The University’s new Health & Social Sciences building opened in April, the first new construction on the University’s South Campus in more than 30 years. The $40 million, 69,000-square-foot building is home to three of UMass Lowell’s most popular majors in health and social sciences: criminal justice and criminology, nursing and psychology.

On opening day, students led tours of the state-of-the-art simulation laboratories, observation rooms, demonstration hospital wing and exam room in the nursing facilities. Futuristic-looking classroom chairs move on wheels for discussion groups and every lecturer has access to smart-room technology for presentations. Throughout the building, informal sitting spaces encourage creative collaborations.

In opening remarks, Chancellor Marty Meehan acknowledged the important support of the governor and the state delegation in bonding the new construction.

“We fought every step of the way to keep that funding in the bill,” said Rep. Kevin Murphy, who was, at the time, chair of the Committee on Higher Education. “Though the building is beautiful, it’s you, the people, who make it worthwhile: the faculty—the superb training you give is the best in the Commonwealth; the staff—you make every event run smoothly; the students—your intellect, your achievements and your spirit are outstanding; and the administration—the cutting-edge leadership of Martin T. Meehan in transforming this University.”

Nursing, Criminal Justice and Psychology Get New Home

Construction of the building supported hundreds of jobs, while helping UMass Lowell make room for its growing student body, which has seen a 40 percent increase in undergraduates since 2007. The building has the capacity to serve nearly 900 students and more than 140 faculty members.

“The building is filled with light, color and innovation, and is a welcoming presence to all who enter,” said Shortie McKinney, dean of the School of Health and Environment. “The quality of the building represents the quality of our students and our nationally respected nursing program that has grown substantially and just celebrated its 40th anniversary.”

The opening of the new building was a bittersweet event for the campus community, with the passing of Nina Coppens, former dean of the College of Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. She had been a passionate champion of the project.

“Nina had many important roles at UMass Lowell,” said Meehan. “She was dean, the chair of the Psychology Department and on the faculty of the Nursing Department. She was known by everyone as a mentor, leader and friend.” A garden in her name is planned.
UMass Lowell Ranked 10th Nationally for ROI Among Public Universities

University in Top 50 for ROI Among All Institutions

A UMass Lowell education provides the 10th best return on investment (ROI) among public universities in the U.S., according to a new report by PayScale Inc.

The report examined 1,060 U.S. colleges and universities to determine their return on investment based on the total cost of attending and the lifetime earning potential of graduates. It ranked UMass Lowell 10th among 437 public universities and 50th out of all colleges and universities for 2013.

“The empirical data helps put into context what our alumni already know, which is that a UMass Lowell education offers an incredibly high value for the investment,” says UMass Lowell Chancellor Marty Meehan.

“The earning potential of our graduates is even more impressive when considering the low cost of attending UMass Lowell relative to some of the private institutions delivering similar or less return on investment.”

According to the PayScale report, the median present value return on investment for UMass Lowell graduates over 30 years, less the cost of their education, is $1.1 million, representing an 8.8 percent annual return. UMass Lowell is one of just 75 colleges and universities in the country—public and private—with a 30-year net ROI of more than $1 million.

In addition to the PayScale report, UMass Lowell appeared on a list of “Best Value Schools” recently published by former U.S. Secretary of Education William J. Bennett in his book, “Is College Worth It?”

Alumni All-stars

UMass Lowell honored alumni who have provided outstanding service to the University, their profession and the community at the 2013 University Alumni Awards ceremony on Thursday, April 18 at the UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center. Shown here in the back row, from left, are: award winners George Tsapatsaris ’77, Mark Forzieri ’78, George Membrino ’52 and Kimberly Sawyer ’89, Executive Vice Chancellor Jacqueline Moloney ’75, ’92, Chancellor Marty Meehan ’78, and award winners Danielle (Bergeron) McFadden ’07, Bruce Arakelian ’62 and Jeffrey Cosiol ’67. In the front row, from left, are Acting Dean of the College of Sciences Mark Hines, Dean of Business Kathryn Carter; Dean of the School of Health and Environment Shortie McKinney; Dean of Education Anita Greenwood; Provost Ahmed Abdelal; Dean of Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Luis Falcón and Interim Dean of the College of Engineering Jack Wilson.

National Science Foundation Funds Research on Greenhouse Gases

$1.6M Grant Will Launch Study on Methane’s Role in Climate Change

When people talk about climate change, the first thing they tend to mention is carbon dioxide (CO2). Although CO2 emissions get most of the media attention, methane (CH4)—a colorless, odorless and highly flammable gas that is a major component of natural gas—also contributes greatly to global warming.

“Methane concentrations in the atmosphere are much lower than that of carbon dioxide. However, methane is about 25 times more potent as a greenhouse gas compared to carbon dioxide, and it is accumulating faster in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide,” says Prof. Mark Hines of the Department of Biological Sciences and acting dean for the College of Sciences.

Methane is released into the atmosphere mainly by leaky gas pipes, the raising of livestock and emissions from the petroleum industry, but a considerable amount enters from natural sources, especially wetlands in the tropics and high latitudes.

“This natural flux of methane is increasing rapidly due to the fact that the Arctic is warming up faster than anywhere else on Earth and, when combined with melting permafrost, a lot of organic material stored in high-latitude soils is now newly available to be degraded,” notes Hines. Hines is part of an international team of researchers that was recently awarded a three-year grant by the National Science Foundation worth more than $1.6 million. The project aims to use new measurement and remote-sensing satellite technologies to greatly fine-tune understanding of methane production in northern wetlands and help create a more accurate model of methane emissions on a global scale.
Rx for Success: Health Care Innovation

New Program Offers Dose of Innovation

The Manning School of Business and the School of Health and Environment are teaming up to offer a new graduate program aimed at doctors, hospital administrators and other professionals who want to advance their careers while bringing an entrepreneurial approach to the health-care industry.

Beginning in the fall, the Manning School will offer its master of science in innovation and technological entrepreneurship (MSITE) degree with a concentration in health care. The program will combine courses from SHE’s master’s programs in health care management and health informatics with MSITE classes.

“The health-care industry is ripe for innovation and entrepreneurship,” says Manning School Dean Kathryn Carter. “The collaboration will address the growing need to prepare professionals who can bring new ways of thinking and greater creativity to an industry that impacts everyone.”

Student Projects Win DifferenceMaker Funding

Idea Challenge Sparks Creative Solutions

Combating childhood obesity in Lowell, providing artificial limbs for children in developing countries and creating online study tools for college students everywhere were at the heart of some of the winning proposals in the University’s first DifferenceMaker Idea Challenge.

Ten student teams were picked to share $25,000 in seed funding to advance their projects at the recent Idea Challenge grand finale. The prize money, in awards ranging from $500 to $5,000, will help students file for patents, purchase supplies and equipment, develop marketing plans and bring their ideas to the next stage.

“Idea challenges and pitch contests are fun, and are important in raising awareness, but the real work begins after the winners are announced,” says Steven Tello, associate vice chancellor for entrepreneurship and economic development.

“Having funds to develop our project is absolutely mind blowing,” says Jonathan De Alderete, a senior mechanical engineering major and member of Developing Nation Prosthetics, which won the $5,000 Campus-wide DifferenceMaker award.

The five-member team is designing low-cost artificial limbs for children who would otherwise not be able to afford them. The students, all engineering majors, estimate they will be able to produce up to 500 prosthetics with the award money.

Program Will Offer Everything From Single Classes to Full Degrees

UMass Lowell will soon open a satellite campus in downtown Haverhill, with classes slated to start the fall 2013 semester.

The new site—which for the near term will be located in a building on the Northern Essex Community College campus—will bring UMass Lowell’s strengths in educating working professionals, adult learners and traditional students to Haverhill. More than 2,000 of UMass Lowell’s 16,000 students hail from Haverhill and nearby communities, and many graduates of Northern Essex Community College go on to earn four-year degrees at UMass Lowell.


The Haverhill satellite campus will be overseen by the University’s award-winning Division of Online and Continuing Education and will offer students the option of traditional classroom learning and hybrid programs that combine online and in-person instruction for what is known as “blended learning.”

Through the Haverhill campus, students will have access to academics from single courses to full degrees, as well as advising and other academic support services. Areas of study will include graduate courses in health management, undergraduate and graduate studies in management and entrepreneurship, and courses designed to assist registered nurses complete bachelor’s degrees.

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Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis Calls Students “UMass Lowell Strong”

UMass Lowell graduated 3,169 students on May 18—setting a record for the sixth consecutive year. Enrollment has grown by 40 percent in the meantime; this year, the student body numbered more than 16,000 for the first time in the University’s history and represented more than 53 countries.

Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis, who returned to his hometown to deliver the keynote address at the undergraduate commencement ceremony, spoke about his role in the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombings. He told students that his leadership during that time was the result of lessons he’s learned over the course of his life, from his days as a college student until today.

“You have had exceptional instructors during your time here at UMass Lowell, and I guarantee you that at some point in your lives, probably when you are completely not expecting it, you will hearken back to some pearl of wisdom that was imparted on you during one of your classes here,” said Davis, who was Lowell police superintendent for 12 years.

Chancellor Marty Meehan ’78, who presided over the exercises, expressed his pride in students’ collective efforts to give back.

“I’m proud that so many of you recognize the need to give of yourself to help make this world a better place,” he said. “We all saw how important it is to help one other on Patriot’s Day in Boston. … It is my hope that you will remain active citizens who become deeply engaged in your community. Because it’s my experience and my belief that better towns, better schools, better neighborhoods, better countries and better societies, result from citizens being involved and taking pride in where they live.”

UMass Lowell graduates have much to be proud of, said Davis, who evoked the “Boston Strong” refrain made popular following the marathon tragedy:

“All of you should proudly and loudly proclaim ‘I am strong,’ because, indeed, you are. I am confident that given the chance, all of you are capable of achieving greatness. So many of the nearly 80,000 alumni of this University are scattered to the four corners of the world, but many of them continue to give back to the place where they got their start, and they stand UMass Lowell Strong.”

$725,000 for Scholarships

For the sixth year in a row, UMass Lowell has broken a record for the funds raised for student scholarships—$725,000—through its annual Commencement Eve Celebration. Since 2008, $3 million has been raised.

The annual gala at the University’s Inn & Conference Center celebrated the following honorary degree recipients: Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis, social entrepreneur Harish Hande ’98, ’00, local philanthropist and arts advocate Nancy Donahue, medical-device entrepreneurs and philanthropists Elisia and Mark Saab ’81 and Distinguished Alumni Award winner Bernard Shapiro ’56. A posthumous Distinguished Alumni Award was also bestowed upon Gary M. Muscat ’71.

Commencement Eve also honored outstanding members of the Class of 2013 who have excelled in academics and service to the campus and community. Ten of the graduates achieved perfect 4.0 grade point averages.

“Our annual Commencement Eve Celebration recognizes and honors the accomplishments of our outstanding graduates, alumni and community leaders,” says UMass Lowell Chancellor Marty Meehan. “Each year, the celebration raises crucial scholarship funds for our students. With the generous support of alumni and friends of the University, again we have achieved a record-breaking year in fundraising through this signature event.”