach the

running backs. Thakkar comes to Harvard after three successful years in a variety of coaching positions at SUNY Maritime. For the last two seasons, Thakkar served as the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach. During his tenure at SUNY Maritime, Thakkar was selected to the American Football Coaches Association 30 Under 30 Leadership Institute, one of six NCAA Division III coaches selected to the program. Thakkar also coached at Fitchburg State during the 2013 and 2014 seasons. He coached the running backs and special teams units, guiding two student-athletes to all-conference honors. Thakkar earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees from Fitchburg State, majoring in Business Administration. He was a three-time academic all-conference selection as a wide receiver and quarterback.

DAVID T. LIU '15, Army Sergeant of Bravo Company, 182nd Infantry Regiment, was presented with the 2018 Best Warrior award in the noncommissioned officer division. Liu will go on to represent the Massachusetts National Guard in the regional Best Warrior Competition this summer.

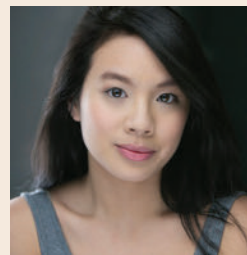
BRANDON P. BRIDEAU '16, '18 represented Fitchburg State at the NASPA National Student Affairs Conference in Philadelphia this March when he received the NASPA NOW Professional Award. The new award is being

offered by the leading association for the advancement, health and sustainability of the student affairs profession.

AMANDA B. DE LAVINI '16 was hired as the new executive director of the Geneva-on-the-Lake's Convention and Visitors Bureau in Ohio.



LISA L. MARRONE '16 will serve as the Town of Chelmsford's first director of business development after serving as economic development coordinator for the city of Leominster the last 11 years. The position is part of the town manager's office. In her new role, Marrone's goals will include promoting the town and facilitation efforts to attract and retain business with a focus on quality and diversity.



LISA T. NGUYEN '16 performed the leading role of Catherine with The Nora Theatre Company (Cambridge) in their February production of David Auburn's "Proof." After graduating from Fitchburg State, Nguyen went on and studied at William Esper Studio for the Summer Intensive.

TAYLOR T. EKSTROM '17 was tabbed this year by the New England Bobcats of the Elite Indoor Football League. Ekstrom played his first year of arena football last year with the now folded Connecticut Chiefs.

KIARA Y. PICHARDO '17 performed the role of Waitress/Kit/Shona this April in Huntington Theatre Company's Top Girls by Caryl Churchill.

ARE YOU A LEADER?

JOIN THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD

We're looking for a few good alumni to join the Alumni Association Board! Contact alumni@fitchburgstate.edu for more information or to nominate someone. Nominations may be submitted at any time, but the deadline for July 2019 consideration is March 1, 2019.

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Frank O'Donnell '93 (alumni trustee)
Robert "Biff" Quinn '81
Paula Stefanakos '92, '02

EVENTS



Alumni Hockey Game: Head Coach Dean Fuller '78 welcomed back over 50 alumni and friends for his annual Alumni Hockey Game at the Wallace Civic Center in February.



Falcons in Florida, Sarasota: Our first time in Sarasota, alumni enjoyed a gorgeous day at The Ringling Museum of Art, Circus Museum, Bayfront Gardens and the Ca' d'Zan mansion.



Falcons in Florida, Naples: In our third year marching in the Naples St. Patrick's Day parade, alumni took to the streets and cheered from the trolley in celebration of the holiday.



Falcons in Florida, Fort Myers: Kathleen "Cap" Morris '70 and her family enjoyed a Red Sox Spring Training game this March and caught up with alumni friends Thomas '78 & Patricia Androlot, and Jeanne '70, Sal, and Stephen DiLorenzo over lunch at the alumni pre-game picnic.



Mohawk Reunion in Waltham: Once again, a group of roughly 50 alumni gathered in Waltham for the annual Mohawk Alumni Christmas Pasta Festival. Hosted by Mark Coughlan '77 with the help of good friends Ralph DiBona '73, Paul White '79, Joe Kraemer '75, '81,

Dave Coughlan and Steve Finer '73, '77, alumni traveled far and wide to be there, including from Colorado, Illinois, Vermont, and the Philippines.



Exercise and Sports Science Alumni and Career Night: The Department of Exercise and Sports Science brought back seven alumni for their fourth annual alumni and career night in March. From left, Dr. Timothy Hilliard; Logan M. Johnson '11, '13; Christopher M. Kibler '12, '15; Shannon K. Fitzgerald '14; Megan M. Macomber '13; Dr. Monica Maldari, Rebecca H. (Aldrich) Manning '14; Jacquelyn J. Rickson '14; Dr. Jason Talanian; Dr. Danielle Wigmore; Dr. Jessica Alsup; and Robert Logan '07.



College to Career: The Alumni Association worked with the Business Society and senior class to bring back a panel of alumni to speak about their experience going from college to career in March. From left, Stephany M. Infante '16, senior marketing coordinator at Charles River Laboratories; Nathan J. LaRose '16, recreation director for the city of Fitchburg; Haleigh M. Crawford '16, teacher at Northwest Elementary School in Leominster; Tyler Lapiere '16, science teacher at Hawthorne Brooke Middle School in Townsend; Christopher M. Mackos '11, director of photography, producer and editor at DigiNovations in Acton; Sarah F. (Durfee) Mackos '11, social worker for the Department of Children and Families; and Kaitlyn M. Mabee '09, probation officer for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.




Alumni Basketball Reunion: Alumnus and former head men's Basketball Coach (1978-1980), Jim Todd '76, '81, took the lead in gathering former players for a home game and reunion this winter.

SUBMIT A CLASS NOTE

To place a Class Note, Celebration, Introduction, or In Memoriam in *Contact*, please visit <https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/alumni/resources/alumni-updates-and-requests-form/> and fill out the form online. *Contact* reserves the right to edit for length and clarity. Notes can also be mailed to *Contact* magazine, Fitchburg State University, 160 Pearl Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420.

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

Photos should be at least 3.5 inches wide and have a resolution of at least 300 dpi. If you mail a glossy print to us, please make sure to include your contact information and the names of any people in the photo.



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ALUMNI WEEKEND

