Here Comes the Class of 2011!

**Biggest Class Ever—Again—Set to Graduate on May 28**

For the fourth year in a row, a record number of students will receive degrees at UMass Lowell’s Commencement.

More than 2,530 graduates will receive bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees on Saturday, May 28, at the Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell. The event begins at 9 a.m.

“This continued growth in the number of students graduating, which has increased by more than 500 since 2007, shows that the University’s efforts to increase student success are working,” says UMass Lowell Chancellor Marty Meehan.

UMass Lowell leads New England public research institutions in increasing the six-year graduation rate, according to a December 2010 ranking by the Chronicle of Higher Education. UMass Lowell’s growth ranked No. 24 in the nation among more than 150 colleges and universities.

The positive growth is the result of strategies including maintaining small class sizes and a 14-to-1 student-teacher ratio; equipping 100 percent of classrooms with state-of-the-art technology to enhance learning; and increasing University housing by more than 800 beds.

Among the highlights of this year’s Commencement ceremony will be the presentation of a Chancellor’s Medal to Andre Dubus III, best-selling author and UMass Lowell professor of English. Dubus—the author of “House of Sand and Fog,” which was adapted into an Oscar-nominated film, and “Townie,” currently a New York Times best-seller—will also speak to graduates during the ceremony.

Honorary degrees will also be presented to MFS Investment Chairman and CEO Robert Manning ’84, former chairman of the UMass Board of Trustees, and his wife, Donna Manning, a UMass Lowell Nursing Department alumna who has won awards for excellence as an oncology nurse at Boston Medical Center; Mico Kaufman, a Romanian refugee who came to the United States and became a renowned sculptor commissioned for works including four presidential medals; and Stuart Mandell, former UMass Lowell professor who was instrumental in the founding of the University’s College of Management.

Barbara Hogan, a South African anti-apartheid activist, received an honorary degree from UMass Lowell at a special ceremony last month during the International Women Leaders’ Summit on Security through Economic and Social Development.

The 2011 Distinguished Alumni Award will go to John Kennedy ’70, former top executive with RSA Security Inc. and Nova Ventures Corp., and currently a director of Harvard Bioscience and Dacom Systems Inc.

All of the honorees, as well as top student award winners, will be feted at the annual Commencement Eve Gala to benefit student scholarships on Friday, May 27, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at the UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center.

For more information on commencement or the gala, go to www.uml.edu/commencement or call (978) 934-3236.
Women came from around the world recently to spend three days at UMass Lowell, building understanding about what it takes to advance democracy and peace.

Delegates from as far away as Colombia, Egypt, Israel, Liberia, Northern Ireland and South Africa shared their experiences and crafted the Lowell Declaration, a pledge to work together to create non-violent solutions to conflict.

The International Women Leaders’ Summit on Security through Economic and Social Development—held April 10-12 at the UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center—was hosted by a committee of UMass Lowell faculty, students and staff led by Prof. Paula Rayman with the support of Provost Ahmed Abdelal.

“One of the goals of UMass Lowell is to become an international institution with a global vision, a diverse faculty and student body, and academic partnerships with universities around the world,” says Abdelal. “An integral part of that goal is to host events like the International Women Leaders’ Summit.”

Among the highlights of the summit was the presentation of an honorary degree to former South African cabinet minister Barbara Hogan for her courage and steadfastness in helping to upend South Africa’s apartheid rule, which included serving eight years in prison for her activism.

There was also a screening of the powerful documentary “Pray the Devil Back to Hell,” which told the story of the women’s peace movement in Liberia led by Leymah Gbowee, one of the summit participants and the 2011 UMass Lowell Greeley Scholar for Peace. Gbowee, along with Janet Johnson-Bryant, former Liberian journalist and current UMass Lowell graduate student, led thousands of women in protest to force both sides of a bloody civil war to come to the peace table. In doing so, they helped end atrocities against women and children and the use of young boys as soldiers.

Rayman, the event’s chairwoman, says one of the biggest lessons of the summit is that “Knowledge without compassion is worthless and knowledge with compassion is wisdom.”

Lowell Declaration Pledges to Find Paths to Peace

On the final day of the International Women’s Summit, delegates signed the Lowell Declaration, which reads: “We join together as colleagues to acknowledge the importance of advancing security through economic and social development. Through collaborative efforts, new international partnerships will be born. While we enjoy our success together at the International Women Leaders’ Summit, we look forward to the larger successes of creating change in our own spheres. We resolve to carry on our new understandings into our organizations, our communities, our nations and our global society.”

Health and Environment Grads Score High

They Consistently Beat the National Averages on Licensing Exams

Graduates in the nursing, medical technology and physical therapy programs at UMass Lowell—part of the University’s School of Health and Environment (SHE)—achieve high pass rates on the board examinations they take to practice in their fields.

“I am proud of the excellence of our graduates that has resulted in high pass rates on licensure and certification examinations, especially in comparison to the pass rates of other university programs within the region and across the nation,” says SHE Dean Shortie McKinney.

In all three programs, UMass Lowell pass rates have exceeded the national average.

Touting a 95 percent pass rate in 2010 on the national exam for registered nurses, UMass Lowell graduates attained a higher rate than the Massachusetts state average of 86.8 percent and the national average of 87.4.

Medical Technology graduates have achieved a 92 percent average pass rate over the past five years on the national medical laboratory scientist board exam. The national pass rate was 77 percent.

The 2010 class of doctor of physical therapy graduates achieved a 100 percent first-time pass rate on the national physical therapy exam, compared to the national average of 89 percent and the Massachusetts average of 91.5 percent.

Kyle Coffey, a 2010 physical therapy graduate, passed the national board exam in July and began work in August at Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates in Chelmsford. Coffey says the UMass Lowell program had prepared him with the critical-thinking skills necessary to not only pass the test the first time but to be a successful professional independent clinician.

“The faculty is great,” says Coffey. “They challenge you to be the best student possible so when you graduate, you are prepared to become the most professional physical therapist out there. My education at UMass Lowell allows me to be competitive in any setting or with any position.”

Calendar Snapshot

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

Spring Concert: “Drawn to Music”

Young artists create a visual response to music.
May 15, 3 p.m., Durgin Concert Hall

Hockey Alumni/Friends Golf Outing

Annual Alumni/Friends Golf Outing; $175 covers greens fee, golf shirt, dinner and use of golf cart; June 20, 12:30 p.m., Meadow Creek Golf Club in Dracut

“We The Porch”

Have dinner and enjoy a play by Jack Neary, June 2, 3, 4, evenings and June 4, matinee; at UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center

Reservations required: 978-984-3151

Women Peacemakers Sign Lowell Declaration

International Delegates Pledge to Work Together as Global Network

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Norm Bazin Named Ice Hockey Head Coach

UMass Lowell Alum was a Standout River Hawks Player

Alumus Norm Bazin ’94, ’99 returns to the ice for UMass Lowell – this time to take the helm of River Hawks as the sixth head coach in the hockey program’s history.

Bazin, who played at UMass Lowell from 1990 to 94 and served as an assistant coach from 1996 to 2000, returns to the University following three successful seasons as head coach at Hamilton College. He also served for eight years as an assistant coach and recruiting coordinator at Colorado College.

“Norm Bazin brings great passion not just for the hockey program, but for the University as well,” said University Chancellor Marty Meehan. “We believe he can recruit top-quality talent, develop that talent and raise the bar of expectation at UMass Lowell. In addition, Norm’s past experiences as a student and a coach demonstrate clearly that he places education at the center of the college experience.”

Bazin replaces Blaise MacDonald, who resigned at the end of the 2010-11 season.

“UMass Lowell is my alma mater and it has a special place in my heart,” Bazin said. “Hockey East is one of the premier conferences in the country.”

Bazin was named the NESCAC Coach of the Year his last two years at Hamilton and helped guide four players to NESCAC All-Conference honors. He was also named a finalist for the 2011 Edward Jeremiah Award for NCAA Division III Coach of the Year.

As a player at UMass Lowell, Bazin compiled 32 goals and 36 assists in 134 career games. He peaked as a senior with 20 goals and 15 assists—including 17 goals in his final 19 games. Team honors were plentiful for Bazin as he was named the recipient of the Most Improved Player, Unsung Hero and Gus Coutu (Most Spirited) awards.

Bazin achieved his bachelor’s degree in criminal justice and earned his master’s degree in education administration in 1999.

He played professionally for the Birmingham Bulls of the ECHL and the Cincinnati Cyclones of the IHL in 1994-95.

Sarah Behn Named Women’s Basketball Head Coach

Former B.C. Star Becomes Sixth Head Coach in Program History

Sarah Behn, one of the most recognized names in New England women’s basketball, has been named head coach of the UMass Lowell women’s basketball program. Behn becomes the sixth head coach in the program’s 36-year history.

“Sarah Behn’s accomplishments as one of the region’s greatest players, her operation of the largest basketball camp program in New England, along with her past experience coaching at the high school and college levels made her a compelling candidate,” said Athletic Director Dana Skinner in making the announcement. “We are excited that she will be bringing her many contacts and high energy to UMass Lowell.”

Behn enjoyed a spectacular career at Boston College, where she became the only four-time Big East Conference all-star in B.C. women’s basketball history and two-time Kodak All-American. She remains the all-time leading scorer in Big East regular season games with 1,546 points (67 games).

The Big East Conference Rookie of the Year in 1989-90, Behn was inducted into the B.C. Hall of Fame in 1998. Five years later, she became the first female student-athlete in B.C. history to have her jersey retired and was named among the top 10 athletes in B.C. history by Sports Illustrated in 2008.

Following graduation, Behn played professionally for one year in Ettlebruck, Luxembourg.

Behn established the Sarah Behn Basketball Camp in 1994, which remains the most successful basketball camp in New England. She has also coached at Foxboro High School, Framingham State College and Franklin Pierce University.

One Word for Toxic Flame Retardants: Nuts!

Students’ Project Wins $75,000 from the Environmental Protection Agency

Two graduate students have developed a way to turn the processing of cashew nuts into safer fireproof fabrics. The research, which has received acclaim—and $75,000—from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), uses a byproduct of processing the nuts’ shells to replace toxic products currently used.

Polymer science student Sethumadhavan Ravichandran and chemical engineering student Ryan Bouldin teamed up with physics Prof. Jayant Kumar and plastics engineering Asst. Prof. Ramaswamy Nagarajan for the research. The team was chosen to receive the EPA’s People, Prosperity and the Planet award during the National Sustainable Design Expo held recently in Washington, D.C.

UMass Lowell was one of only five schools to win the coveted award. Each received up to $75,000 to further develop the design, implement it in the field or move it into the marketplace. A total of 55 universities nationwide competed in the event.

“Most of us go to work driving a car or riding a bus full of plastic components and upholstery that have been treated with compounds to minimize the risk of fire,” says Kumar. “Several commonly used flame retardants contain polybrominated diphenyl ethers, or PBDEs, which are very toxic and can persist in the environment.”

Kumar, who directs UMass Lowell’s Center for Advanced Materials, says, “This award will allow us to develop replacements to fire retardants that are non-toxic and have minimal environmental impact while being inexpensive.”

Seed funding for the team’s work was provided by the Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Institute and the UMass Commercial Ventures & Intellectual Property Technology Development Fund. The investigators also acknowledge the support of U.S. Army Natick Soldier Research Center for this project.

The award winning graduate students met with U.S. Rep. Niki Tsongas, center, during their trip to Washington, D.C. Joining her, from left, are Asst. Prof. Ramaswamy Nagarajan, Sethumadhavan Ravichandran and Ryan Bouldin.
Shovels broke the ground on South Campus recently, signaling the official start of construction of a new academic building there. The Health and Social Sciences Building will be home to three of the University’s most popular majors in health and social sciences—criminal justice, nursing and psychology.

“The students who will study in this new building will help advance a vibrant society,” Chancellor Marty Meehan said at the groundbreaking event on April 21. “So many of our students are committed to making a difference in the world, both while they are here and after they graduate. We salute our students and the faculty who inspire them.”

The $40 million, 69,000-square-foot building will make room for the University’s growing student body, which has seen a 30 percent increase in undergraduates since 2007. When completed during the 2012-2013 academic year, the building will have the capacity to serve nearly 900 students and more than 140 faculty members.

The building will offer traditional classrooms and faculty offices, as well as specialized labs, such as simulated hospital rooms and other health-care settings, and research space designed for social sciences.

It will include a four-story atrium lobby that will promote interaction between faculty and students and sustainable design features such as energy-efficient climate control, strategic use of natural light to reduce electricity costs and water-efficient landscaping that does not require irrigation.


“Sitting on the higher education committee as I do, people realize that public education is an investment, not an expense,” said Donoghue. “It is important for the future of Massachusetts to support our students and keep people and jobs here.”

Said Massachusetts Secretary of Education Paul Reville, “The Patrick-Murray Administration remains firmly committed to providing the support our public campuses need to provide an excellent education for all students. Buildings are an important way that we speak to our students.”