

2023-2024
Unit Annual Report
Division of Academic Affairs
Unit: Arts and Sciences

I Mission and Goal/Outcomes Statement:

The School of Arts & Sciences merges scholarship and professional practice in a wide range of innovative programs. Our faculty inspire students to think and communicate clearly, to recognize and value diverse perspectives, and to act creatively when addressing complex problems in their communities and beyond. We prepare students to navigate a world of rapid change, while developing a foundation for a meaningful life.

II Personnel:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
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Hired:

- Justin Casinghino, Visiting Assistant Professor of Music
- Kenneth Mackie, Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science
- Jason Flynn, Visiting Assistant Professor of Photography
- Heath Hightower, Visiting Assistant Professor of Human Services
- Xiaoying Meng, Visiting Assistant Professor of Game Design (hired as TT effective September 1, 2024)
- Michelle Chadwick, Administrative Assistant for Behavioral Sciences
- Ola Wysocki, Interim Police Academy Director

Departed

- Lisa Lane McCarty, Police Academy Director

Retired (as of summer 2024):

- Christine Shane, Professor of Human Services
- Sally Moore, Professor of Music
- Les Nelkin, Associate Professor of Game Design

III Facilities/Equipment:

- Materials to update and replace exhibits for *When We Were Normal* display
- Equipment repair of instrument for Humanities
- Supplies to support Active Learning Classrooms
- Materials and honoraria for Hammond Art Gallery
- Arts and Sciences small-group faculty and staff lunch gatherings
- Arts and Sciences faculty and staff semester gatherings
- Administrative Assistant working luncheons
- Printing support for college newspaper
- Guest Speaker honorarium for Humanities
- Campus visit of noted kora musician

IV Budget Expenditure Analysis:

Money was spent as budgeted.

V Programs/Activities:

The dean's office supported the staffing of approximately 645 Arts and Sciences courses this year in the day program and 190 courses through SGOCE. The dean conducted faculty evaluations and participated in the successful extension or hire of one-year temporary faculty members (Political Science, Human Services, Music, Game Design, Photography) as well as the hire of a Tenure Track faculty member for Game Design. Additional School programs and dean activities for 2023-2024 included:

Committees, Working Groups, Boards

- Dean of Education Search Committee Member (2 searches)
- Dean of Students Search Committee Member
- Interim Police Academy Director Search Committee Chair
- Negotiation team for SIR II replacement
- JED Campus Taskforce Member
- AUC Curriculum Committee
- Program Area for General Education Program
- CTL Advisory Board
- Honors Advisory Council
- Corporate Engagement Working Group, Corporate/Community Partnership Development Subcommittee, Education Subcommittee
- Transfer Student Taskforce
- Global Ambassadors Scholarship Committee
- Deans' Anti-Racism Fund
- Center for Italian Culture Board Member

Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning

- **Curriculum Development (highlights)**
 - Creative Arts Enterprise major approved by the DHE
 - Expressive Arts Therapies (renamed Creative Arts Therapies) major approved by the DHE
 - Changes to Graphic Design Minor (AUC 007)
 - Require World Literature as Third Survey for Licensure Students in English Studies Core (AUC 017)
 - Update of DMI Minor (AUC 019)
 - Addition to DMI Data Studies Pathway (AUC 020)
 - Add ART 3003 to Media History Requirement list for Photo Concentration (AUC 022) and Electives for Photography Minor (AUC 023)
 - Change requirements for minor in music performance (AUC 053)
 - Updating Accepted HMSV Minor Courses (AUC 055)

- Remove History of Interactive Media and Games from list of production electives in the Game Design Major (AUC 073)
- Creation of Sustainability Studies Minor (AUC 081)

- **New Courses**

- Writing in Technical Professions (AUC 021)
- Photography as a Visual Language (AUC 024)
- Documentary Development (AUC 034)
- Introduction to Sustainability Studies (AUC 035)
- A Cultural History of Nature (AUC 036)
- Medieval Africa Literature and Culture (AUC 049)
- Environmental Communication (AUC 067)
- Environmental Ethics (AUC 076)
- Environmental Sociology (AUC 077)

- **Course/Program Removals**

- Intro to Political Science and Asian Politics and Culture (AUC 029)
- DVD Authoring (AUC 032)
- Pre-Press Production (AUC 033)
- Urban Economics and Industrial Organizations (AUC 058)
- Police Administration, Private Security, Homeland Security, Advanced CJ Research Methods, Community-Based Corrections (AUC 062)

Transfer Pathways & Articulation Agreements

- Bristol Community College Computer Information Systems: Game Development—Game Creation transfer pathway for Fitchburg State University Game Design Program
- Nashoba Valley Technical High School Design and Visual Communication Program articulation agreement with Fitchburg State University Communications Media Program
- Middlesex Community College’s Associate Degree in Visual Design as a linked Mass Transfer program into Fitchburg State University’s Communications Media and Digital Media Innovation Programs
- Rhein-Waal University of Applied Sciences in Germany articulation agreement that will create additional opportunities for cross-cultural exchange
- Update of The Washington Center agreement
- Work on the Graphic Design A2B Pathway
- Work on articulation agreement with Cape Cod Community College Graphic Design Program
- Discussions with Massachusetts Department of Corrections regarding possible employment and graduate program pathways

Research and Creative Activities (selections)

- One Act Play spring showcase
- Publication of ROTEL textbooks by J.J. Sylvia and Kisha Tracy
- Spring Community Orchestra and Concert Band performance

- Spring Chamber Choir and Concert Choir Concert, "I Love to Sing: Music of Joy and Community"
- Women in the Arts annual event
- Speakers Series talks by Dr. Sam Tobin (Game Design) entitled "Tabled: A Materialist Examination of the 'Table' in Tabletop Wargames," Dr. David Svolba (Humanities) entitled "Could There be a Conscious AI?," Dr. Kenneth Mackie (Economics, History, and Political Science) entitled "The Affect Magnetism Heuristic: Belief Formation in Asymmetric Information Environments," and Dr. Michael Hoberman (English Studies), "Theodore Seixas Solomons: The Jewish American Who Inspired North America's Most Famous Footpath." Dr. Hoberman's, "Jews in the Wilderness," was published in Tablet magazine
- Fall production of "It's a Wonderful Life: Radio Play"
- 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 Fitchbyrds, Fitchburg State University's modern jazz band, fall concert
- Hammond Hall Art Gallery: Faculty Show
- Hammond Hall Art Gallery exhibits by Candice Ivy entitled "A Wide Golden Blue" and Hanna Melnyczuk entitled "Don't Close Your Eyes"
- Professor Katherine Rye Jewell (Economics, History and Political Science) was featured in an article published March 29 in The Boston Globe asking educators about the impact of AI in the classroom
- Professor Yasser Derwiche Djazaerly (Humanities) gave a talk at Framingham State University on Tuesday, April 16 about the Gaza War entitled, "The Gaza War at the Crossroads of Regional and International Politics."
- Professor Jane Fiske (Humanities) and alumna Cynthia Schilling performed a four-hand piano arrangement of "Reach for the Summit" from the video game Celeste by Lena Raine at the 11th Annual North American Conference on Video Game Music (NACVGM) hosted by Michigan State University in March
- Associate Professor Sarah Bromberg (Humanities) 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."
- The University of Vermont's Center for Community News recently [highlighted](#) the Assistant Professor Wafa Unus (English Studies) and her journalism students, recognizing the work they are doing to support local news

- Associate Professor Ozge Ozay (Economics, History and Political Science) gave a presentation 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.
- Harrod Lecture by Professor Teresa Fava Thomas (Economics, History, and Political Science) on “The Forever Shutdown: The Hamilton Woolen Strick of 1934”
- Associate Professor Özge Özay (Economics, History and Political Science) presented “Recovery for All? Unmasking the Intersectional Unemployment Gaps in the US Labor Market Amidst the Pandemic” at the Eastern Economic Association Conference in Boston
- Music Mega-Mix showcase
- ARTeries, annual juried student exhibition
- Visions
- Veterans Day Storytelling Event
- Professor Eric Budd (Economics, History and Political Science) presented a paper entitled "Memory in the Post-Conflict State," was the chair and discussant for a panel on "Violence in the Global South," and chaired a panel on "Populism and Polarization" at the annual meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association in Boston
- Professor Charles Sides (Communications Media) published the poem "Herb Gatherer, 1963," in the journal, *Appalachia Places*

Partnerships, Grants, and Outreach

- Pilot program for LawReady, a portfolio alternative to the LSAT for law school admission
- Staffed two reverse open houses at Mount Wachusett and Quinsigamond Community Colleges
- Held meetings with Open Sky to discuss career pipelines
- Hosted Site Visit and Discussion with Fitchburg State Police Program Faculty and Bosnian Legal Socialization Program in Republika Srpska & Brcko District & PH International
- North Worcester County Symphony Orchestra partnership allowing for Fitchburg State University Concert and Chamber Choirs and Concerts bands to perform with the Orchestra throughout the concert season and use of Weston Auditorium by the Orchestra with tickets free of charge to students, staff and faculty
- Meeting with representatives from the Artists-in-Schools Program in Lunenburg
- Ongoing collaboration between the Fitchburg State University and Christ Church choirs produced concert at Christ Church entitled “The Heavens are Telling: The Music of Franz Joseph Haydn”
- First Annual Jazz Night concert including the Fitchburg State FitchByrds, jazz bands from Fitchburg and Leominster High Schools, and Grammy award winner Neal Smith

- Fitchburg State’s instrumental and vocal groups joined the North Worcester County Symphony Orchestra, Fitchburg State’s Concert Choir, Chamber Choir and Concert Band, the Nashoba Valley Chorus, the Westford Chorus, the Greater Gardner Community Choir, and Perfect Alibi for A Symphonic Christmas Carol
- Choral Kaleidoscope annual event including choirs of Fitchburg State along with choirs from Fitchburg, Leominster, and Murdock High Schools

Professional Development

- Completed Executive Leadership Institute
- ACE Women’s Network of Massachusetts

Programming

- Planning and organizing a panel on the crisis in Israel and Gaza
- Planning and organizing of RA Salvatore visiting Writer in Residence program
- Planning and organizing of Richard Kerris visit/speaking event
- Communications Media and English Studies Departments virtual talk with screenwriter Ted Kupper

VI Action Plan for 2023-24:

Planned Initiatives for 2023-24	Associated Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy	Indicate if a DEI initiative
Proposal of Latino/a/x and Latin American Studies Minor and exploration of Major.	Goal 1.3 Goal 1.4 Goal 2.1	X
Collaborate with academic departments to pursue curricular redesigns that differentiate the BA from the BS beyond the language requirement	Goal 1.1	
Collaborate with academic departments to undertake an evaluation of program course numbers to ensure numbers are consistently applied to indicate lower and upper-level courses	Goal 1.1 Goal 2.4	
Evaluate major requirements with programs to determine if more space can be created for electives	Goal 1.1 Goal 5.2	
Work with departments to develop strategies to increase diversity in faculty and staff, with support from Human Resources	Goal 4.1	X
Expand opportunities for student HIP	Goal 1.2	X
Support faculty teaching and scholarship	Goal 2.1 Goal 3.5 Goal 4.3 Goal 4.4	

	Goal 4.7	
Continue to explore new transfer and articulation agreements with Community Colleges	Goal 2.4	X
Continue discussions with high schools exploring credit for coursework with matriculation to Fitchburg State University	Goal 5.3	
Continued alignment of General Education with majors	Goal 1.1	
Complete BHE process for new majors in Expressive Arts Therapies and Creative Arts Enterprise.	Goal 1.4	
Work with departments and CPS to explore options for additional certificate programs	Goal 1.5 Goal 5.4	
Continue to support the development of new General Education courses, particularly integrative/high impact practice courses	Goal 1.1	
Continue to support diversity pedagogies and campus programming through the Deans' Anti-Racism Fund	Goal 1.4	X
Continue work with Communications Media and Humanities on renovation plans for Conlin	Goal 6.5	
Implement work of HEIF grant, including Multilingual Peer Mentoring program	Goal 2.2	X
Strengthen city and regional collaborations related to social and economic development through the Fitchburg Local Innovation Project	Goal 3.3 Goal 3.4	X
Strengthen regional collaborations in the Arts and Humanities with sister and 2-year campuses	Goal 3.6	X (perhaps)
Continue work with other Deans, Institutional Research and Planning, and the Registrar on improving workload management	Goal 4.7	
Continue discussion with local agencies regarding internship placements for our students	Goal 1.4	
Expand faculty use of Active Learning Classrooms and work with Registrar to streamline process for room assignments	Goal 4.3 Goal 4.4	
Expand departmental collaboration on work to identify career competencies	Goal 2.5 Goal 5.1	X
Continue work with Sociology Program to develop an applied learning capstone, after which all programs in Arts and Sciences will include an intentional culminating experience	Goal 1.2	X

VII Assessment Report for 2023-24

Planned Initiatives for 2023-24	Actions Taken
Proposal of Latino/a/x and Latin American Studies Minor and exploration of Major.	U.S. Latino and Latin American Studies Major development work being supported by AIF. Implementation of minor being held until major is developed.
Collaborate with academic departments to pursue curricular redesigns that differentiate the BA from the BS beyond the language requirement	Discussions occurred throughout the year within departments regarding the BA/BS distinction for each program. Details will be provided in NECHE update.
Collaborate with academic departments to undertake an evaluation of program course numbers to ensure numbers are consistently applied to indicate lower and upper-level courses	Programs examined course numbering and submitted changes to AUC in order to create more meaningful and consistent course levels. Details will be provided in NECHE update.
Evaluate major requirements with programs to determine if more space can be created for electives	Ongoing
Work with departments to develop strategies to increase diversity in faculty and staff, with support from Human Resources	Ongoing
Expand opportunities for student HIP	Creation of The Point City Hall New Service to provide students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in reporting on local politics and government working with experienced journalists
Support faculty teaching and scholarship	Continued to organize and support the use of the active learning classrooms. Service on the Center for Teaching and Learning Committee. Spearheaded application process for NEH Summer Research Grants.
Continue to explore new transfer and articulation agreements with Community Colleges	Agreements listed in section V: Transfer Pathways and Articulation Agreements
Continue discussions with high schools exploring credit for coursework with matriculation to Fitchburg State University	Details listed in section V: Transfer Pathways and Articulation Agreements
Continued alignment of General Education with majors	Programs continue to submit courses for General Education and MAJ attributes
Complete BHE process for new majors in Expressive Arts Therapies and Creative Arts Enterprise.	Majors approved in the spring with majors available to incoming students as of Fall 2024
Work with departments and CPS to explore options for additional certificate programs	Certificates in AI & Data-Based Communication Strategy and Data-Driven

	Social Media Strategy approved last year. Additional work will continue.
Continue to support the development of new General Education courses, particularly integrative/high impact practice courses	Expansion of journalism internship opportunities. Additional capstone and internship experiences approved by AUC. Continuing to explore relationships with local agencies.
Continue to support diversity pedagogies and campus programming through the Deans' Anti-Racism Fund	Four projects were funding this year. We will continue this initiative.
Continue work with Communications Media and Humanities on renovation plans for Conlon	Met with architects throughout the year to finalize plans. Work expected to begin next year with Film/Video area.
Implement work of HEIF grant, including Multilingual Peer Mentoring program	Oversight of this initiative is with the Associate VP of Academic Affairs.
Strengthen city and regional collaborations related to social and economic development through the Fitchburg Local Innovation Project	Work has been delayed due to sabbaticals and leaves.
Strengthen regional collaborations in the Arts and Humanities with sister and 2-year campuses	Meeting held with MWCC Provost and Deans. Discussion with heads of Mass Links program. Work is ongoing.
Continue work with other Deans, Institutional Research and Planning, and the Registrar on improving workload management	Human Resources had paused this work for the year. Project expected to pick up again next year.
Continue discussion with local agencies regarding internship placements for our students	Ongoing
Expand faculty use of Active Learning Classrooms and work with Registrar to streamline process for room assignments	56 classes were held in the active learning classrooms this year with schedule coordinated by the Dean of Arts and Sciences. Additional trainings and meetings were scheduled directly through Events Management.
Expand departmental collaboration on work to identify career competencies	Ongoing
Continue work with Sociology Program to develop an applied learning capstone, after which all programs in Arts and Sciences will include an intentional culminating experience	Ongoing

VIII Other Accomplishments:

Addressed in Programs/Activities above.

IX Action Plan 2024-2025:

Planned Initiatives for 2024-25	Associated Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy	Indicate if a DEI initiative
Continue work on Latin American Studies Major supported by AIF grant	Goal 1.3 Goal 1.4 Goal 2.1	X
Support work of developing an interdisciplinary Finance Major	Goal 1.3 Goal 1.4	
Continue to collaborate with academic departments to pursue curricular redesigns that differentiate the BA from the BS beyond the language requirement	Goal 1.1	
Continue work exploring an Interdisciplinary concentration in Sustainability Studies supported by an AIF grant	Goal 1.3 Goal 1.4 Goal 4.6	
Continue to collaborate with academic departments to undertake an evaluation of program course numbers to ensure numbers are consistently applied to indicate lower and upper-level courses	Goal 1.1 Goal 2.4	
Evaluate major requirements with programs to determine if more space can be created for electives	Goal 1.1 Goal 5.2	
Work with departments to develop strategies to increase diversity in faculty and staff, with support from Human Resources	Goal 4.1	X
Expand opportunities for student HIP	Goal 1.2	X
Support faculty teaching and scholarship	Goal 2.1 Goal 3.5 Goal 4.3 Goal 4.4 Goal 4.7	
Continue to explore new transfer and articulation agreements with Community Colleges	Goal 2.4	X
Continue discussions with high schools exploring credit for coursework with matriculation to Fitchburg State University	Goal 5.3	
Continued alignment of General Education with majors	Goal 1.1	
Work with departments and CPS to explore options for additional certificate programs	Goal 1.5 Goal 5.4	
Continue to support the development of new General Education courses, particularly integrative/high impact practice courses	Goal 1.1	

Continue to support diversity pedagogies and campus programming through the Deans' Anti-Racism Fund	Goal 1.4	X
Continue work with Communications Media and Humanities on renovation plans for Conlon and Kent	Goal 6.5	
Continue work on architectural plans for Black Box Theater on Main Street	Goal 1.2 Goal 3.6 Goal 6.5	
Continue to support AIF funded work on Supporting Education Justice in First Year Writing	Goal 2.1 Goal 2.2	X
Strengthen city and regional collaborations related to social and economic development through the Fitchburg Local Innovation Project	Goal 3.3 Goal 3.4	X
Explore models of Writing Centers	Goal 2.1 Goal 2.2	X
Work with World Language faculty to explore and develop processes to better place students in appropriate levels of foreign language	Goal 1.1	X
Strengthen regional collaborations in the Arts and Humanities with sister and 2-year campuses	Goal 3.6	X (perhaps)
Examine CLEP and Seal of Biliteracy credit policies.	Goal 1.1 Goal 2.4	X
Support work for Quinn Bill certification of MS in Criminal Justice program	Goal 1.5 Goal 5.4	
Continue work with other Deans, Institutional Research and Planning, and the Registrar on improving workload management	Goal 4.7	
Continue discussion with local agencies regarding internship placements for our students	Goal 1.4	
Support of Advancement Office work on Visiting Alumni, programming, and gifts.	Goal 6.4	
Expand and strengthen academic relationships with the Fitchburg Art Museum.	Goal 3.6	
Continue to explore opportunities for pipelines into graduate and undergraduate education with local organizations	Goal 1.5 Goal 5.3	
Expand faculty use of Active Learning Classrooms and work with Registrar to streamline process for room assignments	Goal 4.3 Goal 4.4	

X Reflection:

This was an exciting year with much activity focused on expansion and support of the arts with the successful passage of two new arts programs, the restarting of planning for the black box theater, and the finalizing of renovation plans for Conlon. Despite the unexpected departure of our Police Academy Director, we were able to hire an interim director who has successfully mounted our summer Police Academy. Faculty members continue to report increased stress due to the escalating needs of their students and the growing demands of advising. In response, the school has engaged in ongoing discussions at both departmental and administrative levels to identify the most effective and optimal methods for teaching, advising, and service. These efforts aim to better meet the evolving needs of the entire academic community. Remarkably, even with substantial teaching and service obligations, faculty in the School of Arts and Sciences have continued to produce noteworthy research and creative works, reflecting their dedication to their fields and to the university's mission. This perseverance highlights the resilience and passion of the faculty, who strive to balance their multifaceted roles while contributing valuable knowledge and creativity to their disciplines.