Congressman Martin T. Meehan Chosen to Lead Lowell Campus

UML Alum will Assume the Chancellorship July 1

Acting on the recommendation of UMass President Jack M. Wilson, the University of Massachusetts Board of Trustees has unanimously selected U.S. Rep. Martin T. Meehan as the new chancellor of UMass Lowell.

"Congressman Meehan has a proven record of accomplishment. He is a leader, an innovator and has a demonstrated passion for higher education in general and UMass Lowell in particular. I believe that Marty Meehan will be a truly outstanding chancellor. Marty Meehan won the hearts and minds of the campus constituencies during this process. We are very fortunate that he is willing to leave Congress in order to come home to UMass Lowell," President Wilson said in nominating him for the position.

Rep. Meehan is expected to assume the UMass Lowell chancellorship on July 1. He succeeds former Chancellor William T. Hogan, who retired last year after serving as the leader of the Lowell campus for 25 years. David J. MacKenzie has been serving as interim chancellor since Dr. Hogan’s retirement.

The UMass trustees voted on the Meehan appointment at their March meeting at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester. Wilson communicated the decision to the Lowell campus via e-mail immediately after the vote.

Wilson noted that Meehan’s candidacy “has generated enthusiasm among faculty, students, community leaders and industry figures, many of whom called and wrote to me to express their feelings about the next chancellor. His visit to the campus was seen as inspiring by many of the University community.” [See the full text of President Wilson’s message to the campus in eNews at www.uml.edu/news.]

Enthusiasm ran high when the UMass President introduced Meehan to the UML community at a campus reception held the same day as the vote. Hundreds of faculty, students, staff, community leaders, elected officials and Meehan friends and family members packed Alumni Hall for the introduction, despite it being the campus’s spring break. Formal remarks were followed by an impromptu presentation of gifts to the new campus leader as well as questions from the dozens of media in attendance.

Meehan elicited boisterous laughter from the crowd when a reporter asked if he would endorse any of the candidates to replace him in Congress. Meehan responded, “We in academia don’t get involved in elective politics.”

Rep. Meehan, a Lowell native and UMass Lowell alumnus, has served in Congress since 1993, representing Massachusetts’ Fifth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives. Previously, he served

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as first assistant district attorney of Middlesex County and as the Commonwealth’s deputy secretary of state for Securities and Corporations. He earned a bachelor’s in education and political science at UMass Lowell and M.P.A. and J.D. degrees at Suffolk University.

Stephen P. Tocco, chairman of the UMass Board of Trustees, said he was “very impressed” by the search process that resulted in the selection of Rep. Meehan.

“This process has been very focused and very efficient,” Tocco said. “This is a clear example of an outstanding process leading to the selection of a truly outstanding leader. I am confident that Marty Meehan will lead UMass Lowell to new heights. He is the right leader at the right moment.”

Meehan, who has been described as one of the most effective members of Congress, said he was “pleased and honored” to be assuming the leadership of his alma mater.

“I owe the success that I have enjoyed in my life to the education and opportunities I received at UMass Lowell,” Meehan said. “The University of Massachusetts is the indispensable university. I firmly believe that the University of Massachusetts will be the key to our future and that it will shape the future of our region.

“A very great responsibility has been entrusted to me. Higher education transforms lives and transforms us as people. I can think of no more important work and no greater calling, and I thank President Wilson and the Board of Trustees for placing their confidence in me and for providing me with this chance to make a lasting contribution to our students and our state,” Meehan added.

His appointment to the Lowell chancellorship brings a formal end to the search process that began last August, when President Wilson established a 21-member chancellor search committee, asking the panel to identify candidates who could lead the campus into “a new era of growth.” Last month, the committee selected three finalists: Rep. Meehan, David C. Chang, chancellor of the Polytechnic University in Brooklyn, and Nabil A. Ibrahim, vice chancellor for academic affairs and chief academic officer at Purdue University-Calumet.

“This has been a thorough and comprehensive search process. Our search committee reviewed more than 100 candidates, interviewed nine candidates and ultimately came forward with three outstanding finalists. The University owes a debt of gratitude to the search committee and to the hundreds of members of the UMass Lowell community who participated in this process,” Wilson said.

—EJ

SJC Chief Justice Marshall Testifies on Campus

Ways and Means Committee Hearing Covers Courts

There weren’t many racquetballs pounding the walls at the Campus Rec Center during Spring Break, but the Patrick Administration’s budget took some hits in a meeting room there. Sen. Steven C. Panagiotakos, vice chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, co-chaired a committee hearing in which court Chief Justices and related agency heads reported that the Administration’s budget proposal for the next fiscal year underfunds basic needs.

Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Margaret Marshall said the proposed funding levels for the Massachusetts Trial Court system are “not adequate to permit our courts to serve the public in basic respects,” requesting about $40 million more from the Legislature. The hearing was co-chaired by Rep. Theodore Spellios of Danvers.

“I am looking forward to continuing to work with him to leverage the expertise and talent of the campus to promote economic development and partnerships between the campus and business leaders.”

— Howard R. Berke, chairman/CEO, Konarka Technologies, Inc., Lowell

“I think Marty Meehan is the perfect choice.”

— Charles Hoff, principal investor, First Step Land Development, Inc., and UMass Lowell alumnus, ’66

“He has the leadership skills, knowledge and contacts necessary to take UMass Lowell to the next level.”

— Joyce Plockin, president of the Massachusetts Technology Leadership Council

“Their example will be all the more powerful as he takes the reins of our campus.”

— Political Science Prof. Fred Lewis

Comments from Campus Leaders

“Congressman Meehan is uniquely qualified to take the University to the next level.”

— Former Chancellor William T. Hogan

“Congressman Marty Meehan is undoubtedly the best person for the job.”

— David J. MacKenzie, interim chancellor

“This is a perfect moment in the life of this campus for a person with Marty Meehan’s energy and vision.”

— Provost John Wooding

“Marty Meehan appreciates the importance of research and knows what it takes to succeed.”

— Mechanical Engineering Prof. Julie Chen, director of the UMass Lowell-based Massachusetts Nanomanufacturing Center of Excellence

“For Marty, serving the University also means serving his neighbors and serving his community—to him it would never be just a job.”

— Biology Prof. Susan Braunnht

“Marty understands the issues, the technology and the commercial challenges.”

— Plastics Engineering Prof. Stephen McCarthy, director of the Institute for Plastics Innovation

“He is very committed to making the same type of education he received available to all qualified students.”

— Prof. Kathleen Doyle, chair of the Clinical Laboratory and Nutritional Sciences

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— Stephen Holstrom, president, Student Government Association Junior, majoring in political science, from Gardner

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“Chancellor Meehan has [a] passion for the campus, the students, faculty and staff.”

— Heather Makrez, student trustee, member of the search committee

“I think he’ll bring a renewed energy to the campus.”

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March 28, 2007

The Shuttle is published by the Publications Office, UMass Lowell, One University Avenue, Lowell, MA 01854 Tel. 934-3223. Executive Vice Chancellor: Dr. Frederick P. Sperounis

Director of Communication: Patricia McCafferty Editor: Mary Lou Hubbell Staff Writers: Geoffrey Douglas Jack McDerough Other Writers: Renee Lies Claffey Jessica Cornell Jennifer Hanlon Elizabeth James Kristen O’Reilly Sandra Seitz

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Minkkinen Photos Featured in New York Times Magazine

Rock Climbing Assignment was Full of Firsts

For the first photo assignment of his career, Arno Minkkinen, professor in the Art Department and world-renowned photographer, had a doozie.

The call from the New York Times came in on a Thursday. Would he photograph the top women rock climbers in the country? He was delighted and agreed quickly, he says, “because you have to be ready to say yes immediately when opportunities come along.”

By Sunday he was on his way to Yosemite Valley, California. On Monday, he climbed the 3,000-foot vertical granite face of El Capitan tied to a climbing partner with a single rope. At the top, he tucked himself into a crevice to get a photo of Beth Rodden suspended from the mountainside. Then, he rappelled down.

That was the first time he climbed and the first time he rappelled.

Play, a New York Times seasonal sports magazine. Times photo editors who themselves are “legends in their field,” according to—called his shots “vibrant and soulful.” These photos capture what rock climbers know, Minkkinen says. “You have to trust the other person with your life. Pictures like these show the spiritual journey of the climbers.

“I think they asked me to do this photo shoot because they thought I was a rock climber,” says Minkkinen. “They had been looking at my work and assumed there was no other way I could have gotten some of my photos.” Minkkinen is known for his haunting self-portraits in nature, many of which seem to defy natural laws such as gravity.

“I think I earned a sort of respect from the climbers when they realized I had gotten those shots without the ropes and safety equipment that are part of rock climbing,” he says. “They could respect someone who could do this as an athlete. They were willing to work with me because I wasn’t afraid.” Minkkinen calls his climbing experience “an adventure. It gave me a jolt of adrenaline. At 61, I became like 41.” He adds that his own work may benefit from learning about the use of ropes in climbing “because it opens up other ideas of things I can do that are a little more dangerous.” He is also aware of the increased exposure his photos will get by appearing in the New York Times.

“The circulation of the Times is huge,” he points out. “This gets my work out there in a way exhibits never could.”

O’Connell Wins Prestigious Commonwealth Award

Former Tsongas Center Leader Honored at State House

This year, Lowell’s prominence in the state’s arts and culture arena was evident as two of the five recipients of the Commonwealth Awards were given to people with ties to the Mill City.

The Commonwealth Awards are the state’s highest honors in the arts, humanities and sciences. They are given by the Massachusetts Cultural Council to outstanding individuals and organizations in five different categories.

Peter O’Connell, the recently retired director of the Tsongas Industrial History Center, received the award at a State House ceremony for his 40-year career in history education. After coming to the Tsongas Center in 1996, O’Connell developed and oversaw educational programs for more than 60,000 students annually, showcasing the City’s resources and role in the industrial revolution. Under his leadership, he also spearheaded teacher training programs that attracted educators from across the country.

“As museum educators, we live at the edge of the museum or park and the world of the schools. We are educational brokers creating experiential learning in non-traditional settings,” says O’Connell. “This is especially true in a University, which is focused on research and teaching of undergraduates while the Tsongas Center, on the other hand, is primarily working with students in grades 3-8 and with their teachers. So it is doubly rewarding to receive this recognition to cap off my career and recognize the work of all the history museum educators in the Commonwealth!” Also receiving the Commonwealth Award was the staff of the Revolving Museum. Located in downtown Lowell, the museum was honored for its cultural offerings, which include a wide range of youth programs, public art projects and collaborations with the University.

Renowned University-Community Partnership Expert Visiting UML

Dr. Barbara Holland to Address UMass’ Commitment

When the state university system of California wanted to ensure that its system-wide university-community partnerships efforts were comprehensive and coordinated, they turned to Dr. Barbara Holland.

“Dr. Holland is the prominent scholar in the growing area of university-community partnerships,” says Prof. Linda Silka, director of the Center for Family, Work and Community and co-chair of CITA, a committee devoted to exploring facets of successful partnerships. “We’re honored to have her attend our conference.”

Dr. Barbara Holland, renowned scholar in university-community partnerships, will attend UMass Lowell’s upcoming CITA conference in April. Dr. Holland will participate in a presentation by Keith Motley, UMass vice president for Business Marketing and Public Affairs.

Their work also includes public art projects and collaborations with the University.

College of ManagementAnnounces Entrepreneurship Concentration

they didn’t have to work. That way, they could be more fully involved in internships and team projects.”

Information regarding the Entrepreneurship Concentration is available on the College of Management website. For additional information please contact Prof. Tello at Steven_Tello@uml.edu, or by phone at (978) 934-4260.

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Ruths Wins NSF CAREER Award

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded Marina Ruths a CAREER grant for young investigators. Such grants are designed to support promising researchers early in their academic careers.

Ruths, assistant professor in the Department of Chemistry, is researching the characteristics of adhesion and friction at the nanoscopic-to-microscopic level—problems that in the macro world might show up in lubrication or manufacturing processes.

“At that level, most real surfaces are rough,” explains Ruths. “They have asperities—isolated points of contact—that vary in size, height and distribution—and the materials themselves have differing properties of elasticity and strength. As materials are pressed or rubbed together, some points and then others come into contact. “At present, we typically study just one point, but can’t discuss all the parameters that govern the phenomena we see during friction and adhesions of real surfaces.”

To understand those parameters through her research, Ruths will make surfaces with controlled, structured patterns of asperities: distributing nanoparticles on atomically smooth substrates. Study under controlled conditions will help to explain issues that show up in lubrication problems and studies of adhesion.

The NSF grant of $400,000 over five years will fund two graduate students, one full-time and one half-time.

Ruths has been researching friction and adhesion for about 10 years. Other research includes the friction of aromatic, sulphur-containing compounds—similar to ones found in diesel fuels.

“Aromatics and sulphur-containing compounds are pollutants, but removing them from diesel fuel reduces its ability to lubricate,” says Ruths. “So far, we have found that these compounds are mostly not good lubricants in themselves, but protect the surfaces from wear.” Replacement compounds will have to be found that perform equally well. This research is funded by the Petroleum Research Fund.

Ruths also teaches a graduate course on surface and colloid chemistry, as well as introductory chemistry.

College of Management Announces Entrepreneurship Concentration

The College of Management has announced a new undergraduate concentration in its Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) degree program. As of this coming fall, students can choose a concentration in Entrepreneurship.

“The intent of this concentration is two-fold,” says Stuart Freedman, chair of the college’s Management Group. “One aim is to create entrepreneurs. The other purpose is to provide students with the skills and information to become entrepreneurs, people able to create entrepreneurial efforts within corporations. Big businesses need this.

“An innovation-based economy is based on transforming research projects into marketable products,” Freedman points out. “In reality, a very small percentage of those projects become successful businesses. We want to boost the number of people who can help with this process.”

“This is also a way for us to leverage the fact that 80 percent of our students stay in the area,” adds Dean Kathryn Carter. “Our graduates will be helping companies take root in the region.”

College faculty were developing the entrepreneurship concentration when they began getting questions from prospective students and their parents and from community colleges about this possibility. They also surveyed their current students to assess interest in such a concentration and had a very positive response.

“We know this is something students want,” says Freedman. Other undergraduate concentrations in the BSBA program include finance, accounting, management, marketing and management information systems. Students may combine the new concentration with any of the existing ones to create a program that meets a wide range of career goals.

“This is a concentration with applied experience built in,” points out Assistant Professor Steven Tello, one of the concentration’s creators. Faculty are developing a capstone course which will link undergraduate students in the program with scientists on campus and companies involved with the campus’s Commercial Venture and Intellectual Property group.

“We anticipate that students will be able to contribute to the company and also have the opportunity to observe and ask questions like ‘how do entrepreneurs think?’ and ‘to what extent am I like these people?’”, Freedman says. The intent of the capstone experience is to both help students learn about the entrepreneurial process while promoting the development of University Intellectual Property.

In order to facilitate student participation in experiential activities such as the capstone course, the program plans to pilot financial sponsorship for qualifying students. “Most of our students are already working 20 to 30 hours a week,” says Tello.

“We’re looking for ways to develop sponsorships for students that would give them a semester or two when…

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