
Fitchburg State University Today



Winter Commencement a celebration of student success

Fitchburg State awarded more than 400 graduate and undergraduate degrees during the [winter ceremony](#) of its 127th commencement exercises Friday, Dec. 22.

The ceremony included speeches by undergraduate valedictorian Dylan J. Dandy of Leominster and Graduate Student Leadership Award recipient Maryanne

Fiorino of Danvers.

[Read more](#)

Digital magazine highlights Winter 2023 graduates

Several [stories](#) from the Winter Commencement class are shared in the latest edition of [Fitchburg State Magazine](#). Among the profiles:

- [Nadieska Diaz Araujo](#), who found a community at Fitchburg State and plans to pay it forward in human services;
- [Justin Bishop](#), who persisted in the face of life-threatening illness;
- [Mary Nankya](#), who completed her master's degree in pursuit of a better life for her family in Uganda;
- [Nathacha Santiago-Prado](#), who seeks to become the role model at the head of the class that she sought as a student; and
- [Stephen Wells](#), who completed his bachelor's degree at age 70.



[Read the magazine](#)

Presidential Search Committee to meet

The [Presidential Search Committee](#) will meet **today at 9:30 a.m.** in Presidents' Hall. The agenda is posted on the



presidential search [website](#).

NCLEX passing rate soars

The [Nursing Department](#) announced that 98% of its May 2023 nursing graduates passed the [NCLEX](#) licensure examination on their first try last summer and fall.

Fitchburg State's nursing graduates have long boasted high pass rates for the licensure examination, with 95% and higher passing for several consecutive years. The numbers dipped slightly after COVID, said **Associate Professor Debbie Benes**, chair of the Nursing Department, though still represented the vast majority of graduates. Still, the decline prompted quick intervention by the department.



"We were aware that the testing model was being changed to better measure clinical judgment and decision-making," Benes said. "We started preparing our students for that change in their junior year by introducing them to the new types of questions, and changing up the way they were learning in the classroom and simulation center. Students started to do a lot more active and engaged learning, and faculty transitioned over to that type of pedagogy."

[Learn more](#)



University part of pilot program rethinking LSAT

As the longtime advisor to its [pre-law program](#), **Professor Paul Weizer** has seen many former students go on to successful careers in the law. He has also seen otherwise successful students struggle with the standardized test that can qualify them for law school.

This year, Weizer led the effort for Fitchburg State to join a pilot program of five institutions nationwide to try an

alternative to the Law School Admission Test, better known as the LSAT.

Fitchburg State is launching its pilot of [LawReady](#) this semester, in collaboration with the Law School Admission Council. The program is designed to meet students earlier in their undergraduate studies, providing a roadmap to law school readiness with academic skills development aligned with courses already taking place on campus, resources to assist navigating the pre-law process, and community support along the students' journey to a

legal education.

[Learn more](#)

Reminder: UPD hosting self-defense workshop in February

The Fitchburg State University Police Department will be partnering with the [Vanessa T. Marcotte Foundation](#) and the [Worcester County District Attorney's Office](#) to host a two-hour self-defense workshop from 5 to 7 p.m. **Tuesday, Feb. 6** at the Athletics and Recreation Center. Admission is free but space is limited. Women who wish to participate may [register online](#). This event is open to Fitchburg State students, faculty and staff.

Learn about situational awareness and how to handle a confrontation both physically and mentally. Practice realistic self-defense tactics. Have fun, learn some skills, and feel empowered!



Don't miss this! Learn about situational awareness and how to handle a confrontation both physically and mentally.

Practice realistic self-defense tactics.

Have fun, learn some skills, and feel empowered!

Please dress in comfortable clothes and sneakers.

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

5 PM – 7 PM | Recreation Center

ADMISSION IS FREE. Space is limited, so register today.
Scan the QR code to register. ▶

FOR FEMALEES



FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
POLICE DEPARTMENT



Keep up with campus happenings on the Burg Blog

Follow the [Burg Blog](#) for timely updates of campus life.

Among the recent articles and slideshows, see scenes from [international student orientation](#); faculty [development day](#); the public safety [training exercises](#)

University Police conducted with city agencies; and the [first snowfall](#) of the year. Other slideshows include courses on [playwriting](#), [writing in aesthetics](#), and students from the [Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers](#) club collecting certificates for their strong showing in a competition last fall.

[Burg Blog](#)

CenterStage and cultural events

Fitchburg State will highlight the work of multimedia artist [Candice Ivy](#) with an exhibition in the Hammond Hall Art Gallery from Tuesday, Jan. 16 through Friday, March 1. (See images from the exhibition installation on the [Burg Blog](#).)

There will be an opening reception with the artist at **3:30 p.m. Thursday** at the gallery. Admission to the reception is free and open to the public.

Ivy's exhibition is entitled "A Wide Golden Blue." The artist's work explores the relationship between storytelling, material and the natural world.

She received her BA in Fine Arts from Coker College in 1999 and her MFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts/Tufts University, Boston, in 2006. Her multimedia works have been shown both nationally and internationally in large scale exhibitions at Piccolo Spoleto, Charleston, S.C.; Davis Museum, Wellesley; Sguardi Sonori in Venice, Benevento, and Frascati, Italy; Taipei Artist's Village, Taipei, Taiwan; Urban Occupations Urbaines in Montreal, Canada; Fitchburg Art Museum, Fitchburg; and the Universidad Catolica in Santiago, Chile.



Faculty Notes

Associate Professor Ozge Ozay (Economics, History and Political Science) gave a presentation earlier this month entitled "Women's Labor Supply Adjustment to Covid 19 Shock: An Intersectional Analysis" at the [ASSA Annual Meeting](#) organized by the American Economic Association in San Antonio, Texas.

Professor Kisha Tracy (English Studies) was [interviewed](#) on the "Relevant or Irrelevant" radio show to discuss "Myth-busting Medieval Disabilities. The segment can be streamed [online](#), along with a bonus [podcast](#).

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