Booming University Community Gathers for Convocation 2016

$1M Gift Announced to Establish Donahue Center for Business Ethics and Social Responsibility

They are 2,900 strong — the largest-ever group of incoming new and transfer students — and as the school year began, they became part of the nearly 18,000 students pursuing their futures at UMass Lowell.

The university community gathered at the Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell on Aug. 31 for Convocation, the traditional academic year kick-off.

“It doesn’t feel all that long ago that I was in your position: a new student, starting at this university, excited, uncertain and hopeful,” Chancellor Jacquie Moloney told the gathered students. “Let me assure you of this: Your education will change your life. It changed mine.”

Moloney also announced a new $1 million gift from philanthropist Nancy Donahue to establish the Donahue Center for Business Ethics. The Donahue Center — which will be based at the Manning School of Business new home, the Pulichino Tong Business Center — will expand education in ethics to all majors, offer new research opportunities for faculty and students and develop ethics-focused programs and events for the university and the public.

The Chronicle of Higher Education recently ranked UMass Lowell as the ninth-fastest-growing public doctoral research institution in the nation, up from 10th last year. The 1,700-member freshman class is the most diverse ever (32 percent are from ethnically diverse backgrounds) and has the highest-ever average high-school GPA (3.59) and average SAT score (1179) for UMass Lowell. The Class of 2020 also includes the first group of students — approximately 130 with an average high-school GPA of 3.7 — to use the university’s SAT-optional admissions program, which allows high-achieving high schoolers to apply without test scores by completing other requirements.

Throughout the Convocation ceremony, students were encouraged to engage beyond the classroom on campus and in the community, as well as to set goals for success in life after graduation beyond the salary they will earn.

Business ethics expert and author Corey Ciocchetti delivered a lively keynote address, using his own experiences to illustrate that true success is not necessarily defined by wealth or in other ways that students might expect. He urged the students to seek peace and contentment, as well as true friendships, and to act with principle.

“It is impossible to be truly happy if you are an unethical person,” said Ciocchetti, who teaches ethics at the University of Denver.

Convocation also served as an unofficial welcome to campus for Michael Vayda, UMass Lowell’s new provost, who, with Moloney, officially inducted the new students as members of the university community.
South Campus Dining Commons Certified ‘Green’

McGauvran Center Eatery Lauded for Efficient Energy Usage, Waste Reduction, Sustainable Food

The South Campus Dining Commons has been recognized as a “3 Star Certified Green Restaurant” by the Green Restaurant Association, a national nonprofit organization that provides benchmarks for restaurants to become more environmentally responsible.

The dining hall, which opened in January as part of the $34 million McGauvran Center renovation, is in select company. There are just 26 restaurants across the state certified as “3 Star” — and only 16 at a university or college.

Rich Lemoine, executive director of administrative services, environmental and emergency management, says the certification is the direct result of the commitment to sustainability shown by University Dining, which is managed by Aramark.

The GRA evaluates restaurants and awards “GreenPoints” for dozens of environmentally friendly steps across seven categories: water efficiency, waste reduction and recycling, sustainable durable goods and building materials; sustainable food; energy; reusable and environmentally preferable disposables; and chemical and pollution reduction.

South Campus Dining received the most points (91.68) in the energy category, which includes steps such as using LED lamps and Energy Star appliances. The dining hall received 63.75 points in the waste category, for its pre- and post-consumer recycling of food waste, and 45.03 points in the food category for its use of humanely raised and handled eggs and meat, along with its use of local produce.

Campus Latino Professionals Chapter Earns Kudos

Group Honored for its Growth and Activities

In early August, Edwin Naranjo, president of UMass Lowell’s student chapter of the Association of Latino Professionals for America, traveled to Dallas to collect the university’s trophy for best student chapter in the Northeast region. He was joined by fellow students Michael Ortiz and past chapter president Chris Nunez ’16 for ALPFA’s 44th national convention.

The UMass Lowell student chapter was recognized for growing membership and a mix of student activities, events and meetings more frequent than those of other chapters.

Founded in 2013, the university’s chapter offers students firsthand lessons on the art and science of business, including networking opportunities with local business people. Naranjo says he has gained insight into the professional world through the mentoring he’s received as a member of the organization. The national convention, whose theme was “Latinos Driving Growth in the U.S. Economy,” offered more opportunities for learning over three days.

For Nunez, networking through ALPFA led “directly” to his new job as an account manager at Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford, Conn. “I also had multiple job offers from major corporations during the convention,” he says. “It is networking that pays off.”

“I had a great time — we all did,” says Naranjo. “The activities were great, and I attended a lot of workshops and met with professionals who gave good advice.”

Nursing Students Study in China

Group at Start Gains Global Health Perspective

Srayluckyna Thach ’16 jumped at the first global academic experience she could get.

“Not too many nursing programs offer the chance to study abroad,” says Thach, who recently traveled to China with seven other nursing students and two faculty members on a cross-cultural exchange experience. “I was able to integrate academia with my love for travel. It was an amazing experience.”

The 18-day study abroad program, part of the university’s Global Health Experience course, was designed to give students an international health perspective as they compared the Chinese health-care delivery system and culture with those from the U.S. It was offered in partnership with Shandong University’s School of Nursing, one of China’s top nursing schools.

Asst. Prof. of Nursing Yuan Zhang, who is from China, Clinical Asst. Prof. Valerie King and the students attended nursing seminars, visited hospitals and community health centers and learned about traditional Chinese medicine and culture. The group also explored the country’s history, geography, tradition, people and spirituality.

For recent graduate Nicole Hamel ’16, the experience underscored the importance of understanding cultural differences when treating patients.

“We have always been taught in school that you must always be mindful of cultural differences,” she says. “I now have ideas for different practices that I could try here in the U.S., such as massage therapy for pain management.”
New Scholarship Benefits Computer Science Majors

Fund Celebrates Life of Brianna Gainley ’16

Brianna Gainley, a computer science major from Burlington, was the first member of the Class of 2016 to receive her diploma — in a special ceremony held last March after she learned that the osteosarcoma she had battled throughout her college years was terminal.

Gainley died on April 23, surrounded by her family, including her parents, Frank ’86 and Maureen ’92, ’97, and her fiancé, Ryan Hart ’16. A few weeks later, at the official UMass Lowell commencement, Chancellor Jacquie Moloney made a point of honoring Gainley, calling her “a young woman whose hard work, dedication and perseverance truly exemplified the UMass Lowell spirit.”

Her family has created the Brianna T. Gainley and Ryan C. Hart Teamwork Scholarship to benefit computer science majors in the Kennedy College of Sciences.

Diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer during her freshman year, Gainley spent the next five years undergoing chemotherapy, ultimately losing both a lung and her right leg to the disease.

But in between her treatments and surgeries, the Commonwealth Scholar continued to pursue her degree, while also completing internships and helping the UMass Lowell robotics team win a national title.

To contribute to the Gainley and Hart Scholarship, or for more information about creating your own endowed fund, please contact the Office of University Advancement at 978-934-2223.

Researchers Develop New Super-High-Resolution Imaging Technique

Technology Can Be Applied to Medicine, Health Care, Materials Study

Scientists from UMass Lowell and King’s College London in the U.K. have demonstrated a new way of capturing ultrasharp images of structures of extremely tiny objects measuring billions of a meter in size.

Called “interscale mixing microscopy,” or IMM, the technique can obtain details in viruses and nanoparticles much smaller than the wavelength of light. Such technology would be helpful in developing new vaccines against pathogens as well as innovative nanomaterials for industrial applications and novel pharmaceutical drugs to fight diseases.

“Our research addresses a fundamental problem in the field of microscopy,” says physics Prof. Viktor Podolskiy, who is the principal investigator for the UMass Lowell team. “When an object is smaller than the wavelength of light, you cannot really resolve the object’s size, shape or structure. Our technique is designed to go beyond this so-called ‘diffraction limit.’”

Podolskiy adds: “Sub-wavelength imaging with IMM can potentially be used to obtain the colors, or spectra, of small objects such as bacteria, viruses and nanoparticles. By knowing their color signatures, we can rapidly identify and characterize the objects and determine their precise chemical composition.”

The team’s findings were recently published in “Optica,” the prestigious journal of The Optical Society. Funding for the research was provided by the U.S. National Science Foundation and the U.K.’s Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, Royal Society and Wolfson Foundation.

By combining a diffraction grating (a special, finely ruled plate shown at upper left) with a conventional optical microscope, scientists are able to dramatically increase the microscope’s resolution to below the wavelength of light.

History Prof. Robert Forrant has been named UMass Lowell’s 2016 University Professor for his outstanding contributions in research, teaching and public history projects in the community.

Forrant, who worked as a machinist and union business representative in Springfield before beginning his academic career as a labor and industrial historian, is the first professor from the College of Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences to receive the university’s highest faculty honor since the award’s inception in 2008.

Special Adviser to the Chancellor Donald Pierso, who as provost worked closely with Forrant to establish the new master’s degree program in history, lauded his teaching and research, as well as his “extraordinary” community service in Massachusetts and beyond.

Forrant has consulted with the U.N. Industrial Development Organization, the International Labour Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the International Metalworkers Federation and other trade unions.

Forrant said he was grateful for the three-year award, which includes a reduced teaching load so he can devote more time to research. This year, he will work with groups of students on researching and writing a history of the Coalition for a Better Acre, a community development corporation in Lowell’s Acre neighborhood, and an exhibit on Portuguese immigration to Lowell for the university’s Saab-Pedroso Center for Portuguese Culture and Research. He will also deliver the University Professor Lecture in spring 2017.

Forrant has received other major honors, including the UMass President’s Award for Public Service, several UMass Creative Economy grants, the university’s Martin Luther King Jr. Distinguished Service Award and the Massachusetts History Commendation.

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Online and Continuing Education Steps Up Workforce Education

The university is expanding a workforce education partnership with Hanscom Air Force Base that began with network security education and now includes training in project management.

“Hanscom is taking on a greater role in cybersecurity nationally. We worked with them to find a program to fit their needs,” says Catherine Kendrick, senior executive director of market development and online programs for the Division of Online and Continuing Education. “We’re deepening our partnership by offering an on-site project management course that prepares them for certification.”

The Hanscom partnership is just one of a growing number of workforce development programs that OCE offers to businesses and government agencies, using classes on site, online or both. Other partners include BAE Systems, Raytheon and Analog Devices. Not surprisingly, industry demand is mostly for computer science, engineering and business education.

“We’re looking at how you grow a talented workforce in the state, and we’re bringing the university to the client,” Kendrick says. “We customize our offerings to what the client wants.”

Hanscom houses part of the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center, which acquires, supports and maintains all U.S. Air Force weapons systems, from airplanes to cyberweapons.

The network security training began in January 2014 as an innovative, three-way partnership between Hanscom, the university and the state workforce development agency, MassDevelopment, which pays for the courses and books.

Students select four of five courses to earn a graduate certificate in network security from the university, which was recently designated a “National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Research” by the Department of Homeland Security and the National Security Agency. The students can also apply their credits toward the university’s online master’s degree in information technology, which is ranked one of the best in the nation.

Two years after the Education Partnership Agreement between the university and Hanscom was signed, more than 49 civilian and military employees and seven contractors had enrolled in the program, and 17 had completed it.

This year, the partnership was expanded to include the project management program. Not for credit, the program is certified by the Project Management Institute and prepares students for the Project Management Professional certification test, which is the industry standard. Again, MassDevelopment picked up most of the tab for the classes and materials.

The first cohort of 30 students took six seminars, including risk management, critical thinking and a team case study. The seminars totaled 11 full days, spread over three months. Lt. Gen. John Thompson, commander of the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center, presided over a ceremony to mark the program’s completion at the end of July.

The partnership goes both ways. Hanscom is working with the university’s Francis College of Engineering on several educational initiatives, including summer internships for students. Hanscom has also agreed to make Air Force personnel available for guest lectures, to help develop new courses and research projects and to serve as thesis advisers and mentors for undergraduate and graduate students.