What's Better Than a Café and High Def?

The University is breaking ground this month on a new residence hall on East Campus that will be the latest thing in on-campus living for UMass Lowell students. It will be built on Aiken Street, across from the Campus Recreation Center.

With student enrollment now nearing 15,000—up 30 percent over the past three years—the demand for everything from classrooms to labs and student housing has intensified.

But having enough beds is only part of the plan.

Students today seek—and benefit from—a range of services and amenities that were unheard of in residence housing a generation ago. Larger rooms, suite-style apartments, quiet study rooms, cafés and more inspired architecture and landscaping make for a more pleasant, productive and successful college experience.

“Our vision is to increase the residential community to 50 percent while offering the ideal variety of living options in state-of-the-art facilities that can compare with the best institutions across the country,” says Dean of Students Larry Siegel.

The design of the building and its landscaping evoke a sense of the textile and industrial histories of Lowell and will fit gracefully into its Northern Canal neighborhood, near the former Lawrence Mills and Lelacheur Park.

The brick, U-shaped facility will be built around a courtyard that faces the Campus Recreation Center. The courtyard will feature a paved seating area that doubles as spillover space for events, as well as open lawn space.

The residence hall will provide housing for 472 students in four- and six-bed suites. There will be a ground-floor common area with a café and multi-purpose room open to the UMass Lowell community. Each residential floor will have two common kitchen/lounge areas, two quiet study rooms and a group study room.

The project is being managed by the UMass Building Authority and its partner, Joslin Lesser & Associates. The architect is ADD Inc., and Walsh Brothers is the construction manager.
Researchers Develop Method to Monitor Bridge Safety

**System Will Use Latest Technology**

Many of the nation's roads, highways and bridges are in need of maintenance, repair or overhaul. In Massachusetts alone, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has identified a total of 210 bridges on the national highway system as “structurally deficient.”

To help inspect and monitor the structural health and integrity of highway bridges, a team of researchers led by UMass Lowell has developed a low-cost, automated and efficient method for checking critical bridge components.

Called the Multi-modal Remote Sensing System (MRSS), the project is funded with a two-year $1.3 million grant from the DOT’s Research and Innovative Technology Administration.

“Traditional non-destructive testing and inspection methods cannot provide an accurate and rapid evaluation on a routine basis to prevent deteriorated bridges from sudden collapse,” says civil engineering Prof. Tzu-Yang Yu.

Existing bridge inspection techniques, which include visual inspection, ultrasound and mechanical sounding, are typically time-consuming, labor-intensive and costly, he notes.

The MRSS will use innovative continuous-wave imaging radar, high-resolution optical cameras for digital image correlation, GPS and position sensors and a laser ranger for quick, on-the-spot inspection. It will also employ fiber optic sensors for long-term, continuous monitoring.

In addition to detecting surface cracks in concrete piers and rusting in steel girders, the system will allow inspectors to monitor structural behavior and detect surface changes such as bulging, cracking or stress.

“MRSS represents the next-generation of portable bridge-inspection technology,” says Yu. “The same remote-sensing capabilities can be used in other applications such as structural inspection and monitoring of high-rise buildings.”

Management Students Meet Warren Buffett

‘Oracle of Omaha’ Offers Advice on Investing, Life

It was Angela Pasquerello’s most memorable college experience to date. The senior accounting major was one of 20 UMass Lowell management students who flew to Omaha, Neb., this fall to meet billionaire investor Warren Buffett and hear his advice for success.

Each year, Buffett—the Berkshire Hathaway CEO known as the “Oracle of Omaha”—invites select groups of students from across the country, most of them MBA candidates, to meet for a question-and-answer session and lunch. Management Prof. Ravi Jain had written to Buffett twice, asking that his finance students be included. This year, the invitation came.

“I couldn’t imagine having a better experience through school,” says Pasquerello, who is enrolled in Jain’s Portfolio and Security Analysis class.

“I learned so much and made so many friends.”

The students from UMass Lowell and seven other universities met with Buffett at the Field Club, the oldest country club west of the Mississippi River.

Buffett told the students that their best investment is in themselves and said the best way to prepare for the business world is to sharpen their written and oral communication skills. “He’s as sharp as a tack. He told stories that students could understand,” says Kevin Kehr, a senior finance major who helped plan the trip.

Calendar Snapshot

For the full roster of upcoming events, go to www.uml.edu/media/calendar.

Men’s Ice Hockey

Watch the River Hawks take on Merrimack College,
Friday, Feb. 10, 7 p.m. at the Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell

New World Jazz Composers Octet

Music on the Merrimack Series
Feb. 23, 7:30 p.m.
Durgin Concert Hall, 35 Wilder St.
Free

A Picture’s Worth: Contemporary Graphic Novel Artists

Feb. 27 – March 23
University Gallery, McGauvran Student Center, 71 Wilder St.
Free (visit uml.edu/dept/art/galleries for gallery hours)
Partnerships With Chinese Universities Signed

Student Exchanges, Research Partnerships to Expand

On a recent trip to China, Chancellor Marty Meehan signed agreements with three of the country’s top schools: Northwest University, Shanghai Technological University, and Xi’an Jiaotong University, laying the groundwork for academic and research partnerships and student and faculty exchanges.

“These partnerships advance our goal of becoming a more international university and will help prepare our students to take their place in a global economy,” Meehan says.

“Our students, faculty and the entire community will benefit, as China is a critical partner in terms of education, research and economic development.”

The partnerships will support the exchange of undergraduate and graduate students; enable faculty exchanges for research, teaching and other academic work; create opportunities to develop joint research and educational programs; and promote cooperation in cultural and student-focused activities.

The University’s number of international partnerships has been growing as it seeks to expand opportunities for collaboration with institutions around the globe. UMass Lowell has academic partnerships with more than 60 universities in 25 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, North America and Australia. On campus, UMass Lowell’s international student community has also been growing, with students from more than 50 countries represented.

New Online Program Targets Sleep Disorders

As many as 70 million Americans suffer from sleep disorders, putting them at elevated risk for numerous long-term health problems, from obesity to cancer. But sleep-related problems are often undiagnosed, in part because health-care providers receive little education and training in sleep science.

A new program offered through UMass Lowell’s Division of Online and Continuing Education aims to change that. The online graduate certificate in sleep and sleep disorders is designed to help clinicians better understand, diagnose and treat sleep problems and related diseases.

“This is an area with huge implications for public health,” says School of Health and Environment Prof. Geoffrey Phillips McEnany, coordinator of the online certificate program.

The groundwork for the online certificate program was laid a few years ago when the University received a $140,000 grant from the pharmaceutical company Sepracor (now known as Sunovian) to develop a 12-module online program on sleep disorders for nurses. Seventy-five percent of the students who completed the program expressed interest in a certificate program for further training.

The new program, which has about 20 students enrolled, consists of four three-credit courses covering the fundamentals of sleep science and chronobiology, the range of sleep-related disorders, diagnoses and treatments. The students, who include nurses, physicians and respiratory therapists, must also complete a capstone research project.

New Name for College of Management

Manning School of Business Poised for Growth

In recognition of a major gift from alumni Robert and Donna Manning, the College of Management has been renamed the Robert J. Manning School of Business. The new name comes at a time of growth and transformation as plans are made to construct a new building for the management school on North Campus.

“We are extremely grateful to Rob and Donna Manning for their generous donation as this gift will make a huge and lasting impact on our business students and the University,” says Manning School dean Kathryn Carter. “With a new name, a new building and additional resources, we can move the business school to the next level.”

Rob Manning joined MFS Investments after graduating in 1984, working his way up to chief executive officer and chairman of the Boston-based company, which has been in business since 1924 and has more than 1,800 employees in operations around the world.

Donna Manning holds nursing and master of business administration degrees from UMass Lowell. She has worked as an oncology nurse for more than 25 years at Boston Medical Center, where she has received top awards for excellence in patient care.

North Campus Garage on the Rise

Facility Set to Open in September 2012

Construction of a parking garage on North Campus began this fall. Located adjacent to the Riverside Parking Lot, the five-tier facility will add more than 550 parking spaces for North Campus.

Slated to open in September 2012, the garage will not only be a useful addition to the campus, but also an attractive one, with features not usually seen in such facilities.

Restrooms will be provided on the ground level, for example, and enhanced pedestrian pathways will link the garage to the campus and outdoor athletic facilities.

Aluminum metal “fins” will screen the north and west façades, with terra cotta panels anchoring the corners.

The east façade, facing the athletic fields, will be clad in metal panels enhanced with a pattern taken from a photo of the Merrimack River.

Pedestrians will use a glass entrance/stair tower to enter and exit the building, with canopy protection at the doorway. Cars will enter via a driveway on Sparks Street.

This artist’s rendering of the North Campus Parking Garage currently under construction shows the east façade facing the athletic fields.

www.uml.edu
Piano Man Enthralls Students in Durgin Hall

Billy Joel—dressed in black, head to toe—breezed onstage at Durgin Hall with the barest of introductions and utterly without pretense.

The pop singer brought his special presentation designed for music students—called A Night of Questions, Answers and a Little Music—to UMass Lowell last month.

Landing Joel was a landmark moment in the life of UMass Lowell and one Chancellor Marty Meehan hopes draws due attention to the University’s music program, which has produced a steady stream of professionals and more recently, Grammy-winning recording engineers.

From a slew of bids across the nation, Joel selected three schools: Cornell, the University of Connecticut and UMass Lowell. The agreement between Joel’s camp and the University called for making 85 percent of Durgin’s 1,000 seats available to students, the rest to faculty and staff.

It was a master class in the art, the inspiration and the business of being Billy Joel, ideally suited for the University’s music majors. He opened by saying that he loves the job of rock star and vowed when he was young that if he ever made it, “I wanted to be able to help people do this job,” to wade through the often “treacherous” and “larcenous” waters of the music business.

For a little more than two hours, Joel shared his craft and stories of his highs and lows, answering audience questions and illustrating points with snippets of songs. Two pianos, a gong and a stool filled the stage. The stool was never used.

He led Christmas sing-alongs, honored requests for photographs and autographs and allowed two students to accompany him. His voice warmed as the evening went on, to where he was singing such young man’s songs as “Innocent Man” to perfection.

His proudest achievement? His daughter, Alexa Ray. His career highlight? Playing the in Soviet Union in 1987 and feeling his personal vision of the Cold War melt.

At 62, the New York native could simply feast upon the royalties from sales of 150 million records, polish his six Grammy Awards, or reflect on the night in 1999 when Ray Charles inducted him into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

But this concert was about passing along lessons learned, some of them hard-won. Joel said he worked making ink for typewriter ribbons, as an oysterman, a freelance writer or landscaper while playing music. He played the piano before he was tall enough to reach the keys, then took lessons at age 6. By third grade, he was earning weak-kneed screams from fourth-grade girls, crooning “Hound Dog” in the cafeteria.

Joel doesn’t need to do this, nor did he need to select UMass Lowell from the hundreds of schools that applied to host him. But the University’s rich musical history may have held sway.

The University is home to the nation’s first public music education school and over the years, it has produced more music teachers in Massachusetts than anyone else. The UMass Lowell Sound Recording Technology program has produced Grammy winners and has hosted international recording summits, including one in 2008, where the keynote speaker was Phil Ramone, one of Joel’s producers.