**Spring Move Out Nets Record Haul of Donations**

**Food, Clothing and Other Goods Diverted from Landfills and Sent to Local Nonprofits**

The university’s annual Spring Move Out donation drive collected a record 16,500 pounds of clothing, household goods and nonperishable food items from students at 11 residence halls across campus.

That’s nearly five times the amount collected when the university began the program in 2014 as a way to divert reusable items from landfills and send them instead to local charitable organizations.

Managed by the Office of Sustainability and the Office of Residence Life, Spring Move Out has collected a total 50,626 pounds of donations over the past five years. Winter move-out drives have generated another several thousand pounds of donations.

“If this is the smallest thing we can do, I think it’s making a very big impact,” says Move Out Coordinator Andre Ragel, a rising sophomore in the Manning School of Business.

Nearly all of this spring’s donations went to five local charities:

- **4,200 pounds of clothing and shoes to Catie’s Closet**, a Lowell-based nonprofit that provides clothing to kids in more than 50 schools in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.
- **3,000 pounds of dorm supplies to GradBag**, a Newton-based nonprofit that collects, cleans, packages and redistributes items like bedding, lamps, hampers and rugs to college students who may not have the means to buy them on their own.
- **2,000 pounds of nonperishable food items to the UML Navigators Food Pantry and 4,000 pounds of clothing and household items to The Wish Project in Lowell and Savers thrift store in Nashua, N.H.**

The remaining 3,300 pounds of foam mattress pads, rugs, carpets, furniture and books were recycled or repurposed.

“It’s nice that the students’ stuff that’s still usable can go to people that need it and doesn’t end up in the landfill,” says Jill Maker, director of operations at The Wish Project. “In terms of both donations and students volunteering here, UMass Lowell has been wonderful to us.”

Close to 50 students, many of them from club sports, the Honors College and the athletics program, volunteered nearly 200 hours of their time to help sort the Spring Move Out items. Transportation Services also provided staff members and vehicles to collect the donations.

“We couldn’t do it without the volunteers,” says Environmental & Sustainability Waste Management Coordinator Pamela Beckwith, who also thanked the university’s recycling vendor, Allied Computer Brokers (ACB), for hauling the donations from campus to the nonprofits free of charge.

While he appreciates students donating their belongings as they move out of the residence halls, Ragel says the goal of the program isn’t to increase the amount collected each year.

“We would actually love this number to decrease,” Ragel says. “To do that, students need to bring less stuff and reuse as much as possible.”

For more on Spring Move Out, go to: uml.edu/moveout.
Recent Grads Win NSF Graduate Research Fellowships

**Awards Support STEM-related Research**

Two recent graduates from the Francis College of Engineering have won 2018 Graduate Research Fellowship Program awards from the National Science Foundation (NSF). Deborah Fowler, who earned a mechanical engineering degree, and Erin Shaughnessey, who studied chemical engineering, will use the awards to pursue advanced degrees and continue research started while they were undergraduates.

The NSF program supports graduate study that leads to a research-based master’s degree or doctorate in a STEM field. Past fellows have included more than 40 Nobel Prize winners (including former U.S. energy secretary Steven Chu, who received an honorary degree from UML in 2016) as well as Google co-founder Sergey Brin and “Freakonomics” co-author Steven Levitt.

Fowler and Shaughnessey were selected by the NSF for their research proposals on structural dynamics and in vitro modeling of multiple sclerosis (MS), respectively. They will each receive a $34,000 stipend, which is renewable over three years, and a $12,000 tuition award that is paid directly to their chosen institution.

“The fellowships are quite prestigious, with only 2,000 awardees selected from more than 12,000 applicants nationwide,” notes Dean Joseph Hartman of the Francis College of Engineering.

Fowler plans to work on her doctorate at UMass Lowell, under the tutelage of Prof. Peter Avitabile in the university’s Structural Dynamics and Acoustic Systems Laboratory (SDASL). Shaughnessey plans to pursue her Ph.D. in biomedical engineering at Tufts University this fall.

### Business Prof Wins Manning Prize for Teaching Excellence

**Senior Lecturer Deb Finch Recognized for Dedication to Students**

It’s rare to find an undergraduate in the Manning School of Business whose education hasn’t been influenced by Senior Lecturer Deb Finch in some way.

In addition to teaching in the Marketing, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Department, Finch is Director of First-Year Experience for the Manning School, a mentor for business students in the Honors College, a faculty fellow for the DifferenceMaker program and an advisor for the Business Innovation Living and Learning Community. In all her roles, she takes a deep interest in each student’s path to success.

For her outstanding dedication to her students—both in and out of the classroom—Finch was recently recognized with the 2018 Manning Prize for Excellence in Teaching.

Established in 2016 by UMass Lowell alumni Robert ’84 and Donna Manning ’85, ’91, the annual award (and $10,000 prize) goes to one faculty member from each of the five UMass campuses.

“I think my students know I care,” says Finch, who credits her fellow Manning School faculty members for her development as a lecturer. “There’s no one in this college that I can’t go knock on their office door and ask for help. There’s a commitment to teaching excellence.”

Originally from Hudson, N.H., Finch is a Triple River Hawk—she earned her bachelor’s in business administration in 2003, her MBA in 2005 and her doctorate of education in 2012.

Beyond Finch’s work in the classroom and engagement with co-curricular activities, she is a leader in Lowell’s nonprofit community, including the Lowell Association for the Blind, where she’s a lifetime volunteer and director emeritus.

### Dining Hall Waste Converted to Compost for Sale

**Food Scraps Recycled into Revenue Source**

Community members can now purchase bags of nutrient-rich compost that was created from the university’s dining hall food waste, thanks to a pilot program run by the Office of Sustainability. The cubic-foot bags, adorned with the UML logo, are available for $9 apiece (plus sales tax).

“We’ve never done something like this before, and we needed to see if it was feasible,” says Director of Sustainability Ruairi O’Mahony, who worked with the university’s solid waste contractor, Casella Waste Systems, and its offshoot, Casella Organics, to produce 1,000 bags of compost this spring.

This year, the compost is only available for purchase online (www.uml.edu/sustainability). Once an order is placed, the Office of Sustainability arranges a pickup location on campus. O’Mahony says the goal is to ramp up the program next year, with up to 40,000 bags on the shelves of hardware stores and garden centers throughout the Merrimack Valley.

All revenue generated from the compost sales goes back to sustainability initiatives on campus. The university’s cost of bagging and transporting the compost back to campus is covered in the sale price, which means the program pays for itself.

UMass Lowell began composting food scraps from its dining halls in 2013. Last year, the university’s nationally recognized composting program diverted close to 250 tons of food waste from landfills.

### UMass Lowell begins composting food scraps from its dining halls

Senior Lecturer Deb Finch (second from left) received the Manning Prize for Excellence in Teaching at a recent ceremony. Accompanying her, from left, are UMass President Marty Meehan, Donna and Robert Manning, and Chancellor Jacquee Moloney.
Despite his youth, Dwyer, a 2014 graduate of the university’s sound recording technology program, was tapped to run one of Lowell’s most high-profile summer events.

Kevin Dwyer ’14 was awarded an honorary degree at Commencement.

Young Alum Takes the Helm at Lowell Folk Fest

**SRT Grad Ready to Run Lowell’s Marquee Summer Celebration**

When the annual Lowell Folk Festival settles in downtown July 27 through 29, Kevin Dwyer will be at the helm.

Dwyer was named executive director of the Lowell Folk Festival Foundation (a partner in producing the folk festival with the city, the National Park Service and the National Council for the Traditional Arts) in April. He replaces Craig Gates, who died unexpectedly Dec. 30, after six years in the position.

“There’s a lot of responsibility and pressure, but I’m up to the challenge,” he says.

In his new role, Dwyer will oversee logistics and operations for the festival, which brings performers from around the world, artisans and food vendors to the city. Most of his time will be dedicated to fundraising: It takes more than $1 million to keep the three-day festival free for attendees.

“That’s the big piece, and a lot depends on the money,” Dwyer says. “It pays for the sound, the entertainers, just about everything you see.”

Researchers to Develop Self-Evaluating Robots

Robots can do a lot of things—assemble cars, search for bombs, cook a meal or assist in surgery. But something they can’t do is tell you how they are doing.

Researchers from UMass Lowell and several other universities are aiming to change that. With funding from the U.S. Department of Defense’s Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative (MURI), robotics experts from Carnegie Mellon University, UML, Brigham Young University and Tufts University are working together to give humanoid robots and other autonomous systems the ability to assess themselves in terms of how well they can perform a given task or why they cannot complete the job.

This real-time feedback is vital as robots become increasingly autonomous and are tasked with jobs in remote, hostile or dynamic environments with minimal human supervision or intervention.

The project—called SUCCESS, which stands for Self-assessment and Understanding of Competence and Conditions to Ensure System Success—is one of 24 grants awarded nationwide this year through the highly competitive MURI program. The grant is worth a total of $7.5 million over a period of five years. UMass Lowell’s share of the funding is $1.2 million.

“Robots can’t gauge how well they are able to perform a task, how the job is progressing or tell you what their limitations or capabilities are,” says computer science Prof. Holly Yanco, who is the principal investigator for UML and director of the university’s New England Robotics Validation and Experimentation (NERVE) Center. “The project will greatly improve human-robot interaction overall.”

**Project is Funded with $7.5M Department of Defense Grant**

**James Dandeneau ’80 Funds New Engineering, Computer and Robotics Facilities**

The university officially renamed one of its historic engineering buildings in honor of James Dandeneau ’80, a longtime benefactor whose generosity spans everything from student scholarships to state-of-the-art equipment for engineering labs.

“Through his work and his philanthropy, Jim Dandeneau has made a lasting difference in thousands of lives,” Chancellor Jacquie Moloney said at the May 18 dedication ceremony, which was attended by more than 80 UML faculty, students and alumni, including many of Dandeneau’s Pi Lambda Phi fraternity brothers.

Dandeneau was also awarded an honorary degree at Commencement.

A graduate of UML’s plastics engineering program, Dandeneau is the founder, president and CEO of Putnam Plastics, a Connecticut-based plastics extrusion firm that produces catheter assemblies and other medical devices. He has fostered a stream of major technological advances in the industry. Today, more than 280 Putnam employees produce an array of high-end components for the health care industry.

In his new role, Dwyer will oversee logistics and operations for the festival, which brings a wealth of experience to his new job overseeing the nation’s longest-running free folk festival. After earning his degree, he spent nearly four years as assistant to the directors of the popular Lowell Summer Music Series, another summer staple in the city.

Kevin Dwyer ’14 was tapped to run one of Lowell’s most high-profile summer events.

James Dandeneau ’80 and members of his family celebrate the dedication of Dandeneau Hall. From left: Sara and Ryan Dandeneau ’10; Jim and Deb Dandeneau; Lauren Dandeneau and John Hobbs.

James Dandeneau Hall is part of UML’s North Campus Innovation District, which is dedicated to scientific research and development and business education in support of the region’s economy. Formerly known as Pasteur Hall, the 80-year-old building is now undergoing a major renovation with support from Dandeneau. It will serve as a new home for faculty from the mechanical engineering and computer science departments, and will also feature new robotics and computer labs.

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COMMENCEMENT 2018:

UML Celebrates Largest-Ever Graduating Class

Graduates Urged to Carry UML Lessons into the World

Amid the traditional pomp and circumstance of mortarboards and processions—and the more modern-day trends of selfies and social media (#UML2018)—the university conferred degrees on a record 4,358 graduates at its 2018 Commencement ceremonies at the Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell.

Addressing a diverse graduating class that hailed from 36 states and 97 countries, Chancellor Jacquie Moloney congratulated students on their achievement and praised the “extraordinary leadership, innovation and compassion” that defined their time at the university.

“Every one of you has the potential and capacity to address the challenges of the world. Look at all that you’ve accomplished in your short time here. Think of all that you’ll be able to do in a lifetime,” Moloney said.

The May 19 ceremony marked the 11th straight year of growth for the university’s graduating class, which has more than doubled in size since 2008.

The university conferred 122 doctoral, 1,124 master’s, 3,091 bachelor’s and 33 associate degrees. More than 1,400 members of the class graduated with honors, and 120 students had a perfect 4.0 GPA.

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jon Meacham received an honorary doctorate of humane letters and gave the keynote address at the morning ceremony to graduates from the Francis College of Engineering, Kennedy College of Sciences, Zuckerberg College of Health Sciences and intercampus programs.

U.S. Rep. Niki Tsongas, who will leave office this year after a decade representing Massachusetts’ 3rd District, received the Chancellor’s Medal for Distinguished Service during the afternoon ceremony. In the arena named in memory of her late husband, Lowell native Paul Tsongas, she delivered the keynote address to graduates from the College of Education, the College of Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and the Manning School of Business.

“I hope you will always remember that the power that resides in you, that was nurtured and educated at this remarkable university, can be engaged as a catalyst for change, in your lives, in the lives of a community, of a nation and of our world,” Tsongas said.

The Distinguished Alumni Award was given to Mark Russell ’83, Raytheon Co.’s vice president of engineering, technology and mission assurance. Honorary degrees also went to James Dandeneau ’80, president and CEO of medical-device maker Putnam Plastics and owner of Connecticut National Golf Course, and Temba Maqubela, a recipient of the Desmond Tutu Social Justice Award and headmaster of the Groton School.

Student speakers included mechanical engineering graduate Yehya Merhi, who addressed classmates at the morning ceremony, and Zayna Basma, a political science graduate from Shirley, who delivered the afternoon student address.