
Fitchburg State University Today



Commencement honorees announced

Fitchburg State alumna **Yla Eason**, who founded a multiracial toy company dedicated to

fighting the racial imbalance in toys and superheroes, will deliver the address at the [Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony](#) on **Saturday, May 18**.

Eason, a 1971 graduate of Fitchburg State, is an accomplished marketing professional based in the Greater New York City area and currently serves as an assistant professor of professional practice at the Rutgers University Business School in New Jersey, where her focus is business communications and marketing.

Honorees also include:

- Reinaldo "Rey" Lopez, the founder of Resource Management Inc., one of the nation's largest Hispanic-owned businesses, will be presented the President's Medal at the undergraduate ceremony.
- Jyy Rose Liang of Lunenburg, majoring in educational studies, will be recognized as valedictorian of the undergraduate class.
- Ali Raza, majoring in computer science, will receive the Graduate Student Leadership Award at the [Graduate Commencement Ceremony](#) on **Thursday, May 16**.

[Learn more](#)

Presidential Search update

The Board of Trustees will meet at 4 p.m. **Tuesday, April 30** to discuss the [presidential search](#). Over the past several weeks, finalists for the post came to campus for two days of interviews with various university and community constituencies.

The finalists are:

- [Dr. Karim Ismaili](#), Executive Vice President and Provost at Bridgewater State University
- [Dr. Mark Overmyer-Velázquez](#), Dean and Chief Administrative Officer at the University of Connecticut-Hartford
- [Dr. Donna Souder Hodge](#), Vice President of Operations & Advancement at Colorado State University, Pueblo

Additional information on the search is posted on the university [website](#).



Celebrating President Lapidus

Members of the campus community and local dignitaries gathered at Hammond Hall last week to celebrate the tenure of President Lapidus.

In addition to remarks from well-wishers including colleagues and former university trustees, the president received citations from federal, state and local elected leaders during the celebration. See [photos](#) from the event on the Burg Blog.

There will be a student-facing celebration this **Thursday at 3:30 p.m.** on the main quad.

University to host inaugural Lavender Graduation tonight

Fitchburg State's [Gay Straight Alliance](#) will hold its inaugural Lavender Graduation ceremony **tonight at 6 p.m.** in the Hammond Main Lounge, honoring LGBTQIA+ students who will be graduating from the university this semester.



The first Lavender Graduation Ceremony was created by playwright, author and LGBT historian Dr. Ronni Sanlo, who was denied the opportunity to attend the graduations of her biological children because of her sexual orientation. Encouraged by the Dean of Students at the University of Michigan, Dr. Sanlo designed the first Lavender Graduation Ceremony in 1995, which had three graduates. Today there are more than 500 colleges and universities nationwide hosting such celebrations.



Campus to host community conversation on statewide economic conditions

The [Federal Reserve Bank of Boston](#) and Fitchburg State invite members of the campus to join a community conversation about their upcoming project: the Massachusetts Economic Conditions and Household Opportunity Survey at **5:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 1** in

Ellis White Lecture Hall. [Register online.](#)

The Massachusetts Economic Conditions and Household Opportunity Survey is a multiyear research initiative designed to gain a deeper understanding about family wealth across Massachusetts. In addition to statewide estimates, the survey hopes to be able to explore disparities between and within racial-ethnic groups across the Commonwealth and between urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Reminder: Rescheduled Drag Show this Friday

The Gay Straight Alliance presents the 17th annual benefit drag show for **7 p.m. Friday, May 3**. This event, designed to entertain, enlighten, and share a great cultural experience with



the community, was rescheduled because of inclement weather on its original date.

The “Dancing Queens” drag show will be held at the Athletics and Recreation Center, 130 North St., Fitchburg. Proceeds from the show will support the LGBTQ Student Scholarship at Fitchburg State. The program is labeled as New England’s largest and oldest drag show. [Tickets](#) are available now.

[Learn more](#)

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 [Undergraduate Research Conference](#) on April 18; that same day's [Honors Convocation](#); the opening reception for the 2024 [VISIONS](#) exhibition; the university's observance of [Take Back the Night](#); students and faculty cleaning the Rindge Road area for [Earth Day](#); and a book launch celebrating faculty members' [ROTEL](#) volumes.

[Burg Blog](#)



Cultural Events

The Chamber Choir and Concert Choir will present their spring concert, “I Love to Sing: Music of Joy and Community” at 7 p.m. **Tuesday, April 30** at Weston Auditorium. Admission is free and open to the public. At this

concert, the choirs will perform classical, jazz, soul, avant garde, spirituals, show tunes, and more at the concert.

Jazzbyrds perform with Grammy winner Neal Smith on May 1

Fitchburg State’s Modern Jazz Band, The FitchByrds, will present their first annual Jazz Night concert at 7 p.m. **Wednesday, May 1** with guest artist and grammy winner Neal Smith in Kent Recital Hall. The concert will also include the jazz bands from Fitchburg High School and Leominster High School. Admission is free and open to the public.

ALFA Art Exhibit on display at Fitchburg Art Museum

Fitchburg State University’s Adult Learning in the Fitchburg Area ([ALFA](#)) is celebrating its 20th anniversary this spring, including a gallery installation at the [Fitchburg Art Museum](#).

The exhibit in the museum's Community Gallery will be on display through May 27. There will be an opening reception at the museum at **1 p.m. Thursday, May 9.**

The ALFA gallery show is juried exhibition whose requirement for entry was that those submitting works needed to be or have been ALFA students or instructors. ALFA artists submitted work reflective of their style, artistic vision, and message. Participating artists represent those both newly-minted as well as well-established professional artists.

Faculty Notes

Associate Professor Sarah Bromberg (Humanities) has received the Olivia Remie Constable Grant from the Medieval Academy of America, which will fund archival research at the Newberry Library in Chicago on early (15th through 17th-century) printed books.

Professor Katherine Rye Jewell (Economics, History and Political Science) was referenced in New York Times writer Jamelle Bouie's [column](#) on April 19. The column, describing the political fallout of unionization efforts at Southern automobile plants, included a mention of Jewell's 2017 [book](#) "Dollars for Dixie: Business and the Transformation of Conservatism in the Twentieth Century." Professor Jewell was also interviewed on the Sound Opinions podcast to discuss her book "Live from the Underground: A History of College Radio." Listen to the [podcast](#) online.

Visiting Professor Justin Casinghino (Humanities) celebrated the Kennedy Center premiere of *From Either Side of the Table*, a new work for dual wind ensemble. The piece engages two full wind bands in a conversational back-and-forth of increasingly shorter single-ensemble sections that eventually reach a full-stage togetherness – a sharing of motivic ideas in representation of ideal political discourse. The premiere, part of the 2024 Washington D.C. International Music Festival, featured wind ensembles from Hartland, Wis. and Lexington, Mass., respectively, under the direction of Jacob Polancich and Jared Cassedy.

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