Late Sen. Paul Tsongas Honored at Tsongas Center

City leaders who knew the late Paul E. Tsongas passed his torch to a new generation on April 20, in a dedication ceremony celebrating a new permanent exhibit on his life and legacy in the lobby of the Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell.

“This exhibit will serve as a beacon to enlighten students who didn’t know Paul, and to get them engaged,” said UMass Lowell Chancellor Marty Meehan, whose idea it was to make information about Tsongas’ legacy a permanent part of the building, which was acquired by the University in February.

“When the University acquired this facility, it became an educational facility, part of our campus,” Meehan added. “It is fitting that it bears Paul’s name because he was passionate about the power of education and always stressed excellence. He was a university trustee for a time and then served as the state’s highest official in higher education. UMass Lowell is very proud of its association with the Tsongas legacy.”

Speaking at the ceremony, a choked-up U.S. Rep. Niki Tsongas pointed out that today’s 18-year-olds were only 5 when her husband Paul died.

“This exhibit draws attention way beyond the building to things like generational responsibility, to understand and solve the extraordinary problems we face as nation,” she said.

“A Journey of Purpose: The Paul E. Tsongas Exhibit” is adjacent to an existing Janet Lambert-Moore mural, painted for the opening of the facility in 1997, and includes a bronze plaque summarizing Tsongas’ public service and a new wall-mounted display showcasing Tsongas’ reach beyond Lowell, both nationally and internationally.


One panel highlights Tsongas’ environmental accomplishments—a record that stretched from Cape Cod to Alaska—and another his advocacy for pro-business policies in Congress, including government aid to the automaker Chrysler when the company was in peril more than 20 years ago.
Can Long-Standing Global Conflicts be Resolved Peacefully?

Greeley Scholars Debate the Possibilities

Two renowned peace scholars met in friendly debate recently to explore the powers of intervention and compare the peace process in Northern Ireland and Israel.

Padraig O’Malley and Gavriel Salomon, UMass Lowell’s 2009 and 2010 Greeley Scholars for Peace Studies, respectively, drew on their own deep experiences as actively engaged scholars.

Salomon is the director of the Center for Research on Peace Education at the University of Haifa in Israel. As Greeley Peace Scholar, he helped faculty plan a degree program in peace studies at UMass Lowell.

O’Malley is the John Joseph Moakley Distinguished Professor for Peace and Reconciliation at the McCormack Graduate School of Public Policy at UMass Boston.

The event was hosted by Nadav Tamir, the consul general of Israel to New England, and co-sponsored by UMass Lowell’s Middle East Center for Peace, Development and Culture and the Peace and Conflict Studies Institute.

O’Malley described his work to organize a conference for the most radical elements of the Northern Ireland conflict during the 1970s. The sides finally faced the reality that military victory would never occur.

“Leaders who would not sit in the same room – and would not even sit side by side to sign the Good Friday Peace accords – are now co-prime ministers,” said O’Malley.

Salomon spoke of intransigence and growing resentment within Israel, as the sides have found no common ground and mistrust exists at the highest levels. Asked whether both sides want peace, Salomon said, “Both must acknowledge the collective narrative of the other side – the aspirations and the traumas that shape their thinking.”
UMass Lowell Online MBA is Among Best Values in Nation

Most Affordable Internationally Accredited Program in New England

UMass Lowell's online master's degree in business administration gets high marks for quality and value, according to a new national ranking by GetEducated.com.

UMass Lowell’s online MBA program is one of more than 400 reviewed by GetEducated.com in categories based on type of accreditation: regional, national and international. The Vermont-based consumer group objectively reviews and ranks online programs for cost, quality and credibility and provides the rankings at no cost to institutions as part of its online “Consumer Guide to MBAs.”

UMass Lowell ranks No. 27 on the list of online MBA programs considered “High-Quality Buys, All Under $20,000.” It is the only New England program to make the list.

Some 133 online MBA programs nationwide that are accredited by the international Association to Advance College Schools of Business (AACSB), considered the gold standard in business education, were included in the study.

In addition, UM ass Lowell’s online MBA was ranked No. 9 overall in affordability for graduate business students nationwide.

The average annual cost of an AACSB-accredited MBA is $32,926. UMass Lowell online learners “will pay a remarkably low cost of just under $16,500 for this MBA,” GetEducated.com stated in its announcement of the 2010 rankings.

Record Number of Students to Graduate at Commencement 2010

Over 2,300 to earn degrees on May 29 at Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell

A record number of students—more than 2,300—are expected to receive bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees at Commencement 2010. It was only a one-year-old record, since last year’s graduating class of 2,200 was also an historical high.

For several years, graduation classes hovered around the 2,000 mark. Due to an invigorated campus life and new support programs in recent years, retention rates—the number of students who persist to graduation—have increased.

Overall enrollment at the campus has also grown, but it is the current freshman and sophomore classes that are larger, indicating that graduation classes will continue to increase in size over coming years.

National Football League Commissioner Roger Goodell will address graduates at UMass Lowell’s commencement on Saturday, May 29 at 10 a.m. at the Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell.

A Commencement Eve Celebration at the UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center on Friday, May 28 at 6 p.m. will benefit student scholarships. The celebration will be preceded by a 4 p.m. special event with the Goodwins—“A Conversation with Doris & Dick.” Both events are open to the public.

For more information go to www.uml.edu/commencement.

Doctoral Student Wins Fulbright
Stephen Sanborn Will Teach in India for a Year

Stephen Sanborn, a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education at UMass Lowell, was recently named a Fulbright Scholar, joining an esteemed group that includes the likes of John Steinbeck and Henry Kissinger.

The Fulbright Program has been promoting peace and understanding through educational exchange for almost 65 years. One of the most prestigious award programs worldwide, it operates in 144 countries.

Funded by the U.S. Congress and partner nations, the program seeks “individuals of achievement and potential who represent the full diversity of their respective societies and select nominees through open, merit-based competitions,” according to the organization’s website.

“I was elated,” says Sanborn, who teaches biology and biotechnology at Andover High School. “The good news arrived unexpectedly in an e-mail with the name of a city in India I had never heard of before and the name of an Indian teacher who would be taking my place in my school community and living in my home in a few months. It felt like the first step on a grand adventure. When I discovered where Trivandrum was located, I was even more excited for it is in one of most beautiful and interesting parts of India.”

Trivandrum is an English-speaking school; Sanborn will teach biology. His two daughters will attend school there, and the family will live on campus in a faculty residence.

“By teaching in a different country, I will be stepping outside of my comfort zone as a teacher, something that requires me to take a close look at how and why I teach the way I do,” he says.

“I would like to contribute more to my profession through research and by fostering the growth and development of other teachers,” he says.

Sanborn says his courses at UMass Lowell have been instrumental in preparing him to do that.

“I’m having a fantastic experience at UMass Lowell,” he says. “I’m taking it slowly, because I’m trying to get as much as I can out of each course, but I’m really enjoying it.”

GSE student Stephen Sanborn was recently awarded a Fulbright Scholarship.
Researchers to Harness the Power of Photosynthesis

Technology Can Be Used to Store Solar Energy

Most people remember photosynthesis as something they had to memorize in high school—it is the process by which plants take energy from sunlight to convert carbon dioxide and water into organic compounds, such as sugar, while releasing oxygen.

But do you know that the amount of energy trapped by photosynthesis every year is immense? It is estimated to be about 100 trillion watts.

If only that energy could be harnessed to fuel human energy needs.

Researchers at UMass Lowell are now able to replicate photosynthesis in the laboratory, with the goal of someday storing solar energy on a commercial scale to help alleviate global energy need and reduce high concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

“Sunlight is a renewable and environment-friendly energy source that could potentially become the ultimate global energy solution,” says Physics Assoc. Prof. Mengyan Shen, head of the University’s Laboratory for Nanoscience and Laser Applications.

Shen and graduate students Cong Wang, Haibin Huo, Haizhou Ren, Fadong Yan and Michael Johnson employ newly developed nanostructures—which are measured in billionths of a meter—on solid metal surfaces to convert carbon dioxide and water into hydrocarbon and carbohydrate compounds for storing solar energy. The team utilizes intense laser pulses to irradiate the surfaces of cobalt and iron microparticles and induce the formation of the nanostructure arrays.

“Photosynthesis involves dissociating carbon dioxide into carbon monoxide and oxygen, and water into hydrogen and oxygen, and then synthesizing hydrocarbons from the hydrogen and carbon monoxide,” says Shen. “With metal nanostructures formed with femtosecond laser irradiation, a nature-like photosynthesis can be easily achieved and maintained at low cost using Earth-abundant metals.”

He says the efficiency for storing solar energy using the group’s present simple experimental setup is about 10 percent, which they hope to improve even further.

“Our setup is functioning stably and continuously without extra equipment and with sunlight as the only energy source,” he says. “Considering the high hydrocarbon production rate and solar-energy storing efficiency of the artificial photosynthesis, these nanostructure arrays open various new avenues for exploring renewable energy sources and developing carbon recycling in the future.”

The team’s research has been partially supported by a one-year $60,000 seed grant from the National Science Foundation and the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative. Its findings were published last winter in the “International Journal of Modern Physics.”