



# **Institutional Self Study 2022**

Submitted to the New England Commission  
of Higher Education

**FEBRUARY 2022**

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# Institutional Characteristics Form

Revised September 2009

This form is to be completed and placed at the beginning of the self-study report:

Date February 4, 2022

Corporate name of institution: Fitchburg State University

Date institution was chartered or authorized: 1894

Date institution enrolled first students in degree programs: 1895

Date institution awarded first degrees: June 23, 1897

Type of control:

Public

State

City

Other

(Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Private

Independent, not-for-profit

Religious Group

(Name of Church) \_\_\_\_\_

Proprietary

Other: (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

By what agency is the institution legally authorized to provide a program of education beyond high school, and what degrees is it authorized to grant?

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. Degrees: BA, BS, BSE, MA, MAT, MBA, MEd, MS, CAGS

Level of postsecondary offering (check all that apply)

Less than one year of work

At least one but less than two years

Diploma or certificate programs of at least two but less than four years

Associate degree granting program of at least two years

Four- or five-year baccalaureate degree granting program

First professional degree

Master's and/or work beyond the first professional degree

Work beyond the master's level but not at the doctoral level (e.g., Specialist in Education)

A doctor of philosophy or equivalent degree

Other doctoral programs \_\_\_\_\_

Other (Specify)



Type of undergraduate programs (check all that apply)

- Occupational training at the crafts/clerical level (certificate or diploma)      X      Liberal arts and general
- Occupational training at the technical or semi-professional level (degree)      X      Teacher preparatory
- Two-year programs designed for full transfer to a baccalaureate degree      X      Professional  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

The calendar system at the institution is:

- X      Semester       Quarter       Trimester       Other \_\_\_\_\_

10. What constitutes the credit hour load for a full-time equivalent (FTE) student each semester?

- a) Undergraduate      15 credit hours
- b) Graduate      12 credit hours
- c) Professional      N/A

11. Student population: (IPEDS Counts)

a) Degree-seeking students:

	Undergraduate	Graduate	Total
Full-time student headcount	2822	500	3322
Part-time student headcount	760	1842	2602
FTE	3077	1165	4242

b) Number of students (headcount) in non-credit, short-term courses: N/A

12. List all programs accredited by a nationally recognized, specialized accrediting agency.

Program	Agency	Accredited since	Last Reviewed	Next Review
Business Administration	IACBE	2002	2020	2027
Computer Science/Computer Information Systems	ABET, Inc.	2007	2019	2026
Education	NCATE	1996	2013	Accreditation will expire 12/21
Education	Mass DESE		2021	2028
Education	AAQEP	Not yet reviewed	Not yet reviewed	2023 (Planned)
Human Services	CSHSE	1981	2021	2026

Nursing	CCNE	2001	2015	2026

13. Off-campus Locations. List all instructional locations other than the main campus. For each site, indicate whether the location offers full-degree programs or 50% or more of one or more degree programs. Record the full-time equivalent enrollment (FTE) for the most recent year.  
Add more rows as needed.

	Full degree	50%-99%	FTE
A. In-state Locations			
B. Out-of-state Locations			

14. International Locations: For each overseas instructional location, indicate the name of the program, the location, and the headcount of students enrolled for the most recent year. An overseas instructional location is defined as “any overseas location of an institution, other than the main campus, at which the institution matriculates students to whom it offers any portion of a degree program or offers on-site instruction or instructional support for students enrolled in a predominantly or totally on-line program.” **Do not include study abroad locations.**

Name of program(s)	Location	Headcount

15. Degrees and certificates offered 50% or more electronically: For each degree or Title IV-eligible certificate, indicate the level (certificate, associate’s, baccalaureate, master’s, professional, doctoral), the percentage of credits that may be completed on-line, and the FTE of matriculated students for the most recent year. Enter more rows as needed.

Name of program	Degree level	% on-line	FTE
BA/BS Interdisciplinary Studies	Bachelors	100%	3.7
BS Business Administration	Bachelors	100%	56.9
BS Occupational/Vocational Education	Bachelors	100%	30.6

RN to BS, Nursing	Bachelors	100%	151.2
MA, History	Masters	100%	5.6
MBA, Business Admin.	Masters	100%	901.6
MEd, 5-12	Masters	75%	17.8
MEd, Curriculum & Teaching, Accelerated	Masters	100%	173.4
MEd, Educational Leadership & Management	Master	90%	23.1
MEd, Educational Leadership & Management, Accelerated	Master	100%	74.9
MEd, Special Education	Masters	75%	157.9
MEd, Special Education, Guided Studies, Applied Behavior Analysis	Masters	100%	13.1
MS, Applied Communications, Social Media	Masters	100%	14.6
MS, Computer Science	Masters	100%	3.6
MS, Forensic Nursing	Masters	100%	14.6

16. Instruction offered through contractual relationships: For each contractual relationship through which instruction is offered for a Title IV-eligible degree or certificate, indicate the name of the contractor, the location of instruction, the program name, and degree or certificate, and the number of credits that may be completed through the contractual relationship. Enter more rows as needed.

Name of contractor	Location	Name of program	Degree or certificate	# of credits
ACCEPT Educational Collaborative	Natick, MA	Extended Campus	M.Ed.	30
Adult and Community Education of Martha's Vineyard	Vineyard Haven, MA	Extended Campus	M.Ed.	36
Catherine Leahy-Brine Educational Consultants, Inc.	Brockton, MA	Extended Campus	M.Ed. and CAGS	33-39
Collaborative for Educational Services	Northampton, MA	Extended Campus	M.Ed. and CAGS	33-39
Lowell Public Schools	Lowell, MA	Extended Campus	M.Ed. and CAGS (eff. Spring 2022)	36-39
Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators	New Bedford, MA	Extended Campus	UG Certificate and M.Ed.	39 (UG) 36 (GR)
Massachusetts School Administrators Association	Franklin, MA	Extended Campus	CAGS	36

17. List by name and title the chief administrative officers of the institution. (Use the table on the following page.)

18. Supply a table of organization for the institution. While the organization of any institution will depend on its

purpose, size and scope of operation, institutional organization usually includes four areas. Although every institution may not have a major administrative division for these areas, the following outline may be helpful in charting and describing the overall administrative organization:

a) Organization of academic affairs, showing a line of responsibility to president for each department, school division, library, admissions office, and other units assigned to this area;

b) Organization of student affairs, including health services, student government, intercollegiate activities, and other units assigned to this area;

c) Organization of finances and business management, including plant operations and maintenance, non-academic personnel administration, IT, auxiliary enterprises, and other units assigned to this area;

d) Organization of institutional advancement, including fund development, public relations, alumni office and other units assigned to this area.

19. Record briefly the central elements in the history of the institution:

Established in 1894 by an act of the Massachusetts Legislature, the State Normal School in Fitchburg opened in temporary quarters in the old high school building on Academy Street. Principal John G. Thompson, aided by a teaching staff of three, implemented a two-year teacher training program for women that had 46 participants. In December 1896, the school expanded into a new building, known as Thompson Hall, and set up the State School of Observation and Practice in city buildings on Day Street and Highland Avenue.

In the next decade the school was a trendsetter for programs in education. The Edgerly School opened, originally as an eighth-grade model and practice school. In 1910, it became one of the first junior high schools in the United States. The following year the school initiated the first practical arts teacher training course in the country for men. In 1930, the State Normal School was authorized to offer a bachelor's degree in practical arts, and in 1932, when it became the State Teachers College at Fitchburg, four-year degrees were offered in all areas of education.

Under the auspices of the State Division of University Extension, summer courses were first offered in 1915, marking the beginning of the university's commitment to Continuing Education programs. In 1935, the college was also authorized to establish graduate programs and in 1954 the first evening courses were offered.

In 1960, the college changed its name and expanded its mission. The State College at Fitchburg diversified its programs to include degrees in disciplines other than education. In 1965, its name was officially changed to Fitchburg State College. In July, 2010 the governor signed legislation renaming us Fitchburg State University. Today we have 15 academic departments that offer 34 undergraduate majors, 50 minors, 20 master's degree programs, two Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study programs, and various undergraduate and graduate certificate programs. Enrollment is up to 3,025 full-time and 3,725 part-time students. The campus has expanded from a single structure on High Street to 59 buildings on 280 acres, becoming the educational center for the Montachusett region. The University proudly offers traditional and non-traditional programs to serve the educational needs of its students as undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education students.

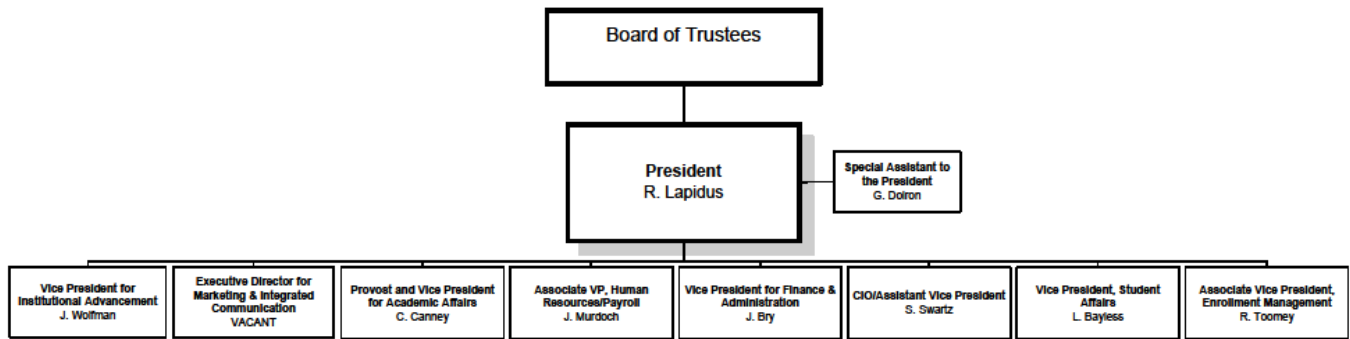
## CHIEF INSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

Function or Office	Name	Exact Title	Year of Appointment
Chair Board of Trustees	C. Deborah Phillips	Chair of the Board of Trustees	2015
President/CEO	Richard S. Lapidus	President	2015
Executive Vice President			
Chief Academic Officer	Catherine Canney	Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs	2021
Deans of Schools and Colleges (insert rows as needed)	Meg Hoey	Dean of Health and Natural Sciences	2020
Deans of Schools and Colleges (insert rows as needed)	Sara Levine	Interim Dean of Arts & Sciences	2021
Deans of Schools and Colleges (insert rows as needed)	Nancy Murray	Dean of Business	2021
Deans of Schools and Colleges (insert rows as needed)	Nancy Murray	Dean of Education	2020
Chief Financial Officer	Jay Bry	Vice President, Finance and Administration	2009
Chief Student Services Officer	Laura Bayless	Vice President, Student Affairs	2017
Planning	Pamela McCafferty	Assistant Vice President, Institutional Research and Planning	2014
Institutional Research	Pamela McCafferty	Assistant Vice President, Institutional Research and Planning	2015
Assessment	Cate Kaluzny	Director of Assessment	2019
Development	Jeffrey Wolfman	Vice President, Institutional Advancement	2019
Library	Jacalyn Kremer	Dean of the Library	2018
Chief Information Officer	Steve Swartz	Chief Information Officer	2008
Continuing Education	Becky Copper Glenz	Dean, School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education	2017
Grants/Research	Jeanette Robichaud	Director, Grant Center	2019



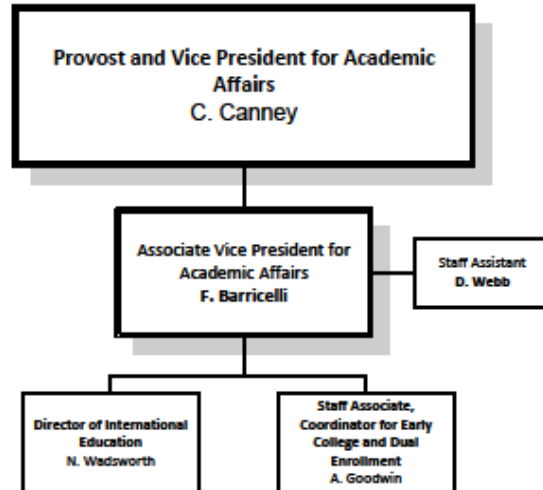
Admissions	Tony Trodella	Director of Admissions	2021
Registrar	Barbara Cormier	Registrar	2021
Financial Aid	Denise Brindle	Director, Financial Aid	2015
Public Relations	Matthew Bruun	Director, Communications & Public Affairs	2013
Alumni Association	Tanya Crowley	Director, Alumni and Family Relations	2021
Other: Enrollment Management	Richard Toomey	Associate Vice President, Enrollment Management	2021
Other: Human Resources	Jessica Murdoch	Associate Vice President, Human Resources and Payroll Services	2014

**Fitchburg State University**  
President



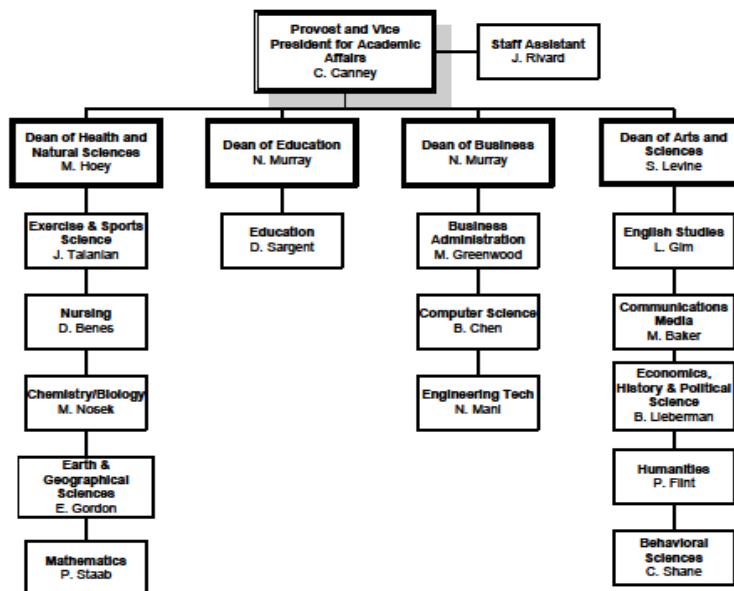
# Fitchburg State University

## Associate Vice President Academic Affairs

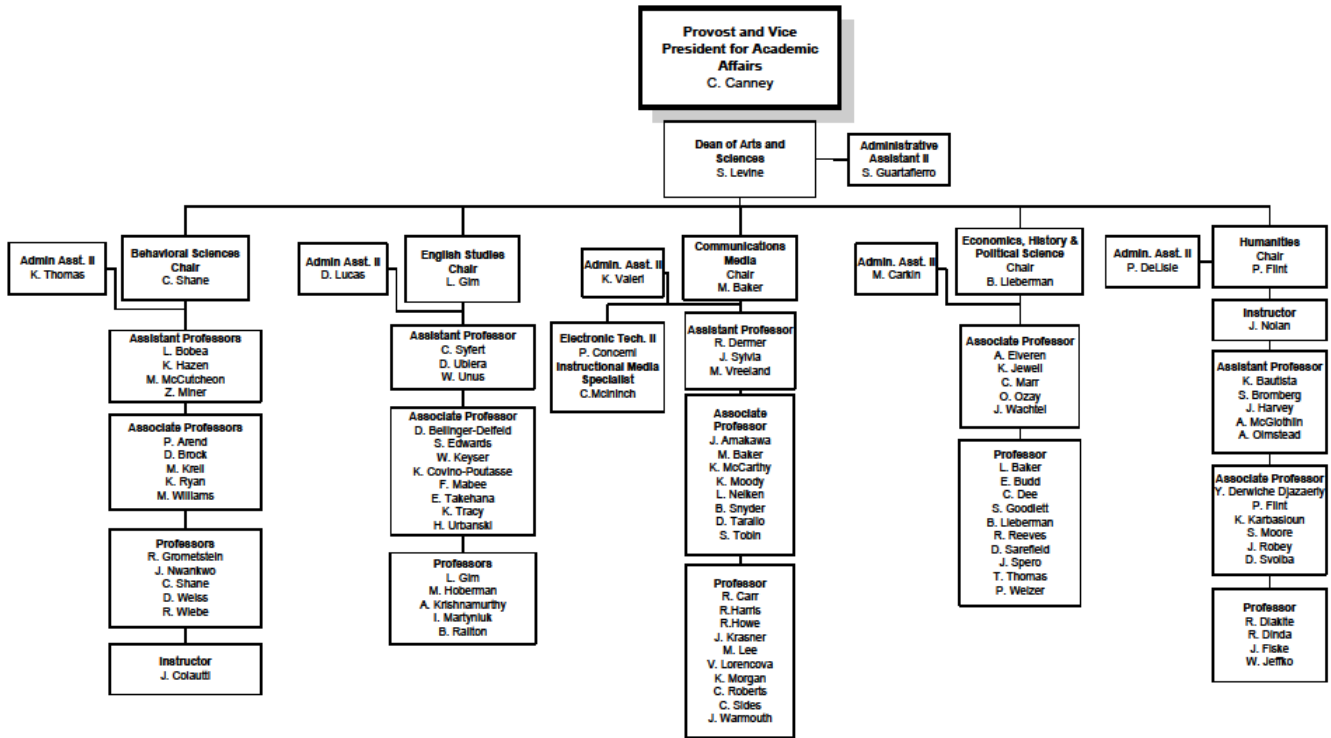


# Fitchburg State University

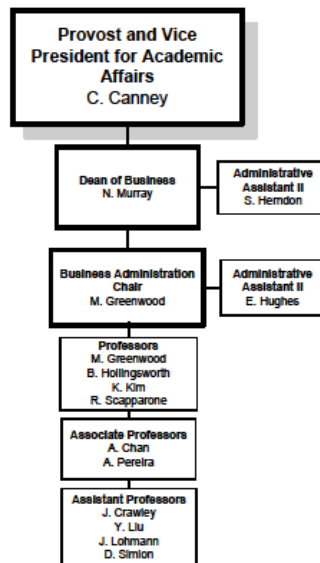
## Vice President of Academic Affairs



Fitchburg State University  
Dean of Arts and Sciences

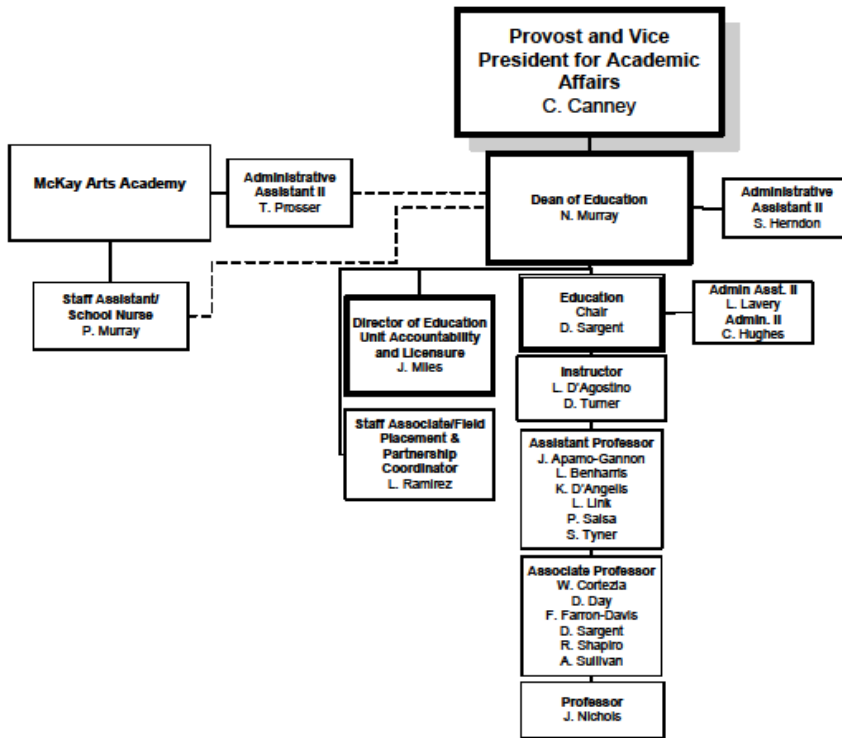


Fitchburg State University  
Dean of Business



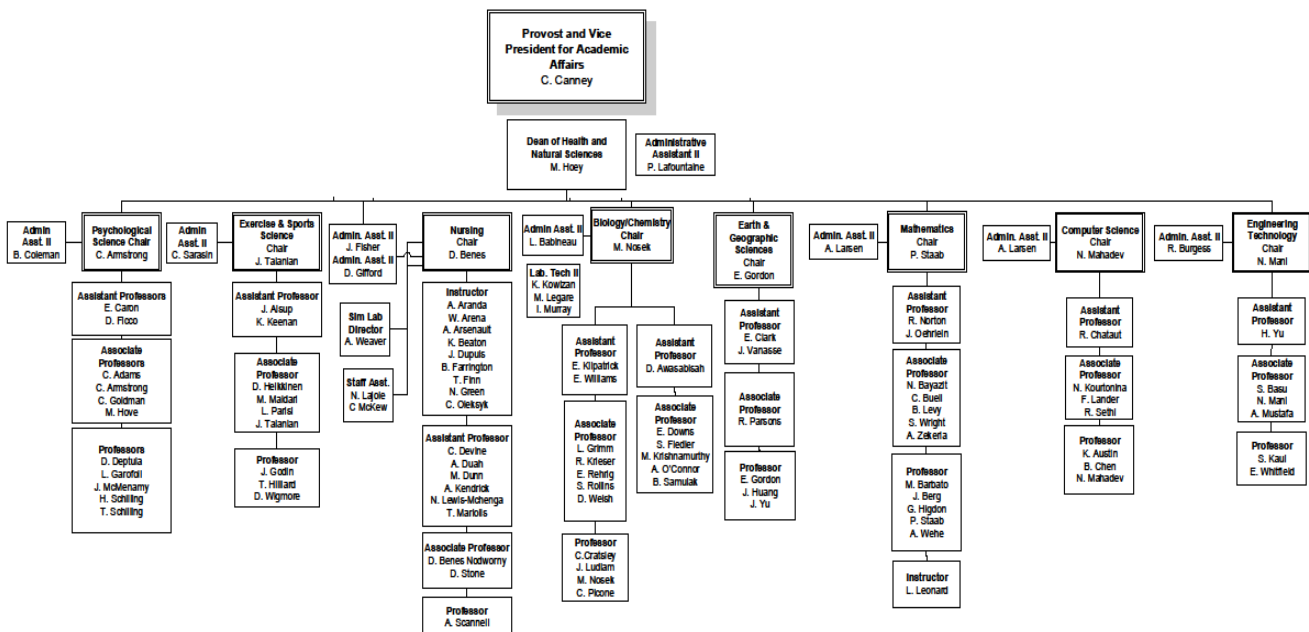
# Fitchburg State University

Dean/Education/McKay Arts Academy

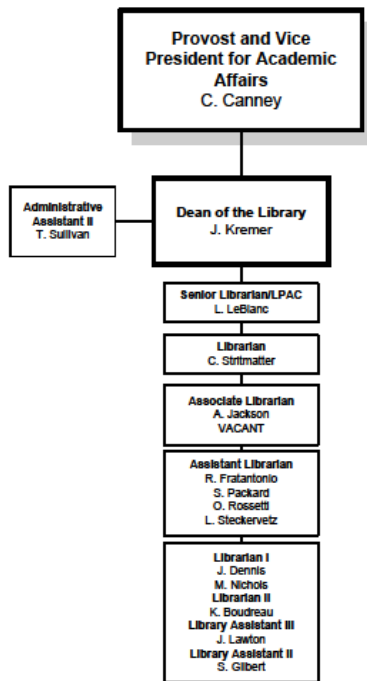


# Fitchburg State University

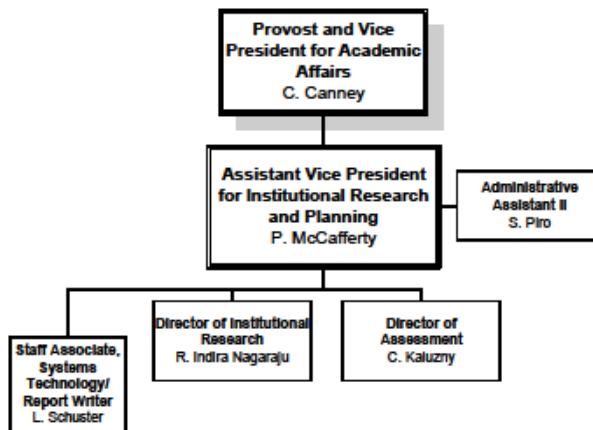
Dean of Health and Natural Sciences



## Fitchburg State University Library

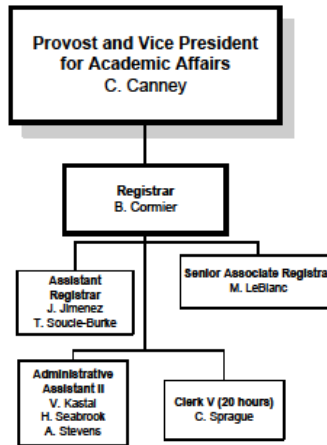


## Fitchburg State University Institutional Research and Planning

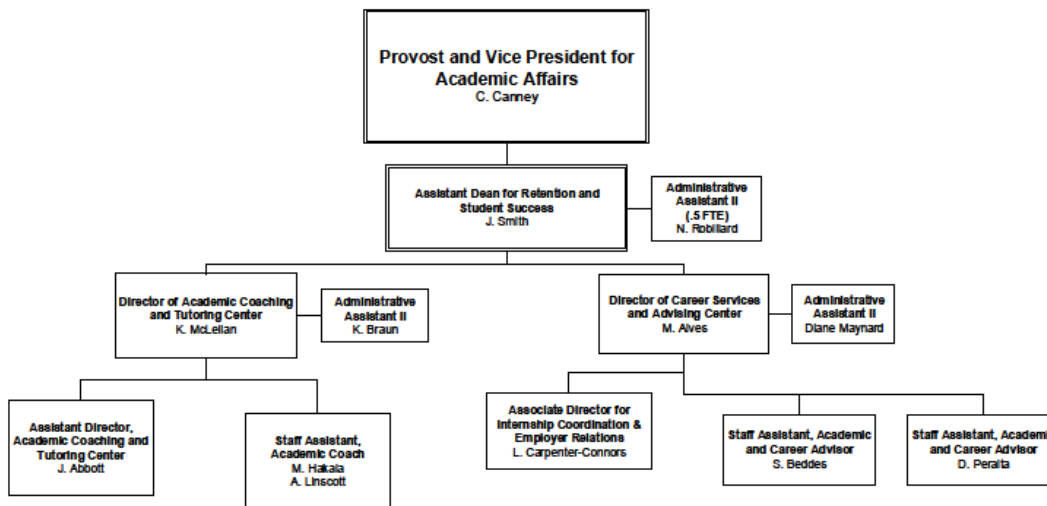




## Fitchburg State University Registrar

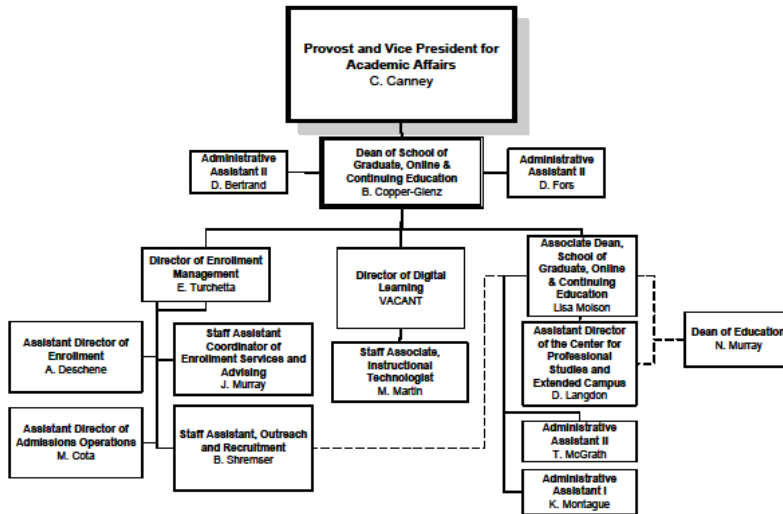


## Fitchburg State University Student Success



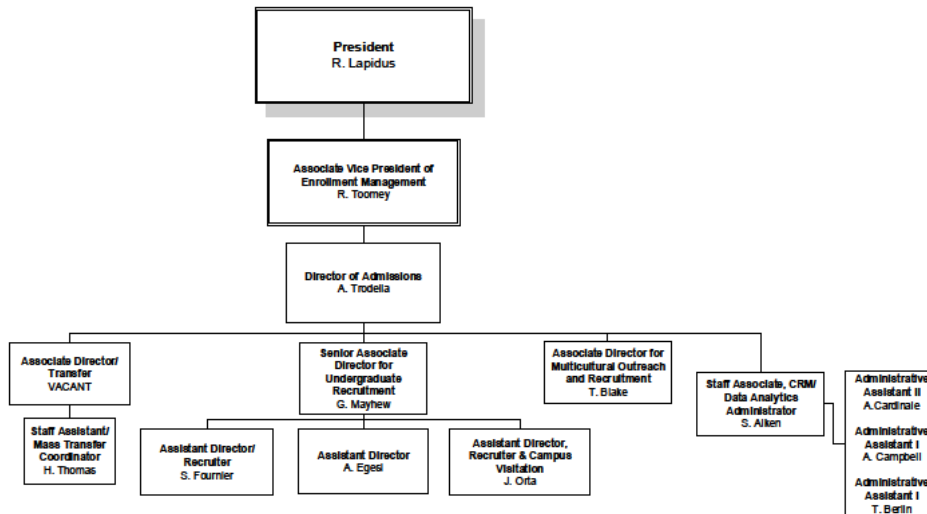
# Fitchburg State University

School of Graduate, Online & Continuing Education

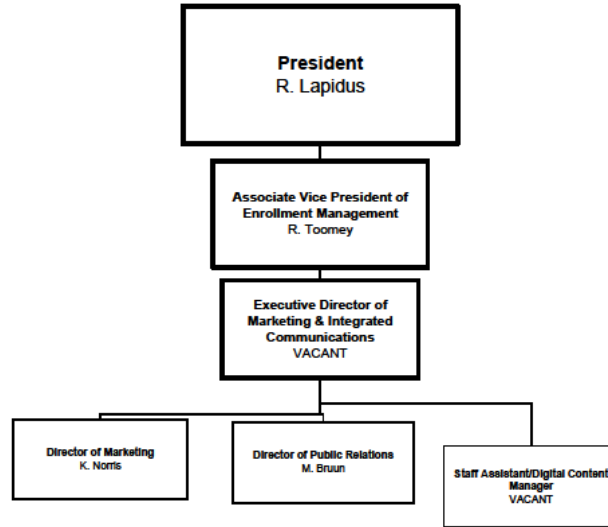


# Fitchburg State University

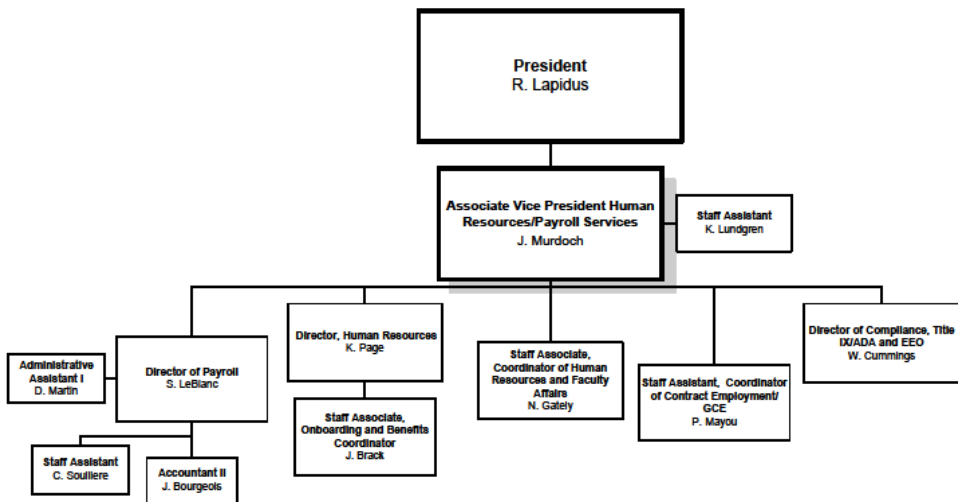
Admissions



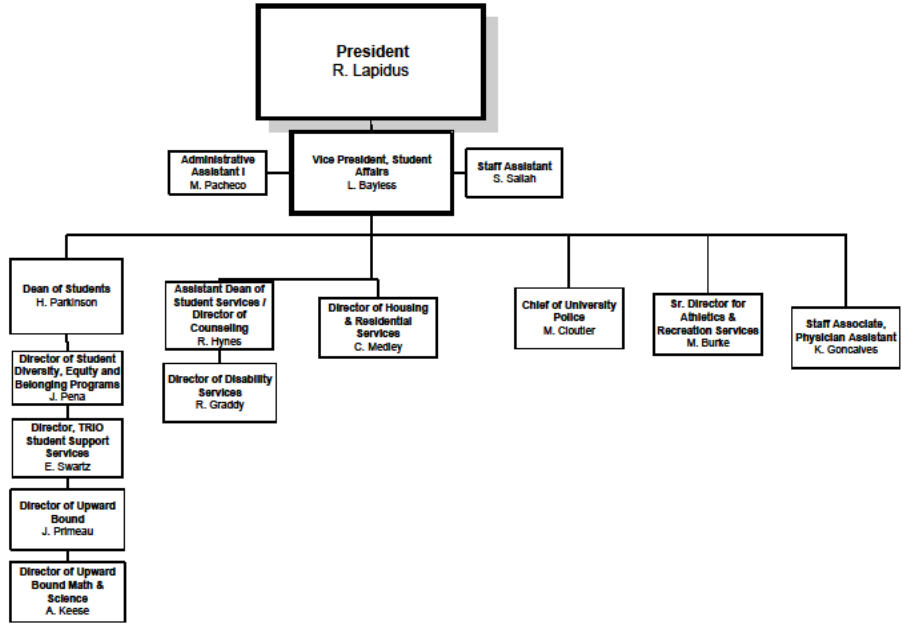
Fitchburg State University  
Marketing & Integrated Communications



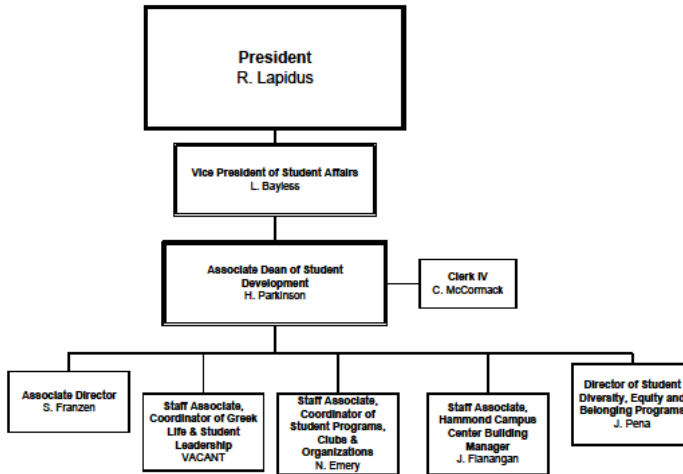
Fitchburg State University  
Human Resources/Payroll Services



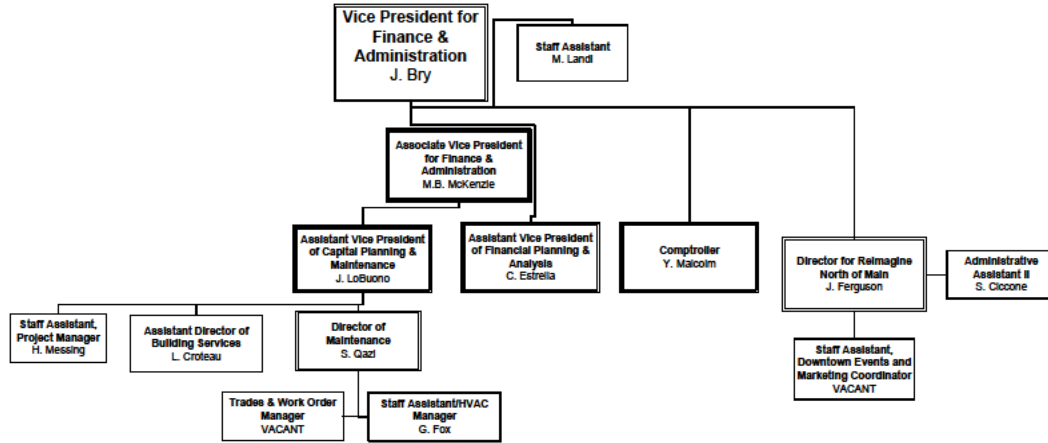
Fitchburg State University  
Vice President of Student Affairs



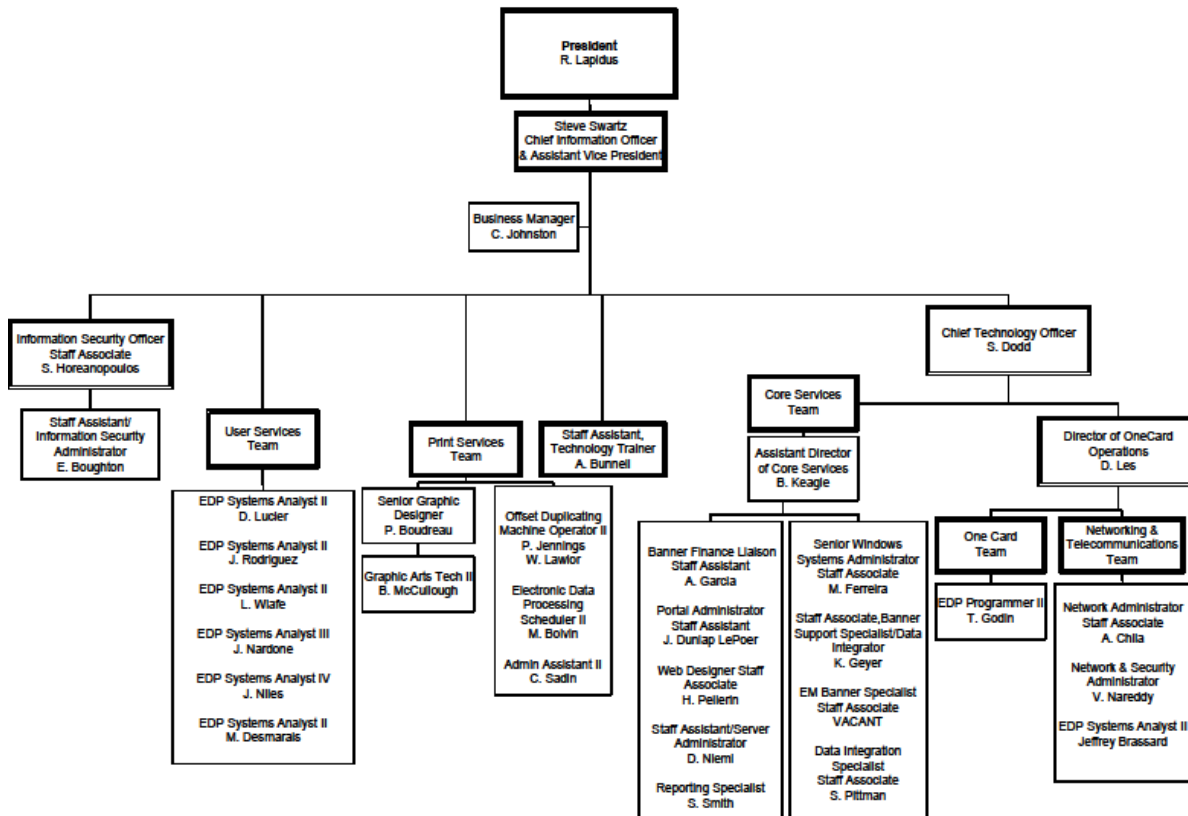
Fitchburg State University  
Student Development



Fitchburg State University  
Finance & Administration



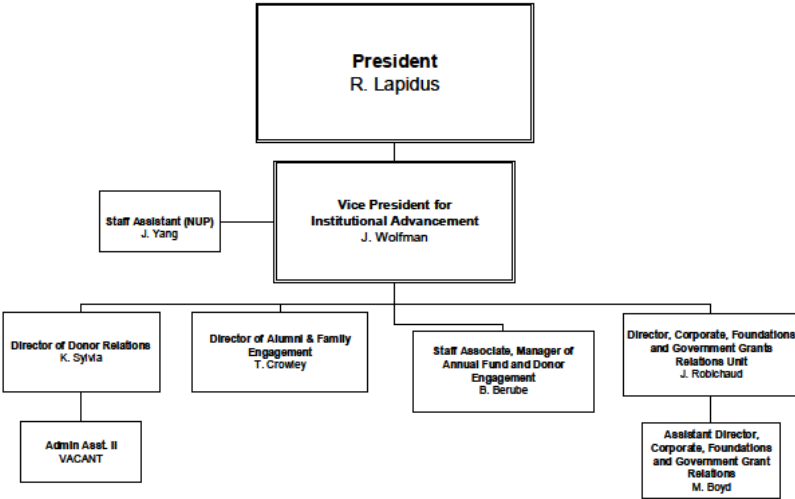
Fitchburg State University  
Technology Department





# Fitchburg State University

Alumni and Development/Grants



## MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAW

- **PART I** ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT (Chapters 1 through 182)
- **TITLE II** EXECUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH
- **CHAPTER 15A** PUBLIC EDUCATION
- **Section 5** Public institutions of higher education system

Section 5. There shall be, for the purposes of this chapter, a system of public institutions of higher education, hereinafter called the system, which shall consist of the following segments: (i) the university of Massachusetts segment, which shall consist of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Boston, Dartmouth, Lowell and Worcester; (ii) the state university segment, which shall consist of Bridgewater State University, Fitchburg State University, Framingham State University, the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, the Massachusetts Maritime Academy, the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Salem State University, Westfield State University and Worcester State University; and (iii) the community college segment, which shall consist of Berkshire Community College, Bristol Community College, Bunker Hill Community College, Cape Cod Community College, Greenfield Community College, Holyoke Community College, Massachusetts Bay Community College, Massasoit Community College, Middlesex Community College, Mount Wachusett Community College, Northern Essex Community College, North Shore Community College, Quinsigamond Community College, Roxbury Community College and Springfield Technical Community College.

The board shall coordinate activities among the public institutions of higher education and shall engage in advocacy on their behalf, which advocacy shall include a sustained program to inform the public of the needs, importance, and accomplishments of the public institutions of higher education in the commonwealth.

- **PART I** ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT (Chapters 1 through 182)
- **TITLE II** EXECUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH
- **CHAPTER 15A** PUBLIC EDUCATION
- **Section 22** Board of trustees of community colleges or state universities; powers and duties

Section 22. Each board of trustees of a community college or state university shall be responsible for establishing those policies necessary for the administrative management of personnel, staff services and the general business of the institution under its authority. Without limitation upon the generality of the foregoing, each such board shall: (a) cause to be prepared and submit to the secretary and the council estimates of maintenance and capital outlay budgets for the institution under its authority; (b) establish all fees at said institution subject to guidelines established by the council. Said fees shall include fines and penalties collected pursuant to the enforcement of traffic and parking rules and regulations. Said rules and regulations shall be enforced by persons in the employ of the institution who throughout the property of the institution shall have the powers of police officers, except as to the service of civil process. Said fees established under the provisions of this section shall be retained by the board of trustees in a revolving fund or funds, and shall be expended as the board of the institution may direct; provided that the foregoing shall not authorize any action in contravention of the requirements of Section 1 of Article LXIII of the Amendments to the Constitution. Said fund or funds shall be subject to annual audit by the state auditor; (c) appoint, transfer, dismiss,

promote and award tenure to all personnel of said institution; (d) manage and keep in repair all property, real and personal, owned or occupied by said institution; (e) seek, accept and administer for faculty research, programmatic and institutional purposes grants, gifts and trusts from private foundations, corporations, federal agencies, alumnae and other sources, which shall be administered under the provisions of section two C of chapter twenty-nine and may be disbursed at the direction of the board of trustees pursuant to its authority; (f) implement and evaluate affirmative action policies and programs; (g) establish, implement and evaluate student services and policies; (h) recommend to the council admission standards and instructional programs for said institution, including all major and degree programs provided, however, that said admission standards shall comply with the provisions of section thirty; (i) have authority to transfer funds within and among subsidiary accounts allocated to said institution by the council; (j) establish and operate programs, including summer and evening programs, in accordance with the degree authority conferred under the provisions of this chapter; (k) award degrees in fields approved by the council; either independently or in conjunction with other institutions, in accordance with actions of the boards of trustees of said other institutions and the council; (l) submit a 5-year master plan to the secretary and the council, which plan shall be subject to the secretary's approval, in consultation with the council, and shall be updated annually according to a schedule determined by the secretary and the board in consultation with the board of trustees; (m) submit financial data and other data as required by the secretary and the board of higher education for the careful and responsible discharge of their purposes, functions, and duties. The data shall be reported annually to the secretary and the board of higher education according to a schedule determined by the secretary and the board of higher education in consultation with the board of trustees. The board of trustees shall also submit an annual institutional spending plan to the secretary and the council for review, comment, and transmittal to the secretary of administration and finance, the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on higher education. Spending plans shall be reported using a standardized format developed by the secretary, in consultation with the board of higher education and the institutional boards of trustees, in a manner to allow comparison of similar costs between the various institutions of the commonwealth. Said plan shall include an account of spending from all revenue sources including but not limited to, trust funds; (n) develop a mission statement for the institution consistent with identified missions of the system of public higher education as a whole, as well as the identified mission of the category of institution within which the institution operates. Said mission statement shall be forwarded to the secretary and the council for approval. The board of trustees shall, after its approval, make said mission statement available to the public; (o) submit an institutional self-assessment report to the secretary and the council, which the board of trustees shall make public and available at the institution. Said assessment report shall be used to foster improvement at the institution by the board of trustees and shall include information relative to the institution's progress in fulfilling its approved mission. Said report shall be submitted annually to the secretary and the board of higher education according to a schedule determined by the secretary and said board in consultation with the board of trustees. (p) The board of trustees of an institution with the potential to expand its mission, profile, and orientation to a more regional or national focus may submit to the secretary and the board of higher education, for approval, a 5-year plan embracing an entrepreneurial model which leverages that potential in order to achieve higher levels of excellence pursuant to section 7.

The board of trustees of each institution may delegate to the president of such institution any of the powers and responsibilities herein enumerated.

The commonwealth shall indemnify a trustee of a community college or state university against loss by reason of the liability to pay damages to a party for any claim arising out of any official judgment, decision, or conduct of said trustee; provided, however, that said trustee has acted in good faith and without malice; and provided, further, that the defense or settlement of such claim shall have been made by the attorney general or his designee. If a final judgment or decree is entered in favor of a party other than said trustee, the clerk of the court where such judgment or decree is entered shall, within twenty-one days after the final disposition of the claim, provide said trustee with a

certified copy of such judgment or entry of decree, showing the amount due from said trustee, who shall transmit the same to the comptroller who shall forthwith notify the governor; and the governor shall draw his warrant for such amount on the state treasurer, who shall pay the same from appropriations made for the purpose by the general court.

## Table of NECHE Actions, Items of Special Attention, or Concerns

Date of Commission Letter	Detailed Actions, Items of Special Attention or Concerns	NECHE Standards cited in Letter	Self-Study Page Number
April 11, 2017	In addition to the information included in all self-studies, the self-study prepared in advance of the Spring 2022 evaluation give emphasis to the institution’s continued success in implementing and assessing its strategic plan and assuring the effective integration of strategic planning, operational planning, and budgeting.	2.5, 2.1, 2.3, 7.14	31, 38-43, 91, 92, 121-125, 133, 151, 157, 163, 167, 177



## Introduction: The Self-Study Process

Fitchburg State University's commitment to student achievement and success through regular assessment of data, self-reflection, and continuous improvement provided a perfect framework to commence the process for accreditation renewal. From the start, one of the guiding principles in steering the process was a unified pledge to be inclusive, transparent, and communicative. In January 2020, the President presented an official notification through the university's governance bodies, the All University Committee and the Graduate Council, that our work to prepare for our comprehensive 10-year accreditation would commence.

In February 2020, an administrative team was formed to develop a structure for the process and to outline general timelines for the work. This team, consisting of the Provost, the Associate Vice-President for Academic Affairs, the Assistant Vice-President for Institutional Research and Planning, the Director of Institutional Research, and the Director of Assessment reviewed the process archived by the Steering Committee from our last 10-year accreditation in 2012. One of their recommendations was to forge a stronger connection between standard committees and the steering committee. We determined that committees would be structured by standards with seven committees to address the nine standards. One committee would address Standards One, Two and Three. Representatives from faculty, staff, and students would populate these standard committees. Each committee would have co-chairs, with one faculty member and one staff serving in those roles.

In March and April of 2020, the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA) representing faculty conducted a call to faculty seeking volunteers to participate in the NECHE Self-Study process by serving on a committee. It was our goal to finalize committee assignments before the summer break to allow committees to begin work early in the fall. The President conducted a call for staff volunteers while the Student Government Association (SGA) did the same for students. In the end, we were thrilled to populate these seven committees with over 90 university community members representing these three populations with most committees having five staff, five faculty, and one or two students. Committee assignments were made to allow for diverse representation of members with a variety of years of service and expertise. During the period of seeking volunteers, the coronavirus global pandemic began, and the campus community largely moved to remote work, teaching, and learning. It was a demonstration of the commitment to the institution and the students it serves to have so many volunteer during this great time of uncertainty.

In May 2020, the President appointed two individuals to oversee the accreditation process. Associate Vice-President Dr. Cathy Canney, who also serves as the university's NECHE liaison, and Dr. Daneen Deptula, Professor of Psychological Science, assumed this role. Respectively Dr. Canney and Dr. Deptula have served the institution for over 30 and 13 years. Drs. Canney and Deptula would oversee the Steering Committee whose membership consisted of the standard committee co-chairs, Provost, Assistant Vice-President for Institutional Research and Planning, the Director of Institutional Research, a member of the Board of Trustees, and the self-study document editor. The appointment of standard committee co-chairs to the Steering Committee was designed to address the 2012 Steering Committee recommendation of a closer connection between the groups.

Another guiding principle for our work was the commitment to compile data before the standard committees began their work and continue to seek evidence throughout the self-reflection process. Led by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, data was compiled over the summer of 2020 with data first forms populated and made available to committees in September 2020. In addition, this office constructed a document, giving committees a list of technology tools used to extract data as well as all regularly administered surveys. This was very helpful to provide a baseline of information from which committees could begin their research and analysis. Committee co-chairs were encouraged to approach the work through a lens of inquiry, reflecting candidly through analysis of institutional effectiveness.

With committees in place, Fitchburg State opened the 2020-2021 academic year in the midst of the continued pandemic but ready nonetheless to commence the self-study process. We invited NECHE Senior Vice-President Dr. Patricia O'Brien to our annual September Professional Development Day for faculty. We opened this professional development day session to all members of the campus community to attend, albeit virtually. Dr. O'Brien provided a great overview of the accreditation process while self-study co-chairs, Drs. Canney and Deptula outlined Fitchburg State's structure and timelines for this work. We were able to unveil a website dedicated to our work where resources and current information would be housed and available to all. In addition, a dedicated email address, [NECHE2022@fitchburgstate.edu](mailto:NECHE2022@fitchburgstate.edu), was created so any community member could comment or ask questions throughout the process.

With the process structure in place, the Provost's Office sought applications for a self-study editor to work as a member of the steering committee throughout and ultimately appointed Dr. Benjamin Railton from our English Studies Department. Dr. Railton's 16 years of experience at the university, as well as his membership on the 2017 Fifth Year Interim Report Committee and his prior service as Chair of both the All University Committee and the Liberal Arts & Sciences Council, provided good context for his editorial work.

As part of our commitment to communication and transparency, the self-study co-chairs provided regular updates to the campus community. For ease of reference, these updates were posted to our [NECHE 2022 website](#). It was our goal that all community members would be informed, able to provide feedback and ask questions at any time.

Standard committees developed bulleted first drafts in January 2021 outlining the beginning of our narrative story. This work helped inform the development of a full campus survey through which we could gather additional NECHE standard-relevant data that was not readily available from existing data sources. It was also another means to build community around the process. The survey was deployed in late January with approximately 600 responses from faculty, staff, and students. The bulleted drafts were shared with the full Steering Committee, opening up the opportunity for feedback across standards. To allow for deeper analysis and support of standard committee work, Drs. Canney and Deptula met individually with standard co-chairs, providing feedback to inform the first round of narrative drafts.

NECHE Vice-President Carol Anderson also reviewed these early drafts and provided written feedback to help with the construction of the next round of narrative drafts. Dr. Anderson also attended the March 2021 Steering Committee meeting to share her feedback and address questions. This was an invaluable piece of our process.

In March 2021, standard committees presented updated narrative drafts to the Steering Committee. Drs. Canney and Deptula again met separately with standard committee co-chairs and this time included the self-study editor and Assistant Vice-President for Institutional Research. The additional feedback and direction for additional data sources provided valued support in the process.

On March 30, 2021, the self-study co-chairs presented to the Board of Trustees an overview of the accreditation process and the university's progress to date, with a plan to provide another presentation later in the process where more specifics on findings would be shared. Having a member of the Board of Trustees on the Steering Committee assisted in keeping a strong connection to the Board.

In April 2021, each standard committee held a virtual information session open to the entire campus community to provide specifics on what the standards contain, details on next steps, and opportunities for feedback. These sessions were recorded and posted to our NECHE self-study webpage for convenient viewing. In early April, the Steering Committee meeting focused on the construction of projections, as the drafts submitted at the end of April included a tentative outline of projections.

The Provost, self-study co-chairs, and AVP conducted a projection analysis exercise for Institutional Research and Planning, with results and feedback given back to standard committee co-chairs. This informed some of the summer draft revision work. Deeper dives into drafts and projections were conducted outside of the standard committees to gain additional insight and wider participation. We continued with our goal of involving as many campus community members as possible to help tell our story. Our collective voices were building a shared understanding of our work. Committee members noted appreciation for learning more about their institution through the examination of areas outside their regular work.

During Summer 2021, additional data was added to the data first forms as further review of drafts were conducted through various lenses. We once again sought NECHE Vice-President Anderson's feedback with our most recent self-study draft. Our self-study editor had begun the work of creating a cohesive draft with one voice while searching for themes and consistency. Standard committees revised drafts based on Dr. Anderson's feedback with our editor doing additional work on the self-study as we prepared to share the draft more broadly. This draft reiteration was shared with the President and his Executive Cabinet for feedback with particular attention to projections. It was critical that projections were fully supported with necessary resources. It is worth noting that all members of the Executive Cabinet were also members of standard committees so they were active throughout the process.

In Fall 2021, we commenced the academic year again with a renewed commitment to preparing for our reaccreditation and further construction of a self-study document that demonstrated our adherence to the standards and our commitment for continuous improvement. In early October 2021, a full self-study draft was shared with the campus community, with multiple means for input and feedback. This draft was submitted to university governance bodies, the All University Committee (AUC) and Graduate Council, with a request for feedback. The AUC and Student Government Association (SGA) sponsored open forums in October to share some highlights of the report, answer questions, and gain feedback. This draft was presented and reviewed with the Board of Trustees at their October 19 meeting, seeking their support for commitments to the work and required resources. In addition, the self-study co-chairs presented highlights of the draft to the academic department and graduate program chairs, the SGA, and the

Academic Affairs division staff. Updates and revisions to the draft continued over the Fall as committees continued to gather and organize supporting data and evidence to support our narrative.

In December 2021, an updated self-study draft was shared with the campus community after another round of diligent attention to campus feedback, as committee members continued to build the evidence room. Work continued in January 2022 to finalize and validate all data, review content, and build an electronic workroom. The self-study co-chairs also presented highlights of this final draft to faculty as part of the January Faculty Development Day held at the start of the semester.

In February 2022, Fitchburg State invited public comments through posting an announcement on the university website and in local papers, informing our internal and external community and various stakeholders that we were undergoing a comprehensive accreditation evaluation visit. An additional Board of Trustee meeting was held on February 15 to present a final review of the submitted self-study and review expectations for the visiting team's March evaluation.

Fitchburg State University embraced the process of self-analysis as we sought to determine our institutional effectiveness while acknowledging our challenges. Our goal to be inclusive, transparent, and communicative throughout the process was achieved. Coming together as a collective community to examine our strengths and weaknesses while developing a direction for continuous improvement was a rewarding experience that will positively affect our students' futures.

## NECHE Self-Study Steering Committee Members

Name	Title	Department	Role
Catherine Canney	Interim Provost and Vice President	Academic Affairs	NECHE Self-Study Co-Chair
Daneen Deptula	Professor	Psychological Sciences	NECHE Self-Study Co-Chair
Pamela McCafferty	Assistant Vice President	Institutional Research and Planning	Planning Committee Member
Rajeev Indira-Nagaraju	Director of Institutional Research	Institutional Research and Planning	Planning Committee Member
Lynn Barrieau	Board Member	Board of Trustees	Planning Committee Member
Ben Railton	Professor	English Studies	Editor
Christian Estrella	Assistant Vice President	Finance and Administration	Standards 1,2,3 Co-Chair
DeMisty Bellinger-Delfeld	Associate Professor	English Studies	Standards 1,2,3 Co-Chair
Becky Copper Glenz	Dean	Graduate, Online, and Continuing Education	Standard 4 Co-Chair
Elizabeth Gordon	Professor	Earth and Geographic Sciences	Standard 4 Co-Chair
Hank Parkinson	Associate Dean	Student Development	Standard 5 Co-Chair
Eric Williams	Assistant Professor	Biology/Chemistry	Standard 5 Co-Chair
Nancy Murray	Dean	BOTH: Business and Education	Standard 6 Co-Chair
Eric Budd	Professor	Economics, History, and Political Science	Standard 6 Co-Chair
Jacalyn Kremer	Dean	Library	Standard 7 Co-Chair
Robert Shapiro	Associate Professor	Education	Standard 7 Co-Chair
Cate Kaluzny	Director of Assessment	Institutional Research and Planning	Standard 8 Co-Chair
JJ Sylvia	Assistant Professor	Communications Media	Standard 8 Co-Chair
Matthew Bruun	Director of Public Relations	Marketing and Communications	Standard 9 Co-Chair
Jannette McMenamy	Professor	Psychological Science	Standard 9 Co-Chair

## Institutional Overview

Fitchburg State was established in 1894 as the State Normal School in Fitchburg, and the sole curriculum was a two-year teacher-training program for women. With 46 participants that first year, the program was seen as an overnight success, and it became obvious that expansion was necessary. In 1896, the State Normal School in Fitchburg became a single building atop a rural hill that remains operational even today, Thompson Hall. In 1930, the State Normal School was authorized to offer a bachelor's degree in practical arts, and in 1932, when the name was officially changed to the State Teachers College at Fitchburg, four-year degrees were offered in all areas of education. While summer courses were first offered in 1915, under the support of the State Division of University Extension, the college was able to establish continuing education courses through graduate programs by 1935 and offered evening courses by 1954.

The college expanded its mission in 1960 by diversifying its programs to include degrees in disciplines other than education. It also changed its name to the State College at Fitchburg for five years before becoming Fitchburg State College in 1965. It went by this name for the next 45 years, as it grew to offer 34 undergraduate majors in 15 academic departments, 20 master's degree programs, two certificate of advanced graduate study programs, and 11 graduate certificate programs. In fall 2008, the university launched its first two fully online degree programs, an M.S. in Forensic Nursing, and a Master of Business Administration. In 2010, the Governor signed legislation that established a state university system in Massachusetts, and the institution's current name, Fitchburg State University, was enacted. Today, enrollment consists of nearly 8,000 students, between undergraduate and graduate populations, and the campus has come a long way from its humble origin in the old building on Academy Street.

Fitchburg State has 42 buildings spread across 60 acres and has become the educational center for the Montachusett region, as a public comprehensive institution that is one of the 29 institutions in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' system of public higher education. We were proud to celebrate our 125<sup>th</sup> year of changing lives during the 2019-2020 academic year.

Fitchburg State is situated within the City of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, which has a population of approximately 41,000 and is located in north-central Worcester County. Fitchburg State is well positioned to partner with and influence the future of this Massachusetts gateway city that continues to address economic and social challenges. The university is visible in the community in many ways, embracing our commitment to a strong town-gown relationship through valuable partnerships and initiatives. Our explicit commitment to the community is amplified in our mission statement, "As a community resource, we provide leadership and support for the economic, environmental, social, and cultural needs of North Central Massachusetts and the Commonwealth." Staff and faculty contribute to community work through their participation on local committees and boards.

The university has a physical presence off the main campus on Main Street, having located our Center for Professional Studies within the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority complex. In addition, the university is engaged in the restoration and rehabilitation of the historic Main Street Theater Block, with a completed game design studio used by students for their capstone experience and an interdisciplinary ideaLab for local entrepreneurs. The Reimagine North of Main project, anchored by Fitchburg State and Fitchburg Art Museum, engages local businesses, non-profits, local government and neighborhood residents to improve the quality of life in the North of Main neighborhoods.

Our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan has reinforced our commitment to the community, with one of its six goals calling for the university to be “an engine of social, economic, civic, and cultural development in our city and region,” understanding that through our shared vision, the community will grow and thrive. The Douglas and Isabelle Crocker Center for Civic Engagement helps local organizations evolve and develop competencies in best practices, empowers people to build a better community, and maximizes collaboration between Fitchburg State and the community. The Center has been an effective vehicle to connect students and faculty with the community. Students and faculty engage in community-based research and internships affording students engagement in high-impact practices, a key component of our revised general education curriculum launched in Fall 2021.

The university strives to reflect the regional demographics within its student body. Students at Fitchburg High School for example are 7.5% African American, 6.1% Asian, 56% Hispanic, 23.7% White, and 6.7% Multi-Racial. The university has developed strategies to attract these historically underrepresented students to our campus while fostering a community in which they can persevere, succeed, and belong. Our state-designated Early College program partnership with Fitchburg High has successfully enrolled students from these groups allowing them to participate in an experience that motivates these students to earn a higher education degree. Our Early College program is a consortium that not only includes Fitchburg High but also Mount Wachusett Community College, Leominster High, Sizer School, and Gardner High. This consortium is a strong partnership to serve the students within the region through true collaboration and sharing of resources while addressing one of the priorities of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education’s priorities within its equity agenda.

Fitchburg State’s longstanding commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion has been strengthened through education, training, and resources. The recognition of our unwavering attention to this work is incorporated into our strategic plan with its overarching goals of being a student-ready campus with a focus on education justice. You will see examples of the institution’s work illustrated within the standards narrative. Some of these include: the restructuring of the Center for Teaching and Learning to include a faculty-led focus on inclusive excellence in the classroom; our participation in the state universities’ Leading for Change Racial Equity and Justice Institute Consortium with our committee structured to ensure attention to students, faculty, and staff; and the reorganization of the Center for Diversity and Inclusiveness, including the addition of a new director. Standards Six and Seven both include projections committing to diversifying our staff and faculty. Our Mission and Strategic Plan will keep this work at the forefront, as there is still work to be done.

As you read the narrative within this report, you will find references to “day” and “evening” students, programs, and faculty. As part of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with the establishment of the state university public higher education system, the divisions within those colleges offering graduate and continuing education programs must be self-supporting and do not receive state support. In our narrative, “day” refers to the state-supported undergraduate traditional program, while “evening” and the School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education (SGOCE) refer to the non-state-supported division of the university. You will see this separation through the faculty contracts as well, with one agreement for “day” faculty and another for “SGOCE” faculty. Regardless of the longstanding general law that creates a legislative divide, Fitchburg State supports a one-college concept where all students deserve access and support in their educational pursuits.



The senior level administrative structure has undergone significant transitions in recent years. Richard Lapidus was appointed the university's 11<sup>th</sup> President in 2015, with Alberto Cardelle appointed as Provost the following year. An initial academic dean structure was created in 2014 with mainly internal staff serving in interim capacities. With a permanent Provost in place and following national searches, new deans assumed these roles in 2017, including a new Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education. At that same time, the position of Vice President for Student Affairs was revived with Laura Bayless assuming that role in 2017. To strengthen the academic dean structure and emphasize the library's essential place at the center of the academic mission, the director position was elevated to dean with Jacalyn Kremer assuming that role following another national search. Jeffrey Wolfman joined the campus in 2019 as the Vice President for Institutional Advancement.

The Academic Affairs Division experienced several transitions in recent years with the departure of the Dean of Health & Natural Sciences in 2019, the Dean of Business and Technology in 2020, and then Provost Cardelle in 2021 when he was appointed president of SUNY Oneonta. As a cost-saving measure, the Dean of Business and Technology position was not replaced, moving the oversight of academic departments within that school to two of the other deans. As we finalized our self-study during the 2021-2022 academic year, NECHE liaison and Associate Vice-President for Academic Affairs Catherine Canney assumed the interim Provost post but maintained her role in leading the NECHE reaccreditation process to allow for continuity.

The decline in undergraduate enrollments discussed in our narrative will continue to be a challenge. Fitchburg State was fortunate in that the nationally predicted demographic changes hit our campus later than other institutions. State budget appropriations are approximately 32% of the university's total revenue, with tuition and fees the primary source of revenue to fund the institution's operations, highlighting the challenges associated with declining undergraduate enrollments. Our early response included expanding access to other student populations - both undergraduate and graduate - who sought higher education opportunities in ways other than the traditional on-campus experience. For well over a decade, we invested significant resources in building an infrastructure to be able to offer fully online degree programs. The graduate online programs and enrollments have seen the most significant increases with our graduate enrollments now outpacing our undergraduate enrollments.

In addition, we also recognized that we needed to better use technology to communicate with our prospective students, particularly undergraduates, and purchased a customer relationship management system, Slate. Furthermore, we contracted with the Education Advisory Board to develop additional recruitment strategies to attract and enroll as much of the smaller pool of high school students as possible. However, we still were experiencing leadership turnaround in admissions and had a splintered approach to oversight and strategy for recruitment and enrollment. We are headed in the right direction with the hiring of an Associate Vice-president for Enrollment Management who will oversee the critical functions of admissions, financial aid, and marketing in a newly centralized Enrollment Management Division.

Fitchburg State's steadfast data-informed decision-making culture has continued to progress, with the university continually reinforcing the importance of using data to plan, evaluate, and improve. The creation of an Office of Institutional Research and Planning in 2015 significantly influenced campus constituents' ability to effectively access data to inform work. Investment in technology tools such as the Student Success Collaborative, DegreeWorks, Slate, Academic Performance Solutions, and more recently



the Education Advisory Board's Edify facilitates individuals' ability to access data. You will see in the Standard Eight narrative in particular how the work of the staff of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning and campus constituents' own capacity to access information have sharpened our focus on analyzing data to better understand levels of student achievement and what students are gaining from their educational experience.

At the time of our 2017 interim report, university institutional learning priorities for students were not yet articulated. The university has since adopted Institutional Learning Priorities as noted in the narrative, most specifically in Standard Eight. Program learning outcomes are part of the fabric of the curriculum and both faculty and students understand that these guide the academic learning experience. The assessment process for academic programs is truly integrated into our regular work. The creation of a University Assessment and Research Committee, described in Standard Eight, reviews annual assessment reports and allows for increased cross-divisional work and more feedback to departments.

A major accomplishment directed by our assessment work was the launch in Fall 2021 of a new general education curriculum. The last revision to our general education curriculum was in 2007 and the work to finalize this new curriculum spanned many years and involved all campus constituents. The resulting curriculum as described in the Standard Four narrative has three main components; Foundation, Exploration, and Integration, the latter of which includes all students participating in at least one integrative high impact practice. An assessment structure has been developed with a commitment to finalize that work articulated through a Standard Eight projection.

As we continue to prioritize assessment of student learning, we are pleased to report that the Student Affairs Division has implemented a Student Affairs Assessment Team recognizing the importance of the assessment of co-curricular experiences and student support areas. As you will read in Standard Five and more fully in Standard Eight, the division's work in this area is impressive as they adopt assessment measures to drive evidence-based improvements that support student success.

Planning remains essential work to strengthen Fitchburg State's ability to be effective. Both our 2015-2020 and 2020-2025 strategic planning processes were successful in utilizing inclusive and transparent processes with attention to implementation, evaluation, and resource allocation. Individual campus constituents are reminded through annual budgeting processes, assessment and annual reports, and program reviews that we expect and value connections between department and division work and the institution's strategic plan. Leadership seeks articulated connections to the strategic plan when making staff, faculty, and other resource requests. Some departments are still working on creating longer-term plans beyond annual strategies and tactics as is noted in the Standard Two narrative, with a projection committing us to the development of these plans. The Academic Affairs division is finalizing their 5-year companion plan to the 2020-2025 strategic plan this spring. The process has been inclusive and will conclude with anticipated governance approval of the plan by the end of the academic year. Other units across campus are also developing companion plans including Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, as the university seeks to align divisional plans with the institution's strategic plan.

The 2015-2020 strategic plan centered on student success and the 2020-2025 strategic plan framed our work under the overarching goals of education justice and being student-ready. Our strategic planning process consistently returns us to our mission of excellence in teaching and learning, transforming lives through education, and ensuring access. With the 2015-2020 plan, we secured additional tools to analyze

the data to guide curricula and to create support structures to expedite the work. Major highlights of this work include the creation of a Student Success Unit, professional staff advisor positions, updating of policies, expanded utilization of the Student Success Collaborative by faculty and staff, and the implementation of a First Year Experience which prepares students for a successful college career by developing habits of mind, reading, and information literacy skills.

Our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan again centered on students, this time understanding that changing demographics will require new support systems and curricular updates. Our current plan was finalized and approved during the first year of the global coronavirus pandemic. The Strategic Plan committees' allegiance to the process was striking considering the vast amount of uncertainty that consumed us all during this period. The narrative within this self-study focuses our story on the past 10 years; while it recognizes the pandemic's influence on our work, we intentionally refrained from letting it be "the story." Still, we will describe some of the ways that the pandemic disrupted the lives of our students, faculty, staff, and the institution overall.

There were many factors that allowed Fitchburg State to quickly transition to a remote operation in March 2020 but we will note two factors here: the transition to Google applications and services shortly before the pandemic; and our long history of success in online learning. Faculty and staff demonstrated a commitment to effective classroom learning, continuity of operations, and ongoing student support throughout this time. We were all learning how to do things differently during these extremely challenging times and still now are working daily on the management of our institution during a pandemic. Add to the onset of this global crisis, the shifting demographics and declining undergraduate enrollments, and our will and fortitude were tested. This institution did both well, managing operations within the coronavirus crisis and planning, developing, and executing initiatives and strategies to continue to improve institutional effectiveness to support student success.

The pandemic brought the disparities amongst our student populations into even greater focus. It reinforced that our strategic planning work had appropriately resulted in a commitment to be a student-ready campus, understanding that not all students that we accept and enroll have the same experiences and resources. We provided students with wi-fi access and loaner laptops so that all could access services and virtual classrooms. The university launched a COVID section of our website, instituted policy changes for incompletes, extended deadlines for course drops, and provided counseling and tutoring in an online/telehealth format. We conducted large-scale outreach efforts with new programs such as Falcons Supporting Falcons as described in Standard Five. Online teaching and use of Google applications training was conducted with the regular sharing of ideas and resources. The best practices that were learned, shared, and adopted are being utilized beyond the forced period of remote learning. Flexibility and adaptability became paramount.

Although we were exerting tremendous amounts of energy to make certain courses were running, support services could be accessed, and co-curricular activities were available, our students were struggling. Moreover, it was not just those students who may have already been academically, socially, or emotionally struggling; it was a condition that crossed boundaries.

At our first in-person commencement ceremony since December 2019, our December 2021 valedictorian acknowledged this in her remarks, noting she "seriously thought about cutting my losses and withdrawing from the semester." Surveys administered during the COVID-19 pandemic (as noted in Standards Five and

Eight) revealed mental health issues affecting persistence capacity, which had already begun to emerge prior to the pandemic.

As we move forward into our new normal, we know that our students will continue to need support to persist. We acknowledge that if we determine a student is capable of earning a Fitchburg State University degree by our admission acceptance, then we have a responsibility to maintain our educational effectiveness by continually examining our curricula, striving for a diverse faculty and staff, removing barriers within processes and policies, and planning to allow resource allocation where its impact is greatest.

Fitchburg State University's motto is perseverance. Our faculty, administrators, and staff display their embodiment to this point of pride with their unwavering commitment to the principle of continuous improvement to help students learn, achieve, and succeed. We understand the significance of providing a quality educational experience for our students, are proud of the work we have accomplished, and are committed to the continued efforts to remain an effective institution.

**DATA FIRST FORMS  
GENERAL INFORMATION**

Institution Name: Fitchburg State University

OPE ID: 218400

Financial Results for Year Ending:		Annual Audit	
		Certified: Yes/No	Qualified
Most Recent Year	06/30 2021		Unqualified
1 Year Prior	2020		Unqualified
2 Years Prior	2019		Unqualified

Fiscal Year Ends on: June 30th (month/day)

Budget / Plans

Current Year	2022
Next Year	2023

Contact Person:	Catherine Canney
Title:	Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Telephone No:	978-665-3653
E-mail address	ccanney@fitchburgstate.edu

## Standard One: Mission and Purpose

### Description

The mission of Fitchburg State University, approved by the Board of Trustees in December 2009, and updated to reflect university status in Fall 2010, is as follows:

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

The mission statement informs the Fitchburg State vision: Fitchburg State University will be nationally recognized for its excellence in teaching and learning in current and emergent fields, for its commitment to transforming lives through education, and for its dedication to public service. In order to achieve this, we will prepare students for a global society through curricular innovation and program development, achieve academic excellence by investing in our faculty and librarians in their pursuit of knowledge, professional competency, and scholarship, employ innovative uses of technology in the library and across our campus to maximize student learning, create a culture of diversity to meet the needs of the region and enhance the personal and academic lives of the university community, and build partnerships within our community to provide real-world opportunities for our students and collaborative solutions to community issues.

The Fitchburg State core values are: accessibility, affordability, community, enrichment, and excellence.

The FSU mission also aligns with the MA Board of Higher Education Mission Statement and the MA Department of Higher Education's Mission for the State Universities.

### Appraisal

The mission statement, vision statement, and core values are available online and in printed publications. In the widely distributed February 2021 NECHE Accreditation Survey, the majority of the FSU community reported being aware of the mission, vision, and core values. Familiarity with the university's mission statement was high (rating familiar or somewhat familiar: 99% Staff/Administrators,  $n = 97$ ; 96% Faculty and Librarians,  $n = 102$ ; 81% Students,  $n = 401$ ). Similarly, most respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the university is fulfilling its mission (Staff/Administrators 95%; Faculty and Librarians 86%; and Students 85%). The mission statement remains appropriate and relevant with a large percentage of respondents as well (Staff/Administrators 91%; Faculty and Librarians 88%; and Students 89%). To continue to reinforce the university's commitment to its mission, framed mission, vision, and core values have been displayed in campus buildings.

The university does not have an official established timeline for review of the mission statement. Historically, the mission statement is reviewed in developing the five-year strategic plan, but a formal

cycle should be incorporated. Although it was decided not to have an official review of the mission statement in the 2020-2025 planning process, the mission was at the core of the work of the strategic plan.

The mission is clearly reflected in the curriculum and across the university, as evidenced by our Institutional Learning Priorities, the General Education program, and the array of academic and curricular programs offered. The mission is also clearly seen throughout the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan (See Standards Four-Six).

Diversity, equity, and inclusion is one of the key elements of our vision supported by our strategic plan. It is anticipated that the institution's commitment will be more explicitly stated in the next review of the mission statement. Significant efforts have been made for the cultural diversity of the university's student body to better reflect surrounding regional demographic changes. According to the 2020 Institutional Factbook, 26.3% of the undergraduate day student population are minoritized (up from 8.4% in 2010), which is an appreciable change since the last NEASC visit (See Standard Five). 15% of the faculty population is diverse, up from 7% in 2010 (See Standard Six).

Our university vision calls upon the university to build partnerships within our community. There is a long history of engagement between the community and the university, giving us a solid base to deepen relationships and add new ones in the furtherance of the region's community and economic development. Since its establishment in 2008, the Douglas and Isabelle Crocker Center for Civic Engagement has enhanced collaboration between FSU and the community by engaging students through civic-learning and community-based research and internships. In September 2015, the Center's efforts were expanded to include activities focused on community investment and establishing meaningful partnerships between the university and local citizens and organizations.

A coalition of agencies is working to revitalize a key section of Fitchburg with the Reimagine North of Main project, and FSU is playing a key role. Through the Crocker Center, students and faculty are helping reinvigorate the diverse and densely populated neighborhoods north of Main Street. Leaders of the Reimagine group include representatives from City Hall, the university, the Fitchburg Public Schools, NewVue Communities and the Montachusett Opportunity Council. They share a dedication to improving the quality of life in the neighborhood, focusing on public safety, economic development and entrepreneurship, education, housing, health, and community engagement. The end result of the effort will be a reimagined North of Main neighborhood where people want to live, work, play, and invest.

Goal 3 of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, "to be an engine of social, economic, civic and cultural development in our city and in the region," reflects our continued commitment to serving the community in which we live.

### **Projection**

University leadership, led by the Assistant Vice President, Institutional Research and Planning (AVPIRP), will create a review cycle for the Mission, Vision, and Core Values, which will be submitted to governance by May 2022. The proposal will call for a review of the Mission Statement no later than May 2024, in advance of the next Strategic Plan.

## STANDARD 1: MISSION AND PURPOSES

Attach a copy of the current mission statement.

Document	Website location	Date Approved by the Governing Board
Institutional Mission Statement	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/university-mission-vision-and-values/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/university-mission-vision-and-values/</a>	12/8/09

Mission Statement published	Website location	Print Publication
Undergraduate Catalog	<a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu</a>	
Graduate Catalog	<a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu</a>	
Student Handbook	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-10/Student-Handbook_Web.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-10/Student-Handbook_Web.pdf</a>	

Related statements	Website location	Print Publication
Vision	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/university-mission-vision-and-values/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/university-mission-vision-and-values/</a>	
Core Values	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/university-mission-vision-and-values/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/university-mission-vision-and-values/</a>	

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

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

## Standard Two: Planning and Evaluation

Fitchburg State University is continuously engaged in planning and evaluation efforts and places a high emphasis on improving institutional effectiveness through data-informed decision-making. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP), created in 2015 and led by the Assistant Vice President, Institutional Research and Planning (AVPIRP), centralizes, and provides oversight to assessment, institutional research, and strategic planning activities.

### Planning

#### Description

After implementing the [2015-2020 Strategic Plan](#), the university recently created and enacted the [2020-2025 Strategic Plan](#). The current strategic plan was written with a commitment to academic excellence and education justice, and towards creating a student-ready university. These strategic plans provide a guide for decision-making and a structure to evaluate the effectiveness of the university's performance.

The process for the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan was launched at a campus-wide Development Day on September 3, 2019 during which the Commissioner of the MA Department of Higher Education (DHE) highlighted the importance of addressing the DHE's Equity Agenda as part of Fitchburg State's plan and the President stressed his administration's commitment to an open, inclusive process. The planning process, led by the AVPIRP and an external consultant with experience in public university planning, featured five theme committees and a steering committee, involving 92 members of the campus community. The process included the development of numerous planning assumptions that reflected the external factors impacting both the institution and higher education in general, both presently and in the future. Demonstrating its commitment to the process, the university adhered to the timeline during the pandemic and created a meaningful and comprehensive strategic plan that was approved by the MA Board of Higher Education in December 2020. Upon the approval of the plan, the university launched a new [webpage](#), outlining and celebrating the new plan.

The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan has six achievable goals that align with our mission, vision, and core values: 1) Forge innovative paths to knowledge acquisition, career readiness, social mobility, and lifelong learning; 2) Become a model student-ready university and narrow the achievement gap; 3) Be an engine of social, economic, civic, and cultural development in our city and region; 4) Establish inclusive excellence, innovation, and environmental stewardship as signature strengths; 5) Assert our distinctive value proposition and institutional learning outcomes boldly and widely and; 6) Steward physical and financial resources responsibly and navigate a path to long-term organizational sustainability.

FSU has a history of successfully developing and implementing strategic planning. The Division of Academic Affairs developed an Academic Plan in alignment with the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan and annually tracked its progress. Due to the academic-centered nature of the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, the Division of Academic Affairs utilized the Strategic Plan itself as their strategic planning document. The plan was tracked annually and a summary document was created. All divisions of the University contributed to a [comprehensive summary document](#) that was then utilized during the 2020-2025 strategic planning process.

With the approval of the new 2020-25 Strategic Plan, the development of new comprehensive



divisional plans began in Spring 2021. Both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs used their annual reporting system to aggregate and synthesize strategic initiatives planned by the various units within their divisions, resulting in a collaborative and engaged divisional planning process. Institutional Advancement completed their [divisional strategic plan](#) in November 2021.

Within the Division of Academic Affairs, units complete an assessment of their prior year Action Plan, which clearly connects annual objectives to the strategic plan. For AY20 and AY21, units were also asked to report and reflect on pandemic-related impacts and lessons learned. The Vice President for Academic Affairs uses the annual reporting process to assess unit effectiveness, demonstrate progress toward the strategic plan, set priorities and allocate resources. The Division is currently developing a long-term [academic plan](#).

Within the Division of Student Affairs, annual goals are focused on both student learning and effectiveness, and are informed by the university mission, strategic plan, institution-wide learning priorities, and division mission as well as departmental missions and priorities. Units also track key performance indicators over time to monitor trends and changes in effectiveness. The Vice President for Student Affairs uses the annual reporting process to assess unit effectiveness, demonstrate progress toward institutional goals, set priorities, allocate resources, and tell the story of unit impact on the student experience. The Division of Student Affairs is currently developing a five-year plan.

The university's budget planning process spans twelve months and includes prioritization based upon the current strategic plan. Since FY17, funding requests beyond the base budget are submitted via the Petition for Strategic Funding Request Form, which maps funds to the strategic plan. Internal factors, such as anticipated enrollments, as well as external factors, such as state appropriations, are also key elements of the budget planning process, which culminates in a proposal that incorporates multi-year projections. The Board of Trustees verifies that resource allocations are consistent with the mission and strategic plan and that they contribute to the university's long-term financial stability and advance its strategic viability. The University Foundation board meets four times per year to review fundraising efforts, set policies and approve their budget.

Divisions across campus create their own unit's strategic plan. For instance, the Information Technology Strategic Plan, created in 2009 and updated in 2015, is reviewed annually and guides project priorities and requests for strategic funding. A new strategic plan will be created in 2022 based upon the university's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.

In addition to their 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, the Library produces annual reports, all of which are available on their webpage.

The Office of Admissions produces annual recruitment plans that guide the office's priorities and activities and establish new student enrollment goals for the following year.

## **Appraisal**

The results of institutional planning are consistently monitored and evaluated in order to measure success of implementation. The university's record of creating and implementing strategic plans on a five-year cycle powerfully illustrates its commitment to long-range planning that prompts actions across the university spectrum. Highlights from the 2015-2020 plan include the creation of Institutional Learning Priorities, creation of the First-Year Experience seminar, a revision to the General Education (LA&S) program, the creation of the Center for Faculty Scholarship, the expansion of the peer mentoring program, the creation of new 4+1 programs, and the implementation of the

SSC Navigate advising platform. Furthermore, strategic planning has evolved over the years, with the 2010-15 and 2015-20 plans clearly identifying institutional priorities and shared core values.

There is evidence that the majority of faculty and staff are aware of the strategic plan and its role in driving decision-making and resource allocation. In a survey conducted in January of 2021, 82% of faculty and staff respondents reported being familiar or somewhat familiar with the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, versus 74% with the 2015-2020 strategic plan. Given that the 2020-2025 plan was approved by the BHE in December of 2020 and that the campus was operating remotely for the academic year, this level of familiarity with the new plan is positive. Also, the university distributed a brochure to all employees in February and September of 2021 in order to increase awareness. In the same survey, 69% of faculty/staff respondents either strongly agree or agree that university's strategic plan drives decision-making at the campus-wide level and 58% either agree or strongly agree that the university's strategic plan drives decision-making at the department level. Finally, 56% of faculty and staff respondents felt that resource allocation was either adequately or very well aligned with the strategic plan. It is possible that awareness is related to faculty/staff involvement with the budgeting and planning processes, where strong links to the strategic plan are drawn, as well as to Town Hall meetings, which provide opportunity for strategic plan updates to the campus. The robust set of metrics associated with the 2020-2025 plan will serve as a means to annually update the campus community on the plan's status. Additionally, the stronger connection of the plan to annual reporting that many departments are making will further strengthen faculty and staff awareness moving forward. For example, the June and November 2021 Academic Affairs Divisional Meetings focused on the Academic Plan's development, providing an opportunity for greater awareness and participation.

In terms of student awareness of the strategic plan, 41% of students reported being familiar or somewhat familiar with the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, versus 34% for the 2015-2020 plan. As with faculty/staff, there exists a greater awareness of the new plan versus the old plan, which is positive, but a significant gap in student awareness overall exists. To that end, the university launched a student-designed infographic in Fall 2021 to increase student awareness of and engagement with the plan which has been displayed in student-frequented spaces.

The creation of the OIRP has facilitated the assessment of our strategic planning efforts. The university tracked 300 completed action items related to the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, with 100% of strategic initiatives being addressed. The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan contains a comprehensive set of metrics which represents a new level of transparency and accountability for the university. Additionally, the Assistant Vice President of Institutional Research and Planning, in conjunction with the Vice President of Student Affairs and the Chief Information Officer are currently evaluating planning and assessment tools that will allow for holistic university-wide planning and assessment reporting and tracking.

Annual planning is prevalent across the university and over time has increasingly been tied to the strategic plan. In Spring 2021, the divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs utilized the annual reporting process as the basis for creating longer-term divisional strategic plans.

At the divisional level, long-term planning, as evidenced by planning documents, is inconsistent. The lack of plans in some areas makes it difficult for the campus community to be informed of the longer-term strategic goals within these divisions and how their priorities are aligned with the rest of the campus. For example, the lack of a long-term financial plan makes it difficult for the campus to be

fully aware of spending priorities and the rational underpinning of the budget process and spending decisions. The development of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan provides an opportunity for all divisions to create long-term strategic plans that will clarify priorities, inform resource allocation and provide greater transparency to the campus community.

Both Technology and Finance and Administration plan to develop strategic plans that support the goals outlined by Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. In general, all divisions possess annual plans that guide their priorities and resource allocation.

The university, supported by OIRP, closely monitors registration and enrollment trend data and utilizes that data in short and long-term budget and resource planning. The university has successfully contracted with external consultants (EAB and Academic Partnerships) to reach short and long-term enrollment goals and mitigate expected demographic (and more recently pandemic) related challenges. In Fall 2020, the University implemented EAB Academic Performance Solutions (APS) which provides access to key performance metrics that give visibility across student, HR, and finance data to department chairs, deans and other senior leadership to support academic planning and budgeting. Additionally, OIRP regularly administers three national survey instruments (NSSE, CSI and MYSA) that provide aggregate and benchmarking data that inform resource allocation and planning. Most recently, the OIRP administered two surveys to measure effectiveness in responding to the pandemic as well as to provide useful information for continued pandemic response planning (see Standard Eight).

## **Evaluation**

### **Description**

FSU regularly assesses student learning in accordance with its Program Review Guidelines and associated annual assessment reporting, which together represent a comprehensive seven-year cycle of continuous review and improvement. The Program Review Guidelines, last updated through governance in 2018, is the university's standardized process for academic program review and evaluation that guides departments through the entire self-study process, including learning outcome assessment, data review, external evaluation, and the development of a five-year action plan. Externally accredited programs follow the accreditation cycle and process of their accrediting agencies. Effective AY17, the E Series template was incorporated into the academic annual assessment report in an effort to support program review, with the intent to be annually collecting substantive information that would feed into, and ease the creation of, the self-study. The OIRP provides support, standardized data sets and oversees the review cycle. The Director of Assessment, a full-time professional position charged with maintaining a culture of assessment, supports and guides departments throughout the seven-year cycle.

The Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs and Students Affairs utilize their comprehensive systems of annual reporting to evaluate their effectiveness, set priorities and allocate resources. All Vice Presidents submit annual reports to the President in June. The President then creates an annual report that is presented to the Board of Trustees in September.

The university is evaluated annually by the DHE via the Performance Measurement Reporting System, which is a public-facing dashboard consisting of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) deemed priorities for state universities. These KPIs include retention and graduation rates, freshmen credit accumulation, completion of gateway courses, and undergraduate and graduate enrollments,

aggregated as well as seen through the lens of the DHE's Equity Agenda. Many of these measures are included in the comprehensive set of 2020-2025 Strategic Plan metrics, which serve to elevate the level of evaluation and transparency of the plan.

The DHE contracted with the EY Parthenon Group in FY21 to conduct a stress test for the state university system. This analysis, which reviewed both historical and projected enrollment and financial data, was designed to measure each university's financial viability in the coming years. Fitchburg State was deemed to be on solid footing and in the top tier amongst peer institutions.

The university's and university affiliates' financial statements are audited annually by an external accounting firm and are reviewed by institutional leadership, the Board of Trustees and the State Comptroller's Office. The University also undergoes reviews and audits by the Quality Assurance Bureau, the State Auditor's Office, and the Board of Higher Education.

Led by the VP of Institutional Advancement, the University engaged the UMass Donahue Institute to determine the economic impacts of the Fitchburg Theater Renovation Project. The resulting report, released in November 2021, will guide planning and fundraising efforts.

The university's Information Security Policy and the Information Technology Disaster Recovery Plan have been approved through legal review and the state and are affirmed and approved as part of our state, PCI, and financial audits.

The OIRP annually provides statistics about retention, graduation rates and other student success data. Students and faculty are often surveyed about their experiences and that information is disseminated to stakeholders. A number of national instruments (National Survey of Student Engagement, Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) College Student Inventory, RNL Mid-Year Student Assessment, RNL Adult Student Priorities Survey) are administered to assess student engagement and satisfaction. Several data analytic and integration platforms (EAB Navigate, EAB Academic Performance Solutions - APS, and EAB Edify) are utilized to support planning and measure institutional effectiveness. Both undergraduate and graduate students are surveyed upon graduation, and undergraduate alumni are surveyed at one, three, and five years post-graduation. Surveys cover such areas as advising, diversity and inclusivity, online learning, adult student experiences, and campus climate, and data are disaggregated by demographic information such as race and ethnicity in support of the equity agenda (see Standard Eight).

## **Appraisal**

The university utilizes the strategic and annual planning processes to track and evaluate its operational and administrative effectiveness. The aggregation of unit reports into divisional reports and then one institutional report represents a holistic system of evaluation.

Academic departments, through departmental assessment and curriculum committees, recognize the connection between teaching and learning strategies and the evaluation of student outcomes. The program review process includes an annual assessment report, a self-study, an external evaluator, and a five-year action plan. Those academic programs with external accreditation benefit from the rigorous self-study process dictated by their professional association. All components of the program review process are reviewed by the Provost, appropriate dean(s), and the director of assessment and together represent a comprehensive system of evaluation and continuous improvement.

With the creation of the OIRP, the reporting of academic assessment activities has become centralized and more systematic. For AY21, 100% of academic departments submitted an annual assessment report, including new sections devoted to strategic planning. Along with non-academic unit annual reports, these reports allow the VPs of Academic Affairs and Students Affairs to assess their divisions' operational effectiveness. The implementation of a university-wide planning and assessment tool will allow for a more holistic and systematic approach to the reporting and evaluation of non-academic activities.

The OIRP serves as an integral part of Fitchburg State University. It readily creates and distributes surveys, reviews the data, and quickly returns results to interested parties. The office annually compiles data on student retention and graduation rates, and these studies provide demonstrable evidence of institutional effectiveness. Relevant stakeholders review detailed data by sub-populations to measure progress toward the goals of the strategic plan and the DHE Equity Agenda. The administration of numerous national and institutional surveys, as well as various analytics platforms, provides data related to institutional effectiveness and student experiences, including feedback from former students.

The university has become increasingly data-informed and data-savvy, with the result being an increased demand for data. The purchase of EAB's Edify, a data integration and visualization platform, will facilitate data collection and sharing across campus. The recent implementation of the APS analytics platform allows for academic program evaluation and benchmarking.

Ten years of "clean" financial audits, coupled with the recent FY21 DHE "Stress Test," indicate that the systems of checks and balances serve to keep the university on solid financial footing.

### **Projection**

Long-term divisional plans will be developed no later than calendar year 2022, to be in line with the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. Moving forward, all divisional plans will be finalized and published within one year of new strategic plan.

## STANDARD 2: PLANNING AND EVALUATION

<b>PLANNING</b>		<b>Year approved by governing board</b>	<b>Effective Dates</b>	<b>Website location</b>
<b>Strategic Plans</b>				
Immediately prior Strategic Plan	2015	2015-2020	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-01/Strategic%20Plan%203-5-15--EPC.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-01/Strategic Plan 3-5-15--EPC.pdf</a>	
Current Strategic Plan	2020	2020-2025	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/campus-planning-and-policies/strategic-plan-2020-2025">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/campus-planning-and-policies/strategic-plan-2020-2025</a>	
Next Strategic Plan				
<b>Other institution-wide plans*</b>		<b>Year completed</b>	<b>Effective Dates</b>	<b>Website location</b>
Master plan	2007		<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-01/MasterPlan.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-01/MasterPlan.pdf</a>	
Academic plan			<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-affairs-division/academic-plan-2021-2023">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-affairs-division/academic-plan-2021-2023</a>	
Financial plan				
Technology plan	2009	2020-21	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-09/Information%20Technology%20Strategic%20Plan%20September%202020.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-09/Information%20Technology%20Strategic%20Plan%20September%202020.pdf</a>	
Enrollment plan			<a href="https://support.fitchburgstate.edu/file/Institutional-Advancement-Unit-Strategic-Plan.pdf">https://support.fitchburgstate.edu/file/Institutional-Advancement-Unit-Strategic-Plan.pdf</a>	
Development plan				
<b>Plans for major units (e.g., departments, library)*</b>				
Library			<a href="https://library.fitchburgstate.edu/about-the-library/strategic-plan/">https://library.fitchburgstate.edu/about-the-library/strategic-plan/</a>	
<b>EVALUATION</b>				<b>Website location</b>
<b>Academic program review</b>				
Program review system (colleges and departments). System last updated:				2018
Program review schedule (e.g., every 5 years)				every 7 years or secondary external accreditation

Sample program review reports  
(name of unit or program)\*

Exercise & Sports Science
Political Science
Earth and Geographic Sciences

<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-10/EXSSCompleteSelfStudy.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-10/EXSSCompleteSelfStudy.pdf</a>
<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-01/POLS_Self_Study_2020_Final.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-01/POLS_Self_Study_2020_Final.pdf</a>
<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-01/EGS_EES_SelfStudyFinalRevised.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-01/EGS_EES_SelfStudyFinalRevised.pdf</a>

**System to review other functions and units**

Program review schedule (every X years or website location of schedule)

annually
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Sample program review reports  
(name of unit or program)\*

Student Affairs
Academic Affairs Unit Reports
Academic Program Annual Reports

<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/campus-planning-and-policies/assessment/other-academic-affairs-programs-and-offices">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/campus-planning-and-policies/assessment/other-academic-affairs-programs-and-offices</a>
<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/campus-planning-and-policies/assessment/assessment-reports">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/campus-planning-and-policies/assessment/assessment-reports</a>

**Other significant institutional studies (Name and web location)\***

<i>Example: Advising: <a href="http://www.notrealcollege.edu/advising">www.notrealcollege.edu/advising</a></i>

Date
2014

\*Insert additional rows, as appropriate.

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below



## Standard Three: Organization and Governance

### Governing Board

#### Description

Fitchburg State University is one of six comprehensive State Universities in the Massachusetts higher education system; like its sister institutions, the university's governance procedures and organizational structure are largely mandated by either state law or collective bargaining agreements. The official governing body is the Board of Higher Education (BHE), which is staffed by the state's Department of Higher Education (DHE), led by the Commissioner of Higher Education. The composition and responsibilities of the BHE are enumerated on their website. The BHE is the statutorily created agency in Massachusetts responsible for defining the mission of and coordinating the Commonwealth's system of public higher education and its institutions.

At the local level, FSU is overseen by eleven voting members of a Board of Trustees. Massachusetts law delineates the roles of the Board of Trustees and the chief operating officers of the state universities. Nine are appointed by the governor and serve terms up to five years; these appointments are renewable one time. A student trustee, elected by the student body, serves a one-year term, and the Alumni Association elects an alumni trustee who serves a five-year term. No trustee may serve more than two consecutive terms. The Board elects its chairperson from among its members.

The duties and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are defined in the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Chapter 15A, Section 22. This law states that FSU trustees are charged with the fiduciary management of the institution, including determination of fees, establishment of personnel management policy, staff services, and the general business of the institution. They elect the university President with the approval of the Board of Higher Education, adopt an annual plan of financial operation, award degrees in approved fields, and develop the university's mission statement consistent with the mission of the Commonwealth's system of public higher education. The trustees conduct an annual evaluation of the President based on goals they have jointly established with him. This review is forwarded to the BHE, which is the hiring authority for all chief executive officers in the state university system.

The Board of Trustees, operating under Bylaws revised in October 2000, meets at least four times annually; the chairperson, the university president, and five trustees may, through petition, call special meetings. The meetings and minutes are public, and executive sessions are limited to purposes specified in the by-laws. There are five standing Trustee committees: Academic Affairs, Student Life, Administration and Finance, Personnel, and the Executive Cabinet. Trustees complete a bi-annual self-assessment evaluation that evaluates the board's understanding of their roles, responsibilities, and the university's mission and financial health.

Newly appointed Board of Trustees members are welcomed by FSU's President and provided with orientation materials that include general information on the university including our strategic plan, trustee responsibilities, financial items, academics, and human resources.



Beginning in fall 2020, the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (BHE) established a training curriculum for all public higher education trustees as directed through a bill signed into law by Governor Baker. Topics covered include fraud prevention, open meeting law, state finance, conflict of interest, public records law, procurement, and fiduciary responsibility. The BHE hosts an annual trustee conference to continue to provide professional development.

Trustees are appointed by the state Public Education Nominating Council. Their Criteria to Guide the Appointment of Trustees includes attention to gender and ethnic qualities that seek to balance the board.

## **Appraisal**

Massachusetts law clearly specifies the authority and responsibility of the DHE and the individual campuses; and the university's governance structure, mandated by the collective bargaining agreements, effectively allows for participation by all segments of the FSU community. Further, while these governance processes have not been locally created, they clearly allow for effective communication across all campus stakeholders.

The Board of Trustees' meeting announcements are posted to the university's website, and all meeting minutes are posted to BoardOnTrack.com. All Board of Trustees meetings are open and include an opportunity for public comment on each agenda.

Through collaboration between the university and the DHE, trustees are provided orientation and continued professional development. This collaboration is facilitated by a position at the state level from the Director of Trustee and Government Relations who also attends board meetings and is available for consultation. Several board meetings during the year also include presentations by university staff about specific areas and initiatives within the university to continue to increase board members' knowledge and understanding of university operations.

The board fulfills its duties and responsibilities as outlined by Massachusetts General Law. Regular attention to financial matters, academic program development, and policies are visible in board meeting agendas. Although the university mission is at the core of all agenda items, more explicit attention might be paid to the institution's progress in fulfilling its approved mission as stated in their duties and responsibilities. Additional meeting time through a retreat may allow for such given the full agendas during the academic year. The self-assessment instrument used by trustees was implemented in 2012. Positive results from self-assessments indicate a functioning board with 88.3% of the 2020 responses in the strongly agree and agree category. The board has not yet engaged in an external perspective to assess its effectiveness.

Composition of the board is managed at the state level with one of the seven supporting attributes of the Criteria to Guide the Appointments stating, "Gender and ethnic qualities that contribute to balance the 'face' of the board to resemble that of the college or university and the community." The state has generally paid attention to these criteria.

## **Internal Governance**

### **Description**

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 15a, section 9 clearly defines the authority and responsibilities of the university President who has the responsibility for establishing the structure of the administration. In July 2015, Dr. Richard S. Lapidus was appointed President and increased the number of Vice Presidents from two to four, including a Vice President for Finance and Administration, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice

President for Student Affairs, and a Vice President for Institutional Advancement. The roles and responsibilities of each administrator are defined and kept on file, along with the procedures for their selection, in the office of the Human Resources and Payroll Services.

The President is advised by an Executive Cabinet (EC) composed of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Vice President for Student Affairs, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Associate Vice President for Finance and Administration, the Chief Information Officer, the Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Planning, Associate Vice President for Human Resources and Payroll Services and Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management. In addition to weekly standing meetings with the EC, the President meets each week with the Vice Presidents individually and collectively.

All EC members hold regular meetings with their staff, facilitating communication and information sharing across all campus constituents. In 2014, within Academic Affairs, a dean structure was implemented, with deans overseeing four Divisions (Arts and Sciences, Health and Natural Sciences, Education, and Business and Technology). Prior to this dean model, all academic department chairs reported directly to the Provost. With the 2020 resignation of the Dean of Business and Technology, the university did not replace that dean as a budget savings strategy resulting in three academic deans now overseeing the four schools. A Dean of the School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education has remained consistent.

At the beginning of each academic year, the President hosts two opening addresses, one for classified personnel and administrators and the other for faculty, librarians, and administrators. These addresses typically review major past events and forecast those expected in the new academic year. In addition, the President holds campus forums two to three times each year, repeating them twice in one day to accommodate faculty and staff scheduling demands. These forums often include the Vice Presidents, allowing information sharing across the divisions. In addition to the President's "open door" policy, he also holds open office hours one day per week so that anyone in the university may share their insights directly with him.

The structure of academic governance at FSU, as in the other state universities, is governed by contractual agreement between the DHE and the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA). The duties and responsibilities of department and library program area (LPA) chairpersons are defined by contract; they are elected by department faculty in accordance with procedures established by Article VI of the contract and may serve up to three consecutive three-year terms. In addition to meeting with department faculty/librarians, chairs meet at least monthly with their academic dean. Four times per year, the VPAA meets with all deans and department/LPA chairs. The Academic Affairs leadership team meets weekly, with two meetings consisting of all members including one with an academic department/LPA chair representative, one with the Associate Vice President and deans, and one with deans only.

A separate contractual agreement between the DHE and the MSCA outlines the responsibilities of the university and faculty teaching in the School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education (SGOCE). SGOCE programs are part of the overall portfolio of academic programs within the departments. Graduate program chairs and evening undergraduate program managers administer these programs with the majority of these positions held by full-time faculty. Twice per academic year, the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Dean of the SGOCE convene meetings that include deans, department chairs, library program area chairs, graduate program chairs, and undergraduate program managers.

At the departmental level, governance begins with curriculum committees, which meet to consider new course offerings, program revisions, and new program development. Approved proposals, along with

those made by faculty/librarians, students, or administrators and those relating to changes in academic or student life policies are then submitted to the All University Committee (AUC). The AUC is comprised of eight faculty/librarian members elected by their peers, three administrators appointed by the President, and three students selected by the Student Government Association (SGA). Three standing subcommittees—Curriculum, Academic Policies, and Student Affairs—as well as *ad hoc* committees deal with special issues. The Curriculum and Academic Policies committees are composed of 16 faculty/librarian members appointed by the MSCA, three administrators appointed by the President, and three students selected by the SGA; while the Student Affairs committee is comprised of nine students, five administrators, and five faculty/librarian members. The AUC recommends approval or disapproval to the President who has the final authority on each proposal.

There is a separate, contractually defined governance structure for review of graduate policies and curriculum. Departments with a graduate program also have a graduate curriculum committee, which may recommend changes to graduate curriculum or policies. After review and approval by the departmental graduate curriculum committee, proposals proceed to the department chair. If both the graduate program chair and the department chair approve the changes, they are reviewed by the Graduate Council. The Graduate Council then makes a recommendation of approval or disapproval to the President who has the final authority. The Graduate Council, as defined with the MSCA contract, is composed of 10 faculty members appointed by the MSCA, three administrators appointed by the President, and one degree-seeking graduate student elected by the other Graduate Council members.

Graduate program chairs, undergraduate program managers, and SGOCE adjunct faculty meet at the beginning of every other academic year. These meetings include professional development, department meetings, and updates from the SGOCE Dean, VPAA, and President.

The Extended Campus Office, which resides within SGOCE, oversees all contractual partnerships. Each partner signs a one-year Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the university that is reviewed annually by university leadership, with final approval by the VPAA and VPANF, and uses the NECHE policy on contractual arrangements as the guiding structure of the agreement. The LOA outlines delivery of courses and programs, including syllabi review, schedules, instructor credentialing, course evaluations, maximum enrollment, and instructional hours, as well as financial aspects including registration, payment schedules, and costs per credit.

## **Appraisal**

The President, EC, and other campus leaders regularly meet with staff and faculty. Formal and informal meetings provide adequate pathways to communicate and provide feedback. Within Academic Affairs, agendas for deans' and chairs' meetings are set in advance with members submitting items of interest. Additional formal planning efforts resulting from these meetings are often addressed through subcommittees or in summer planning groups.

The shift to an academic dean structure facilitates more immediate and direct communication between department chairs and deans providing additional support to academic departments.

The All University Committee's (AUC) and Graduate Council's consistent activity attests to the widespread campus participation in governance. Both the AUC and the Graduate Council have regularly updated websites to support access to information regarding proposals and to facilitate participation in the governance process. In addition, both the AUC and the Graduate Council compile a summary document of all proposals and decisions allowing the campus community to easily review all curriculum and policy changes impacting the campus.

The Fitchburg State University Today newsletter provides widespread communication to the entire campus community. Published biweekly, the newsletter includes current events and announcements. Archived newsletters can be found on the university website.

Student representation to the AUC is the governance voice of the student body. To assist the student members of the AUC and its subcommittees, the Student Government Association (SGA) has been holding weekly open meetings, inviting students to express their concerns to their representatives. SGA also holds special interest forums on topics such as parking as well as social events, which encourage students to mingle with university leadership.

The contractual partnership's LOA emphasizes protection of students, assurance of course rigor, and financial transparency. The LOA outlines student services, course withdrawal policies, refund policies, student complaint processes, and grading and fair practices policies. If a partnership needs to be terminated the LOA outlines processes for students to receive credit from the university and/or the partnering agency to support students for the planned length of the agreed-upon program. Partners are required to meet with the Associate Dean of SGOCE, the Academic Department Chair, as well as the appropriate academic dean multiple times a year to review student progress, address issues, and plan for upcoming programs.

These formal and informal efforts illustrate the downward and upward flow of communication and the active participation in decision-making among all segments of the FSU community.

### **Projections**

The Board, in consultation with the President, will finalize a plan to secure an external perspective on board effectiveness to be conducted by the end of Spring 2023.

The Board will conduct a review of its by-laws by the end of Spring 2022 and identify a permanent review cycle. It will commit to an annual retreat as part of its meeting schedule.

### STANDARD 3: ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE (Board and Internal Governance)

Please attach to this form:

- 1) A copy of the institution's organization chart(s).
- 2) A copy of the by-laws, enabling legislation, and/or other appropriate documentation to establish the legal authority of the institution to award degrees in accordance with applicable requirements.

If there is a "sponsoring entity," such as a church or religious congregation, a state system, or a corporation, describe and document the relationship with the accredited institution.

Name of the sponsoring entity

MA Board of Higher Education

Website location of documentation of relationship

<https://www.mass.edu/bhe/aboutbhe.asp>

#### Governing Board

By-laws
Board members' names and affiliations

Website location
<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/BYLAWS_BoardofTrustees.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/BYLAWS_BoardofTrustees.pdf</a>
<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/board-of-trustees/members/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/board-of-trustees/members/</a>

Board committees \*

Academic Affairs
Finance and Administration
Executive/Nominating
Student Affairs
Personnel
Self Evaluation

Website location or document name for meeting minutes
<a href="http://app2.boardontrack.com/public/ri5bcr/home">http://app2.boardontrack.com/public/ri5bcr/home</a>
<a href="http://app2.boardontrack.com/public/ri5bcr/home">http://app2.boardontrack.com/public/ri5bcr/home</a>
<a href="http://app2.boardontrack.com/public/ri5bcr/home">http://app2.boardontrack.com/public/ri5bcr/home</a>
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<a href="http://app2.boardontrack.com/public/ri5bcr/home">http://app2.boardontrack.com/public/ri5bcr/home</a>

#### Major institutional faculty committees or governance groups\*

All University Committee
All University Curriculum Committee
Graduate Council
Student Affairs Committee
Academic Policies Committee

Website location or document name for meeting minutes
<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-affairs/shared-governance/all-college-committee/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-affairs/shared-governance/all-college-committee/</a>
<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-affairs/shared-governance/all-college-committee/academic-curriculum-subcommittee/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-affairs/shared-governance/all-college-committee/academic-curriculum-subcommittee/</a>
<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/graduate-online-continuing-education/faculty-resources/graduate-council/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/graduate-online-continuing-education/faculty-resources/graduate-council/</a>
<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-affairs/shared-governance/all-college-committee/academic-student-affairs-subcommittee/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-affairs/shared-governance/all-college-committee/academic-student-affairs-subcommittee/</a>
<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-affairs/shared-governance/all-college-committee/academic-policies-subcommittee/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-affairs/shared-governance/all-college-committee/academic-policies-subcommittee/</a>

**Major institutional student committees or governance groups\***

Student Government Association

<b>Website location or document name for meeting minutes</b>
<a href="https://fitchburgstate.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/student-government-association">https://fitchburgstate.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/student-government-association</a>

**Other major institutional committees or governance groups\***

Leading for Change Committee
University Assessment and Research Committee (UARC)

<b>Website location or document name for meeting minutes</b>
<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support/diversity-equity-and-inclusion">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support/diversity-equity-and-inclusion</a>
<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/campus-planning-and-policies/assessment">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/campus-planning-and-policies/assessment</a>

\*Insert additional rows as appropriate.

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

### STANDARD 3: ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE (Locations and Modalities)

Campuses, Branches and Locations Currently in Operation (See definitions in comment boxes)  
(Insert additional rows as appropriate.)

	Location (City, State/ Country)	Date Initiated	Enrollment*		
			2 years Prior (AY19)	1 year Prior (AY20)	Current year (AY21)
Main campus	Fitchburg, MA	1894	10,455	10,301	9,858
Other principal campuses	NA		0	0	0
Branch campuses (US)	NA		0	0	0
Other instructional locations (US)	See List Below		352	310	323
Branch campuses (overseas)	NA		0	0	0
Other instructional locations (overseas)	NA		0	0	0

#### Educational modalities

	Number of programs	Date First Initiated	Enrollment*		
			2 years Prior (AY19)	1 year Prior (AY20)	Current year (AY21)
Distance Learning Programs					
Programs 50-99% on-line	5	9/1/07	530	542	480
Programs 100% on-line	18	9/1/08	1,829	2,251	2,920
Correspondence Education	NA		0	0	0
Low-Residency Programs	NA		0	0	0
Competency-based Programs	NA		0	0	0
Dual Enrollment Programs	2		125	136	171
Contractual Arrangements involving the award of credit	35		3,465	3,279	2,619

\*Enter the annual unduplicated headcount for each of the years specified below.

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Other instructional locations: ACCEPT Educational Collaborative, Adult and Community Education of Martha's Vineyard, Catherine Leahy Brine Educational Consultants, Collaborative for Educational Services, Lowell Public Schools, Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators, Massachusetts School Administrators Association

## Standard Four: The Academic Program

### Overview

Fitchburg State's academic programs are aligned with our mission to prepare students "to lead, serve, and succeed by fostering lifelong learning and civic and global responsibility." Our Institutional Learning Priorities (ILPs) provide a coherent framework for what we want our students to know, be able to do, and value upon graduation, regardless of program of study.

The university has 15 academic departments that offer 34 undergraduate majors, over 50 minors, and 4 undergraduate certificates; 10 departments also offer graduate programs. Programs are structured around student learning outcomes, which identify knowledge, skills, and methods of inquiry to be acquired. These outcomes, along with program requirements, are published in the catalog and on the website. Undergraduate day program Bachelor degrees, including Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BS), and Bachelor of Science in Education (BSE), are designed to be completed in four years. Bachelor degrees offered through the School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education (SGOCE) are consistent with day counterparts, including major requirements, general education requirements, and academic standards for admission and satisfactory progress. While Bachelor degrees through SGOCE can be completed within four years, students may progress at a pace that fits family and career responsibilities. Several SGOCE undergraduate certificates are available to meet needs for career advancement or change. The Honors Program, approved by the Board of Higher Education as a Commonwealth Honors Program, is open to eligible undergraduates in all day programs.

Graduate programs, including Master of Arts, Master of Arts in Teaching, Master of Education, Master of Science, Master of Business Administration, the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies (CAGS), and a variety of post-baccalaureate and certificate programs, are designed to prepare professionals for advancement in their fields and for additional post-graduate work. The institution offers 20 Master's programs, which require between 30 and 60 credits, and two CAGS programs. Each program has minimum standards for admission and retention. Students must complete graduate degrees within six years. Most programs require research appropriate to the discipline and program level. All but two graduate programs require a comprehensive exam, practicum, internship, thesis, capstone, or clinical experience as a final assessment.

In addition to these degree and certificate programs, the Center for Professional Studies (CPS) supports life-long learning by offering online and face-to-face non-credit professional development options in a variety of professional areas including programming focusing on equity and social change. The CPS also manages the Adult Learning in the Fitchburg Area (ALFA) program, a program for local seniors that includes participants from over 20 surrounding communities seeking personal enrichment and other non-credit community-based courses.

The university Catalog, the publicly available central reference point for all undergraduate and graduate academic programs, includes admissions requirements; program objectives, descriptions, and requirements; course descriptions; faculty listings; and academic policies. Program, policy, and curriculum changes that move through governance throughout the year take effect in the following Fall; the catalog is updated annually to incorporate these changes, assuring consistency and reliability. The catalog is available solely electronically to ensure that all users are referencing the most up-to-date version. The university website includes additional information, such as student learning outcomes for individual programs and four-year plans of study that provide detailed course sequences for each undergraduate



day program. The documents outline program goals and requirements, communicate program expectations to students, and provide a framework for maintaining coherent design of degree programs.

## **Assuring Academic Quality**

### **Description**

Fitchburg State has an effective system of academic oversight that has a clearly defined structure and allows input from administrators, department chairs, faculty, students, and, where appropriate, outside evaluators. Academic quality is ensured through collaboration between faculty and administrators to oversee, evaluate, and update programs and curricula, including the development of new programs. The Division of Academic Affairs provides leadership and organizational support for student learning and faculty development and, in collaboration with faculty, is responsible for academic oversight and assuring academic program quality. Academic Affairs is led by a Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA), supported by a leadership team consisting of three academic deans, a Dean of Graduate, Online, and Continuing Education, a Dean of the Library, an Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, an Assistant Dean for Retention and Student Success, an Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Planning and the Registrar. The university has established Schools (Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, and Health and Natural Sciences) that each represent a group of connected academic departments and programs. Each academic department is managed by a department chair, who reports to their respective dean, who in turn reports to the Provost/VPAA. Department chairs play a critical role in maintaining academic standards by leading the department curriculum development and review process, ensuring curricular standards are met, and overseeing course schedules and faculty evaluation.

In Fall 2019, the university renamed the School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education (SGOCE), formerly the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education. Programs offered through SGOCE are managed by a faculty program chair that serves as a liaison between SGOCE and the Academic Department. SGOCE is housed within the division of Academic Affairs and has a dean who is responsible for overseeing the operations of the school, with academic departments responsible for ensuring the academic quality of all credit-based degree programs in their areas, including graduate and undergraduate programs offered through SGOCE. Degree specializations originate in the appropriate academic department. If there is no corresponding academic department, as is the case with some graduate certificate programs, designated graduate curriculum committees perform the appropriate functions.

Overall, the university has seen an increase in online and hybrid course delivery. Online and hybrid course enrollment among undergraduate day students increased by 45% from 2015-2019. Two of the five undergraduate evening programs in SGOCE transitioned to 100% online programs, and one created an online program pathway in addition to maintaining a campus-based option. To support online undergraduate programs, many online general education courses were developed to ensure all students can complete general education requirements.

Graduate programs have also significantly shifted from evening face-to-face courses to online over the last 10 years. As of Fall 2020, eight of the 14 Masters Programs were offered online (four with campus-based and online program options) and nine of 11 graduate certificates were offered online only. The number of students enrolled in fully online programs increased over twelve-fold, from 140 students in Fall 2014 to 1722 students in Fall 2020.

Matters that pertain to the institution's undergraduate day, evening, and online academic programs, such as program creation, modification, or deletion; course creation or deletion; and the core curriculum start within an academic department. Each department has undergraduate curriculum committees made up of faculty and students within the department; departments that have graduate programs also have graduate curriculum committees or designated faculty responsible for faculty curriculum reviews. Once changes are approved at the departmental level, they are brought to the All University Committee (AUC), as set forth in the MSCA contract Article VII, which then assigns those proposals to the standing sub-committees (Curriculum, Academic Policy, and Student Affairs). Each of these sub-committees has a fixed number of members drawn from faculty, librarians, students, and administrators, per the contract. Graduate curricula and policy changes are brought to the Graduate Council. AUC and Graduate Council actions must be approved by the President. New programs of study must also be approved by the Board of Trustees and the Board of Higher Education. The AUC and Graduate Council websites contain overviews of processes and archives of approved actions.

To ensure students complete degrees in the allotted time, department and program chairs, in conjunction with Academic Affairs, build and maintain course schedules based on curricular requirements, two-year rotations, program reviews, student needs, and faculty availability.

The Director of Assessment is responsible for strengthening university assessment culture by guiding collaborative planning, systemic implementation, and analysis of collected data to make informed decisions that enhance student learning experiences and the institution's operations. Assessment of student learning outcomes, part of the program assessment process, is coordinated by the Director of Assessment and conducted by academic departments annually.

Each academic unit (department, division, school) submits an annual assessment report, which includes a reflection on how their accomplishments and challenges for the year align with the goals and action plans that were established the previous year. The academic units then complete an action plan and updated goals for the following year. The process is outlined on the Assessment webpage. Undergraduate and graduate programs, including the General Education program, undergo a more comprehensive review every seven years, unless they have external-program accreditation reviews on a different cycle. The program review process includes a departmental, faculty-prepared self-study that addresses various areas of the program, including effectiveness of curriculum, analysis of student enrollment data, analysis of student success data collected as a part of a program's Outcomes Assessment Plan, and appraisal of the department's personnel and resources. The review process also includes a visit by and report from an external evaluator. Programs must prepare a response to the external evaluator's report to Academic Affairs as part of their review cycle, providing updates and clarifications based on external reviewer comments and their own plans for program improvement. Department chairs meet with their dean and the Provost to review the external report and discuss action items. Departments then prepare an action plan based on the department self-study and the external report. This process assures that academic planning and evaluation are aligned with efforts to enhance the institutional mission and program objectives.

For programs seeking external accreditation, that process replaces the program review process, though it includes the same elements, including external evaluation. Several FSU programs are state and/or nationally accredited, including Business Administration, Computer Science, Education, Human Services, Nursing, School Counseling, and Technology Education. Accrediting agencies, in addition to NECHE, include: Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology; Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education; The Council for Standards in Human Service Education, and the International Assembly for

Collegiate Business Education. In addition, the Criminal Justice program is Quinn Bill-certified by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, making CJ graduates eligible for the Policy Career Incentive Pay Program.

In addition to the standard review process, extended campus programs have additional layers of review. Extended campus programs, partnerships in which the university has engaged in a contractual arrangement to deliver credit-bearing courses and programs, also include a bi-annual meeting with each partner and an annual contract review and approval process, which ensures that students taking classes off-site with partner organizations have adequate access to facilities, learning management systems, and required learning activities at each location. The university ensures extended campus students have access to resources such as the library, IT support, and the writing and tutor centers to assist students. Clear descriptions of the resources available are shared with students and published on the university website.

When program requirements are changed or if programs are eliminated, the university maintains consistency with NECHE and Department of Higher Education (DHE) policies. For program changes, FSU makes arrangements with enrolled students so as not to disrupt their path to completion. Students complete degree requirements according to year of entry, so modifications to curricula do not interfere with degree completion. One example is the recent General Education program changes: communication about the changes has been shared with students, faculty, and staff; and the General Education Program Area Chair shares regular email updates with faculty and advisors so they will be prepared to assist current students navigating the former General Education program and new students under the new requirements.

If a program were to be eliminated, the request must first go through the academic department, then university governance, and finally the President. When programs are closed, the university stops accepting applicants for the program, communicates the change to any current applicants and prospective students, and notifies all current students in the program. The program chair develops a teach-out plan with each current student to make sure they can complete the program in which they started, or to assist them to change programs if they prefer. The decision to close a program is carefully reviewed with consideration of program demand, potential enrollment options, faculty and university support, and financial viability. FSU closed several programs that had lower enrollments or no longer met student needs, including the MEd Education Technology in 2017, the MAT Earth Science in 2016, the Graduate Fine Arts Director Certificate in 2018, and the Not-for Profit Leadership Certificate in 2019.

Results of program review provide a rationale for program related budget requests. Departmental budget requests are made annually in February of the preceding fiscal year to the VPAA and the Office of Financial Services in the form of program budgets as well as one-time Strategic Funding Requests. Final budget recommendations are made by the Vice-Presidents. The President submits the budget for approval to the Trustees. Similarly, department chairs annually submit recommendations for full-time faculty positions to the VPAA, who then presents these recommendations to the President for approval so that the positions can be advertised nationally each fall. Budget requests for specific program needs in SGOCE, such as supplies or travel funds, are made through the program chairs to the SGOCE Dean or the Associate Dean for extended campus and CPS programs. Final decisions on SGOCE budget requests are determined through the annual budget approval process.

Students completing an FSU degree demonstrate collegiate-level skills in English. Undergraduates must have completed a minimum of four college-prep English classes in high school prior to admission.

Incoming students with a high school GPA above 2.7 are enrolled into a college-level writing course, Writing I, in their first semester. Students with a high school GPA below 2.7 must complete a writing placement test and are then enrolled in Writing I or Basic Writing depending on their score. Undergraduates are required to complete 12-15 credits of foundational general education courses in their first year, including Writing I and Writing II. At both the undergraduate and graduate level, international applicants from countries that are not English-speaking are required to complete the TOEFL exam or another approved Language Proficiency exam such as Duolingo prior to admission. Minimum required English Language scores for admission are posted on the International Admissions [website](#).

FSU has recently developed programs to support students whose first language is not English. The Heritage Language Program focuses on the promotion of multilingualism and multiculturalism. The goal is to create a continuum of support for students for whom English is not a first language through strategies that celebrate their multilingualism, leverage their cultural assets to further their academic success while enriching the campus community, and provide a social network to promote a sense of belonging. Key components include a [Multilingual Scholars Peer Mentor program](#) to provide co-curricular support for English Language Learners (ELL) and heritage language speakers; a Multilingual Scholars Seminar to provide credit-bearing support in writing, reading, and speaking as well as specific assignment support; implementation of a process by which students with seals of bi-literacy will receive college credits; and a multidisciplinary certificate in "Spanish for the Professions" that can be linked with any major to build a pathway for students with the bi-literacy seal and other heritage language speakers, currently piloted with the Nursing department.

### **Appraisal**

FSU has a long history of assessment protocols that provide a transparent and effective system of review and improvement. Current program review guidelines, coupled with external accreditation processes, provide a clear path for all programs to be regularly reviewed and evaluated. This cycle, along with annual reporting requirements, ensures that the curriculum offered to all students, in all locations and modalities, is regularly assessed and improved. All programs submitted for external accreditation have succeeded in receiving these distinctions.

Fitchburg State students successfully complete their programs in a timely fashion. For undergraduate students who enrolled as first-year students, the average time to degree completion is 4.3 years. The average credits earned at graduation is 125.

There has been a significant increase in online course programs over the last several years. FSU's [existing comprehensive course development and review process](#) has been operational for decades, ensuring academic quality in online courses. Moreover, an academic department chair workgroup that included the Provost and AVP of Academic Affairs, faculty members, department chairs, deans, and the director of digital learning was formed. As a result, FSU developed a new faculty-training module focused on online learning standards and practices that all faculty are automatically enrolled in. In addition, a rubric was developed to assist academic department chairs as they review each new online course along with the Director of Digital Learning before students gain access to the course site. As with face-to-face courses, students have the opportunity to complete evaluations for online courses.

In addition, in 2018 the university was approved for participation in the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements which improves distance education program quality and provides valuable oversight through its membership requirements that include assurance that the university integrates online learning into its regular planning and evaluation processes and that curricula for online

learning offerings are comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats. A new Instructional Technologist position has been added as well as 1.5 new staff positions over the last four years in SGOCE to provide frontline support to the increasing number of online students.

Our infrastructure to support extended campus programs is robust and collaborative. In order to ensure that the academic quality standards of extended campus partnership programs are the same as on-campus programs, FSU requires that partners who offer degree programs meet with the Associate Dean of SGOCE, the academic department chair, as well as the appropriate academic dean multiple times per year to review student progress, address issues, and plan for upcoming programs. The university also reviews each course schedule, syllabus, and instructor credentials using the same guidelines as on-campus courses. This ensures that our partner agencies follow university syllabi, grading, academic integrity policies, and contact hour guidelines. Each syllabus is reviewed using a comprehensive 28-point rubric that is shared with the partner organization. All partner instructors are evaluated the first time they teach and then subsequently every three years thereafter by a university program chair or their designee.

## **Undergraduate Degree Programs**

### **Description**

Undergraduate degree programs at Fitchburg State are designed to provide students with an introduction to broad areas of human knowledge through their general education requirements, and in-depth mastery of at least one field of study through their major. Through the General Education program, students demonstrate competence in English communication skills, scientific and quantitative reasoning, and critical thinking across a range of disciplines.

In accordance with its mission, FSU provides a diverse program array to prepare students for a wide range of academic and professional pursuits after graduation. Students completing an undergraduate program are expected to choose a major course of study before the end of their sophomore year, though they are encouraged to do so sooner. The major consists of a minimum of 33 semester hours of coursework. Students must also complete 51 semester hours of coursework to satisfy general education requirements, and an overall minimum of 120 semester hours of coursework for graduation. Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 in their major and overall, in order to complete their undergraduate degree. Some programs require a higher GPA for continuation in the program, for internship work, and for graduation.

Degree requirements are integrated into the major, with 10 of FSU's 34 undergraduate majors offering both BA and BS degrees. Most majors offering both degrees distinguish the BA from the BS by the addition of world language competency at the Intermediate II level. All programs and program requirements are listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. Over the past 10 years, FSU has awarded 7987 Bachelor degrees, of which 7462 were B.S., 128 B.A. and 397 B.S.E.

### **Appraisal**

The university is committed to providing students exposure to broad learning and an opportunity to develop knowledge related to personal and social responsibility, in addition to skills for professional success. While all majors require at least 33 credits of coursework in the program, credit totals vary widely by program, with some majors, particularly those with external accreditation, offering fewer opportunities for student electives. For example, the Nursing program requires 62 credits in the department and 34 credits from cognate departments, some of which satisfy general education requirements. With an additional 18 credits required to complete the General Education program, Nursing students have only six credits of free electives. Similarly, students completing initial licensure in



Education are restricted to only one free elective credit. Some majors without external accreditation or licensure, for example Engineering Technology/Electronics and Construction Management, have no room beyond the required courses for free electives. The combined major and general education requirements of several other programs do leave room for more exploration by students (11 free elective courses in English Studies/Literature, eight free electives in Economics and in History, seven free electives in Sociology, and six free electives in Communications Media/Film and Video, as examples). Given that not all non-externally accredited majors provide this free elective space for students to pursue additional knowledge and understanding outside the major, the institution should evaluate its academic portfolio with an eye to ensuring that all students have sufficient access for this exploration.

BA degrees represent a small percentage of the baccalaureate degrees conferred by Fitchburg State (2% over 10 years). In 9 of the 10 majors offering both the BA and BS, the curriculum for the degrees are identical, with the only distinction being the requirement for up to 12 language credits for the BA. This structure has created a disincentive for students to pursue the BA. Only the Biology program has changed its curriculum to differentiate BS and BA degrees internally, both in terms of the classes required and the total number of credits (fewer for the BA).

It is important that the university come to a greater consensus and intentionality between the BA and BS degrees. A chairs' working group was formed in AY19 to examine the BA/BS disparity and make recommendations for increasing the number of BA degrees awarded. Among the group's recommendations was to develop institutional definitions of the two degrees, to make clearer to students the respective benefits of a degree that focuses more on the humanities (BA) and a degree that tends to emphasize science and math (BS) for their long-term goals. The group also recommended collaboration with Admissions to make the definitions of both degrees plain to incoming students, to help them choose which degree best suits their academic and professional objectives. Ultimately, since degree requirements reside in the major, the issue raises the question of curricular revision (as the Biology program has done) to create definitional alignment among and intentionality regarding our degree programs.

## **General Education**

### **Description**

The General Education program, known as the Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) program until its name change in Spring 2021, underwent significant revision as the result of six years of outcomes assessments and a 2014-15 program review. Recommendations from the program review were taken up by the LAS Council in 2015-16, which then designed a revised curriculum during 2016-18. Feedback from the campus community throughout the review and revision process informed the new curriculum, which was approved by the All University Committee (AUC) and the President in May 2019. The new program, implemented for all incoming first-year students beginning Fall 2021, requires 51 credits in General Education coursework; up to nine credits may be used for both General Education and the major curriculum.

The 51-credit General Education program is a coherent set of courses aligned with Institutional Learning Priorities. Implemented in Fall 2021, the curriculum is designed for students to acquire a set of core competencies, gain exposure to a broad range of disciplinary knowledge, and develop critical reasoning and analytical skills that prepare them for success in the world of work and as informed members of society. Students begin with a five-course sequence ("Foundation," 15 credits) in their first year. These foundational courses provide essential knowledge and skills related to Reading, Writing, Information Literacy, Quantitative Reasoning, World Languages, Speaking, and Listening. In the broadest portion of

the curriculum (“Exploration,” 27 credits), students engage in a range of disciplinary ways of knowing through courses that explore diverse perspectives, civic learning, ethical reasoning, logical thinking, personal wellness, as well as inquiry and analysis in various fields of study. In the final portion of the program (“Integration,” 9 credits) students bring all their General Education learning together in integrative courses that include hands-on, high-impact learning opportunities (internships, study abroad, civic engagement, student/faculty research, or creative projects). Alternatively, students may conclude the General Education program by completing a minor or a second major in a different discipline, to give them a second area of in-depth learning.

Students enrolled in our state-approved Commonwealth Honors Program satisfy a portion of the General Education program by taking at least six honors courses, two semesters of a language, and two semesters of Honors Thesis (30-31 credits total).

## **Appraisal**

The new General Education program addresses areas for improvement identified during the General Education program review, including the need for a required First Year Seminar; better alignment between learning outcomes and course requirements; expanding high impact practices including interdisciplinary learning opportunities; and designing a curriculum through which students would logically progress from introductory to more advanced coursework.

A group was formed in 2019 to guide the process of implementing the new curriculum, including coding the campus degree audit system. A General Education Subcommittee of the AUC Curriculum Committee was formed through governance in AY20 to evaluate and make recommendations to the full Curriculum Committee on General Education course proposals. In its second year of operation and in anticipation of the Fall 2021 launch of the new curriculum, the subcommittee recommended approval of 623 General Education course designations. In addition, it developed learning outcome [guidance documents](#) and provided context for consideration of individual proposals. With the Fall 2021 implementation of the new curriculum, the course review work has now reverted back to the AUC Curriculum Committee.

In Spring 2021, the President approved a Program Area for General Education to serve as the centralized locus for general education as a distinct yet interconnected university program. The Program Area facilitates the implementation, delivery, and assessment of the General Education curriculum and builds relationships with departments and offices across campus in order to amplify the purpose and value of liberal arts and sciences education for all students and university stakeholders. Programmatic modifications to the General Education curriculum are proposed through the AUC governance process, with departments maintaining control over developing and scheduling General Education courses, and governance committees maintaining control over approving individual courses for General Education designations.

## **The Major or Concentration**

### **Description**

While the General Education program provides undergraduates a substantive introduction to the broad areas of human knowledge, the required major ensures in-depth study in at least one disciplinary or interdisciplinary area based on specific learning outcomes. Students also have the opportunity to pursue knowledge and understanding through free electives; the number of free electives available to a student varies with their chosen program of study. Students can track their progress in meeting the requirements for graduation in a variety of ways, including through the program requirements listed in the catalog, the

sequence of courses provided in the four-year plans of study, the individualized web-based degree evaluation available online through Degreeworks, and meetings with their academic advisors.

All undergraduate students are required to complete 33-62 semester hours in their major, as outlined in the catalog and by degree audit records. Each major is designed around a set of learning outcomes, published on the department's website, and provides the opportunity for students to develop knowledge and skills specific to the area of study through intentionally sequenced courses within the major. Departmental curriculum committees, composed of faculty and students, regularly review the appropriateness of program requirements as well as units' success in preparing students for fields of study. Programs are required to assess learning outcomes annually and reflect on these outcome data and curricula in their self-studies.

Departments may seek approval through AUC governance to designate up to nine credits of a major curriculum for General Education credit. In order for AUC committees to recommend approval of major courses for this "MAJ" General Education designation, a department must demonstrate that its major course's learning outcomes are aligned with the respective learning outcomes of the 51-credit General Education program. Such overlap of learning outcomes demonstrates the relationship between general education and major curricula.

FSU was awarded a 2020 Davis Educational Foundation Grant to integrate career competencies into program curricula and expand internship opportunities, particularly for majors from traditional liberal arts and sciences disciplines. The [Career Services and Advising Center \(CSAS\)](#) has begun collaborating with faculty from 11 academic departments to develop core career competencies and map those competencies to disciplinary and general education curricula. Staff from CSAS are also working to create a comprehensive internship and employer relations model to support students in building skills for the world of work.

## **Appraisal**

The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan's Goal One highlights our commitment to provide experiential learning opportunities to all undergraduates. Beyond our education licensure programs, 13 academic programs require students to complete an internship, practicum, or capstone experience, while 10 programs offer the opportunity to complete an independent research project or internship as a major elective. Professional programs such as Communications Media, Education, Human Services, and Nursing align curriculum content with practical experience through a required internship or similar culminating experience. The new General Education program also requires students to complete at least one integrative high impact practice, which expands experiential learning to all students regardless of major.

The undergraduate curriculum has experienced several additions in majors and concentrations in the past five years. In addition to the changes to the General Education program described previously, new programs include a Cybersecurity concentration within the Computer Information Systems major and a Technical Theater concentration within the Communications Media program (2017); an Public Health Science major in the Earth and Geographic Science Department, an Educational Studies major in the Education department, and a Strength and Conditioning concentration in the Exercise and Sports Science Department (2018); and a Biochemistry concentration within the Chemistry major (2019). The addition of such programs supported Goal One of the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan to strengthen academic programs in order to prepare students for success in the workforce. Areas for new program development were informed by national data provided by Gray Associates and EAB to evaluate student demand, competition, job opportunities, and other environmental and market factors.



While all majors are structured intentionally for students to progress from introductory through advanced levels of learning, the course numbering system is not uniform across programs. While higher numbers (i.e., 4000) can relate to more advanced courses in given majors, they do not always do so, which can cause confusion for students that may impact course enrollment.

## **Graduate Programs**

### **Description**

The School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education (SGOCE) offers 14 Masters degrees, 11 graduate certificates, and two Certificates of Advanced Graduate Studies (CAGS) with seven concentration options. FSU also offers graduate programs in Education in cooperation with 32 Extended Campus partners through contractual arrangements. FSU contracted with an Online Program Management provider, Academic Partnerships, in 2017 to help with outreach and promotion of three online accelerated graduate programs. These accelerated programs, which offer seven-week online and face-to-face courses, include the MBA, the M.Ed. in Curriculum and Teaching, and the M.Ed. in Educational Leadership and Management. Enrollment in these programs now represents 59% of all graduate enrollments in SGOCE.

Through SGOCE, FSU strives to provide quality graduate programming to students that is responsive and accessible to workforce and community needs and delivers quality services to support students, faculty, and community members. Graduate programs are designed to provide students with advanced knowledge and skills in their professional field of study beyond the level of a Bachelor's degree. Those graduate programs that have an undergraduate program in the same field build on the knowledge and competencies required at the undergraduate level; for example, the M.S. in Applied Communication Studies builds on the B.S. in Communication Studies, moving beyond introductory courses and developing communication skills to application of those skills in the field and applying theory to application.

Academic departments are responsible for overseeing graduate program curriculum and setting standards for graduate-level learning in their program. Each graduate program is managed by a program chair hired through SGOCE in collaboration with the academic department responsible for the graduate program. The program chair is responsible for coordinating faculty hiring and faculty assignments and working with the academic department to qualify faculty in accordance with departmental guidelines. All graduate faculty are given a rank based on the qualifications defined in the DGCE faculty contract, which specifies required professional and academic experience for each rank. The program chair also serves as the primary advisor for students in the program. Larger graduate programs may have additional academic advisors managed by the program chairs. All departments have a graduate curriculum committee or a designated group of faculty for conducting curriculum reviews. The role of the department chair in relation to graduate programs varies somewhat depending on the school, but overall the department chair is responsible for overseeing graduate programs within their department, which includes leading program review processes with the program chair, managing the program learning outcomes to insure alignment with related undergraduate programs, overseeing the faculty hiring process across the department, and maintaining academic assessment processes and departmental accreditation standards across programs where relevant.

Program learning outcomes with possible career pathways are developed and managed by the academic department and are reviewed during the designated program review process with the program chair and related academic department faculty/administrators. Program learning outcomes are listed on each undergraduate program website; the process of updating graduate program learning outcomes is nearly complete. Graduate programs at FSU prepare graduates for professional careers. All programs include

elements of applied learning that vary by program but might include class assignments that embed workplace activities or projects, practica, field experience, and internships. While all graduate programs encourage contributions to scholarly research and several programs offer a thesis option for a student's capstone experience, there are limited opportunities for university-sponsored research for graduate students beyond their program requirements.

Graduate admission requirements ensure that students admitted to graduate degree programs are qualified for advanced academic study. Minimum admission requirements for all graduate programs include a professional resume, a personal statement, and an official transcript from a regionally accredited baccalaureate degree-granting institution. Additional requirements for specific programs might include a writing sample, one or more references, an RN license for the Nursing program, or passing MTEL scores for licensure-based Education programs. International student admission also requires submission of scores from an approved English Proficiency exam that demonstrate the applicant has met the minimum score requirement. Details of the requirements for international applicants are posted on the Admissions website. Admission requirements for each program are posted in the university catalog. Academic departments work with SGOCE and the Admissions office to review and determine admission standards as well as manage the review of applications and confirmation of admission decisions.

Evaluation of the student experience takes place through a survey distributed to all students upon graduation, a bi-annual survey focused on perceptions of adult and graduate students, and course evaluations that take place each academic term. Survey data is used by academic departments and SGOCE for program and service assessment.

In addition to the creation of more online options, three 4+1 programs have been added to meet the needs of students and the community. One is the Criminal Justice 4+1 graduate program that began in Summer 2017. The Criminal Justice 4+1 program is unique as it requires students admitted into the undergraduate police academy track to complete their four-year program, then complete their police academy training on campus as part of their graduate requirements. Students finish the program with a completed academy credential and then move into the remainder of their online graduate program, which they can complete within one year. The Education and Business Administration departments also implemented 4+1 program options in 2020 allowing for qualified undergraduate students to move into a Master's program within their discipline. In addition to the three graduate online accelerated (seven-week courses) programs, the university also has six other seven-week accelerated hybrid or online program graduate options. Examples include the Applied Communication Studies Program, offered 100% online, and the Educational Leadership and Management Program, a hybrid program with some technology enhanced courses that include campus-based meetings.

## **Appraisal**

FSU has succeeded in increasing the number of online programs and the number of students enrolling in graduate programs. This shift in graduate education from campus-based to more online programs is a result of initiatives in both the 2015-2020 and 2020-2025 Strategic Plans to develop new, flexible curricular modes to serve the needs of a changing student population and meet student and workforce demand for more online options. Projected demographic shifts in the Northeast over the next 10 years show an expected decline in traditional-age college students. Increasing the number of graduate and adult programs that attract non-traditional students is therefore one of the strategies FSU has implemented to maintain enrollment and continue to serve the education needs of the region.

Part of this shift has involved creating more online courses and technology-enhanced classes within existing programs and also creating new online programs or moving some face-to-face programs to an online-only modality. Technology-enhanced classes include some face-to-face and some online components within a course. Another part of the shift included establishing the contract with Academic Partnerships in 2017 to help expand enrollment in key online programs through marketing and promotional support.

The results of these changes can be seen in the number of online courses offered between 2015 and 2019. The number of graduate online courses offered increased 71% between Fall 2015 (68 sections) and Fall 2019 (116 sections). Fall 2020 was not included as most courses moved to an online or remote modality due to the pandemic. Prior to Fall 2017, FSU had approximately five 100% online graduate program options; as of Spring 2021, that number increased to 22, including 11 graduate certificate options. In addition to more credit-based programs moving online, the Center for Professional Studies has also added more online options for professional development and in 2019 partnered with Mindedge, an education company that partners with universities to offer non-credit professional programming, to add approximately 100 online offerings across a variety of fields. The ALFA organization, offering education enrichment opportunities for adult residents in the community, also moved to 100% online programming during the pandemic and will continue to offer some online and some face-to-face programming in the future.

In an effort to increase access for graduate students and better align admission practices with professionally focused program outcomes, the SGOCE eliminated GRE/GMAT scores as part of the admission requirements beginning Fall 2017 for all graduate programs. This decision was part of larger university discussions around admission requirements. It was determined that the GRE/GMAT scores were not the best indicators of success for our graduate programs as many students are working professionals who may have been out of school for a time but could succeed in the programs due to work experience regardless of test scores. In addition to that change, various service processes were updated including the establishment of application, registration, and billing deadlines specific to the online accelerated programs.

One area for continued work is to further assess student experiences. In AY21, 75% of graduating survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that FSU graduate school provided them with a higher level of learning than their undergraduate experience. It will be important to monitor student satisfaction and retention with the growth online and respond accordingly.

Another area of focus will be increasing the number of research opportunities available for graduate students, which will include seeking out research grants, providing graduate students with training opportunities to learn about grant writing, seeking out and encouraging participation at professional conferences within a student's discipline and field of practice, and seeking out additional opportunities to support graduate faculty research.

## **Transfer credit**

### **Description**

In Fall 2021, 254 new undergraduate transfer students were enrolled at FSU; 64% were full-time. The university's policy on transfer admission, which is consistent with the [NECHE Transfer and Award of Academic Credit Policy](#), can be found on the [website](#) and in the [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) catalogs. Undergraduate transfer credit is granted for courses completed at regionally accredited colleges and

universities for which the student received a 1.7 or better and which correspond to ones offered at FSU. Courses that do not fit the degree program may be counted as fulfilling free electives for the four-year curriculum. Lower-level undergraduate transfer equivalencies are determined by the Registrar while upper-level undergraduate ones are determined by departments. No graduation credit is awarded for pre-collegiate-level or remedial work designed to prepare students for collegiate study.

A maximum of 75 credits may be transferred from two-year institutions and 90 total credits may be transferred from four-year institutions. However, in order to reduce barriers for students pursuing their Bachelor's in Nursing degree, the university will allow RN to BSN students to transfer 88 credits from two-year institutions. At least 50% of any major or certificate program must be earned at FSU, and students must complete at least two courses at FSU for any earned minor. This ensures that students meet their chosen program of study's learning outcomes. Graduate students may transfer in up to six credits from another regionally accredited university or equivalent with permission from the program chair. Courses must have been completed within six years of degree completion and have not been previously counted toward an earned master's degree. Courses must also have a minimum 3.0 GPA to transfer.

The university participates in MassTransfer, a collaboration led by the Massachusetts DHE between community colleges, state universities, and the University of Massachusetts. FSU works with state partners to create a seamless transfer process for students. MassTransfer drives the strategic planning efforts around transfer enrollment in areas such as creating statewide foundational course equivalencies and transfer pathways to help transfer students successfully complete Bachelor's degrees by maximizing the transfer of credits taken at community colleges or other state institutions. Institutions that are part of MassTransfer participate in the Commonwealth Commitment, which freezes tuition for all four years if students meet the specified benchmarks. All MassTransfer agreements are posted on the MassTransfer website with a link on the university website. Course by course articulation agreements with state community colleges are posted on the Registrar and Admissions websites. Department chairs oversee the viability of course transfers and substitutions.

FSU has developed guaranteed admission agreements with the RN-BS in Nursing program for students at four regional community colleges as well as a guaranteed admission 4+1 program at Mount Wachusett Community College for both our undergraduate day and online accelerated Bachelor's of Business Administration programs.

## **Appraisal**

In response to increasing demand for workers within health science professions, FSU created a career pathway built around a seamless transition from RN-BS Nursing programs. The university established guaranteed admission agreements for the RN-BS in Nursing program with several community colleges. This program allows students to be pre-admitted into a Bachelor's program upon admission to their Associates program, with the understanding that they will successfully complete their Associates degree and move directly into the Bachelors program. Students admitted through the guaranteed admission process receive pre-advising into the program. The agreement with Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) has been the most successful to date: in the first cohort that completed their degree at MWCC and moved directly into FSU's program, 25 students started their RN-BS Nursing program at FSU. In addition to the RN-BS Nursing program, FSU has a guaranteed admission program in Business Administration with MWCC. These agreements are listed on the website.

Goal One in the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan focused on improving academic programs and several strategies included action items for improving transfer student processes, increasing access, building more transfer pathways, and improving community partnerships. The strategic plan reflected the MassTransfer goals for expanding access for transfer students statewide through collaborative and seamless partnerships. FSU has statewide MassTransfer Pathways for 19 different disciplines and over 250 transfer agreements with individual colleges. While participation in the MassTransfer collaboration has been beneficial for students and for the institutions involved, the Commonwealth Commitment is very restrictive, so a small number of students benefit from the program's 10% rebate or frozen tuition and fee rate. For example, in Fall 2021, there were no students enrolled with the Commonwealth Commitment; in Spring 2021 just one student was enrolled. To increase access and decrease student cost, in 2018 FSU approved a change in the number of credits accepted from transfer students, increasing from 60 to 75 credits from 2-year institutions and from 75 to 90 from four-year institutions, decreasing the minimum residency requirement for undergraduate students from 45 to 30 credits. In addition, the RN to BSN program was made more transfer friendly by increasing the maximum number of transfer credits to 88 in 2016.

In Spring 2021, FSU approved a comprehensive and student-focused policy regarding the transfer of general education courses. Various pathways, aligned with the overall number of transfer credits, provide a more efficient and transparent transfer process while reducing the likelihood of unused credits. In addition, an ad-hoc taskforce was created in Fall 2020 to help identify and address additional barriers and service challenges for transfer students. This taskforce will complete a report with recommendations for service and support structures for both online and campus-based transfer students. This task force continues to meet in AY22.

## **Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit**

### **Description**

The university's degrees and other credentials are consistent with the NECHE Policy on Credit and Degrees and align with best practices of US institutions of higher education. The academic departments are responsible for overseeing program and degree changes and naming practices as well as content, program length, and program level. Curricular changes proposed by academic departments must be approved through the governance process, which helps to ensure consistency with industry and higher education standards. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning assists with approving and finalizing the Classification of Instructional Programs codes assigned to all degree programs to ensure alignment with national standards. A minimum of 120 credits is required for a Bachelor's degree, and a Master's degree requires a minimum of 30 credits. The Bachelor's degree credential requires that no more than 50% of the credits within a student's major can be transferred and students must complete a minimum of 30 credits at FSU. Graduate students can transfer a maximum number of six credits, so they must complete a minimum of 24 credits in their degree program.

All degree requirements are posted in the catalog and on the website. To assist students in completing their degree requirements and provide students with the opportunity to see which courses are being offered in upcoming terms, the university has a live seats list that publishes a one-year calendar showing all course offerings and their associated attributes. Four-year plans of study, which outline course sequences for each undergraduate day program, are published on the website to assist students in academic planning and completing their degree within four years. A two-year course rotation for each SGOCE program is made available on the website to assist students in planning for the completion of their program. An online degree evaluation resource, Degreeworks, outlines which courses are needed for each

program, and displays courses a student has successfully completed and requirements they still need to complete. Graduate and undergraduate students are able to track their degree progress in real time using Degreeworks, which connects individual student records to degree paths in the catalog.

FSU maintains authority and administrative oversight for the academic elements of all courses that receive institutional credit. This is true across all modalities and locations in which credit-based courses are offered. The university is responsible for approving, reviewing, and assessing course content, reviewing competencies and course outcomes and how they link to program outcomes, and working with departments to oversee the approval of instructors. The university sets admissions criteria, manages the admission review process, and oversees registration, retention, and evaluation of prior learning credits and transfer credits.

FSU also has 32 Extended Campus/contractual partnerships that are managed within SGOCE. The related academic department is responsible for managing the academic curriculum, which is overseen by the Extended Campus Office along with the Associate Dean of SGOCE, the academic deans, and the department chairs. Extended Campus programs that offer degrees are managed by an FSU graduate program chair, who also advises the off-campus students. The program chair oversees the curriculum review process on behalf of the related FSU academic department. All curriculum changes must be approved by the academic department and the Graduate Council and/or AUC. An SGOCE representative, in collaboration with a representative from the academic department, meets at least once or twice a year to review program data, discuss challenges, and plan for continuous improvements. Each academic year, the Extended Campus partners sign a detailed contract with the university, which obligates them to follow the same procedures and policies, share the same standards for review and approval of programs, courses, and faculty, and have the same curriculum as their on-campus iterations. The Extended Campus Handbook details these policies and procedures.

University procedures ensure that Extended Campus faculty hiring, course, program, and syllabus approval adhere to or exceed university standards. Accordingly, multiple levels of review exist for these programs. An SGOCE representative, the program chairs, and appropriate deans meet with the agencies offering degree programs each year to review processes, curricula, and other pertinent issues. Agency teacher licensure programs are reviewed by the state every seven years, and all previously approved course syllabi are reviewed every three years. FSU program chairs and appropriate deans participate in the syllabi reviews.

FSU offers opportunities for qualified high school students to enroll in university courses through dual enrollment as well as through our state-designated Early College Program. FSU works with internal and external partners to ensure these students receive academic support and advising appropriate to their special program status. Courses offered through our new Early College Program are taught by either full- or part-time university faculty with adjunct hiring following the standard vetting and approval process used across the university.

The institution requires that all programs offered for accelerated time periods, at extended campus locations or online, maintain the same academic outcomes and rigor as those offered during more traditional time periods and modalities. All courses, regardless of location or delivery format, must meet the same requirements as campus-based courses.

Learning outcomes for all graduate and undergraduate programs are created by the academic department. The department is responsible for ensuring that course requirements are appropriate for the level of credit assigned and that content is appropriate to the field of study.



Placement testing is required for first-year students with a high school GPA below 2.7, first-year students taking calculus-based math, and some transfer students to assure appropriate preparation for entry-level English and math courses. No credit toward graduation is awarded for pre-collegiate-level or remedial work designed to prepare the student for collegiate study.

The Admissions Office, Academic Departments, AUC, and the Graduate Council are responsible for overseeing and reviewing continuation, termination, and re-admissions policies. These academic policies, once approved through governance and by the President, are published in the university catalog along with policies related to academic standing.

Online and extended campus students must meet the same entrance and retention criteria as those in on-campus programs and are afforded the same access to services and the library. Information about academic support can be accessed by students from a distance on the distance learning website. To protect academic integrity, all FSU students must create a student account at the time of course registration or at the time of admission. All students receive a unique student ID number and a unique FSU email address and Falcon Key, which are used to register for courses and gain access to email, Blackboard, and Degreeworks. Security standards for course access are overseen by the Chief Information and Security Officers.

FSU offers many ways to help students advance in their academic programs such as establishing and maintaining articulation agreements with community colleges, offering dual enrollment, and awarding credit through prior learning assessment (PLA), Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, College Level Examination Program, and military experience. Other experiences for which credit is awarded such as study abroad, internships, independent study, and service learning must include academic components.

FSU does not offer competency-based programs but does have a prior learning assessment (PLA) option, which allows undergraduates to earn up to 30 credits through portfolio assessment. Students must demonstrate prior work or life experience in order to qualify for PLA credit and credits must be aligned with courses. All students earning PLA credit must demonstrate Bachelors-level learning and articulate how their experience relates to course outcomes as applicable. PLA credit does not count towards the minimum.

Every member of the university community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. Students repeatedly encounter the university's Academic Integrity Policy, which is included in each course syllabus as well as the university catalog. The Academic Integrity Policy is also located in the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Process Handbook and the Student Handbook. An Academic Participation and Honesty online tutorial created by the library and embedded in the First-Year Experience includes an overview of the Academic Integrity Policy, citation styles, and tips on avoiding plagiarism. In addition, international graduate and undergraduate students participate in an academic integrity workshop run by the library as part of their onboarding process. New faculty participate in academic integrity professional development sessions as part of the New Faculty Academy. Academic integrity topics such as plagiarism are discussed through the Center for Teaching and Learning and other faculty professional development platforms. Some degree programs, particularly ones that lead to professional certifications such as Nursing, Education, Human Services, Criminal Justice, and the Police program, have additional academic and professional integrity standards. Information on reporting an academic violation is available on the university's website.

## Appraisal

FSU has met the educational needs of a changing population by creating flexible, responsive programs while maintaining high standards in the awarding of academic credit in all locations and modalities. FSU has added the Early College Program to assist first-generation college seekers, has updated programming for non-traditional Bachelors-seeking students, and is working to identify unique programming needs to address systemic inequities, through faculty professional development in designing and updating curriculum to address inequities, assessing and understanding academic resource and service gaps related to access, and working with the local community and employers to identify and create professional development and other programming related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The Center for Professional Studies has created a number of non-credit courses focused on DEI for a variety of audiences. The process of determining how to update and assess our curriculum and service through a DEI lens has started, but more work is needed to clarify action plans and assess outcomes.

Navigate, the Student Success Advising Platform, was implemented in AY18 as the Student Success Collaborative and has improved communication to students about upcoming deadlines, encouraged student registration, and made it easier for students to sign up for advising appointments. The Navigate system was made available to graduate students in summer 2021.

In June 2019, FSU was approved as a State Designated Early College Program, demonstrating the institution's commitment to the principles of that designation of equitable access, academic pathways, student support, and connection to career and effective partnerships.

FSU updated the Credit for Prior Learning through Portfolio Assessment Process in Fall 2021. Changes included enrolling students in a self-paced online module to assist them with portfolio completion and allowing them to submit portfolios electronically. Students are now required to submit an essay as part of the process in which they discuss how their prior experiences relate to the learning outcomes in the course for which they are seeking credit. The name was changed from the Life Experience Credit Award Program (LECAP) to Prior Learning Assessment (PLA). Additional strategies to educate students on the PLA program need to be considered.

FSU also received State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) approval in 2018 which requires annual review and renewal. SARA approval requires institutions to meet national standards for online programming offering the same level of quality as face-to-face courses and programs. Online courses, in addition to being reviewed and approved by department and/or program chairs, must be reviewed and approved by the digital learning coordinator and the appropriate academic dean. The developmental and approval process is detailed here.

## Projections

The academic deans will collaborate with academic departments to pursue curricular redesigns that differentiate the BA from the BS beyond the language requirement, beginning in AY22.

Academic departments will undertake an evaluation of program course numbers beginning in AY23 to ensure numbers are consistently applied to indicate lower and upper-level courses.

Academic deans will work with chairs to evaluate major requirements and open up space for elective options. A summary report of findings will be produced for every program by Fall 2024.



SGOCE will work with graduate chairs to explore the need for additional opportunities for student participation in research grant-writing and conference presentations. A multi-disciplinary recommendation will be developed by May 2023 and presented to the Provost.

The SGOCE Dean will explore strategies to increase student awareness of and utilization of the PLA and CLEP exam options by Spring 2023.

The university will formalize a transfer student taskforce that will regularly review and update services and processes for transfer students in AY23.

**STANDARD 4: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM**  
**(Summary - Degree-Seeking Enrollment and Degrees)**  
**Fall 2021 (Unofficial)**  
**Fall Enrollment\* by location and modality**

Degree Level/ Location & Modality	Associate's	Bachelor's	Master's	Clinical doctorates (e.g., Pharm.D, DPT, DNP)	Professional doctorates (e.g., Ed.D., Psy.D., D.B.A.)	M.D., J.D., DDS	Ph.D.	Total Degree Seeking
Main Campus FT	0	2,660	116	0	0	0	0	2,776
Main Campus PT	0	136	380	0	0	0	0	516
Other Principal Campus FT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Principal Campus PT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branch campuses FT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branch campuses PT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Locations FT	0	0	36	0	0	0	0	36
Other Locations PT	0	10	104	0	0	0	0	114
Overseas Locations FT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overseas Locations FT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distance education FT	0	51	358	0	0	0	0	409
Distance education PT	0	318	1,540	0	0	0	0	1,858
Correspondence FT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Correspondence PT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low-Residency FT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low-Residency PT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unduplicated Headcount Total	0	3,175	2,534	0	0	0	0	5,709
Total FTE		2,686	1,239					3,925
Enter FTE definition:		15 credits	12 credits					
Degrees Awarded, Most Recent Year (AY1920)		881	849					1,730

Notes:

- 1) Enrollment numbers should include all students in the named categories, including students in continuing education and students enrolled through any contractual relationship.
- 2) Each student should be recorded in only one category, e.g., students enrolled in low-residency programs housed on the main campus should be recorded only in the category "low-residency programs."
- 3) Please refer to form 3.2, "Locations and Modalities," for definitions of locations and instructional modalities.

\* For programs not taught in the fall, report an analogous term's enrollment as of its Census Date.

Please enter any  
explanatory notes in  
the box below

**STANDARD 4: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM**  
**(Summary - Non-degree seeking Enrollment and Awards)**  
**Fall 2021 (Unofficial)**  
**Fall Enrollment\* by location and modality, as of Census Date**

Degree Level/ Location & Modality	Title IV-Eligible Certificates: Students Seeking Certificates	Non-Matriculated Students	Visiting Students	Total Non-degree-Seeking	Total degree-seeking (from previous page)	Grand total
Main Campus FT	0	19	2	21	3,150	3,171
Main Campus PT	0	1,029	0	1,029	677	1,706
Other Principal Campus FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Principal Campus PT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branch campuses FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Branch campuses PT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Locations FT	0	0	0	0	47	47
Other Locations PT	0	13	0	13	124	137
Overseas Locations FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overseas Locations FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distance education FT	0	0	0	0		0
Distance education PT	0	0	0	0		0
Correspondence FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Correspondence PT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low-Residency FT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low-Residency PT	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Unduplicated Headcount Total</b>	0	1,061	2	1,063	5,782	6,845
<b>Total FTE</b>		273.0	2.0		4,584	4,584.0
<b>Enter FTE definition:</b>		15 crs UG, 12 crs GR				
<b>Certificates Awarded, Most Recent Year</b>						

Notes:

- 1) Enrollment numbers should include all students in the named categories, including students in continuing education and students enrolled through any contractual relationship.
- 2) Each student should be recorded in only one category, e.g., students enrolled in low-residency programs housed on the main campus should be recorded only in the category "low-residency programs."

3) Please refer to form 3.2, "Locations and Modalities," for definitions of locations and instructional modalities.

\* For programs not taught in the fall, report an analogous term's enrollment as of its Census Date.

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

**STANDARD 4: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM  
(Headcount by UNDERGRADUATE Major)**

	Number of credits*	3 Years Prior (Fall 18)	2 Years Prior (Fall 19)	1 Year Prior (Fall 20)	Current Year (Fall 21*)	Next Year Forward (goal Fall 22)
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**Certificate (add more rows as needed)**

Professional Accounting- Evening (FA20)	18	-	-	0	0	10
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**Teacher Approval Programs**

Vocational Technical - Evening	39	5	11	7	8	10
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Total 5 11 7 8 20

**Baccalaureate  
(add more rows as needed)**

**120  
credits**

Applied Science & Technology (FA20)				21	40	40
Biology		253	212	176	151	150
Business Administration		394	365	342	304	300
Business Administration - Evening		80	98	89	84	85
Chemistry		27	24	15	15	15
Computer Information Systems		65	57	55	56	55
Communications Media		459	414	394	325	325
Computer Science		102	105	93	94	95
Criminal Justice		392	389	373	303	300
Early Childhood Education		81	74	62	46	45
Early Childhood Education - Evening		25	18	17	17	15
Environmental and Earth Science		36	31	26	22	20
Economics		26	20	16	16	15
Early Education and Care - Evening (FA20)				-		
Elementary Education 1-6		99	96	84	72	70
Engineering Technology (FA20)				48	78	80
Environmental and Public Health (FA19)			4	8	5	5

English Studies		88	86	61	46	45
Educational Studies (FA19)			10	14	22	20
Exercise and Sport Science		195	172	156	146	145
Game Design		174	166	173	160	160
Geographic Science and Technology		9	10	6	6	5
History		61	54	42	38	35
Human Services		120	104	86	70	70
Interdisciplinary Studies - Education		39	37	78	18	15
Interdisciplinary Studies		80	94	66	59	60
Interdisciplinary Studies - Evening		13	12	16	22	25
Industrial Technology		142	136	70	16	10
Mathematics		43	35	27	23	20
Middle School Education		25	28	7	2	0
Nursing, LPN to BS - Evening		34	38	40	30	30
Nursing, RN to BS - Evening		129	173	232	231	230
Nursing, Premajor		114	91	104	88	85
Nursing, BS		207	203	216	191	190
Occupational/Vocational Education - Evening		58	67	59	47	45
Political Science		51	39	33	26	25
Premajor		68	83	73	88	85
Psychological Science		189	192	191	176	175
Public Health Science (FA21)					2	5
Sociology		34	28	28	18	15
Special Education		81	63	56	38	35
Technology Education		10	10	8	6	5

Total	4,003	3,838	3,661	3,197	3,150
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Total Undergraduate	4,008	3,849	3,668	3,205	3,170
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\* Enter here the number of credits students must complete in order to earn the credential (e.g., 69 credits in an A.S. in Nursing)

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Second majors included. \*FA21 is unofficial



**STANDARD 4: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM**  
**(Headcount by GRADUATE Major)**

Number of credits*	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)
	(Fall 18)	(Fall 19)	(Fall 20)	(Fall 21*)	(Fall 22)

**Master's (add more rows as needed)**

MA - English	33	6	9	6	5	5
MA - History	30	10	11	14	20	20
MAT - Biology	36	0	1			
MAT - English	33	8	4			
MBA - Business Administration	30	828	869	1,102	1,219	1,220
MEd - Arts Education	36	6	8	10	16	15
MEd - Curriculum & Teaching	36	308	352	406	341	340
MEd - Early Childhood Education	42	25	23	22	18	15
MEd - Education 5-12	36	0	8	36	48	45
MEd - EDLM	33	42	72	97	139	140
MEd - Elementary Education 1-6	39	19	9	16	22	20
MEd - Middle School Education	36	22	18		1	
MEd - Occupational Education	36	15	25	19	19	15
MEd - Science Education	36	3	4	2	2	
MEd - Special Education	39	318	287	284	256	250
MS - Applied Communication	36	5	13	22	22	20
MS - Computer Science	33	40	47	68	106	105
MS - Counseling	60	70	75	79	85	85
MS - Criminal Justice	36	8	10	30	42	45
MS - Forensic Nursing	39	58	52	39	48	45
Total		1,791	1,897	2,252	2,409	2,385

**Doctorate (add more rows as needed)**

NA						
Total		0	0	0	0	0

**First Professional (add more rows as needed)**

NA						
Total		0	0	0	0	0

**Other; specify (add more rows as needed)**

CAGS- EDLM	39	37	39	35	31	30
CAGS - IDIS	36	19	19	24	16	15
Certificate - Accounting	9				6	10
Certificate - Applied Behav Anal	21	11	6	12	15	15
Certificate - Applied Comm Studies	15				1	5
Certificate - Autism Sp. Disorder	12			6	7	10
Certificate - Fine Arts Director	15	1	0	0	0	
Certificate - Forensic Nursing	21	1	4	2	1	
Certificate - Health Care Mgmt	9				9	10
Certificate - Human Resources Mgmt	9				12	15
Certificate - Marketing	9				2	5
Certificate - Reading Spec	27	9	9	10	19	20
Certiificate - SPED Director	9				2	5
Certificate - Special Issues Counseling	15			1	1	5

Certificate - Supply Chain Mgmt	9				3	5
Non-Degree		1,499	1,481	710	863	860
Total		1,577	1,558	800	988	1010
Total Graduate		3,368	3,455	3,052	3,397	3,395

\* Enter here the number of credits students must complete in order to earn the credential  
(e.g., 36 credits in an M.B.A.)

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

\*FA21 is unofficial

**STANDARD 4: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM  
(Credit Hours Generated and Information Literacy)**

**Credit Hours Generated By Department or Comparable Academic Unit**

<b>3 Years Prior (Fall 18)</b>	<b>2 Years Prior (Fall 19)</b>	<b>1 Year Prior (Fall 20)</b>	<b>Current Year (*Fall 21)</b>	<b>Next Year Forward (goal) (Fall 22)</b>
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**Undergraduate (add more rows as needed)**

Behavioral Sciences	4,795	4,787	4,653	3,621	3,620
Biology/Chemistry	4,276	3,724	3,104	2,768	2,765
Business Administration	3,360	3,237	2,997	3,225	3,225
Communications Media	4,696	4,719	4,104	3,543	3,540
Computer Science	1,549	1,452	1,331	1,202	1,200
Earth & Geographic Sciences	1,502	1,367	1,157	1,000	1,000
Economics, History & Political Science	4,287	3,813	3,321	2,937	2,935
Education	1,913	2,273	2,129	2,249	2,245
Engineering Technology	1,868	1,695	1,699	1,051	1,051
English Studies	5,325	4,939	4,428	3,903	3,900
Exercise & Sports Science	2,441	2,295	2,069	1,857	1,855
Humanities	5,534	5,351	4,371	3,898	3,895
Mathematics	4,184	3,681	3,266	2,789	2,785
Nursing	2,942	3,154	3,872	3,489	3,485
Psychological Science	4,266	3,863	3,719	3,221	3,220
FYE	258	486	537	0	0
Honors	441	496	359	393	390
ROTC	20	19	16	10	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>53,657</b>	<b>51,351</b>	<b>47,132</b>	<b>41,156</b>	<b>41,121</b>

**Graduate (add more rows as needed)**

Behavioral Sciences	645	690	810	894	890
Biology/Chemistry	0	39	0	6	5
Business Administration	5,055	4,965	6,813	7,311	7,310
Communications Media	36	81	135	144	140
Computer Science	288	390	433	775	775
Economics, History & Political Science	51	60	48	75	75
Education	8,521	8,831	7,556	7,732	7,730
Engineering Technology	315	492	399	225	225
English Studies	48	45	21	15	15
Humanities	63	96	48	102	100
Nursing	245	252	183	192	190
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,267</b>	<b>15,941</b>	<b>16,446</b>	<b>17,471</b>	<b>17,455</b>

**Information Literacy Sessions**

	(FY18)	(FY19)	(FY20)	(FY21) Projected	(FY22) Projected
Main campus					
Sessions embedded in a class	178	176	162	67	90
Free-standing sessions	14	11	0	0	0
Branch/other locations					
Sessions embedded in a class	6	7	5	3	6
Free-standing sessions	0	0	0	0	0
Online sessions	63	72	67	167	170

<https://library.fitchburgstate.edu/facilities-services/instruction-services/>

**URL of Information Literacy Reports:**

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

\*Note: The Information Literacy Sessions are defined the following ways: Embedded in a class means in-person Library Instruction Sessions; Free-standing means Student Workshops; and Online Sessions means asynchronous embedded online instruction and synchronous Google Meet/Zoom Instruction Sessions. Session totals are based on full fiscal year; example: 7/1/19-6/30/20 = Fall 20. Projections for Fall 21 and Fall 22 are based on remaining relatively steady/slight increase in overall numbers with a heavier focus on Online Sessions due to the possibility of an ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and expansion of the university's online course offerings.

\*FA21 data is unofficial

## Standard Five: Students

### Description

In Fall 2021, Fitchburg State University enrolled 6,751 students. There were 2,504 full-time undergraduates, 852 part-time undergraduates, 520 full-time graduate students, and 2,875 part-time graduate students. FSU does not offer any PhD programs. There are 13 programs that are 100% online with 2,920 students enrolled in 2021. There are four programs that are partially online (50-99%) with 480 students enrolled in 2021. In AY20, there were 138 international students. Approximately 3% of students receive instruction through FSU's other instructional locations through contractual arrangements. In Fall 2021, 1,046 students resided in residence halls, 42% of the full-time undergraduate population.

FSU enrolls significant numbers of nontraditional students. In Fall 2021, 41% of undergraduates identified as first-generation, 20.6% of undergraduates were 25 years old or older, 33% of undergraduates received Pell grant assistance, and 31% of newly enrolled students were transfer students. FSU offers dual enrollment programs, with 136 students enrolled in 2020. As of May 2020, 12.5% of undergraduates had enrolled in disability services.

In Fall 2021, 53.7% of undergraduates identified as female (46.3% as male). 69.4% of graduate students identified as female (30.6% as male). FSU began collecting non-binary gender information in Fall 2017. In Fall 2021, 1.7% of undergraduates and 0.6% of graduate students identified as Trans Man, Trans Woman, demigender, genderqueer, or questioning.

In Fall 2021, 65% of undergraduates identified as White, 14.1% of students as LatinX/Hispanic, 12.6% as Black/African-American, and 2.6% as Asian. 74% of graduate students identified as White, 6.6% as LatinX/Hispanic, 6.6% as Black/African-American, and 3.3% as Asian.

### Admissions

FSU describes the students it seeks to serve within its mission statement, vision, and core values. FSU is committed to providing a high-quality educational experience that is also inclusive, integrated, and equitable. Our vision is founded on the principles of social mobility and economic prosperity for all. The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan includes the goal of "forging innovative paths to knowledge acquisition, career readiness, social mobility, and lifelong learning." The undergraduate population includes students traditionally under-served in higher education, including first-generation, low-income, and non-traditional students. Our undergraduates represent primarily the Massachusetts community, with 92% residing in state.

The mission of the Office of Admissions is to provide information about academic program offerings, academic services, and experiential opportunities to prospective students. The Office of Admissions has a recruitment plan that includes strategies to enroll a variety of student populations: first-year, honors, transfer, local, students of color, student-athletes, international, students with disabilities, out-of-state students, and Summer Bridge students.

The organization of enrollment management has shifted over the last ten years. A former Dean of Enrollment position was eliminated in 2015, resulting in Admissions and Registrar moving under the VPAA and the student accounts and financial offices moving under the VP for Administration and Finance. In 2021, a new position of Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management (AVPEM) was created to coordinate admissions, financial aid, and marketing with a focus on undergraduate enrollment. The

AVPEM is a vital member of the senior leadership team, bringing a strategic vision, tactical skill set, and active engagement to the development, coordination, and implementation of a university-wide enrollment management process that addresses recruitment, enrollment, and graduation of students, disbursing financial assistance and scholarships, and marketing FSU to local, regional, and international constituents.

Graduate, online, and continuing education admissions has moved from the Office of Admissions to the School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education (SGOCE). The purpose of this move was to align graduate admissions decision-making and communication to the recruitment and enrollment work taking place in the SGOCE. However, the Office of Admissions still handles all frontline support for both the graduate and undergraduate programs.

All undergraduate students are admitted based on admission standards set by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE). FSU admits students who, based on high school GPA (college GPA for transfer students), standardized test scores, and involvement in school and community activities, demonstrate potential for success in our programs. To maintain their desired enrollment and evaluate success in their program, the Nursing department has higher admission standards than the DHE. The Communication Media and Criminal Justice programs also had higher standards in the past 10 years, but recently brought them in line with current DHE standards. Students participating in FSU's Summer Bridge Program are able to meet DHE's standards after successfully completing the program. FSU also participates in the DHE's test optional pilot program through which applicants can opt to not submit SAT/ACT scores and to have their high school GPA be the main basis for admission.

Graduate students are evaluated and admitted based on a variety of admission standards that may be specific to the program to which they're applying. Admission consideration is strongly based on performance in undergraduate degree program, overall cumulative undergraduate GPA, and work experience. In addition, consideration is given to those with strong letters of recommendation, a strong statement of purpose and writing sample, and successful passing of Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure (for Education only). Admissions requirements vary by graduate program; some programs (e.g., teacher preparation and counseling) may also evaluate candidates for fit and aptitude in their fields. The graduate application review process varies by program. The program chair reviews applications for some programs and for others a staff member may review applications based on criteria set by departments. Standardized tests such as the GRE and GMAT are not required for admission into any graduate programs.

FSU's recruitment strategies are centered on core values of accessibility and affordability. The university evaluates success (via such metrics as retention and graduation rates) of all sub-populations to ensure that all students are successful and this information is used to inform admissions. For example, our Nursing, Communications Media, Criminal Justice, and Summer Bridge programs all have adjusted admission guidelines to balance success and student access.

Over the last three years, FSU accepted 85.4-88.4% of first-year undergraduate applications. Of these accepted applications, 19.5-26.3% of applicants enrolled. Transfer students are accepted at a higher rate (93.8-93.3%) and are significantly more likely to enroll (51.3-63.1%). Graduate students are also accepted at a higher rate (98.6-96.5%) and more likely to enroll (66-71.5%).

The Admissions office participates in undergraduate and graduate college fairs, high school visits, on-campus visits, academic program information sessions, and panels for school guidance counselors. SGOCE participates in graduate fairs, virtual information sessions, open houses, and workforce development events. SGOCE also visits community colleges, employers, and community agencies. SGOCE and

Admissions collaborate on recruitment activities such as international recruitment planning, transfer student outreach, and marketing plans. The 2015 purchase of Slate, a comprehensive higher education CRM, followed by the hiring of technical expertise in 2020, supports strategic recruitment of all student populations.

FSU employs several methods to assess student readiness for collegiate study; one is placement testing. First-year students with a high school GPA of less than 2.7 or in a major that requires pre-calculus are required to take Accuplacer placement tests (Writeplacer, Quantitative Reasoning, Algebra, and Statistics Test, Advanced Algebra and Functions Test). Graduate students entering the Master's of Computer Science take the Accuplacer Computer Science tests (C and Java). Language placement exams for international students are administered through WebCAPE. Remote testing is available, and students can retake placement tests once.

The College Student Inventory (CSI) is administered to first-years prior to Fall enrollment. The Mid-Year Student Assessment (MYSA) is administered to the same population mid-year. Both identify readiness and support needs on both the individual and aggregate level. Students are connected to supports and aggregate data can be used for assessment and planning. In Fall 2020, FSU added custom questions on technology and financial need to both the CSI and MYSA related to the pandemic. Data on the risk-level of the first-year class and which supports are most needed is shared at the start of term and also filtered by race/ethnicity and gender. CSI advisor reports are loaded into SSC Navigate for advisors and FYE faculty.

Admitted students receive a number of supports. First-year and transfer students take a First-Year Experience Seminar (FYE). FYE prepares students for a successful college career by developing habits of mind, reading, and information literacy skills. Thematic sections tailor course content to the students' majors, but learning outcomes remain the same.

FSU provides support to undergraduate Latino males through the Hispanic Male Mentoring Program. This program is DHE funded and focuses on the first year. Faculty and peer mentors (with Spanish language skills) work with incoming students to provide proactive guidance.

The Academic Coaching and Tutoring Center offers workshops and in-class support for student success skills such as time management, motivation, and concentration. The SSC Navigate advising platform is used to make academic coaching appointments. The university has 20 peer mentors that provide services to both FYE and non-FYE students. In the Fall semester, peer mentors attend class alongside new students enrolled in FYE and offer workshops and office hours. In the Spring semester, peer mentors lead a variety of activities to help students learn about campus resources, participate in campus social events, and develop study strategies. Writing support is available to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Each semester has a three-week advising period, but advisors maintain contact with advisees all year. Faculty are encouraged to submit enrollment census and deficient mid-semester grades each semester to alert advisors and academic coaches. Alerts can also be generated for academic coach referral, tutor referral, financial aid referral, and attendance issues.

The Career Service and Advising Center provides a number of support services including career and academic advising, graduate school advising, mock interviews, interview room, career assessment, alumni job shadowing programs, and a number of workshops and events.

## Appraisal

FSU's total undergraduate population has declined 21.6% since 2011. The majority of this decline is due to decreased numbers of full-time undergraduates, a decline of 29.6% (3558 in 2011 to 2504 in 2021). Over this same period, the part-time undergraduate population has actually grown by 17.5% (725 in 2011 to 852 in 2021). The majority of these declines occurred during the last two years. The 2011 to 2019 total undergraduate population decline was 5.2%.

The population of traditionally under-served undergraduates has increased over the past 10 years. In 2011, 14% of students identified as diverse compared to 31.7% in 2021. The quickest growing populations have been the LatinX population which has increased from 6.5% to 14.2% and the Black or African American population which has grown from 3.9% to 12.6%. The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan includes goals of doubling the undergraduate enrollment of LatinX students (to 25%). To accomplish this diversity goal, admissions created the position of Associate Director of Multicultural Outreach and Recruitment in 2020, and shifted to a new outreach-focused recruitment model. This includes forming partnerships with community-based organizations, meeting with faith-based leaders and community influencers, and outreach to precollege programs. Natural changes in local demographics will likely contribute to the diversification of the undergraduate population. The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan addresses these anticipated demographic shifts and the importance of providing the appropriate supports.

Despite the addition of dedicated transfer staff in admissions and changes in FSU transfer credit policies (see Standard Four), the number of new undergraduate day transfer students has decreased by approximately 27% since 2011, aligning with a regional decline of students at community colleges. The number of transfer students enrolling in online undergraduate programs through SGOCE, on the other hand, has increased, representing 28% of new transfer enrollment in Fall 2021. To address the declining day transfer enrollment, the transfer center, created in 2017, has developed outreach initiatives including personalized outreach to community college transfer coordinators and monthly transfer days during which students can have their transcripts evaluated and admission decisions made immediately for qualifying students. A new online orientation has been developed to assist in the onboarding process.

SGOCE has transitioned the orientation process for all new graduate students to an online platform offered three times a year, at the beginning of Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters. The orientation is recorded and shared for those unable to participate in the online sessions.

FSU's graduate student population has grown steadily over the last 10 years. From 2011 to 2021 the number of graduate students increased 36% (2,497 to 3,395). The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan has a goal of increasing the enrollment of graduate students by 15% and increasing online enrollment by 20%. These populations have a graduation rate of 85-89%.

The population of traditionally under-served graduate students has not grown as quickly as the undergraduate population (17.6% identify as diverse). The strategic plan has a goal of increasing LatinX enrollment from 5 to 8.5% and African American enrollment from 4 to 5.5%.

The Hispanic Male Mentoring Program targets Latino freshmen for faculty and peer mentoring support. Another program that is particularly successful is the TRIO Student Support Services program (formerly known as Expanding Horizons) which serves first-generation, low-income, and students with disabilities (160 students per year). Students in this program attend pre-semester orientation programs that assist new students in adjusting to university life.



The First-Year Experience seminar is designed to build academic skills and prepare students to succeed in a college environment. Starting in Fall 2021, all incoming first-time students take the course in their first year; transfer students will be enrolled starting in Fall 2022. The course was piloted in Fall 2018, Fall 2019, and Fall 2020 (with 86, 162, and 178 students enrolled respectively). The student populations that participated in the pilot were participants of the Hispanic Male Mentoring program, pre-majors, and Education majors.

FSU has adopted several software systems to provide additional support to at-risk student populations. In 2014, FSU adopted a degree audit system called DegreeWorks. In 2015, FSU partnered with EAB to implement a new predictive analytics and advising platform, the Student Success Collaborative (SSC), now called Navigate. Navigate allows faculty advisors to see risk factors like rates of D, F, or W grades, as well as courses failed and retaken. It is used to collect data related to attendance, deficient mid-term grades, and non-registration status. It also enables student referrals to support services and assists faculty advisors in scheduling course registration advising. Navigate was utilized in Spring 2020 and Spring 2021 to gather information related to possible “walk-aways” resulting from the transition to remote learning. Utilization data reflects the level to which the system is used in order to identify and remediate at-risk behaviors. For example, in AY20 (pre-pandemic), the system recorded 14,105 advising appointments scheduled for 3,053 students with a full-time faculty utilization rate of 79%. Graduate students were added to Navigate in summer 2021 to improve communication and gain some of the service benefits available for undergraduates such as attendance tracking.

Recruitment activities are currently guided by an [annual recruitment plan](#) produced by the Admissions Office and an annual action plan created by SGOCE. Longer-term strategic recruitment plans do not currently exist.

## **Student Services and Co-Curricular Experiences**

### **Description**

FSU aspires to provide accessible, evidence-based programming and services to offer all students the opportunity for educational achievement. Our robust slate of student services and co-curricular experiences supports students’ academic, social, career, civic, and wellness needs. [The Division of Academic Affairs](#) provides academic and career support in addition to a Student Success Task Force and a Transfer Student Success Task Force. The [Division of Student Affairs](#) coordinates varied student support services and robust engagement opportunities, and the Divisions of Finance and Administration and Technology and the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library ensure student opportunity and success through a variety of student-facing services.

FSU’s student services are guided by the university's [mission](#) of preparing students to lead, serve, and succeed. Offices in Student Affairs—including Athletics and Recreation, the Center for Diversity and Inclusiveness, Counseling, Disability Services, Community Health Connections, Housing and Residential Services, Student Conduct, Student Development, TRIO SSS, Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math and Science, and the University Police Department—promote diversity, cultural richness, and belonging as students grow intellectually, build leadership skills, and create strong relationships. Student support offices within Academic Affairs—including the Academic Coaching and Tutoring Center, Career Services and Advising, International Education, the Crocker Center for Civic Engagement, and the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library—do the same.

## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

In providing services, FSU adheres to principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Center for Diversity and Inclusiveness is a hub of campus DEI programming, and a Director of Student Diversity, Equity, and Belonging Programs position was staffed in July 2021. The CDI sponsors an average of 30 events annually and supports identity-based organizations such as Black Student Union, Gay Straight Alliance, Latin American Association, and World Integrated Nations. These principles are also exemplified by the campus-wide Leading for Change committee, individual student-serving departmental efforts, and student-led initiatives.

- CDI created a “First Generation Student Programming Committee” to develop an understanding of the barriers impacting students and to develop programs.
- CDI provides strategic oversight and collaboration with staff and faculty on integrating institution-wide Heritage Month Programming.
- CDI facilitates dialogues on local, national, and global issues through the “Courageous Conversations” (formerly titled “Inclusive Conversations”) initiative.
- CDI provides a resource library and serves as a physical affinity space for Black, LatinX, Asian Diaspora, Native American, Multiracial, LGBTQ+, and multicultural students and allies.
- CDI both sponsors and collaborates to bring prominent keynote speakers on issues impacting minoritized student populations.

## Health and Wellness

FSU has multiple student services dedicated to physical and psychological wellness, as well as programs oriented toward the wellness needs of targeted groups. Additionally, professional and student staff receive training to support intervention in mental health crises.

- All incoming undergraduate students must complete an online training pertaining to sexual and interpersonal violence (Vector Solutions), as well as an in-person offering of the Escalation Workshop (One Love Foundation) as part of New Student Orientation.
- Community Health Connections partners with FSU to provide student health services at two locations near campus.
- Free Flu and COVID Vaccination Clinics and COVID-19 Testing are available on-campus.
- Counseling Services provides prevention-oriented programming such as QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) suicide prevention training, high-quality treatment services, and referral for psychological difficulties. Additional staff was added in 2021 to expand services.
- Disability Services supports a large number of students with physical and mental health disabilities who receive academic and programmatic accommodations and supports.
- FAVE (Fitchburg Anti-Violence Education) is a campus-wide effort to prevent interpersonal violence, relationship violence, and sexual assault, and to empower those affected by violence through education, trainings, and survivor support services.

- Programming includes ribbon campaigns to create awareness around domestic violence, disordered eating, and other topics; events to dispel rape myths and victim-blaming; Take Back the Night to uplift survivor voices; and collaborations with community partners.

### **Academic and Student Support Services**

Academic, advising, and career support and guidance are available to all FSU students through dedicated offices, as well as well-publicized, individualized faculty advising and office hours.

- The Academic Coaching and Tutoring (ACT) Center offers CRLA-certified drop-in and appointment-based academic support for all students. The ACT Center sees approximately 5,000 appointments per academic year and has expanded peer mentoring to serve all incoming first-year, transfer students, and graduate and online students.
- The Career Services and Advising (CSA) Center offers academic advising to students who have not yet declared a major. CSA also offers career guidance, including Career Fairs, internship planning, and job search support, and in recent years has established a Career Success Certificate, adopted an online recruiting portal and resume book to connect undergraduate and graduate students to employers, and coordinated its first online Career Fair.
- The Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library is an essential resource providing digital catalogs, journals, databases, instruction, and information literacy. Students access individual support through research appointments, an online Chat service providing direct communication to librarians, and the Personal Librarian Program for first-year and transfer students. The Outreach Librarian for Student Success supports students through events and programming.
- The Douglas and Isabelle Crocker Center for Civic Engagement increases student success by engaging students in high-impact practices and learning opportunities through community-based internships, research, and civic learning projects.
- Summer Bridge is a conditional admittance program with intensive academic and mentoring support, to promote academic success.
- The Disability Services Office (DSO) provides accommodations for all FSU students, allowing equal access to all programs and services. The DSO provides testing accommodations in their Testing Center.
- TRIO SSS helps students who are first-generation, lower-income and/or have a disability to excel at FSU, offering 160 undergraduates advising, individual support plans, peer mentoring, and financial aid and academic counseling.

### **Student Life Services**

FSU offers programs to meet both residential and commuter students' needs. In addition to coordinating housing and parking, Housing and Residential Services offers walk-in academic support services, life skill management, Residential Learning Communities to foster a sense of belonging, and professional and leadership skills through the Residence Hall Association. Commuter Affairs offers services and programs to help commuters feel more connected to FSU.

Undergraduate transfer students who choose to live on campus have a community location in Mara Village; when capacity there is reached, transfer students are paired as roommates and placed in other upper-class residence halls. Collective placement of transfer students supports specialized programming,

creating a social network to explore campus clubs and organizations.

The Office of Student Development provides student development opportunities through numerous extra- and co-curricular activities, including student employment, community service, commuter programs, and cultural programs. Other key areas offering co-curricular opportunities are Housing and Residential Services, Athletics and Recreation, the Center for Diversity and Inclusiveness, and the Library.

Campus clubs and the Student Government Association (SGA) offer leadership opportunities. Membership in the 75 currently active campus clubs, three sororities, and three fraternities is open to all students. The SGA represents students by participating in campus-wide committees and governing the committees responsible for student affairs, activities, and clubs. SGA representatives serve on 24 FSU committees, including the five major governance committees.

Leadership opportunities are also available as undergraduate employment. The Hammond Campus Center employs students in leadership roles, and students also work as Orientation Leaders, Resident Assistants, Athletic Home Game Management, Recreation Center Attendants, Intramural Officials, Peer Leaders, Campus Center Managers, Center for Diversity and Inclusiveness Program Assistants, Tutors, and Peer Mentors. Paid employment makes leadership roles accessible to all students, including those who must work to afford college.

The Department of Athletics and Recreation provides high quality athletic and recreation programs that challenge students and support their academic endeavors, extending education beyond the classroom and fostering engagement, leadership, and a lifelong commitment to health and wellness. Undergraduate athletes must meet admission standards, and Financial Aid follows all Division III NCAA regulations. Athlete eligibility requirements, published in the student athlete handbook and academic catalog, are the same as progress requirements for all students. The average student athlete GPA is between 2.9 and 3.0, and many student-athletes are placed on MASCAC all-academic teams and the National Student Athlete Honor Society.

Admissions hosts open houses throughout the year, attended by all student-serving offices. New student orientations introduce students to support services, as does the summer-long, online "Falcon Connections" program, led by Peer Leaders. Some student-serving offices—International Education, Disability Services, TRIO Student Support Services, SGOCE—host additional open houses and orientations for targeted students.

### **Case Management**

The Community Assessment and Risk Evaluation (CARE) Team is a multidisciplinary team that works to meet the needs of all students by addressing their safety, welfare, and academic success. Developed in 2016, the CARE Team functions as a student safety net and receives reports of behaviors and other concerns, working to address them through a comprehensive case management approach in the best interest of the student and the campus community.

The Bias Incident Response Team ensures students, faculty, and staff affected by bias or bias-related incidents have access to appropriate resources and assists FSU in its response in situations that may impact the overall campus climate around DEI. The team reviews and responds to incidents in an educational, non-confrontational, and non-punitive manner.

## **Policies and Procedures**

Policies on student rights and responsibilities, including student conduct and grievance procedures, are well publicized, clearly stated, readily available, and consistently administered. [The Student Handbook](#), the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Process Handbook, and all other policies are available on the [FSU student affairs website](#).

Individuals responsible for student services are qualified by formal training and work experience. All new hires complete a standardized HR training, including Conflict of Interest, Diversity: Inclusion in the Modern Workplace, Preventing Harassment & Discrimination, Managing Bias, Data Security and Privacy, and more. Employees receive regular check-ins for the first year, then yearly appraisals from managers.

The Office of Financial Aid assists students who, without financial assistance, would be unable to attend college. They administer federal, state, and institutional need-based aid, as well as work study, and in AY20 awarded \$43 million in financial aid to our students. The office informs students about their rights and responsibilities as financial aid recipients through our website and self-service module, print documents, and electronic communications.

The office utilizes the student information system's auto-packager to award equitably to all students. Academic Works allows students to apply for scholarships offered by the Foundation and others. Web4 lists awards and allows them to actively accept their loans, and also shows missing items needed to complete their file. Dynamic Forms have been implemented to allow students to electronically submit forms, and Google Meets is used to help students virtually.

FSU regularly provides students with clear and timely pre-borrowing information about [cost](#), as well as [debt and repayment](#). Students and families are given information about their rights and responsibilities as borrowers. Students must actively accept their loans, complete Entrance Counseling, and sign a Master Promissory Note in order to pay into their accounts.

The Student Accounts Office works with students and families in understanding their charges, applying financial aid to their account, and issuing any refunds they may have due to excess payments. The office is on the Enrollment Management team and Student Success Task Force.

FSU has publicly available policies regarding information that will be included in students' permanent academic record as well as policies regarding the retention, safety and security, and disposal of records. The University's Retention Standards are based on the [Massachusetts Retention Schedule](#) and follow state standards for protection. Security Plans and Policies comply with National Institute of Standards and Technology standards.

The Office of the Registrar manages FERPA forms. The Office of Student Accounts allows for Authorized Users to be created on the Bill Payment Site. Student Affairs recently created a new position to manage health records in conjunction with a dedicated Physician Assistant where students access healthcare at Community Health Connections.

## **Appraisal**

Since 2012, a Student Success unit has been created to improve retention and review policy through a retention and equity lens. Tutoring and academic coaching have been expanded, and a peer mentoring program has been created. Career support services have been expanded and a campus-wide initiative is mapping core career competencies with curricular learning objectives. Summer Bridge has changed from a low-cost to a no-cost program and has expanded to include residential and online attendance options.

The inclusion of an online option, making Bridge accessible to students who cannot live on or commute to campus during the summer, will remain. The new Outreach Librarian for Student Success coordinates programs and services aimed at improving engagement, retention, and success. According to the 2020 Climate Survey, 75% of students Strongly Agree/Agree that FSU is committed to their success (up from 70% in 2018), 90% Strongly Agree/Agree that they have the opportunity to succeed at FSU (slightly down from 92% in 2018), and 86% Strongly Agree/Agree that FSU provides the support students need to succeed academically (slightly up from 84% in 2018.)

FSU's student-serving offices have more actively centered assessment in planning since 2012. The Student Affairs Assessment Team launched in AY19 to prioritize assessment, hold student affairs departments accountable, and plan collaborative efforts. In Academic Affairs, each non-teaching department has an annual Unit Action Plan, designed to tie goals, objectives, and expected outcomes to the strategic plan. Counseling Services also collects data to understand the needs and goals of students served, which directs current and future programming.

There is an increased expectation for student affairs departments to be intentional with developing students outside the classroom, while supporting the in-classroom experience. The Office of Student Development is in the process of adopting a co-curricular model for all students that has measurable learning outcomes and supports Institutional Learning Priorities.

The Athletic Department has expressed concerns with adequately supporting student athletes academically. As the majority of the coaching staff is part-time, with four full-time coaches, it is difficult for coaches to provide academic monitoring, study hall, and advising services for student-athletes. However, coaches are a vital source of information on student academic progress and are critical in connecting student athletes that need support with the appropriate resources. FSU should explore ways to better connect student-athletes with support services.

Focus groups during summer orientation (2016-2019) assessed students' experiences, including their engagement with student services and their understanding of orientation content, and the largely positive results have directed programming decisions. Student orientation has expanded from half-day to overnight summer sessions and blends themes of academic and student life. In 2019, 99% of new students participated in orientation, providing high exposure to student services. During orientation, Financial Aid and Student Accounts hold information sessions on paying for college and financial literacy, and they are working with the First-Year Experience group to create an experiential piece that would include financial literacy.

During COVID-19, student engagement is down by 50% or more in all extra- and co-curricular areas. Student engagement in campus services is also diminished, as on most campuses. Expanded online services, increased outreach, and new programming platforms are among the strategies departments are using to increase engagement. The COVID response survey indicated that mental health, financial, and technology services were most utilized. Falcons Supporting Falcons is a student success outreach campaign initially developed in Spring 2020. To address students' academic and personal challenges, the Student Affairs division recruited faculty and staff volunteers to outreach to all undergraduates for check-ins, appropriate referrals, and reassurance of ongoing support. Given the success of this campaign, it has been modified to focus on outreach to all first-year students each fall term and is managed out of the Office for Student Success. Starting Fall 2022, new transfer students will be included.

Years of exploring how to expand health services and provide students with a wider range of expertise led FSU to eliminate its on-campus health clinic and partner with Community Health Connections, a federally



qualified health center with two locations close to campus. CHC has a sliding fee discount program and students access services using their student health insurance. CHC offers dentistry, optometry, behavioral health, and podiatry, as well as evening and weekend hours, that the university was not previously able to provide. This change allowed FSU to meet increasing demand for a broader array of services but was met with initial resistance from some students, faculty, and staff. In particular, students expressed concerns related to access and not having Health Services on campus. It is unclear if these concerns still exist, and more information is needed about the level of student satisfaction with the new health center.

In line with the strategic plan, FSU's goal is providing services which show a commitment to education justice and providing equity of opportunities to students. One strategy is redeveloping the Center for Diversity and Inclusiveness, including a new Director position, to respond both to student requests for additional support and the campus-wide need for leadership around critical dialogue, student advocacy, and strong DEI programming.

The Leading for Change committee coordinated the university's climate surveys, which indicated many students of color don't experience a sense of belonging at FSU. In response to this discrepancy and to increased national attention to racial injustice, several student-serving departments have focused on improving their DEI commitments. Student Affairs created a DEI committee; the ACT Center implemented a diverse Peer Advisory Council to propose equitable policies; CSA hosted a First-Generation Alumni Panel; the university implemented a Bias Incident Response Protocol and Team; and Library Services formed an internal Anti-Racism Team to assess services. Most offices also implemented reading groups and staff DEI training.

FSU has recently revised its website to be geared towards recruitment and to provide a better experience for users on mobile devices. Policies on student rights and responsibilities could be more centrally located for increased ease of access (see Standard Nine). Financial Aid Dynamic Forms have been implemented to allow students to electronically submit forms, and Student Accounts takes a comprehensive approach to delivering information to students, including both print and electronic communications. Students have 24/7 access to both financial aid and student accounts information, as well as registration details through our self-service module.

FSU students have both electronic and paper options to submit their privacy requests to several offices on campus. Many offices on campus have moved to imaging systems, and this helps with record retention. The university recently purchased dynamic forms software for many offices on campus to aid in streamlining forms on campus and information security.

Although student services programs and offices are open to graduate students, a large percentage do not utilize them. For instance, of the programming provided by career services, 30% is utilized by graduate students. Counseling services reported that 5% of the students seeking mental health services were graduate students. FSU should explore if graduate students need access to these services, or if these lower utilization rates are due to the graduate student population receiving services elsewhere (e.g., employment-based benefits).

## **Projections**

The Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management will develop a multi-year enrollment and marketing plan by Fall 2022 to achieve FSU's strategic enrollment goals.

The VP for Student Affairs will form a team in Fall 2023 to introduce a co-curricular model to the division. In Fall 2025, Student Affairs will work with all departments to evaluate the effectiveness of the co-

curricular model. This team will establish a set of assessment standards and the data collected will be used to make improvements to this work in Fall 2026.

In Fall 2022, Student Affairs and Institutional Research and Planning will create and administer a student survey to assess the change to Community Health Connections. In Spring 2023 results will be reviewed by senior leadership and action items will be identified for Fall 2023.

In Fall 2022, SGOCE and OIRP will administer a survey to identify services used and desired by graduate students. In Spring 2023 a team of staff and administrators will develop recommendations, keeping in mind fees associated with varied student services.

In Fall 2022 the Senior Director of Athletics and Recreation will lead a committee to explore strategies that support student athletes' academic success. Committee recommendations will be submitted to the Vice President for Student Affairs in Spring 2023 for review and action.



## STANDARD 5: STUDENTS

### (Admissions, Fall Term)

Complete this form for each distinct student body identified by the institution (see Standard 5.1)

Credit Seeking Students Only - Including Continuing Education

3 Years Prior (Fall 18)	2 Years Prior (Fall 19)	1 Year Prior (Fall 20)	Current Year (Fall 21*)	Goal (specify year) (Fall 22)
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**Freshmen - Undergraduate**

Completed Applications	3,234	2,902	2,998	3,414	3,521
Applications Accepted	2,810	2,564	2,638	2,914	3,098
Applicants Enrolled	715	674	661	567	667
% Accepted of Applied	86.9%	88.4%	88.0%	85.4%	88.0%
% Enrolled of Accepted	25.4%	26.3%	25.1%	19.5%	21.5%
Percent Change Year over Year					
Completed Applications	na	-10.3%	3.3%	13.9%	3.1%
Applications Accepted	na	-8.8%	2.9%	10.5%	6.3%
Applicants Enrolled	na	-5.7%	-1.9%	-14.2%	17.6%

Average of statistical indicator of aptitude of enrollees: (define below)

**Transfers - Undergraduate**

Completed Applications	627	578	502	527	550
Applications Accepted	572	539	476	495	517
Applications Enrolled	393	340	287	254	321
% Accepted of Applied	91.2%	93.3%	94.8%	93.9%	94.0%
% Enrolled of Accepted	68.7%	63.1%	60.3%	51.3%	62.1%

**Master's Degree**

Completed Applications	605	599	911	847	850
Applications Accepted	564	578	896	835	835
Applications Enrolled	402	413	641	551	550
% Accepted of Applied	93.2%	96.5%	98.4%	98.6%	98.2%
% Enrolled of Accepted	71.3%	71.5%	71.5%	66.0%	65.9%

**First Professional Degree**

Completed Applications					
Applications Accepted					
Applications Enrolled					
% Accepted of Applied	-	-	-	-	-
% Enrolled of Accepted	-	-	-	-	-

**Doctoral Degree**

Completed Applications					
Applications Accepted					
Applications Enrolled					
% Accepted of Applied	-	-	-	-	-
% Enrolled of Accepted	-	-	-	-	-

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

\*Fall 2021 represent unofficial numbers

**STANDARD 5: STUDENTS  
(Enrollment, Fall Term)**

Complete this form for each distinct student body identified by the institution (see Standard 5.1)

Credit-Seeking Students Only - Including Continuing Education

		3 Years Prior (Fall 18)	2 Years Prior (Fall 19)	1 Year Prior (Fall 20)	Current Year (Fall 21*)	Goal (specify year) (Fall 22)
<b>UNDERGRADUATE</b>						
First Year	Full-Time Headcount	1,006	911	854	791	790
	Part-Time Headcount	33	39	42	37	35
Total Headcount		1,039	950	896	828	825
Total FTE		1,021	928	864	799	795
Second Year	Full-Time Headcount	775	735	644	533	530
	Part-Time Headcount	100	79	85	71	70
Total Headcount		875	814	729	604	600
Total FTE		799	756	668	550	550
Third Year	Full-Time Headcount	871	795	727	617	615
	Part-Time Headcount	231	217	244	216	215
Total Headcount		1,102	1,012	971	833	830
Total FTE		951	865	809	679	675
Fourth Year	Full-Time Headcount	651	699	594	554	550
	Part-Time Headcount	288	332	386	354	350
	Total Headcount	939	1,031	980	908	900
Total FTE		740	802	734	662	660
Unclassified	Full-Time Headcount	12	18	9	9	10
	Part-Time Headcount	232	237	227	174	170
	Total Headcount	244	255	236	183	180
Total FTE		65	72	65	48	50
<b>Total Undergraduate Students</b>						
Full-Time Headcount		3,315	3,158	2,828	2,504	2,495
Part-Time Headcount		884	904	984	852	840
Total Headcount		4,199	4,062	3,812	3,356	3,335
Total FTE		3,576	3,423	3,140	2,738	2,730
% Change FTE Undergraduate		na	-4.3%	-8.3%	-12.8%	-0.3%
<b>GRADUATE</b>						
Full-Time Headcount		399	397	539	520	520
Part-Time Headcount		2,969	3,058	2,513	2,875	2875
Total Headcount		3,368	3,455	3,052	3,395	3395
Total FTE		1,270	1,329	1,374	1,462	1460
% Change FTE Graduate		na	4.6%	3.4%	6.4%	-0.1%
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>						
Grand Total Headcount		7,567	7,517	6,864	6,751	6,730
Grand Total FTE		4,846	4,752	4,514	4,200	4,190
% Change Grand Total FTE		na	-1.9%	-5.0%	-7.0%	-0.2%

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Undergraduate Classification based on increments of 30 credits. All enrollments reflect full semester (i.e. not the fall census.) \*FA21 is unofficial data

**STANDARD 5: STUDENTS**  
**(Financial Aid, Debt, Developmental Courses)**

Complete this form for each distinct student body identified by the institution (see Standard 5.1)

Where does the institution describe the students it seeks to serve?

[www.fitchburgstate.edu/about-fitchburg-state](http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about-fitchburg-state)

**Three-year Cohort Default Rate**  
**Three-year Loan repayment rate**  
**(from College Scorecard)**

(FY 2014)	(FY 2015)	(FY 2016)	(FY 2017)
5.9	6.3	6.5	6.4
65%	65%	66%	66%

**Student Financial Aid**

Total Federal Aid

Grants

Loans

Work Study

Total State Aid

Total Institutional Aid

Grants

Loans

Total Private Aid

Grants

Loans

3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Goal (specify year)
(AY 18)	(AY 19)	(AY 20)	(AY 21)	(AY 22)
2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
\$35,105,968	\$35,808,785	\$33,667,184	\$31,097,499	\$31,000,000
\$7,568,580	\$7,309,428	\$6,985,885	\$6,449,856	\$6,500,000
\$27,280,329	\$28,275,862	\$26,408,424	\$24,534,664	\$25,000,000
\$257,059	\$223,494	\$272,874	\$112,979	\$250,000
\$3,889,914	\$3,913,877	\$3,989,182	\$4,316,360	\$4,500,000
\$3,028,841	\$3,151,603	\$2,901,347	\$2,442,120	\$2,700,000
\$3,028,841	\$3,151,603	\$2,901,347	\$2,442,120	\$2,700,000
\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$6,531,742	\$7,211,278	\$6,625,635	\$4,628,065	\$4,700,000
\$535,185	\$631,129	\$750,489	\$529,839	\$500,000
\$5,996,557	\$6,580,149	\$5,875,146	\$4,098,226	\$4,200,000

**Student Debt**

Percent of students graduating with debt (include all students who graduated in this calculation)

Undergraduates

Graduates

First professional students

82%	81%	82%	82%	82%
29%	37%	38%	37%	37%

For students with debt:

Average amount of debt for students leaving the institution with a degree

Undergraduates

Graduates

First professional students

\$27,377	\$26,543	\$27,156	\$26,204	\$26,200
\$17,300	\$18,778	\$20,019	\$20,421	\$20,420

Average amount of debt for students leaving the institution without a degree

Undergraduates

Graduate Students

First professional students

\$9,583	\$9,472	\$10,888	\$11,521	\$11,520
\$6,959 (n=10)	\$10,207 (n=9)	\$9,488 (n=6)	\$10,300 (n=10)	\$10,300

**Percent of First-year students in Developmental Courses  
(courses for which no credit toward a degree is granted)**

English as a Second/Other Language				
English (reading, writing, communication skills)	2%	2%	1%	1%
Math	46%	32%	21%	19%
Other				

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

**STANDARD 5: STUDENTS**  
**(Student Diversity)**  
**Fall 2021 - unofficial**

**Complete this form for each distinct student body identified by the institution (see Standard 5.1)**

For each type of diversity important to your institution (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, first generation status, Pell eligibility), provide information on student admissions and enrollment below. Use current year data.

<b>Undergraduate Admissions information</b>	<b>Completed Applications</b>	<b>Applicants Accepted</b>	<b>Applicants Enrolled</b>
Male	1,813	1,456	411
Female	2,128	1,953	410
Non-Resident Alien	19	18	5
American Indian or Alaskan Native	10	7	2
Asian	130	113	13
Black or African American	697	501	99
Hispanic or Latino	756	649	145
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	2	0
2 or more races	150	124	22
White	2,097	1,924	517
Unknown Race/Ethnicity	80	71	18
Pell Recipient	Not Avail	Not Avail	326
First Generation (Per Admissions App)	1,676	1,415	325
Total Unduplicated	3,941	3,409	821
<b>Graduate Admissions information</b>	<b>Completed Applications</b>	<b>Applicants Accepted</b>	<b>Applicants Enrolled</b>
Male	328	324	208
Female	519	511	343
Non-Resident Alien	96	94	38
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0	0
Asian	28	28	19
Black or African American	71	69	45
Hispanic or Latino	65	63	43
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	1	1
2 or more races	5	5	3
White	549	543	382
Unknown Race/Ethnicity	32	32	20
Total Unduplicated	847	835	551

<b>Undergraduate Enrollment information</b>	<b>Full-time Students</b>	<b>Part-time Students</b>	<b>Total Headcount</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Headcount Goal (Fall 2022)</b>
Male	1,226	328	1,554	1,295	1,554
Female	1,283	523	1,806	1,448	1,806
Non-Resident Alien	14	2	16	14	16
American Indian or Alaskan Native	6	2	8	6	8
Asian	62	25	87	72	87
Black or African American	309	114	423	343	423
Hispanic or Latino	371	106	477	399	477
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0
2 or more races	56	14	70	60	70
White	1,633	533	2,166	1,777	2,166
Unknown Race/Ethnicity	58	55	113	72	113
Pell Recipient	909	164	1,073	954	1,073
First Generation	1,036	336	1,372	1,112	1,372
Total Unduplicated	2,509	851	3,360	2,743	3,360
<b>Graduate Enrollment information</b>	<b>Full-time Students</b>	<b>Part-time Students</b>	<b>Total Headcount</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Headcount Goal (Fall 2022)</b>
Male	196	835	1,031	489	1,031
Female	331	2,017	2,348	970	2,348
Non-Resident Alien	54	70	124	74	124
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	1	2	1	2
Asian	22	91	113	53	113
Black or African American	61	160	221	115	221
Hispanic or Latino	39	184	223	100	223
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	1	2	1	2
2 or more races	6	27	33	13	33
White	331	2,156	2,487	1,042	2,487
Unknown Race/Ethnicity	12	162	174	60	174
Total Unduplicated	527	2,852	3,379	1,459	3,379

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Enrollment data is unofficial and as of the fall census.

## Standard Six: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship

### Faculty and Academic Staff

#### Description

In line with our mission statement, Fitchburg State faculty and academic staff are committed to preparing students to lead, serve, and succeed, by fostering lifelong learning and civic and global responsibility. FSU's structures and processes ensure quality of instruction and support for student learning through opportunities for faculty growth and development.

The term faculty refers to teachers, lecturers, and professors at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. FSU has 191 full-time faculty members, teaching across 15 departments (see Standard 6.1 Data First Forms). Each year there are between 80 and 100 adjunct faculty teaching in our undergraduate and graduate programs. There are no teaching assistants, so all courses are taught by either full-time or adjunct faculty. Full-time and part-time undergraduate day faculty are included in the collective bargaining agreement between the Board of Higher Education and Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA), while faculty and adjunct faculty teaching for the School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education (SGOCE) are covered by the MSCA Division of Graduate and Continuing Education (DGCE) contract. Academic staff refers to librarians, advisors (career and advising center and TRIO Support Services Program staff), instructional designers/technology trainers, tutors and tutor center staff, Disability Services staff, and co-requisite course staff supporting students' academics.

The faculty and librarian collective bargaining agreement defines faculty ranks, qualifications, hiring and evaluation processes, and workload; it also details faculty rights including academic freedom. The Faculty Handbook defines faculty expectations and processes to ensure that faculty act responsibly and ethically while observing the established conditions of their employment, consistent with FSU's mission and purpose.

Faculty and librarians may be appointed at any rank for which they are qualified, provided that the position was advertised at that rank. Article I of the MSCA contract defines faculty and librarian ranks as well as "full-time," "part-time," "faculty," "librarian," and "tenure." Full-time tenure-track faculty are required to have a doctorate or terminal degree. The faculty consists of individuals with rankings of Instructor, Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor. Departmental faculty vary between six (Earth and Geographic Sciences; Engineering Technology) and 21 (Communication Media). These numbers are based on student need and program size.

The MSCA contract sets minimum and maximum salary ranges and governs all raises tied to promotion and post-tenure review, while the DGCE contract sets the salary ranges for all faculty working within SGOCE. The VPAA negotiates starting salary with incoming faculty hired through the MSCA contract, taking into consideration a range of factors. The Dean for SGOCE assigns ranking and stipends based on the MSCA's faculty definitions.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement provides structure in regard to teaching load, service, and scholarship expectations and opportunities. Full-time undergraduate day faculty teach a 4/4 load. These faculty members may be granted release time from teaching for a variety of reasons. Examples include department chair, coordinator of the Honors Program, Center for Teaching and Learning, Center for Faculty Scholarship, and Crocker Center, union officer, graduate program chair, and performing grant-supported research. Reductions in workload not governed by the collective bargaining agreement must



be approved by the VPAA. Faculty members may request to include SGOCE classes in their four-course teaching load, but most choose to receive additional compensation.

Faculty's right to academic freedom is acknowledged by the MSCA contract for undergraduate programs and the DGCE contract for SGOCE programs. Within MSCA Article V: Academic Freedom and Responsibility and DGCE Article IV: Academic Freedom and Responsibility, specific language outlines the agreement to promote public understanding and support of academic freedom. FSU is committed to ensuring faculty have the academic freedom to pursue their scholarly interests and to implement pedagogical practices that enhance student learning.

Undergraduate day faculty are evaluated in accordance with the MSCA contract. The contract provides well-defined expectations of all faculty members, including in the area of scholarly pursuits. Evaluation procedures assure faculty are current in disciplinary theory, knowledge, skills, and pedagogy. For undergraduate day faculty, evaluators review the narrative prepared by the faculty member, describing the faculty member's teaching effectiveness, academic advising, continuing scholarship, other professional activities, and alternative professional activities. The process also includes student, peer, and administrative evaluations.

To ensure that faculty are demonstrably effective in carrying out their assigned responsibilities, FSU follows the MSCA evaluation process and criteria for undergraduate day programs and the DGCE contract for all SGOCE undergraduate and graduate programs. The MSCA collective bargaining agreement defines the evaluation criteria and process of faculty reappointment, promotion, tenure, and post-tenure review for tenure and tenure-track faculty and librarians. Processes for the hiring, evaluation, and renewal of adjunct/part-time faculty are also enumerated in the MSCA agreement, with the primary criteria for renewal being teaching effectiveness as evaluated through student surveys and classroom observations. All faculty teaching in SGOCE are considered adjunct faculty and their evaluations follow the DGCE contract, Article IX: Evaluations. Specific criteria are outlined in the DGCE contract and include teaching effectiveness, course advising, and instructional obligations as prescribed in Section A(1) of Article VIII. The evaluation of faculty teaching in SGOCE occurs during the first instructional period of teaching in the program and any sixth subsequent SGOCE course.

Faculty teaching in SGOCE that are also considered full-time undergraduate day faculty are able to teach up to five courses a year above load, preferably one course each in the Fall, Spring, Winter, and Summer semesters. Adjunct faculty members teaching in SGOCE are able to teach up to three courses per semester.

All tenure-track positions are filled by nationally advertised searches, with attention given to recruiting for diversity. The recruitment and hiring of new faculty is a shared process which includes faculty members, department chairs, academic deans, provost, and Human Resources. As outlined in Standard Seven, the Office of Human Resources collaborates with departments to assess the needs of vacant positions and identify appropriate advertising with a clear lens that is committed to increasing diversity within the faculty and staff ranks. At the completion of a search process, the Search Committee submits its final three candidates, unranked, to the department or library chairperson, who then submits the committee's recommendation and a separate chair recommendation to the dean. The dean makes a recommendation to the VPAA. The VPAA reviews the recommendations and makes a separate one to the President who makes the final decision. The dean makes the offer, then a letter of appointment is sent.

FSU provides opportunities for professional growth and development, including the MSCA Professional Development fund and Special Projects Grants from Academic Affairs, which are reviewed and recommended by the Center for Faculty Scholarship. Faculty are invited to participate in Faculty Development Day three times a year, and the Center for Teaching and Learning provides additional professional development opportunities. The Office of Digital Learning also offers workshops for adjunct and full-time faculty throughout the year. In addition, SGOCE offers workshops and professional development specific to online and SGOCE programs.

FSU provides processes, policies, and expectations to ensure faculty act responsibly and ethically, and provides sufficient oversight and controls that, while not intrusive or restrictive, offer impartial avenues for identifying and addressing concerns when they arise. The university HR onboarding and regular training as well as the faculty handbook document and update these processes, policies, and expectations as state standards or other internal and/or external entities identify needs or concerns.

All faculty are integrated into the department through university-instituted professional development opportunities. The integration process is multifaceted, including opportunities for mentoring and professional development. The New Faculty and Librarian Academy begins with a two-day August orientation for all new faculty. The Academy continues to provide additional resources, information, and support during the first year. Through monthly sessions, new full-time faculty and librarians have the opportunity to foster relationships with colleagues, network with colleagues from across the university, learn more about resources to support their work, discover new teaching strategies, and find a supportive community of colleagues and mentors. Some of the sessions included are student advising, academic integrity, the evaluation process, and active and inclusive teaching and learning strategies. For faculty teaching in SGOCE, the SGOCE program chair and the academic department oversee the mentoring of new faculty.

In order to assure a full understanding of what materials are considered a conflict of interest, faculty are required to complete Conflict of Interest Training mandated by the state, and must disclose when they wish to teach materials from which they may receive monetary gain. Copyright Regulations for course materials are also available.

FSU is committed to the regular evaluation of its academic staff's efficacy. The majority of staff members are part of the Professional Administrator bargaining unit. Staff members submit a self-evaluation twice per year in November and April. These self-evaluations, in conjunction with performance and goal-setting reviews with direct supervisors, inform an annual evaluative narrative that is drafted and submitted by the administrator's supervisor in June. The annual report highlights work that is performed, professional development activities, and process improvements/suggestions that provide the supervisor with the ability to address the following competencies: leadership/management, communication/interpersonal skills, responsiveness, teamwork, problem solving/judgement and discretion, and job knowledge.

FSU's commitment to providing quality of service to students is reflected in its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. Goal Two calls for FSU to strengthen its identity as a student-ready university and to continue to narrow the achievement gap. Several strategies named to achieve this goal are linked to academic staff's professional practices. This includes implementing a holistic model of student support services, staff training around equity and inclusiveness, and ensuring all process and support services adequately meet the needs of specific student populations.

In addition to individualized professional development action plans established through annual evaluations, FSU faculty, librarians, and staff are encouraged to participate in institutionally-hosted

development opportunities. For example, three annual Development Days are open to all faculty and staff. These programs include topics such as the needs of students from underrepresented populations, assessment, advising, and other student support topics.

## **Appraisal**

The number of full-time faculty (defined as tenure-track faculty or temporary faculty hired full-time with benefits) has been generally consistent since Fall 2018, ranging between 191 and 206. Female faculty rates have ranged between 52% to 57% during the same time frame (see Data First forms). Unfortunately, faculty ethnic/racial diversity has not increased, ranging between 12% to 14%. Although the university has not made significant gains in increasing the diversity among staff and faculty, there is a commitment to do so. As noted in our Vision Statement, FSU is dedicated to creating a culture of diversity to meet the needs of the region and enhance the personal and academic lives of the university community. In addition, Goal 4.1 of our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan addresses this concern: “Increase the visible diversity of our faculty and staff in order to nurture the commitment to equity and inclusion through the campus community.” For instance, FSU has explored the creation of a Center for Faculty/Staff Equity and Inclusion to address Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion across campus. In 2020, a group of faculty and staff began this work and reported results and recommendations at the 2021 January Faculty Development Day, outlining proposed short-term and long-term goals.

The number of part-time Day faculty has declined 21% from 111 in Fall 2018 to 88 in Fall 2021. This decline in the hiring of part-time faculty is reflective of the decrease in day student enrollment, which has decreased by 23% over the same period. In contrast, there has been a continued increase in graduate student enrollment (15% FTE) which is mirrored by an increase in SGOCE faculty numbers from 75 in Fall 2018 to 98 in Fall 2021.

In order to attract and retain diverse faculty and academic staff, the university will continue to place emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion. A Director of Student Diversity, Equity and Belonging has recently been created. The Director's work will help support the attraction, recruitment, retention, academic and professional development of minoritized student populations including students of color, first-generation students, and LGBTQ students. The Director will lead the collaborative effort to provide a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment committed to the success of all students and a shared sense of belonging. This position will create programming, educational opportunities, and services that address diversity initiatives and topics and will support and work in partnership with colleagues across campus.

FSU provides a mentoring program for new undergraduate day faculty in conjunction with their departmental integration. Departmental supports include assigning seasoned faculty as mentors. All departments indicate that the chair meets with new faculty on a regular basis and/or has an open-door policy to provide ongoing support. Some departments such as Education, Nursing, and Psychological Science assign specific departmental mentors, while other departments such as Humanities have mentors available for new faculty. Further exploration of the varied approaches departments use to integrate new faculty beyond the initial orientation and new faculty academy is needed.

There is a clear process for integrating new undergraduate day faculty into the university. However, as enrollment increases in SGOCE programs the need for adjunct faculty also increases in order to maintain quality programs. SGOCE does not hire full-time undergraduate or graduate faculty; therefore, all integration of new faculty is designed for this adjunct population. In order to ensure a smooth transition for new faculty, new hires in SGOCE are integrated through their program chair and are provided with training opportunities specific to SGOCE and to enhance their understanding of online and adult learning.

Although there is a process in place to integrate faculty into SGOCE, this is an area to explore in order to provide a clearer and more definitive process that meets the needs of all faculty teaching in SGOCE.

New faculty have opportunities for professional development through conference funding as well as the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The CTL offers a variety of programs for full-time and adjunct faculty and librarians. They include mentorship of incoming faculty and librarians, grants to encourage the use of new technologies or teaching methods, pedagogical and instructional technology workshops, and annual and summer institutes. Several options for travel funding plus other grants through the Provost and President's office are available.

Starting full-time faculty salaries are set at appropriate levels through the application of the MSCA contract, which specifies minimum and maximum starting salaries. The salary history of full-time faculty between 2012 and 2021 reveals a consistent gender difference, with male faculty (including Instructors) earning \$6958 on average per year more than female faculty. This overall difference ranged from a low of \$4518 (AY14) to a high of \$10519 (AY21). The salary gap was most strongly reflected at the Professor level. In contrast, at the Assistant Professor level, the gender pay gap was much smaller, with female faculty often earning slightly more than male colleagues. Therefore, this salary difference does not appear to be driven by inequities in the hiring process. It is unclear why salaries show more divergence at the Professor level; years of service and application rates for post-tenure review are potential variables.

In addition to the close monitoring of our staff representation of diversity, it is important to note that in accordance with Massachusetts Equity Pay Act, HR will conduct a pay-equity study for faculty and staff, to assess whether there is statistical evidence of a gap in salary associate with gender or minority status. This process is expected to cross over the next two fiscal years.

## **Teaching and Learning**

### **Description**

FSU's commitment to teaching and learning is clear from its mission: "Fitchburg State University is committed to excellence in teaching and learning and blends liberal arts and sciences and professional programs within a small college environment." FSU is committed to assessing all academic programs and services, using the Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP) to gather and share data to help improve academic programs. This office assists in the development of Assessment Reports, Assessment Plans, and comprehensive Program Reviews.

Through discussions between academic departments, the deans, and the Provost, FSU determines the requisite number of faculty for each major to ensure students are instructed by a variety of faculty. Enrollment considerations along with each major's needs and the General Education program are used to determine the number of sections of each course to offer.

FSU continually assesses institutional and program student learning outcomes in order to analyze student learning. For example, the School of Education used exit survey data to hire a new academic advisor for the largest program, Moderate Disabilities Post-Baccalaureate. Given the increase in positive feedback in the AY18 Exit Survey, the academic advisor position was expanded in Fall 2018 to include the Severe Disabilities Post-Baccalaureate program. Additional supporting data can be found under the [Educator Preparation Stakeholder Survey](#) and the [Graduate Aggregate Assessment Report](#).

FSU seeks through the governance process to enhance the quality of teaching and learning wherever and however courses and programs are offered. In addition, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

provides opportunities and support for undergraduate day and SGOCE programs to engage in experimentation to improve instruction. The CTL mission states, “The Center for Teaching and Learning enhances the teaching and learning experiences of all faculty, librarians, and students by sustaining, promoting, and celebrating pedagogical practice, innovation, and excellence.” The Vincent J. Mara Excellence in Teaching Award, celebrated at the May Development Day, recognizes faculty who have “demonstrated a sustained excellence in teaching, a notable impact on student learning, and a dedication to innovative instruction.”

Within the General Education curriculum, multiple course sections are offered by a variety of faculty. The first-year writing courses, Writing I and Writing II, are taught by both full-time and adjunct faculty and offered in various modalities such as online, hybrid, and face-to-face. The English Studies department has published goals to ensure consistency while encouraging faculty to develop themed sections with individual emphases. The First-Year Experience (FYE) course is offered by departments, ensuring flexibility in topic and focus. However, in order to propose a section of FYE, instructors must incorporate the same program learning outcomes, two of which meet General Education learning outcomes, and participate in focused professional development. In Fall 2021 31 FYE sections are offered, taught by both full-time and adjunct faculty. Graduate programs such as the Online Accelerated MBA program have multiple sections of each course that are taught by different instructors.

Our instructional techniques and delivery systems are compatible with, and serve to prepare students for, a global society through curricular innovation and program development, while creating a culture of diversity and inclusion to meet the needs of the region and enhance the personal and academic lives of the university community. Faculty provide instruction through a variety of modalities to meet the needs of our students. In a February 2021 survey of faculty and librarians (including adjunct and SGOCE), 99% agreed that instructional methods are informed by academic and professional standards and disciplinary expectations. Faculty teaching lecture courses also reported using discussion (85%), active engagement (88%), and experiential experiences (62%). Those teaching lab/field work courses reported using lecture (46%), discussion (70%), active engagement (86%), and experiential content (75%).

Not only does the university strive to enhance the quality of teaching and learning through faculty support and assessment, full-time undergraduate day faculty are evaluated on their teaching effectiveness through observations for reappointment, tenure, and promotion. For adjunct faculty teaching in SGOCE, the DGCE Contract includes specific evaluative criteria in the area of teaching effectiveness to assure high-quality learning experiences for all students.

In addition to the full-time faculty’s primary focus on instruction, with scholarship and research as secondary to our commitment to inclusive excellence in teaching and learning, day faculty members also serve on departmental, university, and professional society committees. The committee structure on campus reflects the variety of faculty appointments. The eight faculty members on the AUC are elected by the faculty at large. Additionally, there are two dozen other committees on campus which are populated through a process of self-nominations and appointments by the MSCA. A review of the committee appointments from the last several years shows a broad distribution of representation from all ranks and disciplines.

FSU places a great deal of emphasis upon academic advising for both undergraduate day and SGOCE programs. Each undergraduate day student is assigned an academic advisor within their major; pre-major students are assigned a professional academic advisor through the Career Services and Advising Center. For many SGOCE programs, program chairs are responsible for providing advising for enrolled students.



However, for larger programs, such as the online MBA program, a tiered approach has been implemented providing additional academic staff to support students. In the School of Education, some of the larger licensure programs (Moderate Disabilities and Severe Disabilities) have additional academic staff that focus on advising.

To support quality advising beyond academic planning, the CTL has been restructured, with academic advising as a main pillar of its mission. The CTL has created a committee to explore additional advising support and training for all undergraduate day faculty. By adding faculty leads to assist the CTL coordinator, additional professional development opportunities have been created as well as expansion of the CTL website to include advising resources.

Faculty members embrace their contractual and mission-driven obligation to develop professionally and stay current in their fields. The MSCA contract defines continuing scholarship as contributions in any of the following categories: contributions to the content of the discipline, participation in or contributions to professional organizations and societies, research as demonstrated by published or unpublished work, and artistic and other creative activities. All faculty choose at least one, as well as one area under professional activities: public or community service or contributions to the growth and development of the university community. Adjunct faculty teaching for SGOCE do not have a contractual obligation to develop professionally; however when faculty are hired careful attention is given not only to qualifications and degrees, but to experiences, research, and ability to stay current in the field.

While primarily a teaching institution, FSU is also committed to supporting faculty research, scholarship, and creative activities. All faculty receive Professional Development funds annually through the MSCA contract. The university provides additional funding and support through its Special Projects Grants. Each year, faculty can apply for grants, course reductions, student research assistants, and travel funds. The prestigious annual Faculty Research and Scholarship award recognizes faculty excellence in academic research, scholarship, and creative activity.

## **Appraisal**

FSU has taken a number of steps to create a campus culture of assessment and use data to make improvements in teaching and learning. In conjunction with university-wide assessment, many departments have assessment committees which meet monthly to advance learning outcomes assessment. Assessment committees are composed of four to eight members. Tasks taken on by assessment committees include conducting direct and indirect assessment, curriculum mapping, assessment reporting, and assessment planning. Those departments that do not have their own assessment committee have an assessment liaison/coordinator who is a member of the University Assessment Research Committee and works with the department and its curriculum committee to facilitate departmental assessment.

In working to build a campus assessment culture, FSU seeks to ensure that data is used to improve the quality of instruction and provision of services. When asked if they agree that they use assessment to improve and inform student learning, 85% of faculty have reported that they strongly agree with the statement. Teaching and Learning Hours are scheduled on the Academic Calendar for the third Tuesday of every month during the academic year. The intention is that no other meetings should be scheduled at that time, to provide opportunities for faculty to engage in activities to enrich their teaching techniques. In addition to this, three Faculty Development Days are scheduled per year, at least one of which is primarily pedagogy focused. In the past five years, the university has focused on topics such as inclusive teaching, culturally-responsive teaching, assessment and grading practices, and online teaching.

FSU has made the continued assessment and enhancement of teaching and learning a priority as demonstrated by funding opportunities afforded to faculty and staff. Approximately 70% of the CTL budget has been earmarked for pedagogical grants: scholarship of teaching and learning, innovation, discussion groups, and one-time purchases. The MSCA Professional Development and Retraining fund is in part designed to support activities that “develop new teaching skills and an appropriate facility in the use of media, teaching aids, and other supportive techniques.” Funds are available for focused teaching activities, such as diversity, community engagement, Italian language/culture, Irish culture, and digital humanities. The Grant Center provides opportunities for experimentation and research as well.

Faculty and librarians report feeling supported by the university in the area of teaching and learning. Specifically, in the February 2021 faculty/librarian Survey, 90% of the faculty indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that FSU endeavors to enhance the quality of teaching and learning whenever and wherever courses and programs are offered. 85% of faculty and librarians indicated that FSU provides adequate support to improve instructional effectiveness.

FSU is committed to innovative teaching. Strategic Plan Goal 4 states that FSU will seek to: “Inspire faculty and staff to be involved and experiment, knowing their efforts will be supported through mentorship, guidance, and support.” In the February 2021 faculty/librarian survey, 86% of faculty supported the statement “FSU encourages pedagogical experimentation.” Support is provided to faculty for course redesign to meet students’ changing needs. Since 2015 the CTL has offered a yearly summer workshop on course redesign. Given that the CTL’s mission and the Mara Teaching Award criteria both emphasize innovation, there is broad awareness that pedagogical experimentation is encouraged on campus and in promotion and tenure materials.

Further evidence of pedagogical innovation comes from the 2019 creation of a First-Year Experience (FYE) course. Beginning in Fall 2021, all first-year students take a FYE seminar designed to prepare them for a successful college career. The course develops students’ habits of mind, reading, and information literacy skills in a small-class setting. Through the course, students become engaged thinkers, learners, and members of the university community. As with all of our courses, FYE has specific objectives measured by assignments within the course.

Academic Advising is another area where the university has been innovative and proactive in utilizing both advising tools and services. FSU uses DegreeWorks to facilitate monitoring each student’s academic progress and ensure they are meeting all degree requirements. DegreeWorks shows what requirements a student must still fulfill, along with the different courses that could meet that requirement. FSU has also adopted SSC Navigate, which enables advisors to identify at-risk students, monitor their progress, and easily communicate with them. Advising services were enhanced by combining various offices to create two Centers, Career Services and Advising (CSA) and Academic Coaching and Tutoring (ACT), in order to better coordinate academic and professional advising. Students who have yet to declare a major are assigned a professional academic advisor through CSA. These students are provided career guidance in conjunction with advising to identify a major that fits their personal and career goals. Academic Coaches are available for all students through ACT, as well as Peer Mentors which support students through the FYE seminar and work with transfer students as well.

FSU has enhanced its commitment to both facilitating and promoting faculty research and scholarship. In 2012, an annual publication, *A Community of Scholars*, was launched, showcasing faculty research, scholarship, and creative activities. In Fall 2017, the Provost announced the creation of the Center for Faculty Scholarship (CFS). The CFS has initiated a number of programs to facilitate and promote faculty

research and scholarship. Each Spring, the CFS organizes a Faculty Research Colloquium with a panel of four presenters on a common theme, as well as a guest speaker on a related topic. In addition, the CFS organizes panels by faculty or staff on a range of topics related to research and scholarship. Each month, the CFS sponsors a talk by a faculty member in its FSU Speakers Series. In order to promote faculty scholarship, the CFS publishes a newsletter four times a year highlighting faculty from across the university and informing them of upcoming events. The CFS, in conjunction with the Library, also organizes book launches for faculty publications, and maintains a website to serve as a “go-to” spot for faculty seeking assistance with their research.

The Provost’s office has worked to increase funding for research and scholarship. In recent years, new faculty have been provided with a research start-up fund. In addition, the Provost has increased funds for Special Projects Grants, from just over \$25,000 in 2016 to close to \$44,000 in 2019. Faculty can apply for mini-grants, course reductions, travel grants, or funding for a student research assistant. The Provost and the CFS have worked together to restructure these grants and increase their funding and also collaborate to organize the annual May Development Day programming, focusing on sharing research and creative activities. The Provost has also worked with the Crocker Center for Civic Engagement to create opportunities for Community Engaged Scholarship. As faculty have continued to express a desire for more opportunities to support scholarship and research, continued attention to available and potential grant monies as well as increased opportunities for course reductions should be explored, particularly for junior faculty.

FSU has also worked to enhance student research. Faculty can apply for funding for a student research assistant from the Special Projects Grants. In addition, the CFS has funded two faculty-student research projects each of the past two Springs. FSU also has an annual undergraduate research conference where students have the opportunity to present work related to course research, creative work in the visual and performing arts, study abroad trips, community service, and more. Each year, STEM faculty host a research fair where faculty present a poster about their research and invite students to work with them. Such opportunities need to be expanded across the different Schools. Finally, as part of the new General Education curriculum, one of the High Impact Practices emphasized is faculty-student research projects.

## **Projections**

Academic deans will work with departments to develop strategies associated with Strategic Goal 4.1 of increasing diversity in faculty and staff, with support from Human Resources. Deans will report recommendations and implement the plans for recruitment in AY23.

Academic Affairs will explore continued strategies for supporting faculty as they build their teaching, scholarly, and artistic and creative activities portfolio with attention to time and resources. Recommendations will be developed for review by 2024.

During AY23, the academic deans will collaborate with each of the Schools to explore the possibility of a more standardized department onboarding program.



**STANDARD 6: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP**  
**(Faculty by Category and Rank; Academic Staff by Category, Fall Term)**

3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Current Year
Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021

**Number of Faculty by category**

Full-time	200	206	200	191
Part-time	3	0	2	2
Adjunct (PTD)	111	110	81	88
Clinical	0	0	0	0
Research	0	0	0	0
Visiting	0	0	0	0
Other; specify below:				0
Adjunct (GCE)	75	66	99	98
<b>Total</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>379</b>

**Percentage of Courses taught by full-time faculty**

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**Number of Faculty by rank, if applicable (Benefited)**

Professor	71	70	68	64
Associate	62	66	69	72
Assistant	61	60	53	44
Instructor	6	10	10	13
Other; specify below:	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>193</b>

**Number of Academic Staff by category**

Librarians	6	6	7	7
Advisors	0	0	0	0
Instructional Designers	0	0	0	0
Other; specify below:	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

\* AY 21-22 are not official IPED numbers

**STANDARD 6: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP  
(Highest Degrees, Fall Term)**

3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Current Year
Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021

**Highest Degree Earned: Doctorate**

Faculty		62	63	61	59
	Professor				
	Associate	56	58	62	63
	Assistant	56	53	48	37
	Instructor	0	0	0	1
	No rank	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>160</b>

<b>Academic Staff</b>	Librarians	0	0	0	0
	Advisors				
	Inst. Designers				
Other; specify*					

**Highest Degree Earned: Master's**

Faculty		9	7	7	6
	Professor				
	Associate	5	7	8	8
	Assistant	6	7	5	7
	Instructor	9	10	10	12
	No rank	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>33</b>

<b>Academic Staff</b>	Librarians	6	6	7	7
	Advisors				
	Inst. Designers				
Other; specify*					

**Highest Degree Earned: Bachelor's**

Faculty		0	0	0	0
	Professor				
	Associate	1	1	1	1
	Assistant	0	0	0	0
	Instructor	0	0	0	0
	No rank	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

<b>Academic Staff</b>	Librarians	0	0	0	0
	Advisors				
	Inst. Designers				
Other; specify*					

**Highest Degree Earned: Professional License**

<b>Faculty</b>	Professor	0	0	0	0
	Associate	0	0	0	0
	Assistant	0	0	0	0
	Instructor	0	0	0	0
	No rank	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0
	Total	0	0	0	0

<b>Academic Staff</b>	Librarians	0	0	0	0
	Advisors				
	Inst. Designers				
Other; specify*					

\* Please insert additional rows as needed

**STANDARD 6: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP**

**(Appointments, Tenure, Departures, Retirements, Teaching Load Full Academic Year)**

3 Years Prior		2 Years Prior		1 Year Prior		Current Year	
(AY 18) Fall 2018		(AY 19) Fall 2019		(AY 20) Fall 20		(AY 21) Fall 21	
FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT

**Number of Faculty Appointed**

Professor	71	0	70	0	68	0	65	0
Librarian	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Senior Librarian					1	0	1	0
Associate Professor	62	0	66	0	69	0	71	1
Associate Librarian	2	0	3	0	3	0	1	0
Assistant Professor	62	0	60	0	53	0	44	0
Assistant Librarian	3	0	2	0	3	0	4	0
Instructor	6	3	10	0	10	2	12	1
No rank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	207	3	212	0	207	2	199	2

**Number of Faculty in Tenured Positions**

Professor	71	0	70	0	68	0	65	0
Librarian	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Senior Librarian					1	0	1	0
Associate Professor	58	0	59	0	60	0	66	0
Associate Librarian	1	0	2	0	2	0	1	0
Assistant Professor	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assistant Librarian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Instructor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No rank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	132	0	132	0	131	0	134	0

**Number of Faculty Departing**

Professor	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Librarian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Associate Professor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Associate Librarian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assistant Professor	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	0
Assistant Librarian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Instructor	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
No rank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	0	2	0	2	0	1	0

**Number of Faculty Retiring**

Professor	5	0	2	0	4	0	0	0
Librarian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Associate Professor	2	0	1	0	3	0	0	0
Associate Librarian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assistant Professor	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Assistant Librarian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Instructor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No rank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	8	0	4	0	8	0	0	0

**Fall Teaching Load, in credit hours**

Professor	Maximum							
	Median							
Associate	Maximum							
	Median							
Assistant	Maximum							
	Median							
Instructor	Maximum							
	Median							
No rank	Maximum							
	Median							
Other	Maximum							
	Median							

Explanation of teaching load if not measured in credit hours

\* AY 21-22 are not official IPED numbers

**STANDARD 6: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP**  
**(Number of Faculty by Department or Comparable Unit, Fall Term)**

3 Years Prior		2 Years Prior		1 Year Prior		Current Year	
Fall 2018		Fall 2019		Fall 2020		Fall 2021	
FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT

**Number of Faculty by Department (or comparable academic unit);**

insert additional rows as needed

Behavioral Sciences	16	0	16	0	16	0	15	0
Biology/Chemistry	20	0	20	0	18	0	17	0
Business Administration	8	0	9	0	10	0	10	0
Communications Media	24	0	24	0	23	0	21	0
Computer Science	6	0	6	0	7	0	7	0
Earth and Geographic Sciences	7	0	6	0	6	0	6	0
Economics, History and Political Science	16	0	16	0	16	0	15	0
Education	15	0	16	0	14	0	15	0
Engineering Technology	8	0	8	0	7	0	6	0
English Studies	19	0	19	0	18	0	16	0
Exercise and Sports Science	9	0	9	0	9	0	9	0
Humanities	15	0	15	0	15	0	15	0
Mathematics	11	0	12	0	11	0	12	1
Nursing	16	3	18	0	18	2	17	1
Psychological Science	11	0	12	0	12	0	11	0
Gallucci-Cirio Library	6	0	6	0	7	0	7	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>2</b>

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

**STANDARD 6: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP  
(Faculty and Academic Staff Diversity)**

For each type of diversity important to your institution (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, other), provide information on faculty and academic staff below. Use current year data.

Faculty Fall 2018	Full-time	Part-time (adjuncts)	Total Headcount	Headcount Goal (specify year)
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**Category of Faculty (e.g., male/female, ethnicity categories); add more rows as needed**

Male	98	82	180	
Female	92	103	195	
Hispanic Male	2		2	
Hispanic Female	2		2	
Asian Male	12	2	14	
Asian Female	5	2	7	
Black or African American Male	8	7	15	
Black or African American Female	4	2	6	
White Male	79	73	152	
White Female	88	99	187	

Faculty Fall 2019	Full-time	Part-time (adjuncts)	Total Headcount	Headcount Goal (specify year)
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**Category of Academic Staff (e.g., male/female, ethnicity categories); add more rows as needed**

Male	98	69	167	
Female	108	107	215	
Hispanic Male	3	0	3	
Hispanic Female	2	1	3	
American Indian or Alaska Native Male	2	2	4	
American Indian or Alaska Native Female	0	0	0	
Asian Male	12	0	12	
Asian Female	6	3	9	
Black or African American Male	8	4	12	
Black or African American Female	5	0	5	
White Male	75	63	138	
White Female	95	103	198	

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Faculty Fall 2020	Full-time	Part-time (adjuncts)	Total Headcount	Headcount Goal (specify year)
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Category of Academic Staff (e.g., male/female, ethnicity categories); add more rows as needed				
Male	97	73	170	
Female	103	109	212	
Hispanic Male	3	1	4	
Hispanic Female	2	2	4	
American Indian or Alaska Native Male	0	2	2	
American Indian or Alaska Native Female	0	0	0	
Asian Male	12	1	13	
Asian Female	6	4	10	
Black or African American Male	8	5	13	
Black or African American Female	6	2	8	
White Male	74	62	136	
White Female	89	98	187	
Race & ethnicity unknown Male	0	2	2	
Race & ethnicity unknown Female	0	3	3	

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Faculty Fall 2021	Full-time	Part-time (adjuncts)	Total Headcount	Headcount Goal (specify year)
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Category of Academic Staff (e.g., male/female, ethnicity categories); add more rows as needed				
Male	93	72	165	165
Female	108	113	221	221
Unknown	0	1	1	0
Hispanic Male	2	1	3	4
Hispanic Female	2	1	3	4
American Indian or Alaska Native Male	0	1	1	1
American Indian or Alaska Native Female	0	0	0	1
Asian Male	11	1	12	12
Asian Female	6	2	8	8
Black or African American Male	7	4	11	12
Black or African American Female	5	2	7	8
White Male	73	63	136	136
White Female	95	108	203	200
White Unknown	0	1	1	0
Race & ethnicity unknown Male	0	2	2	0
Race & ethnicity unknown Female	0	0	0	0

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

\* Fall 21 are not official IPED numbers



## Standard Seven: Institutional Resources

### HUMAN RESOURCES

As of Fall 2021, Fitchburg State University employed 191 full-time faculty and 338 full-time staff and administrators, 188 part-time undergraduate day and SGOCE adjunct faculty, and 82 part-time contracted staff. The Office of Human Resources and Payroll Services assists hiring managers to assess the needs of vacant positions and identify appropriate advertising that is likely to draw a diverse candidate pool. HR reviews staffing to address the divisional representation of underrepresented groups. Professional and faculty positions require advanced degrees. Employees who are hired are compensated appropriately and consistent with federal, state, collective bargaining and employment guidelines. HR has prepared hiring materials for each union group for adherence to policy and collective bargaining requirements. Human Resources is committed to increasing diversity within the faculty and staff ranks, and have included in the hiring guide the importance of diversity and inclusion when assessing candidates. All search committee members are trained on the search process.

FSU offers regionally competitive salaries; salary analysis is conducted for each position using an array of sources. The university participates annually in the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources salary surveys. Benchmarking data for compensation analyses was purchased for administrators and faculty. The AFSCME collective bargaining agreement has a defined salary table. FSU also offers a generous benefits package through the Commonwealth and a range of holiday, personal, vacation and sick accruals. Key benefits include health insurance, life insurance, long-term disability insurance, retirement plans, flexible spending accounts, dental plans, and tuition remission. The collective bargaining agreements provide for additional leave entitlements. Employees are onboarded electronically and are required to complete online modules including training on diversity, harassment, bias, security, and a biannual ethics training per state guidelines.

Employees are evaluated per specific guidelines as defined in each of the collective bargaining agreements. There are four recognized unions at FSU: Association for Professional Administrators; American Federation of State, Municipal, and County Employees; Massachusetts Teachers Association/NEA/Massachusetts State College Association; and Massachusetts Teachers Association/NEA Massachusetts State College Association/Division of Graduate and Continuing Education. The four contracts and related Human Resources policies and training information are available on the HR website.

FSU has a well-established, comprehensive grievance system in place to hear issues and complaints raised by employees and/or their union representatives. HR investigates all grievance allegations, including allegations of discrimination. HR administers the Massachusetts State Universities Affirmative Action Plan, and the collective bargaining agreements outline the grievance process and procedures. HR addresses grievances in collaboration with the Provost as it relates to the faculty contract. The Director of Compliance, Title IX/ADA/EEO reports to HR and has oversight of all Title IX claims. The Director also serves on our Community Assessment and Risk Evaluation Team, Bias Incident Response Team, Title IX State University committee, Clery Compliance Team, Conduct Case Management and Emergency Response Team.

Professional development opportunities are available to all faculty and staff. HR provides a variety of programs ranging from professional topics for supervisors, technical support, communication, diversity and inclusion, and health and wellness. More specific professional development opportunities are

provided to faculty and staff through divisions and departments. The Strategic Plan Goals 4.3 and 4.4 pertain to professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to encourage innovation and experimentation with new technologies. This has been especially important with the transition to remote work.

The Strategic Plan Goal 2.3 states: “Provide faculty and staff training around equity and inclusiveness both in and out of the classroom.” Some programs provided are Unconscious Bias, Fostering Inclusion, and The Practice and Language of Inclusion in the Workplace. Leading for Change is a voluntary collaboration of New England institutions committed to student and employee diversity best practices through use of data, institutional benchmarks, and reflective practice. The Leading for Change group conducted a Campus Climate Survey in 2018 and the results show that faculty/staff of color felt like they belonged (85% agreed or strongly agreed) and were satisfied with their experiences at FSU (90% agreed or strongly agreed). In a 2020 survey while fully remote, 70% of faculty/staff of color strongly agreed/agreed that they belonged and 74% indicated they were very satisfied/satisfied with their FSU experiences.

### **Appraisal**

The HR department is committed to addressing changing priorities to meet organizational needs and build a more diverse constituency. Using technology to improve processes and create greater efficiencies remains a focus with recent examples including implementation of the Interview Exchange Module for job announcements and onboarding all employees, Dynamic Forms and Banner HR Electronic Workflow, and Xtender Imaging Software.

The current controls to track positions for funding and approval are manual. FSU uses Ellucian/Banner for data across campus. HR has utilized a section of this system to assist with feeding data to other departments but has not utilized the full module. Implementing the full module will greatly assist with processes related to hiring, position management, and faculty data tracking. HR and Finance have begun implementing this module, to be completed in FY23.

The hiring process for part-time contracted employees needs to better align with the benefitted employment processes; this would result in a more efficient model of hiring all employment groups. In addition, we do not have a documented compensation model for part-time employee rates for managers to review when hiring hourly staff.

HR reviews a position vacancy when it occurs; the classification is assessed to determine whether the position as outlined meets the current needs of the department and university. The data is then provided to the executive leadership group to assess personnel needs. Managers need to be able to review staffing needs prior to submitting a position replacement. The review should include exploring other strategies to fill vacancies beyond replacement.

HR has continually emphasized the importance of diversity and equity in the hiring process. Search committees are trained prior to accessing the applications, with HR playing an active role in reviewing applicants and selecting candidates to ensure qualified candidates meet diversity goals. It remains critical that continued recruitment and hiring practices and strategies are developed to recruit diverse candidates. The demonstration of our continued commitment can be seen in Strategic Plan Goal 4.1: “Increase the visible diversity of our faculty and staff in order to nurture the commitment to equity and inclusion throughout the campus community.”

HR continues to assess programming to engage staff on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as well as traditional professional programs, including wellness and finances, strategies of working with peers, and

more. HR will continue its leadership as part of the Leading for Change Committee to offer professional development programming for faculty and staff regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion at the university and departmental levels. Programming to build shared identity communities within employee groups could be developed to better engage our staff.

Policies are not reviewed according to a university-required timetable or schedule. However, HR annually reviews employee-related policies to ensure compliance to state and contractual requirements. The review would benefit from applying the Massachusetts Equity Agenda Policy and Program Audit lens to ensure inclusive language and removal of unintended barriers.

## **FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

### **Description**

FSU continues to experience positive results from operations and the financial position remains strong. Over the past 10 years the operating activity has produced an operating surplus with the exception of FY 19 and FY20 in which a loss was experienced primarily due to the pandemic and enrollment declines. With the exception of FY20 net assets, the university has experienced positive gains throughout this period. Since 2010, net assets have increased from \$67 million to \$135 million in FY21. The institution has intentionally balanced current operating needs with long-range planning and investment that will ensure the university's long-term viability.

### **Revenues and Expenses**

FSU receives funds annually as appropriated by the state legislature and approved by the governor. Over the last decade, the amount of funds appropriated to the university has remained relatively stable, representing approximately 32% of the university's total revenue.

As a consequence of level state funding, non-appropriated funds (often called trust funds) now provide a significant portion of the revenue used to support our students' educational needs. Massachusetts laws give statutory authority to the Board of Higher Education and institutional Boards of Trustees to administer local trust funds for projects, programs, and activities. The most significant trust fund revenues are tuition and fees, representing nearly half of total revenue (\$49.5 million in FY21). SGOCE tuition and fees make up 31% of total tuition and fees generated. Tuition and fees are evaluated annually by the Board of Trustees to ensure funding while striving to remain affordable and accessible. Affordability is a core value highlighted in the Strategic Plan. After six years of significant fee increases (FY10-16) to bridge the gap between reduced appropriations, increased costs, and unfunded collective bargaining costs, the past six years (FY17-22) FSU has held fee increases between 0%-2% annually.

Additional revenue streams include federal, state, and private grants which comprise around 8% of total revenue. In FY20 FSU received \$4.1 million in one-time federal grants as a result of the CARES Act with the anticipation of \$18.6 million forthcoming. These funds will be primarily used for direct payment to students and to offset lost revenue, refunds, and direct COVID expenses. Auxiliary services, comprising dining and residence halls, have been a steady revenue source representing approximately 14% of total revenue. However, the anticipated decline in undergraduate enrollment was reflected when FY19 residence hall occupancy fell to 80%. That decline has accelerated during COVID as Fall 2021 occupancy was at 62%. The Spring 2020 forced closure of residence halls resulted in over \$2.5 million in housing and dining refunds. The Residence Hall Trust Fund Balance fell below the required 5% reserve for the first time.

FSU receives additional support from fundraising. Money raised and grants received depending on the source, purpose, and donor intention are deposited either temporarily or in perpetuity with the university or with the Fitchburg State University Foundation. The Foundation was established in 1978 to raise and manage private gifts. The Foundation is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation as defined by the IRS and is governed by an independent Board of Directors. Fundraising programs seek gifts for operating activities, capital initiatives, scholarship support, visiting artists and lecturers, equipment, student and faculty travel and experiential learning opportunities, teaching grants, and faculty research. Fundraising follows the Donor Bill of Rights adopted by the Association of Fundraising Professionals and along with the Foundation's Gift Acceptance Policy, and Investment Policy with Spending Policy.

The Foundation's endowment includes permanently and temporarily restricted funds, professionally invested by three independent fiduciary firms and overseen by the Board of Directors. As of June 30, 2021, the Foundation held net assets or fund balances of \$32,442,678, and the FSU Foundation Supporting Organization had \$2,458,062 in net assets. The Foundation Supporting Organization was established in 1999 to acquire and hold property on behalf of the university. The Supporting Organization is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation as defined by the IRS and is governed by an independent Board of Directors.

Total expenditures have grown from approximately \$75 million in FY12 to approximately \$115 million in FY21. As reported in the 2021 audited financial statements, instructional expenses continue to comprise the largest component of the operating budget at 37% of education and general expenses and 32% of total operating expenses. Faculty payroll and related benefits represent approximately 86% of all instructional expenses. Other direct expenses for academic support and student services represent approximately 23% of total expenses. Indirect expenditures related to the daily operation of the institution and physical plant represent approximately 24% of total expenses. Auxiliary operations represent approximately 7% of total expenses. Auxiliary revenue and expenditures are primarily from the residence halls. Auxiliary expenditures are separately budgeted and funded from the auxiliary revenue and typically have little impact on other expenditure categories.

## **Student Financial Aid**

FSU is committed to providing opportunities for students of varying socioeconomic backgrounds to pursue an affordable, quality education, and recognizes the role that financial aid can play in closing societal differences in education, achievement, and opportunity. In Fall 2020, 75% of students received financial aid, with the average student receiving \$9,765 in grants or scholarships and \$3,758 in loans. Federal, state and institutional grants and scholarships make up 86% of the aid awarded, with 14% in loans. The average federal student loan debt for students at graduation in 2020 was \$24,670, which remained fairly consistent over the past five years and consistently lower than the national average. In 2020, FSU committed \$2.9 million in local institutional aid, a 15% increase in commitment to financial aid.

FSU is committed to providing students the information and guidance they need to navigate the financial aid process. The Financial Aid Office maintains Title IV compliance through regular training and participation in The National Association of Financial Aid Administrators. The director of financial aid, in consultation with the AVP of Enrollment and VPFA, maintains regular communications with departments and state and federal governments.

## Sufficient and Qualified Finance Staff

The finance staff are highly qualified, consisting of multiple support personnel with backgrounds in relevant fields and senior leadership that each have over a quarter century of experience. The department is led by a Vice President of Finance and Administration who has over 30 years in public higher education and 11 years as the FSU Chief Financial Officer. The finance leadership team consists of an Associate Vice President with over 28 years of public higher ed experience; Comptroller, a Certified Public Accountant with 25 years of higher ed experience; and Assistant Vice President of Financial Analysis and Planning with 19 years of higher ed experience. There are also 12 support personnel that all have multiple years of higher ed finance experience with most having an accounting, business, or finance degree.

## Budget Process (Multi-year Planning)

The budget planning process begins in late Fall for the next fiscal year and continues throughout the Spring. Starting in the Fall, the Finance Office updates projected budgets based on anticipated enrollment revenue using a model that accounts for factors such as regional demographic data, state enrollment trends, and retention rates. This is reviewed by the Vice-Presidents and President to determine an overall strategy and parameters for the upcoming budget cycle. For the past five years, the focus has been on reallocating existing resources, rather than assuming revenue growth. Presidential forums are held throughout the year to provide budget updates and create dialogue about strategies and parameters. Starting in early Spring, campus-wide workshops and training sessions are offered for those new to the process. Budget templates are then sent to each department. The deans and divisional leads meet with their staff to discuss budget priorities as they relate to the strategic plan and the annual budget goals. Each department then develops their departmental budget in consultation with their divisional lead and enters their base budget into the budget module. During this process, departments may also submit requests for strategic funding which are submitted to the Budget Office with explanations for the requests. Strategic requests are then aggregated for initial review by the VPs followed by a review and approval process with the President.

This culminates in a draft budget proposal which incorporates multi-year projections along with any suggested fee increases and use of reserves. During the past ten years, the budget has included the use of reserves in order to balance the proposed budget. This amount is often referred to as the structural deficit. The annual operating budget has shown an anticipated “structural deficit” that has ranged from a low of \$1.2M in F14 to a high of \$4.7M in FY21. This deficit has primarily been related to the undergraduate day division which has operated at a deficit during this time for all but two years while overall the university, on accrued accounting basis, has experienced positive growth for all but two of the last 10 years.

The President then submits a balanced budget to the Board of Trustees detailing expected revenues and expenditures based on expected enrollment, multi-year analysis and forecasting, proposed tuition and fee rates, and use of reserves. The budget proposals are then presented by the President and CFO to the Board of Trustees Committee of Administration and Finance for their review with a recommendation to the full board. The full board votes to approve the final budget and any use of reserves along with any fee increases. Through this process the Trustees verify that resource allocations are consistent with the mission and strategic plan and that they contribute to FSU’s long-term financial stability and advance its strategic viability. Trustees retain appropriate autonomy in all budget and financial matters, and review the audited financial statements and all interim quarterly financial reports.

The budget process closely aligns with the Commonwealth's budget timeline in which the Governor submits a budget to the legislature in mid-January and the House and Senate release their budgets later in the spring, with the goal of having an approved budget prior to the start of the new fiscal year. The amount appropriated to FSU depends on many factors but ultimately reflects the Commonwealth's fiscal health. In economic downturns FSU has had to realign its resources in response to legislative actions. Budget rescissions are rare with the last one happening in FY09. The university received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stabilization funds in FY10 and FY11 to help offset the decrease. When state cuts happen FSU's goal is to maintain access to public higher education and preserve the quality of academic programs and student services. In 2011, the Board of Higher Education, in collaboration with all state universities, updated the comprehensive budget formula, which is used to determine total resource requirements and the allocation of new funding to individual institutions.

## **Systems and Control**

Throughout the fiscal year, budget activity is regularly monitored. Budget reports are available through a variety of electronic platforms allowing departments and management to monitor budget activity and trends. Budget transfers are generally approved by the CFO with the exception of transfers of \$50,000 or more which are approved by the President. Quarterly Financial Statements and other relevant information are provided to the Board of Trustees.

Appropriate mechanisms have been incorporated throughout the financial processes to ensure proper controls and oversight that prevent negative spending or unauthorized use of funds. Examples include automated workflow processes requiring varied levels of approval and compliance reviews, such as with procurement and accounts payable, as well as payment authorizations, which require approval by persons with increasing levels of authority depending on the amount. The systems are used to maintain separation of duties based on annually reviewed permissions and to automate these processes so authorizations are not bypassed.

FSU's and its affiliates' financial statements have been prepared using the "economic resources measurement focus" and the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, as prescribed by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board. They are audited annually by the accounting firm Cohn Reznick and reviewed by institutional leadership, the Board of Trustees, and the State Comptroller's Office. In addition, Cohn Reznick provides significant disclosures to the Board of Trustees along with in-depth discussions via the Board's finance committee rather than through institutional leadership. FSU has had a "clean" audit, unmodified opinion, for the past 10 years. During 2014-2016 there was one reportable finding each year regarding Federal Work Study, which has been corrected with no findings since. The annual audits are stored in the FSU archives and published on the website. FSU also undergoes audits by the Quality Assurance Bureau, the State Auditor's Office, and the DHE. FSU follows all applicable institutional, federal and state statutes, guidelines and policies. The Foundation follows all prudent and legal guidelines promulgated by applicable authoritative bodies in accordance with the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act.

## **Appraisal**

The past 10 years are a tale of two financial periods. FY11-FY15 reflected a period of continued enrollment growth and a focus on playing "catch-up" from years of lack of investment into facilities and personnel. During this period FSU substantially increased its debt burden as it undertook a multi-year renovation of the Campus Center and Library. Long-term debt increased from \$26M in FY11 to \$62M in FY15 but has remained relatively flat since. FSU also experienced significant increases in student fees



during this time to support debt but also because of partially unfunded collective bargaining increases. The second period, FY16 to present, reflects changing demographics of declining traditional-aged undergraduates. The administration's response is to continue to invest in the university, but without incurring significant new long-term debt and with a focus on reallocation of resources in anticipation of continued enrollment challenges. Under President Lapidus' leadership, FSU has begun the practice of reviewing every position opening at the senior cabinet level to determine the need, reallocation, or elimination of the position. Prior to COVID FSU had been experiencing a steady 2%-3% Return on Net Assets since FY16 with a 10-year average Return on Net Assets of 9.4%. During this time net assets increased from \$67M in 2010 to \$135M in FY21 and the university maintained approximately \$50M in unrestricted reserves, which represents nearly six months of operations.

In sum, FSU is in a relatively strong financial position, but it must work to maintain this position. The commitment to this effort is seen in the Strategic Plan's Goal Six: "Steward physical and financial resources responsibly and navigate a path to long-term organization sustainability." To help leadership evaluate tough decisions facing the institution and to support the development of a long-term financial plan, FSU recently implemented the Educational Advisory Board's Academic Performance Solutions (APS) and is currently implementing Edify. APS helps enable data-based decisions by analyzing and benchmarking data across the institution and against peer institutions. FSU has leveraged this data to standardize faculty line requests, evaluating requests based on demonstrated need rather than precedent, and analyze course enrollment data to plan course offerings based on demand. Edify is a data management solution that organizes data assets across campus into a single centralized platform to support real-time decision making with a 360-degree view of students, faculty, and operations.

## Revenues

Consistent with most public universities, FSU's state appropriation has grown in absolute dollars over time, but it has not kept up with increases in collective bargaining cost, fringe benefits, technology, and inflation costs. Revenue from state appropriations have grown from \$21.9M in FY11 to \$33.8M in FY21 which is approximately 32% of the total revenue. This percentage has remained stable and the university does not expect any significant changes in this pattern of state funding. Therefore the university will continue to pursue growth in other revenue streams along with right-sizing cost-containment strategies.

Non-appropriated funds (often referred to as trust funds) have become FSU's primary funding source. Tuition and fees are the primary source of revenue to fund the institution's operations. Despite our increased reliance on tuition and fee revenue, tuition (\$971) has remained flat since 2001 (by statute), which means the burden has fallen on student fees. This has been particularly true when increases in state appropriations have not kept pace with collective bargaining costs, which are bargained at the state level. Lack of full funding for the collective bargaining agreements results in more payroll expenses shifting to local trust fund accounts. In turn, the university must cover the associated fringe benefit cost, currently set at 39.5%.

Auxiliary services, comprising dining and residence halls, had been a steady revenue source, representing 13% of the total FY19 revenue (\$15 million). However the decline in enrollment was beginning to be seen when residence hall occupancy fell to 80% in 2019, pre-COVID. Even with the enrollment decline, the housing trust fund balance was still over \$2 million prior to the forced closure in Spring 2020. This forced closure resulted in student refunds of \$2.5 million in housing and dining fees, most of which were offset by the federal Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HERFF). However, the difference, along with operating losses from the continued declining occupancy levels, resulted in the housing trust fund falling

below the required 5% Residence Hall Trust Fund Balance requirement. In future fiscal years, FSU will have to subsidize the Residence Hall Trust Fund to meet the balance requirement. Occupancy continues to be a challenge with Spring 2021 occupancy dipping to 40% as result of COVID restrictions and students taking courses online. It is too early to determine the final impact on the Residence Hall Trust Fund Balance pending deployment of the additional rounds of HERFF funding, but the university is anticipating housing to have an operating loss of \$1.8M in FY22 based on anticipated 60% occupancy. These ongoing challenges and the lack of adequate residence hall trust reserves pose a significant challenge to the university's long-term financial health.

The FSU Foundation's primary purpose is fundraising to support the university. Fundraising priorities align with the Strategic Plan focus on financial aid, student experiential learning opportunities and travel, faculty development, and equipment and facilities upgrades. Specific to facilities upgrades, fundraising will contribute, along with tax credits, grants and state funding, to the major capital project to restore and retrofit a 1929 theater in the Fitchburg Historic district, to create a 1,200-seat Performing Arts Center with a 250-seat applied learning laboratory/black box theater, gallery, restaurant and retail space, which provides opportunities for students and a bridge between campus and the larger community.

Alumni giving is an important element in any Foundation strategy. In terms of donations, the funds raised by the Alumni and Advancement Office decreased from FY18 to FY19. While the amount raised by the Annual Fund increased from FY19 to FY20, the participation rate among FSU alumni decreased during this time. These and other factors led to Strategic Plan Goal 6: "Alumni engagement with FSU and their participation in annual giving will be at an all-time high, thanks in part to the establishment of a culture of philanthropy at FSU and thanks also to an investment-worthy case for support." In order to address this decline in participation and create action items that will lead to increased participation, FSU has taken on multiple new initiatives, including the Theatre Block project, that may help to establish a culture of philanthropy. These kinds of visible campus and community improvements may raise the case for future support. It is worth noting that the Foundation plays a limited role in overall university finances, and FSU is not overly reliant on it as a revenue source; rather, alumni support illustrates connection to FSU post-graduation.

### **Budget Process**

The process for FY21 began as planned but because of pandemic unknowns (ability to reopen, enrollment impacts, and state budgets) it was necessary for the Vice-Presidents to re-evaluate the budget in order to present a local operating budget to the Board of Trustees prior to the start of the new fiscal year. Post-COVID, FSU was initially looking at a \$16 million revenue short-fall. The state universities, working collectively with Massachusetts State College Building Authority, were able to restructure debt associated with the residence halls, saving FSU approximately \$7 million in FY21. This still left a \$9.3 million gap that needed to be addressed in order to submit a balanced budget to the Board of Trustees. The Vice-Presidents identified expenditures that would not impact the quality of education: travel, catering, and clothing were reduced by \$620,455. A hiring freeze was proposed with the goal of saving \$2 million along with a proposed furlough estimated to save \$1.6 million. Ultimately furloughs were not implemented after Fall enrollment numbers were better than projected. Given the pandemic's sudden impact, it was determined to balance the budget by using \$4.4 million of reserves rather than more severe cuts to academic or co-curricular programs. This provides more time to evaluate the pandemic's long-term impact on enrollment along with state and federal support.



Prior to the pandemic, FSU had already begun to undertake efforts to right-size the budget to available resources. Divisions were asked in 2017, 2019, and 2020 to submit aggregated department budgets that were 5% lower or level-funded. This also included FSU offering a Retirement Incentive Plan in 2016 that resulted in \$321,578 annual salary savings. This plan was different from previous Early Retirement Plans offered through the Commonwealth as it was funded by FSU. As personnel represent the single largest budget expense, another early retirement was offered in Spring 2021, with an annual salary savings of \$872,554. Working with the state's Division of Capital Assets and Maintenance Management, FSU started implementing an Accelerated Energy Project in 2012. The project evaluated energy conservation measures (ECM) that would upgrade older mechanical systems and reduce energy consumption and reduce FSU's carbon footprint. The project was implemented in FY17 and included 24 ECMs estimated to produce energy savings of one million KWH per year, resulting in average savings of \$404,660 annually in utility costs. This also supports the Strategic Plan's goal to establish environmental stewardship as a signature strength. Another example of a longer-term view with budgeting and finances was the effort to fund a five-year plan for technology upgrades and maintenance. With technology becoming an ever more critical backbone of operations across all sectors, there was recognition of the need to sustainably fund this function.

FSU continues to make the budget and budget process more transparent, with opportunities for input at various stages. The 2015 implementation of the dean structure within Academic Affairs allows deans to work closely with academic departments, facilitating better articulation of department needs to the Provost when considering budget resources and allocations. In 2019, in collaboration with Academic Affairs, the finance department implemented Academic Performance Solutions, which allows academic deans and department chairs to access key performance metrics they can use during the budgeting process and their annual department reviews. This structure allows for even more opportunities for input and has provided support for departments to consider their budget implications on a more macro level. As this platform is new, the university will continue to provide training to ensure its full benefits are utilized.

Most recently regarding the FY21 budget, the VP of Finance and Administration held a series of town-hall style presentations entitled "What Does the Future Look Like?" This presentation attempted to connect the budget and fiscal health of the institution to enrollments. This will be an ongoing series to provide a greater understanding of the institution's budgeting process and fiscal health. These presentations will work to address the desire for campus constituents to better understand the budget processing and allocation decisions.

## **Enrollment**

Given that tuition and fees are the most significant source of revenue and are directly impacted by enrollment, FSU is taking active measures to forecast, plan, and monitor enrollment information to inform budget and financial operations. There has been a significant effort from financial and leadership teams to connect these items into a cohesive approach.

Similar to national and statewide trends for public education, FSU has been experiencing a decline in undergraduate enrollment. Fall undergraduate day enrollment has declined 27% (from 3,440 in Fall 2015 to 2,496 in Fall 2021). Day undergraduate enrollment is primarily composed of traditional-aged high school students and local community college transfer students, which have decreased -12% and -19% respectively this past year.

In an effort to increase out-of-state enrollment FSU implemented the Falcon Scholarship in 2017, giving out approximately \$300,000 annually. While undergraduate enrollment has declined the last four years, out-of-state tuition has remained relatively stable during that period (\$1.4 million in FY17 and \$1.2 million in FY21) which has significant financial benefit since the university, per state statute, is allowed to retain out-of-state tuition. These funds are retained in a Commonwealth fund that covers the cost of fringe benefits for employees funded through this account. Therefore, the value of retained out-of-state tuition continues to increase as the fringe benefit rate continues to increase, from 36.27% in FY18 to 39.5% in FY21. So, every dollar of out-of-state tuition retained in this account is worth nearly \$1.40 at this time.

During the past 10 years the focus on merit versus need-based aid has shifted several times due to transitions in Admissions leadership. As part of our enrollment management engagement with the Education Advisory Board (EAB), FSU reevaluated the aid packaging policies to ensure they align with our long-term enrollment objectives. As part of that review, the university decided to redeploy resources of \$600,000 that had been allocated to a deposit incentive during the pandemic to support on-campus residency in response to our low occupancy levels.

In July 2020, FSU engaged EAB Enrollment Services to conduct a review of current Admissions operations resulting in a number of recommendations, including developing a strategic enrollment plan, optimizing financial aid, and hiring a senior-level Enrollment Management Officer. In June 2021, an AVP of Enrollment Management with extensive experience in public higher education was hired. The goal is to unify Enrollment Management with a focused, intentional strategy to address undergraduate enrollment challenges. FSU also employed EAB Enrollment Services to assist with recruitment of the Fall 2021-2023 classes. The Senior Application Campaign resulted in an increase in applications for Fall 2021 (increased by 54%, with the number of admitted students up 10%). Unfortunately, efforts to yield these applicants do not appear to be fruitful, as the number of deposited students is down 13% from last year.

FSU's School of Graduate and Continuing Education continues to experience growth primarily in the online accelerated degree programs. In 2017, FSU entered into a partnership with Academic Partnerships to provide marketing, recruitment and retention support for four programs strategically chosen to align with an online accelerated model. The initial partnership portfolio included degrees in Business, Nursing, and Education, which generated 10,776 credit hours in AY18 and has grown to 39,438 credit hours in AY21. In FY21 these programs generated \$10.8 in total revenue (up from \$3.88 million in FY18), contributing \$3.6 million to the budget. Conversely, enrollments within the Center for Professional Studies have been declining for the past three years, resulting in a loss of approximately \$115,000 annually. In an effort to counter this trend, the Center is working on a number of initiatives including expanding professional development workshops, partnering with [MindEdge](#) to expand online non-credit offerings, and seeking out employers to identify workforce needs and corresponding grant opportunities.

### **Sufficient and Qualified Finance Staff**

In response to the continual increase in financial reporting, the need for more data driven decision making, and more transparency, in 2019 the finance department was approved to add a new position, AVP of Financial Analysis and Planning. This has helped to improve multi-year planning and analysis and to develop more transparent financial and budget reporting.

Acknowledging the significant turnover of staff at all levels during the past five years, one item that continues to be a challenge is to adequately communicate the policies and procedures that are part of maintaining a strong financial operation. Maintaining these policies and communicating these materials in a clear, transparent, and understandable way for the campus community is essential to ensuring ongoing

compliance with internal and external expectations. While much of this is in routine practice, having points of clear reference easily accessible will help to reinforce and provide continued support to FSU's successful financial operations.

## **INFORMATION, PHYSICAL and TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

### **Library Description**

An essential hub for scholarship and learning at Fitchburg State University, the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library is where people, information, and ideas converge to support student academic success, faculty research and teaching, and community engagement. The library's goal is to create an environment that fosters intellectual curiosity and the social, cultural, and professional development of students, faculty, and staff.

A new, modernized library was opened in Spring 2016, with four floors plus an Archives and Special Collections space. The library is open 89 hours/week during the academic year (67 hours/week during COVID-19). Its facility includes seating for 596 with small tables, large tables, comfortable lounge chairs, group study rooms, a media production room, an instructional classroom with 36 computers, an information commons with 61 computers, printers, and a KIC scanner. The library strives to be a welcoming place by offering an atmosphere conducive to study and research, and meets the needs for quiet and collaborative spaces for students. The Center for Teaching and Learning is located in the Library.

The library provides access to a wide range of resources, including (as of March 2021) over 840,000 books and eBooks, 25,000 streaming videos, 28,000 streaming music files, 117,000 online and print journals, and 179 databases. To facilitate discovery of the collections, in summer 2016 the Library initiated SUMMON, an online discovery service that searches across all library collections, and in summer 2019 redesigned its website. The library employs eight librarians (including the Dean of the Library) who hold a minimum of a Master's degree in library science, six para-professionals, and six part-time staff members.

Librarians teach key information literacy skills that enable users to effectively find, manage, critically evaluate, and use information. Librarians also lead open education efforts and were recently awarded a consortium grant focused on diversity, equity and inclusion in OER creation in alignment with the Strategic Plan's goal to be a student-ready university and narrow the achievement gap. The library develops and holds programming for the university and the local community. Research Help service is offered 60 hours/week by librarians during the academic year in person, by phone, email, and chat, and beginning in July 2021 a 24/7/365 online research help service was added. Interlibrary loan, document delivery, and reserves are also offered. The Archives and Special Collections collect and maintain administrative records and historical materials that document the activities of the university and the surrounding community. These are available to faculty, staff, students, and the public for scholarly research. The Archives and Special Collections currently houses 1600 linear feet of physical records and has 20 digital collections containing over 14,000 items.

The library's strategic plan guides the collective efforts of the library staff.

### **Facilities Description**

FSU's campus hosts 59 serviceable buildings with close to 1,000,000 gross square footage of academic and office space, and 450,000 of residential space on more than 280 acres of land. The majority of campus sits on North Street in Fitchburg, with additional acreage on John Fitch Highway adjacent to campus, Main Street, and property in Lancaster, MA.

FSU's Capital Planning and Maintenance Department provides support for the day-to-day operations of facilities and manages buildings owned by Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the university Foundation. The department utilizes the SchoolDude work order tracking system to ensure a seamless response to student, facility, and staff needs across campus. All systems, including boilers, elevators, sprinklers, are inspected annually for safety and compliance.

All campus spaces are built and maintained following current building code guidelines. Any new construction is LEED certified and recycled materials are utilized when available. All projects on campus are coordinated with the Division of Capital Asset Management or the Mass State College Building Authority for planning, coordination, and construction on campus projects.

The sciences on campus saw a revitalization in the creation of the Antonucci Science Center. Ground broke in 2010 on the creation of the science center Irvine Wing, a new space consisting of over 27,000 square feet of state-of-the-art science laboratories for continual learning and research resulting in Silver LEED certification. The existing Condike wing was also renovated thoroughly with updated labs, classrooms, and offices modernizing the entire complex by 2015.

Renovation began in 2011 on Hammond Hall and work was completed in 2016 after a full renovation of the building interior resulting in a Silver LEED certification and a newly created glass wall entryway to the building, opening the university to the surrounding city. The project included a complete rebuild of the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library, updated HVAC systems, creation of extensive student meeting space including a game room and hub for gathering and dining, and an art gallery that features work of local artisans and student projects.

In 2018, the university's new ideaLab opened on Fitchburg's Main Street, after a significant overhaul of the existing space. The \$3.5M project renovated 7,800 square feet and was featured by American School & University magazine for outstanding design in interior renovation. The lab features a state of the art game-design studio for students in the Game Design program as well as incubator co-work space that is utilized by the university as well as state officials to support small business development. Work on the existing historic theatre and storefront renovation is in the design and fundraising phase.

The McKay C renovation and lobby addition, a \$3.5M project, included creating a new lobby entryway and building an Education department suite in the existing space. The construction allowed the building to be separated from the McKay Elementary School, operated by Fitchburg Public Schools, by eliminating a connecting walking bridge between the two.

Residential spaces have seen construction renovations including new lobby, common spaces, and study areas throughout Aubuchon Hall and Russell Towers, new vestibules and roofs in Townhouses, along with significant landscaping updates. Simonds Hall was purchased in 2017, a 150-bed apartment-style residence hall, allowing for greater diversity in housing options.

In 2018 FSU participated in an Accelerated Energy Project, a \$9M project to update energy efficiencies on campus including lighting, chillers, and water systems to aid in reducing utilities.

FSU was the recipient of the 2020 Leading by Example Award from the Commonwealth of MA for outstanding public sector energy and environmental efforts in the Public Entity-Higher Education category. This honor was received specifically due to recent LEED certification of buildings, the Accelerated Energy Project, renovations in Holmes dining hall resulting in a more energy efficient dishwasher, and electric car charging stations put in over the last few years.

## Information Technology Description

FSU's Information Technology Department provides centralized support for all information technology services. Through a focused approach using a LEAN IT methodology, services have been greatly expanded, improved, and enhanced over the past decade.

All appropriate classroom spaces are mediated, with a setup consisting of a podium, Windows 10 computer with camera and microphone, DVD, speakers, projector, and laptop connection. Most rooms have a document camera and some have SmartBoards or SmartProjectors.

The core network system was replaced seven years ago and again in September 2021. The wireless system was updated and expanded in 2016 and covers all areas of campus, including most green spaces (this included replacing all edge switches as well).

The walk-up helpdesk is open six days/week for onsite support for students, faculty, and staff. Students receive free labor and warranty support for their computers and free loaner laptops if systems cannot be immediately repaired. The Technology department contracts (with other state schools) with a vendor to provide basic call center services 24/7/365, including the ability to remotely control a problematic computer. The helpdesk also has a large supply of wifi hotspots and Chromebooks that can be loaned free-of-charge to students in need.

All full-time faculty have university-owned laptops that are refreshed on a three-year cycle. Desktop systems, used by some staff and in labs, are replaced on a four-year cycle. There are 36 computer labs on campus that students use for general computing or software requirements.

In 2019, FSU moved to Google Enterprise for Education, aligning the staff and faculty email system to the student system. The inclusion of shared documents, chat, video conferencing, and electronic whiteboards has revolutionized campus communication and collaboration.

In January 2020, the main phone system was replaced with a Voice-over-IP Avaya hosted solution. Since the main phone switch and voicemail systems are no longer on campus, moves, adds, and changes are simplified and allow for home use as well.

In recent years, the university has shifted most technology equipment spending to come from a Technology Fee paid by students. The fee has increased from \$65 per semester in 2012 to \$250 in 2020 for undergraduate day students. A comprehensive refresh plan was developed for finance in 2016 that forecasts major system refresh timeframes and estimates future costs.

In March 2019, a dedicated Technology trainer was added to the staff, who assists users with utilizing any services and systems provided. IT personnel are encouraged to attend training programs, and the department offers training to new users, training-upon-request, and free classes to faculty, staff, and students on a variety of technology topics throughout the year.

The IT department has made a number of changes to support the university's operations and academic programs. In 2015, FSU contracted with Blackbelt Help to provide 24/7/365 phone support for all faculty, staff, and students, and IT meets with the call center manager monthly to ensure quality is maintained. In 2017, our Blackboard LMS system was migrated to a hosted, SAAS offering which can dynamically scale as needed. In 2018, the purchase of Dynamic Forms was completed, allowing for electronic approval and workflow of electronic documents on campus, replacing traditional paper systems. In 2019, an additional internet circuit using disparate pathways was configured to enhance our redundancy for connections with the outside world and bandwidth was increased appropriately. In late 2019, the university converted from

a Microsoft email solution to G Suite Enterprise for Education ([G Suite usage statistics](#)) for all faculty and staff (students were already on this platform), enhancing their ability to share documents, video conference, and remote work. In early 2020, the phone and voicemail system was replaced with a cloud offering from Avaya, which enabled soft-client and cellular app capabilities which were critical during the initial COVID response. In addition, all single-use phones were provided with a panic button which sends an alert to campus police.

The [refresh plan](#) developed with the Finance department ensures technology replacements on campus are planned and funded years in advance. The [strategic plan](#) forecasts IT's direction and provides information on upcoming projects and updates for existing projects.

## Appraisal

### Library Appraisal

The library provides high-quality learning tools and information content to support teaching, learning, and research activities. Significant improvements have been made to the book collection, including increasing the number of ebooks to over 680,000, up from less than 2,000 five years ago. The ebook collection is now 3.7 times the print book collection. This was particularly important during COVID as it allowed online access to scholarly books and other materials in support of remote learning. Usage reflects an even greater trend towards ebooks, with annual ebook check-outs over 19,000 and print book checkouts less than 3000.

Through the library's electronic databases and journal subscriptions, over 135,000 articles were accessed in AY21. Usage of the library's online streaming academic film collection has increased as well with over 7,000 viewings of film in AY21. In the past 3 years, the library has instituted a technology lending library in order to support equitable access to technology equipment. In AY20 this collection had over 1,000 checkouts and usage is expected to increase. More information about collections and usage is available in the [annual reports](#).

The library's information literacy program offers research classes taught in-person and through an embedded librarian program. In AY20 librarians taught 245 classes (177 in-person and 68 embedded) reaching over 4,700 students. New information literacy [learning outcomes](#) were developed in AY20 aligned with [ACRL's new Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education](#). As the new General Education program calls for the development of information literacy as a critical skill, the library has started creating a comprehensive information literacy instruction program. The library does not yet have an assessment plan for measuring student learning of information literacy nor for measuring the impact of the usage of library resources and services on learning. However, the [2021 Survey of Satisfaction](#) in library resources and services reveals high levels of satisfaction by faculty and students, with particularly high levels of satisfaction with the books and databases provided and with research help and instruction.

Librarians answered over 1,500 research questions in person or through email or virtual assistance during AY21, a 50% increase in two years. The Library created over 300 online research guides, including guides created specifically for courses, subject areas, and citation help. The guides were accessed over 185,000 times in AY21, up over 200% in two years.

The library utilizes the SUMMON discovery system allowing students and faculty the ability to search all of the library's resources from one search box from the library's newly designed (2018) website. Off-campus access to materials is made available through the use of EZProxy, now hosted off-site to improve access. The catalog system is Voyager, a legacy system that does not support the easy integration of electronic



resources. Library staff are currently evaluating new library catalog systems with implementation expected in July 2022.

Led by the library, significant progress has been made in developing faculty understanding of open resources and pedagogy. Supported by a 2020 Davis Foundation grant and Academic Affairs, 16 faculty members adopted OER course materials, three created OER for courses, and 17 participated in an Open Education Community of Practice. Students are included in the process; a Fall 2020 #TextbookBroke event was held by student government. The Strategic Plan has the Goal “OER will be a resource readily available to faculty and students alike.”

The library has focused considerable efforts in advancing DEI initiatives, including creating a DEI plan, a Children’s Literature collection analysis using a DEI lens, internal intercultural competency training, and a university DEI guide. The Association of College and Research Libraries featured this DEI work in a 2021 Spotlight Series: Practices of Equity & Social Justice.

### **Facilities Appraisal**

FSU has made tremendous strides in renovating current buildings over the past 10 years by working towards goals in the Campus Master Plan. While the Campus Master Plan was completed in 2007, and many of the projects identified have been completed, it continues to provide overall guidance for renovations. In 2017 the Master Plan was augmented by a campus facility assessment that was completed by the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) for each of the state universities. This new information, along with the Master Plan, was used to develop a five-year Deferred Maintenance Plan in collaboration with DCAMM. The FY19-23 Deferred Maintenance Plan will result in FSU being able to leverage \$7.3M in state capital appropriations to complete \$16.7M in deferred maintenance and adaptation renewal. The most recent Gordian Sightlines analysis, finalized in March 2021 with FY20 data, shows that recent renovations have lowered the campus building age by 23 years, which assists in reductions for upkeep to old infrastructure. These renovations have significantly increased FSU’s ability to provide up-to-date teaching and learning environments. This can be seen with the Antonucci Science Center, Hammond Campus Center, Percival Hall, and Landry Arena among other examples.

In order to be a steward of the university’s physical resources, as referenced in the Strategic Plan Goal 6, Capital Planning and Maintenance continues upgrading systems across the university based on recommendations from the Sightlines analysis. The past decade of capital projects has focused on upgrading old buildings and systems. Sightlines has recommended additional project investment in building mechanicals, an area the institution is working towards in planned and ongoing infrastructure projects. By upgrading systems and focusing on deferred maintenance, the university can become more proactive regarding facilities needs.

Winter 2020 began a campus-wide \$25M electrical infrastructure project, fully funded by DCAMM, to create a more reliable system up to modern standards. Existing structures were built in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century by a company no longer in business, resulting in significant difficulty in replacing components. This project will update electrical systems including the main switch gear, transformers, and wiring. It will also provide new emergency backup electrical systems involving five new generators and an electrical loop system which will ensure power will remain continuous to all buildings even in an outage emergency. Through this project, the university has replaced landscaping and trees that were removed during installation.

In November 2017 the Board of Trustees approved adding the Theater Block project to the capital program. This project partially started in response to feedback President Lapidus heard during his inaugural listening tour from students about the lack of vibrancy downtown. But equally important, this project is designed to support the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan's Goal 1: "forge innovative paths to knowledge acquisition, career readiness, social mobility, and lifelong learning"; and Goal 3: "be an engine of social, economic, civic, and cultural development of the city and region." The newly completed idealab is only one component of an anticipated overhaul of the entire Theatre Block. The culmination of this multi-phased project will include a 250 seat BlackBox Theater and refurbishment of the original historic theater.

The Department of Environmental Health and Safety is charged with ensuring compliance regarding environmental regulations related to construction, chemical safety in academic buildings, and appropriate safety measures for maintenance staff. The department provides guidance for best safety practices and is responsible for securely removing hazardous materials.

During the pandemic, Capital Planning adjusted expectations for cleaning and disinfecting priorities, focusing on high-touch areas and restroom facilities. Much of the department's cleaning equipment was older; the university prioritized purchasing additional Kivac and Clorox 360 systems to aid in the disinfection process. Disinfectant was distributed across campus to ensure faculty, students, and staff were able to maintain their personal working space.

The maintenance and operation of the university's buildings follow all codes, safety and accessibility requirements, and guidelines. All academic properties have installed elevator or lift accessibility and each renovation project updates systems and accessibility to meet today's standards. The custodial crew uses green products on campus to further assist in environmental initiatives on campus. Annual inspections of systems occur to ensure compliance.

### **Information Technology Appraisal**

FSU classrooms typically include a podium system, projector, and DVD player, and many include a document camera. Blackboard and Google Classroom are both hosted systems in a scalable environment to limit performance issues. Each fiscal year, \$100,000 is dedicated to upgrading classroom equipment and an additional \$100,000 to upgrading computer labs. As CPM does physical space upgrades, the classrooms and labs are upgraded via that budget process as well.

Currently the 26 members of the IT staff maintain systems and also assist faculty, staff, and students. Robert Half metrics ([How Many Help Desk Tier 1 Personnel Do You Need?](#)) suggest that the current level of staffing is enough only to support faculty and staff, with insufficient staff to help students (full support is provided for students, including free labor on hardware repairs). However, the use of an outsourced call center and a large number of student workers helps offset the number of full-time employees needed to support daily operations ([Call Center Metrics](#)) and provide support to our student population. The call center allows for 365x24x7 support as well, providing help when users need it, not just when the physical helpdesk is open.

The transition to Google applications and services was critically important to support the university's ability to remotely teach and operate during the pandemic ([Google usage charts](#)). It provided everyone at FSU with a simple and native way to video conference, share and collaborate on documents, create and share forms, and provided unlimited online storage capabilities ([Google Applications metrics with explanations](#)). The move to Google apps has allowed faculty and staff to utilize Chromebooks in many



instances as well, which has reduced costs for loaner systems. FSU has further partnered with Google as a beta site for new applications and technologies and provides necessary feedback on their new offerings.

The university's COVID-19 response revealed some key areas for improvement. The transition to remote work for faculty and staff revealed that many faculty, staff, and students do not have a basic understanding of how computers work. While IT's full-time trainer has done extensive work with users on specific applications, the lack of a core understanding of computer concepts made support more difficult once they left campus to work from home. Also, the transition of most of the campus to remote work highlighted that many staff have desktop computers and no way to easily bring equipment home. Decisions about systems have, in the past, focused more on cost reduction than flexibility and this has caused enormous support issues. With the transition to Google and utilizing low-cost Chromebooks, FSU may be able to provide mobility and reduced cost at the same time. The approval of a new Strategic Plan dictates that a new IT Strategic Plan in alignment with university goals needs to be created as well.

IT general and security policies were updated as part of a collective state-wide effort begun in 2015. These policies are available to everyone at [Technology Policies & Planning](#) and the Acceptable Use Policy is also highlighted in the [student handbook](#). Our [Information Security Policy](#) (confidential) and the [Information Technology Disaster Recovery Plan](#) (confidential) are updated annually and kept confidential due to their contents. These policies have been approved through legal review and are affirmed and approved as part of our state, PCI, and financial audits. The [Information Technology Strategic Plan](#) provides guidance for the department and the campus on strategic initiatives and directions that IT is prioritizing but needs to be updated to reflect support for the new FSU Strategic Plan.

The information security team uses numerous systems, including a SIEM system monitored by Cygiant, dual web-application firewalls, Cisco Umbrella DNS endpoint security, and Google security products to ensure data security for our campus, as well as reports through our NextGen Checkpoint firewall. Through the use of network restrictions and these products, the university has not had a single DMCA violation in 12 years.

## **Projections**

Human Resources and Payroll Services will develop a compensation model for part time contractors for FY22 to maintain pay equity and align with cost of living adjustments.

Human Resources, in collaboration with the Leading for Change subcommittee, will review its recruitment process (job description language, placement of announcements, outreach) to identify additional strategies to attract diverse candidates. This work will begin FY22.

Human Resources is exploring the establishment campus groups of staff and faculty in relation to shared characteristics, interests, or life experiences. This work will begin FY22.

In 2022, student affairs and finance staff will work with Massachusetts State College Building Authority on a long-term occupancy and space usage plan for implementation in FY2024.

University leadership, led by the VP of Finance and Administration, will create a long-term sustainable business model that is aligned with strategic plan priorities, the academic portfolio, and anticipated enrollments, which will be approved by the Board of Trustees in FY2025.

The finance department will complete a thorough review and updating of all financial policies and procedures by January 2023.

The library will create in FY22 a scalable, sustainable, and technology-enhanced information literacy library instruction program that achieves stated student learning outcomes for the undergraduate and graduate student populations and aligns with the Association of College and Research Libraries' Framework. An assessment plan for measuring the information literacy outcome and the effect of library resources and services will be developed for FY23.

In order to further the goal of making OER more readily available to students, the Open and Affordable Education Committee, led by the library, will adopt and implement an OER Assessment Plan in 2021. This plan will set baselines for multiple key performance indicators and track these indicators over a five-year period.

The Capital Planning and Maintenance management team will create an updated departmental Master Plan before July 2025 in conjunction with the Vice President of Administration and Finance. The Master Plan will take Gordian Sightlines Benchmarking and Sustainability reporting into consideration to coordinate projects that focus on older Net Asset Value buildings.

In 2021, the IT department will begin a series of general technology trainings for the campus to provide faculty and staff a baseline of knowledge on how computers and systems work securely; they will be viewable by on-campus and remote personnel.

Beginning in 2021, the IT department will continuously examine existing systems and applications for remote-work capabilities and take a "mobility-first" outlook when replacing or procuring systems to allow for easier transitions to work-from-home while controlling costs.

**STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES**  
**(Headcount of Employees by Occupational Category)**

For each of the occupational categories below, enter the data reported on the IPEDS Human Resources Survey (Parts B and D1) for each of the years listed.

If your institution does not submit IPEDS, visit this link for information about how to complete this form:  
[https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/IPEDS/Downloads/Forms/package\\_1\\_43.pdf](https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/IPEDS/Downloads/Forms/package_1_43.pdf)

	3 Years Prior			2 Years Prior			1 Year Prior			Current Year		
	(Fall 18)			(Fall 19)			(Fall 20)			(Fall 21)		
	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total
Instructional Staff	200	186	386	206	176	382	200	182	382	191	188	379
Research Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Service Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Librarians	6	0	6	6	0	6	7	0	7	7	0	7
Library Technicians	5	6	11	5	2	7	5	6	11	5	4	9
Archivists, Curators, Museum Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student and Academic Affairs	50	23	73	54	14	68	39	11	50	40	18	58
Management Occupations	55	0	55	50	0	50	51	0	51	46	0	46
Business and Financial Operations	10	0	10	9	0	9	15	0	15	14	0	14
Computer, Engineering and Science	20	0	20	22	4	26	27	3	30	28	2	30
Community, Social Service, Legal, Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	9	51	60	12	33	45	18	24	42	18	42	60
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	4	1	5	4	4	8	3	0	3	5	0	5
Service Occupations	76	0	76	79	0	79	81	0	81	74	1	75
Sales and Related Occupations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Office and Administrative Support	76	10	86	78	11	89	73	11	84	78	15	93
Natural Resources, Construction, Maintenance	12	0	12	12	0	12	12	0	12	13	0	13
Production, Transportation, Material Moving	13	0	13	15	0	15	10	0	10	10	0	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>799</b>

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

\* Fall 21 are not official IPED numbers

**STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES**  
**(Statement of Financial Position/Statement of Net Assets)**

<b>Fiscal Year ends - month &amp; day: ( 06 /30 )</b>	<b>2 Years Prior (FY 19)</b>	<b>1 Year Prior (FY 20)</b>	<b>Most Recent Year (FY21)</b>	<b>Percent Change 2 yrs-1 yr prior 1 yr-most recent</b>	
<b>ASSETS (in 000s)</b>					
Cash and Short Term Investments	\$28,059	\$24,238	\$29,948	-13.6%	23.6%
Cash held by State Treasurer	\$5,741	\$7,088	\$6,167	23.5%	-13.0%
Deposits held by State Treasurer				-	-
Accounts Receivable, Net	\$2,465	\$3,010	\$12,669	22.1%	320.9%
Contributions Receivable, Net				-	-
Inventory and Prepaid Expenses	\$351	\$219	\$278	-37.6%	26.9%
Long-Term Investments	\$17,678	\$18,054	\$21,539	2.1%	19.3%
Loans to Students	\$1,483	\$1,275	\$1,041	-14.0%	-18.4%
Funds held under bond agreement	\$5,845	\$4,134	\$2,774	-29.3%	-32.9%
Property, plants, and equipment, net	\$182,821	\$181,470	\$185,530	-0.7%	2.2%
Other Assets	\$8,912	\$8,276	\$13,188	-7.1%	59.4%
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$253,355</b>	<b>\$247,764</b>	<b>\$273,134</b>	<b>-2.2%</b>	<b>10.2%</b>
<b>LIABILITIES (in 000s)</b>					
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$11,014	\$9,763	\$9,849	-11.4%	0.9%
Deferred revenue & refundable advances	\$2,024	\$4,906	\$9,288	142.4%	89.3%
Due to state	\$95	\$52	\$48	-45.3%	-7.7%
Due to affiliates	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Annuity and life income obligations	\$0	\$0	\$0	-	-
Amounts held on behalf of others	\$45,947	\$43,114	\$52,465	-6.2%	21.7%
Long-term investments	\$62,599	\$58,330	\$55,154	-6.8%	-5.4%
Refundable government advances	\$1,872	\$1,354	\$1,155	-27.7%	-14.7%
Other long-term liabilities	\$4,526	\$8,417	\$9,934	86.0%	18.0%
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$128,077</b>	<b>\$125,936</b>	<b>\$137,893</b>	<b>-1.7%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>
<b>NET ASSETS (in 000s)</b>					
Unrestricted net assets					
Institutional	\$116,195	\$113,544	\$122,583	-2.3%	8.0%
Foundation	\$5,049	\$5,624	\$6,536	11.4%	16.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$121,244</b>	<b>\$119,168</b>	<b>\$129,119</b>	<b>-1.7%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>
Temporarily restricted net assets					
Institutional	\$8,560	\$7,780	\$12,091	-9.1%	55.4%
Foundation	\$8,047	\$8,752	\$13,342	8.8%	52.4%

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16,607</b>	<b>\$16,532</b>	<b>\$25,433</b>	-0.5%	53.8%
Permanently restricted net assets					
Institutional	<b>\$523</b>	<b>\$504</b>	<b>\$567</b>	-3.6%	12.5%
Foundation	<b>\$10,477</b>	<b>\$12,221</b>	<b>\$12,565</b>	16.6%	2.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,000</b>	<b>\$12,725</b>	<b>\$13,132</b>	15.7%	3.2%
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$148,851</b>	<b>\$148,425</b>	<b>\$167,684</b>	-0.3%	13.0%
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$276,928</b>	<b>\$274,361</b>	<b>\$305,577</b>	-0.9%	11.4%

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

In line with prior years NECHE reporting, I have included net assets information for the Foundation. The fiscal information for the Foundation is only included in the net assets section.

**STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES**  
**(Statement of Revenues and Expenses)**

<b>Fiscal Year ends - month&amp; day: (06 /30)</b>	<b>3 Years Prior (FY18)</b>	<b>2 Years Prior (FY19)</b>	<b>Most Recently Completed Year (FY 20)</b>	<b>Current Year (FY 21 )</b>	<b>Next Year Forward (FY 22)</b>
<b>OPERATING REVENUES (in 000s)</b>					
Tuition and fees	\$49,543	\$51,779	\$50,508	\$49,534	\$49,534
Room and board					
Less: Financial aid	-\$7,723	-\$7,527	-\$6,792	-\$6,182	-\$6,182
Net student fees	\$41,820	\$44,252	\$43,716	\$43,352	\$43,352
Government grants and contracts	\$8,605	\$8,742	\$12,946	\$15,687	\$10,742
Private gifts, grants and contracts	\$908	\$629	\$1,040	\$907	\$907
Other auxiliary enterprises	\$15,305	\$14,915	\$10,629	\$8,583	\$10,257
Endowment income used in operations					
Other revenue (specify):	\$1,523	\$1,456	\$1,299	\$1,083	\$1,456
Other revenue (specify):	\$779	\$831	\$1,154	\$551	\$831
Net assets released from restrictions					
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>\$68,940</b>	<b>\$70,825</b>	<b>\$70,784</b>	<b>\$70,163</b>	<b>\$67,545</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES (in 000s)</b>					
Instruction	\$37,154	\$38,609	\$38,623	\$37,848	\$40,371
Research	\$105	\$94	\$77	\$118	\$118
Public Service	\$555	\$859	\$999	\$994	\$994
Academic Support	\$7,158	\$8,596	\$8,830	\$8,538	\$8,538
Student Services	\$10,124	\$13,603	\$13,419	\$14,437	\$13,603
Institutional Support	\$11,744	\$13,632	\$14,499	\$17,041	\$13,632
Fundraising and alumni relations					
Operation, maintenance of plant (if not allocated)	\$11,030	\$11,757	\$11,553	\$11,791	\$11,791
Scholarships and fellowships (cash refunded by public institution)	\$2,690	\$2,841	\$5,202	\$4,327	\$2,841
Auxiliary enterprises	\$15,169	\$15,322	\$14,563	\$8,552	\$10,914
Depreciation (if not allocated)	\$9,991	\$10,442	\$11,032	\$11,448	\$11,448
Other expenses (specify):					
Other expenses (specify):					
<b>Total operating expenditures</b>	<b>\$105,720</b>	<b>\$115,755</b>	<b>\$118,797</b>	<b>\$115,094</b>	<b>\$114,250</b>
<b>Change in net assets from operations</b>	<b>-\$36,780</b>	<b>-\$44,930</b>	<b>-\$48,013</b>	<b>-\$44,931</b>	<b>-\$46,705</b>

<b>NON OPERATING REVENUES (in 000s)</b>					
State appropriations (net)	\$39,404	\$43,795	\$44,088	\$45,830	\$46,460
Investment return	\$1,030	\$1,218	\$867	\$3,172	\$1,500
Interest expense (public institutions)	-\$1,851	-\$1,985	-\$1,967	-\$1,307	-\$1,967
Gifts, bequests and contributions not used in operations	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other (specify): Debt issuance costs	\$0	-\$23	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other (specify):					
Other (specify):					
<b>Net non-operating revenues</b>	<b>\$38,583</b>	<b>\$43,005</b>	<b>\$42,988</b>	<b>\$47,695</b>	<b>\$45,993</b>
<b>Income before other revenues, expenses, gains, or losses</b>	<b>\$1,803</b>	<b>-\$1,925</b>	<b>-\$5,025</b>	<b>\$2,764</b>	<b>-\$712</b>
Capital appropriations (public institutions)	\$439	\$3,558	\$1,318	\$10,392	\$3,500
Other (specify):	\$503	\$257	\$256	\$255	\$255
<b>TOTAL INCREASE/DECREASE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$2,745</b>	<b>\$1,890</b>	<b>-\$3,451</b>	<b>\$13,411</b>	<b>\$3,043</b>

**STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES**  
**(Statement of Debt)**

FISCAL YEAR ENDS month & day (6 /30 )	3 Years Prior (FY18)	2 Years Prior (FY19)	Most Recently Completed Year (FY20)	Current Year (FY21)	Next Year Forward (FY22)
<b>Long-term Debt</b>					
Beginning balance	\$61,873	\$63,680	\$62,600	\$58,330	\$55,154
Additions	\$5,420	\$2,623			
Reductions	(\$3,613)	(\$3,703)	(\$4,270)	(\$3,176)	(\$3,176)
Ending balance	<b>\$63,680</b>	<b>\$62,600</b>	<b>\$58,330</b>	<b>\$55,154</b>	<b>\$51,978</b>
Interest paid during fiscal year	\$2,350	\$2,281	\$2,207	\$1,569	\$1,569
Current Portion	\$3,737	\$4,151	\$4,297	\$2,655	\$4,151
<b>Bond Rating</b>					
<b>Debt Service Coverage</b> Operating Income / (Annual Interest + Current Portion of Debt)	6.08	5.36	5.11	10.27	11.04
<b>Debt to Net Assets Ratio</b> Long-term Debt / Total Net Assets	0.52	0.50	0.48	0.41	0.38
<b>Debt to Assets Ratio</b> Long-term Debt / Total Assets	0.27	0.26	0.24	0.21	0.20

ending balance  
from previous year

same as last year

same as last year

same as  
non-Covid year

**Debt Covenants: (1) Describe interest rate, schedule, and structure of payments; and (2) indicate whether the debt covenants are being met. If not being met, describe the specific covenant violation (i.e., requirement of the lender vs. actual achieved by the institution). Also, indicate whether a waiver has been secured from the lender and/or if covenants were modified.**

Current interest rate - .26% to 6.0%. Schedule - MDFA loan- \$1.3 million - interest paid monthly, principal paid once per year. DCAMM loan - both interest and principal paid once a year. MSCBA loans - interest paid twice per year and principal once per year. Debt covenants are being met. Please note information below on the restructuring of the MSCBA loans.

The MSCBA issued the Series 2020A Bonds on July 1, 2020 in part to refund Bonds maturing in fiscal years 2021 and 2022 to provide fiscal relief to the State Universities as they faced or are likely to face lower occupancy and a reduction in revenues in those fiscal years due to the COVID-19 outbreak. As a result, the FY 2021 aggregate debt service assessment was reduced by \$52.8 million (approximately 50%), and the FY 2022 aggregate debt service assessment was reduced by \$28.2 million (approximately 25%). In addition to the debt service assessment, operating and reserve assessments to the Universities were also reduced or deferred to more closely align expenses with the lower revenue. The Authority released \$15.8 million from the debt service reserve to fund a portion of the fall 2020 interest payment, and \$400,000 to fund a portion of the spring 2021 interest payment, which further reduced the amount that needed to be assessed to the universities. In the fall of 2020, we did not assess early principal at all.



**Line(s) of Credit: List the institutions line(s) of credit and their uses.**

Fitchburg State University does not have a line of credit

**Future borrowing plans (please describe).**

**STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES  
(Supplemental Data)**

<b>FISCAL YEAR ENDS month &amp; day (06/30)</b>	<b>3 Years Prior (FY18)</b>	<b>2 Years Prior (FY19)</b>	<b>Most Recently Completed Year (FY20)</b>	<b>Current Year (FY21)</b>	<b>Next Year Forward (FY22)</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>					
Net assets beginning of year	\$120,643	\$123,388	\$125,278	\$121,827	\$135,238
Total increase/decrease in net assets	\$2,745	\$1,890	(\$3,451)	\$13,411	\$3,043
Net assets end of year	<b>\$123,388</b>	<b>\$125,278</b>	<b>\$121,827</b>	<b>\$135,238</b>	<b>\$138,281</b>
<b>FINANCIAL AID</b>					
Source of funds					
Unrestricted institutional	\$2,819	\$2,748	\$2,817	\$1,795	\$1,795
Federal, state and private grants	<b>\$7,543</b>	<b>\$7,538</b>	<b>\$9,083</b>	<b>\$8,594</b>	<b>\$8,594</b>
Restricted funds	<b>\$50</b>	<b>\$87</b>	<b>\$90</b>	<b>\$90</b>	<b>\$90</b>
Total	<b>\$10,412</b>	<b>\$10,373</b>	<b>\$11,990</b>	<b>\$10,479</b>	<b>\$10,479</b>
% Discount of tuition and fees	23.9%	22.8%	26.2%	23.6%	23.6%
% Unrestricted discount	9.1%	8.5%	8.6%	6.6%	6.6%
Net Tuition Revenue per FTE					
<b>FEDERAL FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY COMPOSITE SCORE</b>					

**Please indicate your institution's endowment spending policy:**

FSU Foundation has a spending policy of appropriating for distribution each year a percentage of its endowment fund's average fair value over the preceding three years. The amount to be appropriated for distribution shall not exceed 5%.

**Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below.**

**STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES  
(Liquidity)**

<b>FISCAL YEAR ENDS month &amp; day (06 /30)</b>	<b>3 Years Prior (FY18)</b>	<b>2 Years Prior (FY19)</b>	<b>Most Recently Completed Year (FY 20)</b>	<b>Current Year (FY21)</b>	<b>Next Year Forward (FY22)</b>
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**CASH FLOW**

Cash and Cash Equivalents beginning of year	\$38,306	\$36,112	\$39,646	\$35,461	\$38,889
Cash Flow from Operating Activities	(\$13,671)	(\$18,413)	(\$23,174)	(\$21,935)	(\$21,935)
Cash Flow from Investing Activities	\$29	\$273	(\$377)	\$599	\$599
Cash Flow from Financing Activities	\$11,448	\$21,674	\$19,366	\$24,764	\$24,764
Cash and Cash Equivalents end of year	<b>\$36,112</b>	<b>\$39,646</b>	<b>\$35,461</b>	<b>\$38,889</b>	<b>\$42,317</b>

**LIQUIDITY RATIOS**

Current Assets	\$32,500	\$34,855	\$30,140	\$41,281	\$41,281
Current Liabilities	\$17,951	\$20,799	\$22,779	\$25,290	\$25,290
Current Ratio	<b>1.81</b>	<b>1.68</b>	<b>1.32</b>	<b>1.63</b>	<b>1.63</b>
Days Cash on Hand ((Cash and Cash Equivalents / [Operating Expenses + Depreciation and other noncash expenses]) / 365)	<b>139.52</b>	<b>141.14</b>	<b>122.15</b>	<b>142.23</b>	<b>142.23</b>

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below that may impact the institution's cash flow.

Has the institution needed to access its restricted net assets or liquidate other financial assets to fund operations? If so, please describe and indicate when approvals (if required) were obtained from the state's authority.

No, it has not needed to access restricted net assets.

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below.

**STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES  
(Information Resources)**

	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year ESTIMATED
	(FY 18)	(FY 19)	(FY 20)	(FY 21)	(FY 22)
<b>Total Expenditures</b>					
Materials	\$623,667	\$643,963	\$661,609	\$657,363	\$657,363
Salaries & wages (permanent staff)	\$912,969	\$960,757	\$941,129	\$955,135	\$974,238
Salaries & wages (student employees)	\$68,825	\$50,662	\$51,784	\$62,500	\$62,500
Other operating expenses	\$124,280	\$91,383	\$81,397	\$79,148	\$79,148

<b>Expenditures/FTE student</b>	5410	5512	5398	5289	5200
Materials	\$115	\$117	\$123	\$124	\$126
Salaries & wages (permanent staff)	\$169	\$174	\$174	\$181	\$187
Salaries & wages (student employees)	\$13	\$9	\$10	\$12	\$12
Other operating expenses	\$23	\$17	\$15	\$15	\$15

**Collections**

Percent available physically	33%	22%	20%	20%	20%
Percent available electronically	67%	78%	80%	80%	80%
Number of digital repositories	1	1	1	1	1

**Personnel (FTE)**

Librarians - main campus	7	8	8	8	8
Librarians - branch /other locations					
Other library personnel - main campus	8.8	8.8	7.9	8.0	8.0
Other library personnel - branch/other locations					

**Availability/attendance**

Hours of operation/week main campus	90	90	67	89	89
Hours of operation/week branch/other locations					

**Consortia/Partnerships**

MCCLPHEI (Massachusetts Public Higher Education Directors), WALDO, ARC (Worcester Academic and Research Collaborative), Massachusetts Library System
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<b>URL of most recent library annual report:</b>	<a href="https://library.fitchburgstate.edu/uploads/assets/Library_Annual_Report_FY21_FINAL_(1).pdf">https://library.fitchburgstate.edu/uploads/assets/Library Annual Report FY21_FINAL_(1).pdf</a>
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The Library building was closed to visitors from March 2020 - August 2020 due to COVID-19. Remote services were offered during this time. The Library's normally scheduled operational hours in FY20 of 90 hours was entered on this worksheet. Part-time staff hours were eliminated during much of this period and reinstated in August, 2020. Library personnel counts excludes student workers. Operating expenses in FY18 and FY19 were higher due to expenses for a library website redesign and new information literacy tutorials.

See Form 4.5 for data about Information Literacy

**STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES  
(Technological Resources)**

3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)
(AY 19)	(AY 20)	(AY 21)	(AY 22)	(AY 23)

**Course management system**

Blackboard Learning Management System

Number of classes using the system

1,993	2,083	2,148	2,249	2,100
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**Bandwidth**

On-campus network

1000mbps	1000mbps	1000mbps	1000mbps	1000mbps
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Off-campus access

commodity internet (Mbps)

4000mbps	4000mbps	4000mbps	5000mbps	5000mbps
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high-performance networks (Mbps)

10000mbps	10000mbps	10000mbps	10000mbps	10000mbps
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Wireless protocol(s)

802.11ac (and n,g,a)	802.11ac (and n,g,a)	802.11ac (and n,g,a)	802.11ac ( and n,g,a)	802.11ac (and n,g,a)
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**Typical classroom technology**

Main campus

Projector, Podium Windows 10 zero client, DVD, laptop connections, doc camera

Branch/other locations

Theatre: Same.

**Software systems and versions**

Students

Banner Student 9.3

Finances

Banner Finance 9.3

Human Resources

Banner HR 9.3

Advancement

Raiser's Edge NXT

Library

Voyager

Website Management

Drupal CMS

Portfolio Management

TK20

Interactive Video Conferencing

Google Meet & Zoom Rooms

Digital Object Management

**Website locations of technology policies/plans**

Integrity and security of data

<https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/technology/policies/>

Privacy of individuals

<https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/technology/policies/>

Appropriate use

<https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/technology/policies/>

Disaster and recovery plan

<https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/technology/policies/>

Technology replacement

<https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/technology/policies/>

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

**STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES  
(Physical Resources)**

Campus location	Serviceable Buildings	Assignable Square Feet (000)
Main campus	55	1,035
Other U.S. locations	0	0
International locations	0	0

	3 Years Prior (FY 18)	2 Years Prior (FY 19)	1 Year Prior (FY 20)	Current Year (FY 21)	Next Year Forward (goal) (FY 22)
<b>Revenue (\$000)</b>					
Capital appropriations (public institutions)	\$439	\$3,558	\$1,318	\$10,392	\$22,000
Operating budget	\$7,716	\$6,661	\$7,047	\$5,029	\$5,551
Gifts and grants	\$503	\$257	\$256	\$255	\$255
Debt	\$5,420	\$2,623	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	\$14,078	\$13,099	\$8,621	\$15,676	\$27,806
<b>Expenditures (\$000)</b>					
New Construction					
Renovations, maintenance and equipment	\$18,037	\$11,749	\$9,571	\$15,413	\$27,000
Technology		\$64	\$111	\$94	
<b>Total</b>	\$18,037	\$11,813	\$9,682	\$15,507	\$27,000

Assignable square feet (000)	Main campus	Off-campus	Total
Classroom	90	0	90
Laboratory	106	0	106
Office	121	0	121
Study	50	0	50
Special	107	0	107
General	120	0	120
Support	71	0	71
Residential	362	0	362
Other	8	0	8

**Major new buildings, past 10 years (add rows as needed)**

Building name	Purpose(s)	Assignable Square Feet (000)	Cost (000)	Year
Antonucci Science Center, Irving Wing	Life Sciences Instruction	27.55		2013

**New buildings, planned for next 5 years (add rows as needed)**

Building name	Purpose(s)	Assignable Square Feet (000)	Cost (000)	Year
PrimSet Building	Houses Primary Electrical	250.00		2021

Switchgear feeding Campus
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**Major Renovations, past 10 years (add rows as needed)**

The list below includes renovations costing 

\$50,000
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 or more through June 30, 2021, and includes All Project Costs (IE: Design, FF&E, etc.)

Building name	Purpose(s)	Assignable Sq. Feet (000)	Cost (000)	Year
McKay C	McKay C Renovation - Phase 5	15,460	\$208,827	2021
Main Campus	Concrete Walkway Replacement - SRP	0	\$155,595	2021
Hammond	Curtain Wall Window Unit Replacement - SRP	0	\$108,910	2021
Edgerly	Data Center Air Conditioning Replacement - SRP	317	\$61,025	2021
Antonucci Science Center	Steam Coil Replacement - SRP	0	\$141,185	2021
Holmes Pedestrian Bridge	Exterior Bridge Repair - SRP	0	\$355,979	2021
Percival Hall	Envelope - Masonry Repointing & Waterproofing - SRP	0	\$216,303	2020
McKay C	Boiler Rm - Feedwater Tank & Pump Replacement	0	\$75,945	2020
Service Center				
Roof Replacement	Phase 1 - Roof D -	12,200	\$223,095	2020
175-179 Myrtle Avenue	Abatement, Demolition, Site Restoration	0	\$96,550	2020
Percival	Percival Hall Renos Phase 4	5,555	\$2,462,283	2020
Anthony	Emergency Steam line repair from Dupont, Site Restoration	0	\$86,195	2020
McKay C	McKay C Renovation - Phase 4	10,210	\$2,423,629	2020
Recreation Center	Rec. Center Roof Replacement - MSCBA			2019
McKay C	McKay C Lobby Addition - Phase 3	15,432	\$4,619,378	2019
Percival	Percival Hall Renos Phase 3	17,460	\$2,637,416	2019
Recreation Center	Rec. Center Walkway Replacement - MSCBA	0		2019
Thompson	Thompson Hall Window Replacement - ~173 windows	5,500	\$502,819	2019
Edgerly	Edgerly Hall Window Replacement - ~115 windows	3,200	\$984,432	2019
Holmes	Holmes Dish Room Renovation - MSCBA			2019
Landry Arena	Landry Arena Renovation - MSCBA	26,533		2019
Edgerly	Math Emporium Classroom	1,080	\$370,899	2018
Percival	Percival Hall Renos Phase 2	11,280	\$2,970,482	2018
Holmes	Holmes Walk In Cooler Replacement	483	\$421,884	2018
172 Myrtle Avenue	Abatement, Demolition & Site Restoration	0	\$78,175	2018
Edgerly	Edgerly Elevator & Restrooms	2,717	\$1,711,476	2017
Percival	Percival Hall Renos Phase I	5,440	\$2,234,657	2017
Theatre Building	Theatre Bldg Phase I - Game Studio	7,800	\$3,519,053	2017
Thompson	Thompson Hall 1st Floor Dean's Suite & Acc Unisex Restroom	1,228	\$548,619	2017
Sanders	Office Upgrades/Expansion - FY17	4,845	\$1,005,400	2016
198 Pearl, 9 Clinton, 83-87 Pearl	Abatement, Demolition & Site Restoration	0	\$276,505	2016



Pearl Street	Sidewalk Upgrades Highland-JFHwy	0	\$554,099	2016
54 Clinton Street	Abatement, Demo & Site Restoration 54 Clinton Street	0	\$102,227	2015
Conlon	Office Upgrades 2nd & 3rd Floor	696	\$82,030	2015
McKay	McKay B Wing Upgrades & 2 C Wing spaces	5,898	\$243,790	2015
Rec. Center	Rec Center Floor Refinishing	21,650	\$33,882	2015
Conlon Hall	Conlon Elevator	366	\$497,002	2015
185 North St Residence	185 North Fire Alarm	8,403	\$52,650	2015
Quadrangle	Campus Core Improvement - Site Work	0	\$1,538,981	2015
McKay	McKay C Wing 2nd floor Phase 1I	11,802	\$2,878,313	2015
McKay	McKay C Wing 2nd floor Phase 1	9,700	\$2,590,742	2015
Dupont	Dupont Smokestack	7,077	\$792,365	2015
Campus Police	Public Safety Renovations	502	\$92,774	2015
Landry Arena	Selective Interior Demolition and Landry Arena Renovations	31,962	\$918,786	2015
Antonucci Science Center Condike Wing	Science Labs & Classrooms - Major Reno - DCAMM project	31,532		2014
Quadrangle	Hammond Thompson Quad	0	\$80,100	2014
Holmes	Holmes Dining Renovations	12,020	\$230,040	2014
Highland Ave	Highland Street Lighting	0	\$85,129	2014
Highland Ave	Highland Sidewalks	0	\$318,073	2014
Clinton St, 44-46	Renovation 44-46 Clinton	2,628	\$393,815	2014
Property Demos	2 Congress St, 43 Pearl Hill Rd, 1 Ross St	0	\$177,518	2014
Parking	South Campus Parking Expansion North IV & Clinton	3,960	\$458,212	2014
Percival	Percival Elevator HP Access	3,300	\$1,049,110	2014
McKay	Theatre Arts Building - Study	0	\$76,140	2013
340 Highland	340 Highland Ave Upgrades	2,403	\$107,683	2013
Conlon	Conlon IA Exterior Doors Replacement	30	\$73,758	2013
Conlon	Waterproofing @ Roof	365	\$105,984	2013
Conlon	Conlon Misc. Upgrades	2,701	\$111,364	2013
Conlon	Conlon Select Demo and Abatement Conlon Renovations Phase 1 2013 Conlon Renovations Phase 2 2014	31,620	\$5,290,788	2013
McKay	McKay Lot Expansion	0	\$1,581,215	2013
MART	MART Expansion West	1,809	\$227,864	2013
Athletic Fields	Athletic Field Improvements	0	\$121,762	2013
352 Highland	Abatement, Demolition & Site Restoration	0	\$59,029	2013
Percival	Soffit Repairs & Painting	1,560	\$54,365	2013
Ross Street Lot	Ross Parking Expansion & Highland Lot	0	\$1,006,654	2013
Conlon	Conlon IA Summer FY12-13	2,920	\$76,549	2013
Quadrangle	Edgerly Plaza	0	\$318,344	2012
Civic Center	Painting Wallace, Ext. Doors Landry, Site Lighting	12,350	\$162,571	2012
Conlon IA	Dust Collection System Replacement	3,400	\$451,750	2012
Campus	Chiller, formerly South campus	1,436	\$1,841,244	2012
McKay B Bldg	McKay Auditorium Lobby Upgrades	1,420	\$49,474	2012
Sanders	2nd floor Finish Upgrades	2,410	\$200,865	2012
Sanders	Window Replacement	320	\$73,214	2012

40-42 Clinton Street	Abatement, Demolition, Site Restoration 40-42 Clinton	0	\$78,261	2012
Highland Avenue	Highland Ave Gateway & Parking Improvements	0	\$306,381	2012
Elliot Field	Home Team Locker Room Expansion	1,700	\$388,462	2012
Civic Center	Parking Lot Lighting - Upper Shuttle Lot	0	\$274,136	2012

**Renovations planned for next 5 years (add rows as needed)**

The list below includes  or more renovations costing

Building name	Purpose(s)	Assignable Square Feet (000)	Cost (000)	Year
Thompson Hall	General Instructional	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

## Standard Eight: Educational Effectiveness

### Description

Fitchburg State University continues to build a significant culture of assessment in and out of the classroom that provides clear opportunities to measure the success of all students in all modalities and all locations. This progress can be seen in changes to the program review process and the General Education program, the expansion and assessment of co-curricular programs, and our ongoing strength in learning outcomes assessment. These measures of student success help us understand graduates' achievements due to their education. These measures have also been integrated into the strategic planning process and aligned to the mission and core values. Faculty, department chairs, deans, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Student Affairs, Office of Institutional Research and Planning, University Assessment Research Committee, and Student Affairs Assessment Team collaborate to collect and analyze data throughout the year, driving evidence-based improvements that support student success. This data also informs the public. Student learning outcomes are published on [program web pages](#); annual assessment reports are also published [electronically](#).

Under Academic Affairs, curricular assessment takes place for undergraduate and graduate programs and the General Education curriculum. Each academic department has a designated assessment liaison who works with an assessment committee or the department as a whole. Assessment liaisons, the AVP of OIRP, the Director of Assessment, and one academic dean comprise the University Assessment and Research Committee (UARC), collaboratively reviewing and making recommendations for assessment processes across departments.

UARC was established in 2017 to sustain and improve FSU's academic programming, accreditation requirements, and overall performance, through a systematic approach to assessing student learning outcomes, student success measures, and institutional performance measures. Every program is required to submit an [Annual Assessment Report](#). In this report, each program lists Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) assessed during the last year. In addition, each program also submits an annual update to their Programmatic Assessment Plan, including all SLOs and how they will be assessed in the years ahead. Programmatic Assessment Plans include a curriculum map for required courses detailing their role in introducing, fulfilling, and assessing each of the SLOs. These documents are reviewed by the Director of Assessment and UARC, and each program receives annual feedback on the reports including the extent to which the SLOs represent verifiable statements of what students are expected to gain, achieve, demonstrate, or know by the time they complete the program. Other Academic Affairs units, such as the academic Schools and the student success unit, also submit annual reports. These [Annual Assessment Reports](#) are posted on the website.

The [Programmatic Assessment Plan](#) requires that programs establish quantitative benchmarks for each measure of student learning, and the Annual Assessment Report provides a structured format for reporting the use of this data and related benchmarks to understand learning outcomes. The Annual Assessment Report also provides valuable data for use in the seven-year Program Review cycle. [Program Reviews](#) provide an opportunity to aggregate and reflect on measures of student learning and success over a longer period. External perspectives on this data are afforded by the reviewers who provide feedback on each self-study. The Action Plan, developed based on both the self-study and the external evaluator's recommendations, provides a critical mechanism to help ensure that data on student learning and success is used to make concrete changes to improve educational effectiveness. The identification of

resources needed is an important data point of this process that can then be used as part of the department's larger resource allocation plan. The five years following the development of the Action Plan are used to implement changes and assess the curriculum in a comprehensive and thoughtful manner. Annual Assessment Reports can then be used to monitor progress on student learning and success, while serving as the foundation for the next self-study.

Graduate program assessment is the responsibility of the academic department in the same way it is responsible for its undergraduate programs. Reviews of graduate programs are conducted on the same timeline and in concert with the undergraduate program reviews.

Programs that fall under external accreditation submit an Annual Assessment Report in addition to following the review cycle and guidelines established by their professional accrediting agency. Undergraduate programs with external accreditation currently include Human Services, Nursing, Business, Computer Information Systems, Computer Science, and Education. At the graduate level, all Education and Business programs, which represent 89% of our degree-seeking enrollment, are externally accredited.

Academic programs offered through our Extended Campus Partners fall under the assessment and external accreditation processes of the School of Education. Additionally, a Letter of Agreement (LOA) between the partner and FSU exists for each academic program and regular standing meetings are held six or more times per year, allowing for further evaluation by the graduate chair and dean of the associated departments. Extended campus locations where only stand-alone professional development courses are offered have scheduled evaluative meetings once or twice per year depending on the number of course offerings.

### **General Education**

One of the most ambitious and comprehensive efforts in the past ten years to utilize data to improve educational effectiveness involved the program review and revision of the General Education curriculum. The General Education curriculum was last revised in 2007. Ongoing assessment of the old curriculum's learning objectives took place as soon as the curriculum was implemented, beginning in summer 2008 and continuing through 2014. The process of assessing, reviewing, and refining learning outcomes related to the original objectives was supported by both a Davis Foundation grant and an AAC&U and Lumina Foundation grant.

These efforts were also informed by the NEASC accreditation process; a 2011 FSU Academic Plan that called for a review of reading, writing, critical analysis, and logical thinking across the curriculum; a possible service learning requirement; integration of Information Literacy across the curriculum; and Massachusetts Board of Higher Education efforts to promote Civic Learning, Critical Thinking, Quantitative Reasoning, and Written Communication as part of the Vision Project. This history was used in developing the new General Education requirements.

The General Education curriculum was revised to improve student success and retention. A significant component of the revision is the addition of a First-Year Experience (FYE) seminar to aid students in the transition to college. Faculty teaching FYE courses take part in a community of practice which allows for reflection based on student feedback and which has resulted in the number of FYE learning outcomes being reduced from six to three.

### **Co-curricular Assessment**

An important change in the past ten years has been an increased emphasis on assessment and evaluation

in co-curricular programs. In 2017, a new Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) was hired. One of her major initiatives was a more intentional emphasis on priority and goal setting along with assessments of how well priorities and goals are met. In AY18, the VPSA laid the groundwork for examining vision and mission. AY19 brought an introduction to the process of assessment: defining terms, holding workshops for skill development, and creating visionary priorities and outcomes as well as key performance indicators. AY20 was the first year that Student Affairs departments began setting and assessing annual goals and key performance indicators. Even through COVID, the division made progress on their AY20 and AY21 annual goals and performance indicators. Each year, the departments must have at least one student learning-focused goal and at least one effectiveness-focused goal. One major area of emphasis is supporting the university's vision for education justice and being a student-ready campus.

Assessment in Student Affairs is led by its VP and a division-wide assessment team, composed of staff members at all levels in the division. The team is made up of those with expertise in assessment, as well as relative newcomers, to provide a variety of perspectives on this work. Additionally, the leads from the division's 12 departments meet monthly for professional development on assessment and to report on progress in assessment initiatives. These entities engage in a full cycle of assessment including planning, using direct and indirect measures to gather data, analyzing data, and reviewing that data to propose and implement improvements.

The 2018 and 2020 Campus Climate Surveys found that although our students across demographics feel welcome on campus, our diverse students reported a lesser sense of belonging. As a result, the Provost and Vice President for Student Affairs conducted a 2020 listening tour of FSU identity-based student clubs and organizations. This led to changes at the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, including hiring the first 12-month Director and changing the role of student workers to becoming peer educators on DEI topics. Students also guide programming and support identity-based organizations within the role's new parameters.

In AY20 and AY21, Housing and Residential Services set a goal that student staff learn to engage in dialogue on DEI. After being trained in DEI during onboarding, staff members engage in discussions related to DEI in one-on-one meetings with supervisors and as part of their yearly evaluation. Student staff articulate what DEI means to them, how they impact DEI within their department role, and DEI areas of strength and challenge. Student staff reflect on the extent to which "I can engage in a discussion on diversity and inclusion" and also about specific topic areas: language/terminology use, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual identity, sexual violence, religion, political views. Plans for assessing these goals are ongoing.

### **Institutional Assessment**

In 2021, the university adopted Institutional Learning Priorities (ILPs), which identify broad curricular and co-curricular student learning objectives that align with the university's vision. Academic and co-curricular departments have begun the process of examining how their program curricula align with these ILPs.

The university has participated in the AAC&U VALUE Institute (previously known as the Multi-State Collaborative) since 2016, collecting artifacts using Critical Thinking and Written Communication rubrics. Student artifacts submitted to the VALUE Institute were scored by at least two reviewers and the results were analyzed and reported back to FSU. FSU also received a report on state-wide aggregate results for comparison purposes.

FSU also asks individual programs to indicate in their Annual Assessment Reports the alignment between program learning outcomes and the ILPs. In this way, both the academic and co-curricular program-level assessment efforts can be aggregated, providing data that the UARC can use to make institutional recommendations about the assessment process and the ILPs.

Programmatic trend data has been disseminated by OIRP to academic departments since 2013. Initially called Phase I Data, it included retention rates, benchmarked against the overall institutional rates, as well as the number of graduates in majors and minors. Departments were asked to report on student success initiatives related to the trend data as well as SSC data in their annual reports. Trend data is now provided via the APS platform and annual reports now collect progress toward the strategic plan, which includes student success initiatives.

Actual and projected student enrollment data, coupled with a commitment to accessibility and student success, has guided decision making across the university. In 2017, FSU joined the Leading for Change Higher Education Consortium, a voluntary collaboration of higher education institutions committed to identifying student and employee diversity best practices through use of data, institutional benchmarks, and reflective practice. The Consortium was renamed the Racial Justice and Equity Institute in 2018 to reflect an emphasis on closing racial educational equity gaps. Through the consortium, FSU implemented a Campus Climate Survey in 2018 and 2020.

FSU has been recognized for three consecutive years since 2019 by *U. S. News and World Report* for our success in providing Social Mobility to our students. This represents an important dimension of what our students can expect to gain from an FSU education.

### **Assessment Tools**

The OIRP utilizes several internal surveys to collect data on student learning, satisfaction, and post-graduation outcomes. Since 2008, OIRP has issued a Graduating Student Survey to support the program review process by, for example, collecting data on student learning outcomes. This survey has recently been revised into two separate surveys for undergraduate and graduate students. In 2017, FSU launched an Alumni Student Survey to collect post-graduation and learning outcomes data. The alumni survey is sent to undergraduate alumni at one, three, and five years post-graduation and is used as part of the program review process. The campus climate survey, administered in 2017, 2018, and 2020, has informed multiple student success initiatives, including the Reimagining the First-Year project, DEI work, and strategic planning.

In addition to these recurring surveys, many ad-hoc surveys are employed in order to measure institutional effectiveness. For example, the NEASC/NECHE survey was launched in December 2010 and January 2021 as part of the self-study process. Separate COVID-19 response surveys were administered to students, staff, and faculty in May 2020 to assess how the university was responding to the pandemic, to measure the pandemic's impact on student learning, and to inform planning for Fall 2020. Additionally, Student Affairs conducts numerous surveys and focus groups to measure the effectiveness of its programming and make improvements.

The OIRP administers several national survey instruments that allow for national and regional benchmarking and peer comparisons. These include the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) administered every two years since 2006, the College Student Inventory (CSI) annually since 2005, the Mid-Year Student Assessment (MYSA) annually since 2017, and the Adult Student Priorities Survey (ASPS) biannually since 2018. NSSE, administered to first-year and senior undergraduates, measures the extent



to which students engage in effective educational practices empirically linked with learning, personal development, and other desired outcomes such as persistence, satisfaction, and graduation. The CSI is an early alert tool administered to incoming first-year students to identify at-risk students, focus advisors on key concerns, and link students to academic and student support resources. The MYSA, administered to first-year students as a follow-up to the CSI, identifies immediate student need and measures effectiveness of earlier interventions. The ASPS, administered to adult and graduate level students, assesses and benchmarks areas of priority and level of satisfaction.

The National College Health Assessment is administered every other year and informs the work of Counseling Services, Student Conduct/Case Management, and Housing and Residential Services. FSU also participated for three years in the #RealCollegeSurvey with the Hope Center at Temple University, examining students' experiences with food and housing insecurity. These data are shared with the Community Assessment and Risk Evaluation Team, our food and necessities pantry, the Falcon Bazaar, and others services for these students.

Software tools also support assessment practices. The Tk20 application is a comprehensive data gathering and reporting system designed for managing assessment activities. While uses of Tk20 vary widely from program to program, one powerful tool has been the ability of faculty to conduct rubric-based assessment of artifacts including portfolios. Other technological tools serve more to provide student success data. Implemented in Fall 2014, Navigate is a "big data" initiative that analyzes the past decade of student performance at our institution in order to provide predictive analytics related to courses and student attributes. Through tailored reports, departments are able to assess key trends and insights in student performance and identify opportunities for targeted initiatives, curricular change, or enhanced resources. It also provides a comprehensive advising platform that applies historical data analytics to current students in order to provide advisors with detailed insights, including predicted risk, for their advisees.

Additionally, Navigate is used each semester to collect data related to attendance, deficient midterm grades and non-registration status. It also allows faculty to issue referrals related to attendance, academic coaching, tutoring, and financial aid. Navigate was also used during Spring 2020 to gather information related to possible "walk-aways" resulting from the transition to fully remote learning. Most recently, the university adopted the EAB Academic Performance Solutions (APS) platform, which provides access to key metrics across student, HR, and finance data, to department chairs, deans and other senior leadership. APS also provides national and regional benchmarking, comparing data to peers and aspirational peers, as well as structured analytics to support academic planning and budgeting.

The OIRP provides reports, data, and data analysis to its campus constituents in an effort to sustain a culture of data-informed decision-making and to support the measurement of educational effectiveness. Student success data are published on the OIRP website via the University Factbook, Common Data Set, and Student Achievement Measures. The OIRP works with various offices across campus to ensure that data is collected and stored in a way that facilitates the availability of student success data for all populations, modalities and locations. To that end, FSU is currently implementing Edify, a data integration and visualization platform, which will facilitate data collection and sharing across campus.

## **Appraisal**

### **Curricular Assessment**

Overall, the combined efforts of faculty, UARC, OIRP, and Academic Affairs have helped insure a transparent, inclusive, and effective data collection and reflection process, highlighted by the Annual

Assessment Reports. In AY21, 100% of academic departments submitted an annual report. The process has been successful because it has yielded changes to the curriculum which have increased student success. The current program review guidelines, as approved through governance, provide a clear path for all programs to be regularly reviewed and assessed. This seven-year cycle ensures that the curriculum offered to all students, in all locations and modalities, is being assessed using direct and indirect methods and improved as needed.

An example of how data analysis led to changes in delivery can be seen in the Human Services program. Human Services assessed the program learning outcome “Students will be able to assess, analyze, and synthesize empirical research from a Human Services primary source” using papers from a research methods class. The attached [Table](#) shows results of those who achieved the proficient rating of 3 on a 4-point rubric. Between the 2018 and 2019 data collections, the class had gone back to using Open Educational Resources (OER) with suggested texts for those who preferred a book. More case studies were infused to help apply the material. Students achieving a high proficiency rating increased from 83% to 95%.

Another example of the cycle of evaluation and reflection is the Political Science program. Political Science uses TK20 to assess program learning outcomes in a portfolio submitted by fourth-year students. They have regularly improved this assessment process, producing changes that sometimes require further revision, but ultimately yield valuable data. During AY19, no data was available because of limitations that led to inter-rater reliability questions. These limitations were addressed and data collection ensued in AY20 with clearer guidelines for students on what was expected in the portfolios. The target for proficiency was 100%. The outcomes ranged from 82% to 86% in Fall 2019. In Fall 2020, three of the four outcomes achieved 100% efficiency, while political methodology was at 96.8%. See [Table](#) for details.

Finally, within the Accelerated Online MBA program, the Capstone Integrated Business Case was used to measure several Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), with the objective that at least 70% of graduating students should achieve a 4 or higher (out of a possible 6) on the rating scale for each ILO. 262 graduating students submitted artifacts in May 2019. The range of all 262 students was 5.10 to 5.30, and the overall mean for each criterion was 5.23. Because this fell well within the target range, no action was taken. The same data was collected in 2021 and again showed at least 70% of the 44 MBA students who submitted artifacts achieved a 4 or higher for each ILO. The rubric will be shared with all faculty who teach the course in the future.

SSC Navigate has produced data that has assisted in program reviews. Several examples of how this tool has been leveraged to increase undergraduate student learning follow. With the addition of graduate students to the platform, SGOCE plans to leverage data to improve retention, persistence, and graduation rates for graduate, online, and adult learners.

Based on SSC data, the Biology and Chemistry and Exercise Science departments discovered that students in these majors who perform poorly in lower-level classes (earned a 1.0 or lower in BIOL 1800 General Biology I or BIOL 1900 General Biology II; earned a D or F in Introduction to Exercise and Sports Science or Anatomy and Physiology I) are statistically unlikely to complete the program. In response, Biology and Chemistry required a minimum grade of 2.0 in each course and allowed students two attempts each. Exercise Science also set minimum grade requirements in order for students to progress to other courses. Both departments also updated advising to provide additional support to students struggling with these courses and encourage students who do not pass on the first attempt to explore alternative majors.



Integrating student learning data with SSC data in the Program Review process also leads to improvements in instruction and student learning. In AY19, the Psychological Science program review led to new internship requirements to increase student preparedness. This was based on gaps in knowledge students demonstrated when they had failing grades in Psychological Science courses before completing the internship. Therefore, a prerequisite was added that requires students to repeat any failed courses prior to the internship. The program review also led to the development of a Cultural Psychology course to be offered in AY22.

After the AY19 Communications Media program review, the program implemented several changes to support student learning, including participation in an Assessment Plan Workshop in May 2019 that produced updated program mission, goals, and student learning objectives. Each of the concentrations is now in the process of updating their learning outcomes to align with the department's new outcomes. The program also addressed the strategic plan's emphasis on helping transfer students complete degrees by creating a Graphic Design MassTransfer Pathway which allows transfer students to complete their degree in four semesters at FSU.

The Program Review process is also an important factor in resource allocation, allowing departments to integrate assessment findings into the budget request process. Resource allocation is often linked to initiatives that support student success by, for example, making sure students have access to tools or resources they need for future careers. The past two Communications Media program reviews have noted that department facilities are overdue for an upgrade. There was a tentative plan to renovate these areas in 2015, but the renovation was put on hold. It is not always clear to programs why some budget requests are funded and others are not. In order to better close the loop on this review process, programs would benefit from increased transparency as to why budget requests stemming from the program review are or are not approved, which would facilitate better long-term planning in the review process.

An example of a program review impacting budgeting is the 2019 Exercise Science program review, which led to the following purchases to improve learning: Education Recognized Program application to the National Strength and Conditioning Association for the Strength and Conditioning concentration (\$500); Purchase of motion analysis equipment for teaching and research (\$20,656); Membership fee for National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (\$175); and Equipment to support the Strength and Conditioning program (\$5,870).

For programs with licensing examinations, Nursing and Education, data from those exams is reviewed both annually and as part of program review, and the results are used to inform curricular and program revisions. FSU Nursing students have a first-time passing rate for NCLEX (which they take after completing the program) of 95%. The Nursing program uses both curricular and program-wide interventions to maintain high passing rates on the NCLEX. Over the last three years our NCLEX passing rate has increased by at least 2%. Nursing students within the program are assessed using the HESI exam to evaluate potential program areas of emphasis in preparation for the NCLEX exam.

The School of Education offers both undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to achieve learning outcomes, pass the MTELS, and graduate in all locations and all modalities. Published pass rates for the MTELS continue to be at 100%, as this is a requirement for program completers. However, the pass rate from the previous three years fluctuated between 53.1%-58.7% when including those who haven't completed the program. Previously, MTEL prep workshops had been implemented through the Center for Professional Studies. Due to low enrollment and inconsistent attendance, the Education program made MTEL prep a co-requisite for undergraduate courses, so they can track students' satisfactory or

unsatisfactory grades and first-time pass rates. The majority of MTEL prep workshops are now also online or hybrid. Curriculum changes within the Education department, as well as this emphasis on MTEL preparation, increased advising support, and participation in the FYE seminar have all been implemented in an effort to lead to an increase in MTEL pass rate for Education majors.

Based on MTEL pass rate data, the Mathematics department collaborated with Education to design content area courses to support student learning toward these exams. Current assessment data for these courses demonstrates a disparity of success rates related to race and ethnicity. Therefore, under the guidance of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Mathematics Department is proposing alternative pathways for students to demonstrate subject matter knowledge to support all of our students seeking teacher licensure.

Each program has clearly established learning outcomes that are clearly communicated to students. In conjunction with its student-centric website redesign, the University implemented a consistent system of publishing program learning outcomes, which was adopted by all undergraduate programs and is in the process of being implemented by graduate programs.

### **General Education**

To facilitate the approval of learning outcome designations for the new General Education curriculum and to oversee curriculum revisions in response to assessment and student success data, FSU established a standing General Education Subcommittee of the AUC Curriculum Committee for AY21. FSU also created a General Education Program Area, led by a chair and charged with creating a proposal to assess the curriculum, which was approved in August 2021. The proposal creates a General Education Ambassador and Assessment Program to provide a sustainable five-year assessment cycle. Year 1 Ambassadors have been appointed and work will begin in Spring 2022. The assessment plan proposal will pass through governance in AY22 with an implementation date of AY23. Program review will occur in AY28.

One element of the new General Education curriculum that has already begun to be implemented is the FYE seminar, developed based on the longer history of General Education assessment. Currently, the FYE consists only of the seminar (the co-curricular parts have not been developed yet) so the learning outcomes for the course are consistent with the learning outcomes for the program. The assessment materials for the outcomes are still being developed, based on the AAC&U rubrics for information literacy and reading and the reading apprenticeship model used in the three years of pilot courses. These are also learning outcomes for the broader General Education curriculum that will feed into assessment in later courses.

One of the main goals of the FYE is retention, and in Fall 2019 the retention rate was 2% higher for students enrolled in FYE than for those who are not, and 4% higher for LatinX male students, the group with the highest achievement difference on campus. Narrowing and eventually eliminating the achievement gap is a priority for FSU as well as the DHE, so these results are promising. The FYE program has also implemented a peer mentoring program for students in the FYE course. 93.1% of FYE students who accessed peer mentoring outside the classroom were retained (compared with 74.2% of FYE students who did not interact with peer mentors outside of the classroom and 82.1% of non-FYE students). 84% of freshmen who completed the Mid-Year Student Assessment (MYSA) Strongly Agreed or Agreed that the FYE was helpful.

### **Co-curricular Assessment**

The current Student Affairs assessment process was implemented in AY20, and continues into AY21 and

beyond. Though affected by COVID, the division continued the process and made progress on most goals, objectives, and key performance indicators. Below are some examples of student learning goals and results, as well as measures related to student success.

Housing and Residential Services provides opportunities for student staff to learn and practice the ability to engage in dialogue on diversity and inclusion. The student staff reported a high level of “I can completely engage” consistently across all categories of diversity presented, except for the topic of sexual violence. The results will impact future training and in-services. The student staff also were asked to “Define what diversity means to you.” The skill to verbally communicate their intentions and engage their diverse residential community will be supported by the understanding of these baseline terms. Finally, staff were asked to identify at minimum two diversity areas of strength and two areas of challenge. Data from these survey questions guided the Housing and Residential Services Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 student staff training.

TRIO Student Support Services peer mentors gained research skills enabling them to lead one of the First Four Weeks curriculum, demonstrating familiarity with curriculum development, rollout, and assessment. Squad members submitted an activity outline that meets the learning objectives of an assigned “week” during the First Four Weeks in Spring semester. Additionally, they demonstrated their understanding of how to assess student learning by suggesting an assessment method through which comprehension of their assigned activity could be measured.

As part of the federal grant, every year TRIO SSS students learn about financial literacy. In AY21, pre-and post-test results showed that students were more knowledgeable about how to read credit card statements, check credit scores, and establish credit.

The Office of Student Development conducted the second round of a Belonging Study in AY21 comparing students who are actively engaged with those who are not. The data demonstrates that students who are engaged report a deep sense of belonging. Counseling Services, Office of Student Development, and the ACT Center were identified as the top three services that students utilize. Uninvolved students reported relying on faculty and academic advisors as a critical connection to FSU. These data have been shared with the Student Success Center and the Center for Teaching and Learning to incorporate into trainings of academic advisors/faculty.

In AY20, the Athletics and Recreation Department focused on promoting good sportsmanship for student-athletes. Team leaders and athletes participated in pre- and post-tests around a topical speaker. Team leaders gave their team a higher sportsmanship ranking in the “before” survey compared to the “after” survey. Almost all teams ranked their teams one to two points lower than what they filled out originally. The student-athletes developed a more complex understanding of sportsmanship through this assessment.

One of Counseling Services’ AY21 goals was to increase the intentional implementation of treatment plans and goals. A pilot program asked new clients to complete the Pre-Appointment Questionnaire (PAQ) during the intake process and again after the fifth session of clinical intervention. Student patients given the PAQ at intake and again at the start of a new semester were able to reflect on the mitigation of symptoms and to be more collaborative and intentional with treatment planning. By taking the PAQ twice and engaging in dialogue with the counselor, students demonstrated learning of coping strategies that assist in their progress.

In AY21, the Dean of Students, Office of Student Development, and University Police reviewed policies, procedures, and practices with an equity lens in order to support the university's efforts at education justice and being a student-ready campus. In AY22, Counseling Services, Housing and Residential Services, and Athletics and Recreation will conduct equity reviews.

The Dean of Students is working with Institutional Research to examine student conduct data and academic standing data disaggregated by race and ethnicity. In addition, Housing and Residential Services is conducting a similar analysis for residence hall policy violations. Staff in many student affairs departments pursued training related to the Equity Agenda to support the vision of education justice and a student-ready campus. For example, the Counseling Services' Associate Director was trained as a facilitator of the *21-Day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge* and led the staff in this project over several weeks in April 2021. Office of Student Development staff completed Harvard's Implicit Bias Inventory and are working with the Intercultural Development Inventory, creating individual Intercultural Development Plans.

The University Police Department (UPD) is close to completing the review and revision of policies and procedures necessary to become accredited through the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA). Accreditation supports student success by providing greater accountability and competency by officers and staff in daily operations. It is anticipated that UPD will be accredited by June 30, 2022. UPD is also aligning their policies and procedures with the Council for the Advancement of Standards and the MA Police Officer Standards and Training. They have also reviewed policies and procedures with an equity lens.

### **Institutional Assessment**

One approach to learning outcomes assessment that supports both General Education assessment and Institutional Learning Priorities (ILPs) has been the campus participation in the AAC&U VALUE Institute. This process involves collecting artifacts from students who have completed at least 90 credits, which are then scored by VALUE Institute reviewers. Participation in the VALUE Institute also provides opportunities for FSU faculty be trained as national scorers; in AY19 12 FSU faculty and staff participated. Our participation also provides an opportunity to benchmark assessment results against both national standards and peer institutions. In AY19, 88 artifacts were submitted to the VALUE Institute for the Critical Thinking VALUE Rubric.

When comparing our AY19 results with overall state-wide findings from participating institutions, our artifacts scored average for 4-year institutions. These findings will be compared to AY20 findings to determine possible effects of remote learning when made available.

In AY20, the Director of Assessment, in concert with UARC, conducted a self-study on assessment, based on the NILOA Excellence in Assessment application, in preparation of applying for future designation. The process highlighted the need for FSU to develop an institutional level assessment plan. The recent approval of the ILPs and the new General Education curriculum, combined with the emerging development of common graduate program learning outcomes, sets the stage for this work to begin.

In our Center for Professional Studies, which offers continuing education credits in various disciplines, some graduate and undergraduate credit-bearing courses, content for lifelong learning, content for businesses and organizations, and workshops, assessment is dependent on the type of content offered and instructor preferences. Programs offered in conjunction with extended campus partners are included as part of departments' program review.

The Student Success Task Force has embarked on a comprehensive and inclusive process to define student success which will include qualitative and quantitative measures. A benchmark process evaluated how similar institutions define student success and a literature review analyzed best practices for assessing it. A qualitative survey was administered in Spring 2021 to glean student, faculty, and staff perceptions of student success. In AY22, focus groups will be hosted to discuss experiences around student success. Data from these efforts will be analyzed to craft an institutional definition for student success, with implementation in Fall 2022.

In addition to institutional data about student learning, the university collects data on student rates of retention, progression, transfer, graduation, and loan repayment to evaluate educational effectiveness. In the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, FSU identified a goal of reaching and maintaining a retention rate of 80%. Although this goal was not met, rates have improved over the past three years, moving from 73% in 2019 to 74% in 2020 and 77% in 2021. The 2020-2025 strategic plan reaffirms our commitment to a retention rate of 80%. Retention rates for graduate, distance education and additional location programs are strong at 90-94%.

In the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, FSU set a goal to increase the six-year graduation rate by 5%. This goal was achieved with a graduation rate of 58% in AY20. The university has set a goal of achieving a 62% six-year graduation rate as part of its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. Graduation rates for graduate, distance education, and additional location programs are strong at 85-100%.

In evaluating the use of traditional student success data, FSU has emphasized improving equity and inclusion. In its 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, FSU set priorities of increasing the enrollment of international and LatinX students and improving six-year graduation rates of LatinX students. At the conclusion of AY20, all goals had been met, with international enrollment increasing by 41%, LatinX enrollment increasing to 12.4% and the LatinX graduation rate increasing to 54% (from 32%). The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan includes a goal of improving the student success of underrepresented populations. The university also implemented campus climate surveys in Spring 2018 and Fall 2020 to provide data on the experiences of underrepresented students. As a result of the 2018 data, the Biology and Chemistry department launched a program using peer-led focus groups and data collection to evaluate barriers for BIPOC students in STEM.

In 2018, the Assistant to the Provost and the Dean of Students conducted a study in which they reviewed ten years of data about academic standing. They found that students who went on academic probation (with a G.P.A. under 2.0) had a 4% chance of graduation, while those who had a 2.0-2.5 GPA had a 35% chance. These results led to a new academic standing called Academic Warning for students with a G.P.A. of 2.0-2.2. This designation means that a student is still in good standing but in danger of probation. Students in this category are required to meet with a coach from ACT to determine need for services. On average, 150 students per semester are flagged as Academic Warning, triggering outreach by student support offices.

FSU has a cohort default rate below the national average, which it publishes along average student loan debt upon graduation and loan repayment estimates.

Retention, persistence, and graduation rates are very strong for the graduate population. The SGOCE, with dedicated retention and student success staff, has for many years conducted targeted outreach to both registered and stop-out students in an effort to improve persistence rates and provide personalized advising services. The SGOCE staff plan to leverage SSC Navigate to better understand the success rates of



graduate students by program, modality, and location. The implementation of the Edify data integration platform will further facilitate this work.

In a January 2021 survey FSU faculty and staff were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, “The University develops and uses data, evidence, and information to improve educational effectiveness,” and 78% Strongly Agreed/Agreed. This demonstrates an awareness of a culture of data-informed decision-making that FSU can continue to build upon.

SSC data has resulted in numerous student success initiatives since its inception. For example, based on data indicating that students without a declared major have significantly lower graduation rates (19% vs. 52%), a policy was adopted in AY16 whereby undeclared majors would be required to declare a major within 45 earned credits. Corresponding support was provided by the Academic Advising Center. Similarly, in Fall 2015, when SSC data analytics demonstrated higher outcomes for students taking a full load, FSU implemented a “15 to Finish” preregistration policy for our incoming freshmen. SSC data also served as the impetus for the Academic Warning policy that was implemented in 2018 as well as the curricular changes to minimum grade requirements in the EXSS major and in MATH 2300, both in AY16.

In Spring 2019, Enrollment Census reporting transitioned from Banner self-service to SSC Navigate, resulting in significantly higher faculty response rates (88% versus 11%), increased reported at-risk students (211 vs. 32), holistic proactive outreach to at-risk students and access to more meaningful outcomes data. Enrollment Census reporting collects data on students that never attended, stopped attending or have missed class at the conclusion of the Add/Drop period. Students reported as at-risk receive an email encouraging them to schedule an appointment with the ACT via an imbedded link. Additionally, the ACT staff tailor outreach to students based upon the frequency of incidents of at-risk behavior.

In Fall 2019, deficient midterm grade reporting was moved from Banner self-service to SSC Navigate resulting in improved faculty participation rates (70% versus 46%), increased reported at-risk students (1,138 vs. 819), proactive outreach to at-risk students and more meaningful outcomes data. Data from the platform is reviewed and shared each semester. As an example, in Fall 2020 145 faculty identified 1,100 students with deficient midterm grades. Students that subsequently met with the ACT staff had a .98 average grade increase in their final grade.

Overall, adoption of SSC Navigate has been strong with thousands of students annually connecting with advising and tutoring through the platform. The platform also provides the ability to measure intervention effectiveness. For example, students with an appointment during AY20 had a higher Fall 2020 persistence rate than those that did not (84.8% vs. 65.6%.)

Leading for Change data, which provided ten years of retention and graduation rate data disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, first generation and low-income status, highlighted the achievement gap experienced by our male LatinX student population. As a result, FSU instituted the Hispanic Male Mentoring Program in the Fall 2018. Now running in its fourth year, results have been promising with the Fall 2020 cohort being retained at a much higher rate (76% versus 56% for non-mentored male LatinX students). The Leading for Change data is updated and reviewed annually and shared on the OIRP website.

Departmental Trend Data has historically provided academic offices with important student success data that allows for annual reflection and inclusion in the program review. Departments use the data in various ways. For example, for students not succeeding in the major, the departments of Nursing and

Biology/Chemistry developed advising procedures to recommend alternative programs and pathways.

Recently, based on a comprehensive data set, the Summer Bridge Program was transitioned from Student Affairs to the ACT, allowing for continued intentional support into the fall semester. Additionally, the curriculum for Summer Bridge was modified, replacing Health and Fitness with Writing I and increasing the seminar course to two credits.

### **Assessment Tools**

Internally developed surveys such as the alumni and graduating student surveys provide opportunities to collect quantitative and qualitative data to support strategic planning, program review and curricular and co-curricular assessment. Analysis of open-ended responses in these surveys could be strengthened. Alumni, industry, and community committees provide another source of qualitative data to inform program reviews and improve student experiences.

Data on job placement outside of accredited programs is limited. Although graduating student data has been collected since 2008 and alumni data since 2017, response rates fail to support meaningful post-graduation outcomes analysis at the program level. The DHE has made forays into providing this data to the state universities in recognition of both the challenges and importance of collecting this information. Individual academic departments have had some success with response rates using their own surveys, but this approach does not support the aggregation of data at the institutional level. In AY20, a university-wide group attempted to make inroads, but the pandemic delayed meaningful progress. The OIRP is currently attempting to increase response rates with the assistance of the academic departments and the Registrar. Utilization of the individual academic departmental email accounts in sending the 2020 alumni survey resulted in some improvement in response rates. However, programs with small numbers of graduates may still struggle with meaningful results even with improved response rates and when aggregated over multiple years.

In 2020, the graduating student survey was revised into two surveys, one for undergraduate and one for graduate students, to better capture distinct outcomes. The Graduation Survey for Undergraduate Students focuses on quality perceptions, learning outcomes, experiential learning, and post-graduation plans. The Graduation Survey for Graduate Students focuses on quality perceptions, motivations, learning outcomes and post-graduation plans.

AY21 graduation data on undergraduate students indicates solid achievement of intended learning outcomes with 73-86% reporting that FSU prepared them very well or well in a variety of professional and personal skills. 70% of respondents reported they had secured full-time employment, full-time enrollment in graduate school, a fellowship or an internship. This revised version of the survey does not differentiate between employment within and outside of the discipline of study; this will be corrected in the AY22 administration. Worthy of further exploration, but understandable given the circumstances of classes forced to move online and cancelled graduation ceremonies in Spring 2020, is that only 43% of respondents reported their likelihood to stay connected to the campus after completing their degree as Very High or High. Another 34% reported that likelihood as Average. Please see [Table](#) for more detailed data.

AY21 Data collected from the [Graduation Survey for Graduate Students](#) showed strong achievement of six separate learning outcomes (adapted from University of San Diego). 89.23% of graduates responded that they believed their achievement of the learning outcome “Ability to engage in critical inquiry through principle approaches to methods and through effective and ethical information search and evaluation

strategies” was either excellent or above average. Also, 89.32% of graduates responded that they believed their achievement of the learning outcome “Ability to communicate effectively in presenting ideas orally and in writing” was either excellent or above average. It is notable that these results were very similar across all six learning outcomes, with results ranging from 87-89%. The Graduation Survey for Graduate Students also asked about primary expected employment status after graduation as it stands currently. It is significant that 85% of graduates listed their expected employment status as “Full-time” employment and 10% “Unemployed and actively seeking employment.”

The survey of first, third and fifth year alumni paints a more promising picture of employment and graduate school enrollment than the graduating student survey. The recent graduating student surveys reported how many students had been accepted into a graduate program, and this number was relatively low in both 2019 and 2020 (8% and 12% respectively). In contrast, the Data First forms indicate how many students actually completed a graduate program within eight years of graduation. This data indicates 27% for 2019, 23% for 2020, and 20% for 2021, consistent with data from first, third and fifth year alumni on the alumni survey. See [Table](#).

While employment rates in a field related to their degree (61-79%) and career satisfaction (67- 82%) are relatively favorable amongst first, third, and fifth year alumni, the institution is making efforts to try to improve the rate at which students have a clear pathway to secure employment or graduate study in an area related to their field of study. The university has committed to embedding career competencies into the curriculum and has secured a Davis Foundation grant of \$200,000 to fund curriculum work, faculty professional development, and the addition of an Associate Director of Internship Development and Employer Relations within the Career Services and Advising Center. This provides just one more concrete example of the manner in which the institution is continuing to reflect on and use data to inform campus priorities.

Utilization of Tk20 is inconsistent and overall the tool is not viewed as user-friendly or useful. The university is currently reviewing alternative tools that can support holistic, campus-wide assessment and planning.

NSSE provides the University with meaningful data and regional and national peer benchmarking of student experiences. Ten engagement indicators, including higher order learning, reflective and integrative learning, quantitative learning, collaborative learning, and effective teaching practices, provide valuable insights into students’ experiences in their first and senior years. FSU has also administered additional modules over the years, electing to utilize *Inclusiveness and Engagement with Cultural Diversity* and *Experiences with Online Learning* in 2020, due to our commitment to Education Justice and the recent transition to fully online learning. Based on multiple years of NSSE data that indicated that freshmen experienced a lower than average number of advising meetings, an effort was made to increase awareness of and participation in the opening week departmental advising meeting. NSSE data has historically been underutilized but represents an opportunity moving forward. The NSSE data were shared with UARC during AY21 and the committee will conduct a more thorough review during AY22 and make recommendations as to how best share this data campus-wide.

The CSI provides the university with rich data at both the individual and aggregate level. Information regarding risk related to dropout proneness, predicted academic difficulty, and educational stress are loaded into Banner and SSC Navigate so that faculty and staff advisors have access. Individual student reports, detailing the results of the survey, are loaded into SSC Navigate and have been utilized in FYE seminars to support habits of mind and self-advocacy. The Retention Management System (RMS), which



allows academic and student support staff to download survey data, connects resources with the students seeking them. Aggregate data provides the university with an overview of the incoming class in regards to readiness and resource needs. These data are also disaggregated by race and ethnicity. The Office of TRIO SSS uses RMS data to compare their students' Academic Motivation, General Coping Skills and Receptivity to Help to the general FSU population. Additionally, TRIO also uses the data to create advising plans for each student that enable students to build on their strengths and identify challenges for which TRIO SSS can provide support. Since AY21, the Student Success Taskforce has identified CSI data utilization as a priority for the committee.

As with the CSI, the MYSA provides the University with robust data at both the individual and aggregate level and allows academic and student support offices to easily identify and connect to students seeking their services. Unique to the MYSA is the ability to evaluate student utilization of resources and the resulting efficacy. As with the CSI, some FYE faculty are incorporating the MYSA survey into coursework in order to better support the intended learning outcomes. The Student Success Taskforce will review MYSA data during AY22 in order to identify ways to expand its application and utilization.

The ASPS provides the university with meaningful data regarding the experiences of our adult undergraduate and graduate populations. The Dean of SGOCE shares the data with the campus and uses it in divisional planning.

The May 2020 COVID Response Survey was designed to evaluate the university's response to the pandemic and its transition to remote learning, as well as to inform planning. 92% of student respondents strongly agreed or agreed that FSU had done a good job protecting students from the negative health consequences of COVID and 70% strongly agreed or agreed that FSU had done a good job transitioning to remote learning. Quiet space for completing work and sufficient time to complete assignments were top challenges, more than internet and computer access. 64% of respondents reported being concerned about their mental health and only 9% felt a very strong connection to the university, with 53% reporting very little to no connection. The most utilized student support service during the transition to remote learning was faculty advising at 26%, followed by Registrar at 25% and Library at 18%.

The Course Delivery Poll provided FSU with useful information regarding course delivery post-pandemic. In general, students indicated a preference to return to mostly face-to-face classes with some hybrid options. Students reported flexibility as the main reason for preferring online/hybrid options, with few students indicating that they learn better via online/hybrid. Students indicated the same level of preference for asynchronous versus synchronous delivery. Overall, this data provided useful information in planning for Fall 2021 and beyond.

The 2018 and 2020 administrations of the Campus Climate Survey provided the university with robust data regarding the experiences of our students, faculty, librarians, staff and administrators. The data was disaggregated by various subpopulations including race and ethnicity and the 2018 data was benchmarked against Bridgewater State University and Framingham State University. The 2018 data and summary documents were shared with the campus community who were asked to review and reflect upon the data. Divisions and offices were encouraged to conduct meetings and identify action items that they, or the university as a whole, could undertake to improve the experience of campus members, particularly students of color, since survey data indicated this population was having a less positive experience.

An example of the resulting action is the Biology and Chemistry Department which examined the results of the 2018 survey and from those results began a concerted effort to identify a way to address the

gaps. Faculty recognized that dissatisfaction could lead to a range of outcomes, including marginalization, poor academic performance, and dropping out. The group over the years has spent time applying for funding, including a Balfour Grant, engaging in book group discussions, and engaging in campus-wide opportunities to address issues on campus.

The 2018 and 2020 Climate Survey data played an important role during the strategic planning process and continues to be a major focus of the Leading for Change Committee.

FSU has an ongoing commitment to data collection and use to improve educational effectiveness across campus. In addition to ongoing program and department assessment, new Institutional Learning Priorities were developed and recently passed through governance, as was the new General Education curriculum. The campus will now work to align them with assessment strategies, allowing them to be better incorporated in future strategic planning.

Data has been strategically used to guide executive leadership during the pandemic, advance equity and inclusiveness, and navigate issues of enrollment and retention. FSU's implementation of Edify, which unifies and organizes data assets across campus into a single centralized visualization platform to support real-time decision making, is evidence of a clear commitment to data-informed planning. These efforts demonstrate our continued commitment to our mission and strategic plan, to serve all students and achieve education justice.

### **Projections**

The General Education Program Area will implement an Assessment Plan by AY23.

Led by the VP of Student Affairs, SA departments will implement a review process in FY23 similar to academic department program review. Nationally-benchmarked standards such as those published by the Council for the Advancement of Standards will provide the foundation.

OIRP will collaborate with the Office of Alumni and Development, department chairs, Registrar, and Career Services to implement strategies to increase response rates on both the Alumni and Graduating Students Surveys in order to provide more robust data to departments by AY23.

**STANDARD 8: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS  
(Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Rates)**

Student Success Measures/Prior Performance and Goals	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)
<b>IPEDS Retention Data</b>					
Bachelors degree students	78%	73%	74%	77%	75%
<b>IPEDS Graduation Data (150% of time)</b>					
Bachelors degree students	60%	61%	58%	58%	58%
<b>IPEDS Outcomes Measures Data</b>					
<b>First-time, full time students</b>					
Awarded a degree within six years	53%	53%	60%	61%	60%
Awarded a degree within eight years	54%	54%	61%	62%	61%
Not awarded within eight years but still enrolled	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
<b>First-time, part-time students</b>					
Awarded a degree within six years	0%	13%	9%	17%	15%
Awarded a degree within eight years	20%	13%	9%	17%	15%
Not awarded within eight years but still enrolled	0%	0%	9%	9%	9%
<b>Non-first-time, full-time students</b>					
Awarded a degree within six years	63%	61%	59%	61%	60%
Awarded a degree within eight years	65%	63%	61%	63%	62%
Not awarded within eight years but still enrolled	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
<b>Non-first-time, part-time students</b>					
Awarded a degree within six years	36%	37%	44%	42%	42%
Awarded a degree within eight years	41%	42%	51%	44%	44%
Not awarded within eight years but still enrolled	3%	4%	2%	4%	4%

**Other Undergraduate Retention/Persistence Rates  
(Add definitions/methodology in #1 below)**

Male	75%	71%	69%	73%	72%
Female	82%	76%	78%	79%	78%
Minority	79%	70%	64%	71%	70%
Male Hispanic/Latino	74%	57%	44%	59%	58%
Female Hispanic/Latina	77%	77%	72%	81%	80%
Male African American/Black	71%	70%	51%	65%	64%
Female African American/Black	85%	76%	78%	72%	71%
Male White	73%	73%	78%	80%	79%
Female White	83%	76%	79%	80%	79%

**Other Undergraduate Graduation Rates  
(Add definitions/methodology in # 2 below)**

Male	55%	54%	53%	53%	52%
Female	63%	67%	62%	61%	60%
Minority	49%	59%	54%	52%	51%
Pell Recipient	55%	60%	49%	55%	54%
Male Hispanic/Latino	40%	47%	39%	37%	36%
Female Hispanic/Latina	55%	62%	65%	56%	55%
Male African American/Black	45%	64%	56%	55%	54%
Female African American/Black	63%	81%	67%	69%	68%

Male White		58%	55%	56%	57%	56%
Female White		65%	67%	62%	62%	61%

**Definition and Methodology Explanations**

Other Undergraduate Retention/Persistence Rates = IPEDS definition
Other Undergraduate Graduation Rates = IPEDS definition

Note: complete this form for each distinct student body identified by the institution (See Standard 8.1)

**STANDARD 8: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**  
**(Student Success and Progress Rates and Other Measures of Student Success)**

Category of Student/Outcome Measure	Bachelor Cohort Entering		Associate Cohort Entering	
	6 years ago	4 years ago	6 years ago	4 years ago
<b>First-time, Full-time Students</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>758</b>		
Degree from original institution	58%	40%		
Not graduated, still enrolled at original institution	2%	21%		
Degree from a different institution	12%	7%		
Transferred to a different institution	13%	16%		
Not graduated, never transferred, no longer enrolled	15%	16%		
<b>First-time, Part-time Students</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>		
Degree from original institution	40%	0%		
Not graduated, still enrolled at original institution	20%	25%		
Degree from a different institution	0%	0%		
Transferred to a different institution	0%	0%		
Not graduated, never transferred, no longer enrolled	40%	75%		
<b>Non-first-time, Full-time Students</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>308</b>		
Degree from original institution	68%	54%		
Not graduated, still enrolled at original institution	1%	10%		
Degree from a different institution	8%	4%		
Transferred to a different institution	12%	12%		
Not graduated, never transferred, no longer enrolled	11%	19%		
<b>Non-first-time, Part-time Students</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>67</b>		
Degree from original institution	45%	42%		
Not graduated, still enrolled at original institution	4%	9%		
Degree from a different institution	8%	3%		
Transferred to a different institution	10%	13%		
Not graduated, never transferred, no longer enrolled	33%	33%		

Measures of Student Achievement and Success/Institutional Performance and Goals					
	3 Yrs. Prior	2 Yrs. Prior	1 Yr. Prior	Current Year Prior	Next Yr. Forward (goal)
	(AY19)	(AY20)	(AY21)	(AY22)	(AY23)
<b>Success of students pursuing higher degrees</b> (add more rows as needed; add definitions/methodology in #1 below)					
Percent UG graduating class that earned higher degree within 8 or more years	27%	23%	20%	22%	20%
<b>Other measures of student success and achievement, including success of graduates in pursuing mission-related paths (e.g., Peace Corps, public service, global citizenship, leadership, spiritual formation) and success of graduates in fields for which they were not explicitly prepared (add more rows as needed; add definitions/methodology in #2 below)</b>					

**Other measures of student success and achievement: NSSE Survey Results for Seniors**

Percent stated they would definitely or probably choose to attend Fitchburg State if they could start over	79%	NA	76%	NA	78
Percent evaluate their entire educational experience as excellent or good	80%	NA	81%	NA	80

**Other measures of student success and achievement: Graduating Student Survey**

Percent indicate level of academic growth while at FSU was Very Significant or Significant	91%	84%			
Percent indicate level of personal growth while at FSU was Very Significant or Significant	89%	87%			
Percent indicate level of professional growth while at FSU was Very Significant or Significant	91%	92%			
Percent indicate overall satisfaction with experience at FSU as Very High or High	83%	80%			
Percent indicate likelihood to recommend the University to others as Very High or High	80%	77%			

**Other measures of student success and achievement: Graduating Student Survey for Undergraduate Students**

Percent indicate level of overall satisfaction with experience at FSU was Very High or High			72%		73%
Percent indicate likelihood to recommend FSU to others was Very High or High			67%		68%

**Other measures of student success and achievement: Graduating Student Survey for Graduate Students**

Percent Strongly Agree or Agree that attending FSU was the right decision			95%		95%
Percent Strongly Agree or Agree would recommend FSU to a friend or colleague			93%		93%
Percent Strongly Agree or Agree that graduate school provided a higher level of learning when compared to undergraduate experience			76%		76%

**STANDARD 8: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**  
**(Licensure Passage and Job Placement Rates and Completion and Placement Rates**  
**for Short-Term Vocational Training Programs)**

	3-Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Most Recent Year
	(AY 18)	(AY 19)	(AY 20)	(AY 21)

**State Licensure Examination Passage Rates**

Name of exam	# who took exam	# who passed	# who took exam	# who passed	# who took exam	# who passed	# who took exam	# who passed
1 MA Test for Educator Licensure (MTEL)	1,469	862	1,383	784	622*	330	868	488
2 * AY20 test takers low due to COVID-19								
3								
4								
5								

**National Licensure Passage Rates**

Name of exam	# who took exam	# who passed	# who took exam	# who passed	# who took exam	# who passed	# who took exam	# who passed
1 National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCLEX)	70	65	65	63	81	77	53	49
2								
3								
4								
5								

**Job Placement Rates**

Major	*	Class of 2016	Class of 2017	Class of 2019	Class of 2020
1 Nursing Program		80%	81%	85%	78%
Major	*	Class of 2016	Class of 2017	Class of 2018	Class of 2019
1 Education Program		82%	80%	85%	84%

\* Check this box if the program reported is subject to "gainful employment" requirements.

**Web location of gainful employment report (if applicable)**

**Completion and Placement Rates for Short-Term Vocational Training Programs for which students are eligible for Federal Financial Aid**

	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)
	(FY 2 )	(FY2 )	(FY 2 )	(FY 2 )	(FY 2 )

**Completion Rates**

1					
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**Placement Rates**

1					
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Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Job Placement Rates: Nursing Program rates are calculated by the Nursing Department; Education Program rates are calculated by the Commonwealth of MA and reflect employment in a MA public school  
<https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/epp/student.aspx?orgcode=30000022&leftNavId=12483&>

**STANDARD 8: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**  
**(Graduate Programs, Distance Education, Off-Campus Locations)**

Student Success Measures/Prior Performance and Goals	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)
	(AY18)	(AY19)	(AY20)	(AY21)	(AY22)
<b>Master's Programs (Add definitions/methodology in #1 below)</b>					
Retention rates first-to-second year	86%	85%	86%	91%	90%
Graduation rates @ 150% time	81%	89%	89%	85%	84%
Average time to degree	1.5 yrs	1.7 yrs	1.8 yrs	1.6 yrs	1.7 yrs
Other measures, specify:					
<b>Doctoral Programs (Add definitions/methodology in #2 below)</b>					
Retention rates first-to-second year					
Graduation rates @ 150% time					
Average time to degree					
Other measures, specify:					
<b>First Professional Programs (Add definitions/methodology in #3 below)</b>					
Retention rates first-to-second year					
Graduation rates @ 150% time					
Average time to degree					
Other measures, specify:					
<b>Distance Education (Add definitions/methodology in #4 below)</b>					
Course completion rates - GR	96%	96%	96%	96%	95%
Course completion rates- UG	86%	87%	90%	88%	87%
Retention rates (GR)	*	91%	86%	90%	89%
Graduation rates (GR)	*	*	83%	85%	84%
Other measures, specify:					
Persistence rate first AY to second AY (UG)	68%	55%	67%	68%	67%
<b>Branch Campus and Instructional Locations (Add definitions/methodology in #5 below)</b>					
Course completion rates	99%	98%	98%	99%	98%
Retention rates	86%	86%	86%	94%	90%
Graduation rates	93%	93%	91%	100%	95%
Other measures, specify:					
<b>Definition and Methodology Explanations</b>					
1	Entering FT GR Cohorts, all modalities, excluding Counseling due to program credits. Average time to degree: from point of admission				
2					
3					
4	Courses: all fully online courses. Retention and graduation rates: fully online programs only using same methodology as in 1. * indicates n < 15.				
5	UG Persistence: fully online, returned during AY following admission				
	Extended campus				



## Standard Nine: Integrity, Transparency and Public Disclosure

### Integrity

#### Description

FSU is committed to maintaining high ethical standards and meeting its responsibilities while upholding integrity for its students, prospective students, and other audiences. These values exemplify the process of creating the 2020-2025 [Strategic Plan](#). Integrity underscores a theme highlighted in several university academic publications, all available on the website.

Prominent among this documentation, the university [catalog](#) provides comprehensive, updated course descriptions and program listings, including links to academic policies and procedures. The university's [academic integrity policy](#) illustrates for students the requirement to submit work honestly without falsifying results or plagiarizing. This policy also defines the adjudicatory process when an alleged violation occurs and the sanctions applied if an allegation is proven.

The [faculty handbook](#) provides syllabi guidelines for both undergraduate and graduate courses with specific information regarding the inclusion of a statement about the academic integrity policy. These guidelines also provide important information about the inclusion of statements regarding [services available to students with disabilities](#). [Syllabus templates](#) are publicly available online for faculty from our extended campus programs. A [digital course review](#) rubric is used to evaluate courses that are designed to be offered in an online format.

Academic freedom remains central to institutional integrity. The university values the opportunities provided to faculty and students as they teach, study, and conduct research. Academic freedom is defined and outlined in faculty [collective bargaining agreements](#) which are followed by administration. These agreements are also posted online for public view.

To further those objectives, the university maintains a [Center for Teaching and Learning](#) and a [Center for Faculty Scholarship](#), each of which hosts programs every academic year designed to celebrate faculty achievements and inspire meaningful dialogue across disciplines.

Students further benefit from the university's commitment to "providing a campus environment where the ideas, values, perspectives and contributions of all students are respected" (per the [catalog](#)). A significant mechanism for this work is the annual [Undergraduate Conference on Research and Creative Practice](#), where students are encouraged to create original work under the sponsorship of a faculty mentor and share it at an annual conference open to the campus and wider community. Classes are canceled the day of the conference to encourage attendance and participation at this celebration of student achievement. Students are also provided with opportunities to participate in key decision-making committees, such as the All University Committee (AUC).

Beyond the classroom, FSU also fosters an inclusive atmosphere. The university recognizes the importance of athletics to the university experience. Its [student-athletes](#) compete in the National Collegiate Athletic Association's Division III, and the athletic departments are [committed](#) to providing high-quality athletic and recreation programs that challenge our students to achieve their potential and support their academic endeavors. Athletics and recreational services extend education beyond the classrooms and foster student engagement, leadership, and development. Our inclusive programs impact the physical, social, and emotional well-being of all participants and encourage a lifelong commitment to health and wellness.

FSU also has committees and policies governing responsible conduct in human subject research, animal care and use, and biosafety. Information and policies are posted online.

While these research opportunities are public, the institution takes student privacy seriously and abides by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). On the university website, the registrar's page includes information detailing FERPA's definitions and exemptions, along with mechanisms to seek redress if students believe their FERPA rights have been violated. The Registrar sends an email to all students annually reminding them that their educational records are protected and that sharing of such information without their consent is restricted. Information on FERPA is also included in the faculty handbook.

Additionally, the majority of employees, members of collective bargaining units, gain protections under contracts, posted online and available publicly. The university's Human Resources and Payroll Services Department page includes links to those documents, along with the institution's comprehensive Equal Opportunity Plan. This plan outlines expectations, as well as policies and processes governing Title IX violations, along with anti-discrimination and harassment complaint procedures. The plan, shared with Massachusetts' other state universities, is drafted in consultation with legal counsel. This updated document changes according to state and federal guidelines, and the campus community is notified annually of its rights and responsibilities. Information on how to file complaints is detailed online.

The university is supported by a professional police department whose responsibilities include compliance with the Clery Act. The HR page also includes a comprehensive list of policies affecting employees, with a thorough review of those expectations occurring as part of each new hire's onboarding process. The institution ensures that all employees receive adequate and regular training for adherence to state and federal laws, including Title IX, with all relevant training documented.

New first-year and transfer students receive annual training, including during orientation, about sexual assault and harassment, which defines the community's expectations of conduct.

As one of the nine state universities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, FSU is granted the authority to award degrees by the MA Department of Higher Education (DHE). FSU demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationship to the DHE through regular communication and attention to regulations by the university's liaison to NECHE, the Provost, and the President.

Overall, FSU expects that all members of its community, including administrators, faculty and staff, students, and members of the Board of Trustees, act with integrity in the responsible and ethical pursuit of the university's mission.

## **Appraisal**

FSU has appropriate infrastructure to maintain ethical standards. Employees are trained to comply with the state's conflict of interest law as required by the Ethics Commission. This involves an online module completed every two years, with completion tracked by HR.

Faculty and students are also made aware of their ethical expectations and obligations. For example, faculty must disclose authorship of assigned books in courses. The academic integrity policy is widely available and the faculty handbook outlines ethical standards and guidelines.

Students are expected to understand and apply standards of academic integrity described in the student handbook and referenced in course syllabi. Additionally, the library has created an Academic Participation and Honesty online tutorial which is embedded in First-Year Experience courses, and the library offers workshops for international graduate and undergraduate students in this area when they arrive on campus. Furthermore, professional development opportunities are provided through the Center for

Teaching and Learning and during training for new faculty. The website also provides information on how to report violations of the policy.

The university is required to follow federal regulatory guidelines when engaging in activities involving human participants, vertebrates, and biosafety. Since 2012, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has been revised and the Institutional Animal Care and Use (IACUC) and Biosafety Committees established. In 2015 a comprehensive approach to compliance was adopted. Key changes include assigning oversight for the three committees to the Dean of Health and Natural Sciences, establishing an MSCA process for nominating and appointing members to the three committees, and requiring training for all regulated activities using the online CITI training.

The institution does well at understanding and protecting privacy. Full-time employees, contractors, and faculty receive training in expectations around privacy and procedures remain strong and effective. The IT Department has clear policies and guidelines regarding information security and acceptable use, which are regularly updated and disseminated.

It is a strength that FSU has allocated resources to compliance-related matters such as Title IX and the Clery Act. This includes creating a full-time Director of Compliance as well as funding to provide guidance on the creation of the Clery-mandated annual security report. This is especially important as federal guidelines around Title IX/Clery have changed considerably and non-compliance with these expectations would put the institution at considerable risk. The Director of Compliance oversees Title IX/ADA as well as EEO/AA.

One strength for policy availability stems from the HR website. A comprehensive list of policies located there provides valuable information for employees. The website, catalog, and handbooks also contain university-wide and academic policies as well as policies for student organizations. However, policies and processes can be difficult to find because they exist in several locations across the university's website and publications. Having a centralized, searchable web page that lists all policies could make it easier to locate important information.

Another strength is the regular updates to policies that have a connection to external regulatory oversight and updates. One example is the Equal Opportunity Plan, which was revised in 2020 as a result of updated federal Title IX regulations and again in 2021 under the new Director of Compliance.

That said, it is difficult to verify when other internal policies have been updated. This does not apply to all internal policies. For example, the Student Code of Conduct has been updated recently and is available on the website. Furthermore, by virtue of the process that occurs for the university catalog and handbooks, policies are informally reviewed on an annual basis. However, there is not a standardized cycle or formal review process for updating university policies that are not anchored by external regulatory oversight. At the undergraduate level, the Student Success Task Force has been working on a proposal to establish a periodic review cycle for academic policies. Likewise, a similar proposal is in process at the graduate level, with a plan for submission to Graduate Council by Spring 2022.

There is value in establishing a standardized schedule for policy review and updates not only for academic policies, but also more globally across campus. Once policies are formally reviewed and updated, a process can be designed for updating all relevant websites and publications.

Having a published directory of policies and a standard, well-published calendar for formal policy review and updates will foster a more coordinated approach to compliance issues across the university. This will allow us to maximize student success and minimize risk for the university and its community members.

FSU sponsors a wide variety of events and regularly partners with the community. When requests occur to sponsor events, they are vetted by the appropriate divisional or departmental leader to ensure that the proposed event is consistent with the university mission. Once events are approved, they are referred to our centralized Events Management office (which was created since our last self-study) for support and oversight. Additionally, the library maintains specific policies regarding displays and exhibits at the university.

One additional strength with respect to integrity is the established guidelines, procedures, and policies for setting up and maintaining formal partnerships with companies and organizations who provide quality education at extended campuses to constituents engaged in professional development and/or formal study at FSU. The Extended Campus Office, consisting of the Associate Dean of SGOCE and an administrative assistant, oversees 31 contractual partnerships.

Each partner signs a one-year letter of agreement (LOA), which is aligned with NECHE's policy on contractual arrangements, in order to garner approval from the university. There are two LOA documents, one for professional development providers and one for providers who partner with the university to provide a degree program. The LOA, which is submitted annually for review and approval for continuation, details the partner's responsibilities and the university's expectations. The LOA explicitly outlines preparation and delivery of courses and programs, including schedule submission, instructor credentialing, course evaluations, maximum enrollment, and instructional hours, as well as all financial aspects of the partnership, including registration, payment schedules, and costs per credit.

The central pillars of the LOA are protection of our students, assurance of course rigor and integrity, and financial transparency. The LOA also outlines available student services, course withdrawal policies, student complaint processes, and grading and fair practices policies. In the event that a partnership needs to be terminated, the LOA outlines clear processes for students to receive credit from the university and/or the partnering agency to continue to support students for the program's planned length. Partners are required to meet with the Associate Dean of SGOCE, the department chair, as well as the appropriate dean multiple times a year to review student progress, address issues, and plan for upcoming programs.

Clear complaint resolution procedures exist on the website and within institutional policy. University staff are appropriately trained and due process is followed when complaints are filed. Since the last self-study, due to a significant expansion of distance learning opportunities, the university sought approval to join the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement in 2018, and subsequently became the first public institution in Massachusetts to do so. This ensured a mechanism to process student complaints, regardless of location.

FSU has clarified its values around Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). The creation of a position focused on diversity in admissions strengthened the campus, and the university continued its work with the Leading for Change initiative, conducting regular climate surveys of the campus community. These programs have led to learning opportunities and intentional dialogue around identity-related issues. There is a clear focus on meeting DEI needs, including the creation of a new Director post in its Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. A new DEI webpage has launched, and the university will audit our policies and procedures through an equity lens. The institution encourages student-led identity-based organizations and the process for those wishing to start such groups is made clear.

Finally, as part of the self-study process, a survey was administered to campus constituencies, including all students, faculty, librarians, staff, and administrators. The survey included an item about integrity, and responses were consistent across groups. The vast majority of students (92%), faculty and librarians (82%)

and staff and administrators (88%) agreed that the university conveyed accurate, relevant information with integrity.

## Transparency and Public Disclosure

### Description

FSU employs systems and procedures to ensure it is transparent with its audiences and provides timely and accurate disclosure of information in the public interest.

The university's commitment to transparent communication with its audiences particularly emphasizes prospective students and families, as well as faculty, staff, alumni, and the community. This includes annually updated information on tuition and fees, declarations of the university's mission, vision and core values, its academic programs, admissions and financial aid processes, extended campus offerings, and affiliations with other institutions.

Importantly, FSU's various accreditations enable clear online demonstration of the university's qualifications and performance criteria. The university's Strategic Plan, and the process undertaken to develop it, are posted on the university website for all interested audiences. The university also provides a directory of the information covered under the Higher Education Amendments of 1998 on the university's Notice of Availability webpage.

The university catalogs, both undergraduate and graduate, outline academic policies and procedures. Annual amendments to the online catalog ensure accuracy. Links to several years' prior editions exist for students to reference, so that those who begin their courses of study may follow their original track even if curricular changes occur.

FSU also publishes the courses available for an entire academic year, including Winter and Summer semesters, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Two-year course rotations are available on the undergraduate and graduate program websites.

FSU publishes information about the membership of the Board of Trustees as well the administrative structure of the university. With respect to faculty, the university publishes profiles about continuing full-time and permanent part-time faculty on the website and in the catalog, including information about departmental affiliations, courses taught (both undergraduate and graduate), degrees held, and sabbaticals or leaves of absence.

FSU remains transparent in sharing information on how to contact employees through an online directory, inclusive of job titles, and in posting financial data for audited reports. HR provides public-facing information regarding employment opportunities and processes for employment on its webpages. Information regarding complaints is online as well.

The university website was completely redesigned in 2020, with the resulting upgrade designed to be a more user-friendly interface that will work more effectively with mobile devices. Among the heavily-visited pages on the new site is the university's online COVID-19 resource and information hub, which has been regularly updated since the beginning of the pandemic. The page includes all communications to date about the virus and the campus response, as well as links to a dashboard with regularly-updated information on testing results.

In addition to providing detailed information about academic offerings, the website contains information about our student population and campus setting, co-curricular activities, the library and technology services, and the range of support services available to students.

The research achievements of university faculty are also celebrated each year with the *Community of Scholars* publication created by the Division of Academic Affairs.

The registrar's page includes links and information for numerous forms, policies, and procedures covering a wide range of areas of interest to students and families. The Office of Student Affairs publishes information about the student conduct process, including how to file appeals. All of this information is public-facing and accessible.

There is a significant amount of data and documentation for public review on the webpage for the Office of Institutional Research and Planning. These pages, organized by undergraduate and graduate programs, include program reviews and responses, accreditation reports and responses, graduate and alumni surveys, assessment plans, and action plans. Information about learning outcomes for undergraduate programs can be found on the webpages of each academic program. Institutional Research also shares information on retention and graduation rates, along with information on students who have transferred to other institutions.

University Police regularly post updated activity logs monthly, with data over sixty days, and work with relevant campus offices to disseminate emergency notifications as needed. The police department aims to provide transparency about campus crime, policies, and statistics through their responsibility for Clery Act compliance.

FSU complies with Massachusetts open records laws. Its designated primary records access officer helps the university process dozens of records requests annually. These requests fulfill requirements with the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office. University Police also process numerous requests for public information, similarly logged and reported.

FSU shares its institutional story through a variety of print and digital publications, including the alumni magazine Contact (published each summer and winter), as well as the Fitchburg State University Today newsletter (published every two weeks). The university also maintains a number of social media accounts. These include accounts for administrative and academic offices, student clubs and organizations, athletic teams, and alumni groups.

## **Appraisal**

Institutionally, the university promotes intentional and transparent strategic planning. The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan followed this same process and produced a document highlighting consistency with the university's mission and core values.

Links for students, faculty and staff, and other groups on the university's main webpage make it possible to direct those in search of particular types of information, while restricting access to student data to those with appropriate log-in credentials within the university.

In the campus survey conducted during the self-study process, constituencies were surveyed about the ability to find information about the university's policies and procedures online, in the catalog, or in campus publications. Overall, students reported higher levels of agreement with respect to finding information on the website (85%) compared to faculty and librarians (60%) or staff and administrators (58%). This trend continued with respect to finding information about university costs on the website, with students reporting higher levels of agreement (87%) as compared to faculty and librarians (50%) or staff and administrators (71%).

The differences between students and the other groups of respondents are interesting. It is possible that our new website has been effective at meeting its intended goal of providing clear information to



prospective students and their families. With this in mind, additional mechanisms of providing accessible information to internal constituencies should be explored. While university staff and administrators in recent years explored the creation of a “portal” to serve internal users’ needs, they concluded the available solutions were not sufficient to move forward with development at that time. Still, the responses to this survey indicate there is still an unmet need for such a resource.

This analysis is consistent with qualitative comments that were provided in response to the open-ended question about the ease of accessing information on the website and in other university communications. Many student respondents reported that the website was easy to navigate. Others indicated that the website and print communications could be streamlined in different ways (e.g., simplify website links, prioritize information of importance in the catalog, separate information for graduate students and undergraduate students, develop a single login system to access all resources). Among faculty, librarians, staff, and administrators, comments extended to include requests for a separate location for internal information and inquiries about creating centralized, searchable locations for policies and procedures. All of these comments, along with others about visual presentation and navigation, have been forwarded to the web design team for review as they continue to work on the new website layout.

In another survey item, students overwhelmingly (85%) agreed that they could find information on goals for education and success on the website, more so than faculty and librarians (54%) or staff and administrators (58%). The numbers were lower across all constituencies for being able to find education and success goals in other campus publications. Again, students’ reported ease in finding information on the website may be due to the website’s efficacy in meeting the needs of prospective students and families. It is also possible that students are looking for different types of information about educational goals and success in meeting them. Faculty and librarians, as well as staff and administrators, may be looking for information about program learning outcomes or specific types of data to evaluate success.

It is important to note that the students who responded to the campus survey represented two different populations of the FSU community. About 40% (158) of the sample was graduate students, with 69% of them completing their coursework fully online. About 60% (241) of the sample was undergraduate students across all grade levels, with 70% of them completing most of their coursework in-person. Interestingly, the responses of these two groups were consistent across all of the aforementioned questions. This consistency speaks to the efficacy of the website in meeting the needs of a broad range of student populations.

The university’s new website provides rich, interactive content for visitors and is friendly for mobile visitors. A partner site was developed when the university aligned with Academic Partnerships to help recruit and support students in 100% online graduate programs, for which FSU manages the curriculum. That site is being visually updated to better resemble FSU’s new digital representation, and complies with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

With the transformed website, how content is managed has also changed, with such control centralized in Marketing and Integrated Communications. The intent of this centralization aims to promote quality control and uniformity of voice and strategy on the site. This remains in keeping with industry best practices.

The office maintaining the site created an online form for content updates, processing more than 100 requests per month. Feedback from users has been largely positive, with the ticketing system complemented by virtual and in-person consultation on larger web projects. Regarding catalogs, past editions remain easily accessed through the website and the library’s archives, with an option in each section of the catalog to access a “print-friendly” page for that specific section. The catalogs provide anyone reading or reviewing the catalog’s main page and its multiple sub-pages with dozens of links

across many sub-categories, with clearly written and articulated policies, guidelines, contact information, and substantive explanations.

The catalogs itemize all of the university's key academic requirements, in addition to substantial overviews for conduct, university policies, facilities available, admissions determinants, costs and fees, aid, graduation requirements, accreditation, and personnel.

Information about FSU's core values, mission, and vision is easily found. Program learning objectives are documented as well as those for the General Education and Honors Programs.

There is a clear updating and editing process for the undergraduate and graduate catalogs. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP) and SGOCE oversee this process. Each spring, OIRP invites content experts to begin updates. Edits are made to a working catalog and proofed multiple times. End users and content owners are asked to review and make final edits during the summer before the catalog is published at the start of the academic year. Curricular edits for the catalogs are made directly by OIRP and SGOCE after these changes are approved by the President (following approval through governance in the AUC or Graduate Council).

Additionally, with respect to course offerings, the academic deans work with the chairs of academic programs to ensure that courses not being offered in a timely fashion are eliminated from the course catalog via the shared governance process.

For both the website and catalog, accuracy and consistency underline the work of many offices, with an ongoing goal of ensuring consistency across the website and catalog. Given the number of personnel and offices involved in the curation of this important information, ensuring consistency across the website and catalogs remains a challenge and warrants further study.

Information about the cost of an FSU education is important to students and families. The website provides detailed cost information for both undergraduate and graduate degrees. The Student Accounts webpages contain considerable information about cost management, including tuition refunds, loans, ePayment mechanisms, and financial problem-solving. The majority of students in our survey reported easily finding cost information on the website. Information about cohort default and loan repayment rates has been added to the Financial Aid and Student Accounts pages since the self-study was initiated. Information about typical length of study and average amounts borrowed from a variety of loan sources is also documented in the Common Data Set. Including this information on the Student Accounts webpages helps students and families plan financially for college and have important conversations about enrollment (e.g., number of courses each semester to stay "on track") and student loan debt.

There is a considerable amount of data on the FSU website and in university publications. There have been tremendous gains in transparency and public disclosure with respect to data over the past several years. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP) has been created since our last self-study. The OIRP broadly disseminates such data, a true achievement.

Additionally, when student or program accomplishments appear in university digital and print publications, they are supported with links and references to the appropriate sources. Information about accrediting agencies is easily located on departmental/program webpages.

Learning objectives from the university catalog emphasize each academic program's benefits. Program learning outcomes are listed on the webpages for all undergraduate majors, and are in the process of being added to graduate program webpages. That said, variation exists in the content presented on departmental webpages with respect to learning outcomes and students' achievements and success. Accredited programs tend to have more specific information on their webpages (for example, Human



Services' Student Achievement Indicators). Links to pass rates for licensure exams in Nursing and Education are published on departmental webpages.

Overall, multiple and rich sources of important data on the Assessment and Institutional Research and Planning pages exist. The institutional level data on the OIRP website benefits from the context provided by the descriptions of the data source. For example, the nature of the data contained in the Common Data Set, the Institutional Factbook, and the Student Achievement Measure provide ample descriptions. Likewise, the Institutional Factbook remains easy to digest given its formatting and the nature of the information contained.

The Assessment pages provide a wealth of information, including graduate and undergraduate assessment reports. UARC conducted a review of the assessment pages in Spring 2021, which informed a reorganization of the pages to make them easier to navigate and use. OIRP is continuing to work on these pages to make it easier for visitors to interpret the voluminous data contained therein.

A challenge also exists with university social media accounts. Social media accounts exist for both the university and departments, as well as for affinity groups. Only the university accounts are actively populated and managed by Marketing & Integrated Communications (M&IC).

To maximize consistency and accuracy on the website and on social media pages, M&IC provides templates, training, and social media publishing guidelines. Department and affinity groups are advised to have new accounts reviewed and approved by M&IC. That being said, significant variability exists with respect to the content portrayed across different accounts.

Overall, FSU's practices seek to maximize transparency and timely public disclosures.

## **Projections**

The President will convene a committee with representatives from all major divisions, including Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Human Resources, Information Technology, and Finance and Administration, to develop a master calendar for policy review and updates by Spring 2023.

Marketing and Integrated Communications will create an online policies directory by 2024.

The President will convene a committee by Fall 2022 with representatives from all major divisions, including Information Technology and Marketing & Integrated Communications, to explore ways to serve internal users' information needs. This might take the form of a credentialed "portal" or some other type of non-public interface.

The offices of Academic Affairs and Marketing & Integrated Communications will develop a process to ensure the university catalog and website are in alignment by Fall 2022.

By Fall 2022, Marketing & Integrated Communications will begin annual reviews with university offices that maintain branded social media accounts in order to ensure that the content is consistent with website and print publications.

**STANDARD 9: INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE  
(Integrity)**

Policies	Last Update	Website location where policy is posted	Responsible Office or Committee
Academic honesty	2021	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/academic-integrity/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/academic-integrity/</a>	Student Conduct
Intellectual property rights		<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-11/FINAL%20Faculty%20Handbook%2020-21_0.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-11/FINAL%20Faculty%20Handbook%2020-21_0.pdf</a>	Academic Affairs
	2017	<a href="https://mscaunion.org/day-and-dgce-contracts/">https://mscaunion.org/day-and-dgce-contracts/</a>	Human Resources
Conflict of interest		<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/training/#sts=Conflict%20of%20Interest%20Law">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/training/#sts=Conflict%20of%20Interest%20Law</a>	Human Resources
Privacy rights	2014	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/registrars/student-records/ferpa/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/registrars/student-records/ferpa/</a>	Registrar
	2008	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/counseling-services/privacy-policy/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/counseling-services/privacy-policy/</a>	Counseling Services
Fairness for students	2021	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support/office-student-affairs/student-conduct-and-case-management/student-conduct-records-and-confidentiality">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support/office-student-affairs/student-conduct-and-case-management/student-conduct-records-and-confidentiality</a>	Student Conduct
	2021	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/</a>	Student Conduct
	2021	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support/office-student-affairs/student-handbook">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support/office-student-affairs/student-handbook</a>	Student Affairs
Fairness for faculty	2020	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/equal-opportunity-diversity-and-affirmative-action-title-ix/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/equal-opportunity-diversity-and-affirmative-action-title-ix/</a>	Human Resources
	2021	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-08/Faculty-Handbook%20082021.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-08/Faculty-Handbook%20082021.pdf</a>	Academic Affairs
	2017	<a href="https://mscaunion.org/day-and-dgce-contracts/">https://mscaunion.org/day-and-dgce-contracts/</a>	Human Resources
Fairness for staff	2020	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/equal-opportunity-diversity-and-affirmative-action-title-ix/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/equal-opportunity-diversity-and-affirmative-action-title-ix/</a>	Human Resources
		<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/policies/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/policies/</a>	Human Resources
	2019	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-02/Employee_Handbook.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-02/Employee_Handbook.pdf</a>	Human Resources
	2017	<a href="https://afscme1067.org/forms/">https://afscme1067.org/forms/</a>	Human Resources
Academic freedom	2017	<a href="https://mscaunion.org/day-and-dgce-contracts/">https://mscaunion.org/day-and-dgce-contracts/</a>	Human Resources
Research	2018	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-08/Faculty-Handbook%20082021.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-08/Faculty-Handbook%20082021.pdf</a>	Academic Affairs
	2018	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/resources/faculty-staff/grant-center/institutional-review-board-human-subjects-committee">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/resources/faculty-staff/grant-center/institutional-review-board-human-subjects-committee</a>	Academic Affairs
	2018	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-01/Fitchburg_State_University_Institutional_Review_Board_Policy_Rev_May_2018a.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-01/Fitchburg_State_University_Institutional_Review_Board_Policy_Rev_May_2018a.pdf</a>	Academic Affairs
	2015	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/resources/faculty-staff/grant-center/institutional-biosafety-committee">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/resources/faculty-staff/grant-center/institutional-biosafety-committee</a>	Academic Affairs
	2013	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/resources/faculty-staff/grant-">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/resources/faculty-staff/grant-</a>	Academic

		<a href="#">center/animal-care-and-use</a>	Affairs
Title IX	2020	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/equal-opportunity-diversity-and-affirmative-action-title-ix/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/equal-opportunity-diversity-and-affirmative-action-title-ix/</a>	Human Resources
Other; specify			

**Non-discrimination policies**

Recruitment and admissions		<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions/undergraduate/apply/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions/undergraduate/apply/</a>	Admissions
Evaluation	2017	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/collectivebargaining/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/collectivebargaining/</a>	Human Resources
		<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/hrforms/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/hrforms/</a>	Human Resources
Disciplinary action	2017	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/collectivebargaining/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/collectivebargaining/</a>	Human Resources
	2019	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-02/Employee_Handbook.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-02/Employee_Handbook.pdf</a>	Human Resources
Advancement	2017	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/collectivebargaining/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/collectivebargaining/</a>	Human Resources
Other; specify			
Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination & Diversity	2018	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-01/Non_Discrimination_and_Diversity_Abbr_2018.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-01/Non_Discrimination_and_Diversity_Abbr_2018.pdf</a>	Human Resources
EO, Diversity and Affirmative Action Plan	2020	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-05/5-18%20UPDATE%20Equal%20Opportunity%20Plan%2081420%20WITH%20POLICY%20DATE%20NOTE%20%281%29.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-05/5-18%20UPDATE%20Equal%20Opportunity%20Plan%2081420%20WITH%20POLICY%20DATE%20NOTE%20%281%29.pdf</a>	Human Resources

**Resolution of grievances**

Students	2021	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/</a>	Student Conduct
Faculty	2017	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/collectivebargaining/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/collectivebargaining/</a>	Human Resources
Staff	2017	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/collectivebargaining/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/collectivebargaining/</a>	Human Resources
Other; specify			

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Policies are reviewed annually as part of the process to update the university catalog. Those reviews result in affirmation of current language or updates.

**STANDARD 9: INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE  
(Transparency)**

Information	Website location and/or Relevant Publication(s)
How can inquiries be made about the institution? Where can questions be addressed?	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/contact-us/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/contact-us/</a>
Notice of availability of publications and of audited financial statement or fair summary	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/vpfaa/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/vpfaa/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions-aid/financial-aid/notice-availability">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions-aid/financial-aid/notice-availability</a>
Processes for admissions	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions/</a>
Processes for employment	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/human-resources-payroll/</a>
Processes for grading	<a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
Processes for assessment	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/institutional-research-and-planning/office-of-assessment/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/institutional-research-and-planning/office-of-assessment/</a>
Processes for student discipline	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/</a>
Processes for consideration of complaints and appeals	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/</a>
	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Student-Handbook%20%282%29_0.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Student-Handbook%20%282%29_0.pdf</a>
	<a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/campus-planning-and-policies/equal-opportunity-diversity-and-affirmative-actiontitle-ix/complaint-information">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/campus-planning-and-policies/equal-opportunity-diversity-and-affirmative-actiontitle-ix/complaint-information</a>

List below the statements or promises made regarding program excellence, learning outcomes, success in placement, and achievements of graduates or faculty and indicate where valid documentation can be found.

Statement/Promise	Website location and/or publication where valid documentation can be found
University Mission, Vision and Values	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/university-mission-vision-and-values">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/university-mission-vision-and-values</a>
Fitchburg State University Strategic Plan 2020-2025	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Final%20Strategic%20Plan%20Dec%202020.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Final%20Strategic%20Plan%20Dec%202020.pdf</a>
Retention and Graduation Rates	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-03/CDS_2020-2021.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-03/CDS_2020-2021.pdf</a>
Graduation Rates: Student Achievement Measure	<a href="http://www.studentachievementmeasure.org/participants/165820">http://www.studentachievementmeasure.org/participants/165820</a>
NCLEX Results	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/nursing-bs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/nursing-bs</a>
MTEL Results	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-education/education-department/education-unit-educator-licensure-office/massachusetts-tests-educator-licensure-mtel">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-education/education-department/education-unit-educator-licensure-office/massachusetts-tests-educator-licensure-mtel</a>
Community of Scholars - Faculty and Librarian Scholarship	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-05/profiles%20of%20faculty-librarian%20scholarship%202020.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-05/profiles of faculty-librarian scholarship 2020.pdf</a>
<b>Date of last review of:</b>	
Print publications	ongoing
Digital publications	ongoing

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

**STANDARD 9: INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE  
(Public Disclosure)**

Information	Website location
Institutional catalog	<a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
Obligations and responsibilities of students and the institution	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Student-Handbook%20%282%29_0.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Student-Handbook%20%282%29_0.pdf</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
Information on admission and attendance	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions/</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support/office-student-affairs/student-conduct-and-case-management">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support/office-student-affairs/student-conduct-and-case-management</a>
Institutional mission and objectives	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/university-mission-vision-and-values/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/university-mission-vision-and-values/</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
Expected educational outcomes	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/university-mission-vision-and-values/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/university-mission-vision-and-values/</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
Status as public or independent institution; status as not-for-profit or for-profit; religious affiliation	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/vpfaa/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/vpfaa/</a>
Requirements, procedures and policies re: admissions	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions-aid">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions-aid</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
Requirements, procedures and policies re: transfer credit	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions/undergraduate/requirements/transfer/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions/undergraduate/requirements/transfer/</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
A list of institutions with which the institution has an articulation agreement	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions/undergraduate/requirements/transfer/articulation-agreements/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions/undergraduate/requirements/transfer/articulation-agreements/</a>
Student fees, charges and refund policies	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/student-accounts/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/student-accounts/</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
Rules and regulations for student conduct	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Student-Handbook%20%282%29_0.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Student-Handbook%20%282%29_0.pdf</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
Procedures for student appeals and complaints	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/office-of-student-conduct-mediation-education/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Student-Handbook%20%282%29_0.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Student-Handbook%20%282%29_0.pdf</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>

Other information re: attending or withdrawing from the institution	<a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Student-Handbook%20%282%29_0.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Student-Handbook%20%282%29_0.pdf</a>
Academic programs	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
Courses currently offered	<a href="https://web4.fitchburgstate.edu/apex/f?p=127:3">https://web4.fitchburgstate.edu/apex/f?p=127:3</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
Other available educational opportunities	<a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/international-education/study-abroad/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/international-education/study-abroad/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/graduate-online-continuing-education/extended-campus/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/graduate-online-continuing-education/extended-campus/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/100-online/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/100-online/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/honors-program/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/honors-program/</a>
Other academic policies and procedures	<a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Student-Handbook%20%282%29_0.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Student-Handbook%20%282%29_0.pdf</a>
Requirements for degrees and other forms of academic recognition	<a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/career-counseling-and-advising/four-year-plans-of-study-by-major/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/career-counseling-and-advising/four-year-plans-of-study-by-major/</a>
List of continuing faculty, indicating department or program affiliation, degrees held, and institutions granting them	<a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/content.php?catoid=36&amp;navoid=2287">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/content.php?catoid=36&amp;navoid=2287</a>
Names and positions of administrative officers	<a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/content.php?catoid=36&amp;navoid=2287">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/content.php?catoid=36&amp;navoid=2287</a>
Names, principal affiliations of governing board members	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/board-of-trustees/members/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/board-of-trustees/members/</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
Locations and programs available at branch campuses, other instructional locations, and overseas operations at which students can enroll for a degree, along with a description of programs and services available at each location	<a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/graduate-online-continuing-education/extended-campus/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/graduate-online-continuing-education/extended-campus/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/100-online/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/100-online/</a>
Programs, courses, services, and personnel not available in any given academic year.	<a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>

Size and characteristics of the student body	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/institutional-research-and-planning/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/institutional-research-and-planning/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-05/FactBook_2020_RI_4_26.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-05/FactBook_2020_RI_4_26.pdf</a>
Description of the campus setting	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/capital-planning-maintenance/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/capital-planning-maintenance/</a>
Availability of academic and other support services	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/tutor-center/academic-coach/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/tutor-center/academic-coach/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support/health-and-wellness/counseling-services">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support/health-and-wellness/counseling-services</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support/career-support">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support/career-support</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support/disability-services">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support/disability-services</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/health-services/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/health-services/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Student-Handbook%20%282%29_0.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020-12/Student-Handbook%20%282%29_0.pdf</a>
Range of co-curricular and non-academic opportunities available to students	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/campus-life/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/campus-life/</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
Institutional learning and physical resources from which a student can reasonably be expected to benefit	<a href="https://library.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://library.fitchburgstate.edu/</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
Institutional goals for students' education	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/strategic-planning-2019-2020/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/strategic-planning-2019-2020/</a>
Success of students in achieving institutional goals including rates of retention and graduation and other measure of student success appropriate to institutional mission. Passage rates for licensure exams, as appropriate	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/institutional-research-and-planning/institutional-research/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/institutional-research-and-planning/institutional-research/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-05/FactBook_2020_RI_4_26.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-05/FactBook_2020_RI_4_26.pdf</a> <a href="http://www.studentachievementmeasure.org/participants/165820">http://www.studentachievementmeasure.org/participants/165820</a>
Total cost of education and net price, including availability of financial aid and typical length of study	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/financial-aid-office/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/financial-aid-office/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/student-accounts/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/student-accounts/</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
Expected amount of student debt upon graduation and loan payment rates	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/financial-aid-office/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/financial-aid-office/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-03/CDS_2020-2021.pdf">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2021-03/CDS_2020-2021.pdf</a>
Accreditation Statement	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/accreditation/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/accreditation/</a> <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-affairs/strategic-planning-assessment-and-accreditation/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-affairs/strategic-planning-assessment-and-accreditation/</a> <a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>

## Appendices



## AFFIRMATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REGULATIONS RELATING TO TITLE IV

Periodically, member institutions are asked to affirm their compliance with federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including relevant requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act.

- Credit Transfer Policies.** The institution’s policy on transfer of credit is publicly disclosed through its website and other relevant publications. The institution includes a statement of its criteria for transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education along with a list of institutions with which it has articulation agreements. (NECHE Policy 95. See also *Standards for Accreditation* 4.38, 4.39 and 9.19.)

URL	<a href="https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/content.php?catoid=39&amp;navoid=2419#Transfer_Credit">https://catalog.fitchburgstate.edu/content.php?catoid=39&amp;navoid=2419#Transfer_Credit</a>
Print Publications	NA
Self-study/Fifth-year Report Page Reference	Page 67

- Student Complaints.** “Policies on student rights and responsibilities, including grievance procedures, are clearly stated, well publicized and readily available, and fairly and consistently administered.” (*Standards for Accreditation* 5.18, 9.8, and 9.19.)

URL	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support/office-student-affairs/student-handbook">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/student-support/office-student-affairs/student-handbook</a>
Print Publications	NA
Self-study/Fifth-year Report Page Reference	Page 91

- Distance and Correspondence Education: Verification of Student Identity:** If the institution offers distance education or correspondence education, it has processes in place to establish that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives the academic credit. The institution protects

student privacy and notifies students at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional student charges associated with the verification of student identity. (NECHE Policy 95. See also *Standards for Accreditation* 4.48.)

Method(s) used for verification	The university issues each user a secure login username and password. Students also receive a unique student ID number and a unique Fitchburg State email address and Falcon Key. These credentials are given to on-campus, online, and extended campus students. Students are required to use these credentials to register for courses, participate in online courses through the University's Learning Management system, gain access to their academic record, and apply to graduate.
Self-study/Fifth-year Report Page Reference	Page 71

**4. FOR COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATIONS ONLY: Public Notification of an Evaluation Visit and Opportunity for Public Comment:** The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to notify the public of an upcoming comprehensive evaluation and to solicit comments. (NECHE Policy 77.)

URL	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/accreditation/neche-2022">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about/accreditation/neche-2022</a>
Print Publications	NA
Self-study Page Reference	Page 26

The undersigned affirms that Fitchburg State University meets the above federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including those enumerated above.

Chief Executive Officer: 

Date: January 14, 2022

Richard S. Lapidus, President

*June 2020*

**E-SERIES FORMS: MAKING ASSESSMENT MORE EXPLICIT**  
**OPTION E1: PART A. INVENTORY OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS**

CATEGORY X	(1) Where are the learning outcomes for this level/program published? (please specify) Include URLs where appropriate.	(2) Other than GPA, what data/ evidence is used to determine that graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (e.g., capstone course, portfolio review, licensure examination)	(3) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (e.g. annually by the curriculum committee)	(4) What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence?	(5) Date of most recent program review (for general education and each degree program)
At the institutional level:	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about-fitchburg-state#sts=Institutional%20Learning%20Priorities%20(ILPs)">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/about-fitchburg-state#sts=Institutional%20Learning%20Priorities%20(ILPs)</a>	Institutional Learning Priorities were approved in 2021.	Academic departments have begun the process of examining how the ILP's align with their program curricula.	To be determined.	N/A
For general education if an undergraduate institution:	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/general-education-program">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/general-education-program</a>	We are currently in process of creating assessment tools for all of the learning outcomes in the new General Education Program. Over the next five years, tools will be created for all aspects of the program. Assessment will take place in the May each year over of 2-4 of our fifteen outcomes.	We have implemented an Ambassador and Assessment Program consisting of five groups responsible for 2-4 learning outcomes. Each year, one group will be working on Assessment for their learning outcomes. These groups will consist of 3-5 faculty members who will create and revise assessment tools, solicit student artifacts, and organize faculty-led assessment of those artifacts.	As a result of past assessment, the University initiated a reimagining of the general education program (then called Liberal Arts and Sciences). The last 6-7 years have been focused on redesigning the program and then implementing the new design.	The last Program Review was in 2014-2015, which led to the redesign of the program. Since then, the University has been in redesign and implementation stages.

List each degree program:

**School of Arts & Sciences**

<p><b>Criminal Justice, BS</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/criminal-justice-bs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/criminal-justice-bs</a></p>	<p>Senior Capstone Course Papers and Papers from highest level quantitative research course.</p>	<p>The CJ faculty (except the one(s) who taught the course in question) as a body meet to consider the evidence and write the assessment report.</p>	<p>Some years ago, in an effort to improve students' quantitative reasoning skills, we instituted a new course – Advanced Research Methods in CJ – to supplement the existing two-course sequence (Research Methods in CJ and Data Analysis). Several assessments later, we decided to eliminate Advanced Research Methods because we did NOT see the anticipated improvement in students' quantitative reasoning skills, and we were in the process of streamlining our requirements for the CJ major, both traditional and police concentration.</p>	<p>2019-2020</p>
<p><b>2. Human Services</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/human-services-bs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/human-services-bs</a></p>	<p>Our 450-hour internship serves as our capstone course, site supervisors complete an evaluation consisting of 21 items that are rated on a scale with several open-ended questions. Students also complete an end-of-the-internship reflection paper.</p>	<p>Internship Coordinator tallies the results of the 21 items at the end of each academic year. Supervising Professors of the Internship seminars read the open-ended responses each semester. Instructors read and grade the reflection papers.</p>	<p>Department students are performing very well; at this point we are not looking at any major changes in curriculum.</p>	<p>2020-2021 Re-accrreditation (5yr. Cycle)</p>
<p><b>3. Sociology, BA/BS</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/sociology-babs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/sociology-babs</a></p>	<p>TK20 Analysis of final paper in Social Theory (interrupted by pandemic).</p>	<p>The professor of record teaching Social Theory analyzes the papers using a rubric we developed. The sociology program is moving to a juried assessment.</p>	<p>In process of transitioning to capstone assignment out of Social Theory class and into Colloquium being offered in Spring of 2022.</p>	<p>2019-2020</p>
<p><b>4. Communication Media, BS</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/communication-studies-concentration-communications-media-bs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/communication-studies-concentration-communications-media-bs</a></p>	<p>The B.S. in Communications Media uses a portfolio review in the semester prior to the required 12-credit capstone course: COMM 4880 Internship.</p>	<p>Student portfolios are reviewed by one faculty member from the student's concentration and the Internship Director.</p>	<p>Feedback from portfolio reviews provides important data used to revise and update the curriculum. In AY21, the Program Learning Outcomes for the Communications</p>	<p>2018-2019</p>

				Media major were updated. In addition, new Student Learning Outcomes for each concentration were developed. In AY22, Communications Media will work to update the portfolio defense evaluation form and rubrics to align with updated PLOs and concentration SLOs.	
<b>5. Applied Communications, MA</b>	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/social-media-concentration-applied-communication-ms">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/social-media-concentration-applied-communication-ms</a>	Students are required to develop a Capstone project and write a paper that connects their project with the previously completed coursework. Students are asked to submit a Capstone proposal in advance for a review. Students devote 7 weeks to developing the Capstone project, writing a Capstone paper (30 pages) and creating a presentation. At the conclusion of the term, students schedule an oral defense of their Capstone project. The schedule for the Capstone presentations is announced via FSU email and social media sites in advance; the presentations are attended by the graduate faculty, and are open to the public. See COMM 9970: Capstone syllabus for more details. The Capstone presentations from May 2021 can be accessed here <a href="https://sites.google.com/view/capstone-presentations/home">https://sites.google.com/view/capstone-presentations/home</a> . A survey of Capstone students about learning outcomes is an additional indirect method of assessment that began in Spring of 2021.	Annually by the Capstone instructor. See also answer to question #2. See also COMM 9970: Capstone syllabus for details.	In 2019, the Applied Communication graduate program launched a new concentration in Social Media with the objective to realign the program back to the “applied” side of communication, and create a stronger connection between the undergraduate and graduate programs. Feedback from Capstone presentations provided by the Capstone instructor, along with an exit survey completed by students, provides data that will be used to readjust to curriculum. New Student learning outcomes (SLOs) were developed and will be published on the program website, a new Capstone rubric will be developed, to assure that Capstone objectives will reflect SLOs.	The most recent program review was completed in 2019, when the Applied Communication graduate program was undergoing revisions.

6. Game Design, BS	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/game-design-bs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/game-design-bs</a>	The B.S. in Game Design uses a portfolio review in the semester prior to the required 12-credit capstone course: GAME 4100 Game Studio or COMM 4880 Internship.	Student portfolios are reviewed by at least one Game Design faculty member and the Internship Director.	Feedback from portfolio reviews provides important data used to revise and update the curriculum. Please note: Game Design conducted its first program review in AY21. At this time the action plan that came out of the self-study and external evaluators report is being finalized.	2020-2021
7. Economics, BS	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/economics-bs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/economics-bs</a>	Open ended online questionnaire about program learning outcome acquisition. Students affirmed the acquisition of program learning outcomes in questionnaire.	The three Economics faculty interpret the responses by the students.	The Economics faculty created a new assessment plan. In the interim, while transitioning to the new assessment plan, they employed transitional methods such as surveys. Based on those surveys, the Economists launched new courses and altered availability of other courses. They made changes to how frequently we offer intermediate micro/macro and the number of introductory micro/macro courses offered each semester	2021-2022
8. History, BA/BS	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/history-babs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/history-babs</a>	Students must complete the major and take and pass the capstone Senior Seminar.	The instructor for the Senior Seminar uses the rubric to assess Senior Seminar papers. The Historians then review the results at an annual meeting.	The Historians have taken multiple steps to address areas in which students most often fall short of the acceptable or exemplary grading categories. Most notably, the historians replaced a previous 2nd year methods course with two methods courses to create greater opportunities for working closely with students. Data suggest these methods courses have led to improvements for meeting targets for PLOs 1, 2, and 3 with the new courses and higher	2017-2018

				percentages of students meeting the targets for PLOs 4, 5, and 6. The Historians are now looking at models for the 4th year methods class from similar institutions.	
9. History, MA	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/history-ma-online">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/history-ma-online</a>	Besides coursework, each student must complete a Master's Thesis or Comprehensive Oral Examination to be eligible to graduate with the Master of Arts in History. The Master's Thesis is a substantial research project undertaken under the direction of a thesis committee composed of at least three members of the History graduate faculty, a thesis chair and two or more thesis committee members. The Master of Arts in History program requires that all students not completing a Master's Thesis successfully complete a comprehensive oral examination. The oral exam is a summative evaluation in which a student is expected to demonstrate breadth of knowledge in history, depth in specific areas, and the ability to integrate what has been learned through the coursework. The oral exam committee must be comprised of three members of History graduate faculty who were instructors in the student's program of study and should include one person from each of the three subject fields (U.S. history, European history, and world history).	For the Master's Thesis and comprehensive oral examination, the evidence is interpreted by the members of the respective Thesis and oral exam committees. Under the direction of the thesis chair and other thesis committee members, the student prepares a Thesis Proposal for their project, which must be approved in order for the research and writing of the Master's Thesis to commence. The oral defense which includes both the student's presentation and the question and answer session, will typically last minimum of one hour, but should not exceed two hours. At the end of the oral defense, the student is excused from the room and the committee members deliberate on the student's performance. When the thesis committee has reached its decision, the student is informed orally of the committee's decision. Based on the quality of the written work and the statements made at the defense, the student's thesis will be passed, passed with minor revisions, passed with major	Based on input from students and decreasing enrollments in the program, the MAT in History was decommissioned in (AY2016-2017). Based on changes in student interest and demand, we gathered input from students and modified the Master of Arts in History program to transform it into an online program with a few face-to-face courses available during the summer.	2018

			<p>revisions, or failed. Upon successful completion of the oral defense and submission of the final copies of the Master's Thesis, the student shall be deemed eligible for graduation with a Master of Arts in History. The comprehensive oral examination is typically 75 minutes long and consists of questions pertaining to the student's plan of study posed by committee members. At the conclusion of the oral exam, the student is excused from the room and the committee members deliberate on the student's performance. A vote is taken to determine the adequacy of the responses. A majority of the committee members must support the student's performance in order to constitute a passing grade. Upon successful completion of the comprehensive oral examination, the student shall be deemed eligible for graduation with a Master of Arts in History.</p>		
<p><b>10. Political Science, BA/BS</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/american-governmentlaw-concentration-political-science-babs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/american-governmentlaw-concentration-political-science-babs</a></p>	<p>Required Capstone Seminar/Portfolio course provides Political Science baselines for Majors to graduate.</p>	<p>The four Political Scientists. The Political Science Professor who teaches both courses provides grades in the Capstone Seminar Course. The TK20 Capstone Seminar's Portfolio assessment enables all four Political Science Faculty to assess each PLO's data/rubric regarding whether each student fulfills requirements.</p>	<p>For the 2021 Political Science Capstone Seminar's TK20 Portfolios, the "N/A" scoring category was removed for every Rubric to reduce skewing of the TK20 data assessment, per agreement from the 2020 assessment's recommendations. Clearer guidelines and standards for the Capstone Seminar TK20 Portfolio Rubrics provided new, higher</p>	<p>2019-2020</p>



			Discussion then follows where the four faculty discuss the results and make suggested programmatic changes as warranted.	thresholds required by student TK20 portfolio documentation submission. -- More consideration by the four Political Scientists about how to weigh more heavily and score the new, more comprehensive and analytical student "Self-Reflection" (expanded to three-four paragraphs in the fall 2020 Seminar) illustrated improvement and proficiency in the four TK20 Rubrics. The objective to improve from the 82-86% thresholds in 2020 was achieved (meet or exceed Political Science proficiency in all four Rubrics) with 3 out of 4 thresholds reaching 100% and the final threshold achieving 96.77%. -- The PLO threshold for Political Science theory also achieved the markedly higher threshold of 100%, particularly given the new option for students to submit their Capstone Seminar's Literature Review as the theory "Artifact" -- on which students could "Reflect" more in-depth about their growth and improvement in this Rubric's area.	
<b>11. English Studies, BA/BS</b>	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/literature-concentration-english-studies-babs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/literature-concentration-english-studies-babs</a>  <a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/professional-writing-concentration-english-studies-babs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/professional-writing-concentration-english-studies-babs</a>	Analysis of 12 papers from initial class Approaches to English Studies for PLOs. ENGL2999. Portfolio review ENGL4999. Licensure-Middle and Secondary Education (Done in cooperation with Education department and MTEL).	Assessment Committee-reports to whole department (Will move to having initial review by Curriculum Committee and then will be reported to whole department for discussion & recommendations). Licensure-Middle and Secondary Education:	Analysis of 12 Papers from Initial Class Approaches to English Studies for PLOs ENGL2999: Need for Approaches to begin conversation done summarily in Capstone about preparing students for professionalization, graduate work and employment in	2016-2017

	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/english-initial-license-5-12-babs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/english-initial-license-5-12-babs</a>		<p>Secondary-Middle Education faculty in English; MTEL examiners; practicum supervising teachers in High and Middle schools, as well as Secondary-Middle education faculty.</p>	<p>related fields to English as well as to do the academic preparation (introduction to theories, analytical and research methods) that it does currently in order to bring students into the discipline of English Studies. Portfolio review ENGL4999: Need for Capstone to become more content-centered to redress deficits in PLO scores above concerning use of secondary texts: use and citation (PLO 2) and also engagement with secondary texts (PLO4). Also address nature of the discipline of English in addition to the skills it emphasizes. Find measure to assess learning outcomes in the class re: Professionalization, resume creation, job letters, applications to graduate work and preparation for exit portfolio for professional employer's employment in writing related fields. Licensure 5-12 Education: Assessment of teacher preparation programs by English and Education faculty (in coordination with curriculum established in Program for Middle and Secondary and Middle School: PASM).</p>	
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<p><b>12. English Studies, MA</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/english-studies-ma">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/english-studies-ma</a></p>	<p>Graduate Thesis, Graduate Exit Exam</p>	<p>Graduate Thesis Committee, Graduate Exam Committee, Graduate Program Chair. Department Graduate Committee meet each month to review curriculum and take stock of program and student needs.</p>	<p>MA Program has undergone extensive revision in the last few years based on the changing needs of the students and the shifts in the delivery options of the graduate programs across the nation. The program has been relaunched to attract a wide range of students both in and outside of the North Central MA region. The program has made the following changes: 1. Program limited to 30 credits (previously 33 credits). 2. The program is offering a range of modalities: Face-to-face, Online and Hybrid (previously only Face-to-face). 3. Curricular changes: Removed one of two required courses.</p>	<p>2016-2017</p>
<p><b>13. Inter-disciplinary Studies, BA/BS</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/interdisciplinary-studies-babs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/interdisciplinary-studies-babs</a></p>	<p>IDIS 4004 Capstone Paper. The Capstone thesis applies and integrates methods, materials, and/or insights from different disciplines to the solution of a problem, the analysis of an issue, and ultimately the completion of an interdisciplinary capstone thesis or project informed by previous work in different disciplines. The Capstone is clearly written with organizing idea developed consistently, well organized, properly sourced and cited, and that contains few or no sentence level errors, stylistic problems and/or formatting errors.</p>	<p>Capstone projects are assessed by Capstone faculty annually, and by the members of the IDIS Assessment Committee in 3 of the 5 years in our assessment cycle.</p>	<p>Discipline is pleased with outcomes for assessment and see no need to make changes in these areas.</p>	<p>2020-2021</p>
<p><b>14. Arts Education, MEd Art Concentration</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/art-concentration-arts-education-med-non-licensure">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/art-concentration-arts-education-med-non-licensure</a></p>	<p>Capstone project from EDUC 9510 - Capstone: Implementing Best Practices. We have been collecting Capstone projects, since EDUC</p>	<p>The full 5-year assessment plan is under development, but Capstones will first be assessed in May 2022.</p>	<p>No data yet to provide a basis to make any changes.</p>	<p>2020-2021</p>

		9510 was adopted as a program requirement in AY 2019, and we are in the process of designing an assessment tool to analyze what constitutes successful work at the Capstone level in Arts Education.			
<b>15. Arts Education, MEd Music Concentration</b>	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/music-concentration-arts-education-med-non-licensure">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/music-concentration-arts-education-med-non-licensure</a>	Capstone project from EDUC 9510 - Capstone: Implementing Best Practices. We have been collecting Capstone projects, since EDUC 9510 was adopted as a program requirement in AY 2019, and we are in the process of designing an assessment tool to analyze what constitutes successful work at the Capstone level in Arts Education.	The full 5-year assessment plan is under development, but Capstones will first be assessed in May 2022.	No data yet to provide a basis to make any changes.	2020-2021
<b>16. Counseling, MS</b>	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/clinical-mental-health-counseling-counseling-ms">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/clinical-mental-health-counseling-counseling-ms</a>	We use multiple sets of informants, including professors and external supervisors. Faculty complete disposition assessments for the Stage 1 courses (COUN 7010 and 7030) and for certain courses with role-play components (e.g., 8030). External supervisors provide feedback during field experiences. For CMH students, we ask internship supervisors if they would hire our students. In 2021, 100% of supervisors said yes. For school counseling students, in 2020 (the most recent data) 100% of field supervisors gave our students the highest rating on overall skill. Although we would like to examine the results of the licensure tests for the LMHC students, that information is not available to us.	The chair, who is also the program advisor, is responsible for monitoring the assessment results of the Stage 1 and 2 reports to identify any students who need action or remediation. Any concerns are brought to the committee throughout the year. As the bulk of the assessment data is finalized at the end of the Spring semester, and the report completed during May/Summer, the report will be presented to the committee at the start of the Fall semester. Last year's report was presented at the start of the 2020 year to the committee. The school counseling data comes out later in the next year. The data is reviewed as part of Education Unit meeting and presented to the counseling committee.	Generally, the results of the assessment data at the internship level have been extremely positive, particularly from the outside supervisors. However, concerns were addressed this year based on feedback from the DOE visit (see E-Series Part B). These changes included changing the structure of COUN 7000 for Fall 2021 to meet once per week and restructuring the course to focus more strongly on ethical issues. In addition, the chair met with faculty across the school counseling program to discuss areas in which students requested more exposure (e.g. 504 plans) and faculty are planning to strengthen their coverage in this area.	2019

<b>17. Honors</b>	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/honors-program/honors-thesis/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/honors-program/honors-thesis/</a>	Advisors' evaluation/rating of Honors Thesis projects administered in senior year/capstone level. Assessments were solicited from primary advisors and secondary readers for all students who completed Honors Thesis. Scores of 8 or higher meet the standard for the program.	The Honors Program Coordinator interprets the evidence each semester.	The "Honors Thesis Guidelines" document has been revised, and a new, brief "Honors Thesis Checklist" has been created for students. In addition, the HP Coordinator hosted an informational student panel discussion on the Honors Thesis experience since 2017 and will continue to do so every year.	DHE 2018-2019
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### School of Business

<b>18. Business Administration, BS</b>	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-business/business-administration-department/business-administration-accreditation">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-business/business-administration-department/business-administration-accreditation</a>	The Business Department collects data at the program level using three direct measures (case studies and business simulation and exam) and two indirect measures (internship survey and senior exit survey).	Dean, School of Business; BSAD department chair; BSAD department assessment coordinator; and faculty review with particular emphasis on results below desired thresholds. The Business Department's Assessment Committee annually collects, documents, analyzes, and implements action steps to improve student achievement and benchmarks for learning outcomes.	(1) The BSAD core curriculum was expanded from 7 to 10 courses to improve the mapping to the Business Technology Knowledge (BTK) areas. (2) The number of courses in each concentration area was reduced from 9 to six to provide for an expanded core curriculum. (3) The assessment framework was strengthened with revised rubric and performance indicators for the various competency levels. Targets met AY21. The Business Administration Department has adopted new assessment rubrics (developed and written by Department Assessment Coordinator in November 2018) that faculty teaching the capstone course (BSAD 4890, Business Policy and Strategies) are required to adhere to in order to conduct ISLOs assessments in the course. The faculty teaching BSAD 4890	IACBE 2018-2019
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				<p>have collaborated in designing the course to provide measurable outcomes. The department submitted several proposals to the All University Committee (AUC) in 2019-2020 to restructure and improve the Core Curriculum and also courses required in each of the three Concentrations: Accounting, Management, and Marketing. In order to streamline the Business Technical Knowledge (BTK) categories inherent in the ISLOs into the BSBA program, and also to improve measurability, it was recommended that each course syllabus in the BSBA program includes a table to demonstrate how each particular course builds the BTK skills assignments and activities. The added value of such a summary being included into each syllabus is that it serves as an instrument which will provide a basis for quantification and assessment of the educational objectives.</p>	
<p><b>19. Business Administration, MBA</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-business/business-administration-department/business-administration-accreditation">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-business/business-administration-department/business-administration-accreditation</a></p>	<p>MBA Capstone Business Simulation Project and rubric. However, the Business Simulation was not deployed beginning Fall 2018 semester due to the all online nature of the accelerated MBA (OAP) programs and courses. MBA Capstone Integrated Case and rubric. MBA Student Exit Survey.</p>	<p>Dean, School of Business; BSAD department chair; BSAD department assessment coordinator; and faculty review with particular emphasis on results below desired thresholds.</p>	<p>During this assessment period all targets were met. The Business Administration Department has adopted new assessment rubrics (developed and written in November 2018) that faculty teaching the capstone course (MGMT 9500, Strategic Management) are</p>	<p>IACBE, 2018-2019</p>

			<p>required to adhere to in order to conduct ISLOs assessments in the course. The faculty teaching MGMT 9500 have collaborated in designing the course to provide measurable outcomes. Full-time faculty who teach MGMT 9500 have since then adopted the newly developed rubrics to assess their students.</p> <p>Furthermore, changes to assessment of the capstone MBA course, MGMT 9500 Strategic Management has been implemented to ascertain the achievement of the ISLOs. Full-time faculty will work with adjuncts in the implementation of the assessment rubric in their course syllabi and in conducting the assessment in their capstone course sections. In order to streamline the Business Technical Knowledge (BTK) categories inherent in the ISLOs into the MBA program, and also to improve measurability it was recommended that each course syllabus in the MBA program includes a table to demonstrate how each particular course builds the BTK skills through assignments and activities. The added value of such a summary being included into each syllabus is that it serves as an instrument which will provide a basis for quantification and assessment of educational objectives. The</p>	
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				<p>following MBA proposals were already approved by the Graduate Council in 2019-2020: a) 4+1 Program Option: B.S. Business Administration and MBA. b) Online MBA with a Concentration in Marketing. c) Online MBA with a Concentration in Supply Chain Management &amp; Logistics. d) Online MBA with a Concentration in Healthcare Management. e) Online Graduate Certificate in Healthcare Management. f) Online Graduate Certificate in Accounting.</p>	
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**School of Education**

<p><b>20. Education, BSE</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-education/education-department">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-education/education-department</a></p>	<p>Teacher candidates must complete Stage I and Stage II Review and successfully complete the practicum for their license sought. STAGE 1: completion of CORE courses. 2 minimum candidate dispositions that are positive ratings 2 and above. Cumulative GPA of at least a 2.5. Satisfy the FSU Mathematics and Reading readiness. Successfully passed on the Communication &amp; Literacy MTELS. STAGE 2: Completions of all professional coursework (1st semester senior year) required for practicums. Additional 2 positive candidate dispositions. Cumulative GPA of at least 2.75 &amp; 3.0 in major. Successfully passed Context Test(s) specific for license (MTELS). Current degree evaluation reviewed</p>	<p>The Director of Licensure collects and compiles the data. At Unit meetings faculty analyze the data annually and gather the reflective outcomes from this analysis along with projections based on the data reviewed. In addition, the School of Education has committees that review assessment processes, policies, and tools used to assess candidates to include forms, rubrics, and surveys.</p>	<p>As a result of our 2020 Program Approval process through the Department of Elementary and Secondary education (DESE), the Assessment Committee has updated the program completer survey to align with our PLOs and DESE requirements.</p>	<p>DESE 7 YR Cycle 2020-2021</p>
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		with candidate, including petitions. STAGE 3: CAP or Performance Assessment Completion (minimum CAP ratings of Proficient for Quality, Needs Improvement for Scope and Consistency for all 7 Elements). Acceptable Candidate Dispositions and Lesson Plan Rubrics. Submission of Performance Assessment Evidence (including Measure of Impact on Student Learning and Student Feedback Survey). Verification of Practicum Hours.			
<b>21. Early Childhood Education, BSE, MEd</b>	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/early-childhood-education-prek-2-bse">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/early-childhood-education-prek-2-bse</a>	1. The passing of the following MTEs: Communication and Literacy, Foundations of Reading, Early Childhood. 2. The passing of 2 Gateway requirements. 3. The passing of two Stage Reviews that have specific requirements associated with GPA and student performance associated with dispositions. 4. The successful completion of the Candidate Assessment Performance. 5. Exit Survey	The data is reviewed and interpreted by the Education Unit annually. Documentation of the analysis is gathered and reflected upon and then used to inform program changes.	There have been a number of changes made over the years that include an entire revamping of all the programs. Most recently the department used additional data provided by the State to implement the requiring of all students to take and successfully pass (S/U) the MTEL workshops. The workshops were transitioned to an on-line format (excluding the C & L MTEL which is in a hybrid format due to the fact that Freshman are taking this prep). The decision was guided by the low % of students passing the MTEs on their first attempt. We are gathering data to assess whether this requirement increases the passing rate for our students on the first attempt.	DESE 7 YR Cycle 2020-2021
<b>22. Elementary Education, BSE, MEd</b>	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/elementary-education-1-6-bse">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/elementary-education-1-6-bse</a>	1. The passing of the following MTEs: Communication and Literacy, Foundations of Reading, General Curriculum- Math Subtest, General	The data is reviewed and interpreted by the Education Unit annually. Documentation of the analysis is gathered and reflected upon	There have been a number of changes made over the years that include an entire revamping of all the programs. Most recently the	DESE 7 YR Cycle 2020-2021

		Curriculum, Multi-subject. 2. The passing of 2 Gateway requirements. 3. The passing of two Stage Reviews that have specific requirements associated with GPA and student performance associated with dispositions. 4. The successful completion of the Candidate Assessment Performance. 5. Exit Survey	and then used to inform program changes.	department used additional data provided by the State to implement the requiring of all students to take and successfully pass (S/U) the MTEL workshops. The workshops were transitioned to an on-line format (excluding the C & L MTEL which is in a hybrid format due to the fact that Freshman are taking this prep). The decision was guided by the low % of students passing the MTEs on their first attempt. We are gathering data to assess whether this requirement increases the passing rate for our students on the first attempt.	
<b>23. Moderate Disabilities PrerK-8, BSE, MED</b>	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/teacher-students-moderate-disabilities-prek-8-special-education-bse">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/teacher-students-moderate-disabilities-prek-8-special-education-bse</a>	1. The passing of the following MTEs: Communication and Literacy, Foundations of Reading, General Curriculum- Math Subtest, General Curriculum, Multi-subject. 2. The passing of 2 Gateway requirements. 3. The passing of two Stage Reviews that have specific requirements associated with GPA and student performance associated with dispositions. 4. The successful completion of the Candidate Assessment Performance. 5. Exit Survey	The data is reviewed and interpreted by the Education Unit annually. Documentation of the analysis is gathered and reflected upon and then used to inform program changes.	There have been a number of changes made over the years that include an entire revamping of all the programs. Most recently the department used additional data provided by the State to implement the requiring of all students to take and successfully pass (S/U) the MTEL workshops. The workshops were transitioned to an on-line format (excluding the C & L MTEL which is in a hybrid format due to the fact that Freshman are taking this prep). The decision was guided by the low % of students passing the MTEs on their first attempt. We are gathering data to assess whether this requirement increases the passing rate for our students on the first attempt.	DESE 7 YR Cycle 2020-2021

<p><b>24. Severe Disabilities (All Levels) BSE, MEd</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/teacher-students-severe-disabilities-all-levels-special-education-bse">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/teacher-students-severe-disabilities-all-levels-special-education-bse</a></p>	<p>1. The passing of the following MTEs: Communication and Literacy, Foundations of Reading, General Curriculum- Math Subtest, General Curriculum, Multi-subject. 2. The passing of 2 Gateway requirements. 3. The passing of two Stage Reviews that have specific requirements associated with GPA and student performance associated with dispositions. 4. The successful completion of the Candidate Assessment Performance. 5. Exit Survey</p>	<p>The data is reviewed and interpreted by the Education Unit annually. Documentation of the analysis is gathered and reflected upon and then used to inform program changes.</p>	<p>There have been a number of changes made over the years that include an entire revamping of all the programs. Most recently the department used additional data provided by the State to implement the requiring of all students to take and successfully pass (S/U) the MTEL workshops. The workshops were transitioned to an on-line format (excluding the C &amp; L MTEL which is in a hybrid format due to the fact that Freshman are taking this prep). The decision was guided by the low % of students passing the MTEs on their first attempt. We are gathering data to assess whether this requirement increases the passing rate for our students on the first attempt.</p>	<p>DESE 7 YR Cycle 2020-2021</p>
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### School of Health and Natural Sciences

<p><b>25. Computer Information Systems, BS</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/undergraduate/undergraduate-day-programs/computer-information-systems/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/undergraduate/undergraduate-day-programs/computer-information-systems/</a></p>	<p>The Computer Science Department collects data at the program level using direct measures (case studies capstone projects, and exam) and indirect measure (senior exit survey). The performance indicators for each PLO are used to determine that graduates have achieved the stated outcomes and thus the PLO.</p>	<p>The department meet to assign each PLO, a faculty in-charge who will contact the instructors conducting the assessments and collect all the required data and documents. The instructor of a course which is used to assess the PLOs presents and interprets the evidence in the department curriculum meetings and the department curriculum committee discusses and makes recommendations on what changes/actions the instructor needs to be taken.</p>	<p>(1) The continuous improvement assessment framework was strengthened with revised rubric and performance indicators that measure competencies. (2) The Industry Advisory Board was expanded and the number of meetings increased to strengthen feedback on program educational objectives that describe how program outcomes are translating into career goals 3 year or more after graduation.</p>	<p>2019-2020 ABET 6 yr. Cycle</p>
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<p><b>26. Computer Sciences, BS</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/undergraduate/undergraduate-day-programs/computer-science/">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/undergraduate/undergraduate-day-programs/computer-science/</a></p>	<p>The Computer Science Department collects data at the program level using direct measures (case studies capstone projects, and exam) and indirect measure (senior exit survey). The performance indicators for each PLO are used to determine that graduates have achieved the stated outcomes and thus the PLO.</p>	<p>The department meet to assign each PLO, a faculty in-charge who will contact the instructors conducting the assessments and collect all the required data and documents. The instructor of a course which is used to assess the PLOs presents and interprets the evidence in the department curriculum meetings and the department curriculum committee discusses and makes recommendations on what changes/actions the instructor needs to be taken.</p>	<p>1) The continuous improvement assessment framework was strengthened with revised rubric and performance indicators that measure competencies. (2) The Industry Advisory Board was expanded and the number of meetings increased to strengthen feedback on program educational objectives that describe how program outcomes are translating into career goals 3 years or more after graduation.</p>	<p>2019-2020 ABET 6 yr. Cycle</p>
<p><b>27. Applied Sciences &amp; Technology, BS</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/applied-science-and-technology-bs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/applied-science-and-technology-bs</a></p>	<p>The Engineering Technology Department collects data at the program level using direct measures (capstone projects, and exam) and indirect measure (senior exit survey) to assess student achievement.</p>	<p>The Engineering Technology Department's Assessment Committee annual collects, documents, analyzes, and implements action steps to improve student achievement and benchmarks for the learning outcomes.</p>	<p>(1) The program was transformed from Technology Education to Applied Science and Technology and core curriculum was expanded from 7 to 14 courses to improve the mapping to the ANSAC of ABET outcomes. (2) The number of courses in each concentration area was reduced from 9 to six to provide for an expanded core curriculum. (3) The assessment framework was strengthened with revised rubric and performance indicators for the various competency levels.</p>	<p>2019-2020</p>
<p><b>28. Engineering Technology, BS</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/engineering-technology-bs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/engineering-technology-bs</a></p>	<p>The Engineering Technology Department collects data at the program level using direct measures (capstone projects, and exam) and indirect measure (senior exit survey) to assess student achievement.</p>	<p>The Engineering Tech. Department's Curriculum Committee annually collects, documents, analyzes, and implements action steps to improve student achievement and benchmarks for the learning outcomes.</p>	<p>(1) The program was transformed from Industrial Technology to Engineering Technology and core curriculum was expanded from 7 to 15 courses to improve the mapping to the ETAC of ABET outcomes. (2) The number of courses in each concentration</p>	<p>2019-2020</p>

				area was reduced from 9 to six to provide for an expanded core curriculum. (3) The assessment framework was strengthened with revised rubric and performance indicators for the various competency levels.	
<b>29. Biology, BS</b>	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/biology-babs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/biology-babs</a>	PLO-1 (Content knowledge) - Weakest areas include physiology (structure/function, surface area/volume ratios, negative feedbacks), and a few specific concepts about evolution and energy flow. Students show strengths and significant improvement across many areas of Biology, including cell biology, genetics, phylogeny and ecology. PLO 2-4 (Capstone skills). As a feasibility study, we started using a Capstone Skills rubric to assess poster projects in a mid-level class. Ecology capstone skills. In AY2020 we did not assess proficiencies in capstone courses. In AY2021 we used a capstone skills rubric to assess presentations in a capstone course.	Content knowledge- The test is analyzed by members of the Assessment Committee using data from Akindi Capstone skills: The Ecology poster projects are assessed by one member of the Assessment Committee who also taught two of the four sections of Ecology. When applying the rubric to capstone projects annually in the future, scoring will be conducted by faculty teaching the capstone with the support of the Assessment Committee. In 2021 Capstone skills: Two members of the Assessment Committee assessed student presentations in the capstone course using rubric developed with the input of the faculty member teaching the course.	The department retreat in August 2019 re-evaluated the test of content knowledge (PLO-1), and it was revised in fall 2019. At the retreat the department thoroughly evaluated the specific learning outcomes that would be incorporated into a rubric of student skills. The Assessment committee re-wrote a generic rubric to assess capstone skills. The department reported the results of the feasibility study from Ecology posters at our retreat in August 2020. Responding to the extensive disruptions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic meant that assessment focused on collecting data in 2020-2021.	2017-2018
<b>30. Chemistry, BS</b>	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/chemistry-bs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/chemistry-bs</a>	The Chemistry program revised and expanded the assessed PLOs at a department retreat in the fall 2019. The PLOs were designed to be in accordance with the learning outcomes developed by the American Chemical Society. The methods of evaluation are varied and include embedded questions, faculty	The dept. assessment committee evaluates all assessment related matters. The departmental student affairs committee manages the student feedback survey. In AY21, the annual student feedback survey was not administered due to COVID-19 related reasons.	AY21 was the second year we are assessing PLO3 (lab safety) and the first year we are assessing the revised PLO4 (scientific communication). While the COVID-19 situation impacted the assessment, we see promising evidence of meeting the objectives. We plan to continue to	2021-2022

		assessment of an oral presentation, and the completion of a chemical hygiene assignment. Our annual student feedback survey has also recently been proposed to concurrently serve as a measure of indirect assessment on attitudes pertaining to knowledge content.		monitor these categories going forward.	
<b>31. Environmental &amp; Earth Science, BA</b>	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/environmental-and-earth-science-babs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/environmental-and-earth-science-babs</a>	PLO1: Final paper and presentation in upper level course PLO2: Lab reports from various courses PLO3: Exam question in relevant course PLO4: Exam question in relevant course; Paper PLO5: Exam question in relevant course; Position paper	Faculty member of the relevant course assesses the outcome. Assessment committee discusses overall data	PLO 1: A librarian session was scheduled during spring 2021, and while feedback from students was positive, many students were not proficient at properly citing sources. The instructor will include additional information literacy exercises during the next course offering to improve student success with identifying and citing sources. PLO3: When this course is next offered, the instructor will have more assignments and in-class discussions leading up to the final project that helps students synthesize interdisciplinary data, better understand complex issues, and apply knowledge to a new scenario.	2019-2020
<b>32. Geographic Science &amp; Technology, BS</b>	<a href="http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/geographic-science-and-technology-babs">www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/geographic-science-and-technology-babs</a>	PLO1: Exam question in relevant course PLO2: Final paper and presentation in upper level course PLO3: Final project in relevant course PLO4: Final project in upper level course PLO5: Final project in geospatial course	Faculty member of the relevant course assesses the outcome. Assessment committee discusses overall data	Dept. faculty will add assignments in required courses to target skills related to describing and referencing scientific data/figures. Dept. faculty will work with librarians to ensure students have training in information literacy as it pertains to the major. The teaching assistant (peer-educator) has been helpful. The dept. will provide a teaching assistant to every geospatial tech courses.	2019-2020

33. Environmental Public Health, BS	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/environmental-public-health-bs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/environmental-public-health-bs</a>	New Program no Data Available.	New Program no Data Available.	New Program no Data Available.	New Program no Data Available.
34. Exercise & Sports Science, BS	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/clinical-exercise-physiology-concentration-exercise-science-bs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/clinical-exercise-physiology-concentration-exercise-science-bs</a>	A combination of artifacts from various courses taught in the core curriculum is used. We have identified assignments at the early and later stages of our curriculum for assessment of PLOs. Examples of assignments used in previous years include: Research Papers from Sports Nutrition and Cardiovascular Physiology, Exercise Physiology II group research papers, Internship presentations, Practical exams in ETP, final program prescription reports in ETP and Strength and Conditioning and Lab Reports in Exercise Physiology I. in AY21 SLO's 1.2 and 4 were reviewed using Exercise Physiology 1 Lab Reports.	Two faculty review each artifact using the same rubric. An average score is calculated for each paper. This information is then reported to the EXSS Departmental Assessment Committee, who analyze and interprets results before closing the loop by report back to EXSS Department. We also use the information gathered from an alumni survey that was launched in the summer of 2018.	We added a Research Methods course in fall 2016 and would like to see if students' performance in the area of information literacy (which is included in our rubric for PLO 1.2 Students will demonstrate effective written communication) improves as a result of the course. We will track data from SLO 1.2 to determine whether or not this is an effective implementation. Department faculty will work with librarians to ensure students have training in information literacy as it pertains to the major.	2018-2019
35. Mathematics, BA/BS	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/mathematics-babs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/mathematics-babs</a>	Coursework review for Mathematics (no concentration). Coursework review and Capstone Course for Math 4600 Senior Seminar in Applied Math. Coursework, Student Teaching, and MTEL exams for Mathematics with Initial Teacher Licensure in Secondary Education and Mathematics with Initial Teacher Licensure in Middle School Education.	Math Department Assessment Committee collects samples of student work from faculty members. Instructors of Math 4600 review Senior Seminar course work. Instructors for teaching practicum courses review coursework, student teaching of Initial licensure courses for Middle and Secondary Education.	Department used MAA CUPM curriculum Guide to Majors in the Mathematical Sciences to rewrite our department assessment plan.	2016-2017
36. Nursing, LPN, BS	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-health-and-natural-sciences/nursing-department">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-health-and-natural-sciences/nursing-department</a>	Student surveys of course/clinical outcomes, SIR II results, Licensure Examination (NCLEX), HESI score results, C 4 results (clinical /lab evaluations), Student Evaluation of Simulation survey, Senior Exit survey, Evaluation of	Department of Nursing Chair, Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) Curriculum committee, and Faculty.	Curricular examination/proposal for changes/improvements. Impacts course updates and changes to clinical experiences including increased use of Alternative clinical learning experiences (face to	2019-2020 5 yr. Report

		Clinical Site Survey, Evaluation of Preceptor Survey		face simulation, virtual simulation, unfolding case studies, advanced laboratory skill application)	
<b>37. Nursing RN, BS</b>	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-health-and-natural-sciences/nursing-department">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-health-and-natural-sciences/nursing-department</a>	Student evaluation of course outcome surveys, GCE faculty evaluation results, Senior Exit survey	Department of Nursing Chair, Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) Curriculum committee, and Faculty.	In the RN to BS online program, students identified variations in blackboard layouts, due dates for discussion questions, and grading were inconsistent and difficult to navigate. During RN to BS faculty meetings in 2019 and 2020, faculty agreed to uniform grading rubric for discussion board questions that is now incorporated into the grading section, standardized due dates for initial posts for discussions and responses, and providing students with welcome letters and videos to demonstrating how to navigate the blackboard shell for individual courses.	2019-2020 5 yr. Report
<b>38. Nursing in Forensics, MA</b>	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/nursing-forensic-nursing-ms-online">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/nursing-forensic-nursing-ms-online</a>	S-1 surveys in which student perceptions about course outcomes are assessed. S-1 surveys were deployed for AY2018-2019, 2019-2020 and fall 2020, the data were not useful as the course outcomes had not been updated in the survey. Once this error was identified all Graduate S-1 surveys were revised and deployed with current Course Outcomes for Spring 2021. At the end of each semester graduates of the Master's Program are invited to complete an Exit Survey (S-4) and share their perceptions about the extent to which Program/Terminal Outcomes were met. The Program's	Course Faculty, Graduate Committee, and Program Chair	Student Perceptions about Course Outcomes: discussion takes place of the data by the review team and any modifications to the teaching-learning practices that may promote the achievement of the course outcome will take place. Student perceptions about terminal/program outcomes data: The following two terminal/program outcomes 3 and 8 fell short of the identified benchmark in 2018 and 2019. 3 read as: This program helped prepare me to lead quality improvement initiatives that integrate socio-	2019-2020 5 yr. Report



		benchmark is >80% of respondents indicate they agree or strongly agree that Terminal/Program Outcomes were met. The S-4 Survey data for calendar year 2020 indicate that the benchmark of 80% was met or exceeded for all Terminal/Program Outcomes.		cultural factors affecting the delivery of nursing and health care services (50% in 2019, 75% in 2018) 8: This program prepared me to synthesize broad ecological global, and social determinants of health to design and deliver population health interventions and strategies (75% in 2018 and 2019). It was identified that a rewording of the above Terminal/Program Outcomes during AY 2021-2022 to better capture the AACN Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing for Quality Improvement & Safety, and Clinical Prevention & Population Health for Improving Health.	
<b>39. Psychological Science, BS</b>	<a href="https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/psychological-science-babs">https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/programs/psychological-science-babs</a>	The Assessment Committee created a Senior Assessment of Research Literacy Rubric which is used to evaluate a sample of work products from capstone courses. Plans for further assessment were identified in our self-study and action plan for the next five years. Specifically, the department has adopted objectives based on APA guidelines which were used for Curriculum Mapping in AY20-21 and plans to construct an internship evaluation and exit survey.	The typical process is that the Assessment Committee requests capstone products from Fall and Spring. At the start of the Fall semester, the previous academic year's capstones are evaluated with the rubric and the results are shared with the department for discussion at the summer retreat by the assessment committee.	We completed a first round of curriculum mapping which revealed possible areas for greater consistent focus on skill development for students. We also discussed prioritization of some of the programmatic learning goals over others. We intend to conduct another round of mapping next year before making specific changes.	2018-2019

Institutions selecting E1a should also include E1b.

**Note:** Please see the Statement on Student Achievement and Success Data Forms (available on the NECHE website: [www.NECHE.org](http://www.NECHE.org)) for more information about completing these forms.

**E-SERIES FORMS: MAKING ASSESSMENT MORE EXPLICIT  
OPTION E1: PART B. INVENTORY OF SPECIALIZED AND PROGRAM ACCREDITATION**

(1) Professional, specialized, State, or programmatic accreditations currently held by the institution (by agency or program name).	(2) Date of most recent accreditation action by each listed agency.	(3) List key issues for continuing accreditation identified in accreditation action letter or report.	(4) Key performance indicators as required by agency or selected by program (licensure, board, or bar passrates; employment rates, etc.). *	(6) Date and nature of next scheduled review.
<b>School of Arts &amp; Sciences</b>				
<b>Human Services (CHSHSE)</b>	1-Jun-21	No corrective items were highlighted in our most recent approval letter. All accredited programs must monitor the CSHSE website for any policy changes, maintain active annual CSHSE membership, and post updated program and student achievement indicators on our university website. See the June 2021 accreditation letter here: <a href="https://cshse.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/CSHSE-Accreditation-Notification-Letter-Fitchburg-State-University-June-2021-Revised.pdf">https://cshse.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/CSHSE-Accreditation-Notification-Letter-Fitchburg-State-University-June-2021-Revised.pdf</a>	<a href="https://cshse.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/CSHSE-National-Standards-Baccalaureate-Degree-Revised-July-2020.pdf">https://cshse.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/CSHSE-National-Standards-Baccalaureate-Degree-Revised-July-2020.pdf</a>	Spring 2026 - 5-Year Report Only (No site visit)
<b>School of Business</b>				
<b>Business (MBA_BSBA)- IACBE</b>	Jan 28-29, 2020	Provide qualification justification and credentials summary for faculty assigned to teach accounting at the graduate level. Notify IACBE within 30 days of any program changes including new specialization areas such as Healthcare Management.	Documentation of program mission, goals, outcomes, policies, curriculum, etc. Fiscal, physical and academic resources. Administrative and Faculty qualifications and student learning outcomes and alignment of courses and teaching practices. The website path to public disclosure of accreditation by IACBE and the website path to public disclosure of student learning outcomes.	Full Review May 1, 2027
<b>School of Education</b>				
<b>Education-Mass DESE - Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education</b>	9-Mar-21	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Systems to recruit and admit candidates result in the increased racial and ethnic diversity of completers in the workforce.</li> <li>2. Candidates participate in field-based experiences that cover the full academic year.</li> <li>3. School Counselor only- Completers have the Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) to be effective in the licensure role.</li> </ol>	Six Domains, each with multiple criteria. DESE rated Fitchburg State “Exemplary” in the Organization domain and “Proficient” in the Partnership, Continuous Improvement, Candidate, and Field-Based Experiences domains.	31-Aug-28

<b>Education-NCATE - National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education</b>	8-Nov-13	Areas for Improvement (AFIs). 1. Candidates have limited opportunities to work with diverse faculty. 2. Candidates have limited opportunities to work with diverse peers. 3. The unit does not systematically ensure that all initial and advanced candidates have field experiences and clinical practice with P-12 students from different socioeconomic groups, diverse ethnic/racial groups, English language learners, and students with disabilities.	Five Standards as all MET for both Initial Teacher Preparation and Advanced Preparation	Accreditation will expire December 30, 2021
<b>Education-AAQEP - Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation</b>	Never Reviewed	Fitchburg State University is working toward accreditation of its educator preparation programs under the AAQEP standards with an anticipated Quality Assurance Review in fall 2023.	Overall ratings include, Full accreditation, Probationary accreditation, and Adverse action. In addition, feedback is provided for Four Standards: 1. Program completers perform as professional educators with the capacity to support success for all learners. 2. Program completers adapt to working in a variety of contexts and grow as professionals. 3. The program has the capacity to ensure that its completers meet Standards 1 and 2. 4. Program practices strengthen the P-20 education system in light of local needs and in keeping with the program's mission.	Expected to be 10/1/2023
<b>School of Health &amp; Natural Sciences</b>				
<b>Computer Information Systems-Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET</b>	Sept 22-24, 2019	Strengthen the processes for assessing the extent to which student outcomes are being attained, so that the results of these evaluations can be systematically utilized as input for the continuous improvement of the program. The process for collecting course-level data and course level assessment, but more evidence is needed to show how these course level results are being used to systematically improve the program.	Documentation of program mission, goals, outcomes, policies, curriculum, etc. Fiscal, physical and academic resources. Administrative and Faculty qualifications and student learning outcomes and alignment of courses and teaching practices.	2026
<b>Computer Science-Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET</b>	Sept 22-24, 2019	Strengthen the processes for assessing the extent to which student outcomes are being attained, so that the results of these evaluations can be systematically utilized as input for the continuous improvement of the program. The process for collecting course-level data and course level assessment, but more evidence is needed to show how these course level results are being used to systematically improve the program.	Documentation of program mission, goals, outcomes, policies, curriculum, etc. Fiscal, physical and academic resources. Administrative and Faculty qualifications and student learning outcomes and alignment of courses and teaching practices.	2026

Nursing (CCNE)	October 2015	Standard III: Program Quality: Curriculum and Teaching - Learning Practices. Standard IV Program Effectiveness: Assessment and Achievement of Program Outcomes.	Key Element III H: Curriculum and teaching-learning practices are evaluated at regularly scheduled intervals to foster ongoing improvement. Key Element IV B. Program completion rates demonstrate program effectiveness. Key Element IV-H: Data analysis is used to foster ongoing program improvement.	October 2026
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\*Record results of key performance

indicators in form 8.3 of the Data First

Forms. Institutions selecting E1b should

also include E1a.

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# Audited Financial Statements

**Fitchburg State University  
(a department of the  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts)**

**Financial Statements  
(With Supplementary Information)  
and Independent Auditor's Reports**

**June 30, 2021 and 2020**

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**Fitchburg State University**  
**(a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts)**

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## Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of Trustees  
Fitchburg State University

### Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the business-type activities and the discretely presented component unit of Fitchburg State University (the "University") (a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts), as of and for the years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the University's basic financial statements as listed in the Index.

#### *Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements*

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

#### *Auditor's Responsibility*

Our responsibility is to express opinions on these financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

#### *Opinions*

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the business-type activities and the discretely presented component unit of Fitchburg State University as of June 30, 2021 and 2020, and the respective changes in financial position and, where applicable, cash flows thereof for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.



### *Emphasis of Matter*

#### *Financial Statements of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

As discussed in Note 1, the financial statements of Fitchburg State University and its discretely presented component unit are intended to present the respective financial position, the changes in financial position and, where applicable, cash flows of only that portion of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the aggregate discretely presented component units, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that is attributable to the transactions of Fitchburg State University and its discretely presented component unit. They do not purport to, and do not, present fairly the financial position of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as of June 30, 2021 and 2020, the changes in its financial position, or, where applicable, its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Our opinion is not modified with respect to this matter.

### *Other Matters*

#### *Required Supplementary Information*

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the management's discussion and analysis and the pension and OPEB benefit schedules on pages 5 to 19 and 95 to 101, respectively, be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

#### *Other Supplementary Information*

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming opinions on the 2021 financial statements that collectively comprise the University's basic financial statements. The residence hall fund and residence hall damage fund activity shown on pages 103 to 104 are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the 2021 basic financial statements. The residence hall fund and residence hall damage fund activity are the responsibility of management and were derived from and relate directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the 2021 basic financial statements. The residence hall fund and residence hall damage fund activity information have been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the 2021 basic financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the 2021 basic financial statements or to the 2021 basic financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the residence hall fund and residence hall damage fund activity information are fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the 2021 basic financial statements as a whole.

Other Reporting Required by *Government Auditing Standards*

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated December 9, 2021 on our consideration of Fitchburg State University's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of Fitchburg State University's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering Fitchburg State University's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

*CohnReznick LLP*

Boston, Massachusetts  
December 9, 2021

**Fitchburg State University**  
**(a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts)**

**Management's Discussion and Analysis**  
**(Unaudited)**

***Introduction***

The following discussion and analysis are intended to provide an overview of the financial position and results of operations of Fitchburg State University (the "University") for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019. This discussion is provided by the management of the University and should be read in conjunction with the financial statements and notes thereto. The purpose of this document is to give some background to the financial statements and foster an understanding of how these statements relate to the mission and activities of the University.

The University, located in North Central Massachusetts, is one of the nine comprehensive public universities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (the "Commonwealth"). These institutions, along with the five-campus University of Massachusetts system and the fifteen community colleges comprise public higher education in Massachusetts. The University offers more than 30 undergraduate degree programs in fifteen academic departments, 22 graduate degree programs and several Graduate Certificates of Advanced Study. During fall 2020, there were approximately 3,141 full-time students and thousands of part-time students enrolled. For fiscal 2020, there was a combined full-time equivalent annual enrollment of approximately 4,469. Thousands more non-matriculated students take advantage of professional development programs through the School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education ("SGOCE"). The University awarded approximately 1,765 graduate and undergraduate degrees in fiscal 2020. The University is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education ("NECHE"), formerly known as New England Association of Schools and Colleges ("NEASC"), and many of the University's programs are accredited by program-specific accrediting bodies.

***Financial Highlights***

The University experienced positive results from its operations in fiscal 2021 resulting in an increase in net position of approximately 11.0%. The following are key financial highlights for the current period:

- General appropriations from the Commonwealth are approved by the legislature to help fund the day-to-day operations of the University. The University received appropriations of \$33.8 million in fiscal 2021 as compared with \$33.3 million in fiscal 2020 and \$33 million in fiscal 2019.
- The University undergraduate fees increased slightly in the fiscal year. Total mandatory fees per semester were \$4,798, \$4,767 and \$4,692 in fiscal 2021, 2020 and 2019, respectively. Tuition, which is controlled by the Commonwealth, has not increased since the fall of 2001 and remains at \$485 per semester for in-state students. The Graduate fees per 3 credit class saw a slight increase in fiscal 2021 to \$1,002 from \$957 for each of the fiscal years 2020 and 2019. On the other hand, the fees for the Accelerated Online Programs remained the same \$933 to \$1,251 per 3 credit class in fiscal 2019 to fiscal 2021.
- The University expended \$5.2 million from current funds for capital additions in fiscal 2021. Projects completed during the year included the renovations to the following: Percival Hall Phase IV, McKay Phases 3 and 4, Holmes Dining Dish Renovation, Hammond Curtain Wall Window, and an Orientation Software. Projects still in process at June 30, 2021 are: Campus wide electricity infrastructure upgrade, renovations to the Theater Building Phase 2, Recreation Center's Roof, and various projects at the McKay facility.
- Total assets and deferred outflows of resources at the end of fiscal 2021 were \$273.1 million and exceeded liabilities and deferred inflows of resources of 137.9 million by \$135.2 million (i.e., net position).

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- Total operating, non-operating, and gift revenue for fiscal 2021 was \$129.8 million, while expenses totaled \$116.4 million, resulting in an increase to net position of \$13.4 million. The increase in net position results from a decrease in operating expenses and an increase in capital revenue.
- Governmental Accounting Standards Board ("GASB") Statement No. 75 requires that an allocated portion of the Commonwealth's unfunded post-employment benefits other than pension be reported on the financial statements of the individual institutions of higher education. The allocation is based on the actual contributions paid by the institutions through the group insurance commission charges on the fringe benefit. A prior period restatement was made to fiscal year 2019 assets, liability, and expense accounts for GASB 75. The net of this restatement is an expense of \$0.93 million. The University's portion of the Commonwealth's unfunded post-employment benefits other than pension ("OPEB") liability after the restatement is calculated at \$25.8, \$24.1, and \$27.3 million at June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019.
- GASB Statement No. 68 requires that an allocated portion of the Commonwealth's net pension liability be reported on the financial statements of the individual institutions of higher education. The allocation is based on the actual contributions paid by the institutions through assessed fringe benefit charges. The University's portion of the Commonwealth's net pension liability is calculated at \$20.1, \$12.8 and \$12.5 million at June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019.
- Unrestricted net position (before benefits adjustments of \$39.8 million at June 30, 2021) available to support short-term operations totaling \$38.3 million.

Ratio analysis measures certain elements of an institution's overall financial health. The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education has instituted the use of certain core financial ratios as part of their performance measures for public universities and colleges in the Commonwealth. Analysis using these ratios, as well as other commonly accepted ratios, are incorporated throughout this document. These financial ratios are shown before unfunded benefits adjustments. Net assets benefits adjustment amount after the restatement are \$39.8 million in 2021, \$35.9 million in 2020 and \$ 34.2 million in 2019.

A change was made in fiscal year 2019 to the accounting for the dining hall income and expenses. The income and expenses related to the dining hall program was moved from an agency account to reflect an auxiliary income and its corresponding expenditure accounting. All relevant fiscal years and ratios are adjusted accordingly.

- **Current Ratio:** An excess of current assets over current liabilities (the current ratio) is a measure of liquidity and provides a buffer against future uncertainties. The University's current assets of \$41.3 million are sufficient to cover current liabilities of \$25.3 million. The University's current ratio at June 30 is 1.6 to 1 for 2021, 1.3 to 1 for 2020, and 1.7 to 1 for 2019.
- **Return on Net Position Ratio:** Net position represents the residual interest in the University's assets and deferred outflows of resources after liabilities and deferred inflows of resources are deducted. Comparing the current change in total net position to total net position at the beginning of the period (return on net position) is an economic measure that determines if the University is financially better off than in previous years. The University's return on net position at June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019 was 10.9%, -1.0% and 3%, respectively. The increase in 2021 return on net position ratio is caused by many factors. It is primarily the result of state funded on campus capital appropriation projects, federal grant expense reimbursements and loss revenue income, and a reduction in operating expenses. The decrease in 2020 return on net position ratio is primarily the

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result of the increase in expenses relating to COVID-19 and a slight decrease in tuition income from the on-ground program. While the increase in 2019 return on net position ratio is primarily the result of the increase in tuition income from the Accelerated Online program, and an increase in capital appropriations from the state.

- **Primary Reserve Ratio:** This ratio indicates how long the University could function using its expendable reserves without relying on additional net position generated by operations. The University's primary reserve ratio at June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019 was 40.3%, 27.1% and 32.3%, respectively.
- **Secondary Reserve Ratio:** This ratio measures the significance of non-expendable net position in relation to an institution's operating size. An improving trend shows an improved capital base and the higher the ratio value, the better the long term financial condition. The University's secondary reserve ratio at June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019 was 115.2%, 105.5% and 106.3%, respectively.
- **Composite Financial Index:** In order to assess and evaluate the total financial health of an institution, core financial ratios are weighted and combined into a single factor called the Composite Financial Index (CFI). When calculated, a strength factor of three indicates a relatively healthy institution that can sustain moderate growth with expendable net position exceeding debt levels. The University's CFI at June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019 was 3.3, 0.9 and 1.8, respectively.

***Using the Financial Statements***

Fitchburg State University reports its activity as a business type activity using the full accrual basis of accounting. The accrual basis of accounting ensures that all amounts owed to the University and all pending obligations of the University are accounted for in the appropriate period, thus giving a clear picture of the University's financial position. The University is a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. A summary of the University's financial statements is incorporated in the Commonwealth's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report in its government-wide financial statements.

The University's financial statements include three major documents: The Statement of Net Position; the Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Position; and the Statement of Cash Flows. These statements are prepared in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America ("GAAP").

**Statements of Net Position**

The statement of net position presents the financial position of the University at the end of the year and includes all assets, liabilities and deferred inflows and outflows of resources of the University, with the difference reported as net position. Assets, liabilities and deferred inflows and outflows are generally measured using current values, with a notable exception in capital assets, which are stated at historical cost less an allowance for depreciation. Net position is one indicator of the financial condition of the University, while the change in net position from one period to the next is an indicator of whether the financial condition has improved or worsened.

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The statements of net position (condensed, in thousands) at June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019, are as follows:

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
<b>Assets</b>			
Current assets	\$ 41,285	\$ 30,142	\$ 34,855
Capital assets, net	185,530	181,470	182,821
Other	<u>33,131</u>	<u>27,877</u>	<u>26,767</u>
Total assets	<u>259,946</u>	<u>239,489</u>	<u>244,443</u>
Deferred outflows of resources	<u>13,188</u>	<u>8,276</u>	<u>8,913</u>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Current liabilities	25,290	22,779	20,799
Long-term liabilities	<u>102,672</u>	<u>94,742</u>	<u>102,753</u>
Total liabilities	<u>127,962</u>	<u>117,521</u>	<u>123,552</u>
Deferred inflows of resources	<u>9,934</u>	<u>8,417</u>	<u>4,526</u>
<b>Net position</b>			
Net investment in capital assets	129,113	125,002	121,719
Restricted			
Nonexpendable	567	504	523
Expendable	12,089	7,779	8,559
Unrestricted			
Designated	22,004	16,867	18,462
Undesignated (deficit)	<u>(28,535)</u>	<u>(28,325)</u>	<u>(23,985)</u>
Total net position	<u>\$ 135,238</u>	<u>\$ 121,827</u>	<u>\$ 125,278</u>

Current assets consist mainly of cash and cash equivalents (68.8%) and accounts receivable (30.6%). Other assets include non-current restricted cash and cash equivalents, investments in marketable securities and loans receivable. Capital assets are used to provide services to students, faculty and staff. These assets are not available for current or future spending. Current liabilities primarily include revenue received in advance (35.2%), trade accounts and salaries payable, accounts payable - construction, the current portion of compensated absences and accrued faculty payroll. In the normal course of events and based on a consistent past history in this regard, it is anticipated that obligations due to employees will be funded by state appropriations. Deferred inflows and outflows of resources represent either the acquisition or use of net position applicable to future periods and are distinct from assets and liabilities. The change in fiscal year 2019 unrestricted net position, deferred inflows and deferred outflows of resources from prior year financial statement is a result of a restatement of GASB 75. The decrease in net position in fiscal year 2020 compared to increase in fiscal year 2019 was primarily the result of the pandemic. Although we have turned the corner on the pandemic in fiscal year 2021, we are still feeling the effects related to the undergraduate student population and on those students living in campus housing. On a hopeful note,

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fiscal year 2021 saw an increase in the state's funding of the campus' deferred maintenance program and a one-time federal grant reimbursement of loss revenues due to COVID-19 for fiscal years 2020 and 2021. About a half of this loss revenue was recognized in fiscal year 2021 and the balance is to be recognized in fiscal year 2022. The individual elements of revenue and expenses and their corresponding effect on our net position are illustrated in the following schedule.

*Statements of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Position*

The following Statements of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Position (condensed, in thousands) presents information showing the University's results of operations for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019. Changes in net position are reported as soon as the underlying event giving rise to the change occurs, regardless of the timing of related cash flows. Thus, revenue and expenses are reported in this statement for some items that will result in cash flows in future periods (e.g. the accrual for compensated absences).

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	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Operating revenues			
Tuition and fees (net)	\$ 43,352	\$ 43,717	\$ 44,253
Grants	16,594	13,986	9,370
Sales and service of educational department	1,083	1,299	1,456
Auxiliary	8,583	10,628	14,915
Other operating revenue	551	1,154	831
	<u>70,163</u>	<u>70,784</u>	<u>70,825</u>
Total operating revenue			
Operating expenses			
Instruction	37,848	38,623	38,610
Research and public service	1,112	1,076	952
Academic support	8,538	8,830	8,596
Student services	14,437	13,419	13,603
Scholarships	4,327	5,202	2,841
Institutional support	17,041	14,499	13,632
Operations and maintenance	11,791	11,553	11,757
Depreciation	11,448	11,032	10,442
Auxiliary	8,552	14,563	15,322
	<u>115,094</u>	<u>118,797</u>	<u>115,755</u>
Total operating expenses			
Net operating loss	<u>(44,931)</u>	<u>(48,013)</u>	<u>(44,930)</u>
Non-operating revenue and expenses			
State appropriations	45,830	44,088	43,795
Investment income	3,172	867	1,218
Interest expense and debt issue costs	(1,307)	(1,967)	(2,008)
State capital appropriations	10,392	1,318	3,558
Capital gifts and grants	255	256	257
	<u>58,342</u>	<u>44,562</u>	<u>46,820</u>
Total non-operating revenue			
Increase (decrease) in net position	13,411	(3,451)	1,890
Net position, beginning of the year	<u>121,827</u>	<u>125,278</u>	<u>123,388</u>
Net position, end of the year	<u>\$ 135,238</u>	<u>\$ 121,827</u>	<u>\$ 125,278</u>

State appropriations are reported net of the amount of in state day school tuition collected by the University on behalf of the Commonwealth. The tuition collected (for in state supported courses taught by state employees) is then remitted to the Commonwealth as required by Massachusetts General Law. The following schedule details the Commonwealth appropriations received by the University. Included in appropriations are the fringe benefit costs for University employees, which are paid by the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth appropriates general funds to cover the cost of fringe benefits for state employees, but these funds are not appropriated directly to the University. Employees who are paid from local trust funds, grants or other sources receive the same fringe benefits. Generally, the University reimburses the Commonwealth for the benefit costs associated with these employees. In 2012 legislation was passed that allowed the state universities to retain out of state day tuition. The legislation further mandated that the Commonwealth would fund the fringe benefits for any employee paid from this funding source. The fringe benefit rate charged by the Commonwealth, exclusive of compensated absences, for fiscal years 2021,



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2020 and 2019 was 36.38%, 35.48% and 34.89%, respectively. The current fringe benefit rate includes group medical insurance (20.65%); retirement (14.66%) and terminal leave (1.07%).

The following schedule (condensed, in thousands) details the Commonwealth appropriations received by the University:

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Commonwealth general appropriations	\$ 33,771	\$ 33,297	\$ 31,242
Commonwealth special appropriations	-	30	1,746
Appropriations to cover fringe benefits provided to employees of the Commonwealth	<u>12,528</u>	<u>11,637</u>	<u>11,596</u>
	46,299	44,964	44,584
Tuition remitted back to the Commonwealth	<u>(469)</u>	<u>(876)</u>	<u>(789)</u>
Net appropriations	45,830	44,088	43,795
Additional state capital appropriations	<u>10,392</u>	<u>1,318</u>	<u>3,558</u>
Total appropriations	<u>\$ 56,222</u>	<u>\$ 45,406</u>	<u>\$ 47,353</u>

State appropriations are a significant source of funding for the University. According to the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, appropriations are considered non-operating revenue. As such, the University appears to experience a loss from operations. However, it should be noted that state appropriations are used to fund the operating activities of the University.

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The following schedule (condensed, in thousands) illustrates the University's incurred losses from operations for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019.

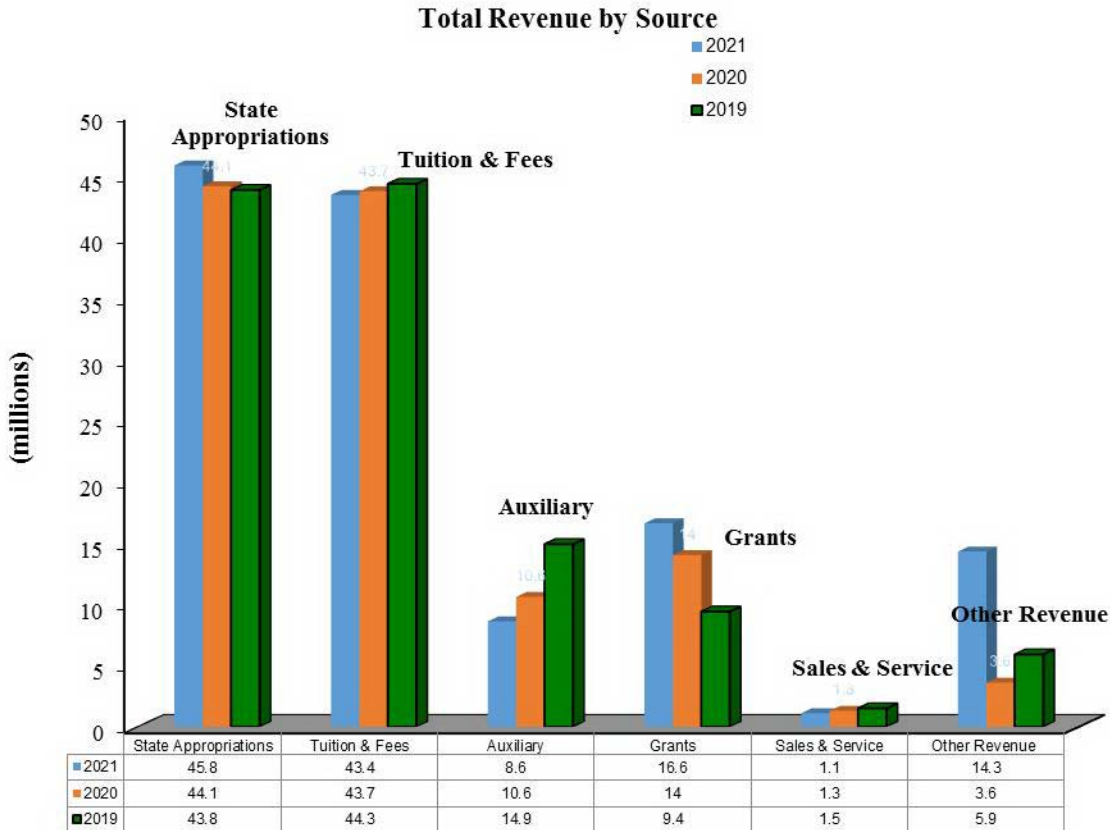
	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Tuition and fees revenue, net	\$ 43,352	\$ 43,717	\$ 44,252
Other operating revenue	<u>26,811</u>	<u>27,067</u>	<u>26,573</u>
Total operating revenue	70,163	70,784	70,825
Operating expenses	<u>(115,094)</u>	<u>(118,797)</u>	<u>(115,755)</u>
Operating loss	(44,931)	(48,013)	(44,930)
Total state appropriations	45,830	44,088	43,795
Other revenue (expense), net	<u>12,512</u>	<u>474</u>	<u>3,025</u>
Increase (decrease) in net position	<u>\$ 13,411</u>	<u>\$ (3,451)</u>	<u>\$ 1,890</u>

**Net Operating Revenues Ratio:** This ratio indicates whether total operating activities resulted in a surplus or deficit. A positive ratio indicates that the institution experienced an operating surplus and is indicative of efficient and effective operations. For the fiscal years ended June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019, the University's net operating revenues ratio was 5.6%, -2.8% and .7%, respectively.

The following is a graphic illustration of total revenue (operating, non-operating and capital) by source. Total revenue for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019 was \$129.8, \$117.3, and \$119.6 million, respectively.

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State appropriations have increased slightly over the past three fiscal years (2019-2021), and these increases are a result of the state funding of the collective bargaining agreements which were ratified in 2018. Although ratified in 2018, the state did not start paying out the salary increases until fiscal year 2019 and at that time the state supplemented this increase with a one-time payment. In fiscal year 2020, we also had a supplement funding appropriation from the state because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the last twenty years, general appropriations (including fringe benefits) that support the operating costs of the University have decreased to 39.4% from 61.5% in fiscal year 2001. In addition to the increasing amount of local payroll, all other operating costs incurred by the University are funded from other non-state revenue sources. Tuition and fees are reported net of tuition waivers, exemptions, and scholarship allowances. The \$485 per credit tuition charged per semester is controlled at the state level and remains unchanged since 2001. The board approved a few minimal fee increases in 2021 and these increases were mainly due to the need for improved and robust internet services and increased data protection. Because of the pandemic and the reduction of in face-to-face student activities on campus, the board waived the student activity fee of \$45 per semester. In fiscal year 2020, the only fee increase approved was the University fee of \$75 per semester. Because of the robust online program, overall total tuition and fee revenue had only a moderate decrease of 2.0% in fiscal year 2021 and a 1.5% decrease in fiscal year 2020 but saw an increase of 3% in fiscal year 2019. During fiscal year 2021, 2020 and 2019, in-state tuition, fees and room & board for full time resident students were \$11,571, \$10,578 and \$10,492 per semester, respectively. In-state tuition and fees for commuting students in fiscal years 2021, 2020 and 2019 were \$5,291, \$5,261 and \$5,177 per semester, respectively.

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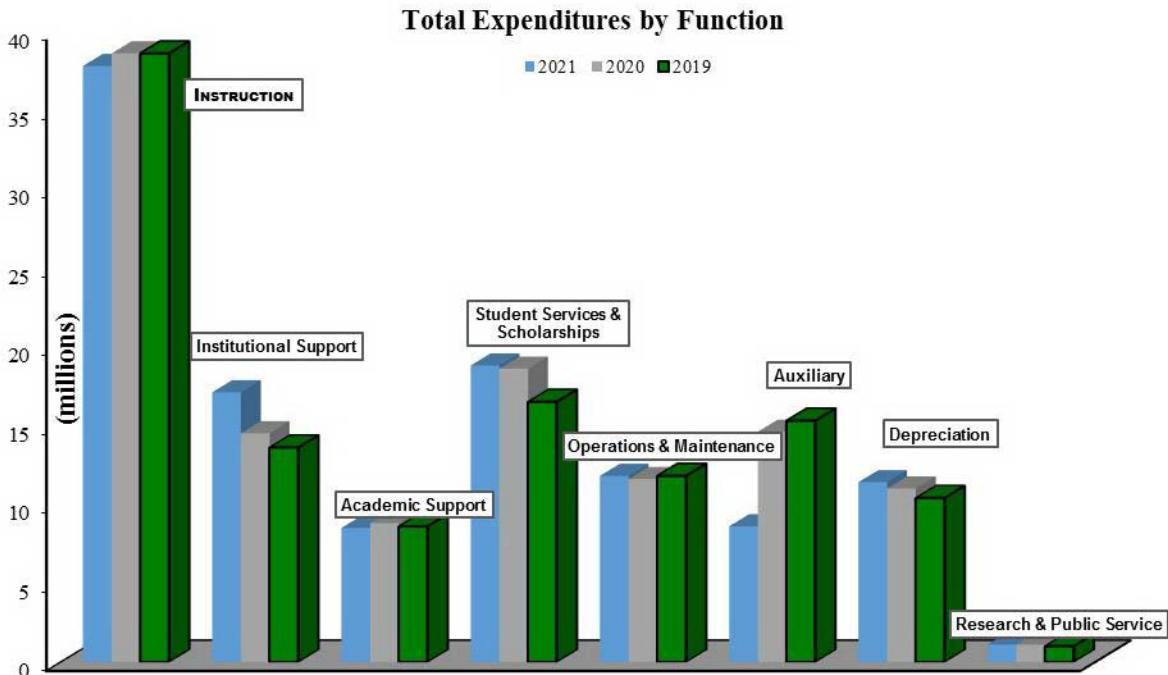
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Auxiliary revenue represents revenue received from the operations of the University's residence and dining halls. Auxiliary revenue does not include fees charged for the student housing facility owned and operated by the FSU Supporting Organization, Inc. (the "Supporting Organization"). The average residence hall occupancy rate for the fiscal year 2021 was 50.3% of capacity versus 76.2% of capacity in fiscal year 2020 and 89.4% capacity in fiscal year 2019.

Grant revenue is made up of federal, state and private grants. Grant revenue includes grants for financial aid programs such as PELL, SEOG and Federal Work Study and a federal pandemic related grant called HEERF – Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund - which was approved to support institutions of higher education to serve students and ensure learning continues during the COVID-19 pandemic. This grant was appropriated in three phases – the CARES Act in March 2020, the CRRSAA in December 2020 and the ARP grant in March 2021 and was to be expended within one year of performance. HEERF award was authorized and given to be used for student and institutional support respectively. A total of \$2.1 million institutional support was authorized in FY20 and \$11.3 million in FY21. While a total of \$2 million student support was authorized in FY20 and \$7.4 million in FY21.

Other revenue includes investment and miscellaneous revenue.

The following is a graphic illustration of total expenditures (operating) by function. Total expenditures for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019 were \$115.1, \$118.8 and \$115.8 million, respectively.



Expenditures, exclusive of depreciation, decreased by 3.82% in 2021 and increased by 3.3% in FY2020 versus 9.0% in fiscal year 2019. The fiscal year 2021 decrease was mainly because of two reasons. The first reason was because of a one-time re-funding of the auxiliary debt payment thru MSCBA in July 2020. This refunding resulted in reduced interest expense payments made in fiscal year 2021 and a

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corresponding reduction of the principal debt liability payment also. Another reason for the reduction in expenditure relates to the reduced number of students living in student housing and those using the dining facilities. On the other hand, fiscal year 2020 increase was largely due to COVID-19 related expenses. The fiscal year 2019 increase was primarily due to payment of retroactive salary increases for fiscal years 2018, mandated increase in benefits payments, increase in resident hall debt payments to MSCBA and increase in the commission payment arising from the accelerated online program. The most significant area of expense remains Instruction, which represents 32.8% of total operating expenses in fiscal year 2021, 32.5% of total expenses in fiscal year 2020 and 33.05% of total expenses in fiscal year 2019. In fiscal year 2021 faculty payroll of (\$24.5 million) and related benefits of (\$9 million) represents approximately 86.3% of Instructional expenses while in fiscal year 2020 faculty payroll (\$25.4 million) and related benefits (\$9 million) represent approximately 89.2% of instructional expenditures. But in fiscal year 2019, faculty payroll (\$24.4 million) and related benefits (\$8.5 million) represent 85.2% of instructional expenditures. Institutional Support consists of the day-to-day operational support of the institution, excluding physical plant operations. Scholarships are funded from Title V entitlement programs such as PELL and SEOG, as well as, from institutional operating funds. Operations and Maintenance consists of expenditures related to physical plant. Expenditures in this functional area include general repair costs and deferred maintenance costs that are below the capitalization threshold of \$50,000. The financial statements include \$11.4, \$11.0 and \$10.0 million in depreciation expense for 2021, 2020 and 2019, respectively.

**Demand Ratios:** Demand ratios measure the extent to which each type of expense consumes operating and non-operating revenues. The following table displays the amount of operating and non-operating revenue, exclusive of capital grants and appropriations, consumed by the various functional expense categories:

Expense	2021	2020	2019
Instruction	31.80%	33.40%	33.30%
Institutional Support	14.30%	12.50%	11.00%
Academic Support	7.20%	7.60%	7.40%
Student Services & Scholarships	15.70%	16.10%	14.20%
Operations & Maintenance	9.90%	10.00%	10.10%
Auxiliary	7.20%	12.60%	13.20%
Depreciation	9.60%	9.50%	9.00%

Note: The total sum of all Demand Ratios will be greater (less) than 100 percent, with the difference representing the surplus (deficit).

Statement of Cash Flows

The statement of cash flows provides pertinent information about the cash receipts and cash payments during a certain period of time. The statement provides an additional tool to assess the financial health of the institution. As required by GASB, the statement is reported using the direct method. The direct method of cash flow reporting portrays net cash flows from operations as major classes of receipts (e.g. tuition and fees) and disbursements (e.g. cash paid to employees for services).

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The following are the University's statements of cash flows (condensed, in thousands) for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019:

	2021	2020	2019
Cash received from operations	\$ 65,565	\$ 70,669	\$ 71,023
Cash expended for operations	(87,499)	(93,843)	(89,436)
Net cash used in operations	(21,934)	(23,174)	(18,413)
Net cash provided by noncapital financing activities	33,385	32,451	32,198
Net cash used in capital and related financing activities	(8,622)	(13,085)	(10,525)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	598	(376)	273
Net increase (decrease) in cash and equivalents	3,427	(4,184)	3,533
Cash and equivalents, beginning of the year	35,461	39,645	36,112
Cash and equivalents, end of the year	<u>\$ 38,888</u>	<u>\$ 35,461</u>	<u>\$ 39,645</u>

In fiscal year 2021, the University's cash and cash equivalents increased by \$3.4 million to \$38.9 million. This increase in cash and cash equivalents stemmed from reduced payments of \$3.3 million to suppliers, \$2.6 million reduction in payroll expenses, an increase of \$0.9 million in state appropriations and reduction of \$1.8 million in auxiliary expenses and \$2 million in grant revenue. The University's cash and cash equivalents decreased by approximately \$4.2 million during fiscal 2020, resulting in the cash and cash equivalents balance of \$35.5 million at the fiscal year-end. The decrease in fiscal year 2020 is primarily due to an increase in coronavirus expenditure, increase in payroll expenses of \$3.6 million, reduction in auxiliary income of \$4.4 million and an increase in grant income of \$4 million. Fiscal year 2019 had an increase which was primarily due to the increase in tuition and fees with negligible corresponding increase in accounts receivable and state and general capital appropriations and a decrease in capital expenditures.

Non-capital financing activities, as defined by GASB, include state appropriations. These appropriations fund the operating activities of the University. Investing activities include interest and dividends received from portfolio investments, as well as interest earned on university funds held in various short-term money management vehicles.

**Capital Assets**

Capital assets consist of land, land improvements, buildings and building improvements, equipment, library materials, and construction in progress. As of June 30, 2021, net capital assets increased by \$4.1 million to \$185.5 million net of current depreciation of \$11.4 million. At fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, net capital assets decreased to \$181.5 million net of current depreciation expense of \$11.0 million. At June 30, 2019 net capital assets increased to \$182.8 million net of depreciation expense of \$10.4 million. During fiscal year 2021 there were \$15.5 million additions to capital assets, \$9.7 million in 2020 and \$11.8 million in 2019.

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Major capital initiatives either continuing or undertaken during 2021 include:

➤ McKay projects	\$7.4 million (to date)
➤ Electricity infrastructure upgrade	\$8.5 million (to date)
➤ Percival projects	\$2.6 million (to date)
➤ Theater Renovation	\$1.9 million (to date)
➤ Recreation Center Roof	\$1.6 million (to date)

Additional information on Fitchburg State University's capital assets can be found in footnote 5 to the accompanying financial statements.

**Physical Asset Renewal Ratio:** The extent to which capital renewal is occurring as compared to physical usage (depreciation) can be measured by the physical asset renewal ratio. A ratio above 1:1 indicates increasing investment in plant facilities. The University's physical asset renewal ratio for fiscal years ended June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019 was 0.8, 1.2 and 1.1, respectively.

Long-term Debt

The University has long term debt obligations issued for various capital projects. The debt was issued through several financing agreements with the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency (MDFA) (formerly the Massachusetts Health and Educational Facilities Authority (MHEFA)), the Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA) and a capital lease through J P Morgan. The interest rate on the majority of MSCBA debt is based on fixed coupon rates ranging from 2.00% to 6.00% over the term of the debt as set by MSCBA. The interest rate on the capital lease is fixed at 1.81%.

MSCBA issued the Series 2020A Bonds on July 1, 2020 in part to refund Bonds maturing in fiscal years 2021 and 2022 to provide fiscal relief to the State Universities as they faced or are likely to face lower occupancy and a reduction in revenues in those fiscal years due to the COVID-19 outbreak. As a result, the fiscal year 2021 aggregate debt service assessment was reduced by \$52.8 million (approximately 50%), and the fiscal year 2022 aggregate debt service assessment was reduced by \$28.2 million (approximately 25%). In addition to the debt service assessment, operating and reserve assessments to the Universities were also reduced or deferred to more closely align expenses with the lower revenue. MSCBA released \$15.8 million from the debt service reserve to fund a portion of the fall 2020 interest payment, and \$400,000 to fund a portion of the spring 2021 interest payment, which further reduced the amount that needed to be assessed to the Universities. In the fall of 2020, MSCBA did not assess early principal at all.

The current MSCBA debt is being repaid by the University primarily through dedicated student fees (DSF).

The following table summarizes the various debt vehicles, interest rates, debt service and debt outstanding at June 30, 2021 and is inclusive of any bond premiums or discounts.

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Issuing Agency	Construction Project	Fiscal Year Originally Issued	Original Amount	Funding Source	Effective Interest Rate	Debt Service Payments	Debt Outstanding	Maturity
MDFA	Recreation Center	1997	\$ 6,000,000	DSF	0.26%	\$ 349,378	\$ 1,301,094	2023
MSCBA	Holmes Dining Hall Renovations	2005	\$ 1,090,000	DSF	2.54%	\$ 38,797	\$ 422,521	2034
MSCBA	Elliot Athletic Field Improvements	2005	\$ 4,020,000	DSF	2.66%	\$ 138,782	\$ 1,495,105	2034
MSCBA	Holmes Dining Hall Renovations	2006	\$ 2,060,000	DSF	2.57%	\$ 70,776	\$ 880,645	2031
MSCBA	Hammond Campus Center Renovations	2011	\$ 15,935,656	DSF	5.54%	\$ 414,074	\$ 9,639,944	2030
MSCBA	Hammond Campus Center Renovations	2012	\$ 7,043,416	DSF	2.50%	\$ 193,991	\$ 4,560,366	2035
MSCBA	Hammond Campus Center Renovations	2013	\$ 11,300,906	DSF	3.22%	\$ 300,283	\$ 7,365,801	2034
MSCBA	Parking Expansion	2013	\$ 2,563,127	DSF	3.03%	\$ 69,360	\$ 1,873,473	2034
MSCBA	Hammond Campus Center Renovations	2014	\$ 12,235,614	DSF	3.29%	\$ 296,977	\$ 8,792,549	2038
MSCBA	Hammond Campus Center Renovations	2015	\$ 10,669,503	DSF & Operating Funds	4.67%	\$ 286,906	\$ 6,739,850	2035
MSCBA	Landry Area Refurbishment	2017	\$ 4,166,418	DSF & Operating Funds	4.01%	\$ 95,610	\$ 3,945,185	2037
DCAMM	CEIP Funds	2017	\$ 5,420,360	DCAMM	3.00%	\$ 214,007	\$ 5,010,863	2039
JP Morgan	Campus Wireless Project	2017	\$ 1,261,206	JP Morgan	1.81%	\$ 131,295	\$ 131,295	2021
MSCBA	Holmes Dining Hall Renovations	2019	\$ 1,516,022	DSF	2.00%	\$ 31,066	\$ 1,689,389	2039
MSCBA	Recreation Center	2019	\$ 1,107,123	DSF & Operating Funds	3.84%	\$ 23,764	\$ 1,305,672	2039
Total			\$ 86,389,351			\$ 2,655,066	\$ 55,153,752	

For the fiscal years ended June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019, the total debt (current and long term) attributable to interagency payments, bond premiums and capital lease payments amounted to \$55.2, \$58.3 and \$62.6 million, respectively.

Additional information on Fitchburg State University's long term debt activity can be found in footnotes 12 and 13 to the accompanying financial statements.

**Viability Ratio:** The availability of expendable net assets to cover debt (the viability ratio) is a basic determinant of financial health. Expendable net assets are those assets not required to be retained in perpetuity, i.e., those assets available for use for operations. A ratio of 1:1 or greater would indicate, as of the balance sheet date, an institution has sufficient expendable net assets to satisfy debt obligations. However public institutions can operate effectively on a reduced ratio because of the benefit of state support which is not captured in the institution's expendable net assets. The University's viability ratio, which has remained relatively consistent over time, is 0.85 for June 30, 2021, 0.58 for 2020 and 0.61 for 2019.

**Debt Burden:** The debt burden ratio measures an institution's dependence on borrowed funds by comparing the level of debt service to total expenditures. In order to effectively manage resources, including debt, industry standards sets the upper threshold for institutional debt burden at 7%. As of June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019, the University's debt burden was 2.0%, 5.5% and 5.2%, respectively.



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Looking Forward

Fitchburg State University is on a mission. A mission not only to change lives one student at a time but to change generations to come. Fitchburg State University's vision as noted on the Strategic Plan page of the Fitchburg State University website is to create "an inclusive, integrated, and equitable university" which is believed to be "the clearest path to social and economic prosperity for all."

There are six strategic goals to get to the desired outcome. I will paraphrase a few:

- Forge innovative paths
- Be an engine of change where you are
- Establish excellence as a strength
- Steward physical and financial resources responsibly

Most, if not all, departments on campus have taken up this mantle.

The University police department is forging new paths. "They did this recently when they added this new member to their department. It is said that this latest member was "recruited" by a fellow officer and the officers ensured that this new member would easily fit in the department, which means he had to be friendly, hard-working, and approachable and is able to quickly follow orders. What is also interesting is that this new member will not be trained to check for bombs, or contraband or to pursue suspects but his role is instead one of needed during stressful times. His role is to provide comfort to all, both students and non-students."

Not sure if you are able to put all the clues together, but just in case it is missed, the newest member of the police department is a dog. We would like to welcome Odin and thank the police department for forging new paths.

Fitchburg State University has accepted the challenge once again to be an engine for change. President Lapidus recently signed a memorandum of understanding with leaders from Mount Wachusett Community College, LUK Inc., and the Fitchburg Public Schools to support students with housing insecurity. The program called "Moving to College" was launched by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. The program is looking at the best way to end homelessness among college students. Way to go FSU.

Fitchburg State University's Engineering Technology is an example of a department forging new paths for their students and establishing excellence as a part of the course they travel. Professor Chenot's students are getting real world experience while in the classroom. The students from the architecture, energy management, electronics and construction management concentration in the Engineering Technology program recently competed in the U. S. Department of Energy's Solar Decathlon Design Challenge and they had the valuable assistance of the Senior Energy Efficiency Program Coordinator from Unitil. The challenge they accepted was to reimagine a vacant parcel as a hub of renewable energy. According to one of the students, "this was a real world project that emphasized team work and we were assigned roles based on our interest and strengths". What a way to learn!

U.S. News & World Report has once again recognized and ranked Fitchburg State University among colleges and universities that contributes to upward social mobility of its students. It has been noted, not only inside FSU but externally, that FSU is making a difference and graduating large numbers of economically disadvantaged students. The university's success in creating upward social mobility is one of the goals of Fitchburg State University latest strategic plan. According to President R. S. Lapidus "the

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pillars of this strategic plan are educational justice, being a student-ready campus, and inclusive excellence."

The University is on a mission to be a beacon of light in the Fitchburg community and beyond. And one way it does this is to ensure that the campus not only looks pristine but is pristine. Over the years, the University has continually invested in its infrastructure as that is one of the best ways of improving the well-being of its students and show that it is fiscally responsible by being good stewards of the property it has been entrusted with. A number of these projects undertaken in FY21 and FY22 are being done in collaboration with funding from DCAMM.

Renovations have been completed in the following areas:

- Percival Hall – the renovation of classrooms, offices, conference room, and small-group space.
- McKay Addition – new entrance, café, new faculty offices, etc.

Underway:

- McKay - Final phase – the remainder of the classrooms, computer lab, etc.
- Anthony Admissions Suite – to be updated to offer an expanded seating and welcoming area for new students and their families.
- Thompson Hall – to make it wheelchair accessible.
- Electric Infrastructure project – fully funded by DCAMM. Replaces an obsolete electrical distribution system.

Fitchburg State University is still committed to the upgrading of the Theater facility which will not only aid the community of Fitchburg, but as President Lapidus says is a way "to create a different front door for ourselves and a way to plant a flag downtown". The board of Fidelity bank have bought in our dream and have donated their building in downtown Fitchburg to the college. This property is adjacent to the Theater building and will be a good investment once the renovation to the Theater is complete. As a community resource, the institution continues to provide leadership and support for the economic, environmental, social, and cultural needs of Fitchburg, north central Massachusetts, and the Commonwealth.

**Requests for Information**

This financial report is designed to provide a general overview of the finances of Fitchburg State University for anyone interested in this information. Questions concerning any of the data provided in this report or requests for additional financial information should be addressed to Dr. Richard S. Lapidus, President, Fitchburg State University, 160 Pearl Street, Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 01420.

Complete financial statements for Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc. the University's Component Unit, can be obtained from the office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration, Fitchburg State University, 160 Pearl Street, Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 01420.

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**Statements of Net Position**  
**June 30, 2021 and 2020**

	<u>Assets</u>			
	<u>2021</u>	Component Unit Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc. <u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	Component Unit Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc. <u>2020</u>
<b>Current assets</b>				
Cash and equivalents	\$ 21,401,963	\$ 2,499,955	\$ 20,103,032	\$ 1,866,947
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	6,997,652	-	6,863,394	-
Investments	-	14,595,376	-	9,033,514
Accounts receivable, net	12,668,794	37,849	2,963,457	32,495
Contributions receivable, net	-	311,428	-	403,375
Loans receivable - current portion	-	-	1,055	-
Other current assets	216,532	69,247	209,713	121,355
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>41,284,941</b>	<b>17,513,855</b>	<b>30,140,651</b>	<b>11,457,686</b>
<b>Noncurrent assets</b>				
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	10,489,013	-	8,494,542	-
Investments	20,429,198	-	17,161,427	-
Endowment investments	1,109,576	12,564,448	892,728	12,220,628
Accounts receivable, net of current portion	-	-	47,032	-
Contributions receivable, net	-	61,346	-	348,529
Loans receivable, net of current portion	1,041,035	-	1,273,489	-
Capital assets, net	185,530,026	7,218,761	181,470,066	6,737,875
Other noncurrent assets	61,942	140,920	8,895	146,788
<b>Total noncurrent assets</b>	<b>218,660,790</b>	<b>19,985,475</b>	<b>209,348,179</b>	<b>19,453,820</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>259,945,731</b>	<b>37,499,330</b>	<b>239,488,830</b>	<b>30,911,506</b>
<b>Deferred outflows of resources</b>				
Deferred outflow-OPEB	5,802,040	-	5,014,453	-
Deferred outflow for pensions	7,386,093	-	3,262,016	-
<b>Total deferred outflows of resources</b>	<b>13,188,133</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,276,469</b>	<b>-</b>

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**Statements of Net Position**  
**June 30, 2021 and 2020**

Liabilities and Net Position

	2021	Component Unit Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc. 2021	2020	Component Unit Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc. 2020
<b>Current liabilities</b>				
Interagency payables - current portion	2,523,772	-	4,038,987	-
Long-term debt - current portion	-	225,884	-	254,180
Bank lines of credit	-	-	-	250,000
Capital lease obligations - current portion	131,295	-	259,038	-
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	4,624,741	85,085	4,213,648	102,705
Accounts payable - construction	1,396,551	536,901	1,369,689	100,000
Accrued workers' compensation - current portion	131,181	-	104,231	-
Compensated absences - current portion	3,243,931	-	3,584,425	-
Faculty payroll accrual	3,876,328	-	4,231,311	-
Revenue received in advance	8,891,959	30,000	4,534,790	32,500
Deposits	396,500	-	371,150	-
Other current liabilities	73,453	31,080	71,254	31,080
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>25,289,711</b>	<b>908,950</b>	<b>22,778,523</b>	<b>770,465</b>
<b>Noncurrent liabilities</b>				
Interagency payables, net of current portion	52,498,686	-	53,901,118	-
Accrued workers' compensation, net of current portion	957,244	-	373,893	-
Long-term debt, net of current portion	2,117,468	-	2,157,318	-
Capital lease obligations, net of current portion	-	4,147,702	-	3,544,808
Loan payable - federal financial assistance program	1,154,792	-	1,354,371	-
Net OPEB liability	25,852,605	-	24,061,207	-
Net pension liability	20,091,153	-	12,763,415	-
<b>Total noncurrent liabilities</b>	<b>102,671,948</b>	<b>4,147,702</b>	<b>94,742,647</b>	<b>3,544,808</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>127,961,659</b>	<b>5,056,652</b>	<b>117,521,170</b>	<b>4,315,273</b>
<b>Deferred inflows of resources</b>				
Deferred inflow - debt refunding	2,125,859	-	-	-
Service concession arrangement	758,754	-	1,011,672	-
Deferred inflow - OPEB	6,269,569	-	6,233,735	-
Deferred inflow for pensions	779,813	-	1,171,344	-
<b>Total deferred inflows of resources</b>	<b>9,933,995</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,416,751</b>	<b>-</b>

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**Statements of Net Position**  
**June 30, 2021 and 2020**

	<u>2021</u>	<u>Component Unit Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc. 2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Component Unit Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc. 2020</u>
Net investment in capital assets	129,112,613	3,239,383	125,001,606	2,983,093
Restricted for:				
Nonexpendable				
Scholarships and fellowships	567,112	6,453,507	504,243	6,194,533
Cultural programs	-	4,251,160	-	4,230,397
Centennial endowments	-	1,592,974	-	1,592,974
Other	-	266,808	-	202,725
Expendable				
Scholarships and fellowships	474,923	7,608,222	412,403	4,587,274
Cultural programs	-	5,047,976	-	3,498,687
Loans	168,109	-	197,348	-
Capital projects	86,750	-	50,000	-
Debt service	11,182,545	-	6,905,505	-
Other	176,755	685,962	214,661	665,653
Unrestricted (deficit)	<u>(6,530,597)</u>	<u>3,296,686</u>	<u>(11,458,388)</u>	<u>2,640,897</u>
 Total net position	 <u>\$ 135,238,210</u>	 <u>\$ 32,442,678</u>	 <u>\$ 121,827,378</u>	 <u>\$ 26,596,233</u>

See Notes to Financial Statements.

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**Statements of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Position**  
**Years Ended June 30, 2021 and 2020**

	2021	Component Unit Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc. 2021	2020	Component Unit Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc. 2020
Operating revenues				
Student tuition and fees	\$ 44,257,345	\$ -	\$ 44,917,493	\$ -
Student fees restricted for repayment of Interagency payables	5,276,977	-	5,591,162	-
Less: Scholarship allowances	<u>(6,182,413)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(6,792,063)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net student tuition and fees	43,351,909	-	43,716,592	-
Federal grants and contracts	14,698,939	-	11,982,884	-
State and local grants and contracts	987,641	-	962,732	45,000
Nongovernmental grants and contracts	907,446	-	1,040,326	-
Sales and services of educational departments	1,082,948	600,556	1,299,234	814,328
Gifts and contributions	-	1,432,611	-	903,788
Auxiliary enterprises:				
Residential life	6,470,991	95,326	7,450,821	263,623
Dining hall	2,094,729	-	3,157,802	-
Alcohol awareness and other programs	17,150	-	19,698	-
Other operating revenues	<u>550,859</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,154,130</u>	<u>-</u>
Total operating revenues	<u>70,162,612</u>	<u>2,128,493</u>	<u>70,784,219</u>	<u>2,026,739</u>
Operating expenses				
Educational and general				
Instruction	37,848,073	-	38,622,968	2,442
Research	118,083	-	76,841	14,008
Public service	994,361	19,198	998,932	70,509
Academic support	8,537,515	17,300	8,830,350	14,269
Student services	14,436,572	53,283	13,419,253	117,550
Institutional support	17,041,392	625,848	14,498,712	715,303
Operations and maintenance of plant	11,791,303	645,509	11,552,991	95,566
Depreciation and amortization	11,447,580	176,705	11,032,465	166,693
Scholarships and awards	4,326,742	535,218	5,201,434	446,743
Auxiliary enterprises				
Residential life	6,330,598	39,091	11,319,050	58,487
Dining hall	2,219,352	-	3,237,249	-
Alcohol awareness and other programs	1,961	-	7,052	-
Total operating expenses	<u>115,093,532</u>	<u>2,112,152</u>	<u>118,797,297</u>	<u>1,701,570</u>
Operating income (loss)	<u>(44,930,920)</u>	<u>16,341</u>	<u>(48,013,078)</u>	<u>325,169</u>

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**Statements of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Position**  
**Years Ended June 30, 2021 and 2020**

	2021	Component Unit Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc. 2021	2020	Component Unit Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc. 2020
Nonoperating revenues (expenses)				
State appropriations	45,829,701	-	44,088,228	-
Investment income (loss), net of investment expense	3,126,637	1,610,654	717,555	383,194
Investment income (loss) on restricted assets, net of investment expense	45,573	4,665,478	149,260	1,037,071
Interest expense on Interagency payables and capital asset related debt	(1,307,130)	(192,661)	(1,966,664)	(171,277)
Loss on sale of capital assets	-	(587,581)	-	-
Net nonoperating revenues (expenses)	<u>47,694,781</u>	<u>5,495,890</u>	<u>42,988,379</u>	<u>1,248,988</u>
Income (loss) before capital and endowment additions	<u>2,763,861</u>	<u>5,512,231</u>	<u>(5,024,699)</u>	<u>1,574,157</u>
State capital appropriations	10,391,679	-	1,318,286	-
Capital grants	255,292	-	255,776	-
Private gifts for endowment purposes	-	334,214	-	1,449,520
Total capital and endowment additions	<u>10,646,971</u>	<u>334,214</u>	<u>1,574,062</u>	<u>1,449,520</u>
Increase (decrease) in net position	13,410,832	5,846,445	(3,450,637)	3,023,677
Net position - beginning of year	<u>121,827,378</u>	<u>26,596,233</u>	<u>125,278,015</u>	<u>23,572,556</u>
Net position - end of the year	<u>\$ 135,238,210</u>	<u>\$ 32,442,678</u>	<u>\$ 121,827,378</u>	<u>\$ 26,596,233</u>

See Notes to Financial Statements.

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**Statements of Cash Flows**  
**Years Ended June 30, 2021 and 2020**

	2021	2020
Cash flows from operating activities		
Tuition and fees	\$ 43,677,925	\$ 43,389,728
Research grants and contracts	11,902,872	13,936,558
Payments to suppliers	(24,531,396)	(27,883,481)
Payments to utilities	(4,445,721)	(4,514,308)
Payments to employees	(49,402,176)	(51,484,225)
Payments for benefits	(3,849,370)	(4,340,208)
Payments for scholarships	(4,683,734)	(5,616,414)
Loans issued to students	(1,540)	(4,189)
Collection of loans to students	235,049	209,373
Auxiliary enterprise receipts		
Residential life	6,469,330	7,322,006
Dining hall	2,094,729	3,157,802
Alcohol awareness program	17,150	19,732
Receipts from sales and services of educational departments	1,167,142	1,388,826
Other receipts (disbursements)	(584,965)	1,244,380
	<u>(21,934,705)</u>	<u>(23,174,420)</u>
Cash flows from noncapital financing activities		
State appropriations	33,771,117	33,326,949
Tuition remitted to State	(468,982)	(875,959)
Gifts from grants for other than capital purposes	83,330	-
	<u>33,385,465</u>	<u>32,450,990</u>
Cash flows from capital and related financing activities		
State capital appropriations	9,169,661	1,574,062
Loan programs net funds received	40,607	32,808
Capital grants	-	2,224,395
Federal loan funds received	269,425	-
Private gifts for capital purchase	(1,200)	-
Payments for capital assets	(15,480,678)	(10,712,891)
Principal paid on capital debt	(1,050,856)	(3,996,280)
Interest paid on capital debt	(1,568,632)	(2,206,812)
	<u>(8,621,673)</u>	<u>(13,084,718)</u>



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**Statements of Cash Flows**  
**Years Ended June 30, 2021 and 2020**

	2021	2020
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of investments	(5,263,668)	(6,925,155)
Proceeds from sale of investments	4,819,705	6,816,394
Earnings on investments	625,955	(267,790)
Interest on investments	416,581	-
	<u>598,573</u>	<u>(376,551)</u>
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities		
Net increase (decrease) in cash, cash equivalents and restricted cash	3,427,660	(4,184,699)
Cash, cash equivalents and restricted cash, beginning of year	<u>35,460,968</u>	<u>39,645,667</u>
Cash, cash equivalents and restricted cash, end of year	<u>\$ 38,888,628</u>	<u>\$ 35,460,968</u>
Reconciliation of operating loss to net cash provided by (used in) operating activities		
Operating loss	\$ (44,930,920)	\$ (48,013,078)
Adjustments to reconcile operating loss to net cash provided by (used in) operating activities		
Bad debt expense	103,825	176,593
Depreciation and amortization	11,447,580	11,032,465
Fringe benefits paid by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts	12,527,566	11,637,238
Change in net pension liability	2,812,130	981,639
Change in net OPEB liability	1,039,645	820,088
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
Receivables	(9,778,459)	(991,259)
Other current and noncurrent assets	(38,418)	345,108
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	411,078	(397,503)
Accrued workers' compensation	610,301	(112,682)
Compensated absences	(380,344)	236,393
Accrued faculty payroll	(354,983)	237,511
Revenue received in advance	5,495,857	575,821
Other current liabilities	(1,158,422)	10,062
Deposits	25,350	82,000
Loans to students	233,509	205,184
	<u>\$ (21,934,705)</u>	<u>\$ (23,174,420)</u>
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities		

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**Statements of Cash Flows**  
**Years Ended June 30, 2021 and 2020**

	2021	2020
Schedule of noncash investing and financing activities		
Acquisition of capital assets	\$ 15,507,540	\$ 9,681,801
Accounts payable thereon:		
Beginning of year	1,369,689	2,514,558
End of year	(1,396,551)	(1,369,689)
Net interest earned and incurred, capitalized in construction in progress	-	(113,779)
Payments for capital assets	\$ 15,480,678	\$ 10,712,891
Unrealized gain (loss) on investments	\$ 2,381,159	\$ (18,841)
Fringe benefits paid by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts	\$ 12,527,566	\$ 11,637,238
Capital grants - amortization of deferred inflows of resources - service concession arrangement	\$ 252,918	\$ 252,918
Capital debt and debt issuance costs		
Proceeds from capital debt	\$ 47,638,203	\$ -
Principal paid on capital debt	(47,180,057)	-
Debt issuance costs	(458,146)	-
Capital debt and debt issuance costs	\$ -	\$ -
Reconciliation of cash, cash equivalents and restricted cash balances		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 21,401,963	\$ 20,103,032
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	6,997,652	6,863,394
Noncurrent assets		
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	10,489,013	8,494,542
Total cash and cash equivalents	\$ 38,888,628	\$ 35,460,968

See Notes to Financial Statements.

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**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**June 30, 2021 and 2020**

**Note 1 - Summary of significant accounting policies**

**Organization**

Fitchburg State University (the "University") is a public, State-supported comprehensive four-year University which offers a quality education leading to baccalaureate and master's degrees in many disciplines. With its campus located in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, the University provides instruction in a variety of liberal arts, allied health, and business fields of study. The University also offers, through the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education, credit and non-credit courses. The University is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education ("NECHE") (formerly known as the New England Association of Schools and Colleges ("NEASC")).

The University is a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (the "State" or the "Commonwealth"). The accompanying financial statements reflect only the transactions of the University and its discretely presented component unit. Accordingly, the accompanying financial statements may not necessarily be indicative of the conditions that would have existed if the University had been operated independently of the State.

Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc. (the "Foundation") is a component unit of Fitchburg State University. The Foundation is a legally separate, tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It was organized on June 6, 1978, exclusively for the benefit of Fitchburg State University, to establish scholarships and make awards to educationally talented and needy students; to establish a Distinguished Professor award within the faculty of the University; to subsidize inter-collegiate athletic programs; to subsidize budgets of departments of the University as needed for particular purposes; to encourage public use and support of functions and activities which further the mission of the University; and to encourage other activities necessary for, or incidental to, any or all of the foregoing. The following programs are supported under the auspices of the Foundation: Center Stage, Alumni Association, Women in Today's Society, Amelia V. Gallucci - Cirio endowment and the University's Booster Clubs. The Board of the Foundation is self-perpetuating and consists of graduates and friends of the University. Although the University does not control the timing or amount of receipts from the Foundation, the majority of resources, or income thereon that the Foundation holds and invests are restricted to the activities of the University by the donors. Because these restricted resources held by the Foundation can only be used by, or for the benefit of, the University, the Foundation is considered a component unit of the University and is discretely presented in the University's financial statements.

FSU Foundation Supporting Organization, Inc. (the "Foundation Supporting Organization") was organized on October 29, 1999 for the exclusive benefit of the Foundation and all of its educational and charitable activities. The Foundation Supporting Organization is a legally separate, tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Foundation Supporting Organization's sole program activity, as of June 30, 2021, has been to acquire, hold, operate and lease real estate and related improvements for the benefit of the Foundation and the University. The financial information of the Foundation Supporting Organization is consolidated into the financial statements of the Foundation. The Foundation and Foundation Supporting Organization are collectively referred to hereinafter as the FSU Foundation.

During fiscal 2021, FSU Foundation distributed scholarships and awards in the amount of \$535,218 directly to students and faculty of the University, and incurred an additional \$2,357,176 in support of its mission in other ways. Complete financial statements for FSU Foundation can be obtained from the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration, Fitchburg State University, 160 Pearl Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420.

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During fiscal 2020, FSU Foundation distributed scholarships and awards in the amount of \$446,743 directly to students and faculty of the University, and incurred an additional \$1,426,104 in support of its mission in other ways.

**Basis of presentation**

The University's financial statements have been prepared using the "economic resources measurement focus" and the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, as prescribed by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board ("GASB"). Revenues are recorded when earned and expenses are recorded when a liability is incurred, regardless of the timing of related cash flows. Grants and similar items are recognized as revenue as soon as all eligibility requirements have been met.

FSU Foundation, as a nonprofit organization, reports under Financial Accounting Standards Board ("FASB") guidance on financial reporting for Not-for-Profit Entities. As such, certain revenue recognition criteria and presentation features are different from GASB revenue recognition criteria and presentation features. Other than the reclassification of certain items, no modifications have been made to FSU Foundation's consolidated financial information in the University's financial reporting entity for these differences.

The University's policy for defining operating activities in the statements of revenues, expenses and changes in net position are those that generally result from exchange transactions such as the payment received for services and payment made for the purchase of goods and services. Certain other transactions are reported as nonoperating activities in accordance with GASB Statement No. 35. These nonoperating activities include the University's operating and capital appropriations from the Commonwealth, net investment income, gifts, and interest expense.

When both restricted and unrestricted resources are available for use, it is the University's policy to use the restricted resources first, then unrestricted resources as they are needed.

GASB Statement No. 34 requires that resources be classified for accounting purposes into the following three net position categories:

- **Net investment in capital assets:** Capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation and outstanding principal balances of debt attributable to the acquisition, construction or improvement of those assets. Deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources that are attributable to the acquisition, construction or improvement of those assets or related debt are also included in this component of net position.
- **Restricted:**
  - Nonexpendable** - Component of net position whose net assets are subject to externally-imposed stipulations that they be maintained permanently by the University. Such assets include the University's permanent endowment funds.
  - Expendable** - Component of net position whose use of net assets by the University is subject to externally-imposed stipulations that can be fulfilled by actions of the University pursuant to those stipulations or that expire by the passage of time.
- **Unrestricted:** All other categories of net position. Unrestricted net position may be designated for specific purposes by action of management or the Board of Trustees.

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**Notes to Financial Statements**  
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In accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth, the University's operations are accounted for in several trust funds. All of these trust funds have been consolidated and are included in these financial statements.

**Use of estimates**

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts and disclosures reported in the financial statements and accompanying notes. Although these estimates are based on management's knowledge of current events and actions it may undertake in the future, they may ultimately differ from actual results.

**Cash and cash equivalents and investments**

The University's cash and cash equivalents are considered to be cash on hand, cash and cash equivalents held by the Commonwealth's Treasurer and Receiver-General, Massachusetts Development Finance Agency ("MDFFA") and Massachusetts State College Building Authority ("MSCBA"), and short-term investments with original maturities of three months or less from the date of acquisition.

Investments for the University are reported at fair value. Any investments held with the Commonwealth's Treasurer and Receiver-General in the Massachusetts Municipal Depository Trust ("MMDT") are also at fair value. This external investment pool, run by the Treasurer and Receiver-General, operates in accordance with appropriate laws and regulations. The reported value of the pool is the same as the fair value of the pool shares.

Investments include marketable debt and equity securities which are carried at their readily determinable fair values. Realized and unrealized gains and losses are included in nonoperating revenues. Gains and losses on the disposition of investments are determined based on specific identification of securities sold or the average cost method. Investment income is recognized when earned and is generally credited to the trust fund holding the related assets.

Dividends, interest and net gains or losses on investments are reported in the statements of revenues, expenses and changes in net position. Any net earnings not expended are included in net position categories as follows:

- i. as increases in restricted - nonexpendable net position if the terms of the gift require that they be added to the principal of a permanent endowment fund;
- ii. as increases in restricted - expendable net position if the terms of the gift or the University's interpretation of relevant state law impose restrictions on the current use of the income or net gains. The University has relied upon the Attorney General's interpretation of state law that unappropriated endowment gains should be classified as restricted - expendable; and
- iii. as increases in unrestricted net position in all other cases.

At June 30, 2021 and 2020, the University had \$474,388 and \$411,868, respectively, in endowment income available for authorization for expenditure, which is included in restricted - expendable net position for scholarships and fellowships.

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 15 grants authority to the University Board of Trustees to administer the general business of the University. Inherent in this authority is the authority to invest

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funds of the University. Chapter 15 further grants the Trustees the authority to delegate, to the President, any said powers or responsibilities. The Board of Trustees of Fitchburg State University has delegated the authority to make specific investment decisions to the President of the University and the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees. The University's endowment investments consist of debt, marketable equity securities, mutual funds, and other investments which are carried at their fair values. The primary cash equivalent funds are within the MMDT, the external investment pool for political subdivisions of the Commonwealth.

The University's authorized spending rule provides that all earnings on endowment investments may be expended pursuant to the stipulations placed on these endowments. If a donor has not provided specific instructions, Massachusetts General Law permits the University's Board of Trustees to authorize for expense the net appreciation (realized and unrealized) of the investments of endowment funds. Any net appreciation that is spent is required to be spent for the purposes for which the endowment was established.

FSU Foundation's investments consist of debt, marketable equity securities, mutual funds and other investments which are carried at their fair values. Unrealized gains and losses are included in revenue. Restricted investment income and gains are reported as increases in unrestricted net position, unless a donor or law temporarily (expendable) or permanently (non-expendable) restricts their use. Gains and losses on the disposition of investments are principally determined based on the first-in, first-out method or specific identification of securities sold. Investment income is recognized when earned. Dividends are recorded on the ex-dividend date.

FSU Foundation maintains cash and equivalents and an investment pool that is available for use by all funds. Each fund's portion is reflected in the financial statements under cash and cash equivalents and investments. Earnings on cash and investments of the unrestricted net position and temporarily restricted (expendable) net position are reflected in the fund in which the assets are recorded.

The FSU Foundation's endowments consist of approximately 121 and 113 individual funds at June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively, that are restricted by donors to function as endowments primarily for the granting of scholarships and to fund other academic and cultural programs. During fiscal 2018, FSU Foundation's Board of Directors voted to earmark \$25,000 as a board-designated fund entitled The Fund for Fitchburg State to function as an endowment fund. The fund is designated for students with financial needs to be awarded financial aid scholarships. In accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, net assets associated with endowment funds, including funds designated by the Board of Directors to function as endowments, are classified and reported based on the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions. As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, the endowment is \$25,000 each year.

FSU Foundation's Board of Directors has interpreted the Massachusetts Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act ("UPMIFA") as requiring the preservation of the fair value of the original gift as of the gift date of the donor-restricted endowment funds absent explicit donor stipulations to the contrary. As a result of this interpretation, FSU Foundation classifies as net assets with donor restrictions (a) the original value of gifts donated to the permanent endowment, (b) the original value of subsequent gifts to the permanent endowment, and (c) accumulations to the permanent endowment made in accordance with the direction of the applicable donor gift instrument at the time the accumulation is added to the fund. The funds will remain in net assets with donor restrictions until those amounts are appropriated for expenditure by FSU Foundation in a manner consistent with the standard of prudence prescribed by UPMIFA.

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In accordance with UPMIFA, FSU Foundation considers the following factors in making a determination to appropriate or accumulate restricted endowment funds: (i) the duration and preservation of the fund, (ii) the purposes of FSU Foundation and the donor-restricted endowment fund, (iii) general economic conditions, (iv) the possible effect of inflation and deflation, (v) the expected total return from income and the appreciation of investments, (vi) other resources of FSU Foundation, and (vii) the investment policies of FSU Foundation.

FSU Foundation has adopted investment and spending policies for endowment assets that attempt to provide a predictable stream of funding while seeking to maintain the purchasing power of the endowment assets. Endowment assets include those assets of donor-restricted funds that FSU Foundation must hold in perpetuity or for donor-specified periods as well as board-designated funds. Under this policy, as approved by FSU Foundation's Board of Directors, the endowment assets are invested in a variety of investments that aim to preserve principal, generate income and provide the opportunity for conservative growth.

FSU Foundation's performance goals are to provide an average annual total rate of return, net of fees that equals or exceeds its spending rate plus inflation ("CPI") over a rolling five-year period. Additionally, the endowment assets are invested in a manner that is intended to produce results that equal or exceed the average return of appropriate capital market indices weighted by FSU Foundation's asset allocation target percentages over a rolling five-year period. FSU Foundation's performance goals are also intended to produce results that equal or exceed the average return of a universe of similarly managed funds. FSU Foundation's performance goals are based upon a long-term investment horizon. Accordingly, actual returns in any given year may vary from these amounts.

To satisfy its long-term rate-of-return objectives, FSU Foundation relies on a total return strategy in which investment returns are achieved through both capital appreciation (realized and unrealized) and current yield (interest and dividends). FSU Foundation targets a diversified asset allocation that places a greater emphasis on equity-based investments to achieve its long-term return objectives within prudent risk constraints.

FSU Foundation has a spending policy of appropriating for distribution each year a percentage of its endowment fund's average fair value over the preceding three years. The amount to be appropriated for distribution shall not exceed 5%. In establishing this policy, FSU Foundation considered the long-term expected return on its endowment fund assets. Accordingly, over the long-term, FSU Foundation expects the current spending policy to be consistent with the FSU Foundation's objective of seeking to maintain the purchasing power of the endowment fund assets held in perpetuity or for a specified term as well as to provide additional real growth through investment return.

From time to time, the fair value of assets associated with individual donor-restricted endowment funds may fall below the level that the donor or Massachusetts General Laws requires FSU Foundation to retain as a fund of perpetual duration. In accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, deficiencies of this nature are reported in net assets with donor restrictions. As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, there were no deficiencies of this nature.

The University's and FSU Foundation's investment income are presented net of investment expense in the statements of revenues, expenses and changes in net position. The University's investment expense amounted to \$111,077 and \$92,556 for the years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively. FSU Foundation's investment expense amounted to \$158,354 and \$118,160 for the years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively.

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**Accounts receivable**

Accounts receivable are stated at the amount the University expects to collect from outstanding balances. The University provides for probable uncollectible amounts through a charge to operations and a credit to a valuation allowance based on its assessment of the current status of individual accounts. Balances that are still outstanding after the University has used reasonable collection efforts are written off through a charge to the valuation allowance and a credit to accounts receivable.

Accounts receivable also include a receivable from the operator of the University's food services operation in connection with a service concession arrangement between the University and the operator. The receivable has been recorded at the net present value of the installments to be received from the operator using a discount rate determined by management of the University.

**Loans receivable and payable**

Loans receivable consist, primarily, of the Federal Perkins Loan Program ("Perkins") and the Federal Nursing Student Loan Program ("NSL"). The federal government provides the majority of the funds to support these programs. Loan payments received from students made under the Perkins and NSL programs may be re-loaned after collection. The portion of the Perkins and NSL Loan Programs provided by the federal government is refundable to the federal government upon the ending (liquidation) of the University's participation in the programs. The amount due to the federal government upon liquidation by the University is \$978,870 and \$1,106,069 for Perkins and \$175,922 and \$248,302 for NSL at June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively. These amounts are included as a noncurrent liability in the accompanying statements of net position.

The prescribed practices for the Perkins and NSL programs do not provide for accrual of interest on student loans receivable or for the provision of an allowance for doubtful loans. Accordingly, interest on loans is recorded as received and loan balances are reduced subsequent to the determination of their uncollectability and have been accepted (assigned) by the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services. Management closely monitors outstanding balances and assigns loans to the Department of Education based upon such factors as student payment history, current status of applicable students, and the results of collection efforts.

**Capital assets**

Capital assets are controlled but not owned by the University. The University is not able to sell or otherwise pledge its assets, since the assets are all owned by the Commonwealth. Capital assets, which include land, land improvements, buildings, building improvements, equipment and other assets are reported in the statements of net position at cost or acquisition value, if donated. Capital assets are defined by the University as assets with an initial, individual cost of more than \$50,000 in accordance with the Commonwealth's capitalization policy. The University does not hold collections of historical treasures, works of art, or other items not requiring capitalization or depreciation.

The costs of normal maintenance and repairs that do not add to the value of the asset or materially extend asset lives are not capitalized.

Capital assets, with the exception of land, are depreciated using the straight-line method over estimated useful lives of 40 years for buildings, 20 years for building and land improvements, five years for furniture and three to 10 years for equipment.

Library materials acquired for the most recent five-year period are capitalized. The cost of library materials purchased in the current year is added and the cost of purchases made in the earliest year of the five-year period is deducted from the net position balance.



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The land on which the residence halls stand is leased by the MSCBA from the Commonwealth at a yearly cost of one dollar. The leases are long-term leases which can be extended at the end of their terms for additional 10-year periods.

The University, in accordance with a management and services agreement between the MSCBA and Commonwealth, is charged a semi-annual revenue assessment which is based on a certified occupancy report, the current rent schedule, and the design capacity for each of the residence halls. This revenue assessment is used by MSCBA to pay principal and interest due on its long-term debt obligations. These obligations may include the costs of periodic renovations and improvements to the residence halls. The revenue assessment amounts for the years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020 were \$2,895,881 and \$7,747,542, respectively, and are included in the Residential life auxiliary enterprises in the accompanying statements of revenues, expenses and changes in net position. All facilities and obligations of the MSCBA are included in the financial statements of the MSCBA. It is not practical to determine the specific asset cost or liability attributable to the University. The leases, therefore, are accounted for under the operating method for financial statement purposes.

FSU Foundation's capital assets are recorded at cost, if purchased or constructed and, if donated, at fair value at the date of donation. Capital assets, with the exception of land, are depreciated using the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of the assets of 40 years for buildings, 20 years for building and land improvements, 7 and 10 years for furniture and fixtures, 5 years for equipment and 3 years for computer software and equipment. FSU Foundation generally capitalizes all additions and improvements with an individual cost or, if donated, fair value in excess of \$5,000.

**Contributions and bequests**

FSU Foundation recognizes contributions revenue when the donor makes a promise to give, that is, in substance, unconditional. Unconditional promises to give are reported at net realizable value if at the time the promise is made collection is expected to be received in one year or less. Unconditional promises to give that are expected to be collected in more than one year are reported at fair value using present value techniques and a discount rate determined by management of FSU Foundation. Amortization of discounts is recorded as additional contribution revenue in accordance with donor-imposed restrictions, if any, on the contributions. Conditional promises to give that is, those with a measurable performance or other barrier, and right of return, are recognized only when the conditions on which they depend are substantially met and the promises become unconditional. Contributions in the form of property and equipment and other assets are recorded at the fair value on the date the donation is received. All contributions are considered to be available for unrestricted use by FSU Foundation unless specifically restricted by the donor. FSU Foundation provides for probable uncollectible amounts of unconditional promises to give through a charge to earnings and a credit to a valuation allowance based on its assessment of the current status of individual account balances.

**Compensated absences**

Employees earn the right to be compensated during absences for vacation leave and sick leave. Accrued vacation is the amount earned by all eligible employees through June 30 each year. Pursuant to statewide experience on sick pay buy-back agreements applicable to state employees, the University accrues sick leave to a level representing 20% of amounts earned by those University employees with ten or more years of State service at the end of the fiscal year. Upon retirement, these employees are entitled to receive payment for this accrued balance (see also Note 8).

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**Student fees**

Student tuition and fees are presented net of scholarships applied to students' accounts. Certain other scholarship amounts are paid directly to, or refunded to, the student and are generally reflected as expenses.

**Revenue received in advance**

Deposits and advance payments received for tuition and fees related to the University's summer programs and tuition billed for the following fiscal year are recorded as revenues received in advance. Funds received in advance from various grants and contracts are also included in revenues received in advance.

**Agency funds**

Agency funds consist of resources held by the University as custodian or fiscal agent of student organizations, the State Treasurer and others. Transactions are recorded to asset and liability accounts. There were no material balances at June 30, 2021 and 2020.

**Bond premiums**

Bond premiums are being amortized on a straight-line basis over the terms of the related debt agreements.

**Interest expense and capitalization**

The University follows the policy of capitalizing interest expense as a component of the cost of capital assets constructed for its own use. During 2021 and 2020, total interest costs incurred were accounted for as follows:

	2021	2020
Total interest costs incurred	\$ 1,591,143	\$ 2,365,449
Less: Interest income on unused funds from tax exempt borrowings	-	(11,566)
Bond premium amortization	(220,909)	(273,440)
Gain (loss) on refunding	(63,104)	-
	1,307,130	2,080,443
Less: Capitalized portion of net interest earned and incurred	-	(113,779)
Interest expense	\$ 1,307,130	\$ 1,966,664

**Pension plan**

For purposes of measuring the net pension liability, deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions, and pension expense, information about the fiduciary net position of the Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement System ("MSERS") and additions to/deductions from MSERS's fiduciary net position have been determined on the same basis as they are reported by MSERS. For this purpose, benefit payments (including refunds of employee contributions) are recognized when due and payable in accordance with the benefit terms. Investments are reported at fair value.

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**OPEB plan**

For purposes of measuring the net OPEB liability, deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to post-employment benefits other than pensions, and OPEB expense, information about the fiduciary net position of the OPEB Trust Fund and additions to/deductions from OPEB Trust Fund's fiduciary net position have been determined on the same basis as they are reported by the OPEB Trust Fund. Investments are reported at fair value.

**Fringe benefits**

The University participates in the Commonwealth's fringe benefit programs, including health insurance, unemployment, pension and workers' compensation benefits. Workers' compensation coverage is provided by the Commonwealth on a self-insured basis. Health insurance and pension costs are billed through a fringe benefit rate charged to the University. Workers' compensation and unemployment insurance costs are assessed separately based on the University's actual experience.

**Tax status**

The University is a department of the Commonwealth and is, therefore, exempt from federal and state income taxes.

**Reclassifications**

Certain reclassifications have been made to the 2020 financial statements to conform to the 2021 presentation.

**Impact of COVID-19 Crisis**

Due to the global viral outbreak caused by a novel coronavirus ("COVID-19") in 2020, there have been lingering effects that currently have had only a marginal impact on the University's financial condition. During 2021, the University incurred approximately \$2,000,000 in COVID-19 related expenses and \$8,600,000 in lost revenue. The University recognized grant revenue of approximately \$5,600,000 under the Higher Education Emergency Relief Act ("HEERF") during 2021 to help defray the cost of these expenses and the University had to defer \$5,000,000 of income to be recognized in FY22. Because the University can only recognize in income the same proportion of allotted HEERF student funds disbursed to students, the University had to defer \$5,000,000 even though those expenses were incurred in fiscal 2021. Currently, in fiscal 2022, the University is still battling the effects of COVID-19 and this is reflected in the reduced number of returning and transfer undergraduate day division students, and in those who returned to live and eat in the halls on campus.

Initially in response, the University had reduced its fiscal 2021 operating budget by approximately \$15,000,000 but it restored approximately \$8,000,000 of that budget in fiscal 2022 as it works to fully reopen the university and all its facilities to students and the public at large. Additionally, MSCBA closed on a bond refunding in July 2020 and agreed to distribute debt service reserves as part of a multifaceted plan to reduce expenses in response to the impact of COVID-19 on the nine State Universities, including Fitchburg State University (see Note 12). Management of the University anticipates that additional CARES funding and state assistance may be available in fiscal 2022.

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**Note 2 - Cash and cash equivalents, and investments**

Cash and cash equivalents - unrestricted and restricted - include the following at June 30, 2021 and 2020:

	2021		
	Current unrestricted	Current restricted	Noncurrent restricted
Cash and money market accounts	\$ 11,115,787	\$ 4,475,304	\$ 7,841,273
Cash equivalents held by MDFA *	-	349,378	247,548
Cash equivalents held by MSCBA **	-	78,578	2,330,385
Massachusetts Municipal Depository Trust	6,212,969	-	69,807
Massachusetts State Treasurer ***	4,072,522	2,094,392	-
Petty cash	685	-	-
	<u>\$ 21,401,963</u>	<u>\$ 6,997,652</u>	<u>\$ 10,489,013</u>
	2020		
	Current unrestricted	Current restricted	Noncurrent restricted
Cash and money market accounts	\$ 9,401,327	\$ 3,746,140	\$ 4,769,555
Cash equivalents held by MDFA *	-	329,602	216,384
Cash equivalents held by MSCBA **	-	198,574	3,389,012
Massachusetts Municipal Depository Trust	6,201,338	-	119,591
Massachusetts State Treasurer ***	4,499,682	2,589,078	-
Petty cash	685	-	-
	<u>\$ 20,103,032</u>	<u>\$ 6,863,394</u>	<u>\$ 8,494,542</u>

\* This amount consists of cash equivalents which are restricted by the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency ("MDFA") for the funding of payments to retire the bonds (see Note 12). The University does not have access to these funds except by the authorization of MDFA.

\*\* This amount consists of cash and cash equivalents which are restricted by the Massachusetts State College Building Authority ("MSCBA") for the funding of certain construction projects at the University and payments to retire bonds (see Note 12). The University does not have access to these funds except by authorization of MSCBA. Interest earned on debt service reserve funds is used on a current basis to offset annual debt service payments.

\*\*\* The University has recorded cash held for the benefit of the University by the State Treasurer in the amount of \$4,072,522 and \$4,499,682 at June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively, for University funds and \$2,094,392 and \$2,589,078 at June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively, to pay year-end liabilities. The latter balance represents amounts paid from State appropriations subsequent to the fiscal year-end.

Money market funds include the Goldman Sachs Financial Square Government Fund in the aggregate amount of \$48,451 and \$48,040 at June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively. The Goldman Sachs

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Financial Square Government Fund invests in U.S. Government securities and repurchase agreements. The fund seeks to maximum current income consistent with the preservation of capital and liquidity, and the maintenance of a stable \$1.00 per share net asset value. At June 30, 2021 and 2020, the fund's investment securities had a weighted average maturity of 44 and 53 days, respectively. The fund had an average credit quality rating of AAAM at both June 30, 2021 and 2020.

Money market funds include the Northern Institutional U.S. Government Portfolio in the aggregate amount of \$136,777 and \$258,355 at June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively. The Northern Institutional U.S. Government Portfolio invests primarily in marketable securities issued or guaranteed as to principal and interest by the U.S. Government, or any of its agencies or instrumentalities, and repurchase agreements backed by such securities. The fund seeks to maximize current income to the extent consistent with the preservation of capital and maintenance of liquidity. At June 30, 2021 and 2020, the fund's investment securities had a weighted average maturity of 43 days and 48 days, respectively. The fund had an average credit quality rating of AAAM at both June 30, 2021 and 2020.

Money market funds also include the RWM Cash Management money market account with a balance of \$184,000 and \$222,697 at June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively.

The Massachusetts Municipal Depository Trust ("MMDT") is not subject to FDIC insurance. According to the MMDT, the Massachusetts Municipal Depository Trust is an investment pool for political subdivisions in the Commonwealth which was designed as a legal means to safely invest temporarily available cash. Its primary purpose is to provide a safe, liquid, high-yield investment vehicle offering participation in a diversified portfolio of high quality debt instruments. The MMDT is not a bank, savings institution, or financial institution. The MMDT is an instrumentality of the State Treasurer.

The University maintains a cash and investment pool that is available for use by all trust funds. Each fund type's portion of this pool is reflected in the financial statements under the caption, cash and cash equivalents and investments. The method of allocating interest earned on pooled cash and investments is to record all interest to the appropriate fund based on that fund's average monthly balance. Interest earnings attributable to each trust fund are included under investment income.

**Custodial credit risk**

Custodial credit risk for deposits is the risk that in the event of a bank failure, the University's deposits may not be returned to it. The University's deposit policy provides for bank balances to be held in interest-bearing checking accounts and, where account activity and balances warrant it, in money market accounts. All bank balances are to be held at financial institutions of high credit quality. At June 30, 2021 and 2020, the University had uninsured cash balances totaling approximately \$5,059,100 and \$6,020,800, respectively.

The University does not have a formal policy with respect to the custodial credit risk for investments. Custodial credit risk is that, in the event of the failure of the counterparty, the University will not be able to recover the value of investment or collateral securities that are in the possession of an outside party.

Certain investments are covered by the Securities Investor Protection Corporation ("SIPC") up to \$500,000, including \$250,000 of cash from sale or for purchase of investments, but not cash held solely for the purpose of earning interest. SIPC protects securities such as notes, stocks, bonds, debentures, certificates of deposit and money funds. Certain cash balances are covered by the National Credit Union Administration's Share Insurance Fund up to \$250,000.

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The following University investments at June 30, 2021 and 2020 are held by the counterparty's trust department or agent but not in the University's name and, therefore, are subject to custodial credit risk as follows:

	2021	2020
U.S. Treasury Notes and Government Securities	\$ 1,937,473	\$ 1,675,739
Corporate Debt Securities	1,846,884	1,771,136
Equity Securities	10,011,807	6,913,782
Mutual Funds	7,742,610	7,693,498
Total	21,538,774	18,054,155
Less insured amounts	1,500,000	1,500,000
Amount subject to Custodial Credit Risk	\$ 20,038,774	\$ 16,554,155

**Credit risk**

The University is required to comply with the Commonwealth's deposit and investment policies which are principally defined in the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 29. State Statutes permit investment in obligations of the U.S. Treasury, authorized bonds of all states, bankers' acceptances, certificates of deposit, commercial paper rated within the three highest classifications established by Standard & Poor's Corporation and Moody's Commercial Paper Record and repurchase agreements secured by any of these obligations. The University has also adopted its own formal investment policy, the objectives of which are: safety of principal; liquidity for operating needs; return on investment; and diversification of risk. The University's investment policy generally limits the maturities of investments to not more than one year. However, the University may invest in securities with maturities in excess of one year if it is determined to be in the best interest of the University as described in the University's investment policy. The University may also appoint a professional fund manager and invest in equity and bond funds. Eligible investments shall be consistent with those permitted by State Statutes.

As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, the fair values of the University's deposits held at the MMDT were \$6,282,776 and \$6,320,930, respectively. At June 30, 2021, the approximate percentage of the University's deposits held at the MMDT and the respective investment maturities in days were as follows: 52% at 30 days or less; 32% at 31-90 days; 11% at 91-180 days; and 5% at 181 days or more. At June 30, 2021, approximately 100% of the MMDT's cash portfolio had a First Tier credit quality rating.

The University's funds held at MDFA are invested in the Short-Term Asset Reserve ("STAR") Fund and had a fair value of \$596,926 and \$545,986 at June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively. The STAR Fund invests primarily in U.S. Treasury bills, notes, and other obligations guaranteed by the U.S. government or its agencies or instrumentalities. Additionally, the fund invests in repurchase agreements, bankers' acceptances, certificates of deposit, commercial paper, notes, and both corporate floating rate and corporate fixed-rate securities. The STAR Fund maintains a net asset value of \$1 per share and had a fund credit quality rating of AAAM as of both June 30, 2021 and 2020. At June 30, 2021 and 2020, the fund's investment securities maintained a weighted average maturity of 52 and 40 days, respectively.

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At June 30, 2021, certain of the University's funds are held at MSCBA. Of the total, \$878,776 is deposited in various cash accounts which are fully collateralized by securities in accounts in the name of MSCBA, and \$1,530,187 is invested in various funds as listed below:

Investment type	Fair value	Investment maturities (in years)				Credit rating
		Less than 1	1 - 5	6 - 10	Greater than 10	
Federal Home Loan Bank Discount Notes	\$ 111,320	\$ 111,320	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	N/A
Federal Farm Credit	677,846	677,846	-	-	-	N/A
Massachusetts ST Bonds	741,021	-	-	741,021	-	AAA
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,530,187</b>	<b>\$ 789,166</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 741,021</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	

At June 30, 2020, certain of the University's funds are held at MSCBA. Of the total, \$1,516,293 is deposited in various cash accounts which are fully collateralized by securities in accounts in the name of MSCBA, and \$2,071,293 is invested in various funds as listed below:

Investment type	Fair value	Investment maturities (in years)				Credit rating
		Less than 1	1 - 5	6 - 10	Greater than 10	
Federal Home Loan Bank Discount Notes	\$ 144,841	\$ 144,841	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	N/A
Federal Farm Credit	881,963	881,963	-	-	-	AA+
Massachusetts ST Bonds	1,044,489	80,326	-	964,163	-	AAA
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,071,293</b>	<b>\$ 1,107,130</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 964,163</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	

The University's investments in marketable securities are represented by the following at June 30, 2021 and 2020:

	2021		2020	
	Cost	Fair value	Cost	Fair value
U.S. Treasury Notes and Government Securities	\$ 1,891,624	\$ 1,937,473	\$ 1,577,803	\$ 1,675,739
Corporate Debt Securities	1,783,159	1,846,884	1,658,397	1,771,136
Equity Securities	6,430,105	10,011,807	5,425,597	6,913,782
Mutual Funds	7,243,803	7,742,610	7,451,146	7,693,498
	<b>\$ 17,348,691</b>	<b>\$ 21,538,774</b>	<b>\$ 16,112,943</b>	<b>\$ 18,054,155</b>

The University's investments at fair value are presented in the accompanying statements of net position as follows:

	2021	2020
Investments	\$ 20,429,198	\$ 17,161,427
Endowment investments	1,109,576	892,728
	<b>\$ 21,538,774</b>	<b>\$ 18,054,155</b>

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At June 30, 2021, the University's U.S. Treasury Notes and Government Securities and corporate debt securities along with their investment maturities and credit quality ratings are as follows:

Investment type	Fair value	Investment maturities (in years)				Credit rating
		Less than 1	1 - 5	6 - 10	Greater than 10	
U.S. Treasury Notes and Government Securities 1.125% to 2.875%	\$ 1,937,473	\$ 100,703	\$ 1,290,426	\$ 546,344	\$ -	AA+
Corporate Debt Securities 2.800% to 2.950%	205,175	60,858	62,458	81,859	-	A
Corporate Debt Securities 1.730% to 4.130%	335,304	-	192,143	143,161	-	A-
Corporate Debt Securities 3.000% to 3.750%	388,560	60,448	328,112	-	-	A+
Corporate Debt Securities 2.800% to 3.400%	124,939	61,119	63,820	-	-	AA
Corporate Debt Securities 3.000% to 3.630%	313,466	-	313,466	-	-	AA-
Corporate Debt Securities 3.200%	54,533	-	54,533	-	-	AA+
Corporate Debt Securities 3.130%	54,508	-	54,508	-	-	AAA
Corporate Debt Securities 3.000% to 3.880%	370,399	-	289,627	80,772	-	BBB+
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,784,357</b>	<b>\$ 283,128</b>	<b>\$ 2,649,093</b>	<b>\$ 852,136</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	

At June 30, 2020, the University's U.S. Treasury Notes and Government Securities and corporate debt securities along with their investment maturities and credit quality ratings are as follows:

Investment type	Fair value	Investment maturities (in years)				Credit rating
		Less than 1	1 - 5	6 - 10	Greater than 10	
U.S. Treasury Notes and Government Securities 2.000% to 3.125%	\$ 1,675,739	\$ 253,266	\$ 888,395	\$ 534,078	\$ -	AA+
Corporate Debt Securities 2.800% to 3.625%	275,431	-	191,260	84,171	-	A
Corporate Debt Securities 2.950% to 4.125%	340,505	-	193,156	147,349	-	A-
Corporate Debt Securities 2.875% to 3.300%	387,798	-	192,370	195,428	-	A+
Corporate Debt Securities 3.043% to 3.625%	188,626	60,033	128,593	-	-	AA
Corporate Debt Securities 2.800% to 3.625%	187,473	-	187,473	-	-	AA-
Corporate Debt Securities 3.200%	55,839	-	55,839	-	-	AA+
Corporate Debt Securities 3.125%	55,887	-	55,887	-	-	AAA
Corporate Debt Securities 3.750% to 4.650%	279,577	-	279,577	-	-	BBB+
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,446,875</b>	<b>\$ 313,299</b>	<b>\$ 2,172,550</b>	<b>\$ 961,026</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	



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FSU Foundation's cash and cash equivalents consist of the following at June 30, 2021 and 2020:

	2021	2020
Cash and other demand deposits	\$ 1,452,405	\$ 1,188,810
Money Market Funds	1,047,550	678,137
	\$ 2,499,955	\$ 1,866,947

Money market funds include the SSGA US Government Money Market Fund, the Goldman Sachs Financial Square Government Fund, RWM Cash Management and the Fidelity Bank LifeDesign Business Cash Management Money Market accounts in the amounts of \$288,117, \$53,742, \$233,743 and \$471,948 at June 30, 2021.

Money market funds include the SSGA US Government Money Market Fund, the Goldman Sachs Financial Square Government Fund, RWM Cash Management and the Fidelity Bank LifeDesign Business Cash Management Money Market accounts in the amounts of \$26,532, \$52,419, \$127,633 and \$471,553 at June 30, 2020.

The cash balances are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation ("FDIC") up to \$250,000. At June 30, 2021 and 2020, FSU Foundation's uninsured cash and cash equivalent balances, including the SSGA US Government Money Market Fund, Goldman Sachs Financial Square Government Fund, RWM Cash Management and the Fidelity Bank LifeDesign Business Cash Management Money Market accounts, amounted to approximately \$1,485,775 and \$726,000, respectively.

FSU Foundation's investment policy consists of an asset allocation range of 50% to 70% equity securities, 30% to 50% fixed income securities and up to 10% in cash and cash equivalents.

FSU Foundation's investments are represented by the following at June 30:

	2021		2020	
	Cost	Fair value	Cost	Fair value
Equities	\$ 7,887,838	\$ 14,066,746	\$ 5,965,766	\$ 11,071,121
Preferred Stocks	25,220	26,665	50,683	49,820
Mutual Funds	3,452,953	6,907,972	4,496,953	5,063,054
Corporate Bonds	3,317,945	3,367,705	2,209,464	2,327,811
U.S. Government Securities	2,754,977	2,790,736	2,638,105	2,742,336
	\$ 17,438,933	\$ 27,159,824	\$ 15,360,971	\$ 21,254,142

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FSU Foundation's investments at fair value are presented in the accompanying statements of net position as follows:

	2021	2020
Current assets		
Investments	\$ 14,595,376	\$ 9,033,514
Noncurrent assets		
Endowment investments	12,564,448	12,220,628
	\$ 27,159,824	\$ 21,254,142

At June 30, 2021, net unrealized gains in FSU Foundation's investment portfolio amounted to \$9,720,891. At June 30, 2020, net unrealized gains in FSU Foundation's investment portfolio amounted to \$5,893,171.

At June 30, 2021 and 2020, equities include securities in the consumer goods sector which represent 16% and 12%, respectively, of the fair value of FSU Foundation's investment portfolio.

At June 30, 2021 and 2020, equities include securities in the technology sector which represent 10% and 10%, respectively, of the fair value of FSU Foundation's investment portfolio.

At June 30, 2021 and 2020, 6% and 4%, respectively, of the fair value of FSU Foundation's investment portfolio represents foreign investments.

Investments held by FSU Foundation with an equivalent fair value of \$15,398,676 at June 30, 2021 collateralize certain debt agreements (see Notes 14 and 15).

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**June 30, 2021 and 2020**

At June 30, 2021, FSU Foundation's U.S. Treasury Notes and Government Securities and corporate debt securities along with their investment maturities and credit quality ratings are as follows:

Investment type	Fair value	Investment maturities (in years)				Credit rating
		Less than 1	1 - 5	6 - 10	Greater than 10	
U.S. Treasury Notes and Government Securities 0.125% to 2.875%	\$ 2,790,736	\$ 752,193	\$ 1,746,723	\$ 291,820	\$ -	AA+
Corporate Debt Securities 0.450% to 3.750%	509,168	126,267	241,985	55,187	-	A
Corporate Debt Securities 0.810% to 3.650%	566,737	20,208	366,393	111,126	-	A-
Corporate Debt Securities 1.350% to 3.450%	681,437	50,373	519,731	84,347	-	A+
Corporate Debt Securities 3.400% to 3.700%	163,730	-	32,841	56,865	-	AA
Corporate Debt Securities 0.430% to 3.000%	347,145	-	277,004	-	-	AA-
Corporate Debt Securities 3.450%	54,080	-	54,080	-	-	AA+
Corporate Debt Securities 3.130%	27,254	-	27,254	-	-	AAA
Corporate Debt Securities 2.750% to 5.500%	240,853	-	240,853	-	-	BBB
Corporate Debt Securities 1.450% to 4.460%	70,741	-	70,741	-	-	BBB-
Corporate Debt Securities 1.650% to 4.750%	706,560	-	540,617	165,943	-	BBB+
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 6,158,441</b>	<b>\$ 949,041</b>	<b>\$ 4,118,222</b>	<b>\$ 765,288</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	

At June 30, 2020, FSU Foundation's U.S. Treasury Notes and Government Securities and corporate debt securities along with their investment maturities and credit quality ratings are as follows:

Investment type	Fair value	Investment maturities (in years)				Credit rating
		Less than 1	1 - 5	6 - 10	Greater than 10	
U.S. Treasury Notes and Government Securities 1.375% to 3.625%	\$ 2,742,336	\$ 1,309,926	\$ 1,006,558	\$ 425,852	\$ -	AA+
Corporate Debt Securities 2.250% to 4.400%	867,953	51,018	451,189	365,746	-	A
Corporate Debt Securities 1.700% to 4.750%	298,860	-	183,075	115,785	-	A-
Corporate Debt Securities 2.450% to 3.450%	308,843	50,349	229,357	29,137	-	A+
Corporate Debt Securities 2.895% to 4.250%	293,723	51,050	183,608	59,065	-	AA
Corporate Debt Securities 2.200% to 3.300%	261,003	-	261,003	-	-	AA-
Corporate Debt Securities 2.000% to 3.450%	130,724	75,477	55,247	-	-	AA+
Corporate Debt Securities 3.125%	27,943	-	-	27,943	-	AAA
Corporate Debt Securities 4.000%	11,358	-	-	11,358	-	BBB
Corporate Debt Securities 2.200% to 3.050%	127,404	75,344	52,060	-	-	BBB+
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 5,070,147</b>	<b>\$ 1,613,164</b>	<b>\$ 2,422,097</b>	<b>\$ 1,034,886</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	

The University's investments are measured at fair value on a recurring basis and have been categorized based upon the fair value hierarchy in accordance with GASB 72 below. Similarly, the FSU Foundation follows similar guidance in accordance with Financial Accounting Standards Board

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Accounting Standards Codification ASC 820-10, which prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value of investment assets into three levels also.

Level 1 - Quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the University can access at measurement date.

Level 2 - Inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for an asset or liability, either directly or indirectly.

Level 3 - Unobservable inputs for an asset or liability.

The University's investments' fair value measurements are as follows at June 30, 2021:

Investments	Fair value	Quoted prices in active markets for identical assets (Level 1)	Significant other observable inputs (Level 2)	Significant unobservable inputs (Level 3)
U.S. Treasury Notes and Government Securities	\$ 1,937,473	\$ -	\$ 1,937,473	\$ -
Corporate Debt Securities	1,846,884	-	1,846,884	-
Equity Securities	10,011,807	10,011,807	-	-
Mutual Funds	7,742,610	7,742,610	-	-
	<u>\$ 21,538,774</u>	<u>\$ 17,754,417</u>	<u>\$ 3,784,357</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

The University's investments' fair value measurements are as follows at June 30, 2020:

Investments	Fair value	Quoted prices in active markets for identical assets (Level 1)	Significant other observable inputs (Level 2)	Significant unobservable inputs (Level 3)
U.S. Treasury Notes and Government Securities	\$ 1,675,739	\$ -	\$ 1,675,739	\$ -
Corporate Debt Securities	1,771,136	-	1,771,136	-
Equity Securities	6,913,782	6,913,782	-	-
Mutual Funds	7,693,498	7,693,498	-	-
	<u>\$ 18,054,155</u>	<u>\$ 14,607,280</u>	<u>\$ 3,446,875</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

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FSU Foundation's investments' fair value measurements are as follows at June 30, 2021:

Investments	Fair value	Quoted prices in active markets for identical assets (Level 1)	Significant other observable inputs (Level 2)	Significant unobservable inputs (Level 3)
U.S. Treasury Notes and Government Securities	\$ 2,790,736	\$ -	\$ 2,790,736	\$ -
Preferred Stocks	26,665	-	26,665	-
Corporate Bonds	3,367,705	-	3,367,705	-
Equity Securities	14,066,746	14,066,746	-	-
Mutual Funds	6,907,972	6,907,972	-	-
	<u>\$ 27,159,824</u>	<u>\$ 20,974,718</u>	<u>\$ 6,185,106</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

FSU Foundation's investments' fair value measurements are as follows at June 30, 2020:

Investments	Fair value	Quoted prices in active markets for identical assets (Level 1)	Significant other observable inputs (Level 2)	Significant unobservable inputs (Level 3)
U.S. Treasury Notes and Government Securities	\$ 2,742,336	\$ -	\$ 2,742,336	\$ -
Preferred Stocks	49,820	-	49,820	-
Corporate Bonds	2,327,811	-	2,327,811	-
Equity Securities	11,071,121	11,071,121	-	-
Mutual Funds	5,063,054	5,063,054	-	-
	<u>\$ 21,254,142</u>	<u>\$ 16,134,175</u>	<u>\$ 5,119,967</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

Mutual funds and equity securities categorized as Level 1 are valued based on prices quoted in active markets for those securities. Debt securities categorized as Level 2 are valued using a matrix pricing technique that values securities based on their relationship to benchmark quoted prices.

The FSU Foundation's endowment net asset composition by type of fund at June 30, 2021 is as follows:

Fund type	Without donor restrictions	With donor restrictions	Total
Donor-restricted funds	\$ -	\$ 12,054,659	\$ 12,054,659
Donor-restricted amounts required to be held in perpetuity	-	12,564,449	12,564,449
Board-designated for endowment fund	25,000	-	25,000
Total funds	<u>\$ 25,000</u>	<u>\$ 24,619,108</u>	<u>\$ 24,644,108</u>

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Changes in FSU Foundation's board-designated and donor-restricted endowment net position by type of fund for the year ended June 30, 2021 are as follows:

	Without donor restrictions	With donor restrictions	Total
Endowment net position, beginning of year	\$ 25,000	\$ 19,886,466	\$ 19,911,466
Investment return			
Investment income	-	263,390	263,390
Appreciation (depreciation), realized and unrealized	-	4,517,470	4,517,470
Total investment return	-	4,780,860	4,780,860
Contributions	-	339,104	339,104
Appropriation of endowment assets for expenditure	-	(256,853)	(256,853)
Investment management fees	-	(117,583)	(117,583)
Reclassification of net position	-	(12,886)	(12,886)
Other changes			
Transfer upon removal of donor restrictions	-	-	-
Endowment net position, end of year	<u>\$ 25,000</u>	<u>\$ 24,619,108</u>	<u>\$ 24,644,108</u>

The FSU Foundation's endowment net asset composition by type of fund at June 30, 2020 is as follows:

Fund type	Without donor restrictions	With donor restrictions	Total
Donor-restricted funds	\$ -	\$ 7,665,838	\$ 7,665,838
Donor-restricted amounts required to be held in perpetuity	-	12,220,628	12,220,628
Board-designated for endowment fund	25,000	-	25,000
Total funds	<u>\$ 25,000</u>	<u>\$ 19,886,466</u>	<u>\$ 19,911,466</u>

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Changes in FSU Foundation's board-designated and donor-restricted endowment net position by type of fund for the year ended June 30, 2020 are as follows:

	Without donor restrictions	With donor restrictions	Total
Endowment net position, beginning of year	\$ 25,000	\$ 17,499,346	\$ 17,524,346
Investment return			
Investment income	-	259,267	259,267
Appreciation (depreciation), realized and unrealized	-	862,344	862,344
Total investment return	-	1,121,611	1,121,611
Contributions	-	1,731,167	1,731,167
Appropriation of endowment assets for expenditure	-	(368,354)	(368,354)
Investment management fees	-	(84,994)	(84,994)
Reclassification of net position	-	(11,222)	(11,222)
Other changes			
Transfer upon removal of donor restrictions	-	(1,088)	(1,088)
Endowment net position, end of year	<u>\$ 25,000</u>	<u>\$ 19,886,466</u>	<u>\$ 19,911,466</u>

**Note 3 - Accounts and contributions receivable**

The University's accounts receivable include the following at June 30, 2021 and 2020:

	2021	2020
Student accounts receivable	\$ 2,842,261	\$ 2,897,193
Parking and other fines receivable	112,130	134,235
Commissions receivable	11,629	35,849
Grants receivable	191,449	471,817
Federal grants receivable	9,991,935	-
Compass receivable, including accrued interest of \$4,155 and \$1,781 (see Note 11)	49,406	47,032
FSU Foundation receivable	45,715	66,807
	<u>13,244,525</u>	<u>3,652,933</u>
Less allowance for doubtful accounts	<u>(575,731)</u>	<u>(642,444)</u>
	<u>\$ 12,668,794</u>	<u>\$ 3,010,489</u>

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FSU Foundation's contributions receivable consist of the following at June 30, 2021 and 2020:

	2021	2020
Receivable in less than one year	\$ 311,428	\$ 403,375
Receivable in one to five years	70,000	370,000
	381,428	773,375
Discount on pledges	(8,654)	(21,471)
	\$ 372,774	\$ 751,904

Contributions which are to be received in more than one year are reflected net of a discount determined at the time of contribution ranging from 1% to 2%.

**Note 4 - Loans receivable**

Loans receivable include the following at June 30, 2021 and 2020:

	2021	2020
Perkins loans receivable	\$ 877,365	\$ 1,059,477
Nursing loans receivable	163,340	214,012
Emergency student loans receivable	330	4,073
	1,041,035	1,277,562
Less allowance for doubtful accounts	-	(3,018)
	\$ 1,041,035	\$ 1,274,544

The federal law authorizing the disbursing of Perkins loans expired on September 30, 2017. As of October 1, 2017, the University is prohibited from issuing new Perkins loans to undergraduate students. As of October 1, 2016, the University is prohibited from issuing new Perkins loans to graduate students who received them prior to October 1, 2015. The Perkins loan program ended any further new loans being issued after September 30, 2017. The University may remit all federal proceeds and loans at any time thereafter to the Department of Education or continue to maintain them for five additional years.



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**Note 5 - Capital assets**

Capital assets activity of the University for the year ended June 30, 2021 is as follows:

Capital assets:	Totals June 30, 2020	Additions	Reclassifications* and reductions	Totals June 30, 2021
<u>Non-depreciable capital assets</u>				
Land	\$ 5,478,125	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,478,125
Construction in progress	9,913,164	9,356,575	(6,648,714)	12,621,025
Total non-depreciable assets	<u>15,391,289</u>	<u>9,356,575</u>	<u>(6,648,714)</u>	<u>18,099,150</u>
<u>Depreciable capital assets</u>				
Land improvements	17,935,801	516,572	-	18,452,373
Buildings	80,591,909	-	-	80,591,909
Building improvements	169,413,974	5,221,176	4,714,076	179,349,226
Equipment	28,763,642	388,095	1,934,638	31,086,375
Furniture	597,676	-	-	597,676
Library materials	455,133	25,122	(116,604)	363,651
Total depreciable assets	<u>297,758,135</u>	<u>6,150,965</u>	<u>6,532,110</u>	<u>310,441,210</u>
Total capital assets	<u>313,149,424</u>	<u>15,507,540</u>	<u>(116,604)</u>	<u>328,540,360</u>
Less: Accumulated depreciation				
Land improvements	8,739,033	893,225	-	9,632,258
Buildings	45,727,848	1,153,759	-	46,881,607
Building improvements	59,453,516	8,212,829	-	67,666,345
Equipment	17,161,285	1,071,163	-	18,232,448
Furniture	597,676	-	-	597,676
Library materials	-	116,604	(116,604)	-
Total accumulated depreciation	<u>131,679,358</u>	<u>11,447,580</u>	<u>(116,604)</u>	<u>143,010,334</u>
Capital assets, net	<u>\$ 181,470,066</u>	<u>\$ 4,059,960</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 185,530,026</u>

As of June 30, 2021, capital assets of the University with a cost of approximately \$55,623,233 were fully depreciated and still in service.

- \* Construction costs incurred for various capital projects were included in construction in progress and subsequently transferred to capital asset additions upon completion during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2021.

The University enters into various contract commitments with contractors, from time to time, for improvements to its facilities. Remaining contract commitments totaled approximately \$1,792,700 and \$4,496,100 at June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively.

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Capital assets activity of the University for the year ended June 30, 2020 is as follows:

Capital assets:	Totals June 30, 2019	Additions	Reclassifications* and reductions	Totals June 30, 2020
<u>Non-depreciable capital assets</u>				
Land	\$ 5,478,125	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,478,125
Construction in progress	14,330,041	6,397,797	(10,814,674)	9,913,164
Total non-depreciable assets	19,808,166	6,397,797	(10,814,674)	15,391,289
<u>Depreciable capital assets</u>				
Land improvements	17,579,322	321,897	34,582	17,935,801
Buildings	80,591,909	-	-	80,591,909
Building improvements	165,286,659	2,321,203	1,806,112	169,413,974
Equipment	19,199,768	589,894	8,973,980	28,763,642
Furniture	597,676	-	-	597,676
Library materials	483,450	51,010	(79,327)	455,133
Total depreciable assets	283,738,784	3,284,004	10,735,347	297,758,135
Total capital assets	303,546,950	9,681,801	(79,327)	313,149,424
Less: Accumulated depreciation				
Land improvements	7,855,617	883,416	-	8,739,033
Buildings	44,574,089	1,153,759	-	45,727,848
Building improvements	51,396,833	8,056,683	-	59,453,516
Equipment	16,302,005	859,280	-	17,161,285
Furniture	597,676	-	-	597,676
Library materials	-	79,327	(79,327)	-
Total accumulated depreciation	120,726,220	11,032,465	(79,327)	131,679,358
Capital assets, net	<u>\$ 182,820,730</u>	<u>\$ (1,350,664)</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 181,470,066</u>

As of June 30, 2020, capital assets of the University with a cost of approximately \$55,413,000 were fully depreciated and still in service.

\* Construction costs incurred for various capital projects were included in construction in progress and subsequently transferred to capital asset additions upon completion during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020.

The University has considered the requirements of GASB Statement No. 49, *Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pollution Remediation Obligations*, and has noted no implications of this standard to the University's financial statements for the years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020.

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Capital assets activity of FSU Foundation for the year ended June 30, 2021 is as follows:

Capital assets:	Totals June 30, 2020	Additions	Reclassifications and reductions	Totals June 30, 2021
Real estate under lease to the University:				
Land	\$ 402,663	\$ 1	\$ -	\$ 402,664
Building	1,557,724	-	-	1,557,724
Building improvements	100,452	241,627	-	342,079
	<u>2,060,839</u>	<u>241,628</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,302,467</u>
Real estate used for student housing:				
Land	253,555	-	(17,031)	236,524
Buildings	434,225	-	-	434,225
Building improvements	28,600	-	-	28,600
	<u>716,380</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(17,031)</u>	<u>699,349</u>
Other:				
Land	2,072,730	444,311	(440,183)	2,076,858
Land improvements	158,127	-	(61,899)	96,228
Buildings	2,050,794	559,233	(141,253)	2,468,774
Building improvements	1,109,006	-	(1)	1,109,005
Equipment	759,307	-	-	759,307
Furniture and fixtures	60,773	-	-	60,773
Library materials	6,570	-	-	6,570
	<u>6,217,307</u>	<u>1,003,544</u>	<u>(643,336)</u>	<u>6,577,515</u>
Total capital assets	<u>8,994,526</u>	<u>1,245,172</u>	<u>(660,367)</u>	<u>9,579,331</u>
Less: Accumulated depreciation				
Real estate under lease to the University:				
Building	538,713	38,943	-	577,656
Building improvements	66,131	8,042	-	74,173
	<u>604,844</u>	<u>46,985</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>651,829</u>
Real estate used for student housing:				
Buildings	142,028	10,856	-	152,884
Building improvements	15,492	1,430	-	16,922
	<u>157,520</u>	<u>12,286</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>169,806</u>
Other:				
Land improvements	88,135	4,811	(61,899)	31,047
Buildings	268,968	53,463	(10,887)	311,544
Building improvements	324,186	55,451	-	379,637
Equipment	759,308	-	-	759,308
Furniture and fixtures	47,120	3,709	-	50,829
Library materials	6,570	-	-	6,570
	<u>1,494,287</u>	<u>117,434</u>	<u>(72,786)</u>	<u>1,538,935</u>
Total accumulated depreciation	<u>2,256,651</u>	<u>176,705</u>	<u>(72,786)</u>	<u>2,360,570</u>
Capital assets, net	<u>\$ 6,737,875</u>	<u>\$ 1,068,467</u>	<u>\$ (587,581)</u>	<u>\$ 7,218,761</u>

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Non-depreciable capital assets of FSU Foundation total \$2,716,046 at June 30, 2021, which is comprised of land.

At June 30, 2021, capital assets of FSU Foundation with a cost of approximately \$792,000 were fully depreciated and still in service.

On June 28, 2021, the Foundation Supporting Organization transferred seven properties, which consists of land and one building to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts acting by and through DCAM on behalf of Fitchburg State University. On the date the properties were transferred, the seven properties collectively had a cost basis and accumulated depreciation of \$660,367 and \$72,786, respectively. A loss of \$587,581 was recorded from the transfers of the properties and recognized in loss on sale of capital assets in the accompanying statements of revenues, expenses and changes in net position for the year ended June 30, 2021.

On December 22, 2020, the Foundation Supporting Organization acquired a property in close proximity to the Fitchburg State University campus. The property which includes land and a building was purchased for a total cost of \$121,813. The FSU Foundation intends to use this property for green space and possible future parking.

On November 30, 2020, the Foundation Supporting Organization received a donation of the former Fidelity Bank property in downtown Fitchburg. The property includes the bank building and three parcels of land. This property was recorded at fair market value of \$709,500, \$526,617 of which was recorded as building and \$182,883 as land based on an appraisal completed utilizing the sales comparative approach. The property is being held for development of the Theater complex.

On September 18, 2020, the Foundation Supporting Organization acquired a property in close proximity to the Fitchburg State University campus. The property which includes land and a building was purchased for a total cost of \$172,231. The Foundation intends to use this property for green space with possible future parking.

On November 13, 2019, the Foundation Supporting Organization acquired a property in close proximity to the Fitchburg State University campus. The property, which consists of land and a building, was purchased for \$1 as current environmental remediation is needed before the property is usable. The property was acquired to support the downtown Theater project and the organization intends to raze the building on the property and convert the land to a parking lot. The FSU Foundation was notified by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP") about an environmental issue with the property that requires remediation. For the year ended June 30, 2020, the FSU Foundation had purchased an insurance policy with a determined deductible of \$100,000, which it determined increased the value of the land and was recorded as land. For the year ended June 30, 2021, the FSU Foundation determined that additional costs of the remediation are expected above the insured policy limits in the amount of \$465,696, which has been expensed in the current year and included in environmental costs in the accompanying schedule of functional expenses. As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively, the remaining environmental liability of \$536,901 and \$100,000 is shown on the accompanying statements of net position.

In fiscal 2017, the Foundation Supporting Organization acquired a property in close proximity to the Fitchburg State University campus consistent with the Foundation Supporting Organization's mission and the University's strategic plan which includes campus expansion. The property, which includes land and a building, was purchased for an aggregate cost of \$360,305. The acquisition was financed, in part, with a mortgage note on the property in the amount of \$280,000 (see Note 14). The Foundation

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Supporting Organization is planning a major renovation and expansion of the property which, when completed, is expected to cost approximately \$25,000,000 and consist of a multi-phased project providing academic space, student support services space, retail and community space and a theatre renovation. The space is expected to be used by the University and the Fitchburg and surrounding communities. Fitchburg State University will be responsible for the costs of the project's development and construction pursuant to the terms of the license agreement between the University and the Foundation Supporting Organization. Funding for the project is expected to come from a variety of sources including, but not limited to, New Market Tax Credits, Historic Tax Credits, bonds, grants and philanthropy. The project is in the very early stages of development and is estimated to require four years to completion. At some point during that period, the property will be transferred to a new entity. The Foundation Supporting Organization will pay for certain legal services incurred in connection with the project which the Foundation Supporting Organization currently estimates to be approximately \$148,000 for the entire project. The Foundation Supporting Organization expects to fund these costs through operating cash. For the year ended June 30, 2020, the Foundation Organization has incurred \$73,491 of legal costs related to the project which have been recorded in prepaid expenses and other current assets in the accompanying 2020 statements of net position.

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**June 30, 2021 and 2020**

Capital assets activity of FSU Foundation for the year ended June 30, 2020 is as follows:

Capital assets:	Totals June 30, 2019	Additions	Reclassifications and reductions	Totals June 30, 2020
Real estate under lease to the University:				
Land	\$ 402,663	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 402,663
Building	1,557,724	-	-	1,557,724
Building improvements	100,452	-	-	100,452
	<u>2,060,839</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,060,839</u>
Real estate used for student housing:				
Land	253,555	-	-	253,555
Buildings	434,225	-	-	434,225
Building improvements	28,600	-	-	28,600
	<u>716,380</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>716,380</u>
Other:				
Land	1,949,324	123,406	-	2,072,730
Land improvements	158,127	-	-	158,127
Buildings	1,831,326	219,468	-	2,050,794
Building improvements	1,109,006	-	-	1,109,006
Equipment	759,307	-	-	759,307
Furniture and fixtures	60,773	-	-	60,773
Library materials	6,570	-	-	6,570
	<u>5,874,433</u>	<u>342,874</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,217,307</u>
Total capital assets	<u>8,651,652</u>	<u>342,874</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>8,994,526</u>
Less: Accumulated depreciation				
Real estate under lease to the University:				
Building	499,770	38,943	-	538,713
Building improvements	61,108	5,023	-	66,131
	<u>560,878</u>	<u>43,966</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>604,844</u>
Real estate used for student housing:				
Buildings	131,172	10,856	-	142,028
Building improvements	14,062	1,430	-	15,492
	<u>145,234</u>	<u>12,286</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>157,520</u>
Other:				
Land improvements	83,324	4,811	-	88,135
Buildings	223,187	45,781	-	268,968
Building improvements	268,735	55,451	-	324,186
Equipment	759,094	214	-	759,308
Furniture and fixtures	42,936	4,184	-	47,120
Library materials	6,570	-	-	6,570
	<u>1,383,846</u>	<u>110,441</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,494,287</u>
Total accumulated depreciation	<u>2,089,958</u>	<u>166,693</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,256,651</u>
Capital assets, net	<u>\$ 6,561,694</u>	<u>\$ 176,181</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 6,737,875</u>

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Non-depreciable capital assets of FSU Foundation totaled \$2,728,948 at June 30, 2020, which is comprised of land.

At June 30, 2020, capital assets of FSU Foundation with a cost of approximately \$849,000 were fully depreciated and still in service.

On June 24, 2020, the Foundation Supporting Organization received a donation of property in close proximity to the Fitchburg State University campus. The property, which includes land only, was recorded at fair market value of \$2,100 at the time of the donation. The Foundation Supporting Organization intends to use this property for open green space.

On June 2, 2020, the Foundation Supporting Organization acquired a property in close proximity to the Fitchburg State University campus. The property which includes land and a building was purchased for a total cost of \$240,774. The Foundation Supporting Organization intends to use this property for open green space. The acquisition was funded, in part, through the proceeds of an advance of \$250,000 on a letter of credit.

On November 13, 2019, the Foundation Supporting Organization acquired a property in close proximity to the Fitchburg State University campus. The property, which consists of land and a building, was purchased for \$1 as current environmental remediation is needed before the property is usable. The Organization intends to raze the building and convert it to a parking lot. The Foundation Supporting Organization obtained an insurance policy to cover the costs of remediation needed. For the year ended June 30, 2020, the Foundation Supporting Organization has determined a probable liability for these costs equal to \$100,000, which has been capitalized into the land.

**Note 6 - Accounts payable and accrued liabilities**

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities include the following at June 30, 2021 and 2020:

	2021	2020
Accounts payable - trade	\$ 864,962	\$ 820,024
Salaries and fringe benefits payable	2,848,635	2,605,829
Accrued interest payable	357,062	334,550
Tuition due State	47,674	52,154
Other	506,408	401,091
	\$ 4,624,741	\$ 4,213,648

**Note 7 - Accrued workers' compensation**

Independent actuarial reviews of the outstanding loss reserve requirements for the Commonwealth's self-insured workers' compensation program were conducted as of June 30, 2021 and 2020. Based upon the Commonwealth's analyses, \$1,088,425 and \$478,124 of accrued workers' compensation has been recorded as a liability at June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively.

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**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**June 30, 2021 and 2020**

**Note 8 - Accrued compensated absences**

Accrued compensated absences are comprised of the following at June 30, 2021 and 2020:

	2021	2020
Vacation time payable	\$ 2,872,809	\$ 2,866,275
Sick time payable	2,488,590	2,875,468
Total	\$ 5,361,399	\$ 5,741,743
Amount representing obligations due to employees funded through sources other than State appropriations	\$ 350,760	\$ 329,819
Amount representing obligations due to employees compensated through State appropriations	5,010,639	5,411,924
Total	\$ 5,361,399	\$ 5,741,743

It is anticipated that the obligation due to employees funded through State appropriations will be discharged through future State appropriations and the balance is expected to be liquidated through trust funds. Had these amounts not been reflected as obligations of the University, the University's unrestricted net position (deficiency) balances would be \$3,589,403 and \$(6,046,464) at June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively (see Note 1, Compensated absences).

**Note 9 - Faculty payroll accrual**

The contract for full-time faculty begins on September 1 and ends on May 31, of any given academic year. The Commonwealth and Fitchburg State University pay all faculty over the 12-month period from September through August. Consequently, on June 30 of each year there is a balance due on each faculty contract which is to be paid from the subsequent year's State appropriation. The total amount due at June 30, 2021 of \$3,876,328 will be paid from the University's fiscal 2022 State appropriations. The total amount due at June 30, 2020 of \$4,231,311 was paid from the University's fiscal 2021 State appropriations.



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**Note 10 - Revenue received in advance**

Revenue received in advance includes tuition received in advance from students for summer courses commencing after June 30 and grant funds received in advance. Revenue received in advance includes the following at June 30, 2021 and 2020:

	2021	2020
Tuition, fees and professional development	\$ 2,182,704	\$ 1,713,082
Capital projects	1,085,708	2,224,396
Grants	5,559,668	538,426
Other	63,879	58,886
	\$ 8,891,959	\$ 4,534,790

**Note 11 - Deferred inflows of resources from service concession arrangement**

Deferred inflows of resources from service concession arrangement at June 30, 2021 and 2020 in the amounts of \$758,754 and \$1,011,672, respectively, consist of the unamortized balances of a service concession arrangement with Compass Group USA, Inc. ("Compass") to manage and operate the University's food services operation at the University's dining services locations as more fully described in the arrangement. The service concession arrangement commenced on July 1, 1999 for a term of 10 years through June 30, 2009 and has been amended several times thereafter to modify its terms, provide for additional payments to the University for investment in improvements in or at the University as mutually agreed upon by the parties, and extend the term of the arrangement until June 30, 2024. The last such amendment to the service concession arrangement was effective May 1, 2014 and provides for the extension of the arrangement to June 30, 2024 and payments to the University totaling \$2,500,000. These payments shall be made to the University by Compass in seven installments as follows: \$300,000 in fiscal 2011; \$1,200,000 in fiscal 2012; \$200,000 in fiscal 2014; \$500,000 in fiscal 2015; \$200,000 in fiscal 2016; \$50,000 in fiscal 2020; and \$50,000 in fiscal 2022. As of June 30, 2020, the University has received the first six installments from Compass, of which \$50,000 was received in fiscal 2020. In addition, Compass has agreed to pay the University specified percentages of 4%, 4 ½% or 12% of specified sales receipts from the food services operation as more fully described in the arrangement. All improvements and equipment purchased with the payments received from Compass shall remain the property of the University. The arrangement may be terminated by either party at any time, without cause, by giving not less than 60 days prior written notice to the other party. The arrangement contains provisions, whereby, in the event of termination of the arrangement, the University shall be required to repay a portion of any payments made to the University by Compass. The portion required to be repaid shall be determined in accordance with amortization schedules prepared by Compass. The amortization schedules assume that all funds will be received from Compass. The University does not anticipate that the arrangement will be terminated prior to its expiration date.

The University has recorded the service concession arrangement as a deferred inflow of resources at its present value using a 5% discount rate determined by management of the University. In fiscal 2011, the University recorded an accounts receivable from Compass at the present value of the future payments to be received from Compass, using a 5% discount rate determined by management of the University. At June 30, 2021, the accompanying statement of net position includes a remaining receivable from Compass in the amount of \$49,406, which includes accrued interest receivable of

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\$4,155 (see Note 3). At June 30, 2020, the accompanying statement of net position includes a remaining receivable from Compass in the amount of \$47,032, which includes accrued interest receivable of \$1,781 (see Note 3). The deferred inflow of resources is being amortized to revenue on a straight-line basis over the term of the arrangement. Amortization in the amount of \$252,918 has been recognized in capital grants revenue in the accompanying statements of revenues, expenses and changes in net position for each of the years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020.

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**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**June 30, 2021 and 2020**

**Note 12 - Interagency payables**

The University, in association with the Massachusetts State College Building Authority ("MSCBA"), the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency ("MDFA"), and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance ("DCAMM"), has entered into financing and construction agreements for various campus projects.

The following table summarizes the University's Interagency payables as of June 30, 2021:

	Issue date	Original amount	Interest rates (%)	Due date	Effective interest rates (%)*	Interagency payable balance	Unamortized bond premiums	Total interagency payable
MDFA Series J-3	11/22/1996	\$ 6,000,000	Floating	7/1/2023	0.26	\$ 1,301,094	\$ -	\$ 1,301,094
MSCBA Series 2005A	3/1/2005	5,110,000	3.50-5.00	5/1/2034	2.66	1,907,048	10,578	1,917,626
MSCBA Series 2006A	3/8/2006	2,060,000	3.50-5.00	5/1/2031	1.86	876,513	4,132	880,645
MSCBA Series 2010B	12/17/2010	11,078,908	4.89-6.54	5/1/2030	5.96	9,639,944	-	9,639,944
MSCBA Series 2012A	1/4/2012	7,043,416	3.00-5.00	5/1/2035	2.83	4,552,835	7,531	4,560,366
MSCBA Series 2012C	12/20/2012	13,864,033	2.00-5.00	5/1/2034	2.65	8,994,925	244,350	9,239,275
MSCBA Series 2014A	1/7/2014	12,235,614	2.00-5.00	5/1/2038	2.52	8,676,463	116,086	8,792,549
MSCBA Series 2014C	12/17/2014	10,669,502	3.00-5.00	5/1/2035	2.54	6,366,086	373,764	6,739,850
DCAMM CEIP Funds	11/7/2016	5,420,360	3.00	1/1/2039	3.00	5,010,863	-	5,010,863
MSCBA Series 2017A	1/25/2017	4,166,418	3.00-5.00	6/30/2037	4.20	3,774,502	170,683	3,945,185
MSCBA Series 2019A	1/23/2019	2,623,145	3.00-5.00	6/30/2039	4.32	2,849,888	145,173	2,995,061
Total		<u>\$ 80,271,396</u>				<u>\$ 53,950,161</u>	<u>\$ 1,072,297</u>	<u>\$ 55,022,458</u>

\*Effective Interest Rates are calculated by dividing total interest paid during the year by the average outstanding balance of the Interagency payable.

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**June 30, 2021 and 2020**

The following table summarizes the University's interagency payables as of June 30, 2020:

	Issue date	Original amount	Interest rates (%)	Due date	Effective interest rates (%)*	Interagency payable balance	Unamortized bond premiums	Total interagency payable
MDFA Series J-3	11/22/1996	\$ 6,000,000	Floating	7/1/2023	6.03	\$ 1,601,094	\$ -	\$ 1,601,094
MSCBA Series 2005A	3/1/2005	5,110,000	3.50-5.00	5/1/2025	4.01	1,675,000	-	1,675,000
MSCBA Series 2006A	3/8/2006	2,060,000	3.50-5.00	5/1/2026	4.39	825,000	32,205	857,205
MSCBA Series 2010B	12/17/2010	11,078,908	4.89-6.54	5/1/2030	3.39	9,549,184	-	9,549,184
MSCBA Series 2012A	1/4/2012	7,043,416	3.00-5.00	5/1/2031	5.05	4,210,887	522,339	4,733,226
MSCBA Series 2012C	12/20/2012	13,864,033	2.00-5.00	5/1/2032	3.12	9,130,000	697,837	9,827,837
MSCBA Series 2014A	1/7/2014	12,235,614	2.00-5.00	5/1/2033	5.00	8,605,000	871,165	9,476,165
MSCBA Series 2014C	12/17/2014	10,669,502	3.00-5.00	5/1/2034	5.00	7,520,000	1,159,921	8,679,921
DCAMM CEIP Funds	11/7/2016	5,420,360	3.00	1/1/2039	3.00	5,218,638	-	5,218,638
MSCBA Series 2017A	1/25/2017	4,166,418	3.00-5.00	6/30/2037	3.93	3,564,000	202,663	3,766,663
MSCBA Series 2019A	1/23/2019	<u>2,623,145</u>	3.00-5.00	6/30/2039	3.69	<u>2,385,000</u>	<u>170,172</u>	<u>2,555,172</u>
Total		<u>\$ 80,271,396</u>				<u>\$ 54,283,803</u>	<u>\$ 3,656,302</u>	<u>\$ 57,940,105</u>

\*Effective Interest Rates are calculated by dividing total interest paid during the year by the average outstanding balance of the Interagency payable.

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**MDFA Series J-3 bond issuance**

On November 22, 1996, the University signed a financing agreement to receive \$6,000,000 from a MDFA (formerly Massachusetts Health and Educational Facilities Authority ("MHEFA")) bond issuance to be used for the construction of the University's athletic facility. This obligation is being repaid solely by the University. Construction of the athletic facility was completed in August 2000. MDFA retained \$502,899 of the bond proceeds for a debt service retirement fund.

The University is required to make annual funding payments of principal on this debt each July 1. The principal payment due July 1, 2021 of \$349,378 was made as scheduled. These payments are made to a restricted cash account held in escrow in the University's name and recorded on the books of the University. These amounts, along with the remaining balance of the debt service retirement fund, are held in an escrow account by MDFA. Earnings on this balance are transferred and used by the University to offset the administrative costs associated with this debt. In a prior year, the University elected to release the annual funding payments from the reserve to redeem portions of the debt obligation. Accordingly, each year the funding payments are now being released from the debt service reserve to redeem portions of the outstanding debt obligation. These debt payments are to be repaid by the University solely from student fees.

Interest on the debt is paid every 35 days at a floating rate of interest subject to market conditions. The interest rate is determined by MDFA conducting a true auction of their debt issuance every 35 days, in which the University's obligation is pooled with other higher education institutions within the Commonwealth who have debt funded through MDFA. The most recent auctioned interest rate in effect at June 30, 2021 and 2020 was .318% and 6.506%, respectively. The University is also responsible to pay for program expenses at an annual rate of 1.085% (2021) and 1.015% (2020) of the outstanding principal balance, calculated and payable every 35 days when the rate is auctioned.

MDFA is responsible to determine, subject to certain criteria, if income earned on unexpended bond proceeds exceeds the interest cost to the bondholders. Any excess income earned is held in a rebate fund by an appointed trustee. Such amounts are held until every fifth year, whereby payment is to be made as indicated by the bond indenture agreement.

**MSCBA Series 2005A bond issuance**

During March 2005, the University signed a financing agreement to receive \$5,110,000 from a MSCBA bond issuance. These funds were used for renovations of the athletic fields and dining hall (the "Projects") at the University. This obligation will be repaid solely by the University through dedicated student fees.

The University is required to make annual principal payments on this debt each May 1. The final principal payment was originally due on May 1, 2025. During fiscal 2021, the series 2005A bond was refunded/restructured with the MSCBA series 2020A bonds. In accordance with the terms of the bond restructuring, no principal payments were required until May 2022 and the bonds are now due on May 1, 2034. Interest on the debt is payable May 1 and November 1 each year. Interest payments are based on an amortization schedule prepared by MSCBA using an increasing coupon rate of interest ranging from 3.50% to 5.00% over the term of the debt to maturity. Funds from the debt service reserve fund are expected to be applied to the final payment on the debt. Earnings on the balance in the debt service reserve fund are to be used to defray debt service costs.

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**MSCBA Series 2006A bond issuance**

During March 2006, the University signed a financing agreement to receive \$2,060,000 from a MSCBA bond issuance. These funds were used for renovations of the dining hall (the "Project") at the University. This obligation will be repaid solely by the University through dedicated student fees.

The University is required to make annual principal payments on this debt each May 1. The final principal payment was originally due on May 1, 2026. During fiscal 2021, the series 2006A bond was refunded/restructured with the MSCBA series 2020A bonds. In accordance with the terms of the bond restructuring, no principal payments were required until May 2022 and the bonds are now due on May 1, 2031. Interest on the debt is payable May 1 and November 1 each year. Interest payments are based on an amortization schedule prepared by MSCBA using an increasing coupon rate of interest ranging from 3.50% to 5.00% over the term of the debt to maturity. Funds from the debt service reserve fund are expected to be applied to the final payment on the debt. Earnings on the balance in the debt service reserve fund are to be used to defray debt service costs.

As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, MSCBA held debt service reserve funds in the amount of \$111,320 and \$144,841, respectively, which are included in the accompanying statements of net position at June 30, 2021 and 2020 as noncurrent restricted cash and cash equivalents.

**MSCBA Series 2010A bond issuance**

During December 2010, the University signed a financing agreement to receive \$4,856,749 from a MSCBA bond issuance. These funds, net of bond issuance costs and a debt service reserve fund, were used for renovations to the Hammond Campus Center. This obligation was repaid solely by the University through dedicated student fees and operating funds. During May 2018, the University made the final payment on the 2010A bonds.

As of June 30 2020, MSCBA held debt service reserve funds in the amount of \$80,326, which is included in the accompanying statement of net position as noncurrent restricted cash and cash equivalents. During fiscal 2021, the entire balance of the debt service reserve was released to the University.

**MSCBA Series 2010B bond issuance**

During December 2010, the University signed a financing agreement to receive \$11,078,908 from a MSCBA bond issuance. These funds, net of bond issuance costs and a debt service reserve fund, were used for renovations to the Hammond Campus Center. This obligation will be repaid solely by the University through dedicated student fees and operating funds.

The University is required to make annual principal payments on this debt each May 1. The final principal payment is due on May 1, 2030. During fiscal 2021, the series 2010B bond was refunded/restructured with the MSCBA series 2020A bonds. In accordance with the terms of the bond restructuring, no principal payments were required until May 2022. Interest on the debt is payable May 1 and November 1 each year. Interest payments are based on an amortization schedule prepared by MSCBA with interest rates ranging from 4.89% to 6.54% over the term of the debt to maturity. Funds from the debt service reserve fund are expected to be applied to the final payment on the debt. Earnings on the balance in the debt service reserve fund are to be used to defray debt service costs.

As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, MSCBA held debt service reserve funds in the amount of \$741,021 and \$964,163, respectively, which are included in the accompanying statements of net position at June 30, 2021 and 2020 as noncurrent restricted cash and cash equivalents.

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**MSCBA Series 2012A bond issuance**

During December 2011, the University signed a financing agreement to receive \$7,043,416 from a MSCBA bond issuance. These funds, net of bond issuance costs, were used for renovations to the Hammond Campus Center. This obligation will be repaid solely by the University through dedicated student fees and operating funds.

The University is required to make annual principal payments on this debt each May 1. The final principal payment was originally due on May 1, 2031. During fiscal 2021, the series 2012A bond was refunded/restructured with the MSCBA series 2020A bonds. In accordance with the terms of the bond restructuring, no principal payments were required until May 2022 and the bonds are now due on May 1, 2035. Interest on the debt is payable May 1 and November 1 each year. Interest payments are based on an amortization schedule prepared by MSCBA with interest rates ranging from 3.00% to 5.00% over the term of the debt to maturity.

**MSCBA Series 2012C bond issuance**

During December 2012, the University signed a financing agreement to receive \$13,864,033 from a MSCBA bond issuance. These funds, net of bond issuance costs and a debt service reserve fund, were used for Phase III of renovations to the Hammond Campus Center and parking expansion. This obligation will be repaid solely by the University through dedicated student fees and operating funds.

The University is required to make annual principal payments on this debt each May 1. The final principal payment was originally due on May 1, 2032. During fiscal 2021, the series 2012C bond was refunded/restructured with the MSCBA series 2020A bonds. In accordance with the terms of the bond restructuring, no principal payments were required until May 2022 and the bonds are now due on May 1, 2034. Interest on the debt is payable May 1 and November 1 each year. Interest payments are based on an amortization schedule prepared by MSCBA with interest rates ranging from 2.00% to 5.00% over the term of the debt to maturity. Funds from the debt service reserve fund are expected to be applied to the final payment on the debt. Earnings on the balance in the debt service reserve fund are to be used to defray debt service costs.

As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, MSCBA held debt service reserve funds in the amount of \$164,599 and \$214,164, respectively, which are included in the accompanying statements of net position at June 30, 2021 and 2020 as noncurrent restricted cash and cash equivalents.

**MSCBA Series 2014A bond issuance**

During January 2014, the University signed a financing agreement to receive \$12,235,614 from a MSCBA bond issuance. These funds, net of bond issuance costs and a debt service reserve fund, were used for Phase IV of renovations to the Hammond Campus Center. This obligation will be repaid solely by the University through dedicated student fees and operating funds.

The University is required to make annual principal payments on this debt each May 1. The final principal payment was originally due on May 1, 2033. During fiscal 2021, the series 2014A bond was refunded/restructured with the MSCBA series 2020A bonds. In accordance with the terms of the bond restructuring, no principal payments were required until May 2022 and the bonds are now due on May 1, 2038. Interest on the debt is payable May 1 and November 1 each year. Interest payments are based on an amortization schedule prepared by MSCBA with interest rates ranging from 2.00% to 5.00% over the term of the debt to maturity. Funds from the debt service reserve fund are expected to be applied to the final payment on the debt. Earnings on the balance in the debt service reserve fund are to be used to defray debt service costs.

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As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, MSCBA held debt service reserve funds in the amount of \$513,247 and \$667,799, respectively, which are included in the accompanying statements of net position at June 30, 2021 and 2020 as noncurrent restricted cash and cash equivalents.

**MSCBA Series 2014C bond issuance**

During December 2014, the University signed a financing agreement to receive \$10,669,502 from a MSCBA bond issuance. These funds, net of bond issuance costs and a debt service reserve fund, are being used for Phase V of renovations to the Hammond Campus Center. This obligation will be repaid solely by the University through dedicated student fees and operating funds.

The University is required to make annual principal payments on this debt each May 1. The final principal payment was originally due on May 1, 2034. During fiscal 2021, the series 2014C bond was refunded/restructured with the MSCBA series 2020A bonds. In accordance with the terms of the bond restructuring, no principal payments were required until May 2022 and the bonds are now due on May 1, 2035. Interest on the debt is payable May 1 and November 1 each year. Interest payments are based on an amortization schedule prepared by MSCBA with interest rates ranging from 3.00% to 5.00% over the term of the debt to maturity. Funds from the debt service reserve fund are expected to be applied to the final payment on the debt. Earnings on the balance in the debt service reserve fund are to be used to defray debt service costs.

As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, MSCBA held debt service reserve funds in the amount of \$458,809 and \$596,968, respectively, which are included in the accompanying statements of net position at June 30, 2021 and 2020 as noncurrent restricted cash and cash equivalents.

**DCAMM Clean Energy Investment Program**

In November 2016, the University entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with DCAMM to undertake a Comprehensive Energy Performance Contracting Project (the "Project"). The Project's goal is to upgrade boilers, replace the chiller, lighting, EMS expansion and improvements, HVAC upgrades, and various energy conservation measures.

The total cost for the Project was \$9,451,868, including \$498,975 incurred in 2020. The cost of the Project was funded from Clean Energy Investment Program Funds ("CEIP Funds") in the amount of \$5,420,360, capital grants of \$3,781,536, and energy incentives from the contractor in the amount of \$249,972. CEIP Funds for the Project are to be repaid over 20 years at 3.00% interest. Annual payments of principal and interest for the Project in the amount of \$364,333 commenced on January 1, 2020. Additionally, the agreement provides for the University to fund annual maintenance costs to be paid over the first five years of the Project totaling approximately \$244,500. These maintenance costs are expected to be offset by energy savings as a result of the Project. The Project was completed and placed into service in August 2019.

**MSCBA Series 2017A bond issuance**

During January 2017, the University signed a financing agreement to receive \$4,166,418 from a MSCBA bond issuance. These funds, net of bond issuance costs and a debt service reserve fund, are being used for renovations to the Landry Arena. This obligation will be repaid solely by the University through dedicated student fees and operating funds. The University also executed a management agreement with MSCBA whereby MSCBA is providing management services to the University for the renovations.



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The University is required to make annual principal payments on this debt each June 30 commencing in fiscal 2018. The final principal payment is due June 30, 2037. During fiscal 2021, the series 2017A bond was refunded/restructured with the MSCBA series 2020A bonds. In accordance with the terms of the bond restructuring, no principal payments were required until May 2022. Interest on the debt is payable June 30 and December 30 each year. Interest payments are based on an amortization schedule prepared by MSCBA with interest rates ranging from 3.00% to 5.00% over the term of the debt to maturity. Funds from the debt service reserve fund are expected to be applied to the final payment on the debt. Earnings on the balance in the debt service reserve fund are to be used to defray debt service costs.

As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, MSCBA held debt service reserve funds in the amount of \$79,218 and \$103,073, respectively, which are included in the accompanying statements of net position at June 30, 2021 and 2020 as noncurrent restricted cash and cash equivalents.

**MSCBA Series 2019A bond issuance**

During January 2019, the University signed a financing agreement to receive \$2,623,145 from a MSCBA bond issuance. These funds, net of bond issuance costs and a debt service reserve fund, are being used for renovations to the Holmes Dining Commons and the Recreation Center. This obligation will be repaid solely by the University through dedicated student fees and operating funds. The University also executed a management agreement with MSCBA whereby MSCBA is providing management services to the University for the renovations.

The University is required to make annual principal payments on this debt each June 30 commencing in fiscal 2020. The final principal payment is due June 30, 2039. During fiscal 2021, the series 2019A bond was refunded/restructured with the MSCBA series 2020A bonds. In accordance with the terms of the bond restructuring, no principal payments were required until May 2022. Interest on the debt is payable June 30 and December 30 each year. Interest payments are based on an amortization schedule prepared by MSCBA with interest rates ranging from 3.00% to 5.00% over the term of the debt to maturity.

As of June 30, 2021, MSCBA held unexpended debt proceeds in the amount of \$53,714, of which \$2,886 is included in the accompanying 2021 statement of net position as current restricted cash and cash equivalents and \$50,828 is included in the accompanying 2021 statement of net position as noncurrent restricted cash and cash equivalents. As of June 30, 2020, MSCBA held unexpended debt proceeds in the amount of \$426,564, of which \$31,189 is included in the accompanying 2020 statement of net position as current restricted cash and cash equivalents and \$395,375 is included in the accompanying 2020 statement of net position as noncurrent restricted cash and cash equivalents.

**MSCBA Series 2020A bond refunding**

On July 1, 2020, MSCBA closed on Refunding Revenue Bonds Series 2020A for the purpose of providing budgetary relief in fiscal year 2021 and fiscal year 2022 to the nine State Universities including Fitchburg State University. These bonds were issued to refund/restructure debt outstanding from multiple series of bonds, as noted above. The reduction of the University's fiscal year 2021 debt service assessment was approximately \$10,580,000. The reduction of the University's fiscal year 2022 debt service assessment is approximately \$5,540,000. During August 2020, MSCBA's board approved the release of a portion of the funds held in the Debt Service Reserve Fund to pay the November 1, 2020 interest payment on behalf of the State Universities. Fitchburg State University received approximately \$2,590,000 in funds held in reserve to be applied to the November interest payment to MSCBA. The bond restructuring resulted in a net deferred gain of \$3,482,170, which will be amortized

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and recognized over the original term of the bonds. As of June 30, 2021, there were net deferred gains of \$2,125,859, which is included in deferred inflows of resources on the accompanying 2021 statement of net position.

Aggregate principal and interest payments due to maturity consist of the following:

Year ending June 30:	Principal	Amortization of bond premium	Total principal	Estimated interest (1)	Total
2022	\$ 2,302,873	\$ 220,899	\$ 2,523,772	\$ 2,206,556	\$ 4,730,328
2023	4,232,760	184,520	4,417,280	2,027,084	6,444,364
2024	4,577,598	156,021	4,733,619	1,847,487	6,581,106
2025	4,147,600	126,114	4,273,714	1,664,584	5,938,298
2026	3,764,426	95,952	3,860,378	1,267,417	5,127,795
2027 - 2031	19,195,244	225,997	19,421,241	4,092,524	23,513,765
2032 - 2036	12,295,379	55,755	12,351,134	1,506,603	13,857,737
2037 - 2041	3,434,281	7,039	3,441,320	304,823	3,746,143
Total	<u>\$ 53,950,161</u>	<u>\$ 1,072,297</u>	<u>\$ 55,022,458</u>	<u>\$ 14,917,078</u>	<u>\$ 69,939,536</u>

(1) The interest rate in effect at June 30, 2021 of .318% was used to calculate the estimated interest on the MDFA Series J-3 bond included above.

**Other Interagency activity**

The oversight of various capital projects on campus is provided by MSCBA. To fund these projects, the University provides equity contributions, by advancing funds to MSCBA, which are then held by MSCBA until used for the payment of the capital project costs. During fiscal 2021, the University provided an equity contribution of \$670,000 toward the Theater Project. During fiscal 2020, the University provided an equity contribution of \$300,000 toward the Recreation Center Project, of which \$102,837 of these funds were subsequently transferred to the Theater Project account at MSCBA for the Theater Project renovations. During fiscal 2020, funds totaling \$13,473 were transferred from the Southside Chiller, Laundry Project, Recreation Center Project and Theater Project accounts at MSCBA for the Holmes Dining renovations project. During fiscal 2020, Holmes Dining funds of \$170,655 were transferred to the Theatre Project account MSCBA for the Theater Project renovations.

As of June 30, 2021, amounts held by MSCBA representing the unexpended portion of the University's contributions are as follows:

University Projects	Restricted cash and cash equivalents:	
	Current	Noncurrent
Recreation Center	\$ -	\$ 67,798
Theater	13,627	150,909
	<u>\$ 13,627</u>	<u>\$ 218,707</u>

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As of June 30, 2020, amounts held by MSCBA representing the unexpended portion of the University's contributions are as follows:

University Projects	Restricted cash and cash equivalents:	
	Current	Noncurrent
Recreation Center	\$ -	\$ 71,612
Theater	167,385	150,691
	\$ 167,385	\$ 222,303

**Note 13 - Capital lease obligation**

During fiscal year 2017, the University entered into a noncancellable capital lease agreement with a financial institution in the amount of \$1,261,206 for an upgrade to its wireless network equipment. The lease has a term of five years and requires semi-annual payments of \$132,483, which commenced on March 23, 2017 and continues through September 23, 2021. The assets and capital lease obligation were recorded at the present value of the future minimum lease payments based upon an interest rate of 1.81% which was determined to be applicable at the inception of the lease. The capital lease obligation is secured by the related assets.

The University's wireless network equipment held under capital lease totaled \$1,261,206 as of both June 30, 2021 and 2020. The assets under the capital lease are being depreciated over their estimated useful lives and the depreciation of these assets is included in depreciation expense. The accumulated depreciation on the leased assets amounted to \$1,198,145 and \$945,904 at June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively. Depreciation expense totaled \$252,241 for each of the years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020.

Interest expense incurred on the capital lease totaled \$5,899 and \$10,525 in fiscal years 2021 and 2020, respectively.

The following is a schedule of future minimum lease payments under this capital lease at June 30, 2021:

Year ending June 30,	Amount
2022	\$ 132,483
Total minimum lease payments	132,483
Less amount representing interest	(1,188)
Present value of future minimum lease payments	131,295
Less current portion	131,295
Present value of long-term portion	\$ -

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**Note 14 - FSU Foundation's long-term debt**

FSU Foundation's long-term debt consists of the following at June 30, 2021 and 2020:

	2021	2020
First mortgage notes payable	\$ 3,940,299	\$ 3,339,115
Notes payable - bank	453,794	474,686
	4,394,093	3,813,801
Less net debt issuance costs	(20,507)	(14,813)
	4,373,586	3,798,988
Less current portion	(225,884)	(254,180)
	\$ 4,147,702	\$ 3,544,808

The Foundation has a mortgage note payable in the original amount of \$550,000, dated April 16, 2008, with Fidelity Cooperative Bank. The proceeds of the note were used to acquire certain real estate properties on the Fitchburg State University campus. The note is secured by a first mortgage interest in the real estate and related personal property located thereon, and an assignment of leases and rents. Furthermore, any and all deposits held by the lender serve as additional collateral for the loan.

The loan agreement has a term of 20 years and provided for a fixed rate of interest of 5.75% per annum for the first 10 years of the loan term. Thereafter, the interest rate was to be fixed at the Federal Home Loan Bank Ten Year Cost of Funds Rate in effect as of the first day of the final 10 years of the term of the loan plus 118 basis points. The interest rate was adjusted to 4.27% per annum for the remainder of the loan term pursuant to the provisions of a Change in Terms Agreement dated October 19, 2016. The loan required monthly installments of principal and interest of \$3,862 through October 16, 2016. Thereafter, the loan requires monthly installments of principal and interest of \$2,454 commencing on November 16, 2016 with a final principal payment due in the amount of \$210,752 at the loan's maturity date of April 16, 2028. The note may be prepaid at any time, in whole or in part, without premium or penalty.

At June 30, 2021 and 2020, the outstanding principal balance of this mortgage note payable amounted to \$329,618 and \$344,440, respectively.

In August 2006, the Foundation Supporting Organization acquired land and a building consisting of 4,179 square feet of office space and 53,429 square feet of warehouse space located in Fitchburg, Massachusetts near the University campus. The entire property has been leased to DCAMM on behalf of the University (see Note 23). The University is currently using the property for its print services, maintenance, and shipping and receiving and financial services.

The acquisition and related costs were funded with the proceeds of an offering of tax-exempt revenue bonds, Massachusetts Development Finance Agency Revenue Bonds, FSC Foundation Supporting Organization Issue, Series 2006 (the "bonds"), dated August 1, 2006, in the amount of \$1,900,000, issued by the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency ("MDFA"), pursuant to a Loan and Trust Agreement. People's United Bank, as successor in interest to Chittenden Trust Company, is the bond Trustee. MDFA assigned all of its rights, title, and interest in and to the loan and related loan

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documents to the bond Trustee as security for repayment of the bonds. The loan is secured by a first mortgage interest in the real estate and related personal property located thereon, and an assignment of leases and rents. Payment and performance of the Foundation Supporting Organization's obligations under the loan agreement have been guaranteed by the Foundation.

The loan agreement has a term of 20 years and provides for a fixed rate of interest of 5.5% per annum for the first five years of the loan term. Thereafter, the interest rate will be adjusted at five-year intervals (August 16, 2011, 2016 and 2021) to a fixed rate of interest equal to 80% of the bank's prime rate, but no greater than 1% or less than 1% of the interest rate in effect for the immediately preceding five-year adjustment interval. The interest rate was adjusted to 4.5% per annum on August 16, 2011 pursuant to the provisions of the loan agreement. The loan required monthly installments of principal and interest of \$13,154 through August 16, 2011 and \$12,306 until August 16, 2016. The interest rate was adjusted to 3.5% per annum on August 16, 2016 pursuant to the provisions of the loan agreement. Commencing thereafter, the monthly installments of principal and interest are \$11,739 until the next five-year interval adjustment date of August 16, 2021. The loan matures on August 16, 2026. The loan agreement requires the Foundation Supporting Organization to maintain a Debt Service Coverage Ratio, as defined, of not less than 1.10 to 1 to be measured annually at the end of its fiscal year.

The mortgage note was issued pursuant to the Loan and Trust Agreement and related loan documents and is subject to and governed by the terms and conditions of those agreements. The loan may be prepaid in accordance with the terms of the Loan and Trust Agreement for prepayment of the bonds as more fully described in the Loan and Trust Agreement.

The loan documents contain cross default provisions with the DCAMM lease.

As of June 30, 2021, the outstanding principal balance of the loan and debt issuance costs is \$0.

Debt issuance costs, net of accumulated amortization, totaled \$20,507 and \$14,813 as of June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively. During 2021, the loan associated with these debt issuance costs was repaid in full and as such the related debt issuance costs were fully amortized. During 2021, the Foundation Supporting Organization paid \$20,507 in debt issuance costs related to the new mortgage provided by Rollstone Bank. For the year ended June 30, 2021 and 2020, amortization expenses of \$14,813 and \$2,404, respectively, were added to interest costs in the accompanying statement of revenues, expenses and changes in net position. Amortization of debt issuance costs on the above loan was amortized using an imputed interest of 3.64% as at June 30, 2020.

As of June 30, 2020, the outstanding principal balance of the mortgage note payable of \$779,258, less net debt issuance costs of \$14,813, amounted to \$764,445.

MDFA is providing financing to the Foundation Supporting Organization in the form of a General Fund loan in the amount of \$500,000 per the agreement dated June 28, 2021. The loan will be disbursed by a series of advances, per the terms and conditions stipulated in the Construction Loan Agreement. The proceeds are to be used for predevelopment costs in connection with the proposed redevelopment of the Theater Block. The note is secured by a first mortgage on and assignment of leases and rents for the real estate located at 675 Main Street, Fitchburg, Massachusetts. The note has a term of 5 years, maturing on June 28, 2026, and provides for a fixed rate of interest of 4% per annum. The loan requires monthly installments of interest effective August 1, 2021. The entire outstanding principal balance shall be due and paid at the earlier of (i) a triggering event or (ii) at maturity, June 28, 2026. A triggering event occurs when the property is transferred to another, abandoned, or financing of \$20,000,000 or more is secured. No disbursements have been made as of June 30, 2021.

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Workers' Credit Union ("WCU") provided financing to the Foundation Supporting Organization in the form of a note, dated February 27, 2009, in the amount of \$750,000. The note is secured by a first mortgage interest in certain real estate owned by the Foundation Supporting Organization and an assignment of certain leases and rents. The note is also collateralized by all funds held by the lender. At June 30, 2021 and 2020, the Foundation Supporting Organization has total cash balances of \$8,456 and \$8,097, respectively, held by the lender which serve as additional collateral for the loan.

The mortgage note had a term of 10 years, expiring on February 27, 2019, and provided for a fixed rate of interest of 5.74% per annum. The interest rate was adjusted to 4.99% per annum on June 20, 2015 pursuant to the provisions of a loan modification agreement. On February 27, 2019, pursuant to the provisions of a new loan modification agreement, the interest rate was adjusted to 5.25% per annum expiring on February 27, 2024. The note requires monthly installments of principal and interest of \$4,517, through February 27, 2024. Commencing thereafter, the interest rate will be adjusted to the FHLB 5 year Classic Advance plus 2.25% until the new maturity date of February 27, 2029, and monthly payments for principal and interest will be determined at that point.

At June 30, 2021 and 2020, the outstanding principal balance of this first mortgage loan amounted to \$498,266 and \$525,566, respectively.

Rollstone Bank & Trust provided financing to the Foundation Supporting Organization in the form of a note, dated December 22, 2014 in the amount of \$240,000. The note is secured by a first mortgage interest in the real estate property located at 131 Highland Avenue in Fitchburg, Massachusetts and an assignment of leases and rents on the property. The note has a term of 20 years, maturing on December 22, 2034, and provides for a fixed rate of interest of 3.25% per annum. The loan requires monthly installments of principal and interest of \$1,367 based on a 20-year principal amortization. The loan agreement requires the Foundation Supporting Organization to maintain a ratio of Cash Flow (after distributions), as defined, to the Current Maturity of Long-Term Debt plus interest, as defined, of not less than 1.0 to 1 for any fiscal year. The loan agreement also contains, among other covenants, restrictions relating to future borrowings, capital expenditures by lease or purchase, distributions, making of advances or loans to other parties, making of investments, and sale, lease or transfer of assets, except as provided for and as more fully described in the loan agreement.

At June 30, 2021 and 2020, the outstanding principal balance of the mortgage note payable amounted to \$178,567 and \$188,898, respectively.

Rollstone Bank & Trust provided refinancing to the Foundation Supporting Organization in the form of a note, dated December 9, 2020 in the amount of \$1,538,000. The proceeds of the note was used to (i) refinance existing debt owed by the Foundation Supporting Organization, (ii) to purchase, raze and develop the real property located at 175-179 Myrtle Street, Fitchburg, Massachusetts, (iii) to finance a new roof at the property located at 167 Klondike Avenue. This note is secured by a first mortgage interest in the real estate property located at 167 Klondike Avenue in Fitchburg, Massachusetts and an assignment of leases and rents on the property. The note bears interest at a fixed rate of 3.5% per annum until December 9, 2030. Thereafter, the note shall bear interest at a per annum rate equal to the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston "Five Year Classic Advance Rate" plus 2.25%. The loan requires monthly installments of principal and interest of \$11,032 based on a 15-year principal amortization. The loan agreement requires the Supporting Organization to maintain a debt service ratio equal to or greater than 1:1. The loan agreement also contains, among other covenants, restrictions relating to future borrowings, capital expenditures by lease or purchase, distributions, making of advances or loans to other parties, making of investments, and sale, lease or transfer of assets, except as provided for and as more fully described in the loan agreement.

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As of June 30, 2021, the outstanding principal balance of the mortgage loan amounted to \$1,498,585.

Fidelity Co-Operative Bank provided financing to the Foundation Supporting Organization in the form of a note, dated June 26, 2013, in the amount of \$83,200. The note is secured by a first mortgage interest in the real estate property located at 340 Highland Avenue in Fitchburg, Massachusetts and an assignment of leases and rents on the property. The mortgage note has a term of 20 years, maturing on June 26, 2033, and provides for a fixed rate of interest of 3.5% per annum for the first five years of the loan term. Thereafter, the interest rate will be adjusted at five-year intervals (June 26, 2018, 2023 and 2028) to the Federal Home Loan Bank Boston Classic Advance Five-Year Rate plus 2.75% per annum. The loan required monthly installments of principal and interest of \$376 until the next five-year interval adjustment date of June 26, 2018. The interest rate was adjusted to 5.93% per annum on June 26, 2018 pursuant to the provisions of the loan agreement. The July and August 2018 monthly installments of principal and interest remained at \$376. On August 27, 2018, the Foundation Supporting Organization entered into a Change in Terms Agreement with the lender in which the interest rate on the note was modified to a fixed rate of 5.20% per annum until June 26, 2023. At that time, the interest rate will be adjusted pursuant to the terms of the original note described above. All other terms, provisions and conditions of the original note agreement remain in full force and effect. Commencing with the September 2018 monthly installment of principal and interest, the monthly installments shall be \$450. The note provides for the payment of a prepayment penalty if the loan is paid prior to maturity. The amount of the penalty shall be a specified percentage of the amount prepaid with such percentage ranging from 5% if paid before the loan's first anniversary and decreasing by 1% per year to 1% if paid before the loan's fifth anniversary. The prepayment penalty will reset as defined above at each five-year anniversary date of the note. The loan agreement contains, among other covenants, restrictions relating to future borrowings, making of advances or loans to other parties, sale, lease or transfer of assets, and the granting of further security interests, except as provided for and as more fully described in the loan agreement. The loan is cross-defaulted and cross-collateralized with any and all other loans made by the lender to the Foundation Supporting Organization.

At June 30, 2021 and 2020, the outstanding principal balance of the mortgage note payable amounted to \$70,255 and \$71,916, respectively.

In October 2016, Fidelity Co-Operative Bank provided financing to the Foundation Supporting Organization in the form of a promissory note, dated October 19, 2016, in the amount of \$118,000. The note is secured by a Negative Pledge Agreement on the real estate property located at 198 Pearl Street in Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

The promissory note has a term of 10 years, maturing on October 21, 2026, and provides for a fixed rate of interest of 4.11% per annum. Commencing on November 21, 2016, the loan requires monthly installments of principal and interest of \$726 based on a 20-year principal amortization until the maturity date, at which time the remaining outstanding principal balance of \$71,599 and any accrued interest thereon is due and payable. The note provides for the prepayment of all or a portion of the amount owed without penalty. The business loan agreement contains, among other covenants, restrictions relating to future borrowings, making of advances or loans to other parties, sale, lease or transfer of assets, and the granting of further security interests, except as provided for and as more fully described in the business loan agreement. The loan is cross-defaulted and cross-collateralized with any and all other loans made by the lender to the Foundation Supporting Organization.

As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, the outstanding principal balance of the loan amounted to \$98,339 and \$102,826, respectively.

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In January 2017, Fidelity Co-Operative Bank provided financing to the Foundation Supporting Organization in the form of a promissory note, dated January 13, 2017, in the amount of \$220,000. The note is secured by a Negative Pledge Agreement on the properties located at 9 Clinton Street and 85-87 Pearl Street in Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

The promissory note has a term of 10 years, maturing on January 13, 2027, and provides for a fixed rate of interest of 4.76% per annum. Commencing on February 13, 2017, the loan requires monthly installments of principal and interest of \$1,431 based on a 20-year principal amortization until the maturity date, at which time the remaining outstanding principal balance of \$136,868 and any accrued interest thereon is due and payable. The note provides for the payment of a prepayment penalty if the loan is paid prior to maturity. The amount of the penalty shall be a specified percentage of the amount prepaid with such percentage ranging from 5% if paid before the loan's first anniversary and decreasing by 1% per year to 1% if paid before the loan's fifth anniversary. The prepayment penalty will reset as defined above at each five-year anniversary date of the note. The loan agreement contains, among other covenants, restrictions relating to future borrowings, making of advances or loans to other parties, sale, lease or transfer of assets, and the granting of further security interests, except as provided for and as more fully described in the loan agreement. The loan is cross-defaulted and cross collateralized with any and all other loans made by the lender to the Foundation Supporting Organization.

As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, the outstanding principal balance of the loan amounted to \$187,181 and \$195,137, respectively.

In November 2016, Enterprise Bank and Trust Company provided financing to the Foundation Supporting Organization in the form of a promissory note, dated November 4, 2016, in the amount of \$280,000. The note is secured by a first mortgage interest in the property and an assignment of rents on the property located at 689-717 Main Street in Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

The promissory note has a term of 10 years, maturing on November 4, 2026, and thereafter is payable on demand. The note provides for a fixed rate of interest of 4.33% per annum for the first ten years of the loan term. Thereafter, the interest rate will be adjusted at 10-year intervals to the Daily High Federal Home Loan Bank Boston Classic Advance Ten Year Regular Rate plus 1.95% per annum. Commencing on January 1, 2017, the loan requires monthly installments of principal and interest of \$1,401 based on a 30-year principal amortization schedule. If the note is prepaid in whole or in part during the first 117 months of each fixed rate period for the purpose of refinancing the note with another financial institution, the note provides for a prepayment penalty equal to 3% of any principal reduction. Except for the forgoing, the note may be prepaid in whole or in part without penalty. The loan is cross-defaulted and cross-collateralized with any and all other loans made by the lender to the Foundation Supporting Organization.

As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, the outstanding principal balance of the loan amounted to \$257,596 and \$262,969, respectively.

In September 2017, Webster First Federal Credit Union provided financing to the Foundation Supporting Organization in the form of a commercial note, dated September 22, 2017, in the amount of \$250,000. The note is secured by a first mortgage interest in the real estate properties located at 66 and 0 Day Street and 721-725 Main Street, Fitchburg, Massachusetts, and an assignment of leases and rents on the properties. The note has a term of 15 years, maturing on October 1, 2032, and provides for a fixed rate of interest of 3.75% per annum for the first 10 years of the loan term. Thereafter, the interest rate will be adjusted to the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston Five Year Classic Rate plus 1.5% per annum for the remaining five years of the loan term, but no less than a rate



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of 3.75% per annum. Commencing on November 1, 2017, the loan requires monthly installments of principal and interest of \$1,825 based on a 15-year principal amortization schedule with a final payment of all unpaid principal and accrued interest thereon due at maturity. The note may be prepaid in whole or in part at any time without penalty.

As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, the outstanding principal balance of the loan amounted to \$201,340 and \$215,293, respectively.

The Foundation Supporting Organization has a note payable in the original amount of \$680,000, dated April 26, 2007, with Enterprise Bank and Trust Company. The note is secured by investments with an equivalent fair value of approximately \$2,855,000 and \$2,301,000 at June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively. In addition, payment and performance of the Foundation Supporting Organization's obligations under the loan agreement have been guaranteed by the Foundation.

The promissory note has a term of 30 years, expiring on May 5, 2037, and provides for a fixed rate of interest of 6% per annum for the first five years of the loan term. Thereafter, the interest rate will be adjusted at five-year intervals (April 26, 2012, 2017, 2022, 2027 and 2032) to the Federal Home Loan Bank Boston Classic Advance Five-Year Rate plus 1.15% per annum. The rate was adjusted to 2.62% per annum on April 26, 2012 pursuant to the provisions of the loan agreement. The loan required monthly installments of principal and interest of \$4,122 through May 7, 2012 and \$2,875 until April 26, 2017. The interest rate was adjusted to 3.49% per annum on April 26, 2017 pursuant to the provisions of the loan agreement. Commencing thereafter, the monthly installments of principal and interest are \$3,115 until the next five-year interval adjustment date of April 26, 2022. The note may be prepaid at any time, in whole or in part, without premium or penalty.

At June 30, 2021 and 2020, the outstanding principal balance of this note payable amounted to \$453,794 and \$474,685, respectively.

In November 2018, Enterprise Bank and Trust Company provided financing to the Foundation Supporting Organization in the form of a promissory note, dated November 5, 2018, in the amount of \$148,000. The note is secured by a first mortgage interest in and an assignment of leases and rents on a real estate property located at 70-78 North Street in Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

The promissory note has a term of 20 years, maturing on November 5, 2038. The note provides for a fixed rate of interest of 5% per annum for the first ten years of the loan term. Thereafter, the interest rate will be adjusted at five-year intervals to the Daily High Federal Home Loan Bank Boston Classic Advance Five Year Regular Rate plus 1.95% per annum. The loan will have a minimum floor rate of 5%. Commencing on January 1, 2019, the loan requires monthly installments of principal and interest of \$983 based on a 20-year principal amortization schedule. If the note is prepaid in whole or in part during the term of the loan for the purpose of refinancing the loan with another financial institution, the loan provides for a prepayment penalty equal to 3% of any principal reduction. Except for the forgoing, the note may be paid in whole or in part without penalty. The loan is cross-defaulted and cross-collateralized with any and all other loans made by the lender to the Foundation Supporting Organization.

As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, the outstanding principal balance of the loan amounted to \$136,612 and \$141,347, respectively.

In June 2019, Hometown Bank provided financing to the Foundation Supporting Organization in the form of a commercial note, dated June 18, 2019, in the amount of \$312,000. The note is secured by a

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first mortgage interest in the property and a collateral assignment of rents and leases on the real estate property located at 164 Highland Avenue in Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

The commercial note has a term of 10 years, maturing on June 18, 2029, and provides for a fixed rate of interest of 4.60% per annum for the first five years of the loan term. Thereafter, the interest rate will be adjusted at five-year intervals (June 18, 2024) to the Federal Home Loan Bank Boston Classic Advance Five Year Rate plus 1.75% per annum. Commencing on July 18, 2019, the loan requires monthly installments of principal and interest of \$1,752 based on a 25-year principal amortization schedule with a final payment of all unpaid principal and accrued interest thereon due at maturity.

As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, the outstanding principal balance of the loan amounted to \$298,009 and \$305,145, respectively.

In June 2019, Hometown Bank provided financing to the Foundation Supporting Organization in the form of a commercial note, dated June 18, 2019, in the amount of \$138,400. The note is secured by a first mortgage interest in the property and a collateral assignment of rents and leases on the real estate property located at 174 Highland Avenue in Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

The commercial note has a term of 10 years, maturing on June 18, 2029, and provides for a fixed rate of interest of 4.60% per annum for the first five years of the loan term. Thereafter, the interest rate will be adjusted at five year intervals (June 18, 2024) to the Federal Home Loan Bank Boston Classic Advance Five Year Rate plus 1.75% per annum. Commencing on July 18, 2019, the loan requires monthly installments of principal and interest of \$777 based on a 25-year principal amortization schedule with a final payment of all unpaid principal and accrued interest thereon due at maturity.

As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, the outstanding principal balance of the loan amounted to \$132,193 and \$135,359, respectively.

In April 2019, Fitchburg Historical Society provided financing to the Foundation Supporting Organization in the form of a promissory note, dated April 4, 2019, in the amount of \$90,000. The note is secured by a first mortgage interest in the property and a collateral assignment of rents and leases on the real estate property located at 0 Main Street in Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

The commercial note has a term of five years, maturing on April 1, 2024, and provides for a fixed rate of interest of 5.00% per annum. Commencing on May 1, 2019, the loan requires monthly installments of principal and interest of \$1,694 based on a 5-year principal amortization schedule with a final payment of all unpaid principal and accrued interest thereon due at maturity.

As of June 30, 2021 and 2020, the outstanding principal balance of the loan amounted to \$53,738 and \$70,962, respectively.

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Principal funding payments and estimated interest due to maturity consist of the following:

Year ending June 30:	Principal	Interest (1)	Total
2022	\$ 225,884	\$ 176,445	\$ 402,329
2023	235,356	166,971	402,327
2024	241,536	157,396	398,932
2025	234,502	147,443	381,945
2026	615,144	186,165	801,309
2027-2031	1,900,160	308,671	2,208,831
2032-2036	881,211	82,747	963,958
2037-2041	60,300	2,409	62,709
Total	<u>\$ 4,394,093</u>	<u>\$ 1,228,247</u>	<u>\$ 5,622,340</u>

(1) The interest rates in effect at June 30, 2021 on the first mortgage notes payable and the note payable - bank were used to calculate the estimated interest on these debt obligations.

**Note 15 - FSU Foundation lines of credit**

On August 23, 2017, the Foundation renewed, under substantially the same terms, its existing demand revolving working capital line of credit agreement with Workers' Credit Union which permits the Foundation to borrow up to \$250,000. Pursuant to the provisions of the line of credit agreement, maximum advances under the line are limited to 70% of the pledged investment collateral unless otherwise approved by the lender. The renewed line of credit provided for interest at 5.25% through September 1, 2017 and, thereafter, at The Wall Street Journal Prime Rate plus 1%. The interest rate charged to the Foundation may not exceed a rate of 18%. On January 31, 2019, the line of credit agreement was modified to change the interest rate to The Wall Street Journal Prime Rate plus 0%. At June 30, 2021 and 2020, the effective interest rate was 3.00% per annum. In fiscal 2021, \$250,000 was borrowed on the line of credit to assist with short-time cash flow in purchasing a property abutting the University. The amount was repaid in full in January 2021. Accordingly, as of June 30, 2021 and 2020, there was no outstanding liability under the line of credit.

Borrowings under the line are secured by investments with an equivalent fair value of approximately \$12,544,000 and \$9,916,000, respectively, at June 30, 2021 and 2020. The line is also collateralized by all funds held by the lender. At June 30, 2021, the Foundation has total cash balances of approximately \$59,000 held by the lender. The Foundation may prepay outstanding revolving loans under the agreement in whole or in part without premium or penalty. The line of credit agreement expires on March 25, 2022.

On August 18, 2016, the Foundation Supporting Organization entered into a demand unsecured revolving line of credit agreement with Rollstone Bank and Trust which permits the Foundation Supporting Organization to borrow up to \$250,000. The line of credit provides for interest at The Wall Street Journal Prime Rate less .25% (effective rates of 3.0% at June 30, 2021 and 3.25% at June 30, 2020). The line of credit agreement expired on August 18, 2017. The line of credit was extended through November 30, 2017, and again through November 30, 2018, under the same terms and conditions of the previous agreement. On November 30, 2018, the line of credit was renewed through November 30, 2020 and again through November 30, 2021. The Foundation Supporting Organization may prepay outstanding revolving loans under the agreement in whole or in part at any time without premium or penalty. The line of credit agreement contains, among other covenants, the maintenance of a debt service coverage ratio, as defined, of at least 1.00 to 1. In addition, the agreement provides that

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the line of credit be brought to a zero balance for 30 consecutive days annually during the term of the agreement. As of June 30, 2021, the Foundation Supporting Organization had no amounts outstanding on this line of credit. For the year ended June 30, 2020, the Foundation Supporting Organization made payments of \$250,000 under the line of credit agreement. The balance outstanding as of June 30, 2021 and 2020 was \$0 and \$250,000, respectively.

**Note 16 - Long-term liabilities**

Long-term liability activity of the University for the year ended June 30, 2021 included the following:

	Totals June 30, 2020	Additions	Reductions	Totals June 30, 2021	
				Ending balance	Current portion
Interagency payables	\$ 57,940,105	\$ -	\$ 2,917,647	\$ 55,022,458	\$ 2,523,772
Total	57,940,105	-	2,917,647	55,022,458	2,523,772
Other liabilities:					
Capital lease obligation	390,363	-	259,068	131,295	131,295
Workers' compensation	478,124	714,532	104,231	1,088,425	131,181
Compensated absences	5,741,743	3,204,081	3,584,425	5,361,399	3,243,931
Loan payable - federal financial assistance	1,354,371	35,914	235,493	1,154,792	-
Net pension liability	12,763,415	7,327,738	-	20,091,153	-
Net OPEB liability	24,061,207	1,791,398	-	25,852,605	-
Total other liabilities	44,789,223	13,073,663	4,183,217	53,679,669	3,506,407
Long-term obligations	\$ 102,729,328	\$ 13,073,663	\$ 7,100,864	\$ 108,702,127	\$ 6,030,179

Long-term liability activity of the University for the year ended June 30, 2020 included the following:

	Totals June 30, 2019	Additions	Reductions	Totals June 30, 2020	
				Ending balance	Current portion
Interagency payables	\$ 61,955,383	\$ -	\$ 4,015,278	\$ 57,940,105	\$ 4,038,987
Total	61,955,383	-	4,015,278	57,940,105	4,038,987
Other liabilities:					
Capital lease obligation	644,803	-	254,440	390,363	259,038
Workers' compensation	590,806	16,114	128,796	478,124	104,231
Compensated absences	5,505,350	3,574,035	3,337,642	5,741,743	3,584,425
Loan payable - federal financial assistance	1,871,966	28,884	546,479	1,354,371	-
Net pension liability	12,484,412	279,003	-	12,763,415	-
Net OPEB liability	27,318,264	-	3,257,057	24,061,207	-
Total other liabilities	48,415,601	3,898,036	7,524,414	44,789,223	3,947,694
Long-term obligations	\$ 110,370,984	\$ 3,898,036	\$ 11,539,692	\$ 102,729,328	\$ 7,986,681

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Long-term liability activity of FSU Foundation for the year ended June 30, 2021 included the following:

	Totals June 30, 2020	Additions	Reductions	Totals June 30, 2021	
				Ending balance	Current portion
First mortgage notes payable	\$ 3,324,302	\$ 1,559,169	\$ 963,679	\$ 3,919,792	\$ 204,207
Notes payable - bank	474,686	-	20,892	453,794	21,677
Long-term obligations	<u>\$ 3,798,988</u>	<u>\$ 1,559,169</u>	<u>\$ 984,571</u>	<u>\$ 4,373,586</u>	<u>\$ 225,884</u>

Long-term liability activity of FSU Foundation for the year ended June 30, 2020 included the following:

	Totals June 30, 2019	Additions	Reductions	Totals June 30, 2020	
				Ending balance	Current portion
First mortgage notes payable	\$ 3,545,519	-	\$ 221,217	\$ 3,324,302	\$ 233,256
Notes payable - bank	494,807	-	20,121	474,686	20,924
Long-term obligations	<u>\$ 4,040,326</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>\$ 241,338</u>	<u>\$ 3,798,988</u>	<u>\$ 254,180</u>

**Note 17 - Net position**

Unrestricted net position is comprised of net position that is not subject to externally imposed stipulations; however, they may be subject to internal restrictions. For example, unrestricted net position may be designated for specific purposes by action of management or the Board of Trustees or may otherwise be limited by contractual agreements with outside parties. Certain unrestricted net position is internally designated for academic and research programs and initiatives, and graduate and continuing education programs. Designated unrestricted net position was \$22,004,241 and \$16,866,925 at June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively. Undesignated unrestricted net position was \$(28,534,838) and \$(28,325,313) at June 30, 2021 and 2020, respectively.

At June 30, 2021 and 2020, the net investment in capital assets amount of \$129,112,613 and \$125,001,606, respectively, includes the effect of deferring the recognition of revenue from the installment payments associated with the dining facilities service concession arrangement. At June 30, 2021 and 2020, \$739,306 and \$985,740, respectively, of the balance of the deferred inflow of resources has been included, as a reduction, in the calculation of net investment in capital assets. This amount will be recognized as revenue and increase the net investment in capital assets net position over the remaining term of the arrangement.

**Note 18 - Net position restricted by enabling legislation**

Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc.'s statements of net position as of June 30, 2021 and 2020 reflect a restricted net position of \$25,906,609 and \$20,972,243, respectively. Of these amounts, \$2,357,931 for each year, are restricted by enabling legislation for the State Matching Funds Program.

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**Note 19 - Operating expenses**

The University's operating expenses for the years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020, on a natural classification basis, are comprised of the following:

	2021	2020
Salaries		
Faculty	\$ 24,429,739	\$ 25,440,450
Exempt wages	4,260,161	4,698,921
Non-exempt wages	20,526,788	21,363,362
Benefits	20,531,979	17,961,852
Scholarships	4,683,734	5,616,414
Utilities	4,384,739	4,301,064
Supplies and other services	24,724,987	28,206,176
Depreciation	11,447,580	11,032,465
Bad debt expense	103,825	176,593
	\$ 115,093,532	\$ 118,797,297

**Note 20 - State controlled accounts**

Certain significant costs and benefits associated with the operations of the University are appropriated, expended, controlled, and reported by the Commonwealth through non-University line items in the Commonwealth's budget. Under generally accepted accounting principles, such transactions must be recorded in the financial statements of the University. These transactions include payments by the Commonwealth for the employer's share of funding the Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement System and for the employer's share of health care premiums.

The estimated amounts of funding attributable for the Commonwealth's retirement system contribution and the employer's share of health care premiums for the years ended June 30, 2021, 2020, and 2019 were as follows (see State appropriations under Note 24):

	2021	2020	2019
Commonwealth's retirement system contributions	\$ 5,416,674	\$ 5,021,593	\$ 4,427,126
Employers share of health care premium	\$ 7,110,892	\$ 6,615,645	\$ 7,169,153

**Note 21 - Retirement plan**

Substantially all of the University's full-time employees are covered by the Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement System ("MSERS"). MSERS, a public employee retirement system ("PERS"), is a cost-sharing multi-employer defined benefit plan that is administered by the Massachusetts State Retirement Board and covers substantially all non-student employees. The Commonwealth does not issue separately audited financial statements for the plan. The financial position and results of operations of the plan are incorporated into the Commonwealth's financial statements, a copy of which

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may be obtained from the Office of the State Comptroller, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, One Ashburton Place, Room 901, Boston, MA 02108.

MSERS provides retirement, disability, survivor and death benefits to members and their beneficiaries. Massachusetts General Laws ("MGL") establishes uniform benefit and contribution requirements for all contributory PERS. These requirements provide for superannuation retirement allowance benefits up to a maximum of 80% of a member's highest three-year average annual rate of regular compensation. For employees hired after April 1, 2012, retirement allowances are calculated on the basis of the last five years or any five consecutive years, whichever is greater in terms of compensation. Benefit payments are based upon a member's age, length of creditable service, and group creditable service, and group classification. The authority for amending these provisions rests with the Legislature.

Members become vested after 10 years of creditable service. A superannuation retirement allowance may be received upon the completion of 20 years of creditable service or upon reaching the age of 55 with 10 years of service. Normal retirement for most employees occurs at age 65; for certain hazardous duty and public safety positions, normal retirement is at age 55. Most employees who joined the system after April 1, 2012 cannot retire prior to age 60.

The MSERS' funding policies have been established by Chapter 32 of the MGL. The Legislature has the authority to amend these policies. The annuity portion of the MSERS retirement allowance is funded by employees, who contribute a percentage of their regular compensation. Costs of administering the plan are funded out of plan assets.

Member contributions for MSERS vary depending on the most recent date of membership:

<u>Hire date</u>	<u>% of compensation</u>
Prior to 1975	5% of regular compensation
1975 to 1983	7% of regular compensation
1984 to June 30, 1996	8% of regular compensation
July 1, 1996 to present	9% of regular compensation
1979 to present	An additional 2% of regular compensation in excess of \$30,000

In addition, members of Group 1 who join the system on or after April 2, 2012 will have their withholding rate reduced to 6% after achieving 30 years of creditable service.

The University is not required to contribute from its appropriation allocation or other University funds to MSERS for employees compensated from State appropriations. For University employees covered by MSERS but compensated from a trust fund or other source, the University is required to contribute an amount determined as a percentage of compensation in accordance with a fringe benefit rate established by the State. The total amount of current funding by the State related to the University's employees during 2021, 2020, and 2019 was \$5,416,674, \$5,021,593, and \$4,427,126, respectively. The total amount of funding by the University related to the University's employees compensated from a trust fund or other source during 2021, 2020, and 2019 was \$913,619, \$1,265,410, and \$868,517, respectively. Annual covered payroll was approximately 58%, 81%, and 81% of annual total payroll for the University in 2021, 2020, and 2019, respectively.

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At June 30, 2021 and 2020, the University reported a liability of \$20,091,153 and \$12,763,415, respectively, for its proportionate share of the net pension liability. The net pension liability was measured as of June 30, 2020 and 2019, respectively, and the State's total pension liability used to calculate the net pension liability was determined by an actuarial valuation as of January 1, 2019 and 2018. The University's proportion of the net pension liability was based on an effective contribution methodology, which allocates total contributions amongst the employers in a consistent manner based on an employer's share of total covered payroll. At June 30, 2021, the University's proportion was 0.1171%, which was an increase of 0.0299% from its proportion measured as of June 30, 2020. At June 30, 2020, the University's proportion was 0.0872%, which was an increase of 0.0072% from its proportion measured as of June 30, 2019.

For the years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020, the University recognized pension expense of \$8,771,712 and \$7,268,364, respectively.

At June 30, 2021, the University reported deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions from the following sources:

	Deferred outflows of resources	Deferred inflows of resources
Changes of assumptions	\$ 1,139,139	\$ -
Net difference between projected and actual earnings on pension plan investments	1,104,419	-
Difference between expected and actual experience	639,271	130,005
Changes in proportion due to internal allocation	3,574,472	600,838
Changes in proportion from Commonwealth	15,173	48,970
University contributions subsequent to the measurement date	913,619	-
Total	\$ 7,386,093	\$ 779,813

The \$913,619 reported as deferred outflows of resources related to pensions resulting from University contributions subsequent to the measurement date will be recognized as a reduction of the net pension liability in the year ending June 30, 2022. Other amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions will be recognized in pension expense as follows:

Year ending June 30:

2022	\$	1,122,959
2023		1,647,940
2024		1,718,212
2025		1,131,078
2026		72,472
Total	\$	5,692,661



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At June 30, 2020, the University reported deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions from the following sources:

	Deferred outflows of resources	Deferred inflows of resources
Changes of assumptions	\$ 946,080	\$ -
Net difference between projected and actual earnings on pension plan investments	-	190,382
Difference between expected and actual experience	423,876	165,995
Changes in proportion due to internal allocation	604,115	814,319
Changes in proportion from Commonwealth	22,534	648
University contributions subsequent to the measurement date	1,265,411	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,262,016</b>	<b>\$ 1,171,344</b>

The total pension liability for the June 30, 2020 measurement date was determined by an actuarial valuation as of January 1, 2019 rolled forward to June 30, 2020. This valuation used the following assumptions:

1. (a) 7.15% investment rate of return (7.25% investment rate of return for the year ended June 30, 2019), (b) 3.50% interest rate credited to the annuity savings fund and (c) 3.00% cost of living increase per year on the first \$13,000 of allowance each year.
2. Salary increases are based on analyses of past experience but range from 4.00% to 9.00% depending on group and length of service.
3. Mortality rates were as follows:
  - (i) Pre-retirement - reflects RP-2014 Blue Collar Employees Table projected generationally with Scale MP-2016, set forward 1 year for females.
  - (ii) Post-retirement - reflects RP-2014 Blue Collar Healthy Annuitant Table projected generationally with Scale MP-2016, set forward 1 year for females.
  - (iii) Disability - the mortality rate reflects RP-2014 Blue Collar Healthy Annuitant Table projected generationally with Scale MP-2016, set forward 1 year.
4. Experience studies were performed as follows:
  - (i) Dated February 27, 2014 and encompasses the period January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2011, updated to reflect actual experience from 2012 through 2016 for post-retirement mortality.

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Investment assets of MSERS are with the Pension Reserves Investment Trust ("PRIT") Fund. The long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments was determined using a building-block method in which best-estimate ranges of expected future rates of return are developed for each major asset class. These ranges are combined to produce the long-term expected rate of return by weighting the expected future rates of return by the target asset allocation percentage. Best estimates of geometric rates of return for each major asset class included in the PRIT Fund's target asset allocation as of June 30, 2020 and 2019 are summarized in the following table:

Asset class	Target allocation		Long-term expected real rate of return	
	2020	2019	2020	2019
Global equity	39.00%	39.00%	4.80%	4.90%
Core fixed income	15.00%	15.00%	0.70%	1.30%
Private equity	13.00%	13.00%	8.20%	8.20%
Portfolio completion strategies	11.00%	11.00%	3.20%	3.90%
Real estate	10.00%	10.00%	3.50%	3.60%
Value added fixed income	8.00%	8.00%	4.20%	4.70%
Timberland/natural resources	4.00%	4.00%	4.10%	4.10%
Total	100.00%	100.00%		

The discount rate used to measure the total pension liability for the measurement years ended June 30, 2020 and 2019 was 7.15% and 7.25%, respectively. The projection of cash flows used to determine the discount rate assumed that plan member contributions will be made at the current contribution rates and the University's contributions will be made at rates equal to the difference between actuarially determined contribution rates and the member rates. Based on those assumptions, the net position was projected to be available to make all projected future benefit payments of current plan members. Therefore, the long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments was applied to all periods of projected benefit payments to determine the total pension liability.

The following presents the University's proportionate share of the net pension liability calculated using the discount rates of 7.15% and 7.25%, respectively, for the measurement years ended June 30, 2020 and 2019, as well as what the University's proportionate share of the net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1-percentage-point lower (6.15%, 2020, and 6.25%, 2019) or 1-percentage-point higher (8.15%, 2020, and 8.25%, 2019) than the current rates:

Measurement year ended	1% decrease	Discount rate	1% increase
June 30, 2020	\$ 26,471,563	\$ 20,091,153	\$ 14,847,267
June 30, 2019	\$ 16,988,523	\$ 12,763,415	\$ 9,153,268

Detailed information about the pension plan's fiduciary net position is available in the Commonwealth's financial statements.

**Note 22 - Fringe benefits for current employees and post-employment obligations - pension and non-pension**

The University participates in the Commonwealth's Fringe Benefit programs, including active employee and post - employment health insurance, unemployment, pension, and workers' compensation benefits.

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Health insurance and pension costs for active employees and retirees are paid through a fringe benefit rate charged to the University by the Commonwealth.

On-behalf payments of fringe benefits for benefited employees on the Commonwealth's payroll are recognized as revenues and expenses in the University's financial statements in each of the fiscal years presented.

**Post-employment other than pensions**

In addition to providing pension benefits, under Chapter 32A of the Massachusetts General Laws, the Commonwealth is required to provide certain health care and life insurance benefits for retired employees of the Commonwealth. Substantially all of the Commonwealth's employees may become eligible for these benefits if they reach retirement age while working for the Commonwealth. Eligible retirees are required to contribute a specified percentage of the health care/benefit costs, which are comparable to contributions required from employees.

The Commonwealth administers a single employer defined benefit Postemployment Benefits Other Than Pensions ("OPEB") Plan. Benefits are managed by the Group Insurance Commission ("GIC") and investments are managed by the Pension Reserves Investment Management ("PRIM") Board. The State Retirement Benefits Trust Fund ("SRBT") is set up solely to pay for OPEB benefits and the cost to administer those benefits. Management of the SRBT is vested with a board of trustees, which consists of 7 members. GIC administers benefit payments, while the Trustees are responsible for investment decisions. The SRBT is reported as an OPEB Trust Fund and does not issue a stand-alone audited financial report. The financial position and results of operations of the plan are incorporated in the Commonwealth's financial statements, a copy of which may be obtained from the Office of the State Comptroller, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, One Ashburton Place, Room 901, Boston, MA 02108.

During the fiscal years ended on June 30, 2021 and 2020, the GIC provided health insurance for its members through indemnity, PPO, and HMO plans. The GIC also administered carve-outs for the pharmacy benefit and mental health and substance abuse benefits for certain of its health plans. In addition to health insurance, the GIC sponsors life insurance, long-term disability insurance (for active employees only), dental and vision coverage for employees not covered by collective bargaining, a retiree discount vision plan and retiree dental plan, and finally, a pre-tax health care spending account and dependent care assistance program (for active employees only).

Employer and employee contribution rates are set in Massachusetts General Law. The Commonwealth recognizes its share of the costs on an actuarial basis. As of June 30, 2021 and 2020 and as of the valuation date (January 1, 2020), Commonwealth participants contributed 10% to 20% of premium costs, depending on the date of hire and whether the participant is active, retiree, or survivor status.

At June 30, 2021 and 2020, the University reported a liability of \$25,852,605 and \$24,061,207, respectively, for its proportionate share of the net OPEB liability. The net OPEB liability was measured as of June 30, 2020 and 2019, and the Commonwealth's total OPEB liability used to calculate the net OPEB liability was determined by an actuarial valuation as of January 1, 2020 and 2019. The University's proportion of the net OPEB liability was based on an effective contribution methodology which allocates total actual contributions amongst the employers in a consistent manner based on an employer's share of total covered payroll. At June 30, 2021, the University's proportion was 0.1249%, which was a decrease of 0.0066% from its proportion measured as of June 30, 2020. As of June 30, 2020, the University's proportion was 0.1315%, which was a decrease of 0.0156% from its proportion measured as of June 30, 2019.

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The amount of funding by the University related to benefits other than OPEB for the years ended June 30, 2021, 2020 and 2019 were \$20,531,979, \$17,961,852 and \$17,941,745, respectively, which equaled the required contributions each year charged to it through the Commonwealth's fringe benefit recovery program. The total amount of current funding by the State related to the OPEB portion of fringe benefits for the University's employees during 2021, 2020 and 2019 was \$2,650,879, \$2,392,217 and \$2,922,864, respectively. The total amount of funding by the University related to the OPEB portion of fringe benefits for the University's employees compensated from a trust fund or other source during 2021, 2020 and 2019 was \$528,286, \$655,514 and \$633,318, respectively.

For the years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020, the University recognized OPEB expense of \$4,218,809 and \$4,523,332, respectively.

At June 30, 2021, the University reported deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to OPEB from the following sources:

	Deferred outflows of resources	Deferred inflows of resources
Changes of assumptions	\$ 2,129,005	\$ 2,498,565
Net differences between projected and actual investment earnings on OPEB plan investments	74,750	-
Difference between expected and actual experience	713,482	638,130
Changes in proportion due to internal allocation	2,365,871	3,045,075
Changes in proportion from Commonwealth	39,180	87,799
University contributions subsequent to the measurement date	479,752	-
Total	\$ 5,802,040	\$ 6,269,569

The \$479,752 reported as deferred outflows of resources related to OPEB resulting from University contributions subsequent to the measurement date will be recognized as a reduction of the net OPEB liability in the year ending June 30, 2022. Other amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources as a result of the University's requirement to contribute to the Plan will be recognized in expense as follows:

Year ending June 30:	
2022	\$ (1,793,909)
2023	(1,273,024)
2024	495,024
2025	604,549
2026	1,020,079
Total	\$ (947,281)

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At June 30, 2020, the University reported deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to OPEB from the following sources:

	Deferred outflows of resources	Deferred inflows of resources
Changes of assumptions	\$ 18,514	\$ 3,618,187
Net differences between projected and actual investment earnings on OPEB plan investments	-	11,066
Difference between expected and actual experience	964,967	30,812
Changes in proportion due to internal allocation	3,316,789	2,573,670
Changes in proportion from Commonwealth	58,669	-
University contributions subsequent to the measurement date	655,514	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 5,014,453</b>	<b>\$ 6,233,735</b>

The total OPEB liability for the June 30, 2020 measurement date was determined by an actuarial valuation as of January 1, 2020 rolled forward to June 30, 2020. This valuation used the following assumptions:

1. The following annual healthcare cost trend rates: (1) 7.0%, decreasing by 0.5% each year to 5.5% in 2023 and then decreasing 0.25% each year to an ultimate rate of 4.5% in 2026 for medical (7.5%, decreasing by 0.5% each year to an ultimate rate of 5.5% in 2023 for medical for the year ended June 30, 2019) and (2) 4.0% for administration costs (4.5% for the year ended June 30, 2019). Healthcare costs are offset by reimbursements for Employer Group Waiver Plans ("EGWP"), which are assumed to increase 5.0% per year until 2025, then decrease to 4.5% in 2026.
2. The mortality rate was in accordance with RP 2014 Blue Collar Mortality Table projected with scale MP-2016 from the central year, with females set forward one year.
3. Participation rates:
  - (i) 100% of all retirees who currently have health care coverage will continue with the same coverage, except that retirees under age 65 with POS/PPO coverage switch to Indemnity at age 65 and those over age 65 with POS/PPO coverage switch to HMO.
  - (ii) All current retirees, other than those indicated on the census data as not being eligible by Medicare, have Medicare coverage upon attainment of age 65, as do their spouses. All future retirees are assumed to have Medicare coverage upon attainment of age 65.
  - (iii) 85% for both years ended June 30, 2020 and 2019 of current and future contingent eligible participants will elect health care benefits at age 55, or current age if later.

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- (iv) Actives, upon retirement, take coverage, and are assumed to have the following coverage:

	Retirement Age	
	Under 65	Age 65 +
Indemnity	28.0%	96.0%
POS/PPO	60.0%	0.0%
HMO	12.0%	4.0%

Investment assets of the Plan are with the Pension Reserves Investment Trust ("PRIT") Fund. The long-term expected rate of return on OPEB plan investments was determined using a building-block method in which best-estimate ranges of expected future rates of return are developed for each major asset class. These ranges are combined to produce the long-term expected rate of return by weighting the expected future rates of return by the target asset allocation percentage. Best estimates of geometric rates of return for each major asset class included in the PRIT Fund's target asset allocation as of June 30, 2020 and 2019 are summarized in the following table:

Asset class	Target allocation		Long-term expected real rate of return	
	2020	2019	2020	2019
Global equity	39.00%	39.00%	4.80%	4.90%
Core fixed income	15.00%	15.00%	0.70%	1.30%
Private equity	13.00%	13.00%	8.20%	8.20%
Portfolio completion strategies	11.00%	11.00%	3.20%	3.90%
Real estate	10.00%	10.00%	3.50%	3.60%
Value added fixed income	8.00%	8.00%	4.20%	4.70%
Timberland/natural resources	4.00%	4.00%	4.10%	4.10%
Total	100.00%	100.00%		

The discount rates used to measure the OPEB liability as of June 30, 2020 and 2019 were 2.28% and 3.63%, respectively. These rates were based on a blend of the Bond Buyer Index rates of 2.21% and 3.51%, respectively, as of the measurement dates June 30, 2020 and 2019, respectively, and the expected rates of return on plan investments of 7.15% and 7.25%, respectively. The plan's fiduciary net position was not projected to be available to make all projected future benefit payments for current plan members. The projected "depletion date" when projected benefits are not covered by projected assets is 2028 (2029 for the year ended June 30, 2019). Therefore, the long-term expected rate of return on plan investments was not applied to all periods of projected benefit payments to determine the total OPEB liability as of June 30, 2020 and 2019.

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The following presents the University's proportionate share of the net OPEB liability calculated using the discount rate as well as what the University's proportionate share of the net OPEB liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1-percentage-point lower or 1-percentage-point higher than the current rate:

<u>Measurement year ended</u>	<u>1% decrease</u>	<u>Discount rate</u>	<u>1% increase</u>
June 30, 2020 (a)	\$ 31,067,852	\$ 25,852,605	\$ 21,732,290
June 30, 2019 (b)	28,721,305	24,061,207	20,376,695

(a) The discount rates as of June 30, 2020 are as follows: 2.28% (current); 1.28% (1% decrease) and 3.28% (1% increase).

(b) The discount rates as of June 30, 2019 are as follows: 3.63% (current); 2.63% (1% decrease) and 4.63% (1% increase).

The following presents the University's proportionate share of the net OPEB liability calculated using the current healthcare cost trend rate as well as what the University's proportionate share of the net OPEB liability would be if it were calculated using a healthcare cost trend rate that is 1-percentage-point lower or 1-percentage-point higher than the current rate:

<u>Measurement year ended</u>	<u>1% decrease (b)</u>	<u>Healthcare cost trend rates (a)</u>	<u>1% increase (c)</u>
June 30, 2020	\$ 21,075,698	\$ 25,852,605	\$ 32,302,227
June 30, 2019	19,819,472	24,061,207	29,644,526

(a) The current healthcare cost trend rates are as follows: 7.15% (June 30, 2020) and 7.5% (June 30, 2019) for medical, and 5.0% per year until 2025, then decrease to 4.0% in 2026 (June 30, 2020) and 4.5% (June 30, 2019) for Employer Group Waiver Plan and 4.0% (June 30, 2020) and 4.5% (June 30, 2019) for administration costs.

(b) The healthcare cost trend rates after a 1% decrease are as follows: 6.15% (June 30, 2020) and 6.5% (June 30, 2019) for medical, 4.0% per year until 2025, then decrease to 3.0% in 2026 (June 30, 2020) and 3.5% (June 30, 2019) for Employer Group Waiver Plan and 3.0% (June 30, 2020) and 3.5% (June 30, 2019) for administration costs.

(c) The healthcare cost trend rates after a 1% increase are as follows: 8.15% (June 30, 2020) and 8.5% (June 30, 2019) for medical, 6.0% per year until 2025, then decrease to 5.0% in 2026 (June 30, 2020) and 5.5% (June 30, 2019) for Employer Group Waiver Plan and 5.0% (June 30, 2020) and 5.5% (June 30, 2019) for administration costs.

Detailed information about the OPEB plan's changes in net OPEB liability, fiduciary net position, and employees covered by benefit terms separately identified by: a) Inactive employees currently receiving benefit payments, b) Inactive employees entitled to but not yet receiving benefit payments, and c) Active employees is available in the Commonwealth's financial statements.

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**Note 23 - Lease and license agreements**

As disclosed in Note 14, the Foundation Supporting Organization entered into a long-term operating lease agreement with DCAMM on behalf of the University. The lease commenced on August 16, 2006 and expired on August 16, 2016. The lease provided for base rent of \$165,000 per year, payable in monthly installments of \$13,750, for the entire lease term. The University was also responsible for the payment of normal operating, maintenance and repair costs associated with its use of the property. The lease continued in effect, after its expiration, under the same terms and conditions until March 9, 2017 when the Foundation Supporting Organization signed a new 10-year lease with the same terms and conditions as the previous agreement. The new lease agreement became effective as of August 16, 2016. For the years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020, rental income amounted to \$165,000 in each year. The rental income is reflected in revenue from sales and services of educational departments in the accompanying statements of revenues, expenses and changes in net position. The corresponding rent expense of the University is reflected in operations and maintenance of plant.

The following is a schedule of future minimum rental income under the operating lease agreement at June 30, 2021:

<u>Year ending June 30,</u>	<u>Amount</u>
2022	\$ 165,000
2023	165,000
2024	165,000
2025	165,000
2026	165,000
Later years	<u>20,625</u>
	<u><u>\$ 845,625</u></u>

On August 6, 2008, the Foundation Supporting Organization entered into a 10-year operating lease agreement with an unrelated third party for 2,350 square feet of office space located in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. The lease commenced on November 1, 2008 and shall expire on October 31, 2018. The space is being used by Fitchburg State University as office and classroom space for its Center for Professional Studies. The lease provided for a base annual rent of \$17,625 for each of the first three years of the lease term, payable in monthly installments of \$1,469. Beginning with the fourth year of the lease there will be a 7.5% increase at the commencement of each three-year period of the lease term, including the continuous period of any extensions thereof. On November 1, 2011, the base annual rent increased to \$18,947 for the next three-year period of the lease term payable in monthly installments of \$1,579. On July 1, 2014, the Foundation Supporting Organization entered into an amended operating lease agreement with the unrelated third party adding 20 parking spaces for use in conjunction with the above mentioned office space and extending the lease term through June 30, 2019. The amended lease provides for a base annual rent of \$28,495 for each of the first three years of the lease term, payable biannually in installments of \$14,247. On July 1, 2017, the annual rent on the lease shall increase by 7.5% to \$30,632 (biannual installments of \$15,316). On July 1, 2019, the Foundation Supporting Organization extended the lease agreement for another three year term which provides for a base annual rent of \$30,632 and will increase 2% annually. The Foundation Supporting Organization may extend the initial term of the lease, under the same terms and conditions, for successive periods of one year provided it is not then in default of the lease terms and it gives proper notice. The Foundation Supporting Organization may cancel the lease at any time with the payment of two months' base rent



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as a termination charge. The Foundation Supporting Organization is also responsible for the payment of normal operating, maintenance and repair costs associated with the use of the property. For the years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020, rent expense amounted to \$30,632 in each year.

The future minimum rental payments under this operating lease agreement at June 30, 2021 are \$31,870 and \$32,507 for both fiscal years ending June 30, 2022 and 2023.

On February 1, 2013, the Foundation Supporting Organization entered into a 10-year operating lease agreement with the above noted unrelated third party for an additional 1,424 square feet of office space located in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. The lease commenced on February 1, 2013 and shall expire on January 31, 2023. The space is being used by Fitchburg State University for additional office and classroom space. The lease provides for a base annual rent of \$5,696 payable in monthly installments of \$475. Effective July 1, 2017, the lease agreement was amended to extend the term of the lease until June 30, 2023 and modify the lease payment provisions to be in biannual installments of \$2,848. The Foundation Supporting Organization may extend the initial term of the lease, under the same terms and conditions, for successive periods of one year, provided it is not then in default of the lease terms and it gives proper notice. The Foundation Supporting Organization may cancel the lease at any time after February 1, 2014 with the payment of two months base rent as a termination charge. The Foundation Supporting Organization is also responsible for the payment of normal operating, maintenance and repair costs associated with the use of the property. For the years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020, rent expense amounted to \$5,696 in each year.

The following is a schedule of future minimum rental payments under this operating lease agreement at June 30, 2021:

<u>Year ending June 30,</u>	<u>Amount</u>
2022	\$ 5,696
2023	<u>5,696</u>
	<u>\$ 11,392</u>

The Foundation Supporting Organization and the University are parties to License Agreements whereby the Foundation Supporting Organization granted to the University irrevocable and exclusive licenses to occupy, manage, maintain and operate certain property owned by the Foundation Supporting Organization. The License Agreements provide for initial terms of one year and automatic annual renewals thereafter. The License Agreements provide for annual license fees payable, in arrears, in four equal quarterly installments. All costs to operate and maintain the property, including any capital improvements made thereto, shall be borne by the University. The License Agreements may be terminated by either party upon the expiration of the initial term of the agreements and any subsequent renewal term with the giving of proper notice. In addition, the University may terminate the agreements at any time with the giving of proper notice. For the years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020, license fee income for the Foundation Supporting Organization amounted to \$365,337 and \$545,661, respectively. The license fee income is reflected in revenue from sales and services of educational departments in the accompanying statements of revenues, expenses and changes in net position. The corresponding license fee expense of the University is reflected in operations and maintenance of plant.

On June 22, 2018, the Foundation Supporting Organization entered into a three-year operating lease agreement with an unrelated third party to lease a minor portion of a building acquired in fiscal year

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2018. The lease agreement provides for monthly lease payments of \$1,600 commencing on July 1, 2018. The lease agreement was amended effective July 1, 2019 and provided for monthly lease payment of \$1,358. A new five-year lease commenced on July 1, 2021 with a monthly lease payment of \$1,958. For the years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020, rental income amounted to \$22,968 and \$21,255, respectively.

**Note 24 - Management Accounting and Reporting System**

Section 15C of Chapter 15A of the Massachusetts General Laws requires Commonwealth colleges and universities to report activity of campus based funds to the Comptroller of the Commonwealth on the Commonwealth's Statewide Accounting System, Massachusetts Management Accounting and Reporting System ("MMARS"), on the statutory basis of accounting. The statutory basis of accounting is a modified accrual basis of accounting and differs from the information included in these financial statements. The amounts reported on MMARS meet the guidelines of the Comptroller's Guide for Higher Education Audited Financial Statements.

**State appropriations**

The University's State appropriations are comprised of the following for the years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020:

	2021	2020
Gross State appropriations	\$ 44,162,796	\$ 34,644,875
Add: Fringe benefits for benefited employees on the Commonwealth payroll	12,527,566	11,637,238
Less: Day school tuition remitted to the Commonwealth and included in tuition and fee revenue	(468,982)	(875,599)
Net State appropriations	\$ 56,221,380	\$ 45,406,514

\$45,829,701 and \$44,088,228 represent appropriations for maintenance and payroll and other noncapital appropriations during 2021 and 2020, respectively, and \$10,391,679 and \$1,318,286 represent appropriations for capital improvements for 2021 and 2020, respectively. These amounts are presented separately in the accompanying statements of revenues, expenses and changes in net position.

Day school tuition receipts and transfers have been recorded in an agency fund during the year and had no material balance outstanding at June 30, 2021 and 2020.

**Note 25 - Risk management**

The University is exposed to various risks of loss related to torts; theft of, damage to, and destruction of assets; errors and omissions; and natural disasters for which the Commonwealth is self-insured. In addition, the University maintains commercial insurance coverage for certain of those risks. Management believes such coverage is sufficient to preclude any significant uninsured losses for the covered risks. The separate insurance policies maintained by the University consist of Director and Officer's liability, automobile liability, and a foreign package policy. There were no significant reductions

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in insurance coverage from coverage in the prior year. The costs of settled claims have not exceeded policy coverage in any of the past three years.

The University also participates in the Commonwealth's self-insured programs for employee workers' compensation, health care and other insurance. The Commonwealth assesses the costs of workers' compensation and unemployment insurance to the University based on the University's actual experience (see Note 7). The Commonwealth manages workers' compensation as part of its general operations. No separate fund for workers' compensation is provided for in Massachusetts General Laws. The Commonwealth assesses the costs of health care insurance to the University through a fringe benefit rate and the liability for such coverage is borne by the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth's Group Insurance Commission manages health insurance and other benefits for the Commonwealth's active and retired employees (see Note 22).

Massachusetts General Laws limit the risk assumed by the Commonwealth for claims of personal injury or property damages to \$100,000 per occurrence, in most circumstances.

**Note 26 - Commitments and contingencies**

Pending or threatened lawsuits against governmental agencies arise in the ordinary course of operations. In the opinion of the University's administration, the ultimate resolution of any legal actions at this date will not result in a material loss to the University since most of any obligation is expected to be paid from state appropriated funds.

The University receives significant financial assistance from federal and state agencies in the form of grants. Expenditure of funds under these programs require compliance with the grant agreements and are subject to audit by representatives of these federal and state agencies. Any disallowed expenditures resulting from such audits become a liability of the University. In the opinion of management, such liabilities, if any, are not expected to materially affect the financial condition of the University.

The University participates in the Massachusetts College Savings Prepaid Tuition Program. This program allows participants to pay in advance (against a bond) for future tuition at the cost of tuition at the time of the bond purchase, increased by changes in the Consumer Price Index plus 2%. The University is obligated to accept as payment of tuition the amount determined by this program without regard to the standard tuition rate in effect at the time of the individual's enrollment at the University. The effect of this program cannot be determined as it is contingent on future tuition increases and the bond purchasers who attend the University.

The University can perform capital projects that are funded and controlled by another State agency. These projects would be paid from funds appropriated and under the control of DCAMM. The Projects generally consist of renovations and improvements and have been recorded in the respective accounts.

**Fitchburg State University**  
**(a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts)**

**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**June 30, 2021 and 2020**

**Note 27 - McKay Agreement**

The University has an agreement with the City of Fitchburg, whereby the City can use the McKay building to provide elementary education to local residents on a year to year basis. The University receives quarterly payments from the City to reimburse the University for its share of payroll and related operating expenses (the "McKay School expenditures"). Reimbursements received for both years ended June 30, 2021 and 2020 were \$810,487. These reimbursements are included in the Sales and Services of Educational Departments revenue amount and the McKay School expenditures are included in the appropriate categories under Operating Expenses in the accompanying statements of revenues, expenses and changes in net position.

**Note 28 - Civic Center**

In August 2006, the University and the City of Fitchburg entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in which the University would assume responsibility for the operations, management and maintenance of the George R. Wallace, Jr. Civic Center and the Alice G. Wallace Planetarium (collectively, the "Civic Center"). The Civic Center includes two skating rinks and the adjoining planetarium. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts acting by and through DCAMM on behalf of the University entered into a lease agreement for the Civic Center with the City of Fitchburg and the Board of Trustees of the Civic Center. The lease commenced on October 1, 2007 and is for a term of 99 years. The lease provided for an initial nominal rent payment and is otherwise a net lease. Pursuant to the terms of the lease, the University has complete authority, at its sole discretion, to do all such acts and deeds as it deems reasonably necessary to manage, maintain and operate the Civic Center for the permitted uses specified in the lease agreement. The University is responsible for payment, from net revenues generated by its operation of the Civic Center, of all costs associated with the maintenance and operation of the Civic Center, and certain other payments as specified in the lease agreement. DCAMM, at the instruction of the University and with 60 days prior written notice, may terminate the lease in the event that the University, in its sole discretion, determines that continuation of the lease is not in the interest of the University.

During fiscal 2007, the University commenced initial management, maintenance and operations activities at the Civic Center in anticipation of the lease agreement being executed. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Legislature appropriated an aggregate amount of \$2,500,000 for repairs and upgrades to the Civic Center. During fiscal 2008, the University made repairs and upgrades to the Civic Center for an aggregate cost of \$2,477,381. The University engaged the services of a professional management company, Facilities Management Corporation ("FMC"), to assist with management, maintenance and operations activities of the ice-skating rink program at the Civic Center. The initial management contract expired on December 31, 2008.

On February 1, 2009, the Commonwealth acting by and through DCAMM on behalf of the University entered into a sublease agreement with FMC for a term of 25 years commencing on the date of the agreement. The sublease agreement is a net lease and, accordingly, FMC is responsible for all costs associated with the operations, management, and maintenance of the sublease premises as well as repairs and required capital improvements. The sublease premises consist of the facilities and related equipment associated with the operation of a public ice-skating rink program. The planetarium is not part of the sublease premises and it is not currently operational. FMC is also responsible for certain other payments for and on behalf of the University related to obligations in existence at the date the University initially assumed management of the Civic Center. During the term of the sublease agreement, FMC is required to pay the University monthly percentage rent based upon the actual gross

**Fitchburg State University**  
**(a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts)**

**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**June 30, 2021 and 2020**

revenues from its operations, as defined. During each of the first 10 years of the sublease term, no percentage rent is required.

Thereafter, for each of the years 11 through 25, percentage rent at the rate of 1% of actual gross revenues shall be due and payable on a monthly basis. However, in no event shall the aggregate amount of percentage rent paid by FMC during the sublease term be less than \$107,155. For fiscal year 2021 and 2020, the percentage rent incurred by FMC was not material to the financial statements.

The University, officials of the City of Fitchburg, and the Board of Trustees of the Civic Center believe that their collective efforts will return the Civic Center to a vibrant place where the citizenries of the City of Fitchburg and its surrounding cities and towns can enjoy athletic, educational and cultural activities.

**Required Supplementary Information**

**Fitchburg State University**  
(a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts)

**Schedule of the University's Proportionate Share  
of the Net Pension Liability and Schedule of University Contributions  
Year Ended June 30, 2021**

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
University's proportion of the collective net pension liability (asset)	0.1171%	0.0872%	0.0944%	0.0891%	0.0912%	0.0878%	0.0684%
University's proportionate share of the collective net pension liability (asset)	\$ 20,091,153	\$ 12,763,415	\$ 12,484,412	\$ 11,430,648	\$ 12,580,841	\$ 9,995,092	\$ 5,078,817
University's covered payroll	\$ 40,651,993	\$ 41,831,191	\$ 40,564,017	\$ 37,747,018	\$ 37,408,274	\$ 37,167,634	\$ 35,389,121
University's proportionate share of the collective net pension liability (asset) as a percentage of its covered payroll	49.42%	30.51%	30.78%	30.28%	33.63%	26.89%	14.35%
Plan fiduciary net position as a percentage of the total pension liability	62.48%	66.28%	67.91%	67.21%	63.48%	67.87%	76.32%

\* The amounts presented for each fiscal year were determined as of 6/30.

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Contractually required contribution	\$ 6,330,293	\$ 6,287,003	\$ 5,295,643	\$ 4,756,899	\$ 3,977,525	\$ 3,799,572	\$ 3,946,690
Contributions in relation to the contractually required contribution	<u>(6,330,293)</u>	<u>(6,287,003)</u>	<u>(5,295,643)</u>	<u>(4,756,899)</u>	<u>(3,977,525)</u>	<u>(3,799,572)</u>	<u>(2,912,032)</u>
Contribution deficiency (excess)	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 1,034,658</u>
University's covered payroll	\$ 40,651,993	\$ 41,831,191	\$ 40,564,017	\$ 37,747,018	\$ 37,408,274	\$ 37,167,634	\$ 35,389,121
Contributions as a percentage of covered payroll	15.57%	15.03%	13.06%	12.60%	10.63%	10.22%	11.15%

See Independent Auditor's Report on Page 2 and Notes to Required Supplementary Information.

**Fitchburg State University**  
**(a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts)**

**Notes to Required Supplementary Information - Pension**  
**June 30, 2021**

**Note 1 - Changes in Pension Plan Benefit Terms and Assumptions**

**FY2020 Changes in Actuarial Assumptions**

Changes of assumptions:

Changes in the investment rate of return

MSERS changed its discount rate to 7.15% from 7.25%.

**FY2019 Changes in Actuarial Assumptions**

Changes of assumptions:

Changes in the investment rate of return

MSERS changed its discount rate to 7.25% from 7.35%.

**FY2018 Changes in Actuarial Assumptions**

Changes of assumptions:

Changes in the investment rate of return

MSERS changed its discount rate to 7.35% from 7.50%.

Change in mortality

The following mortality assumption changes were made in the January 1, 2018 Actuarial Valuation:

- Disabled members - would reflect the same assumptions as for superannuation retirees, but with an age set forward of one year.

**FY2017 Changes in Actuarial Assumptions**

Changes in benefit terms

Chapter 79 of the Acts of 2014 established an early retirement incentive ("ERI") program for certain employees of the highway division of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation whose positions have been eliminated due to the automation of toll collections. Most members retiring under the ERI program had a date retirement of October 28, 2016. 112 members took the ERI and retired during FY2017. As a result, the total pension liability of MSERS increased by approximately \$10 million as of June 30, 2017.

Changes in assumptions:

Change in mortality

- Pre-retirement - was changed to RP-2014 Blue Collar Employees table projected generationally with Scale MP-2016 set forward 1 year for females from RP-2000 Employees table projected generationally with scale BB and a base year of 2009 (gender distinct).



**Fitchburg State University**  
**(a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts)**

**Notes to Required Supplementary Information - Pension**  
**June 30, 2021**

- Post-retirement - was changed to RP-2014 Blue Collar Healthy Annuitant table projected generationally with Scale MP-2016 set forward 1 year for females from RP-2000 Healthy Annuitant table projected generationally with Scale BB and a base year of 2009 (gender distinct).
- Disabled members - is assumed to be in accordance with the RP-2000 Healthy Annuitant Table projected generationally with Scale BB and a base year of 2015 (gender distinct), and is unchanged from the prior valuation.

**Note 2 - Other information**

This schedule is intended to present 10 years of data. Additional years will be presented when available.

**Fitchburg State University**  
(a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts)

**Schedule of the University's Proportionate Share  
of the Net OPEB Liability and Schedule of University Contributions  
Year Ended June 30, 2021**

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
University's proportion of the collective net OPEB liability (asset)	0.1249%	0.1315%	0.1471%	0.1272%
University's proportionate share of the total OPEB liability (asset)	\$ 27,609,783	\$ 25,861,235	\$ 29,068,920	\$ 23,499,661
Less: University's proportionate share of Plan fiduciary net position	<u>1,757,179</u>	<u>1,800,028</u>	<u>1,750,656</u>	<u>1,266,987</u>
University's proportionate share of the collective net OPEB liability (asset)	\$ 25,852,605	\$ 24,061,207	\$ 27,318,264	\$ 22,232,674
University's covered payroll	\$ 40,651,993	\$ 41,831,191	\$ 40,564,017	\$ 37,747,018
University's proportionate share of the net OPEB liability (asset) as a percentage of its covered payroll	63.59%	57.52%	67.35%	58.90%
Plan fiduciary net position as a percentage of the total OPEB liability	6.40%	6.96%	6.01%	5.39%

\* The amounts presented for each fiscal year were determined as of 6/30.

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
Contractually required contribution	\$ 3,179,165	\$ 3,047,731	\$ 3,556,181	\$ 3,366,603
Contributions in relation to the contractually required contribution	<u>(3,179,165)</u>	<u>(3,047,731)</u>	<u>(3,556,181)</u>	<u>(3,366,603)</u>
Contribution deficiency (excess)	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
University's covered payroll	\$ 40,651,993	\$ 41,831,191	\$ 40,564,017	\$ 37,747,018
Contributions as a percentage of covered payroll	7.82%	7.29%	8.77%	8.92%

See Independent Auditor's Report on Page 2 and Notes to Required Supplementary Information.

**Fitchburg State University**  
**(a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts)**

**Notes to Required Supplementary Information - OPEB**  
**June 30, 2021**

**Note 1 - Changes in OPEB plan benefit terms and assumptions**

**FY2020 Changes in Actuarial Assumptions**

Changes of assumptions:

Change in discount rate

The discount rate was decreased to 2.28% (based on a blend of the Bond Buyer Index rate of 2.21%).

Change in excise tax

The excise tax was removed.

Change in per capita claims costs

Per capita claims costs were updated based on changes in underlying claims and benefit provisions.

Change in medical trend rates

The medical trend rates were updated.

Change in salary scale

The salary scale assumption was updated from a constant 4% assumption to rates that vary by years of service and group classifications.

Change in future retirees' plan participation rates

The portion of future retirees cover a spouse was reduced from 80% to 60%.

Change in medical plan election rates

Retirees and spouses (if covered) are assumed to be non-Medicare eligible prior to age 65 and Medicare eligible at age 65, unless their spouse is over age 65 and non-Medicare eligible.

**FY2019 Changes in Actuarial Assumptions**

Changes of assumptions:

Change in base OPEB rates for medical and prescriptions

Annually, a recalibration of the underlying healthcare costs is performed using healthcare cost experience from the GIC and developing new per person annual costs under the different health plan options. The expectation is that the new rates will be equal to the prior year rates plus one year of healthcare trend (medical inflation).

Change in trend of future costs

The healthcare trend rate decreased from 8.0% in FY2018 to 7.5% in FY2019, which impacts the high cost excise tax.

**Fitchburg State University**  
**(a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts)**

**Notes to Required Supplementary Information - OPEB**  
**June 30, 2021**

Change in medical plan election rates

The pre age 65 medical plan election percentages were updated to better reflect plan experience.

Change in future retirees' plan participant rates

Plan participation rate for future retirees was changed from 80% to 85% to better reflect recent plan experience plan experience.

Change in discount rate

The discount rate was decreased to 3.63% (based on a blend of the Bond Buyer Index rate (3.51%) as of the measurement date and the expected rate of return on assets) as required by GASB Statement No. 74.

**FY2018 Changes in Actuarial Assumptions**

Changes of assumptions:

Change in base OPEB rates for medical and prescriptions

Annually, a recalibration of the underlying healthcare costs is preformed using healthcare cost experience from the GIC and developing new per person annual costs under the different health plan options. The expectation is that the new rates will be equal to the prior year rates plus one year of healthcare trend (medical inflation).

Change in trend of future costs

The healthcare trend rate decreased from 8.5% in FY2017 to 8.0% in FY2018, which impacts the high cost excise tax.

Change in mortality

The following mortality assumption changes were made in the January 1, 2018 Actuarial Valuation:

- Disabled members - would reflect the same assumptions as for superannuation retirees, but with an age set forward of one year.

Change in discount rate

The discount rate was increased to 3.92% (based on a blend of the Bond Buyer Index rate (3.87%) as of the measurement date and the expected rate of return on assets) as required by GASB Statement No. 74.

**Fitchburg State University**  
**(a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts)**

**Notes to Required Supplementary Information - OPEB**  
**June 30, 2021**

**FY2017 Changes in Actuarial Assumptions**

Changes of assumptions:

Change in discount rate

The discount rate was increased to 3.63% (based on a blend of the Bond Buyer Index rate (3.58%) as of the measurement date and the expected rate of return on assets) as required by GASB Statement No. 74. The June 30, 2016 discount rate was calculated to be 2.88%.

**Note 2 - Other information**

This schedule is intended to present 10 years of data. Additional years will be presented when available.

## **Supplementary Information**

**Fitchburg State University**  
**(a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts)**

**Residence Hall Fund and Residence Hall Damage Fund Activity**  
**June 30, 2021**

The University's Residence Hall Fund and Residence Hall Damage Fund non-classified Statements of Net Position at June 30, 2021 are as follows:

Statements of Net Position

	Residence Hall Fund	Residence Hall Damage Fund
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash	\$ 3,347,074	\$ 7,605
Cash held by State Treasurer	218,402	-
Investments	1,146,234	279,889
Prepaid expenses	5,037	-
Accounts receivable, net	136,909	15,103
Total assets	4,853,656	302,597
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable	65,114	-
Deposits	396,500	-
Salaries payable	97,476	-
Compensated absences	139,803	-
Deferred rental income	2,200	-
Total liabilities	701,093	-
<b>Net position</b>	\$ 4,152,563	\$ 302,597

**Fitchburg State University**  
**(a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts)**

**Residence Hall Fund and Residence Hall Damage Fund Activity**  
**Year Ended June 30, 2021**

The University's Residence Hall Fund and Residence Hall Damage Fund Statements of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Position (presented in accordance with the Commonwealth's Expenditure Classification plan) for the year ended June 30, 2021 are as follows:

	Residence Hall Fund	Residence Hall Damage Fund
<b>Revenues</b>		
Student fees	\$ 6,026,811	\$ -
Interest	18,908	2,692
Investment income	174,856	24,896
Commissions	4,518	-
Rentals	200,005	-
Room damage assessments	-	18,305
	<b>6,425,098</b>	<b>45,893</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Regular employee compensation	1,200,894	-
Regular employee related expenses	2,060	-
Special employee/contract services	96,106	-
Pension and insurance	460,207	-
Facility operating supplies and related expenses	58,569	-
Administrative expenses	10,404	-
Energy and space rental	964,361	-
Operational services	11,181	-
Equipment purchases	8,494	-
Equipment lease - purchase, lease, rent, repair	2,985	-
Purchased client services and programs	105	-
Construction and improvements	479,983	-
Benefit program	78,203	-
Loans and special payments	2,911,062	-
Other - bad debt expense (recovery)	13,968	1,245
Information technology expenses	30,321	-
Miscellaneous	450	-
	<b>6,329,353</b>	<b>1,245</b>
<b>Transfers (in)/out</b>		
Covid-19 - Grant income - HEERF	(4,000,000)	-
Covid-19 - Refund - other	(71,854)	-
Interdepartmental rental expense	10,305	-
Miscellaneous Income	-	(285)
	<b>(4,061,549)</b>	<b>(285)</b>
<b>Total expenses and transfers</b>	<b>2,267,804</b>	<b>960</b>
Increase (decrease) in net position	4,157,294	44,933
Net position - beginning of year	(4,731)	257,664
	<b>\$ 4,152,563</b>	<b>\$ 302,597</b>

The above Statements of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Position do not include an allocation of the current year charge for workers' compensation as estimated by the Commonwealth's actuarial review. It is not practical to allocate any such amount to any specific trust fund.

See Independent Auditor's Report.



Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting  
and on Compliance and Other Matters Based on an Audit of Financial Statements  
Performed in Accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*

To the Board of Trustees  
Fitchburg State University

We have audited, in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, the financial statements of the business-type activities and the discretely presented component unit of Fitchburg State University (the "University") (a department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts), as of and for the year ended June 30, 2021, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the University's basic financial statements, and have issued our report thereon dated December 9, 2021, which included an emphasis of matter paragraph as indicated on page 3.

#### Internal Control over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered the University's internal control over financial reporting ("internal control") as basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the University's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the University's internal control.

*A deficiency in internal control* exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. A *material weakness* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. A *significant deficiency* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses may exist that have not been identified.

#### Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the University's financial statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the entity's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.

*CohnReznick LLP*

Boston, Massachusetts  
December 9, 2021



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December 9, 2021

Dr. Richard S. Lapidus,  
President  
Fitchburg State University  
160 Pearl Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Dear President Lapidus:

This letter serves to confirm that CohnReznick LLP did not issue a separate management letter in connection with its audits of the financial statements of Fitchburg State University, Fitchburg State University Foundation, Inc. and FSU Foundation Supporting Organization, Inc. for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2021.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely yours,

CohnReznick LLP



Melissa Ferrucci, CPA  
Partner

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[Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library](#)  
[Douglas and Isabelle Crocker Center for Civic Engagement](#)  
[Summer Bridge Program](#)



[TRIO SSS - Student Support Services Program](#)

[FSU Housing and Residential Services](#)

[Residential Learning Communities](#)

[FSU Commuter Affairs](#)

[Office of Student Development](#)

[Hammond Campus Center](#)

[Department of Athletics and Recreation](#)

[FSU Community Assessment and Risk Evaluation \(CARE\) Team](#)

[FSU Bias Incident Response Team \(BIRT\)](#)

[FSU Student Handbook](#)

[FSU Student Affairs Website](#)

[FSU Undergraduate Tuition and Fees](#)

[FSU Financial Aid](#)

[Massachusetts Statewide Records Retention Schedule](#)

[Additional Supplemental Material for Standard 5](#)

### **Standard Six: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship**

[Massachusetts State College Association Contracts \(Day and DGCE\)](#)

[FSU Faculty Handbook](#)

[FSU Center for Faculty ScholarshipFSU Faculty Development Day](#)

[FSU Center for Teaching and Learning](#)

[FSU Human Resources and Payroll Services](#)

[New Faculty and Librarian Orientation and Academy](#)

[Copyright Guidelines](#)

[Association of Professional Administrators Webpage](#)

[2020-2025 FSU Strategic Plan](#)

[Educator Preparation Stakeholder Survey](#)

[Graduate Aggregate Assessment Report FYE Learning Outcomes](#)

[FSU Center for Teaching and Learning \(CTL\) Budget](#)

## **Standard Seven: Institutional Resources**

[FSU Hiring Materials](#)

[College and University Professional Association for Human Resources](#)

[Salary Table \(AFSCME Collective Bargaining Agreement\)](#)

[FSU Benefits Package](#)

[Collective Bargaining Agreements](#)

[Mass.gov Ethics Training](#)

[FSU Human Resources Website](#)

[MA State Universities Affirmative Action Plan](#)

[Community Assessment and Risk Evaluation \(CARE\) Team](#)

[Bias Incident Response Team](#)

[FSU Title IX State University Information](#)

[FSU Clery Compliance Information](#)

[Conduct Case Management Committee Information](#)

[Emergency Response Team](#)

[FSU Audited Financials](#)

[Funding Sources - Grants](#)

[CARES Act](#)

[Residence Hall Occupancy](#)

[Fitchburg State University Foundation, IncGift](#)

[Acceptance Policy](#)

[Investment Policy with Spending Policy](#)

[Consolidated Financial Statements with Supplementary Information and Independent Auditor's Report](#)

[Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report June 30, 2021 and 2020](#)

[2021 Audited Financial Statements](#)

[Requests for Strategic Funding](#)

[April 2021 Board of Trustees Agenda including Quarterly Financial Statements](#)

[Finance Documents for Board of Trustees](#)

[FSU 2020-2025 Strategic Plan](#)

[Academic Performance Solutions \(APS\)](#)

[Edify](#)

[FSU Annual Fund](#)

[Accelerated Energy Project](#)

[Financial Presentations to FSU Campus Community](#)

[MindEdge](#)

[Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library Facilities](#)

[FSU Open Education Resources](#)

[Announcement of Consortium Grant Focused on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in OER Creation](#)

[FSU Events and Workshops](#)

[FSU Archives and Special Collections](#)

[Library's Strategic Plan](#)

[FSU Building Catalog and Data](#)

[Summary of Real Property at FSU](#)

[FSU ideaLab Announcement](#)

[American School & University Magazine Coverage of FSU ideaLab](#)

[2020 Leading By Example Awards](#)

[LEAN IT](#)

[FSU Classroom Spaces](#)

[FSU Computer Labs](#)

[FSU Technology Training Programs](#)

[Blackbelt Help October 2020 Monthly Report](#)

[Blackboard LMS System Summary of Usage 2020](#)

[G Suite Usage Statistics](#)

[IT Refresh Expenses Plan](#)

[Information Technology Strategic Plan](#)

[Library Annual Reports](#)

[Information Literacy Instruction Learning Outcomes](#)

[ACRL's new Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education](#)

[2021 Library Survey of Satisfaction](#)

[Library Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan](#)

[Diversity, Equity & Inclusion \(DEI\) Resources](#)

[2021 Spotlight Series: Practices of Equity & Social Justice](#)

[FSU Capital Planning Master Plan](#)

[Gordian Sightlines - FY20 Benchmarking and Sustainability Preliminary Report](#)

[What is the Average IT Service Desk to Employee Ratio \(Robert Half Metrics\)](#)

[Google Applications Metrics with Explanations](#)

[Technology Policies & Planning Website](#)

[FSU Student Handbook](#)

[FSU Information Security Policy](#)

[Information Technology Disaster Recovery Plan](#)

[Additional Supplemental Material for Standard 7](#)

## **Standard Eight: Educational Effectiveness**

[FSU Program Finder](#)

[FSU Assessment Webpage](#)

[Annual Assessment Report Template](#)

[Annual Assessment Reports](#)

[Programmatic Assessment Plan Template](#)

[Governance Policy Proposal for Program Review Cycle](#)

[FSU Institutional Learning Priorities](#)

[FSU Mission, Vision, and Core Values](#)

[AAC&U VALUE Institute](#)

[Leading for Change Racial Equity and Justice Institute \(REJI\)](#)

[Human Services Student Success Data](#)

[Political Science Student Success Data](#)

[First-Year Experience Course Learning Outcomes](#)

[Information Literacy AAC&U VALUE Rubric](#)

[Reading AAC&U VALUE Rubric](#)

[Sense of Belonging Interview Results Spring 2021](#)

[Critical Thinking AAC&U VALUE Rubric](#)

[2015-2020 Strategic Plan](#)

[2020-2025 Strategic Plan](#)

[Student Success Data - Graduating Student Feedback Survey](#)

[Graduation Survey for Graduate Students](#)

[Student Success Data - Alumni Surveys](#)

[Additional Supplemental Material for Standard 8](#)

## **Standard Nine: Integrity, Transparency and Public Disclosure**

[FSU 2020-2025 Strategic Plan](#)

[Fitchburg State University 2021-2022 Undergraduate Catalog](#)

[Academic Integrity Policy](#)

[Faculty Handbook 2021-2022](#)

[Disability Accommodations](#)

[Syllabus Template for Extended Campus Partners](#)

[Course Design Rubric Template](#)

[Collective Bargaining Agreements](#)

[Center for Teaching and Learning](#)

[Center for Faculty Scholarship](#)

[Mission of the State Universities](#)

[Undergraduate Conference on Research and Creative Practice](#)

[Fitchburg State Athletics](#)

[Fitchburg State Athletics Mission](#)

[Institutional Review Board](#)

[Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee](#)

[Institutional Biosafety Committee](#)

[FERPA Privacy Policy](#)[Collective Bargaining](#)

[Human Resources & Payroll Services](#)

[Equal Opportunity Plan](#)

[Equal Opportunity/Title IX Complaint Information](#)

[University Police Department](#)

[Clery Act and Annual Security Reports](#)

[Human Resources Policies](#)

[Title IX](#)

[Title IX Team Training](#)

[Fitchburg Anti-Violence Education \(FAVE\)](#)

[Accreditation and Contact Information for FSU Liaison to NECHE](#)

[State Ethics Training](#)

[State Ethics Form for Faculty Authorship](#)

[FSU University Student Handbook](#)

[Academic Participation and Honesty Online Tutorial](#)

[Reporting Violations of the Academic Honesty Policy](#)

[CITI Training Human Subjects](#)

[Information Technology and Information Security Policies](#)

[Annual Security Report](#)

[Human Resources Policies](#)

[Events Management](#)

[Library Display Spaces Policies](#)

[Extended Campus](#)

[LOA Extended Campus for Professional Development](#)

[LOA Extended Campus for Partners: Degree Programs](#)

[University joining State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement \(SARA\)](#)

[State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement \(SARA\)](#)

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Webpage](#)

[University Tuition and Fees](#)

[FSU Mission, Vision and Core Values](#)

[Academic Programs](#)

[Admissions and Financial Aid Processes](#)

[Extended Campus Offerings](#)

[Articulation Agreements](#)

[Notice of Availability](#)

[FSU Catalog - Active](#)

[Archived Catalogs](#)

[Day School and Graduate & Continuing Education \(GCE\) Course Schedules](#)

[Board of Trustees Member Information](#)

[Faculty Profiles](#)

[Faculty, Trustees, Administration List in Catalog](#)

[Faculty and Staff Directory](#)

[Financial Services](#)

[Audited Financials](#)

[University Information about COVID-19](#)

[COVID-19 Testing and Vaccine Dashboard](#)

[Student Population and Campus Setting](#)

[Office of Student Development](#)

[Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library](#)

[Technology Department](#)

[Student Support Services](#)

[Community of Scholars](#)

[University Registrar](#)

[Student Conduct FAQs](#)

[Undergraduate Assessment Documentation](#)

[Graduate Assessment Documentation](#)

[Retention and Graduation Rate Information](#)

[University Police Logs](#)

[Public Records Request and Access Officer](#)

[Contact Magazine](#)

[Fitchburg State University Today Newsletter Archive](#)

[University Social Media Directory](#)

[University Website with Academic Partnerships](#)

[Online Form for Web Content Updates](#)

[Student Accounts Webpages](#)

[Common Data Set 2020-2021](#)

[Human Services Program Student Achievement Indicators](#)

[Nursing Department \(Including Pass Rates\)](#)

[Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure \(Including Pass Rates\)](#)

[FSU Assessment Webpage](#)

[FSU Institutional Research and Planning](#)

[Common Data Set 2019-2020](#)

[Institutional Factbook 2020](#)

[Student Achievement Measure](#)

[FSU University Social Media Accounts](#)

[Visual Identity and Social Media Guidelines](#)

[Additional Supplemental Material for Standard 9](#)

## **Other Workroom Materials**

[Representative Vitae](#)

[Representative Syllabi](#)