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## Fitchburg State University Today

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# BLACK HISTORY MONTH



### Celebrating Black History Month

Fitchburg State will highlight African Americans and the arts as the foundation of its [Black History Month](#) celebration throughout February.

The [programs](#) will culminate in a keynote address by Rhymes with Reason founder Austin Martin.

The programming theme acknowledges the connection between African American art and influence with African, Caribbean, and the Black American lived reality. This theme, organized by the National Association for the Study of African American Life and History, focuses and emphasizes the many ways in which art manifests in our current world whether it be in film, architecture, cooking, and additional forms of expression.

The month will close with a keynote address at **7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 29** by Austin Martin, founder of Rhymes with Reason, in the main lounge of Hammond Hall. Admission to the talk is free and open to the public.

[Black History Month](#)

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### NSF grant will support scholarship, mentorship for STEM students

Fitchburg State University has received a \$1 million grant from the National Science Foundation that will provide scholarship support and mentorship for academically talented students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

The grant will build upon Fitchburg State's pedagogy of "real talk" [initiative](#) that is designed to improve retention and career success by fostering deeper connections between students, faculty and staff members. The evidence-based approach is built upon engaging, teaching, and connecting with students at promise, or students who are prone to drop out, combining a focus on the delivery of content with an understanding of the student as a whole human being. The [approach](#) seeks to create an inclusive and student-centered learning environment, a classroom climate and culture where students feel safe, known, and valued.

"Through this project, we aim to build institutional capacity for an inclusive and asset-

based pedagogical approach to support domestic, low-income STEM students with academic ability, talent, or potential, and with demonstrated unmet financial need,” said **Associate Professor Nirajan Mani** (Engineering Technology), the principal investigator for the grant.

[Learn more](#)

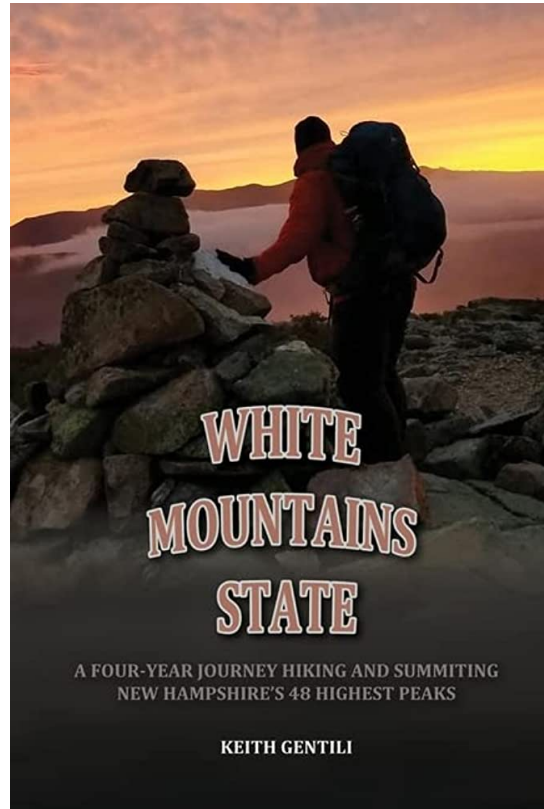
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## Community Read programs continue this week

The [Community Read](#) of alumnus Keith Gentili’s book *White Mountains State: A Four-Year Journey Hiking and Summiting New Hampshire’s 48 Highest Peaks* continues with a series of events this spring, including a talk by the author himself.

The semester’s offerings begin with a [virtual talk](#) today at 12:30 p.m. by Professor Michael Hoberman (English Studies), who will present “Theodore Seixas Solomons: The Jewish American Who Inspired North America’s Most Famous Footpath.” The virtual talk is also part of the Speakers Series.

Gentili’s book has been described as a down-to-earth story for anyone with an interest in hiking and mountain climbing, highlighting both the trails and challenges of the New Hampshire 48, as well as the deep satisfaction and accomplishment that can result in finishing the list.



The programs continue at 6:30 p.m. **Thursday** at the Leominster Public Library with “Hiking for the Soul,” a screening of a short film and clips ideal for hiking enthusiasts. These materials celebrate the joys, challenges, and life-changing perspectives afforded by hiking in the mountains. After the viewing, **Associate Professor Kevin McCarthy** (Communications Media) will moderate a discussion on these themes. This program is free and open to the public. No registration required.

[Learn more](#)

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## Campus to host premiere of award-winning student filmmaker's latest work

Award-winning filmmaker - and current Fitchburg State student -Tonia Magras will present the premiere of her latest documentary, “More than Our Skin,” at Fitchburg State University on **Thursday, Feb. 22.**

The [film](#), focusing on five women living with the autoimmune disease vitiligo, will be shown at 11 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. in Ellis White Lecture Hall in Hammond Hall. Admission is free and open to the public, and guests will include cast members and state and local leaders.

# More Than Our Skin



**"Powerful! Poignant! Beautiful!"**

**"The strength and vulnerability of these five women leaps off the screen!"**

*"There's so much I didn't know. Now I want to learn more!"*

**"EVERYONE NEEDS TO SEE THIS MOVIE!"**

PRODUCED & DIRECTED BY TONIA MAGRAS | EXECUTIVE PRODUCER GREGORY MAGRAS | WRITTEN BY CYNTHIA JOHNSON | CO-PRODUCER/CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER CALVIN A. LINDSAY, JR.

HULL BAY PRODUCTIONS presents a JAMIE-LEE FILM in association with CENTURION FILMWORKS  
KATRINA CHRISTIAN | MILLICENT MEADOWS | VALARIE MOLYNEUX | PATRICIA ROSSV | ALICIA ROUFES  
music composed by MARIK WARD director of photography GREGORY MAGRAS  
additional cameras LANCE DOUGLAS | DILLARD MORRISON | HOWARD POWELL  
associate producers SHELEEE BREVARD | MYA MCKINNON  
post-production editor MIKE CHAPMAN post-production audio JOHN JENKINS  
assistant editor HAILEY FINN graphic designer CATHERINE BOSSE production manager MARGARET MURPHY

Production underwriting provided in part by:



The film has also been entered into competition at several film festivals.

Magras, a three-time Emmy-award winner and seven-time nominee, is producer and director of the film, and is currently enrolled in the film/video program at Fitchburg State. She has over three decades of production and film experience, beginning with her 25-year career at PBS' flagship station, WGBH Boston. She enrolled at Fitchburg State in 2022 to pursue her formal education while she continued her career in film.

[Learn more](#)

## Reminder: Multi-factor authentication deadline nears

The [Technology Department](#) reminds the campus community that as of **Tuesday, Feb. 13**, Azure Multi-Factor Authentication will be required for all university accounts. Details on how to navigate the transition have been sent to all campus community members via university email and may also be viewed on this [shared document](#).

Chief Information Officer Stefan Dodd and Chief Information Security Officer Eric Boughton will be at the Help Desk in Conlon Hall for "Multi-Flavor Coffee" this **Wednesday morning** to help visitors get set up.

## Reminder: UPD hosting self-defense workshop Tuesday

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 **tomorrow from 5 to 7 p.m.** 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.

FOR FEMALES

**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. ▶



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 the latest visit from the [therapy dogs](#); a [fondue party](#) sponsored by the Office of Student Development; classroom views of [technical](#)

[theater](#), a [genetics lab](#), and an [introduction to music](#); and international students enjoying the [snowy campus](#).

[Burg Blog](#)

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## New ROTEL volumes published

Professor Kisha Tracy (English Studies), a member of the Remixing Open Textbooks through an Equity Lens ([ROTEL](#)) community, recently published two books that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Her first book, *Heritages of Change: Curatorial Activism and First Year Writing* includes principles of writing and information literacy through the lenses of curatorial activism, cultural heritage, and curation/exhibition.

Her second book, *Why Do I Have to Take This Course? A Guide To General Education* helps students systematically study how general education requirements are developed, their history, and post-graduation value. It emphasizes exploration of the significance of individual learning outcomes, especially through the lens of John Lewis' philosophy of "good, necessary trouble."



Fitchburg State is one of six Massachusetts institutions participating in the Remixing Open Textbooks through an Equity Lens (ROTEL) grant. This project provides stipends for faculty to remix and/or develop accessible, intentionally inclusive open textbooks and other OER that reflect students' local and lived experiences.

[Learn more](#)

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## CenterStage and cultural events

Fitchburg State highlights the work of multimedia artist [Candice Ivy](#) with an exhibition entitled "A Wide Golden Blue" in the Hammond Hall Art Gallery

through Friday, March 1.  
(See images from the  
exhibition opening  
reception on the [Burg  
Blog.](#))



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## Staff Notes

**Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Patricia A. Marshall** was [elected](#) as a director of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) at the organization's recent annual meeting. AAC&U is a global membership organization dedicated to advancing the democratic purposes of higher education by promoting equity, innovation, and excellence in liberal education.

**Dean Fuller** (Athletics) recently [scored](#) his 600th career win as ice hockey coach for the Falcons, becoming only the third NCAA Division III coach to reach that milestone. His achievement will be acknowledged before the start of the **4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 10** game when the Falcons take on Worcester State at the Wallace Civic Center.

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## Faculty Notes

**Assistant Professor Sarah Bromberg** (Humanities) gave a presentation entitled "Jewish and Christian Exegetical Traditions in Manuscript Illuminations Illustrating Nicholas of Lyra's *Postilla Litteralis*" for a panel at the American Association of Religion Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas, in November. She also noted the open access publication of her [article](#) "The Position of Jewish Art and Exegesis in an Illustrated Christian Biblical Commentary: Ezekiel's Vision of the Tetramorph in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Manuscripts and Printed Copies of Nicholas of Lyra's *Postilla litteralis*."

**Professor Michael Hoberman** (English Studies) noted the publication of his [article](#) "Jews in the Wilderness" in Tablet magazine. The article describes the role of Theodore Seixas Solomons in the shaping of the nation's best-loved and most spectacular long-distance footpath (who is also the topic of his Speakers Series presentation **today at 12:30** [online](#)).

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