UMass Lowell students returned this fall to completely upgraded dining options and facilities, including the Dining Commons in Fox Hall, with cooking stations, pizza oven, in-house bakery and after-hours café.

New and Returning Students to Enjoy New Amenities, Programs

When the UMass Lowell Class of 2016 moved in on Saturday, Sept. 1, students were greeted with expanded dining options, new academic programs and facility upgrades that showcase vibrant campus life.

For the fourth consecutive year, enrollment is up 10 percent at UMass Lowell, with increases in the numbers of new students as well as those continuing their education. Joining UMass Lowell’s student body—which now represents 53 countries around the world—are approximately 1,500 first-year students and 1,130 transfers. This year’s freshmen, 83 percent of whom will live on campus, have an average SAT score of 1,127, an increase of 53 points over six years.

Students returning to UMass Lowell or experiencing it for the first time will benefit from dozens of University projects designed to enhance their lives, including 20 new majors and other academic options at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Enhanced meal options at a variety of locations on campus will have an immediate impact on student life. At the newly remodeled University Dining Commons in Fox Hall on East Campus, the redesigned dining area features an all-new approach to campus dining with exposition-style cooking stations, a brick pizza oven, an in-house bakery and a wide variety of made-to-order foods. A new after-hours café with fireplace, large-screen TV and comfortable seating will provide students a place to snack and socialize.

On North Campus, students and the public can enjoy a new Einstein Bros Bagel shop in Olney Hall. The franchise will join Starbucks, Subway and Taco Bell on campus. On South Campus, the Hawk’s Nest offers gourmet burgers, salads, hot wings and more, seven days a week, lunch to late night.

Ready to tackle the books: Move-in day saw a record number of students enrolled at UMass Lowell, as well as record numbers living on campus.

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For more information go to: www.uml.edu/news

September 2012
**Climate Team’s Model Correctly Predicted Ongoing Drought in U.S**

*Record Dryness Is the Worst in Decades*

Food and gasoline prices are expected to continue to rise as the record-breaking drought affecting much of the central United States shows no sign of letting up.

“This drought is definitely more than the seasonal cycle—it’s much more dry than usual for this time of year in many areas,” says climate science Assoc. Prof. Mathew Barlow of the Environmental, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Department.

“The cause for the drought is currently a subject of much debate, whether it’s due to natural variability or global climate change brought about by human activity, or both,” he adds. Barlow is part of a team of researchers led by Judah Cohen, a climate modeler at the Lexington-based consulting firm Atmospheric and Environmental Research Inc., which developed a sophisticated seasonal forecast model that correctly predicted this year’s warm winter and hot summer.

Weather in the eastern United States and Europe is influenced mainly by a climate phenomenon known as the North Atlantic Oscillation or Arctic Oscillation (NAO). This year’s drought was probably set in motion when a strongly positive NAO deflected major winter storms away from the United States. When spring arrived, there was very little snow to melt and moisten the ground, and thus very little water to evaporate and create rain. A summer heat wave caused further evaporation of groundwater, lakes, reservoirs, rivers and streams.

However, Barlow cautions that the real picture might be more complicated than that.

“These are contributing factors in this drought, probably not the primary cause, as much of it seems to be due to an overall decrease in precipitation rather than a switch from snow to rain,” he says. The study is currently funded with a $665,000 grant from Agennix AG, a Germany-based company that could someday treat a form of lung cancer.

Therapy Designed to Target Lung Cancer

A team of researchers in the Chemistry Department is studying a new drug developed by a biopharmaceutical company that could someday treat a form of lung cancer.

“The molecule we are working on with Agennix AG is talactoferrin, a manmade, or recombinant, form of a naturally occurring human protein that plays an important role in the establishment and functioning of the body’s immune system,” says chemistry Asst. Prof. Jin Xu, the principal investigator for the project.

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Talactoferrin is being studied for the treatm ent of non-sm all cell lung cancer (NSCLC) and is currently undergoing Phase III clinical studies. NSCLC is more common than the other type of the disease, the small-cell lung cancer.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death and the second most-diagnosed cancer in both men and women in the United States. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2008 more than 208,000 Americans were diagnosed with the disease and nearly 159,000 died from it. The symptoms usually do not appear until the disease is already at an advanced stage and incurable.

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**Area Educators Love Computer-Science Initiative**

Sure, teenagers are computer savvy. They can handle social media, mobile apps and multimedia software without breaking a sweat. But what about more sophisticated skills needed in the workplace such as software development, data management, computer forensics and robotics?

That was the subject of a three-day workshop and conference held this summer at UMass Lowell, which attracted 40 middle- and high-school teachers from across the region. Called CS4HS—and sponsored by Google to promote computer science and computational thinking in high-school and middle-school curricula—the event was organized by UMass Lowell's Engaging Computing Group (ECG), in collaboration with the Computer Science Teachers Association Greater Boston Chapter and the Advanced Math and Science Academy.

“Our goals are to provide teachers with ideas they can immediately bring into their classrooms, create a forum to share approaches with each other and encourage ideas and support for advocacy and equity in computer-science teaching and learning,” says Assoc. Prof. Fred Martin, director of the ECG and associate dean of the College of Sciences.

The event featured hands-on workshops on creating applications for Android smartphones and tablets using the MIT App Inventor, teaching computer science with the low-cost Finch robot and mapping course and lesson plans to national computer science standards. There were also panel discussions on curriculum, careers, advocacy and social issues as well as research talks on computer forensics, data management and telepresence robotics.

**Tsongas Center Climbs in Ranking of World’s Top Venues**

**Reaches No. 13 on List, Up From No. 20**

The Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell is ranked No. 13 in the most recent Venues Today Magazine Mid-Year Top Stops Rankings in its capacity category (5,001 to 10,000). Last year was the first year the Tsongas Center made it into the Top Stops rankings, coming in at No. 20.

Venues Today is the leading source of original reporting for live entertainment and events, serving management, owners and suppliers to music, sports and meeting venues internationally.

“The recognition we have received from Venues Today demonstrates we are providing a quality event experience,” says Peter Casey, executive director of UMass Lowell Venue & Event Enterprises.

Casey notes that significant improvements continue to be made at the facility, with the enhancement of the club box suites, an additional catering kitchen and new selections on the food and beverage menu.

Owned by UMass Lowell and managed by Global Spectrum, the Tsongas Center has continued to attract and feature the best in live entertainment during 2011-12. Many of the featured acts this year were in the magazine’s monthly “Hot Tickets” rankings throughout the past six months, including comedian Jeff Dunham, the Kiss 108 FM Jingle Ball, Judas Priest, Dropkick Murphys and Eric Church.

**Stephen King to Speak at UMass Lowell on Dec. 7**

**Event Launches Chancellor’s Speaker Series**

For one night only, Stephen King will take the stage at the Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell, offering fans the chance to hear him read his work, ask questions and listen to him discuss his passion for writing and his advice for aspiring authors.

“A Conversation with Stephen King”—set for Friday, Dec. 7, at 7:30 p.m.—will be moderated by Andre Dubus III, bestselling author and professor in UMass Lowell’s English Department, the program’s co-sponsor.

King’s appearance marks the debut of the new UMass Lowell Chancellor’s Speaker Series. General admission tickets to the Dec. 7 event are on sale for $30 (plus $2 facility fee) at the Tsongas Center box office, www.tsongascenter.com and 866-722-8780. Additional fees apply for online and phone purchases. Admission is free for UMass Lowell students with valid ID who obtain tickets in advance at the Tsongas Center box office.

Teachers engaged in a lively group discussion during this year’s CS4HS workshop and conference.
UMass Lowell, MRT Partner to Bring ‘Beat Generation’ to Stage

In 1957—the same year his classic novel "On the Road" was released—Jack Kerouac wrote his only full-length play, “Beat Generation.” He tried to build interest for it in the theater world, contacting such people as Lillian Hellman and Marlon Brando, but he failed and set the manuscript aside. Kerouac died in 1969.

The manuscript was found in a warehouse in 2005 and will finally premiere thanks to a partnership between UMass Lowell and the Merrimack Repertory Theater (MRT). Presented as a staged reading for eight performances only, the play will be the centerpiece of the 2012 Jack Kerouac Literary Festival, set for Oct. 10-14.

The Festival also includes free programs that draw on Kerouac’s works and his history in his hometown of Lowell, as well as the next generation of writers inspired by his work. For more information, go to www.LowellCelebratesKerouac.org.

The Oct. 10 premiere is UMass Lowell Night, and will include a celebration of the partnerships behind the play.

“This is a moment of literary and theatrical history,” says Charles Towers, artistic director of the Merrimack Repertory Theatre. “When the ‘Beat Generation’ manuscript was discovered in 2005, it made international news. Such is the remarkable influence of Kerouac on contemporary culture. Now, ‘Beat Generation’ will be first spoken aloud on the stage in Lowell, his native city, and it is fitting that Lowell’s professional theater company—Merrimack Repertory Theatre—is producing its world premiere.”

MRT has a history of being the first to present Kerouac’s works to audiences. Its performance space, known as Liberty Hall, was the site in the 1980s of several sold-out screenings of the premiere of John Antonelli’s documentary, “Kerouac, the Movie” and in the 1990s, the stage adaptation of Kerouac’s Lowell-set romance, “Maggie Cassidy.”

The play’s premiere is being presented in Lowell with the support and collaboration of Kerouac Literary Estate executor John Sampas.

“It is apt that the premiere production of Jack Kerouac’s play ‘Beat Generation’ shall take place in his hometown of Lowell, Massachusetts in October at Merrimack Repertory Theatre under the guidance of the inimitable director Charles Towers,” Sampas said.

“Beat Generation” is a story of friendship and karma set in the 1950s and its characters and dialogue capture the Beat mentality at the roots of American counterculture as only Kerouac could. Written in the author’s trademark autobiographical style, the play follows a group of friends based on Kerouac, Neal Cassady, Allen Ginsberg and others over the course of one day in 1955.

“The play is aligned with Kerouac’s aesthetics of spontaneity and immediacy, which he was experimenting with not only in his prose and poetry but also in other media like the film ‘Pull My Daisy,’” says Assoc. Prof. Michael Milner, head of the University’s Jack and Stella Kerouac Center for Public Humanities. “In his experiments with various media, he was continuing his lifelong investigation of new aesthetic forms and what they might communicate.”

The Jack and Stella Kerouac Center for Public Humanities at UMass Lowell was founded in 2005 with generous support provided by the Kerouac Estate. Its purpose is to strengthen the interdisciplinary study of American culture and public humanities by facilitating ties between the fields of English, History, Philosophy, Cultural Studies, Art, Music, Sociology and Economics at UMass Lowell, in the New England region and beyond.