BLUE LIGHT SPECIAL
The glow-up of Downtown Lowell continues, and the John E. Cox Memorial Bridge near campus is a shining example. Built in 1937, the historic steel truss bridge has been outfitted with more than 200 colored LED lights, whose lifespan is projected to illuminate Bridge Street’s path over the Merrimack River for at least two decades.

Led by the Greater Lowell Community Foundation, Lowell Heritage Partnership and the City of Lowell, the effort is part of the Lowell Waterways Vitality Initiative.
Chancellor Chen Settles In
UML’s new chancellor, Julie Chen, talks about her priorities and plans.

City Lights
From research partnerships to internship opportunities, the city of Lowell serves as a learning lab for students and faculty.

The Company We Keep
Teradyne and UMass Lowell share a long history of collaboration on creating opportunities for students and alumni.

Face of Philanthropy
Jim Lou ’92 and Cathy Wang ’92 repay a professor’s kindness by helping current students.

IN THIS ISSUE
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Dear Alumni and Friends,
I thought I knew UMass Lowell. After all, I’ve been at the university for more than 25 years, as a professor, a researcher and an administrator. But since becoming chancellor nine months ago, I’ve talked to hundreds of members of our community—alumni, students, faculty, staff, partners—and I’m learning so much more, and am even more impressed by our River Hawk family.

There is so much good work being done—on campus, in our region and around the globe. We highlight some of it in this issue, but we could fill another entire edition with stories about your successes, and those happening in our classrooms, labs and athletics arenas.

As we wrap up our first strategic planning process since 2010, I’m excited for what’s ahead. We’re poised to realize our vision of being an inclusive, sustainable public research university in a vibrant Gateway City, and we’re laying out the steps to get there. I explain some of it in the Q&A on page 22, and will share more in months to come.

Sincerely,

Julie Chen

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EDITOR’S NOTE: Please send comments to Editor Sarah McAdams Corbett at Sarah_Corbett@uml.edu. Submit class notes at uml.edu/updateyourinfo.

WHEREVER YOU ARE ON CAMPUS, THE MERRIMACK RIVER is never far, serving as a constant reminder of how the history—and the future—of the university, the city, and the river are entwined. This photo, taken by Anthony Sampas, an archivist with the university’s Library, captures the Aiken Street Bridge, built in 1899, East Campus to Lowell’s Centralville neighborhood.
TRENDING @ UML

SMOOTH SLEDDING
Hardcore skiers and snowboarders may be fond of the phrase “no friends on powder days,” but that doesn’t apply at UML. Students budded up on a bluebird day to take advantage of fresh snowfall on South Campus.

An out-of-this-world menu
Students Ariel Shramko, Eliot Pirone, Michelle Connelly and recent grad Gitesh Shewatker are among the top 25 finalists in NASA’s international Deep Space Food Challenge. The team, which got its start through the university’s Difference Maker program, has formed a company called the Auto Terra Project to develop self-sustaining terrariums for food production for future Mars explorers. They stand to win a contract from NASA worth up to $150,000.

EYES ON THE PRIZE
The UML men’s basketball has something special brewing in its 10th Division I season. Unbeaten at home (13-0) as of Feb. 8, the River Hawks are off to their best start (20-6) in over a decade. Costello Athletic Center has been selling out, and seems to be cozy for everyone except for the River Hawks’ opponents. Taking down America East preseason favorites Vermont and Bryant, the team is vying for an inaugural DI title and first-ever March Madness appearance.

Space Campus
Thanks to a team of students, faculty researchers, scientists and engineers at UML’s Lowell Center for Space Science and Technology (with a little help from a $5.6 million grant from NASA), the university successfully launched a planet-finding telescope to the edge of the atmosphere. The 14-foot-long, 1,500-pound telescope, called PICTURE-C, was carried aloft to the stratosphere by an unmanned, helium-filled balloon 400 feet wide and several stories high; it was released from the Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility in Fort Sumner, New Mexico, at the end of September. Its ultimate goal? Discover Earth-like planets capable of supporting life.

SPICING THINGS UP
People lined up to get Craic Sauce at the new Indoor Winter Farmers Market at University Crossing. The hot sauces, created by founder Brian Ruhlmann, are made in Lowell with locally sourced ingredients—some grown right on campus. A limited-edition sauce, Aji Punch, features peppers grown in the greenhouse on East Campus. The monthly market is an extension of the Urban Agriculture Program, run in partnership with UML’s First Institute of Sustainability and Energy and Mill City Grows, an urban food justice organization in Lowell.

CHECK OUT MORE TRENDING
UML News at uml.edu/news.

A new development … or developer, anyway.
After a comprehensive selection process, GMH Communities was tagged to develop approximately 10 acres on UML’s East Campus. Located along the Merrimack River between the Tsongas Center and LeLacheur Park, the property will be recast into a mix of space that will include business, research, hospitality, student housing and retail. “This will transform the way students, faculty, business partners and community members view and interact with UMass Lowell,” says Chancellor Julie Chen. “Our students and alumni already know the impact of hands-on learning to accelerate their career trajectories. This project will dramatically scale up those opportunities for students by co-locating on our campus many of our business, nonprofit and research partners offering co-ops, internships and, ultimately, jobs.”
Nearly 5,000 students live on campus at UMass Lowell—including about 85% of first-year students.

Dog-in-residence

Clockwise from top: Sophy Tuttle and helper painting mural on Mahoney Hall; “Chrome Cobito,” by internationally known muralist Bikismo, depicts a Caribbean hermit crab, or cobito, on the Pinanski building; Sophy Tuttle’s mural on Mahoney Hall depicts six endangered species in Massachusetts.

Tuttle’s mural faces Broadway and the South Campus quad-rangle, while the internationally renowned Puerto Rican muralist “Bikismo” (Joshua Santos Rivera) painted a Caribbean hermit crab, or cobito, on the Pinanski building, facing VFW Highway.

Tuttle, who once lived in Lowell, has painted murals around New England, from the College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, Maine, to Harvard University’s new campus in the Allston neighborhood of Boston. “I like the physicality of mural painting—being outside and the big movements—and I enjoy the interactions with people stopping by,” she says. “I like that it changes the space, and becomes a landmark that people recognize. And hopefully, it gets people to stop and think.”

PAINTING THE TOWN RED (AND BLUE AND YELLOW AND …)
with Ruben Sança, director of the new Office of Student Life & Well-Being

Loneiess. Anxiety. Depression. College students across the country are hurting. A mental health crisis that has been building for years only became more acute during the pandemic. In a 2021 survey by the American College Health Association, almost three-quarters of students reported moderate or severe psychological distress. To help address the issue, UMass Lowell recently created the Office of Student Life & Well-being. As vice director, Ruben Sança ‘09, ’11 (a former Olympic runner), about mental health on campus.

Q: NEARLY EVERY STUDY SHOWS THAT RATES OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS HAVE INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC. WHAT ARE YOU SEEING AT UML? IS THE PICTURE CHANGING AS ACTIVITIES HAVE RESUMED ON CAMPUS?

A: The Okanagan Charter provides institutions with a common language, principles and strategies that can address student mental health issues from onset, before they become much larger. We must take an approach from a holistic standpoint with proactive measures.

Q: WHAT GIVES YOU THE MOST HOPE ABOUT THE CRISIS?

A: First and foremost, we’ve established thoughtful collaboration on campus. We have connected with students, staff and faculty, introducing the concept of health promotions and well-being. So far, we have worked closely with first-year and transfer student services to keep those levels of stress and anxiety manageable for our students, but just like other institutions, we realize that counseling center appointments alone cannot solve this issue. In addition to counseling, we must find better strategies that can address student mental health issues on campus, in order to support them before they get to that point.

Q: WHAT HAS THE OFFICE BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH IN ITS FIRST YEAR?

A: We are connecting with students, staff and faculty, introducing the concept of health promotions and well-being. So far, we have worked closely with first-year and transfer student services to keep those levels of stress and anxiety manageable for our students. We are still gathering data to be able to understand our student needs. We have partnered with the Student Government Association and Prof. Carlsmith, University Prof. of Anthropology at UMass Boston Steve Mrozowski, Prof. Audrey Horning of Queen’s University Belfast and Queen’s University’s Excavation Director Quintin Blake (bottom left photo). We are still gathering data to be able to understand our student needs.

Q: IN SEPTEMBER, UML BECAME THE FIRST CAMPUS IN NEW ENGLAND TO LAUNCH A SURVEY TO ASSESS STUDENT WELL-BEING. WHAT DOES THE REPORT MEAN FOR STUDENTS?

A: Based on information we continue to gather through our Behavioral Intervention Team, UMass Lowell is no different when it comes to increased rates of anxiety and depression in our students. Our division on the Wellness Center was so hard to provide the best service for our students, but just like other institutions, we realize that counseling center appointments alone cannot solve this issue. In addition to counseling, we must find better strategies that can address student mental health issues on campus, in order to support them before they get to that point.

Q: HOW CAN STUDENTS TELL IF THEY ARE UNDER TOO MUCH STRESS AND A DEEPER ISSUE?

A: By nature, all of us experience some level of anxiety and stress. We strive to provide resources to keep those levels of stress and anxiety manageable for our students, but it’s never a guarantee that our students are actually using those resources. Through assessments, we can measure where our students are and determine how to effectively deploy resources.

Q: WHAT GIVES YOU THE MOST HOPE ABOUT THE CRISIS?

A: The establishment of this office and adopting the Okanagan Charter are big steps—and now we are doing a complete assessment with specific questions related to health, well-being and mental health. We’re focusing on things we can actually change, and that’s really going to help over the next several years.

Ruben Sança ‘09, ’11, director of the Office of Student Life & Well-Being, holds a Tibetan singing bowl in the university’s new Serenity Center. First used thousands of years ago in Mesopotamia, the bowls can transport listeners into a meditative state.

 Pieces of the Past Students Dig Up History in Lowell

Digging at an archaeological site in Lowell recently uncovered some hints about the lives of the city’s Irish settlers in the 19th century. Students from UMass Lowell, UMass Boston and Queen’s University Belfast were part of a team searching for artifacts from a grocery store and dwelling that was operated by Irish immigrant Patrick Kaye in the mid-1800s. The group wanted to get ahead of a new development planned for the parcel at 509 Market, which will, quite literally, cover the past.

Kaye was an entrepreneur and leading member of the Irish community in Lowell. In the 1870s, he served as a representative in the Massachusetts Legislature. His family owned the Market Street property until 1906. In the mid-1950s, the building became home to a nightclub called the Cosmopolitan Lounge.

Led by archaeologists, nine history majors used trowels, buckets and brushes in a search for clues about life more than 150 years ago.

“It’s exciting to hunt for a glimmer or twinkle that could be a piece of glass or pottery, giving us a peak into the past, and to learn what people’s lives were like in the mid-19th century,” says UML history major Orlaith Hutchison, who grew up in Ireland. “I am fascinated by history and find it poetic that Irish immigrants helped build the canals in Lowell, and now I’m using a pickaxe to uncover their way of life all these years later.”

Prof. Audrey Horning of Queen’s University, who helped lead the dig, says the team uncovered a variety of artifacts, including buttons, pipe stems, shoe heels, nails, clay pieces and marrbles.

“These will be researched and documented to preserve an urban history of prominence of Irish immigrant and this people who lived in this Acre area of Lowell,” she says.

The project continues archaeological work started in 2010, when researchers hunted for clues of Lowell’s early Irish settlers at an excavation on the grounds of St. Patrick’s Church, also in the Acre neighborhood. —KA
CAMPUS LIFE

Nursing Chair Receives International Distinction

The true value of nursing has never been more evident than during the past few years. In recognition of her dedication to the profession and those for whom she cares, Heidi Collins Fantasia was elected a member of the 2022 American Academy of Nursing Class of Fellows. She was one of nine Massachusetts professionals named in a group of 250 from across the globe.

AAN Fellows represent the nursing industry's most accomplished leaders in policy, research, practice, administration and academia and are selected based on their contributions to advancing the public’s health.

Chair of the Solomon School of Nursing, Fantasia is only the second UML faculty member to receive the honor. May Futrell, who served as chair of the School of Nursing for 23 years before retiring in 2005, was the first. Fantasia, who has served the community as a nurse for 32 years, specializes in women’s health including reproductive health, contraception, intimate partner violence and sexual consent.

New Campus Signs Tell the History of Lowell’s Indigenous Peoples

Lowell's backstory as the cradle of the Industrial Revolution is well documented. Thanks to the work of several UMass Lowell students and faculty, the history of the Indigenous peoples who called this area home centuries before the textile mills came along is now being told—and in some unexpected places.

Led by History Prof. Robert Forrant, the group created a half-dozen educational signs across campus to broaden community awareness and knowledge of the native Pawtucket and Wannagee peoples of the Pennacook tribe. The “Indigenous Past and Presence” signage project was the subject of a discussion on Nov. 7 as part of the university’s observance of Native American Heritage Month.

With funding from the Provost’s Office, the university was able to offer paid internships to three students—two history majors who helped research and write the text, and a graphic design major who created the signs.

Helping First-Gen Students Find Careers

Thanks to $300,000 in federal funding, the university is now helping its first-generation students get a head start on their careers.

In the fall, UML’s River Hawk Scholars Program launched a Pathways to Career pilot program. While the nationally recognized program is geared toward freshmen and sophomores, it expanded to provide career and graduate school readiness programming for juniors and seniors.

The program provides the first cohort of 26 juniors with a structured plan for the academic year. Students are required to participate in several activities and programs hosted by the Career and Co-op Center, such as interviewing and resume workshops, networking nights and the Dine & Dress event. Students are also required to attend either the fall or spring career fair, as well as conduct career-related interviews with three people from the UML community.

“Every year, the needs of each college cohort are different,” says Assoc. Director of Career Services Sarina Addicote-Adco. “By junior year, they understand the ins and outs of college, and now they’re thinking, ‘OK, I need to get an internship and do something with my career.’ That’s why we’re here—to support them in a variety of ways.”

UMass Lowell Is Only America East School on Athletic Equality List

UMass Lowell remains one of only 15 Division I athletic departments to score a perfect 100 on the NCAA’s recent annual update. Launched in 2017, the AII measures LGBTQ+ inclusion policies and practices in collegiate athletics, provides feedback to athletic departments on how their policies and practices compare to others across the nation, and offers resources to departments hoping to update their policies and practices.

The NCAA’s AII Research Fellows perform a comprehensive annual audit of the student-athlete handbook, policy manuals and official athletics websites of every NCAA DI institution to identify policies and practices of LGBTQ+ inclusion. Every athletic department has the capacity to earn full points on the AII by enacting and making each policy, resource and training publicly available to staff, teams and student-athletes.

UM Athletics took a number of steps, including adding resources to riverhawks.com, such as an Inclusive Fan Code of Conduct and a Bias Reporting link, and encouraging more staff members and student-athletes to participate in Ally Space training.

UMass Lowell is the only America East school with a perfect score.

AHoy! Their pirate ship sailed through Bone-Shaker Alley and the Maddening Mud Pit before taking on serious water in the Mermack River.

A pair of mechanical engineering majors—junior Gil Rojas, a first-generation student, and his sister, senior Daniela Rojas—faced all of this recently in the Lowell Kinetic Sculpture Race, an annual event celebrating science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics.

Started in Northern California in 1969, the race came to Lowell in 2016 thanks to Race Director Michael Roody, an assistant teaching professor of art and design. This year’s race was the first since 2019 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We’re so glad to be back,” Roody said at the race’s downtown starting line on Market Street, “because some who were adopted were forbidden to go out vehicles and costumes, a party band played and course marshals dressed as sea hounds danced to Gowan Stiffler’s ‘Hollaback Girl.’

Using forks as bicycles, boats and recycled materials, teams from as far away as California, Nevada and Maryland built human-powered, human-powered, ‘kinetic sculptures’ that had to traverse a seven-mile course of cobblestones, asphalt, water and sand—from which pieces of selenium.
A lot of the hate that comes from Islamophobia stems from ignorance. People just don’t know. And a lot of times, it’s hard to blame them when all they know are the bad things. We want to counter that by clearing up any of those lingering stereotypes.”

STANDING COURTSIDE AT the Campus Recreation Center on a fall Friday night, Abdullah Abou Mahmoud wears a satisfied grin while watching fellow students hoist jump shots, scramble for rebounds and swap high fives.

As president of the Muslim Student Association (MSA), Abou Mahmoud, a senior computer science major, was responsible for putting together the charity 3-on-3 basketball tournament that raised over $1,000 for Islamic Relief USA. He was happy with the turnout—about 50 players and friends cheering them on—but more so with the joy and camaraderie that he was witnessing on the court. It was the same positive energy that sparked his interest in UMass Lowell’s MSA nearly a decade ago.

“It’s an organization that I wanted to be part of since middle school,” says Abou Mahmoud, who, as an eighth-grader at The Islamic Academy for Peace in Methuen, Massachusetts, was invited by the MSA to recite verses from the Quran at a community event at University Crossing.

Now, Abou Mahmoud is leading one of the oldest student clubs on campus (founded in 1975). Under his leadership, it was named UML’s Student Organization of the Year in 2021-22. “It’s a privilege to be part of the organization, for sure,” he says.

Coming out of the pandemic, Abou Mahmoud and the group’s executive board have been able to grow membership to around 120 students. They’ve done so by offering “something for everyone,” he says. There are the religious activities: Jumu’ah prayers on Fridays at Alumni Hall and Quran memorization programs on Tuesdays at University Crossing’s Serenity Center, which is also open for daily prayers and provides an ablution station—a sink used for “Wudu,” the ritual cleansing of head, arms and feet.

There are also more social activities: the biweekly “MSA Circle,” where members can discuss whatever’s on their mind over slices of pizza, and general meetings with scavenger hunts and games of “Jabapary.” For those who enjoy sports, there are meetings devoted to games of volleyball, badminton and Spikeball.

“The philosophy is to build community,” Abou Mahmoud says. “College students don’t want to sit through another lecture, so we try to find a balance between the spiritual and social events.”

Abou Mahmoud says there are “a lot of misconceptions about our religion,” particularly in the media post-9/11. While he has not encountered Islamophobia at UML, “Colleges are more of a melting pot; I think it’s more of a problem in high school or with much older people, for some reason,” he says. It was important for the MSA to host an open house in the University Crossing lobby this fall at which members could answer questions that anyone may have about the Islamic faith.

“A lot of the hate that comes from Islamophobia stems from ignorance. People just don’t know. And a lot of times, it’s hard to blame them when all they know are the bad things,” he says. “We want to counter that by clearing up any of those lingering stereotypes that people may have in the back of their minds.”

What does Abou Mahmoud’s Muslim faith mean to him? “It has shaped who I am,” he says. “But it’s not just praying five times a day, it’s not just fasting. There are a lot of different things that we are required to do every day that are more of a lifestyle thing. For example, it’s a sin to be filthy; you have to be clean. We get ingrained from a young age to stay away from all of these bad things that are just normalized nowadays. We learn how you should treat children, how you should treat your elders, how you should treat women.”

“I wasn’t part of the Muslim faith, I would not have the community that I have now,” he adds. “When you have something common that brings you together, you feel a lot more fulfilled. You feel more motivated. And that’s something that I have, both at the university and outside the university.”

Abou Mahmoud already has a software engineering job waiting for him at Microsoft after graduation. He interned for the company in Seattle last summer and will work remotely from home in Dracut, Massachusetts. Before then, he wants to “build the foundation” that will help propel the MSA into the future.

“For a lot of Muslims, a big part of the college decision is made from, ‘How is the MSA?’ So, for me to be in a position where I can help influence people joining this university, it definitely motivates me,” says Abou Mahmoud, who can’t imagine his UML experience without the MSA. “Would I have survived? Yes. But would I have been fulfilled? No. Fulfillment is something that we get from MSA.”

Abdullah Abou Mahmoud

SENIOR COMPUTER SCIENCE MAJOR

Muslim-Student Association members gather for the bi-weekly “MSA Circle” meeting in the Serenity Center in University Crossing.

“Would I have survived? Yes. But would I have been fulfilled? No. Fulfillment is something that we get from MSA.”
Noelle Lambert ‘19 found a new way to inspire people by competing on the CBS reality show “Survivor.” A former River Hawk women’s lacrosse player from Londonderry, New Hampshire, Lambert lost her left leg above the knee in a 2016 car accident. She has since started the Born to Run Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to providing child amputees with prosthetics, and becomes a track and field star. She competed in the 2020 Paralympics in Tokyo and holds the U.S. record in the 100-meter dash.

“Survivor” contestant Noelle Lambert ‘19, front row center; joined the women’s lacrosse team for a watch party at University Crossing. Lambert made it to the top eight on the reality show.

When I lose weight, it affects the suction on my prosthetic and my leg will pop off. And I didn’t want the other players to know that I’m a Paralympian, so I lied. I wanted to starve myself leading up to the show so I could get used to that. I was like, “OK, I can get through this.”

Q: How did you get cast on the show? A: My mother (Judy) is a huge fan and has been telling me for years that I need to get on the show. But I’d never seen an above-the-knee amputee on “Survivor,” so I thought I had no shot. And I didn’t think it was the best idea because when I get hungry and tired, I’m a terrible person. But when I was in Tokyo for the Paralympics, I got a call from the head casting director. I thought it was a joke or a scam, but it was real. I sent in a video to start the whole casting process, which took about six months.

Q: What were some of your strategies in the game? A: I wanted to strike myself leading up to the show so I could get used to that. When I was weightlifting, it affected the suction on my prosthetic and my leg would pop off. And I didn’t want the other players to know that I’m a Paralympian, so I lied to everyone and said I’m a lacrosse coach for UMass Lowell. My strategy was just to be likable and useful around camp, and to lay low in the beginning. I think I proved myself. I was able to keep up in challenges.

Q: You were born your Run Foundation sweatshirt on the show. Has it helped the cause? A: People have reached out and donated, saying, “I saw your sweatshirt.” A lot of amputees are also reaching out, which is great. I’m glad I can create a positive light for people going through difficult times. They can see me doing it and be like, “OK, I can get through this.”

Q: How did the experience change you? A: I used to say I have a time patience, but that lasted for about a week. You feel really accomplished after the game is over — “I actually did this.” When you’re complaining about things back at home, like when you’re hungry, you remember I survived eight or nine days on nothing but coconut. It makes you realize what’s important. It makes you appreciate things you have at home. But it’s weird how it affects people in different ways. It can psychologically mess with some people. That’s what I was most scared of. What if it changes me? But I came home on Memorial Day weekend and was like, “Let’s rage.”

Q: Would you do it again? A: Absolutely. On the Island, I was like, “I’m never doing this again.” This was the worst decision of my life. But a week out of the game, I was like, “OK, I’m ready.” It’s a really cool experience. You create genuine relationships with every person you play the game with.

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Does a Common Food Additive Harm the Gut?

Added as a whitener and anti-caking agent to thousands of food products such as candy and salad dressing, titanium dioxide use is on the rise even though research in animals shows a link to increased risk of intestinal inflammation, accumulation in organs and ability to damage DNA.

This year, the European Union banned the substance in food. The candymaker Mars Inc. was recently sued for not phasing out titanium dioxide from its products, including the popular-with-kids candy Skittles.

$2.5M NSF Grant Will Help Make Local Drinking Water Safer

UMass Lowell researchers are aiming to improve the quality and safety of drinking water for thousands of Merrimack Valley residents, and a nearly $2.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation is helping. Led by Prof. Pradeep Kurup, chair of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, the four-year pilot project will engage residents in Lowell, Lawrence, Dracut and Andover to become “citizen scientists” and help sample and test water.

“Water is a basic human need, and this university and the city of Lowell are here because of the water flowing in the Merrimack River, which supplies drinking water to over 600,000 people in the region,” says Chancellor Julia Chan, U.S. Sen. Ed Markey and U.S. Rep. Lori Trahan, who were instrumental in helping secure support for the program, came to campus to officially kick off the project.

The project builds on earlier research led by Kurup.

“Thanks to previous funding from the NSF and the U.S. Army Natick Soldier Center, our research team has developed a simple, easy-to-use handheld electrochemical sensor—called an ‘electronic tongue,’ or E-Tongue—that can rapidly detect multiple toxins in drinking water on-site,” he says.

These toxins include heavy metals like lead, arsenic and copper, as well as pesticides and even per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)—the so-called ‘forever chemicals’ that can last indefinitely in the body and in the environment.

The E-Tongue will be distributed to selected households, schools and facilities around the Merrimack Valley with instructions for testing drinking water. Through a user-friendly app, the collected data will be automat-
ically transmitted to a smart, cloud-based computing platform. There, machine-learning algorithms will analyze and predict not only the type and concentration of a contaminant but also the extent of the contamination, and possibly even pinpoint its source.

Researchers Developing New Model for Managing Chronic Pain without Opioids

Chronic inflammatory pain, which is often caused by underlying health conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis or fibromyalgia, affects the quality of life for millions of people, impacting everything from mobility to social activities. Treatment is often complicated by the use of opioids because of the related side effects and the risk of addiction.

A research team led by Biomedical Engineering Asst. Prof. Bryan James Black could help change that. Black and researchers from UMass Lowell and the University of Wisconsin-Madison are developing a way to screen non-opioid drugs for use in treating chronic pain. The project is funded by a four-year, $844,000 grant from the National Institute of Health.

The team developed an innovative 3D tissue-chip model of acute and chronic nociception—the process by which pain stimulation is communicated through the body’s peripheral and central nervous system—that could help facilitate the preclinical development of new non-opioid pain treatments, therapies or drugs.
Management Professor Explores Future of ‘Workforce Ecosystems’

“You’re the leader of a marketing agency that wants to start offering TikTok services to clients. Unfortunately, senior leaders in your company have never used the app. You consider firing someone, but then you realize that several of your colleagues and contract workers—people who are already part of your broader workforce ecosystem—are TikTok aficionados. By partnering them with more established personnel in your organization, your agency can suddenly provide a valuable new service to clients. As guest editor for the MIT Sloan Management Review’s “Future of the Workforce Big Ideas” research initiative, Assoc. Prof. of Management Elizabeth Altman heard such a story while interviewing a marketing executive about workforces.

“That’s when it clicked for me that this truly is a different way of thinking about strategy,” says Altman, who teaches strategy and organizational theory in undergraduate, MBA and doctoral programs in the School of Business.

Altman’s work, a joint multiyear research initiative with MIT Sloan Management Review and Deloitte Consulting, has produced a research article and two reports—2021’s “Workforce Ecosystems” and this year’s “Orchestrating Workforce Ecosystems”—and spawned a book that’s due out in the spring, “Workforce Ecosystems: Reaching Strategic Goals with People, Partners, and Technologies” (MIT Press).

The research, Altman says, aims to help executives seek an integrated approach to managing an increasingly intertwined workforce—that is, technology that’s enabling new ways of working and roles that are becoming more project- and outcome-based.

Professor Makes it Easier for Humans to Teach Robots New Skills

Asst. Prof. Reza Ahmadzadeh of the Miner School of Computer and Information Sciences envisions a future where more people have robots inside their homes—think of TikTok aficionados. By partnering them with more established personnel in your organization, your agency can suddenly provide a valuable new service to clients.

Science Dean Reps River Hawks in Qatar

Kennedy College of Sciences Dean Noureddine Melikechi was in Qatar for the World Cup in December, and he says it was an experience he’ll never forget.

“FIFA invited me, and the entire experience was incredible,” says Melikechi, who says that whenever possible, he roots for the national team of his native Algeria, but also supports Manchester United. The dean attended the semifinal and final matches, as well as several events where he met stars of the sport, including former Boston Breakers player Kristine Lilly, a two-time FIFA World Cup champion with the U.S. Women’s National team. But the highlight, he says, was the overall feeling of camaraderie between fans from all over the world. “Qatar is small, so there were people everywhere, and I did not see a single problem. There were fans from Senegal, France, Argentina, Brazil, Morocco—and they were dancing together, charting together. Everyone was getting along before and after games. That was really nice to see; the whole world coming together.”

Chilling in Chile

A group of honors students spent winter break in South America, exploring and learning about Chile. They toured the Presidential Palace in Santiago and learned about the business practices of a sustainable winery in the Casablanca Valley. In Valparaíso, the street art capital of the world, they met with street artists, and in Concón, they climbed ancient sand dunes. In between, they surfed and ate a lot of great food. It wasays, says sophomore Caragh Whalen-Pinciabbi, “a trip of a lifetime.”

Friendship and Rivalry in Belfast

The men’s ice hockey team was back in Belfast, Northern Ireland, for the first time since 2018 for November’s Friendship Four. UML lost to UMass Amherst 2-1 in the semifinals before Quinnipiac earned the 2022 Beloit Trophy. This River Hawks took a 4-3 overtime win against Dartmouth in the third-place contest. When they weren’t on the ice, the players toured the country, visiting a local school and trying their hand at Gaelic games.
FEATURES

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GOOD NATURED

Equipped with tape measures, students recently fanned out around Lowell to collect data about trees. The information gathered will help the city address urban heat islands, which, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, “occur when cities replace natural land cover with dense concentrations of pavement, buildings, and other surfaces that absorb and retain heat.” The net effect of heat islands? They increase heat-related illness, mortality, air pollution and energy costs.

The collaboration is part of Sociology Assoc. Teaching Prof. Thomas Piñeros Shields’ newly launched Climate Crisis and Society course.

“We live in this community, and we need to be committed to giving back to it,” says Shields, who reached out to Lowell Energy Manager Katherine Moses ’12 to find ways to get his students involved with a project in Lowell. Read about more ways the university is teaming up with the city to address important challenges facing our world, starting on page 25.
SHE’S GOT IT

MEET CHANCELLOR CHEN

BY SARAH CORBETT
he student was sitting on a bench outside the ballroom in Cabot Hall, crouched over a laptop. Frowning at the screen, he typed furiously. His concentration broken only by the sound of footsteps making their way toward him across the lobby’s shiny tiled floor.

As he looked up, the student’s face lit up and he waved amicably. “Chancellor!” he called. “Got it! I know what I want to do. I’m going to be a special ed teacher!”

“Hey, I could be a chancellor of a university one day,” then that is an obligation to normalize diversity in leadership. And that’s just for starters. As the university wraps up its first strategic planning process since 2010, we asked Chen to talk about the priorities for UMass Lowell.

“Your time here will be one of discovery—a time when you will continue to be a special ed teacher! I got it.”

As he looked up, the student’s face lit up and he waved enthusiastically. “Chancellor!” he called. “Got it! I know what I want to do. I’m going to help the next generation.”

“So,” Chen said. “If I’m going to talk about why there should be more women in leadership positions, I think it’s important to start with the idea that leadership is not the direction I’m going to go. I said, ‘Oh, no, I don’t think “chancellor” is the direction I’m going to go. I’m going to be a special ed teacher! I got it.”

Chen knew she could bring some other things, too—including inspiration. “I’m determined to make paid, career-connected experiences a reality for all our students. As an R1 university, we’ll offer work on interesting research projects, and students have hands-on experience within the boundaries of the university itself, reducing their commuting time and expenses.

But we really want to scale that program, and by partnering with more companies and nonprofits with offices close to campus, we can ensure that paid internships and other career-exploration experiences are available to all of our students. And I do mean all. I’m really excited about our students’ experiences, as a component of every student’s experience here at the university, no matter what their major is. And we’re very close to that being the case.

SC: There’s been a renewed focus on partnering with the city of Lowell and surrounding communities over the past year. Why is that so important right now?

JC: Absolutely. We’re on the precipice of being designated what’s called a Research 1 doctoral university—or R1—by the Carnegie Classification of the nation’s leading research universities. Being in the top echelon of U.S. research universities is important to UMass Lowell’s reputation, which is in turn key to recruiting the best faculty, corporate partners and students. As an R1 university, we’ll offer students the highest levels of discovery and impact.

SC: As you think about the challenges facing higher education right now, what keeps you up at night?

JC: There are a few things. The first is something every university leader thinks about: enrollment. Because only about 26% of our budget is funded by the state, enrollment is critical to our revenue. So we’re watching demographics, as the number of young people will continue to decrease in coming years, and putting a real focus on reaching and appealing to prospective students in innovative and intentional ways.

But another big challenge we’re facing is that incoming students are not as prepared as they used to be. So we’re watching them in class, and adapting the curriculum, and adjusting teaching methods more. And we’re looking at federal grants and initiatives, which we’re using more than we have in the past to help students get where they need to be, specifically within STEM majors.

The last thing keeping me up is mental health of our students. It’s a real crisis across the country, and it’s one that we’re going to continue to be a priority in my time in the coming years. We have a great team in place, and addressing it holistically, working with students on getting enough sleep, eating right, developing great financial wellness and other tools. The message I keep hearing is that it’s not just the job of our counselors—we have to, on campus, from faculty to staff to students’ peers, has to get involved and make it part of their job.

SC: You were a student-athlete at MIT, an Academic All-American in both softball and field hockey, and went on to serve as assistant coach for the latter. How has your experience as an athlete shaped your approach to leadership?

JC: It’s very much a core to who I am. I think of everything from the perspective of being part of a team, and bringing different skill sets together to achieve something better. That mentality has been ingrained in me since my early junior high and high school years, playing on teams. And sometimes, I don’t have the shot, so I’ll feed it to someone else—and celebrate when they make it.

SC: What’s kept you at UMass Lowell so long?

JC: I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else. Our students as a group, our administration, our board, our students, and what UMass Lowell offers. Could I make more money elsewhere? Yes. But I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else. Our students as a whole are so bright, and so unentitled. They’re hard workers, and they care—and you just want to help them. And it’s my conviction to say it, but it’s in the DNA of our faculty and staff to want to help these students be successful. We’re not just the university that does, but it’s very much core to UML.

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When Civil Engineering Prof. Tzuyang Yu and his wife first drove their Toyota Camry into Lowell in 2008, they marveled at the brick mill buildings, distinctive churches and tall chimneys and clock towers. “Immediately, I could tell this was a historical city,” Yu says.

But “historical” also meant aging. As the couple drove from the Lowell Connector onto the city’s streets, their car bounced across potholes. And when they crossed the old University Avenue truss bridge to North Campus, where Yu was starting his first job as an assistant professor, they shuddered—literally. “You could actually see through the old steel bridge to the bottom of the river, and the bridge was shaking. And a few days later, I saw the corroded foundation, and I was very worried,” says Yu, who was familiar with such bridges from his days serving as an engineer in Taiwan’s army.
Nothing’s better than giving students hands-on experiences, applying real-world technologies to solve real-world problems.”

—YU YU

Monitoring for Civil Infrastructure. He divided the students into five teams, and each team used ground-penetrating radar to examine the condition of the parking decks in one of the garages.

That was a decade ago, and the assignment to inspect historic or aging city and campus infrastructure is now an integral part of the class. Yu, who has won multiple federal grants for his research on ways to monitor bridges for structural damage, teaches the students to use radar, sonar and camera-equipped drones in the process.

“It’s hard to explain the problems in civil engineering—and making a difference—in the community.”

Students like recent English major and Honors College grad Autumn Kleiner ’22 describe those hands-on experiences as among the most valuable of their educational careers.

She took the English Department’s service-learning internship class twice; her second internship, at Project LEARN, a Lowell nonprofit that provides K-12 students with extracurricular enrichment, turned into a part-time job—and then a full-time job upon graduation.

“I feel like I’m the poster child for the internship program, because this is exactly what an internship is supposed to do,” says Kleiner, now Project LEARN’s communications and grants specialist.

And she’s just one example.

From nursing students who volunteered at Lowell’s COVID-19 testing and vaccination clinics, to education majors presenting lesson plans in the Lowell Public Schools, to environmental science students doing outreach for energy efficiency programs in low-income neighborhoods, to music and psychology majors volunteering to teach in summer music camps for autistic children, UMass Lowell students are working—and making a difference—in the community.

IN LATE FALL 2021, Barbara Greenwood ’05, director of financial education at Community Teamwork Inc. of Lowell, was looking for UML students who could help lower their high tax rates. She reached out to Accounting Department Chair Khondkar Karim about finding students for the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program, or VITA.

Karim and adjunct faculty member Edgar Carter quickly recruited three students who took IRS courses online over winter break to become VITA-certified and then helped taxpayers for 10 to 15 hours a week during winter 2022. The students received course credit for their work and a modest tuition scholarship from the Manning School of Business.

Management major Amy Bui was among them, and she plans to volunteer again this year: “I want to keep learning,” she says.

“Each year, they have new tax laws, and I want to keep myself updated. I can benefit myself and also help other people.”

She even got a job offer from an accounting firm.

This year, Karim and Carter plan to ramp up the service-learning program to a dozen or more students, especially accounting majors, for whom participation in VITA as a great resume-builder.

“Chancellor Julie Chen has talked about experiential learning, local and clear.”

Senior action for health

UMASS LOWELL: AN AGE-FRIENDLY CITY?

That’s the question faculty and students in the Zuckerberg College of Health Sciences are trying to answer by evaluating outdoor space, transportation, safety and more.

The work, through the Center for Population Health, includes an “Age-Friendly Lowell” study funded by the Tufts Health Plan Foundation in partnership with city and nonprofit agencies, including the Lowell Senior Center.

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WHEN A FRIEND OF GIANNA SANDELLI ’19, ‘22 overdosed on opioids and died, she wanted to prevent more deaths. But first, she needed answers. “He kept saying, ‘I just want to stop,’” she says. “I thought, ‘Then why doesn’t he quit?’”

She worked her way through Middlesex Community College to become a licensed drug and alcohol counselor. Then she went on for a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master’s in community social psychology while working full-time as an outreach specialist for Lowell House Addiction Treatment and Recovery, a nonprofit.

At Lowell House, Sandelli’s salary was paid in part by federal grants that faculty and staff at the university’s Center for Community Research and Engagement helped the city obtain, with the goal of reducing overdose deaths and diverting people from jail to treatment. Center Co-Director Robin Toof and Criminology Assoc. Prof. Wilson Palacios also serve as the city’s research and evaluation partners on the grants.

The first grants paid for police, EMTs and outreach workers to follow up at the site of every overdose to connect survivors with services, while also checking on and helping any children living with them. Sandelli laughs when she recalls how much she hated her first research methods class at UML and the research paperwork she had to fill out at work. “I thought, ‘I don’t want to work with data, I don’t want to fill out encounter forms. I want to just do my job.’”

But as she saw how the research was helping Lowell’s Community Opioid Outreach Program—which includes city agencies, Trinity EMS, the county sheriff’s office and health and mental health agencies—her attitude changed. “We work predominantly with unhoused individuals and the highest-risk population in Lowell. The researchers taught us to look at data that would never have occurred to us, to show what success looks like with this population,” says Sandelli, now division director for outreach at Lowell House.

The UML team’s research has helped the city win new grants, including one for a Spanish-speaking outreach worker and a nurse who can provide on-the-spot wound care before people end up in the ER. From 2016—when fentanyl became widespread—to 2021, fatal overdoses in Lowell fell by 37 percent, and from 2018 to 2021, nonfatal overdoses dropped by 40 percent, according to the state Department of Public Health. “People on the streets want to work with us. They want to stay out of jail; they want to live a healthier life,” Sandelli says. “I hated that word ‘research’ before—but now I understand it and I love it.”

“Every year, hundreds of UMass Lowell students intern, do research, volunteer or engage in service-learning projects and classes in Lowell.”
**Love your community**

**LAST FALL, Management Prof. Kimberly Merriman sat on a bench facing the Hamilton Canal at lunchtime a couple of times a week, filling out a research form with a description of every person using the canal-side trails and what they were doing: walking a dog, lingering in a tiny park or striding briskly for exercise. Merriman, a Lowell resident, researches factors that contribute to “quality of place”—attracting people to live in certain communities—and that help communities become more attractive and livable. Now she’s looking at how the design and location of the brand-new Lowell Justice Center affect people who work there or come on court business.

The Justice Center, just across the road from “her” bench, is an example of environmentally friendly architecture and “biophilic” design, which incorporates natural elements including fresh air, natural light and views of the outdoors. The idea is that connecting people with nature can improve their well-being, even in a stressful environment like the court.

Merriman and her student research assistants will find out if it’s working. Step one: Be if court-house workers are getting outside and walking along the canals during their lunch breaks.

Step two: Observe people inside the courthouse.

“If someone asked me, ‘Where in the country do you want to travel to study this?’ I’d say, ‘Right here!’” says Merriman, who lives a couple of blocks away in a repurposed mill building.

“Lowell is one of the few urban centers where the walking trails are already here. The canals are already here, you have biophilic design inside the building, you can see outside—and then you can go out there.”

Honors public health major Thuy Nguyen, a sophomore, observed the trails three or four days a week. She applied to work with Merriman because the professor’s research uses tools and methods that Nguyen is learning about in her public health informatics and technology classes.

Nguyen discovered that she loves the hands-on part of the research. The project has also deepened her appreciation for Lowell, which she didn’t visit much while growing up in neighboring Dracut, Massachusetts.

“I personally believe Lowell has a lot to offer: You just have to look into it,” she says. “I’ve discovered that there’s all this culture, all these coffee shops that are a part of town and there’s all this nature. It’s really a great place to live.”

**Fire them up**

ASSOC. DEAN FRED MARTIN wants to get schoolchildren in the curriculum. “If someone asked me, ‘Where in the country do you want to travel to study this?’ I’d say, ‘Right here!’” says Merriman, who lives a couple of blocks away in a repurposed mill building.

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**That’ll teach ‘em**

School of Education Teams Up with Lowell Public Schools

**BY KATHARINE WEBSTER**

In sixth grade, Kaurnita Heng was chosen to prepare and present a lesson to the other students in an English class—and greatly enjoyed it. Afterwards, “My friends called me ‘Teacher Heng,’” she says.

Now, Heng is in the “Grow Your Own” teacher pathway program at Lowell High School, applying to UMass Lowell and other colleges as an education major and planning to become a teacher. “I just want to do something I actually like,” Heng says.

As part of the pathway program, Heng and 12 other Lowell High students took a UMass Lowell education class, introduction to Teaching in Inclusive Classrooms. The dual-enrollment class, which was offered for the first time this academic year, is co-taught by UML Ph.D. student and staff member Cassie Calimac ’13, ‘18 and Lowell High English teacher Kendra Bauer.

The high school students can also take UML dual-enrollment classes in psychology, sociology and environment science, as well as other dual-enrollment classes at Middlesex Community College, during their junior and senior years of high school. These credits can save them time and money when they start college, says Assoc. Dean Stacy Sztalcisz.

The Grow Your Own partnership, which will soon include Greater Lowell Technical High School, is aimed at diversifying the teaching workforce in Massachusetts, where more than 40% of students are children of color and about 90% of teachers are white. The disparity is even greater in urban districts. “It’s so important for our students to see themselves in their teachers,” McMahan says. “Even greater, their academic achievement goes through the roof.”

The Grow Your Own initiative is just one of many research and experiential learning partnerships between UML’s School of Education and the Lowell Public Schools:

• The Diverse Teachers Network brings together teachers of color for professional support and advancement. The university has applied for a state grant to support 10 of the teachers while they earn certification for leadership roles.

• There’s also a need for administrators of color,” Sztalcisz says.

• Assoc. Prof. Jack Schneider and Visiting Assist. Prof. Elizabeth Zumpa have a $500,000 grant to help the district develop an in-depth data “dashboard” that measures school performance holistically—and then use that data for continuous improvement.

• Aast. Prof. Robai Werunga works with parents whose first language is not English to help them understand the special education services their children need.

• Education Chair Jill Lohmier is working with the district and For- felikia, a nonprofit advocacy group, to support Hispanic and Latino students.

All undergraduate education majors and UTeach students, as well as the Lowell High dual-enrollment students, get their initial field experiences in the Lowell Public Schools. Recently, a small group of third-graders at Bailey Elementary School enjoyed Heng’s first-ever mini-lesson, on penguins and polar bears. “I love it,” Heng says. “I really did confirm that I enjoy teaching.”
IMMERSED IN EACH OTHER
Teradyne and UMass Lowell share a focus on interdisciplinary collaboration—and a long history of partnership

Sam Paxton ’19 wasn’t sure where a computer engineering degree would take him. The job opportunities seemed endless: Would he become a developer? Or an engineer? Would he focus on working with software? Or maybe hardware was the way to go.

“Figuring out exactly the profession you want is a deceivingly important and difficult decision that usually takes years to figure out after college,” he says. Teradyne helped speed up the decision-making process. The test and automation company, based in North Reading, Massachusetts, exposed Paxton to application software engineering through two co-ops he completed while at UMass Lowell. He says the co-ops were instrumental in helping him choose a career path.

“The biggest realization I made from my co-op experiences was that I wanted to be a software engineer over an applications or hardware engineer,” he says.

Three years later, Paxton is still at Teradyne. After graduating from UMass Lowell, he became a full-time software engineer for the multibillion-dollar company and is one of about 95 UML alumni currently working there.

For decades, Teradyne, which was founded in 1960, has depended on UMass Lowell for creative and talented engineers, says Andrew Blanchard, the company’s vice president of corporate relations.

“The intern, co-op, and graduates of UML bring fresh thinking, innovative ideas and energy to Teradyne, and Teradyne provides challenging opportunities for them to flourish in a professional environment,” he says.

Teradyne tests and helps to build the world’s most innovative products, from chips found in consumer technology to collaborative and autonomous mobile robots that free people from doing dull or dangerous tasks.

Steve Conte, UML’s associate dean of student affairs for career development, says the company’s diverse yet collaborative environment makes it a great place for students to complete a co-op.

“Teradyne is not siloed in its work, so students learn a multifaceted skillset,” he says. “They get involved in a lot of different types of projects.”

Steve Conte, senior manager of Teradyne’s Support Engineering Organization, is a strong proponent of getting students engaged in different areas of the company.

“The internship and co-op programs at Teradyne are immersive, and the student is exposed to not only their major, but other engineering disciplines as well,” says Conte, who received a certificate in Unix and systems administration from UMass Lowell and serves on the Industry Advisory Board of UML’s Master of Business Administration program.

Teradyne’s commitment to giving students a rounded, comprehensive experience mirrors that of UMass Lowell. Students receive a comprehensive education through the university’s curriculum, allowing them to become knowledgeable in disciplines beyond their major. They can also work with UMass Lowell’s research centers, which are highly regarded for producing high-impact, interdisciplinary research.

Scott Diniz, a double River Hawk, credits UMass Lowell for equipping him with the fundamentals of engineering and software development to have the confidence to be productive from day one at Teradyne,” says Diniz, who earned a master’s degree in computer engineering from UML in 2016. He now serves as a software engineering manager at Teradyne and is enrolled in UML’s Master of Business Administration program.

Within Teradyne, Diniz and Conte are Campus Advisors for UML, ensuring a continuous connection in the partnership between the university and the company. They are directly involved with the success of the co-op program and often work alongside students.

“We typically set up a mentor with each co-op to help guide them into our design process and utilize their skill set while also introducing them to new skills along the way,” Conte says.

Paxton, who joined Teradyne as a full-time test development engineer after graduating from UML with a degree in electrical engineering, “I owe a lot of my career to how beneficial the co-op program was.”

The partnership between Teradyne and UMass Lowell expands beyond providing students with real-world career experiences. The company also helps students thrive on campus.

Teradyne has made gifts to support several diversity, equity and inclusion programs at UML, including the River Hawk Scholars Academy first-generation program (RHSA); Honors College Fellowships; summer bridge programs for first-year engineering and computer science students; Multicultural Affairs Programming; recruiting programs focused on women and underrepresented minorities in STEM; student-veteran programs; and student chapters of the Society of Women Engineers, National Society of Black Engineers and Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers.

“Teradyne’s philanthropic commitment to our diverse population has made a world of difference for so many deserving students. It’s a win-win,” says Matthew Hurwitz, RHSA director and English associate teaching professor.

Blanchard says the partnership between Teradyne and UMass Lowell will keep growing as the company looks to collaborate with the university’s research resources.

“Teradyne engineers work on some of the toughest problems in electrical, mechanical and computer sciences every day. UML researchers and faculty work on the technology building blocks needed to solve many of those challenges and prepare the next generation of engineers and scientists that the industry depends on to create the future,” he says. “With UML and Teradyne benefitting from our engagements at multiple levels, we expect the relationship to continue for years.”
T
here are some acts of kindness that you never forget.

Help with settling into a new city when you are half a world away from home. A recommendation that leads to a badly needed job. An invitation to a holiday dinner. A reference that leads to a badly needed job. An invitation to a holiday dinner. A recommendation that leads to a badly needed job. An invitation to a holiday dinner.

Jim Lou ’92 and Cathy Wang ’92, who arrived at UMass Lowell before web browsers were even invented, when mainframes and microcomputers still reigned supreme—they are upbeat about the range of opportunities available to students study- ing computer science now.

They live in Greenwood Village, Colorado, just south of Denver, and continue to hike and ski. Their daughters, both graduates of Northwestern University, work in the computer industry in California.

While so much in the technology world has changed since their student days—Lou and Wang arrived at UMass Lowell before web browsers were even invented, when mainframes and microcomputers still reigned supreme—they are upbeat about the range of opportunities available to students studying computer science now.

For Jim Lou ’92 and Cathy Wang ’92, a Professor’s Kindness Endures

Computer Science Alumni Create Scholarships in Memory of Prof. Georges Grinstein

As they mourned the loss of their friend, Lou and Wang decided to establish a second endowed scholarship fund in Grinstein’s memory. Between the two scholarships, the couple has committed $225,000 to support students at UMass Lowell.

“We were very poor. We couldn’t afford a marriage celebration,” Lou recalls.

“[Professor Georges Grinstein] showed such kindness. The celebration at his church was totally free for us,” Lou says. “That is something you always remember.”

Jim Lou and Cathy Wang embody the spirit of the River Hawk community, says UMass Lowell Chancellor Julie Chen. Their generosity is helping new generations of students to pursue their dreams of a world-class education and is inspiring others as well.

Looking back on their UML experience, both Lou and Wang agree they got the skills and education they needed to succeed in the fast-moving technology business.

“[Professor Georges Grinstein] was very kind to us. It’s an interesting field, and we really appreciate for the support they received at UMass Lowell has come full circle. Their generosity is helping new generations of students to pursue their dreams of a world-class education and is inspiring others as well.”

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“One day in 1995, Grinstein extended a welcoming hand to Lou and Wang, who had been the family to China. On Thanksgiving, Grinstein invited them to his home for dinner. And when Lou and Wang were getting married, Grinstein made sure they had a fitting celebration.

“[Professor Georges Grinstein] showed such kindness. The celebration at his church was totally free for us,” Lou says. “That is something you always remember.”

Jim Lou and Cathy Wang embody the spirit of the River Hawk community, says UMass Lowell Chancellor Julie Chen. Their generosity is helping new generations of students to pursue their dreams of a world-class education and is inspiring others as well.

Looking back on their UML experience, both Lou and Wang agree they got the skills and education they needed to succeed in the fast-moving technology business. 
Mike Carpenter ’97 may have retired at age 46, but his life is fuller than ever. The business alum started a company, is writing a second book and is deep into a pair of large real estate projects. And in the fall, he married his longtime partner Hope Jones (pictured here in the red dress, with Carpenter behind her) in Alamo, California. Helping them celebrate? None other than Snoop Dogg, who performed at the reception. Read more on page 50.
CLASS NOTES

1958
Bob Munroe, an LTI textile engineering graduate, says: “The pragmatic education and hardy industry input served me well in my career, along with the mantra of never stop learning.” He says throughout his career—which included long stints at IBM and Motorola—he worked on problems not previously addressed. That included work on the first U.S. astronomical satellite in 1961, dynamic stress analysis of the Gemini computer, the building of custom hybrid circuits used in space, and the first use of a lightweight alloy that was half the weight of aluminum. Munroe says he “picked up a few awards along the line,” and a couple of years ago, he wrote a book (“primarily for family and friends”) called “An Engineer’s Space Race Stories and More,” describing his pioneering work.

1960
Lowell State Teachers College alumni from the class of 1950 gathered for a summer reunion in Portland, Maine. Three years later, the family members and friends have been getting together in various locations across the country. Dick Lookhart ’67 hosted the most recent reunion. The next reunion is slated for October 2023 in Charleston, South Carolina.

1966
Allen Ferguson of Scotia, N.Y., retired from Bechtel after nine years. He previously worked for General Electric for 39 years.

1968

1970
Kevin Shanahan ’70, Peg Shanahan ’78, and the Independent University Alumni Association at Lowell (IUAA) were honored for their commitment to UMass Lowell and its students at the rededication ceremony of the newly renovated IUAA Alum Memorial Library Center.}

Alum Donates Historic Book Collection to UML

T hanks to an alumnus of the Class of 1956, a small piece of the Industrial Revolution recently found a new home at UMass Lowell. Nicholas Dadoly ’56 donated more than 170 historic technical books on chemicals, dyes and pigments to the university. Most of the books are from the late 1800s, around the time of the Industrial Revolution, when the city of Lowell was a manufacturing leader.

Dadoly, a chemical engineer, spent 21 years at the National Ailine Division of Allied Chemical Corp., where he served as a division and national manager. He and his colleagues often referenced the books. When the company moved from Boston to Andover, Massachusetts, Dadoly saved the books from being thrown away. He recently donated those books, along with others from his collection, to UMass Lowell.

“Very happy that the university has adopted the books,” he says. “The knowledge in them relates to the history of UMass Lowell’s predecessor, the Lowell Textile School, which taught science and engineering and particular industries—like textiles, paper, leather and nuclear—and the books might be helpful to today’s students and historians.”

Dadoly’s parents were Greek immigrants. His mother, Efthymia Phousias Dadoly, worked in the Lowell textile mills from 1913 to 1920. His father, Konstantine Evangelos Dadoly, was a farmer who grew vegetables and fruit trees and raised animals to feed his family and many Greek Americans in Lowell during the Great Depression. Konstantine was also an entrepreneur.

Dadoly enrolled in Lowell Technological Institute to study engineering. He married the (literal) girl next door, Constance Margaret O’Neil ’55, an alumna of the Lowell General Hospital School of Nursing. Constance worked as a registered nurse and was an artist.

“My wife told me that going to Lowell Tech was the best thing that ever happened to me because it made me practical,” Dadoly says of his late wife.

Dadoly, who lives in New England, donated those books, along with others from his collection, to UMass Lowell. The books are from the late 1800s, around the time of the Industrial Revolution, when the city of Lowell was a manufacturing leader. Dadoly’s parents were Greek immigrants. His mother, Efthymia Phousias Dadoly, worked in the Lowell textile mills from 1913 to 1920. His father, Konstantine Evangelos Dadoly, was a farmer who grew vegetables and fruit trees and raised animals to feed his family and many Greek Americans in Lowell during the Great Depression. Konstantine was also an entrepreneur.

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“My wife told me that going to Lowell Tech was the best thing that ever happened to me because it made me practical,” Dadoly says of his late wife.

Dadoly, who lives in New England, recently found a new home at UMass Lowell.

Wayne Brawerman has been named managing editor of The Bedford Citizen in his hometown of Bedford, Massachusetts. He has had a long career in local journalism in both print and digital media, most recently for Gannett and GateHouse Media New England.

Continued on page 46
Richard T. (Dick) Miner ’86, ’89, ’97

There was never any doubt where Lowell native Ellen O’Leary Coughlin ’65 would go to college. “When you’re the president’s daughter, it’s just expected,” says O’Leary Coughlin, whose father, Daniel O’Leary, was president of Lowell Teachers College/Lowell State College from 1950 to 1965.

O’Leary Coughlin, who now lives in Seabrook Island, South Carolina, returned to campus in September with one of her two sons, criminal justice master’s alumnus Hud Coughlin ’98, to visit the library named after her late father and admire his portrait hanging in the first-floor lobby.

“It was a little difficult being the president’s daughter, I have to admit. The place was small enough that everyone knew who you were,” says O’Leary Coughlin, who went on to become an elementary school teacher, first in Lowell and then New Hampshire.

Her late husband, William Coughlin ’67, became a professor and chair of the English Department. He also taught at Tewksbury High School, where he’s credited with helping steer former Chancellor Jacquie Moloney ’75, ’92 to pursue a college education.

Ellen and William got married in 1967 at Concordia Hall—the new residence hall on what’s now South Campus. “We wanted a small wedding, and dad came up with the idea of Concordia,” she says. “I think we’re the only ones who ever married there.”

O’Leary Coughlin was supposed to live in Concordia while attending Lowell State, but its construction was delayed, she recalls, because her father wanted to make sure the building was completely paid for before opening.

“He let me break the ground instead to keep me happy,” she says with a smile.—EB

IT WAS A LITTLE DIFFICULT BEING THE PRESIDENT’S DAUGHTER, I HAVE TO ADMIT. THE PLACE WAS SMALL ENOUGH THAT EVERYONE KNEW WHO YOU WERE.” —ELLEN O’LEARY COUGHLIN ’65

1. NANCY (QUILL) STEIN ’81
2. JAMES COSTOS ’85
3. RICH MINER ’86, ’89, ’97
(See class notes on page 48)
Six Lowell Tech students who met as roommates or fellow students formed a lasting bond over folk music and rock ‘n’ roll.

Four of them already played guitar when they started college, and the other two learned quickly. During the 1972-73 school year, three of them rented a cottage on Long Pond in Dracut, where they could make music together. A couple of weekends and every weekend, all six jammed on the porch or in front of the fieldstone fireplace. And anyone else who came, friends and roommates, joined in, says Jeff Pfeiffer ’73, a retired Hewlett-Packard executive turned tournament consultant.

“The rule was that if you were there, you had to play an instrument—even if you didn’t play an instrument,” Smith says. “So we had kazoos and tambourines. I sometimes played the spoons just to change it up.”

Five decades later, the men still meet for a few days every year to play guitar, bass, banjo, ukulele, piano and harmonica together, minus Jeff Pfeiffer ’74, who died last July.

During their first year at what was then Lowell Technical Institute, Pfeiffer taught his roommates, Ron Hamal ’74, how to play guitar. Likewise, Smith—a sophomore—taught a few chords to roommates Frank McLaughlin ’74, who practiced obsessionately and learned fast. The “two Franks” met Rich Goldman ’73, while working at The Ted, the campus newspaper. The whole crew came together through the Apple Corps, a student group that brought top musical acts to campus, helping to load and unload equipment and running errands for the visiting musicians. Jere Anderson ’74 was a key member, Smith says.

“We had J. Geils, Livingston Taylor, Bob Dylan and The Rolling Thunder Revue [Fleet], the Byrds—the list goes on,” says Smith. “Who had the Steve Miller Band, Santana, Aerosmith, J. Geils, Collins, Sha Na Na, Frank Zappa and even Cheech and Chong. Incredibly for what was then a small New England college.”

On campus, the six friends were instrumental in starting the Spring Carnival and opening a musical coffeehouse in the basement of Eames Hall, where Goldman and Anderson often played together. Ultimately, the six formed their own band. “We played in nursing homes and coffeehouses. I sometimes played the tambourines. I sometimes played the spoons just to change it up.”

The group met each fall, sometimes at a ski cabin in North Conway, New Hampshire, sometimes in rented beach houses in Maine. At first, everyone came except Goldman, who had settled in the Pittsburgh area.

One year, though, Smith and Anderson drove out to a guitar workshop in Ohio and visited Goldman on the return trip. He’s been coming to the reunions ever since.

In 2021, Pfeiffer asked the group to schedule their annual get-together in Woodstock, New York, where an international luthiers’ convention is held every October. The Woodstock Invitational Luthiers Showcase was canceled because of a surge in COVID-19 cases, but the six men had a great time playing music together in the house they’d rented, which had a large fieldstone fireplace and a porch, just like the Long Pond cottage where they’d spent so many happy evenings.

In 2022, Pfeiffer asked the group to schedule their annual get-together in Woodstock again. The Woodstock Invitational Luthiers Showcase was canceled because of a surge in COVID-19 cases, but the six men had a great time playing music together in the house they’d rented, which had a large fieldstone fireplace and a porch, just like the Long Pond cottage where they’d spent so many happy evenings. As college students, Smith says. “That was 24 years ago.”

The group met each fall, sometimes at a ski cabin in North Conway, New Hampshire, sometimes in rented beach houses in Maine. At first, everyone came except Goldman, who had settled in the Pittsburgh area.

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1978
Jerry Coyle '78, '96 [B], chairman of MMS Investments, who co-chaired UMass Lowell’s recent chancellor search that resulted in the appointment of Julia Chen, joined the UMass system’s Board of Trustees.

1980
Linda Merchi and Susan Kathwinkel Naviens recently joined more than 60 students and alum of the University Choral and Chamber Singers in an on-campus performance of Giuseppe Verdi’s “Requiem,” according to the Cambridge Symphony Orchestra and Nashoba Valley Chorale. Other alumni and choir alumni present included Dick Liberty ’77, Melody Tarbox ’78 and Linda Marchi ’80.

By BROOKE COUPAL

FROM PLAYER TO COACH

Peter Barrett ’74 went from creating new businesses to helping fund the next generation’s business ideas.

For the past 20 years, the chemistry alum has been a partner of Atlas Venture, a venture capital firm based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he has funded several startup biotech companies that focus on developing new therapies for diseases. “I meet a lot of interesting people with really good ideas,” says Barrett, who recalls one of his first investments with Atlas being in Arrhythm Pharmaceuticals, an RNAi therapeutics company.

“To see when our companies are successful in creating a new therapy, and you meet the patients that it affects, it’s really touching,” he adds.

Barrett was initially hesitant about joining Atlas because of his lack of experience in venture capital. But after talking with investors, he found similarities between his past career experience with Connecticut’s BioClinica, formerly known as Perkin-Elmer, and being a venture capitalist.

“Being a venture capitalist is really like what I had been doing internally for Appiara, when I was starting new business ventures all the time, except I’d be a coach versus a player,” he says.

Barrett spent nearly 20 years at Appiara, where he worked his way up to vice president of corporate planning and business development. In this role, he created new businesses in automation and PCR within the company.

“We were the company that commercialized PCR instruments for the research world,” he says.

Barrett went on to co-found Celeria Genomics, which announced the first successful sequencing of the human genome in 2000. Then-President Bill Clinton honored Celeria Genomics at the White House, but Barrett had other plans that day.

“It was my parents’ anniversary and we had already decided to take them on a cruise when we got a notice from the White House that they wanted us to come down for this big announcement about the genome sequencing,” he says. “So, I told them, ‘Can’t go.’

Barrett says his career successes stem from his time at UML’s predecessor Lowell Technological Institute. As a Peabody, Massachusetts, native who grew up with four siblings, Barrett chose to go to Lowell Tech for both its educational offerings and its affordability.

With an interest in science, Barrett pursued a chemistry major, interning in the lab of Professor Emeritus Eugene Barry, who introduced Barrett to analytical chemistry.

“The ability to go into a laboratory and actually do experiments is what got me really interested in analytical chemistry,” he says.

Barrett went on to graduate in the laboratory at nearby Lowell General Hospital to get a better understanding of analytical chemistry in the medical field.

He continued his education at Northeastern University, where he earned a Ph.D. in analytical chemistry. For the past five years, he taught at Harvard Business School, where he remains an executive fellow for the school’s Blavatnik Fellowship in Life Sciences Entrepreneurship.

Barrett continues to give back to the UMass Lowell community, including with a recent donation to CatalyzeUML, a summer program for incoming first-year chemistry majors that launched in 2022. “CatalyzeUML is a great program. I hope that it helps chemistry students get a head start in college,” he says.

Alum Helps Open Doors to Engineering Careers

Greg Sydney ’81 struggled with the plastics engineering coursework during his first year at the University of Lowell. As a first-generation college student, he was balancing part-time work at a shipping plant and classes.

His family had moved from Trinidad and Tobago to MAttapan, Massachusetts, when Sydney was 12 years old. He earned good grades in high school, but didn’t know what to expect in college.

Everything changed when he and his engineering classmate, Rick Rees ’81, co-founded the Lowell chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers. Through the club, Sydney found friends, study partners and professors he could rely on.

He decided to come full circle at age 63, and has made it a priority to encourage students from backgrounds not historically represented in engineering to become engineers. Sydney donates $50,000 and established the university’s first endowed scholarship for members of the National Society of Black Engineers.

Sydney is now reaching out to classmates and colleagues to encourage them to support engineering students. “We need to get more role models in engineering from all communities,” he says.—JB

Continued on page 48

CLASS NOTES

1981
Nancy (Guil) Stein, a former WMUJ Magic 107.7 DJ, was inducted into the Massachusetts Broadcasters Hall of Fame in September after 20 years on the job. She has been called “the most listened to woman in the city of Boston,” due to her near-40 decades on the air. She reflected in 2020 and now keeps busy with voiceover work and maintains a small recording studio in her home.

1982
Victor Scordilis has been appointed to the Corporate Advisory Board at Teqten Bia, a landscape clinical biotechnology company specializing in the development of cell and gene therapies in oncology, neurology and ophthalmology.

He currently serves as an executive vice president at Sorrento International, leading a global team of experienced risk control professionals.

1983
Doug Reader was recognized by Titan 100 as a Titan of Industry, one of the Phoenix area’s most accomplished business leaders. He is the president and CEO of Arizona Nutritional Supplements.

1984
Jerry Jannetti was promoted to the role of Southeast region president for WSP USA, a leading engineering and professional services company, where he will provide leadership for the transportation, buildings, energy, environment, water and advisory markets.

1985
Judith Put accchio Bossard recently published a memoir titled “Ma Belle France,” describing the two years that she and her family lived in France in the late 1970s. She is the immediate past president of Lowell Celebrateurs and a member of the committee working to establish the Kurucian Museum and Performing Arts Center in Lowell. From left, National Society of Black Engineers Lowell chapter co-founders Greg Sydney ’81 and Rick Rees ’81 spoke recently at the 40th anniversary celebration of the chapter.

CLASS NOTES
MARY BURNS IS FIRST WOMAN TO LEAD BUILDING AUTHORITY

A fourth-generation Lowell native and one of six siblings to graduate from UMass Lowell, Mary Burns ‘84 was elected chair of the 11-member UMass Building Authority (UMBA), which oversees the multimillion-dollar facility construction and renovation activities across the five campuses of the University of Massachusetts.

Burns is the first woman to lead the UMBA board, which builds and repairs academic buildings, laboratories, athletic facilities, teaching dormitories, campus dining commons, parking garages and other facilities.

“The 72,000 plus UMass students need diverse world-class facilities that will prepare them for success in the global economy,” says Burns, who owns and operates Splash Media, an out-of-home advertising company. “I look forward to the Building Authority playing a pivotal role in achieving that mission.”

Burns, a UMass trustee, was also named vice chair of the 22-member University of Massachusetts Board of Trustees.

“I have witnessed firsthand Mary Burns’ dedication to the UMass mission,” says Jerry Colella ’78, chairman of MKS Instruments. “She is a great asset to the Board of Trustees and will benefit UMass students on all five campuses.”

Around the World and Back Again: The Evolution of an Engineer

As a first-generation college student and child of Chinese immigrants, Elana Yee ’88 had to work hard to so study at UMass Lowell, let alone what kind of career she would choose.

At her father’s suggestion, she majored in technical communication which she found interesting. After working for only a few years, she took the next step — study at UMass Lowell, let alone what kind of career she would choose.

Yee was accepted to the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, where she will oversee the prestigious academic program alongside 11 other representatives. “It is a great privilege to continue the work I did when I was an embassy employee,” she says. “I always wanted to spend a lot of my time with the next generation of folks who are coming up behind us, because they will be our future leaders, and we have to invest in our future and our resources in them.”

Seon Sullivan is the executive director of the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, where she worked to create the Tampa Bay Regional Resiliency Coalition, the 18th initiative of its kind in the U.S. Today, 31 governments and over 90 private sector partners are working with Sullivan to address climate resilience and extreme weather events throughout the Tampa Bay, Florida, region.

University of Massachusetts Lowell Board of Trustees

“I want to spend my time to make sure that we have the right skill set to be able to make sure we have the right skills to be prepared for success in the global economy,” says Burns, who owns and operates Splash Media, an out-of-home advertising company. “I look forward to the Building Authority playing a pivotal role in achieving that mission.”

Burns, a UMass trustee, was also named vice chair of the 22-member University of Massachusetts Board of Trustees.

“I have witnessed firsthand Mary Burns’ dedication to the UMass mission,” says Jerry Colella ’78, chairman of MKS Instruments. “She is a great asset to the Board of Trustees and will benefit UMass students on all five campuses. "It’s a way of learning, a way of analyzing things, allowing a little bit of distance to look at the most painful things going on, including racism and homophobia," she said. "It helped me to figure out, 'How do I grow the campus to be more diverse and less biased?'”

When Yee was in her late 40s, her mother got cancer and died, followed in rapid succession by her stepfather and father, so Yee moved back to the East Coast to support her sister and nieces. She found a job as diversity director at Providence College—and embarked on another career evolution. “I talked to a lot of student leaders and heard about some of their struggles, and I wanted to figure out what else I could do to support students in higher education.”

She returned to graduate school once again, earning a master’s degree in clinical mental health counseling at Rhode Island College. She got her first job as a counselor at Alfred University in New York while working towards full licensure, and now works at Ramapo College of New Jersey in Mahwah.

“Life is too short” not to grow and change—and UMass Lowell has kept pace, growing and changing into a world-class public research university while continuing to serve first-generation college students and children of immigrants like her, Yee says. “I’m so proud of UMass Lowell,” she says. “And I hope that from my story, students and alumni, especially Asian Americans, can see that the journey of a life can turn from the sweated path, and yet you can still be a person who has respect.”

Life is too short not to grow and change,” Yee says—and UMass Lowell has kept pace, growing and changing into a world-class public research university while continuing to serve first-generation college students and children of immigrants like her.\n
"Life is too short not to grow and change,” Yee says—and UMass Lowell has kept pace, growing and changing into a world-class public research university while continuing to serve first-generation college students and children of immigrants like her.”

CONTINUE FROM PAGE 47

James Costa, U.S. ambassador to Spain and Andorra from 2013 to 2017, was appointed to the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, where he will oversee the prestigious academic program alongside 11 other representatives. “It is a great privilege to continue the work I did when I was an embassy employee,” he says. “I always wanted to spend a lot of my time with the next generation of folks who are coming up behind us, because they will be our future leaders, and we have to invest in our future and our resources in them.”

Seon Sullivan is the executive director of the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, where she worked to create the Tampa Bay Regional Resiliency Coalition, the 18th initiative of its kind in the U.S. Today, 31 governments and over 90 private sector partners are working with Sullivan to address climate resilience and extreme weather events throughout the Tampa Bay, Florida, region.

CLASS OF 1984

Ann, who grew up in Methuen, Massachusetts, moved to Southern California to run the International service-learning program at Westmont College, a small Christian school in Santa Barbara. Over several years, she evolved her role to become the college’s first director of diversity and social justice, using the approach to processes and procedures she learned as an engineering student at UML.

“It’s a way of learning, a way of analyzing things, allowing a little bit of distance to look at the most painful things going on, including racism and homophobia,” she said. “It helped me to figure out, ‘How do I grow the campus to be more diverse and less biased?’”

When Yee was in her late 40s, her mother got cancer and died, followed in rapid succession by her stepfather and father, so Yee moved back to the East Coast to support her sister and nieces. She found a job as diversity director at Providence College—and embarked on another career evolution. “I talked to a lot of student leaders and heard about some of their struggles, and I wanted to figure out what else I could do to support students in higher education.”

She returned to graduate school once again, earning a master’s degree in clinical mental health counseling at Rhode Island College. She got her first job as a counselor at Alfred University in New York while working towards full licensure, and now works at Ramapo College of New Jersey in Mahwah.

“Life is too short” not to grow and change—and UMass Lowell has kept pace, growing and changing into a world-class public research university while continuing to serve first-generation college students and children of immigrants like her, Yee says. “I’m so proud of UMass Lowell,” she says. “And I hope that from my story, students and alumni, especially Asian Americans, can see that the journey of a life can turn from the sweated path, and yet you can still be a person who has respect.”

CONTINUE FROM PAGE 51
I have always been a sales leader, and even when I was a sales executive, I always had a strong accounting background. I have always been able to balance being an entrepreneur and a successful sales executive, and that's where the financial gains come from. I've been super fortunate, and I never take it for granted. I've been here for 20 years now, and I think I'm working harder than I ever have. It's important for me to stay busy, and I think that's why I've been successful. I want to be doing a lot more foundation stuff, giving back. The world needs a lot more of that right now. — Mike Carpenter '97

I want to be doing a lot more foundation stuff, giving back. The world needs a lot more of that right now. — Mike Carpenter '97
1994

Craig McNamara joined PECO as chief financial officer and a member of the organization’s executive committee. He brings 28 years of financial leadership to the nonprofit organization. PECO’s goal is a health plan for adults 55 and older who have chronic health needs and wish to stay at home.

Matthew Connors joined Hancock Associates as a regional engineering manager. He has nearly 30 years of experience in site and civil engineering, project management and construction administration.

1995

Maria Dickinson, economic development officer for the City of Lowell, was among a group of alumni who joined UML’s Saab Center of Portuguese Studies in visiting on campus with Jose Manuel Bolieiro, president of the Government of the Autonomous Region of the Azores.

José Manuel Bolieiro, president of the Government of the Autonomous Region of the Azores, and Elisia Saab ’13 (H) met on campus with Portuguese Studies in visiting on campus with alumni who joined UML’s Saab Center of Portuguese Studies.

1996

Sean Mulhern joined Amentum, a technical and engineering services government contractor, as executive vice president of business development.

1998


2000

Leslie Bondo Jr. has been appointed managing director of Raytheon Digital, a Raytheon subsidiary. Previously, he served as general manager of Raytheon in the Sultanate of Oman and as a senior executive for growth and relationships in the Kingdom of Bahrain. He also led Raytheon’s Integrated Air & Missile Defense business for Qatar and served as program director for the Qatari Government’s Integrated Air Defense System.

CLASS NOTES

Continued from page 51

ROCKET WOMAN

just over a third of the NASA workforce is female, but Evana Gizzi ’13, ’14 has high hopes that more women will join STEM fields.

“I have observed that women have an especially unique leadership capability,” says Gizzi, a principal investigator at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center. “I have had some of the greatest successes on projects that were led by women.”

In the fall, Gizzi was invited to address incoming students at the university’s Convocation ceremony. Two months later, she was named to NASAs board at the university’s Career Fair. Having interned at NASA while a doctoral student at Tufts where she earned a Ph.D. in AI, after getting a bachelor’s and master’s degrees in applied and computational mathematics at UML, Gizzi says she wants to help give UMass Lowell students more opportunities for career-connected work.

“Students can bring a cutting-edge perspective to help solve problems, especially in AI,” says Gizzi, who works on a project called Research in Artificial Intelligence for Spacecraft Resilience, which she created in 2021 while a NASA intern. Her team focuses on using artificial intelligence to speed up the detection and repair of problems in spacecraft.

Gizzi says she didn’t always aspire to work in artificial intelligence, but a required computing course she took during her junior year at UML changed her trajectory. Her professor, triple River Hawk Mark Sherman ’91, ’10, ’17, who at the time was pursuing a Ph.D. in computer science, told Gizzi that she had a “knack for coding.”

“That really empowered me,” she says.

Gizzi still keeps in touch with people at UMass Lowell who impacted her life. In 2021, she married Navy veteran Mitchell Conway ’21, who also earned a bachelor’s degree in mathematics at UML. Computer Science Prof. Fred Martin attended their wedding, and Gizzi’s bridal party consisted of mostly UML alums.

“There was a lot of people who wanted her to succeed,” says Martin. “I am grateful I could be a part of that.”

“I have observed that women have an especially unique leadership capability,” says Gizzi, a principal investigator at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center. “I have had some of the greatest successes on projects that were led by women.”

J

CLASS NOTES

Continued on page 54

By Brooke Coopla

From left: Andrea Saab Brown ’18, Susana Mia Leal, state Rep. Nyan Howard, President Jose Manuel Bolieiro, Robsona Julia Okum, Elisia Saab ’13 (H) and Maria Dickinson ’95 of the City of Lowell Economic Development Department.

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NOTE: In his last issue of UML Magazine, we incorrectly stated that Tyler Valila ’16 married Fabio Braz ‘15. The latter was instead a groomsman in the wedding of Valila and his new wife, Matia. We regret the error.
F or a hyperactive only child like Sima Suon ’17, sports were a great outlet as a kid growing up in Lowell—and, she says, “a blessing” for her Cambodia-born parents, who didn’t know what else to do with all her energy. But even though Lowell has the second largest Cambodian American population in the country (behind Long Beach, California), Suon noticed that not many girls looked like her on the soccer fields and basketball courts.

“That’s very rooted in the tradition of our culture,” she says. “Women don’t really play sports; they’re doing house tasks, going to school, taking care of siblings, parents, grandparents. There’s not much room for extracurricular activities.”

Suon, a former javelin thrower on the UML women’s track and field team, is working to change that. Last May, she organized and played on a 3-on-3 women’s basketball team that represented Cambodia at the Southeast Asian Games in Hanoi, Vietnam. It was the first time a Cambodian women’s basketball team had competed on the international stage since 1974, before the Khmer Rouge genocide.

“I was proud that we were able to take the floor and compete,” says Suon, who joined the board of the Lowell-based USA-Cambodia Basketball Association in 2019 and started scouting the country for players to field a team for the biennial competition. She eventually found three players on the West Coast, and after just a few practices together in California, they headed to Vietnam for the Games, where they finished 0-6.

“It was challenging, but the bigger purpose here was laying the groundwork for the development of Cambodian women’s basketball,” says Suon, who is now working on scoping a dozen players for a full 5-on-5 team for the 2024 Southeast Asian Games, which will be held in Cambodia in May 2024.

Taking part in the opening ceremonies at the Games in Vietnam, which were delayed a year because of the pandemic, is something Suon will never forget.

“We all watch the Olympics and see athletes marching out with their teams,” she says. “There’s a lot of pride that goes along with it when you’re out there waving your country’s flag. It lights a fire inside of you, but also gives you chills at the same time.”

A state champion javelin thrower in high school, Suon won America East Conference championships in the event for the River Hawks in both her junior and senior years. She holds the UML record with a throw of 140 feet, 2 inches.

After graduating cum laude with a bachelor’s degree in psychology, Suon earned a master’s degree in sports administration from the University of Miami, where she worked as a graduate assistant with the women’s basketball team. She returned home in 2018 and landed a job as an athletic academics and compliance assistant at UML.

Just as sports provided an important outlet in her youth, Suon is grateful to have found her calling through athletics.

“If we can inspire the next round of Cambodian women basketball players to be proud of their heritage, and to aspire to be on a national team and go to college and play, that’s all I can hope for.”
2004
Washington Alves was appointed vice president of biologics manufacturing at Tectonic Therapeutics Inc., a pre-clinical stage biotechnology company.

2006
Todd Brodie was named by Software Report to the Top 20 Midwestern Leaders of Concern for 2022. He is the director of security at Califin, which offers solutions such as risk mitigation and data analytics for industries including health care, retail and finance.

2008
Chris Kennedy was named superintendent of the Thomaston City Schools in North Carolina. He served as assistant superintendent of the school district since 2001.

2009
Ruben Sança ’09, ’11 (also featured on page 35) unofficially tops the Guinness World Record for tallest midriff-baring a pen.” He finished in 4:32:2 while pushing his 5-year-old son at the High Street Mile road race in Newburyport this summer.

Scott Smith has joined Tigue & Bond as the director of safety and health. He has worked on a global scale facilitating hazard analysis and reducing costs, risks and recordable injuries for companies across North America, Canada and Asia.

2010
Francisco Urena was appointed as a managing director at Lawrence Memorial Hospital in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

LOVE BIRDS
Study Abroad Trip Holds Special Meaning for River Hawk Couple

Clyton Cook ’18 and Arick Forsyth ’19 met when they signed up for the first Honors College study-abroad course in San Sebastian, Spain, in spring 2015.

“We had a meeting at O’Leary Library before we left, and I remember sitting there thinking, ‘This isn’t very many cool kids at this table,’” says Cook, a nursing major. “They Arkie came in with this girl I kind of knew through family friends and I thought, ‘Never mind.’

Students in the three-week summer program, led by Honors Visiting Prof. Julian Zabala-Becerra, study Spanish in the mornings and experience Basque History and culture in the afternoons. Cook and Forsyth were placed in the same Spanish class and sat together every day.

Their romance blossomed, and they started dating in September, with Cook driving her from home in Tyngsboro, Massachusetts, to Anton’s to see Forsyth and meet some of his 11 brothers and sisters. (Seven of the eight oldest attended or are attending UML; the rest plan to apply. Cook’s older brother, Michael ’14, is also an alumn.)

Cook graduated first and now works as a nurse at Lowell General Hospital. Forsyth, a chemical engineering major, graduated a year later after doing two co-ops. He went on for a master’s degree in engineering management at Tufts University and works as a process engineer at Varian Pharama.

Along the way, they traveled. “We went to Amsterdam, Paris and Italy after she graduated, and then afterward, we went to Ireland and England,” Forsyth says. “San Sebastian was the first place I’d ever been to out of the country without my family, so it definitely sparked the travel bug.”

San Sebastian remained their special place. So when Fibethary ’19, Forsyth’s next youngest brother and closest friend, spotted cheap tickets to Spain last spring, Forsyth and Cook decided to celebrate their seventh anniversary as a couple by going back. They were accompanied by Fitz, Steve Murphy ’19, a good friend who had been on the original Honors College trip with them, and Murphy’s girlfriend, Estee Lewis.

Forsyth had been planning to propose since they booked the trip, “but he was playing it so cool” that Cook was surprised, she says. As the group strolled along La Concha Beach boardwalk on the couple’s anniversary, Forsyth dropped to one knee and popped the question. “Estee was blocking that Cook was surprised, she says. As the group strolled along La Concha Beach boardwalk on the couple’s anniversary, Forsyth dropped to one knee and popped the question. “Estee was blocking that

Continued from page 52

Three-Dimensional Thinker
Jonathan Aguilar ’21 grows CADSPARC at iHub

opportunities knocked on Jonathan Aguilar’s door March Wage door in the fall of 2020. While most of the campus was shut down because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Aguilar ’21 was living in the East Campus residence hall with several fellow mechanical engineering majors—people with whom he shared interests in computer-aided design (CAD) and digital manufacturing.

Through his participation in the first CLASSES OF 2018 AND 2019

love birds

Continued on page 58

Matthew Scanio reports that he is working as a private driver for the rapper Swae Lee in Miami Beach.

Daniel Serafin was named chief technology officer of MutualOne Bank, headquartered in Framingham, Massachusetts. He most recently served as chief information officer at Savers Bank.

2011
Laura (Fickenwirth) Dysen and Sam Dyens welcomed a baby girl, Sylvie, in July 2021. "It was a blessing," says Dysen, who works as a nurse at UMass Lowell.

Sophie Hansen got married in June 2022, with her fellow Class of 2012 classmates Eddie Silva (officiating) and Ashley (Bally) Aziz (Auction) serving as her maid of honor.

Laura Deveyhirt completed her dental program in 2020 and is now a dental-level psychologist specializing in the treatment of psychosis and schizophrenia. She is working as a licensed clinical psychologist at North Memorial Hospital in Minneapolis.

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Continued on page 54

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Three-Dimensional Thinker
Jonathan Aguilar ’21 grows CADSPARC at iHub
Profiles of young alumni whose student experiences led to full-time jobs

EMILY SAYLER ’22 Skipped an Economics Class—and Ended Up with a Job

“Being able to talk about those Labor Economics research experiences led to the market research internship, which led to the economic consulting internship and the Emerging Scholarship. You get to the point where professors will think about you for opportunities.”

—EMILY SAYLER

Emily Sayler

EMILY SAYLER ’22 HAD ALREADY been accepted at UMass Lowell as a transfer student but decided to skip the first Labor Economics class because she was too new to economics to understand the material. But after talking to the professor and learning more about the course, she changed her mind and attended the class. She was able to get an online information session with the firm. Sayler did—and then followed up, sending the recruiters research to ask how she could make an internship application stand out. The economists advised her to get as much research and economic data analysis experience as possible.

Sayler, who did three research projects in Galizzi’s class, then worked with Galizzi and Cristology Prof. April Pattana on research into the economics of domestic violence. She also was accepted as an Emerging Scholar for her senior year, when she researched academic freedom in different countries around the world with Prof. Nicholas Shatto, former College Dean Jennifer Whitten-Woodring, a political scientist, and Education Prof. A.J. Arquilla. Sayler co-authored a paper with the two professors and global studies PhD student Emma Peterson, and Whitten-Woodring brought Sayler to the International Studies Association Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, to help present it.

Sayler says her research experiences gave her two “phenomenal” academic mentors, both women. “That’s important,” Sayler says, because she’s going into a field with very few women.

Sayler is also grateful to Dr. Galizzi’s class for giving her the confidence to knock on doors for research opportunities. “Prof. Galizzi has brought me opportunity after opportunity and believed in me every step of the way. She’s just been my biggest supporter,” she says. “And Prof. Galizzi’s class is something I always loved.”

At UMass Lowell, Sayler discovered that “I was apparently really good at economics.”

Sayler is a member of the Economics Society her senior year. This fall, she started a YouTube channel called Shannon’s Study Music to teach music to students stuck at home.

EMILY SAYLER

2013

Shannon Sullivan-Gillis was appointed public health director for the town of Swampscott, Massachusetts. She works with the Board of Health to promote healthy living and food safety in the community.

2014

Josh Holstrom was named director of hockey operations at the U.S. Air Force Academy. He previously was the head coach of the Eastern Hockey League’s Walpole Express, after playing professional hockey for six seasons.

Michael Baldassarre was named interim superintendent of the Utica City Public Schools. He previously served as assistant superintendent for pupil services in Woburn Public Schools.

2015

Blake Bamford joined the Northham Bank Commercial & Industrial Lending group as senior vice president and structured finance relationship manager. He has over 15 years of experience in financial services, with expertise in C&I lending and customer relationship management.

Kathleen Oram recently graduated with a Ph.D. in economic geography from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is currently working as a City Lincoln in Lexington, Massachusetts.

2016

Nicholas “Nico” Guigues, a musician and music teacher in the Randolph Public Schools in Massachusetts, released his seventh studio album in August. Called Why Is This Happening To Me?, the album features entirely original music with spoken word and soundscapes. Guigues says the album explores “climate change, capitalism, mental health and social non-contingency/exclusion from dominant groups.” [3]

2017

Dustin DeJoy ’17, ’19 is the new Marcellus High School band director and music teacher. He founded the Marcellus High School Marching Band, the Spartans Drum and Bugle Corps, the Northern Campus band and the University Band.

2018

Elizabeth Ploms was named development director for the Brooklyn-based nonprofit that supports youth experiencing homelessness. She has worked in the nonprofit sector for more than eight years, most recently as the development manager at the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute.

2019

Nick Lampson ’19, ’20 is the new research assistant for Hamilton High School. He previously worked as a patrol officer for the Hudson Police Department.

2021

Christy Whittlesey, coordinator of K-12 Fine and Performing Arts at the Chelmsford Public Schools, was named recipient of the Massachusetts Music Educators Association. She is also the author of ‘He’s Kind of a Guy’ and ‘This Beginner’s Guide to Being a Trans Ally,’ and a sought-after speaker on transgender issues.

Tiffany Samny is the recipient of the Somerville-based “Bubblesphere” band Mint Green. The band dedicated its first full-length LP “the summer.” ‘All Girls Go to Heaven.’ She is also a licensed real estate agent in other bands, including her own, called ‘tilly.’ Tiffany also teaches music.

Dana Sheriton is a member of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, a Boston-based choir that performs with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Boston Pops. She helped the orchestra to sing on stage during the July 4th Fireworks Spectacular this year. Sheriton has made a career of performing and teaching music; during the pandemic, she started a YouTube channel called Shannon’s Study Music to teach music to students stuck at home.

SPRING 2023

CLASS NOTES

38  UMASS LOWELL MAGAZINE

CLASS NOTES
Our searchable directory is a powerful tool for finding great businesses to meet your needs and support fellow UML alumni at the same time. You may even receive a discount with participating merchants when you present your valid virtual UML alumni ID.

Are you an alum business owner? List your business today! Are you looking for a new vendor or service provider? See if a fellow alum can help you!

Alumni.uml.edu/businessdirectory

Show your support and champion UML alumni-owned businesses!

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CONTACT CORPORATEPARTNERSHIPS@UML.EDU TODAY!
When it comes to dancing, generations of River Hawks have followed Fred Astaire’s lead to “Do it big, do it right and do it with style.” These students donned their finest for the 1959 Senior Prom: formal dinner jackets and black ties, crinoline skirts, pearls and corsages. The photo is from the Florence (Zaher) Lacouture Collection in the university’s archives at the Center for Lowell History.

Lacouture, who graduated from Lowell State Teachers College in 1959, took thousands of photos during her student years, as an alumna and as an employee of the university. It was her mission to preserve the history of the institution she loved. Lacouture donated her collection of photos and archival materials to the university shortly before her death in 2006.

Events Calendar
For the latest information on locations and other details, go to alumni.uml.edu.

MARCH 2023
3
HONORS COLLEGE ALUMNI APPRECIATION HOCKEY NIGHT
Pre-game Gathering, 6-7 p.m.
Game, Tsongas Center, 7:15 p.m.

9
ON THE ROAD: NEW YORK CITY, Victor’s Cafe, 5:30 p.m.

11
ST. PATRICK’S DAY PARADE, Naples, 10 a.m.
ST. PATRICK’S DAY LUNCHEON, Bistro 821, Naples, 12:30 p.m.

12
UMASS ALUMNI & FRIENDS GAME WATCH

RED SOX VS. YANKEES
Jet Blue Park, Fort Myers, Time TBD

14
NAPLES SPEAKER EVENT
Jennifer Whitten-Woodring, Dean, Honors College
Naples Grand Resort, 5:30 p.m.

15
PALM BEACH SPEAKER EVENT
Jennifer Whitten-Woodring, Dean, Honors College
Eau Palm Beach Resort and Spa, Manalapan, 5:30 p.m.

APRIL 2023

11-13
DAYS OF GIVING
 Begins April 11 at noon and ends April 13 at noon

12
CELEBRATION OF CHANCELLOR CHEN AND TASTE OF LOWELL
University Crossing

13
INAUGURATION OF CHANCELLOR CHEN
Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell

15
MULTICULTURAL STUDENT AND ALUMNI NETWORKING AND CAREER NIGHT
Coburn Hall, 6 p.m.

30
YOUNG ALUMNI AND CLASS OF 2023 NIGHT AT THE UMASS CLUB
UMass Club, Boston, 6 p.m.

MAY 2023
11-13
50TH REUNION
All over campus

JUNE 2023
2
SOUNDS OF PORTUGAL: AN EVENING OF FADO
Reception, Coburn Hall, 5 p.m.
Concert, Durgin Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

21
WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center
More than 60 years later, River Hawks still like to dress up and get down, this time for the Fall Ball. While there is far more variety in formal attire nowadays, these students share with their predecessors the desire to do it big and do it right. They, too, are guided by an abiding sense of style and an enduring study hard/have fun ethos that is part of the campus DNA.
Tyler Lagasse ’19 won a gold medal for golf in the Special Olympics National Games last summer. This was his first gold medal after taking home silver in 2010, 2014 and 2018. Says Tyler: “To all the people living with autism or a disability: I hope you know that you are capable of anything you set your mind to.”

Hey alumni, be like Tyler and check in once in a while and let us know how you’re doing! New job? Newly married? Some other fabulous accomplishment? Send us a class note at: alumni.uml.edu/classnotes.