Market Basket Documentary Offers Lessons in Business Ethics

UMass President Marty Meehan hosted an hourlong question-and-answer session with the film’s co-producers, Nick Buzzell and Leonsis, following the screening, which drew nearly 250 students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members to University Crossing’s Moloney Ballroom.

Philanthropist Nancy Donahue, whose $1 million gift to the university established the center named in honor of her and her late husband, also attended.

“The next generation of business leaders needs to understand that you can do well and do good,” Chancellor Jacquie Moloney said in thanking Donahue for her continued support of the university. “Nancy and her late husband shared a great passion for business ethics education, and it’s incumbent on all of us to teach the values that we saw in this film.”

Leonsis, a successful businessman and philanthropist, grew up in Lowell and attended the university for two years in the early 1970s. After graduating from Georgetown University, he went on to become president of AOL and is the founder and CEO of Monumental Sports and Entertainment, which owns three professional sports teams in Washington, D.C.: the NBA’s Wizards, the NHL’s Capitals and the WNBA’s Mystics.

A longtime friend of Demoulas, Leonsis compared the Market Basket story to the Arab Spring, with people using social media to organize and make their voices heard. In the case of Market Basket, the customer boycott and employee rallies prevented the chain from being sold to an outside venture capitalist firm that likely would have done away with the employee profit-sharing.

“Businesses matter to their communities and their employees, and managing for Main Street instead of just Wall Street really sets apart good businesses,” said Leonsis.

“You should claim this here at UMass Lowell as your story and make it the bedrock of your teaching,” he said.

“It’s an incredible case study in conscious capitalism and community,” said Assoc. Prof. Scott Latham, who was interviewed for the documentary along with Meehan. Latham said the Market Basket story resonates with students since many of them have worked for the company. “Students can believe in it because they’ve seen it firsthand,” he says.

The Donahue Center, which is part of the Manning School of Business, offers education, research and outreach opportunities for faculty and students and develops ethics-focused programs and events such as the documentary screening.
Eggs May Help Preserve Vision

A diet that includes regular consumption of eggs may help protect against macular degeneration, the leading cause of vision loss in the U.S., according to new research by Assoc. Prof. Thomas Wilson of the Department of Biomedical and Nutritional Sciences.

The 12-month study, the results of which were published in the Journal of Clinical Ophthalmology & Research, measured the effects of eating a dozen eggs per week on people with early age-related macular degeneration.

The macula, which is the light-sensitive portion of the retina, controls the ability to see in fine detail, making it possible to read, recognize faces or colors and clearly see objects. Age is a major risk factor for the disease, with more than 10 million people over the age of 60 in the U.S. affected by it.

The study found that people who consumed 12 eggs per week had a significant improvement in glare recovery, which means that they could more quickly recover sight after exposure to bright light.

According to Wilson, eggs provide nutrients that protect eyes from harsh light that damages the macula.

“Nutrition is one way to prevent or delay the onset of macular degeneration,” he says. “With a change in diet, people may slow the progression of the disease by preventing light from damaging the macula.”

The study was funded by the USDA and the Egg Nutrition Center, a division of the American Egg Board.

New Home to Business School Features Sustainable Design

The Pulichino Tong Business Center has received LEED Gold certification by the U.S. Green Building Council. LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is the rating system used by the council to evaluate the environmental performance of buildings and encourage sustainable design.

Pulichino Tong, which opened in April 2017 and is home to the Manning School of Business, is the university’s second LEED Gold building. The other is its North Campus Innovation District neighbor, the Mark and Elisia Saab Emerging Technologies and Innovation Center.

Designed by Cambridge Seven Associates, the four-story, 54,800-square-foot building includes sustainable features such as occupancy sensors and daylight harvesting, “chilled beams” for heating and cooling, and a solar wall to preheat the intake air. The project also earned LEED points by recycling materials from the demolition of Eames Hall, which was torn down to make way for the new building.

LEED scores buildings in nine categories, including energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, water efficiency, innovation in design and sustainable sites. A building’s overall score determines which LEED designation it receives: Certified, Silver, Gold or Platinum.

The university currently has three LEED Silver buildings: University Crossing, University Suites and the Health and Social Sciences Building.

Three other campus buildings—Bourgeois Hall, Leitch Hall and Fox Dining Hall—have been receiving upgrades to lighting, plumbing and heating systems as part of the university’s three-year Accelerated Energy Plan. They are targeted to receive LEED Silver designation once completed.

Social Science Professors Win Major Grant to Study Terrorist Recruitment

Four social science professors have won a $794,000 Department of Defense grant to study the effects of extremist propaganda on different personality types, as well as the effects of different countermessaging strategies.

The three-year grant was awarded by the Office of Naval Research to three faculty members in the School of Criminology and Justice Studies—Asst. Prof. Neil Shortland, Prof. Arie Perliger and Asst. Prof. Jill Portnoy—and Psychology Prof. Thomas Gordon.

Shortland, the director of the university’s Center for Terrorism and Security Studies, says the grant will result in several studies that will answer basic questions about the effects of exposure to online extremist messages and countermessages, such as: What kind of messaging is most effective? What are the short- and medium-term results of exposure to extremist messages and countermessages? What personality characteristics in viewers make them more or less receptive to different kinds of messages?

The researchers will focus on psychological traits, including the subjects’ sensitivity to threats of punishment and rewards, as well as their hostility, aggression and predisposition to extremist views.

“No one has done what we’re trying to do: predicting behavioral outcomes based on not just the type of propaganda, but also the type of person who is viewing it,” says Shortland, the primary investigator on the project.

Ultimately, the researchers plan to produce a variety of reports and training materials for professionals engaged in understanding terrorist recruitment and creating countermessaging, a book and a series of podcasts for students, teachers, practitioners and the public.
NIH-Funded Research Takes Aim at Heart Disease

**Study Could Help Prevent Sudden Deaths of Young Athletes**

A research team led by Assoc. Prof. Jeffrey Moore of the Department of Biological Sciences has won a four-year, $1.6 million grant from the National Institutes of Health for a study that could help prevent sudden cardiac deaths among young athletes.

Moore and his colleagues are studying hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, or HCM, which is a genetic disorder that causes the walls of the heart to thicken and become stiff. The condition reduces the heart’s ability to pump blood, which can lead to irregular heartbeats and heart failure.

Among young athletes, sudden cardiac arrest is the leading cause of death while competing or training. Moore says those deaths result from complications related to HCM. While HCM can occur at any age, there may be no symptoms in children and young adults with this condition, and the disease often goes undiagnosed.

The study aims to examine the disease process in great detail—from chemical changes and interactions at the molecular level to the structural arrangement of cardiac muscle fibers at the tissue level.

The team hopes its research will lead to new diagnostic tools and screening for early detection of the disease and help develop new targeted drug therapies.

Moore is the project’s principal investigator (PI). His co-PIs include Prof. William Lehman from the Boston University School of Medicine and Assoc. Prof. Stuart Campbell from the Yale School of Engineering and Applied Science.

**Two Patents Emerge from Work Supported by Pernick Fund**

Faculty and students at UMass Lowell and Shenkar College of Engineering, Design and Art in Israel have joined forces to study and produce new coatings that make surfaces from glass to metal self-cleaning.

The research, which is covered by two patents, could revolutionize the aerospace, automotive and building industries, among others.

Developed by faculty and student researchers in plastics engineering, the coatings resist corrosion and friction, which can translate into a wide range of commercial applications that reduce maintenance and pollution. For example, the exterior surface of an aircraft can be treated with a coating that will significantly decrease accumulation of snow and ice, which can lead to the reduction or elimination of the need for chemical deicers.

The coatings can be sprayed onto surfaces such as kitchen appliances and medical devices and are based on commercially available materials. Potential applications exist in the construction, agriculture, optical, aerospace and military sectors.

The research was supported by the Pernick Fund, which was founded by David Pernick, who graduated from UMass Lowell (then Lowell Textile Institute) in 1941. Before Pernick died in 2014, he and his wife, Frances, established the International Program of Graduate Studies in Plastics Engineering. The program brings doctoral students from Shenkar College to UMass Lowell and faculty from Lowell to Israel for research and academic collaboration.

“We are excited about the possibilities for this technology,” says Prof. Joey Mead of Plastics Engineering. The collaboration “is truly a story where philanthropy has led not only to educating our future researchers, but also to strengthening the local economy and creating new materials to solve real-world problems.”

**Endowed Scholarships Help Reduce Student Loan Debt**

Student loan debt is one of the top challenges facing college graduates today. Reducing that debt is one of the top priorities for Our Legacy, Our Place: The Campaign for UMass Lowell.

Alumni—as well as UML faculty, staff and supporters—have embraced that priority. Since 2010, they’ve almost doubled the number of endowed scholarships and other funds that support student learning. In December, the total number of endowed funds crossed the 500 mark when alumna Sandy Green ’86 endowed a new engineering scholarship.

“Donors like Sandy know the value of a UMass Lowell education, and they want to make sure that students today have the same opportunities they did,” says John Feudo, vice chancellor for university advancement. Green, who earned a master’s degree in electrical engineering with a concentration in communications and information systems, is the founder and CEO of n-Link Corporation, a successful IT services firm based in Bend, Ore.

UML students graduate with an average of $32,000 in loan debt. “Our goal is to reduce that debt to well under $30,000,” says Chancellor Jacquie Moloney. “Endowed scholarships help us do that.”

More than a dozen alumni have endowed scholarships during the current fiscal year, including James ’88 and Amy Regan, Gregory ’92 and Fadwa ’91 Chiklis, and Cheryl ’66 and Paul ’64 Katen. The Kronos Corporation, already a major university supporter, endowed a new scholarship to benefit Lowell High School graduates. Faculty members Robert Giles, chair of the Physics Department, and Paula Rayman, emerita director of the Peace and Conflict Studies Program, endowed funds. And family members and colleagues of Christine Dunlap, former executive director for strategic communications, endowed a memorial scholarship in her honor.

For more information about how to endow a scholarship, go to www.uml.edu/ourlegacy-ourplace or call the Office of University Advancement at 978-934-2223.
From the Bitcoin Boom to the Snowfall Forecast, Professors Offer Their Predictions for the Year Ahead

Let It Snow
It may not be Snowmageddon, but we can expect above-average snowfall this winter, says Frank Colby, professor of environmental, earth and atmospheric sciences.

The brutally cold start of the year portends more frigid temps ahead, he says. "Researchers are forecasting colder and snowier weather into March, with a total seasonal snowfall of around 60 inches, which is slightly above normal," says Colby.

Talk about Pop Muzik
What tunes will we be adding to our playlists this year? Prof. Alan Williams, chair of the Music Department, says there’s a good chance that pop songs will have an edge.

“I predict that we will see more direct political commentary in popular music. I think we will start to see more mainstream pop addressing the current political climate, much as we did during the late 1960s and early 1970s,” he says. “Be prepared to see more overt political statements from artists we might not expect them from.”

Bitcoin or Bust
Interest in Bitcoin, the cryptocurrency, took off last year, with its price skyrocketing into the thousands of dollars per unit. When its value started to slide in December, it left the world wondering if this was a temporary slump or the beginning of a steep decline. Assoc. Prof. Saira Latif, chair of the Finance Department, believes that cryptocurrency will take hold in the future, but it won't be Bitcoin.

“The Bitcoin phenomenon will play out the same way dot-com and property bubbles did. Many people will get very rich very fast. Others will keep crying ‘bubble’ and keep getting proven wrong by their friends and colleagues with constant updates on the recent successes of their acquaintances using Bitcoins,” she says. “And then, one day, it will all come crashing down when people least expect it. Ordinary folks who had gone all out and invested their limited savings in Bitcoins will be the ones hit hardest by the collapse.”

#mystartuptoo
What's on trend in the startup world? Women entrepreneurs, says Steven Tello, senior associate vice chancellor in the Office of Entrepreneurship & Economic Development.

“2018 will be the year for growth and recognition of women entrepreneurs. Women have contributed greatly to the startup environment, but growing social and political awareness will create greater opportunities for women. We have already seen this at UMass Lowell, where two of our most successful student startups, Nonspec and invisaWear, have strong alumni female leads.”

Taking Stock
Where is the U.S. stock market heading in 2018? Domestic stocks are vulnerable to a downturn because in the current boom, stock prices are being propped up by the widespread practice of stock buybacks, says William Lazonick, professor of economics. The recent corporate tax cuts could exacerbate a decline if businesses “use most of the extra after-tax income for more buybacks instead of investing in their employees, plants and equipment, and research and development,” he says.