

May 30, 2024

Dr. Noe Ortega, Commissioner  
Massachusetts Department of Higher Education  
Office of the Commissioner  
One Ashburton Place, Room 1401  
Boston, MA 02108

RE: Recommendation of Dr. Donna Souder Hodge as the 12<sup>th</sup> president of Fitchburg State University.

Dear Commissioner Ortega,

I write pursuant to Section III. A. of the Department of Higher Education Guidelines and Procedures of the Search, Selection, Appointment and Removal of State University and Community College Presidents, (“BHE Guidelines”) to provide formal notice that the Board of Trustees of Fitchburg State University voted by a majority of its members to recommend that Dr. Donna Hodge be appointed president of Fitchburg State university and to authorize the board chair to negotiate terms and conditions of such appointment, in accordance with the BHE Guidelines.

You are in receipt of the finalists’ resumes and cover letters. We were extremely pleased to have received 78 applications of interest; of those who self-identified we had 15 female respondents, 32 male respondents, 1 non-binary respondent, 3 respondents with disabilities and the racial/ethnic makeup of the respondents were 8 Asian, 7 Black or African American, 26 White, 3 Two or more races and 4 Hispanic/Latino. Our 10 semifinalists reflected a diverse representation that stayed consistent with our finalists who came to campus. We had one female and two males, 1 Hispanic and the other two or more races. If you require more information related to the affirmative action and diversity of the candidates please let me know.

I have spoken with Dr. Hodge several times in connection with the proposed appointment terms, including compensation, and they are memorialized in writing pursuant to the Terms of Appointment Provided by the Department of Higher Education.

All background checks shall be forwarded to you for your review.

Finally, the summary of the search process is being sent under separate cover. The entire process was a great experience for the search committee as well as the Board of Trustees of Fitchburg State University. I look forward to the meeting with the Board of Higher Education on June 11, 2024.

Very truly yours,

  
C. Deborah Phillips