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It was as a college student running a drop-in center for neighborhood kids in Worcester, more than 30 years ago, and later teaching at an alternative school, that Jim Byrne first began to develop the conviction that has guided his career: that violence in a community can better be addressed through informal controls that exist on the street than by anything the police or mayor can do.

“I was a VISTA volunteer, going to classes and working, putting in 75 hours a week for $45 plus food stamps. And I began to see it right there. The social forces—wages, teachers—the neighborhood—that’s what really made the difference. Everybody has somebody they don’t want to let down. It might be a teacher, a parent, a probation officer. And that’s the person—the person in the community, or the community itself, but not the cops or the authorities—who is going to be the biggest factor in controlling the level of violence and crime.”

“It is a new millennium now, and a vastly different world—but the message hasn’t changed. “Researchers studying community-level violence have consistently found that gang influence appears to be strongest in areas where informal social controls are weakest,” Byrne told an audience in Los Angeles. “Researchers studying community-level violence have consistently found that gang influence appears to be strongest in areas where informal social controls are weakest,” Byrne told an audience in Los Angeles. “It might be a teacher, a parent, a probation officer. And that’s the person—the person in the community, or the community itself, but not the cops or the authorities—who is going to be the biggest factor in controlling the level of violence and crime.”

Working WISE conference organizers include, from left, Mariam Muskiewicz, science librarian, UML Libraries; Psychology Prof. Meg Bond, director of CWW; Christina Bingham, project manager; NEED Prof. Paula Rayman, CWW senior associate; and Mohamed Abdallah, project research assistant.

For the second year, Computer Science students in Asst. Prof. Fred Martin’s computer science class were teamed with graphic design students of Asst. Prof. Karen Roehr.

Three-student teams—two designers and one scientist—worked on each robot. CS students created fully autonomous machines able to collect panel eggs and avoid black ones. Design students created flyers advertising the competition and logos, posters and brochures supporting their robot. Two egg hunts were held in the fall. Robots and promotional materials were exhibited at the Dagon Gallery in February.

Roehr and Martin’s combined statement on the benefits of the project offers: And while the work of the project has focused on a theme of a crime-community symbiosis, the project has better been addressed through informal controls that exist on the street than by anything the police or mayor can do.

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Yanco Wins CAREER Award for Human-Robot Research

Holly Yanco, assistant professor of computer science, has been awarded a five-year, $420,000 CAREER grant by the National Science Foundation for her proposal on “Interacting With Autonomy.” CAREER is NSF’s Faculty Early Career Development Program.

Yanco directs the Computer Science Robotics Lab and teaches introduction to undergraduate and graduate courses on programming languages and robotics. In her research, she will explore methods for improving human-robot interaction for urban search and rescue robots and for robotic wheelchair navigation.

“Although the research will be performed in a laboratory setting, the situations they may encounter in the field are often unpredictable. We are working on developing sliding scale autonomy, so that the robot or the operator can decide to take a little more or less control, depending on the situation,” says Yanco.

A related problem is tracking and summarizing past actions: “Let’s say the robot gets stuck. Can we create a brief, yet complete, account of how the robot got to this spot?”

According to Yanco, the multi-campus program also offers students the flexibility of taking classes on any of the four campuses. It also enables them to tap into the talent in their specialty areas on all four campuses. For Cardarelli, who hails from Rhode Island and is a medical physicist at Rhode Island Hospital, this meant he could take courses at Lowell and also at Dartmouth, which was significantly closer to home for him.

Art Student Develops Logo for Ward Hill Business Park

Senior art major Scott Cahill has learned that community relationship-building is an art in his chosen field of study. And according to all involved with his project designing a logo for a Ward Hill business group, he earned an “A” in both areas.

That project began about two years ago, when state Sen. Steven Baddour talked with Chancellor William T. Hogan about involving the University with the greater Haverhill community. The perfect link-up soon presented itself when business leaders expressed to Baddour a need for signs in the Ward Hill business park, for which they needed a logo designed at little or no cost.

“The senator came up with the idea of getting involved with the University, and it mushroomed from there,” says Bud Hart, with the Ward Hill Park Association.

“It is a great example of UMass and its students cooperating with the community,” says Baddour.

Baddour’s office contacted Renee Lias Claffey, director of Government Relations, who contacted Art Department Chair Jim Coates. The two met with Hart and others to determine the Association’s needs. Coates pledged assistance, and asked Asst. Prof. Karen Roehr to handle the project. Roehr identified the best student for the job—Scott Cahill—and supervised his work. After developing several designs, Cahill presented them to Ward Hill Association leaders.

Chemistry Department Announces 300th Doctorate

The Chemistry Department announced the awarding of its 300th doctoral degree recently as Philip Levesque defended his thesis. Levesque is a senior research associate at ID Biomedical Corporation, working on analytical chemistry method development. Levesque’s thesis is titled, “Investigation of Recombinant Streptococcus Pneumoniae Vaccine Antigen Adsorbed onto an Aluminum Adjuvant.”

The examination committee consisted of Profs. Eugene Barry, chair, Melsenda McDonald and David Ryan, all of chemistry; and Prof. Carl Lawton, chemical engineering.

The first doctorate in chemistry was awarded in the mid-1960s and the 100th in 1990—about 25 years later. The next 200 were awarded in the 13 years from 1990 through 2005.
U.S. Army Funds a National Research Council Fellow

Innovative work on flame resistant materials has earned the respect and attention of the U.S. Army—as well as new funding.

Arthur Watterson, director of the Institute for Nano Science and Engineering (INSET) spearheaded the original research in collaboration with Dr. Lynne Samuelson of the Natick Soldier Systems Center. Watterson also credits Prof. Jayant Kumar of the Physics Department and director of the Center for Advanced Materials (CAM), Dr. Rajesh Kumar of INSET and Dr. Virinder S. Parmar, visiting professor in chemistry, for their work and insightful contributions.

The discovery involves the use of certain enzymes as catalysts to synthesize a new class of polyol carbonate materials under mild and environmentally friendly reaction conditions.

“We knew we had potential with this material—that it’s environmentally safe and benign, both to produce and to use—and that it solves many of the problems associated with flame-retardant compounds in wide use,” says Watterson.

The Army has a significant need for improved, cost-effective and environmentally safe flame retardant clothing. Burn injuries are increasing due to urban warfare and from a multitude of flame hazards: incidental exposure, accidents with battlefield combustibles, and enemy attack with thermal or chemical weapons, explosions, or ballistic. The loss of highly trained military personnel in combat from burn injuries is detrimental to operations and expensive; millions of dollars are spent each year on burn injury treatment for the military and costs continue to rise.

The new funding is a three-year grant from the Army’s Environmental Quality Program and will fund a National Research Council post-doctoral fellow, Dr. Ravi Mosurkal, who already works with CAM and INSET on the enzymatic synthesis of new materials.

University Launches F. Bradford Morse $1M Endowment Campaign

The University has initiated a $1 million endowment campaign named for F. Bradford Morse, the late congressman from Lowell and long-time United Nations official.

The F. Bradford Morse Endowment for the Study of International Relations, Sustainable Development and Peace will fund an annual distinguished lecture series and conference on the United Nations or a related topic and support UML’s award-winning student International Relations program as well as a model United Nations program for high schools organized by the University.

Each year UML will present a distinguished guest who will deliver a public lecture on international relations, sustainable development in a global context or strategies for achieving peace among nations.

The endowed already includes $65,000, largely from an infusion of seed money from professors emeriti Dean Bergeron of history and Joyce Denning of political science. The goal is to reach $1 million in five years.

“The endowment will not only help sustain outstanding student programs but also will make UMass Lowell better known as a center for thoughtful and inspired discussion about international issues,” says Bergeron, who, along with Denning, has been a major financial supporter of the University’s programs in international relations and political science.

Morse’s widow, Josephine, says she and her daughter, Stephanie, are “enormously pleased” about the endowment.

Morse, who was born in Lowell, was a graduate of Boston University, where he earned his law degree in 1949. He also received an honorary doctorate from UMass Lowell.

We have always told stories that help us make sense of the world,” says Avery. “Most of us are not aware how science and technology are impacting our daily lives. We don’t take time to reflect on the implications. Writers do this for us, imagining characters we can identify with asking, ‘What if...?’

The nano module is part of Avery’s undergraduate English course, Monsters, Apes and Nightmares, which examines such fiction as Mary Shelley’s “Frankenstein,” Robert Louis Stevenson’s “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,” and H.G. Wells’s “The Island of Dr. Moreau.”

“There is quite a lot of literature exploring nanoscience, nanotechnology and nanomanufacturing,” Avery says. “Some of it is accurate, some is wildly inaccurate and some is alarmist.”

He characterizes Halperin’s novel as pro-nano, while Chrichton’s book exemplifies the majority of literature about nano by being a cautionary tale.

The literature/science connection comes naturally to Avery, who began his undergraduate career as a mechanical engineering major. After switching into English and philosophy, he wrote his thesis on the science behind Shelley’s novel, “Frankenstein.” He has explored other connections between literature, ethics and technology, and is publishing a book this year titled “Radio Modernism: Literature, Ethics, and the BBC, 1922–1938.”

Green Chemistry Program Announces Sappi Grant

As scientists invent new materials and processes using nanotechnology, sometimes they look directly to nature.

The Green Chemistry Program at UMass Lowell is embarking on sponsored research into nanotechnology applications using paper—paper as a substrate for electronics, for example—funded by Sappi International.

Sappi Limited, one of the world’s largest producers of coated fine paper and chemical cellulose, is based in Johannesburg, South Africa, Sappi Fine Paper North America is headquartered in Boston.

Prof. John Warner, director of the Center for Green Chemistry, announced that funding supports two full-time positions through two years of research: the Sappi Green Chemistry Research Professor and the Sappi Green Chemistry Graduate Student Fellow. Dr. Sofia Trakhtenberg assumes the Green Chemistry research professor position; she is an expert on the characterization of surface properties and applications of environmentally benign polymers and nanoparticles. The Green Chemistry fellow is doctoral student Vineet Dua, who is working on semiconductors and renewable substrates. Sappi is providing the specialized electro-conductive papers to be used in research on low temperature processing of semiconductors.

“The Sappi sponsorship marks a milestone in the development of benign alternatives to current materials and technologies,” says Warner. “Look around you now: Almost all products are based on petroleum chemistry and the world’s reserves are finite. But the forestry industry is the best place to go to learn about environmentally responsible nanotechnology—a tree is a biodegradable, endlessly renewable resource. Developing high tech applications for forest products is reaching for the highest and best use of a resource.”
For Tsongas Center Displays, Students Step Up the Effort

Each fall semester, 300 students take the Introduction to Engineering course.

Prof. David Kazmer of the Plastics Engineering Department guides them through the basics and beyond, into a fully-realized service learning project.

The students in the Intro class are faced with two design/build/test challenges.

They deal with a structured project first, with a specific objective and provided materials: to reach optimization (load carrying capability) and produce an interactive exhibit about an engineering project client. Staff helped shape the requirements—providing materials: to reach optimization (load carrying capability) and produce an interactive exhibit about an engineering project client. Staff helped shape the requirements—professional and market expertise at UMass Worcester and the marketing expertise of the University’s Donahue Institute to help both established and start-up companies with product design, prototyping, manufacturing, clinical trials and FDA compliance issues.

Prof. Steve McCarthy of Plastics Engineering, a primary investigator of M2D2, says, “Medical device companies have told the Donahue Institute that they want access and interaction with University researchers. Our response is M2D2.”

While industry members have been able to approach the UMass system’s faculty and researchers to seek assistance in the past, there has never been an opportunity to facilitate this effort, McCarthy says. The new Center solves that problem.

There are more than 220 medical device companies in Massachusetts, with 20,000 employees and a total payroll of more than $1.6 billion. And, it’s estimated that every 100 jobs in the industry is associated with another 79 jobs in the state.

The Center was launched with $135,000 in seed funding, awarded by UMass President Jack Wilson from the University’s Science and Technology Fund. This money will be used by the Center to compete for major funding through the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation and industry.

With such support, it is expected that 10 new manufacturing plants will be generated within 10 years.

UML Joins in Forming Center to Aid State’s Medical Device Companies

In keeping with its mission to support regional economic development, UMass Lowell has taken part in the formation of a center to help the state’s medical device companies grow, compete and remain in Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Medical Devices Development Center (M2D2) combines the engineering expertise at UML, the clinical and medical expertise at UMass Worcester and the marketing expertise of the University’s Donahue Institute to help both established and start-up companies with product design, prototyping, manufacturing, clinical trials and FDA compliance issues.

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Biomass for Biomanufacturing

Dr. Beverley Perna, one of the Tsongas Center judges of the engineering projects, checks out a winning exhibit designed and built by students in the Introduction to Engineering course.

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The exhibits are installed in the Center’s cafeteria and main lobby.

A grand celebration was held at the Tsongas Center to display and demonstrate the winning designs. The highest-scoring project was a functioning dam model, built with the help of donations from local businesses, that Center staff estimated would have cost nearly $10,000 to have had professionally produced.

One outcome was especially gratifying — student grades have improved over the three years Kazmer has taught the course, while the material is just as difficult and the grading policies are even more stringent.

Underground Movement Began On Campus in Late 1940s

It was in the late 1940s, not long after World War II, that the first underground movement began at what was then the Lowell Textile Institute.

It expanded slightly in 1950, and again four years after that, and once again in 1958.

It’s still in existence today, more than half a century after its inception, and it still has many adherents—especially on cold, snowy or rainy days.

This underground is, of course, the tunnel system that connects Smith, Eames, Alumni, Cumnock, Ball and Southwick halls and the Lydon Library. It’s the conduit that enables students, faculty and staff to walk to nearly every building on UML North without braving the harsh New England elements.

In fact, though, the ease and comfort of the University community was not the primary motive for creating these tunnels in the first place.

“The purpose for the tunnels was just to take utility services, principally steam, from the north central heating plant to the residence halls for heat and hot water,” says Physical Plant Director Dave Kiser. “Secondarily, they served as pedestrian passages and kept people from having to cross the street.

“The tunnels are a mixed blessing. They’re not very pretty or well-maintained, but hey, they’re there to stay. They were built to last, and once again in 1958.

“Some tunnels have been closed off over the years, or had their entrances sealed, but the ones that are still open are still in use today.”

The University’s tunnel system, constructed originally to carry steam and other utilities from building to building, is a popular pedestrian way for students, staff and faculty.

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Campus News

UML Buys Renewable Energy Certificates for Residence Halls

Celebrating the University’s purchase of renewable energy certificates are, from left, Karl Bolding of the Center for Resource Solutions, Mark Crowdis of Think Energy, UML Energy and Utilities Manager Mark Lukitsch, and Brent Alderfer of Community Energy.

The University is purchasing 4,200 megawatt hours worth of renewable energy certificates annually for the next three years at a cost of $9,000 a year, an arrangement that represents 13 percent of the institution’s electrical power. This is the equivalent of the electrical energy that powers all of the University’s residence halls.

In effect, the funds are a premium that the University and other companies and institutions pay to ensure that a certain percentage of their energy comes from renewable sources – in this case, electricity generated by wind turbines.

“Avoided energy credits are a way for companies and individuals to support clean energy projects,” says Energy and Utilities Manager Mark Lukitsch.

“Translated to more tangible concepts, the amount of carbon dioxide emissions reduced by this three-year purchase is the equivalent of the electrical energy that powers all of the University’s residence halls.

A percentage of the money from the purchase of certificates flows back to the renewable energy producers through suppliers such as Community Energy. The power generated by the producers is distributed throughout the country via the national power grid.

Other Massachusetts purchasers include Amherst College, the John Merck Fund, Mr. Holyoke College, the Oak Foundation, PerkinElmer, Inc., Sasaki Associates, Inc., and Smith College.

Provost Creates Task Force on Campus Safety

As one of a number of steps initiated to enhance the wellbeing of all members of the UMass Lowell community, Provost John Wooding has created a nine-member Task Force on Campus Safety, chaired by Associate Provost Kristin Esterberg.

The task force is charged with reviewing policies and identifying strategies to ensure the security of both faculty and staff.

In addition to Esterberg, the members are Sheila Riley Callahan, executive director of Academic Services; Noel Cartwright, director of the Counseling Center; Psychology Prof. Nina Coppens; Police Chief Brian Pray; Dean of Student Affairs Larry Siegel; Vice Chancellor Jeff Thompson; Rhoda Trietsch, associate director of the Counseling Center; and Greg Wilder, director of Residence Services.

Workplace, for members of the faculty and staff. Kristin Esterberg introduced the Alumni Hall event, which included presentations and discussions led by Hamish Blackman of the Wellness Corp., Chief Pray and Cartwright. The Wellness Corp. administers the University’s Employee Assistance Program.

In a related program, the University Police Department will be conducting a four-day, 12-hour rape defense course for female members of the UML community that will provide women with the skills and confidence to avoid and, if necessary, confront those who would try to harm them.

Meanwhile, the police department has requested a peer review by the Licensed Executive Management Assistance Program, a consulting and technical assistance initiative of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators.

30 Websites Have New Look and Feel as Part of Redesign

The Communications and Web offices are making great progress implementing the content management system (CMS). More than 30 sites have been launched using the CMS, incorporating a new design template.

All university websites are being redesigned using a CMS product called Serena Collage, which separates content from design and enables departments to maintain their websites without using programs such as Dreamweaver and MS FrontPage. Maintainers from each department are trained by IT/Training to make content updates and changes in the CMS. For more information on the CMS and the implementation plan, visit intranet.uml.edu/it/weboffice.

Construction of the Campus’s First Parking Garage Is Underway

The bad news for a while there was a lot of noise coming from the Bourgeois Hall parking lot on UML East.

The good news: construction is underway on the campus’s first parking garage, a four-level, 630-space concrete and steel structure. Pile driving, the source of the early racket, eventually was replaced by the quieter phase of pouring concrete.

The $13 million project broke ground in late December and is scheduled for completion late this fall, depending on availability of building materials. The garage will primarily serve the needs of faculty, staff and students living and working on UML East.

Following completion of the UML East facility, design is expected to begin on a second, 900-space garage to be located on part of the Riverside Lot on UML North.

Hector Valdes, project manager in the Office of Facilities, is overseeing construction of the UML East garage.

AG Tom Reilly Visits University

Attorney General Thomas Reilly, a Democratic candidate for governor, was briefed on the University’s nanotechnology, biotechnology and green chemistry programs this spring.

Campus Hosts NIOSH Town Meeting

UMass Lowell was one of 13 sites nationwide hosting a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) town meeting to let the federal agency know what issues matter in this part of the country, in order to guide the agency’s national research agenda.

The March meeting included NIOSH Director John Howard and health and safety researchers, employers, workers, health professionals, members of professional associations and organized labor representatives.

The agency is gathering input for its National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA), a framework that will guide occupational safety and health research for the nation. Its aim is to reduce work-related injury and illness.

UMass Lowell, Four Others, Join Forces to Advance the Region’s Growth

Northeastern Massachusetts’ five public higher-education institutions, including UMass Lowell, have formally joined forces in a partnership to advance the economic and cultural growth of the region.

The newly-formed alliance, edlink, announced earlier this year by the presidents or chancellor of North Shore Community College, Middlesex Community College, Northern Essex Community College, Salem State College and UMass Lowell, will combine the resources of the five institutions to address the region’s opportunities, problems and challenges.

Since each of the five already boasts a long history of academic training and achievement, as well as a background of collaborative ventures with the region’s schools systems and employers, the new partnership cannot help but benefit the area and its workforce.

“This is a proud moment in the history of our region and of our respective institutions,” said UMass Lowell Chancellor William T. Hogan. “Each of us has been working for years, both separately and together, to increase the means to advance the growth of our region. The creation of this partnership can only add to the weight and pace of this effort.”

The leaders of the five institutions—Presidents Wayne M. Burton (NSCC), Carole A. Cowan (MCC), David Hartleb (NECC), Nancy D. Harrington (SSCC) and Chancellor Hogan—will personally form the leadership of edlink, whose mission, they say, will be advanced through a blend of collaborative forums, targeted educational programs, research initiatives and public higher-education advocacy.

EPA Funds Grant to Improve Children’s Environmental Health

The University recently was awarded $150,000 from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to educate New England health professionals about environmental health hazards faced by children, and how to address them. UMass Lowell was one of only seven organizations nationwide to receive such a grant.

Lead researcher, Prof. Stephanie Chalupka of the Nursing Department, and Project Manager David Turcotte of the Center for Family, Work and Community will conduct seven workshops—one in each New England state, with two in Massachusetts—targeting health professionals who work with children, especially nurses.

They expect to reach about 200 such practitioners. Ass’t. Prof. Joel Tickner of the Community Health and Sustainability Department also will head the research effort, and Julie Villareal of the Center for Family, Work and Community will serve as the training program manager.

“What are the environmental health hazards that children might be exposed to? And how can practitioners address them?” says Turcotte, in defining the focus of the workshops. “We hope to have a major impact among health professionals, especially nurses working with low-income and minority children.” Studies have shown that those groups, along with immigrant and refugee children, are exposed to disproportionate levels of environmental health hazards and, particularly in smaller cities and rural areas, have less access to health care services than do others. Therefore, the project concentrates on those groups and locales.

TURI Awards Three Community Grants

Now in its 11th year, the Toxics Use Reduction Networking Grant Program has helped neighbor groups, municipalities and other non-profit organizations, educate people about how to live healthier, safer lives.

For the 2005-06 grant program, the Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Institute (TURI) awarded grants ranging from $12,000 to $14,000 each to the Town of Westford Water Department, the Regional Environmental Council in Worcester, and the Center for Healthy Homes and Neighborhoods at Boston University’s School of Public Health.

“We’re seeing an increased desire from community groups to focus in areas where they can offer safer alternatives and build on what’s worked in the past, which is at the heart of TURI’s community grant program,” says Eileen Gunn, TURI Community Program manager.

The Town of Westford will raise public awareness of the effects of pesticides on human health and water resources and promote safer alternatives for lawn care. The Council in Worcester will train self-employed workers and junior technicians about the health hazards of toxics found in common cleaning products and introduce safer alternatives. The third grant recipient, the Center at Boston University, will train residents in housing developments in Boston, Cambridge and Weltham about how to reduce the use of pesticides through more effective and environmentally sound pest management strategies.

‘Bringing the Richness Back’ to the Classroom

There was a time, not so long ago, before the days of MCAS tests and statewide budget cuts, when an eighth-grade classroom was a lot more fun than today. There were art lessons, music lessons, play-acting, sometimes even hobbies and games.

It made for a well-rounded day.

At Lowell’s old Bartlett School, in the school-year that began last October, those times may be on their way back. In a new, hour-long extended-day program, the outgrowth of a partnership between the city and UMass Lowell, a curriculum heavy on non-academic doings is serving as a model for the city as a whole.

“Art, music, drama, all those sorts of things—they’ve gotten short shrift in...
the high-stakes testing environment we have in the schools today,” says Judith Boccia, director of the Center for Field Services and Studies (CFSS) in the Graduate School of Education. “What we’re doing at the Bartlett is trying to reverse that trend a little, to get some of that richness back.”

Roughly 100 middle-school students at the new Bartlett Community Partnership School extended their school days by an hour, from 2:50 to 3:50 p.m., to take part in an “enrichment program” taught largely by University faculty and students, that had them playing chess, taking photos, drawing maps, doing archeology projects, dancing, playing instruments, and getting homework help.

The purpose of the program, says Dean Donald Pierson of the Graduate School of Education, is not only to enrich the standard Lowell school curriculum and to give University students and faculty a forum for their skills, but also to provide an opportunity for local students who might not otherwise have the chance for such non-traditional pursuits.

“The purpose of the University’s mission,” Pierson says, “is to enhance the quality of education in the region in whatever ways we can. This has been a unique opportunity, both for us and for the city of Lowell. Without what we’re offering at the Bartlett, most of these kids during that hour—they’d just be hanging out.”

Massachusetts CEOs Take Dim View of the Economy

Chief executive officers of Massachusetts businesses are generally downbeat about the current outlook for the national and state economies and are being conservative in their own business expansion plans.

This was the finding of a new statewide poll of 527 CEOs released recently by the Massachusetts Economic Assessment and Analysis Project (MEAAP) at UMass Lowell and Boston.

“This is part of the University’s mission,” says Pierson, “to enhance the quality of education in the region in whatever ways we can. This has been a unique opportunity, both for us and for the city of Lowell. Without what we’re offering at the Bartlett, most of these kids during that hour—they’d just be hanging out.”

UMass Study Looks at ‘Green’ Cities Across the Country

UMass researchers have come up with 10 green building program recommendations for the City of Lowell following a 21-community study. The recommendations include the importance of developing building standards, education and outreach. “Green building” refers to design and construction strategies that significantly reduce or eliminate the negative environmental impacts of a building while providing healthy space for its occupants. The research was done in partnership with the City of Lowell and other community stakeholders and is the first step in a broader analysis of what a green building program would be like in Lowell.

Teddy Bears Rain in Dollars for Make-A-Wish Foundation

At a December UMass Lowell hockey game, fans aimed their plastic-wrapped Teddy Bears at Rowdy the River Hawk’s shopping cart as he skated around the rink. Later, kids collected the bears off the ice so they could be brought to Lowell General Hospital’s Children’s Place pediatric unit. Fans purchased bears prior to the game for $10; proceeds from which were donated to the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

University researchers collected data from 21 communities that use the green building model on a municipal level. They examined programs in each city and compiled information on best practices, obstacles, education and outreach. The research was supported by a $25,000 grant by the Theodore Edison Parker Foundation.

“This is the first national study I am aware of that examines over 20 municipal green building programs,” says David Turcotte, project director of the Lowell Green Building Initiative at UML’s Center for Family, Work and Community. “In addition, this study is a concrete example of how research— in the form of a community and university partnership—can contribute to the sustainable social, environmental and economic development of the region.”
In Memoriam  Summer 2006

The University of Massachusetts awarded Asst. Prof. Joel Tickner of the Community Health and Sustainability Department its 2005 President’s Award for Public Service. President Jack M. Wilson and Board of Trustees Chairman James J. Karam presented the award at a Boston ceremony in early December.

In his acceptance remarks, Tickner said, “The work for which I am being honored today is the product of partnership. It is not my work but rather the work of a spectacular group of people at UMass Lowell and throughout the Commonwealth.”

He thanked his mentors, including UMass Lowell faculty and staff members Ken Geiser, David Kriebel, Cathy Crumby and Beverly Volker, and he thanked his family.

In a press release, the President’s Office called Tickner “an expert on the ‘Precautionary Principle,’ a principle that calls for a proactive approach in preventing harm to human or environmental health,” and noted that “he has helped to create The Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow.”

1926  Mary Corbett  1954  Richard Cullen
1928  Alice Hurley Giles  1956  David Baphaw
1934  Irene Mitchell  1957  Hazel Kiwicz
1935  Dorothy McQuade  1958  Gail Derpana
1936  Dorothy Duncan  1960  Donna White
1938  Alice Turmer  1964  James Devlin
1942  Irving Wolf  1972  Hyman Deletetsky
1943  Peter DeMallie  1973  Catherine Morison
1944  Helen Sullivan  1974  William Riley
1945  Elizabeth McDonough  1974  Norren Lustenberger
1948  Albert Bianco  1975  William Raston
1949  Robert Peirnt  1976  Richard Powers
1950  Edward Manning  1977  Kenneth Fisher
1951  Joan McCarthy  1978  Arthur Graves
1953  Thomas Maigne  1979  Dona Leggot
1954  Philip Haley  1980  Karen Tidley
1955  Mary Nangle ‘83, and Ned Early ’79 greet incoming freshmen at this year’s Accepted Students Reception.

Alumni Admissions Ambassadors Mary Nangle ’83, and Ned Early ’79 greet incoming freshmen at this year’s Accepted Students Reception.

To learn how you can become an Alumni Admissions Ambassador, contact Lois Nangle (978) 934-2213 or Deme Gys (978) 934-4810 or e-mail alumni_office@uml.edu

Byron L. Dennison
Prof. Byron L. Dennison of Westminster, Mass., and Blacksburg, Va., who chaired the Electrical Engineering Department at Lowell Tech from 1968 to 1972, died March 13 at the age of 75.

Born in Clarksburg, W. Va., Prof. Dennison was raised in Keyser, W.Va., on a state dairy farm affiliated with Potomac State College, where his father was chair of the Department of Agriculture.

He earned his bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering at West Virginia University, a master’s degree at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and a doctorate at Worcester Polytechnic.

Before joining the Lowell Tech faculty in 1966, he was a senior electrical engineer for Philco Corp. and later a member of the Virginia Polytech faculty. He left Lowell in 1973 but returned as a Distinguished Visiting Professor in 1985 following periods of self-employment and visiting professor posts at Virginia Polytech and Southeastern Massachusetts University.

Miriam Smith
Miriam Smith, a member of the Lowell State Teachers Class of 1949 and an educator for more than four decades, died on April 21 at the age of 78.

Mrs. Smith was principal of the Varnum Elementary School in Lowell for 27 years, after having taught in Tewksbury and Westford schools.

Lowell Schools Superintendent George Tsapatsaris said, “She was the example of a true professional. The Lowell school system is fortunate to have had her and I’m fortunate to have worked with her.”

Mrs. Smith was widowed in 1974 and raised her seven children by herself.

“She put us all through school and took us on vacations. She was an incredible woman,” said her son Robert.

A standout athlete as a young woman, she was the first female elected to the Dracut High School Hall of Fame.

For several years before her retirement, Mrs. Smith moved to Hampton, N.H., to be near the ocean, and commuted daily to Lowell.

CampusNews

In Memoriam Summer 2006

JOIN THE
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ADMISSIONS
AMBASSADORS

More than 48 Alumni Admissions Ambassadors are already donating their time, energy and enthusiasm to help UMass Lowell attract more high quality, hard working students. See why this new program is generating so much excitement among alumni who are looking for a tangible program is generating so much excitement among alumni who are looking for a tangible program among alumni who are looking for a tangible program among alumni who are looking for a tangible program among alumni who are looking for a tangible program.

As an Alumni Admissions Ambassador you might:
• Share your experiences with prospective students
• Greet students and their families at the Accepted Students Open House
• Attend local high school college fairs
• Act as a liaison for community outreach efforts

Alumni Admissions Ambassadors Mary Nangle ’83, and Ned Early ’79 greet incoming freshmen at this year’s Accepted Students Reception.

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University of Massachusetts
Lowell

UMASS LOWELL MAGAZINE  SUMMER 2006
By Jack McDonough

One snowy winter night in the late 1980s, after the University’s hockey team had played a game at Tully Forum in Chelmsford, Dana Skinner returned to the campus. Then the assistant director of Athletics, his job was to bring the gate receipts back to Costello gym and lock them up for the night.

More than 15 years later, he remembers that night all too well. Now the director of Athletics, he sat in his office one day recently and described the event.

“When I walked into the gym,” he says, “water was pouring through the ceiling and the floor was covered. Water was everywhere. Part of the roof had given way under the heavy wet snow.

“I called up Wayne Edwards, the AD, and we spent the whole night in the gym. We salvaged everything we could and we had buckets all over the place.

“The stains on the wall from that storm are still there. Every time I see them, I’m reminded of that night. The happiest moment for me will be when I go into that gym and don’t see them anymore.”

— Dana Skinner

The new floor will have 44 percent absorbency, the property that provides springiness that cushions the impact of running and jumping.

“The stains on the wall from that storm are still there. Every time I see them, I’m reminded of that night. The happiest moment for me will be when I go into that gym and don’t see them anymore.”

— Dana Skinner

The gymnasia renovation is the latest in a series of multi-million dollar additions and upgrades to the University’s athletic facilities.

The largest and most visible of these began in 1998 with the opening of the Paul E. Tsongas Arena and the Edward A. LeLacheur Park, both joint ventures with the City of Lowell. The magnificent 6,300-seat Tsongas Arena is the home of UMass Lowell’s Division I hockey team, a perennial power in Hockey East, and also of the Lowell Lock Monsters of the American Hockey League.

The River Hawk baseball team plays its home games at LeLacheur Park, a 4,700-seat jewel of a stadium adjacent to the University dormitories on UML East. During the summer, the Single A Lowell Spinners of the Red Sox farm system play their home games in this park.

In the fall of 2002, the University unveiled its new Campus Recreation Center – which Dana has called the “heartbeat” of the University – across the street from LeLacheur Park. This sparkling, 65,000-square-foot brick and glass building offers all manner of facilities, including three basketball courts, two racquetball courts, a squash court, a running track and a dual-level fitness area.
Cover Story

Alums Applaud Renovation of Costello Gym

While it’s clearly evident that the renovation of Costello Gymnasium was not only desirable but essential, there is at least one former basketball player who feels a little wistful about it.

Aliya Cox ’00 says, “I played here for four years and the gym felt like home. I’m excited that it’s being re-done but I’m a little sad at the same time. I wish I could have taken a piece of the floor.”

After graduating, she helped coach the women’s team part-time and, for the last two years, has been a full-time assistant.

Despite her nostalgia for the old hardwood, however, she admits that it has taken its toll of athletes’ backs, knees and ankles – and was a factor in her own back and knee problems.

Miroslava Raspopovic ’01, now a doctoral student in electrical engineering, says she and her teammates were thinking more about the game than the floor but acknowledges that “there definitely were times when I wished the floor had been better. I’m really glad they’re doing something.”

The renovation was necessary, she says, “not only for the safety of the athletes but also for the gym’s appearance.” And attractive venues, like the Tsongas Arena, draw crowds, she adds.

Lowell attorney Liam Scully ’92, who played four years of varsity basketball and is now a big fan and booster of the program, says, “I’ve been bringing the family to games for years and we’re excited that Costello will be a new, better, family-friendly place. The program is now at the highest level of division two basketball and the new facility will match that performance.”

Another alum who played basketball and applauds the renovation is one who never played on the Costello surface.

Hank Brown ’67 played his varsity basketball when the court was on the fourth floor of Southwick Hall.

“Our score a lot because it was a small gym and we knew how to run a small floor. But you had to be careful if you drove to the basket because the wall was only about six inches beyond the baseline.”

The locker room in those days was on the ground floor in a different building, he recalls, but at halftime the team went to the Athletics Director’s office on the third floor. But he thinks visiting teams were sent to the ground floor.

“They were always tired in the second half,” he remembers.

Hank wasn’t happy with the Costello construction from the outset.

“I had been complaining about the floor before the gym opened. I said I hoped it wasn’t laid on concrete.” It was, of course.

“Refurbishing that floor was the best improvement they could have made. I’m grateful I didn’t play four years on that floor. It hurts your knees.”

Jim Hunt, who graduated three years before Hank Brown, played during his first two years, before being sidelined by a thigh injury. He remembers the Southwick gym well.

“It was a tough court to play on,” he says. “There were vertical roof supports that were nearly on the court. They had heavy padding around them and that was good because more than one official ran into those supports during games.”

Jim has stayed close to the University, organizing alumni support groups and working closely with Dana on committees. Now he’s especially interested in the plan for the new Alumni Championship Hall.

“Not only was the floor in serious need of attention,” says Dana. “It was like playing on concrete.”

Actually, it nearly was like playing on concrete. Between the wood floor and the concrete base beneath it there were only two layers of tar paper and one layer of cork. The hardness of the surface had a deleterious effect on student athletes over time.

“They would come in as freshmen with great jumping skills but by the time they were seniors they weren’t jumping at the same level,” Dana says.

But, although the floor was the major concern, it wasn’t the only one.

“When we hosted back-to-back NCAA regional championships (2003-04), that’s when the weaknesses of the facility became evident. We then began to consider renovating Costello from the perspective of hosting a major championship.

“When we host an event of that kind, we need to put our best foot forward, so we wanted to bring it up to championship level. We needed a cleaner, brighter facility with improved spectator seating and a ramped up area for the media.”

Things hadn’t changed much since the building opened in 1967. The bleachers on one side of the gym were so old that they couldn’t be rolled out any more. And members of the media had to sit at temporary tables behind one baseline with extension cords snaking away into the nearest offices.

When fans enter the gymnasium later this year, they will see the “like new” facility that Dana speaks of – a new media section on the floor along the sideline to the left, where there once were bleachers; new roll-out bleachers behind the baseline to the right; a new, updated sound system; bright new red and white paint on the walls; new red plastic bleachers in the balconies, replacing the old wooden seating; and, of course, a spunking new playing surface.

Dana describes the extensive renovation project as a “total team effort” in which Peter Casey, associate director of Athletics, and Jean Robinson, director of Athletic Facilities, played a major role.

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This artist’s rendering of the new floor shows the new red color scheme of the renovated gymnasium.

This acoustic sound paneling is one element of the gym’s new, enhanced sound system.

In addition to these three major projects, the University has built a new softball complex on UML South and a new athletic field complex on UML North.

The renovation of Costello Gymnasium had been “left on the back burner” while these other projects were completed, Dana says. Replacing the floor was the most critical part of the $700,000 Costello project.

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The University has built a new softball complex on UML South and a new athletic field complex on UML North.
"Peter and Jean have done yeoman’s work on this project," Dana says. “We had to make our money go a long way, and those two made it happen.”

The new floor, according to Casey, will have a 44 percent absorbency, as opposed to zero to five percent for the old floor. Absorbency is the property that provides springiness, cushioning the impact of running and jumping.

The new floor will be built on top of a load distribution sub-floor, below which will be a bio-pad that provides absorbency. The whole structure will be separated from the underlying concrete by a series of steel channels. In addition, the playing surface will be constructed with spacing that will allow for expansion and contraction in differing atmospheric conditions.

For several years, according to Dana, the Athletics Department has been “quietly” putting aside money from various fund-raising efforts – including the annual golf tournament – to pay for the gym renovation.

Dana says, “The University and the state have been very generous over the years in upgrading our facilities and we knew we were going to have to do this on our own. So a lot of folks have come together and worked hard at it.”

In addition to the golf tournament, the fund-raising efforts included an online auction and the sale of memorial bricks. There are two phases to the refurbishing project. The first is the gymnasium itself and the second is the renovation of the lobby.

“Our vision for the lobby,” says Dana, “is that it become an Alumni Championship Hall. We want it to honor our national championship teams and to display our Hall of Fame and Major Award Winners board. The intent is to create a new atmosphere from the moment you walk in the front door.”

The whole effort falls under the campaign called Home-court Advantage. The objective of this initiative is to upgrade all athletic venues up to championship caliber.

“Although the University has terrific facilities, some can’t host championship events for different reasons. The soccer field, for example, needs to be enclosed, it needs a press area and it needs additional seating. We also have some work to do on the softball field,” says Dana.

In addition to providing a better place in which to play basketball and volleyball, the Costello renovation also is a good tool for recruiting student athletes in all sports.

“Recruiting has become much more competitive, and all aspects of the University are important – the athletic facilities, the residences, the dining halls and so on.”

When Dana talks about the renovation, he recalls a lot of exciting events and fascinating personalities that the facility has seen in its four decades of existence. One that stands out above many others is the 1988 men’s basketball team that went on to win the national NCAA championship after not being favored to win its own league crown. No one expected much of anything from that team.

“It was like the movie ‘Hoosiers,’” he says.

Then there was the night that the gym was sold out to see the 7-foot-6 Manute Bol playing for the University of Bridgeport. And the night the gym hosted a concert by Bob Dylan.

And the years that the Lowell coach was Stan van Gundy, who went on to coach at the University of Miami and, even later, Shaquille O’Neal in the NBA.

“The facility hasn’t kept up to the level of some of the great performers of the past,” he says.

“It’s earned a makeover. We’re trying to keep the energy alive.”

And, best of all, he’ll never have to see that water-stained wall again.

“The facility hasn’t kept up to the level of some of the great performers of the past. It’s earned a makeover. We’re trying to keep the energy alive.” — Dana Skinner
Tsongas Center, 15 Years Later, Looks to a Future As Vibrant As Its Past

by Geoffrey Douglas

In the late early 1980s, when Paul Tsongas was working, among other things, to breathe new life into the Lowell city school system—as a means of revitalizing the city itself—one of the first things he did was to bring in a young consultant named Don Pierson, a Harvard grad who’d been working in the Waltham and Brookline Public Schools. Pierson’s original mission, as he recalls it today, was to “study the school system—as a means of revitalizing the city itself—one mission, as he remembers, was to “study the school system, deteriorating for years, was—in Paul Tsongas’s view—a vital part of this task.

There were huge hurdles. The city was old, poor, economically depressed and ethnically divided, still in the throes of a 50-year depression brought on by the exodus of the textile industry that had ushered in its glory years a century before. But already by this time, under Tsongas’s leadership, Lowell had begun its renaissance, attracting both national publicity and major federal funding as the country’s first urban national park. The task now was to bring its elements together, to find the cohesion to bridge educational and economic divides. And the city’s school system, deteriorating for years, was—in Paul Tsongas’s view—a vital part of this task.

“It was inspiring to be in the room with the man,” says Pierson today of Tsongas, who died of cancer seven years ago. “He was an incredible presence, an energy, just totally involved all the time. He loved the city, he was devoted to it. Sometimes when he was in Washington, he’d call from his office to get updates on what was going on. You don’t see that kind of involvement every day.”

In tandem with University of Lowell Chancellor William T. Hogan, who at the time was in the early stages of shepherding his institution’s merger with the UMass system, Tsongas created the Lowell Education Reform Commission to address the school-system crisis. Made up of the deans from three area universities—and headed by Don Pierson—the Commission recommended, among other things, that ULowell (soon to be UMass Lowell) join in partnership with the Lowell Public Schools and local organizations to reuse the city’s decaying industrial infrastructure as a kind of urban “history classroom.”

It was an innovative idea—and very much in keeping with the thinking going on, at roughly the same time, at the newly-created Lowell National Historical Park. Park officers there had devised a management plan, built a visitors’ center and begun restoring its properties—the boardinghouse, the Boott Cotton Mills—as student and visitor destinations that would tell the story of Lowell. The city’s first park superintendent was offering local elementary school teachers seating priority on the park’s new “canal boats” to exchange for the schools’ commitment to build park programs into their curriculum. The school superintendent, Chrysandra Walter, just returned from a visit to Old Sturbridge Village, was more than willing to go along: “When I saw the size of the center at Sturbridge and how engaged those kids there were, I knew we had to enlarge our idea…”

And for Don Pierson, whose role as consultant by then had been expanded into a faculty post in the ULowell School of Education, the new partnership offered a unique opportunity for teachers to practice their craft: “They would benefit greatly by getting out of their school cultures and participating in an active learning experience in a community setting… [which] would suggest ways they could change practice in their schools.”

In 1984, Paul Tsongas was forced to relinquish his senate seat to fight the cancer that would ultimately take his life. His successor, John Kerry, proposed that the budget of the Lowell National Historic Park be increased to fund a center that would take the Tsongas name. The bill passed in both houses and was signed into law by Ronald Reagan. By early the following year—1987—the Paul E. Tsongas Industrial History Center, at least conceptually, was in place. And its funding had been granted: from the federal government to complete the Boott Mills exhibits and design the Center, and from the state to allow ULowell to hire the staff.

It was a unique concept. One of the University’s several new research centers—whose principal mission was community outreach—it was the only one not located on the campus, staffed entirely by faculty and built around the University’s culture and needs. Designed as a community-based learning laboratory for K-12 students and staffed largely by park rangers and other non-University personnel, it was a creative anomaly conceivably to meet a need.

Its pedagogical challenge was daunting. “Ask students what their 10 favorite subjects are, and history will be about twelfth,” the Center’s first director, Ed Penney, would comment later. “To kids, history is boring—stories about dead people. Industrial history is even worse…”

The Center opened October 15, 1991: 15,000 square feet in the Boott Mills, with an annual appropriation of $250,000, supplemented by grants from the National Science Foundation, the National Park Service and various banks and corporations—a budget of about $500,000, divided roughly equally among the University, the Parks Department and various grants and gifts. Its initial offering was modest: two industrial-history workshops—the Weave Room and an exhibit on water power—with three more to open within six months. A Center spokesman, talking to reporters on opening day, said that 5,000 students would be an acceptable first-year number. Don Pierson hoped privately, he remembers, for something close to twice that amount.

Those numbers were low from the start. Within five years, the Center was booking 40,000 visitors a year; by 2004, the figure was 64,000. The space has grown to 22,000 square feet; the number of workshops, depending on how you count them,
Peter O’Connell, 10 Years as Director, Leaves a Legacy of Progress, Innovation

Peter O’Connell, who will be departing his post as Tsongas Center director this coming fall after a decade in the job, is going to leave behind some very large shoes to fill.

O’Connell, who arrived as director in 1996 when the Center was only five years old and still feeling its way, has guided it through 10 years of almost-continuous growth. The year he arrived, roughly 40,000 visitors passed through its doors to take part in its exhibits and workshops; by 2004, the number was 64,000—a 60 percent rise—augmented still farther by the growth of on-line “virtual tours.”

“Peter has been a wonderfully solid, creative leader,” says Sheila Kirschbaum, the University liaison to the Tsongas Center, who has worked with him for all of his 10 years on the job. “What’s extraordinary about him is how he’s been able to manage in such a thoughtful, careful way, respecting and building on the Center’s past progress, yet at the same time still open to new ideas—both those of others and his own.”

O’Connell, who came to the position from the background as director of the Museum Education Department at Old Sturbridge Village, had also served as an adjunct professor in the Tufts University Museum Studies Program, as a high-school social-studies teacher and a VISTA volunteer.

“He brought us a really unusual combination of talents,” Kirschbaum says. “As someone who had worked in both the museum world and at both ends of the world of public schools”—as classroom teacher, then education director at Sturbridge Village—he was able to understand and anticipate the [curricula] trends, which gave us a big advantage in working with the schools.”

Another dimension of O’Connell’s contribution has been in the area of grant-writing. In addition to the most recent grant award, $224,000 this year from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Center has been the recipient of an average of $400,000 a year in grant monies—from the U.S. Department of Education, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Massachusetts Environmental Trust and other sources.

O’Connell, who announced his retirement intentions earlier this year, is expected to leave in September. An active search is currently underway for a replacement, who will hopefully be in place by the end of the year. But he’ll be missed, says Sheila Kirschbaum.

“It’s hard to imagine this place without him. I’m sure they’ll find a great new director, but it’ll never be quite the same.”

On a typical day, 300 students will come through the Center with their teachers—one,000 classes a year, from all over Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Vermont, as far away as New York’s Hudson Valley. In 90-minute viewings followed by 90-minute hands-on workshops, they will play the roles of farmers, factory workers and immigrants—complete with 19th-century costumes—design and patent their own inventions, weave cloth on hand looms, join textile assembly lines (which will then “speed up” to meet demand, causing their looms to spin out of control), take out their grievances in a union hall and feel the bite of child-labor laws. They will build their own water wheels, design their own canal systems, explore the origins of a typhoid epidemic, use groundwater tanks to assess the effects of pollution. By the time they leave (it is an all-afternoon visit), they will understand, as well as anyone could through simulation, what it was to be a farmer, a mill worker or an immigrant, and how the land, the water and the weather combine with the ways of man to shape lives.

“There is no other museum in the country with a hands-on program as lengthy or complete as ours,” says Peter O’Connell, the Center’s director since 1996, who will be leaving in the fall of this year. “With kids that age—fourth- and fifth-graders—if all you do is talk, they’re not going to take it in at all. It just goes right past them. But if you can manage to get into their sense”—with the hands-on workshops—“you can really engage them, you can make it memorable.”

It’s been 15 years since the Center’s opening. Every initial goal has been met and exceeded. The reach of the program, and of Paul Tsongas’s legacy, has been far beyond what even he could have foreseen. But with all these successes—and a budget now approaching $2 million—have come problems and challenges which, 15 years ago, were just as far from anyone’s mind.

“The Center is a model for experiential learning,” says Don Pierson today, 23 years since his initial hiring as a school-system consultant, now dean of the Graduate School of Education at UMass Lowell. “We’ve been very successful—we’ve saturated the region, we’ve got teachers signing up classes now a full year in advance. But the costs have risen with the numbers—and the University and Park Service can only carry so much of the load. It’s time now to broaden our goals…”

More and more as budget costs have risen, Pierson notes, grant-money has filled the gap—it’s proportion today of the total budget is greater than ever before. But grants, almost by definition, tend to be directed more at new projects or new initiatives, less at maintaining day-to-day operating costs. And the Center, as bold as it’s been and as successful as it is, is no longer a new initiative.

“So we have to repurpose ourselves,” Pierson says. “We have to widen our focus beyond industrial history, to encourage civic involvement, to extend our reach to embrace related themes—environmental issues perhaps, or something similar. And the University has got to be involved.”

A consultant has been hired, he says, for just this purpose: “to help with issues of vision, to get a perspective on accomplishments and identify future goals.” But things will move slowly initially, in deliberate phases, until a new director is found. At that point, says Pierson: “We will move toward a broader, more enduring Center, one more positioned for the future. A Center more reflective of Paul Tsongas’s legacy, and of the city’s and the University’s needs.”

“There is no other museum in the country with a hands-on program as lengthy or complete as ours.” — Peter O’Connell

Peter O’Connell
In a Strange Way, Dick Kimball’s Career Paths Were Determined by His Father

When Dick Kimball ’86 was a young man living at home in Salem, N.H., his father fell ill with cancer.

“At one point, we had to call an ambulance to transport him to the hospital,” Kimball says. “I admired the way the EMTs, who were also firefighters, made us feel at ease while they took care of my dad. It seemed to me that these guys were really doing something good, helping people in time of need.”

So it was that Harry Kimball, in an indirect way, had an effect on the career path of his son, who would later become a firefighter.

Years earlier, the elder Kimball — a railroad worker with little education — had done something curious that also foreshadowed a decision his son would make later in life.

“That history began in 1974 with Kimball, then 21, being a Salem, N.H., firefighter before graduating from UMass Lowell and entering Harvard Law School.

“Now what?” I said. “I had no idea what I’d do if I were accepted. I hemmed and hawed, and then on the very last day that you could apply, he says,” Kimball discovered that “the Harvard experience is as diverse as its student body. The beauty of it is that you’re surrounded by all these brilliant people but that you can often offer a different perspective that is respected.

“Everyone has their own way of making it through. For me, it was work, work, work and more work.”

Early in the second year of law school, Kimball discovered that “the Harvard experience is as diverse as its student body. The beauty of it is that you’re surrounded by all these brilliant people but that you can often offer a different perspective that is respected.”

“So it was that Harry Kimball, in an indirect way, had an effect on the career path of his son, who would later become a firefighter.

Years earlier, the elder Kimball — a railroad worker with little education — had done something curious that also foreshadowed a decision his son would make later in life.

“Through the Boston firm participation last year in UML’s Invention to Venture efforts in helping promising start-ups. As a matter of fact, the firm participated last year in UML’s Invention to Venture workshop, which addressed innovation and entrepreneurship.

While Kimball has not been involved officially with the University’s program, he says, “I have provided counsel to some students from the University who started their own company. I also was involved with a committee that considered starting a venture fund for technologies developed at the University.”

“Now the young man who earned a degree at UMass while raising a family and fighting fires, and who applied to Harvard Law School almost as a lark, is 51 and a senior partner in a prestigious Boston firm.

The children are grown — Neal, living in New Hampshire, is a consultant; Adam is a sales manager in San Diego; and Amanda is in the Nutter offices near the World Trade Center.

But what of that briefcase that Harry Kimball gave to his young son all those many years ago?

“It actually made it to Harvard,” Kimball says. “I brought the envelope from Harvard.” It took him a while to find the acceptance letter, tucked inside all the information about housing and Cambridge and the law school.

“Now what?” I said. “I was supporting a family, and Harvard had no night program. I told Virginia that maybe I’d just frame the acceptance letter.”

But she urged him to grab that brass ring and — by juggling vacation time and working extra shifts for other firefighters who would repay him when he started school — Kimball enrolled at Harvard.

“I remember on my first day at orientation at Sanders Hall thinking they must have made a mistake. Then the dean of the law school stood in front of the new students and said, ‘I know most of you are thinking you don’t belong here, that we must have made a mistake. Well, this is Harvard and we don’t make mistakes. You belong here.’”

Kimball discovered that “the Harvard experience is as diverse as its student body. The beauty of it is that you’re surrounded by all these brilliant people but that you can often offer a different perspective that is respected.”

“Everyone has their own way of making it through. For me, it was work, work, work and more work.”

Early in the second year of law school, the bigger law firms visit campus to recruit “summer associates” to work during the summer between their second and third years. Then, if they like you, they make you an offer to work there after graduation.

“I had over 30 interviews scheduled, which is a typical number, but after just a few I thought seriously about quitting before the debt burden got too high. For two weeks I anguish over what to do. I loved being a firefighter. It was part of my identity. But I also loved the intellectual challenge of law school.”

After a “cathartic” two-week struggle, Kimball made his decision to pursue law, and, he says, “I would never look back.”

In 1991, Kimball joined the Boston firm of Hale & Dorr where, for the first eight or 10 years, he did a lot of securities work — IPOs, mergers and acquisitions, and venture capital transactions.

Eventually, however, the firm began moving toward a narrower practice and he was asked to concentrate of venture capital transactions.

“I found it too narrow to my liking and I missed counseling companies.”

Deciding that he wanted to be in a position to “make a difference,” he joined the firm of Nutter McClennen and Fish where, in 2004, he launched TechOvations, a program in which the firm awards qualified start-up companies grants of legal services. After a rigorous vetting process, the companies become full-fledged clients, assisted by senior partners and a strategic legal team.

“When we were considering new strategies for development, we found that one of the major hurdles that start-ups face is a lack of funds for legal services,” he says. “Early counsel can ensure later success, and we realized that by granting our services to these outstanding companies, we could help New England maintain its standing ahead of the innovation curve.”

“The firm’s goal is to pick the right companies, foster long-term relationships, and be viewed as a trusted confidant as the companies grow into successful enterprises.

Nutter’s work in this project is not unlike the University’s efforts in helping promising start-ups. As a matter of fact, the firm participated last year in UML’s Invention to Venture workshop, which addressed innovation and entrepreneurship.

While Kimball has not been involved officially with the University’s program, he says, “I have provided counsel to some students from the University who started their own company. I also was involved with a committee that considered starting a venture fund for technologies developed at the University.”

Now the young man who earned a degree at UMass while raising a family and fighting fires, and who applied to Harvard Law School almost as a lark, is 51 and a senior partner in a prestigious Boston firm.

The children are grown — Neal, living in New Hampshire, is a consultant; Adam is a sales manager in San Diego; and Amanda is in the Nutter offices near the World Trade Center.

But what of that briefcase that Harry Kimball gave to his young son all those many years ago?

“It actually made it to Harvard,” Kimball says. “I brought it with me every day of my last week there.”
Many local alumni and friends enjoyed the fifth annual wine and dine epicurean extravaganza hosted by the Alumni Relations Council in February. From left are Karla MacKenzie, Christopher MacKenzie '84, Kimberly Jaworski, Peter Jaworski, John Geraci '97 and Wendy Geraci.

Alumni Leadership Day 2006 provided an opportunity for local alumni to learn more about and become involved in volunteer efforts such as alumni admissions, corporate partnerships, regional chapters and young alumni programs. From left are Jennifer Wetmore '96, Monica Swaida '97, Joe Solomon '83, Don Adams '82 and Paul Bertrand '85.

Enjoying the March '06 reception at the Mar-a-Lago Club in Palm Beach are Mary Jo Leahey ’37, seated, and, standing, from left Joyce Sullivan, Robert Tamarin, dean of Sciences; Jacqueline Moloney ’75, dean of Continuing Studies and Corporate Education; and Harriet Keville Pugh ’60.

Two generations enjoying the Mar-a-Lago reception are, from left, Kevin Ryan, Erin (McGuirk) Ryan ’98, Christina (Belurus) McGuirk ’67 and Thomas McGuirk.

A Red Sox spring training alumni event was the setting for a reunion of 1966 classmates, Charlie Hoff, left, and Richard Hovaska.

Grads of LTI from the ’60s enjoyed getting together at the Red Sox spring training alumni event. From left, are, Richard Hovaska ’68, Richard Daikays ’63, Stuart Pearce ’64, Jerry Lydon ’66 and Bob Stanton ’67.

Florida West Coast alumni enjoyed a barbeque and Red Sox game in Fort Myers during Spring Training. They were joined by UMass Vice President for Business and Public Affairs, back row, center, Dr. Keith Motley.

Chairperson Kay Doyle and members of the Department of the Clinical Lab and Nutritional Sciences hosted their first reunion dinner for alumni. Pictured are members of the class of 1981.

Clinical Lab and Nutritional Sciences alumni enjoyed a wonderful evening of reminiscing with one another and department faculty and staff. They included, front row, from left, Dave Garby ’05, Cheryl Callahan ’82 and Jill McArdle ’86 and, back row, from left, William Pana ’05, Joe Bertolini ’05 and Linda Kilbride ’79.

The Department of Biological Sciences awarded this year’s distinguished alumnus citation to Dr. Kenneth Sigvardson ’77. From left are Dean of Sciences Robert Tamarin, Sigvardson, Prof. Zake Rivers and Department Chair Mark Hines.

Biology alumni gathered for a reception following the annual department awards program on campus. They are, from left, Dennis Hunt ’66, Professor Emeritus John Lyon, Professor Emerita Ethel Kamin and Laurie Seaund ’78.
HOWELL INVITES YOU TO TRAVEL WITH...

Students of the department, along with Professor Emeritus Ray Hardy and Prof. Steve Pennell, joined by current Physics alumni, faculty, staff and students gathered in alumni hall for the annual department banquet and awards ceremony. Seated in the back row, from left, are Jonathan August ’88, Renee Fishman, Harvey Fishman ’53, Ed Adler ’53, Arlene Berger and Stan Berger ’53.

After lunch and a talk by artist and NYU Prof. Ed Adler, LTI ’53, New York area alumni visited several galleries during an Art in the Afternoon alumni event. Pictured, front row from left, are Rosemary Bliss, Phyllis Adler, Roseanne Foley ’90, Diane Earl of University Advancement, Ilse Moss and Warren Moss ’45. In the back row, from left, are Jonathan August ’88, Renee Fishman, Harvey Fishman ’53, Ed Adler ’53, Arlene Berger and Stan Berger ’53.

Washington, D.C., area alumni gathered on Capitol Hill for a reception hosted by Congressman Marty Meehan ’78. Keynote speaker for the evening was Roger Cressey ’87, NBC News terrorism analyst, president of Good Harbor Consulting LLC and former White House counter-terrorism director. Pictured, from left, are Cressey, Brian Andrits ’95 ’97 of University Advancement, Karen Laveno ’93, Christopher Rocchiette ’96, Professor Emeritus Dean Bergeron and Michael Lavallee ’88.

In the back row, from left, are Jonathan August ’88, Renee Fishman, Harvey Fishman ’53, Ed Adler ’53, Arlene Berger and Stan Berger ’53.

Peter the Great

Rendezvous in Russia! Trace the steps of Peter the Great as you explore St. Petersburg, encountering his famed replica—the Boron Home; You’ll be amazed by this opulent city, filled to the brim with Russian art and culture.

Board the luxurious Mondello Palace Hotel, explore the cultural treasures of St. Petersburg, including the stunning Hermitage Museum, St. Isaac’s Cathedral, the Winter Palace, and then sail the placid waters of the Gulf of Finland toinja.

Art gallery tour, visit the pottery of Kizhi Island, and enjoy the folk music of the elite Beverly Hills Hotel.

Revel in the resplendence of the Italian Riviera. Lose yourself in the stunning coastal scenery leading to Santa Margherita. Cruise the placid waters to the enchanting harbor of Portofino and its sensational Duomo, the cosmopolitan Portofino and its legendary Duomo, the picturesque fishing village of Cefalù; and Corleone.

Extraordinary cultural crossroads. See the picturesque fishing village of Catania; and Corleone. Marvel at this city’s awe-inspiring Punta del Capo and sail the Gulf of Naples.

Enjoy tuscany with its sensational Duomo, St. Isaac’s Cathedral, and the splendid Mondello Palace Hotel.

Enjoy the picturesque fishing village of Cefalù; and Corleone. Marvel at this city’s awe-inspiring Punta del Capo and sail the Gulf of Naples.

Sports Illustrated Pays Homage to UML’s Joanna DaLuze

Joanna DaLuze, the senior from Harwich who scored UML’s game-winning goal in the national NCAA Division II field hockey championship game, was featured in the Faces in the Crowd section of the Dec. 2 issue of Sports Illustrated.

The goal by DaLuze, a three-year starting midfielder, came in double overtime and gave the River Hawks a 2-1 victory over Bloomsburg in the Nov. 13 title game played at Shipensburg, Penn.

In addition to the Sports Illustrated feature, she earlier was named the Northeast-10 Conference Co-Player of the Year, first team All America by the National Field Hockey Coaches Association and Eastern College Athletic Conference Division II Player of the Year.

Other UMass Lowell athletes who have appeared in the Faces in the Crowd section include basketball star Elad Inbar in 2004 and women’s soccer standout Jackie MacLean in 1997.

Extreme Makeover Helps Rowdy Reach Out to Fans

His face was showing his age. His attitude was not sitting well with fans. And worst of all, he was scary little kids. An intervention was in order.

So Rowdy the River Hawk, the 11-year-old mascot for the UML athletic teams, received an extreme makeover, with experts helping him polish his appearance, improve his attitude, and create a whole new bird—one that could rally River Hawk fans without striking fear into the hearts of children.

This remarkable transformation was filmed by CNN, the Comcast Network, and aired in December on the show “Sports Pulse.”

Peter Casey, associate athletic director, said Rowdy’s problems became apparent soon after his creation in 1994, when the UML sports nickname changed from the Chieftans to the River Hawks.

“When he was first created, he was envisioned as a superhero-esque type mascot, with the bulked-up physique and ferocious glare. What we found was that a lot of our youngest fans were frightened by Rowdy, so we wanted to make him more kid friendly.”

They tapped local experts, such as those of Rowdy the River Hawk’s hair stylist, and then in April when he finally went hitless in a game.

The 30-game streak by Wilson, the River Hawks’ first baseman, broke a UMass Lowell record, and was also the longest active streak this season in baseball’s Division II. Wilson, a 200-pound, 6-foot-1 junior, hit safely in all but one of his first 37 games of the year.

The River Hawks finished the regular season with a record of 33-12-20 in the NE-10 Division—placing them in a tie for third in the division.

They opened post-season play May 10, as tournament host, against Bryant University.

They boast a 16-3 record in five years of NE-10 tournament play.

Hitting Streak by River Hawks’ First Baseman Sets New University Record

Hitting Streak by River Hawks’ First Baseman Sets New University Record

For further information please contact University of Massachusetts-Lowell Office of University Relations 801 South Street, Lowell, MA 01854 978-938-5910
Margaret (Athridge) Allen, a retired teacher from the Wakefield School Department, writes that she has “given up caring for a house and garden and moved to a condominium where someone else can do the work!”

Norman Gale is semi-retired after spending his entire career in the government industry. He married Peggy while attending LT1 and they have three children and three grandchildren. After graduation, Norman returned to the Army and served in the 3rd Division in Korea where he earned the Bronze Star and C.I.R.

Walter Dawson is a patent attorney at Phoenix and Pearson in Lowell where he practices intellectual property and real estate law in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Walter serves on the University’s Electrical and Computer Engineering Department Industry Advisory Board.

Ronald L. Brough retired in 2001 after teaching music for 36 years in the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District. He is currently teaching wind instruments and directing the Wachusett Winds Select Ensemble of the Overlook Middle School and Oakmont Regional High School. He is also involved in animal welfare groups and Siamese Rescue. He spends as much time as possible in Maine, kayaking, fishing and just being near the sea. He still plays his major instruments, trombone and baritone horn, in his church and local bands.

Donna-Lane Nelson, who lives in Switzerland and the south of France, has published her second novel, “The Card,” which Booklist has described as “witty, poignant.” Her first book, “ Chuckles Over Not A Cookbook,” has been published in Russian and German in addition to the English edition. “The Card,” first published in English in 2005, will be published in German next year. “The Card” follows the lives of two women who were roommates at Boston University. Every year, one sends the same Christmas card with a new note to the other. This correspondence helps them cope with distance, a cheating husband, a dying spouse, motherhood and other life experiences. An Amazon.com reviewer called it “an intriguing relationship drama.” Nelson is now working on a book called “Triple Deckers,” about an Irish family that loses a son in Iraq. “It is being written almost as things happen,” she says. In addition to her writing, she also writes a regular column on writing for Writers Forum, an English magazine, and describes her experiences on a website, http://sheepatheruns.blogspot.com.

Continuing Studies and Corporate Education presented the annual Haskell Memorial Award for Distinguished Teaching to John D. Colluccini, an adjunct faculty member of mechanical engineering technology. “Professor Colluccini captures the essence of a great teacher, which is what the Haskell Award was built upon,” said Pauline Carroll, CSCE director of enrollment management and administration. “We’re proud to honor him with this esteemed award.” Before becoming an adjunct faculty member, Colluccini was a full-time assistant professor for the College of Engineering for nearly 40 years. He holds three engineering degrees from UMass Lowell, including a master’s in mechanical engineering. His articles have appeared in “Mechanical Engineering”, “Materials Handling,” among others. He is a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and is former vice-chairman of the ASME Boston Chapter. He continues to travel extensively on behalf of the University to provide on-site corporate training.

James Wolfgang is director of human resources for First Student, Inc. First Student operates all student transportation for the Boston public schools and has 1,200 employees, ranging from bus drivers to maintenance workers to management and administrative staff.

Arthur Hoyle (B.M. in Piano Performance) was appointed associate professor of Music and Director of Keyboard Studies at Mesa State College in Grand Junction, Colo. He is founder and director of the Festival for Creative Pianists (www.pianofestival.org) and is active as a piano teacher, performer, clinician, composer, adjudicator, and columnist for “American Music Teacher” (the official journal of the Music Teachers National Association). He recently gave presentations for national conferences of the College Music Society and Music Teachers National Association.

Sheila Riley-Callahan, executive director of Academic Services, recently made a presentation at Alliance ’06 an annual conference for PeopleSoft/Oracle clients, where she discussed the University’s first automated Academic Degree Audit. Her presentation, titled “3 Schools – 3 Implementations,” focused on the Boston-Dartmouth-Lowell implementation of academic advisement. The conference, held in New Orleans, La., in March, drew some 3,500 members of higher education institutions and federal, state and local governmental agencies.

Stephen Wade is a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Band and performed recently with the Coast Guard Woodwind Quintet in Western, R.I. Wade, a Chief Musician, joined the Band in 1982. He has performed with the Goldovsky Opera Orchestra, the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, the Nashua Symphony Orchestra, Boston Virtuosi, Symphony Pro Musica, Orchestra New England and the Monadnock Festival Orchestra. He is currently assistant principal oboe of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra and the Connecticut Opera Orchestra and principal oboe of the Coast Guard Band.

Scott Ringser, whose success as an Elvis Presley impersonator was the subject of a feature story in the Fall 2005 issue of the UMass Lowell Magazine, will be embarking on his third Royal Caribbean cruise in August – this time to Alaska. Ringersen, who also is a police officer in Delray Beach, Fla., entertains cruise passengers with his Elvis vocals. In addition to the August cruise, he says he has also signed contracts for others in September, October and January. For more information, check the website www.cruiseconnection.org.

Greg Garoffolo has designed a device for unloading bicycles, skis and other objects weighing up to 100 pounds from the roof of high-profile motor vehicles, such as SUVs. A patent for his invention, filed last September, is pending. Garoffolo, who majored in industrial management, lives in Westport, Conn. He can be reached at greggaroffolo@optonline.net.

John Hovan has been promoted to senior vice president, chief software architect and chief technology officer of LODESTAR Corporation, a leading provider of energy software solutions. He has been with the company for 12 years and during that time has led the evolution of LODESTAR’S software from both a business and technology perspective. He has directed the research and development team to implement meta-data-driven rules and software frameworks, web-browser based interfaces, application-level security, an integrated reporting framework and internationalized software for all new products. As chief technology officer, he will continue to lead the R&D team while providing product technical direction and the current and future technology vision to existing and new clients.

Brian Snell established his own law office in January in North Reading. It is a general practice
Ebenzer Asamblues de Dios, and contributions from local businesses and patries from Charlie’s Bakery—and a Lowell city councilman, high-school teacher and businessman as guest speakers—she put on a benefit at the Polish American Veterans Club that raised more than $3,300.

All this she managed while carrying a load of UMass Lowell business courses and working 50 hours a week at a local real estate firm—from which she donates $50 weekly, deducted from her paycheck, to augment the scholarship fund.

So far, she says, there is a little more than $6,000 in the fund. Still not enough, in her view, to deplete for scholarship grants. So, at the second-annual awarding of scholarships this year—again, $250 each to two high-school graduates, to be conferred at the Lowell High School awards ceremony in May—the money, as it did last year, will come from Amsi’s own funds.

“My goal is to grow that money,” she says, “to put more kids up on that stage. In future years, I’m hoping there’ll be more than two scholarships, and maybe more money for each one, and I’m doing everything I can to make that happen. But for now, this is what we can afford.”

She has won converts along the way. It’s hard to imagine there won’t be many more.

“I’m so, so proud of this young woman,” says Elkin Montoya, an employee of the Jeanne D’Arc Credit Union and himself a UMass Lowell graduate (’83), who, at the March 23 fund-raiser, issued a personal challenge to everyone in attendance to make a $10 gift. “She is a remarkable person. I’m proud to have anything to do with her.”

“This is a woman who will make a difference in the city of Lowell. That much I’m sure of,” says Linda Kowa, who tended bar that night at the Polish American Club and witnessed what went on. “She’s an inspiration. To see a woman that young, the daughter of immigrants, an immigrant herself, so determined to give back to the city—her family should be proud.”

They are proud, says Amsi. And it all began with college. “My mother, she is just so emotional about my graduation—I’m the first ever in the family. It means so much to her…

“I want to do that for others—other kids, other mothers, other families. I want to put more kids up on that stage.”

A UMass Lowell Senior: Carving a Path for Others, Building a Bridge to the Future

“Anyone can go to college. It doesn’t matter if you work two jobs, or no one in your family has ever gone before or you don’t have the money for tuition. If you want a college education, there is always, always a way.”

It’s a sentiment we’ve all heard before, a sentiment motivational speeches are built on. But there is a young woman from Lowell, a UMass Lowell business major, the child of Puerto Rican immigrants, who is building a life around these words.

Amsi Morales is 25 years old. She came to America from Puerto Rico when she was five. For her birthday last year, as 25 year-olds are wont to do, she asked for money in lieu of gifts. But this was a little different. With the money, she started a college scholarship fund—for Hispanic high school students. And in the meantime, she gave two $250 scholarships, again from her own funds, to graduating Hispanic seniors at Lowell High.

“It’s just something I’ve always wanted to do,” she told a reporter earlier this year. “In such a large school as Lowell High, it’s hard for guidance counselors to speak with every kid about college opportunities. And education just means so much to me.”

Since then, she has taken it to the next level. On March 23, with the help of her local church, Iglesia Cristiano
UMass Lowell Nursing Grad, an ICU Nurse, Is the Subject of a Globe Special Report

Julia Zelixon, who earned her RN at UMass Lowell in June of 2004, arrived at Boston’s Mass. General Hospital only two months later for training. And within only eight months of that day—as a result of an easing of residency requirements brought on by the national shortage of nurses—she reported for her first day of duty at the Mass. General ICU.

It was a grueling, nearly endless, infinitely challenging day, the subject of a special report (“Critical Care: The making of an ICU Nurse”) in The Boston Globe last winter, that began with a 55-year-old woman named Helen with ovarian cancer and a very presence in an ICU at New England’s largest hospital is a measure of the upheaval in nursing, one of the most demanding but least glamorous professions in medicine...

The Globe piece, one of a four-part series, went on to describe Julia’s odyssey: from Siberia to Israel, where she had learned a new language, tried and failed to gain admission to Israeli medical schools, and then head to the countryside where we’ll visit fishing villages, farms and other rural areas.”

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Julia, who had grown up in a small city in western Siberia, had lived in three countries and was a mother to two children, the ICU posts was the fulfillment of a dream. It was also, The Globe reported, an anomaly of our times: “[Her] very presence in an ICU at New England’s largest hospital is a measure of the upheaval in nursing, one of the most demanding but least glamorous professions in medicine...

In 1924, Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin died, New York’s Computer Tabulating Recording Co. became IBM and the Washington Senators won the World Series. Lenin died, New York’s Computer Tabulating Recording Co. became IBM and the Washington Senators won the World Series.

The editors of the Knoll, the state Teachers College yearbook, have been a popular and active member of our class. We’re sure she lived up to that prediction, as her training supervisor finally put it to her: “we think it’s time for you to basically sink or swim.”

The teachers, he explains, will also sit in on rural elementary, high school and college classes, and speak with teachers at each level regarding Japanese educational policy. “The highlight of the trip will be a two-night stay with a Japanese family,” he adds.

McLaughlin says he applied for the scholarship after seeing a website about it as well as a flyer at school.

“I spent a month in Korea when I was in the Army and was in love with Korean culture, so this is another trip to East Asia for me,” he says.

McLaughlin, who majored in history at UML, is in his second year of teaching. He spent six years in the Army, with more than a year of that in Afghanistan with a Civil Affairs company.

“[Her] very presence in an ICU at New England’s largest hospital is a measure of the upheaval in nursing, one of the most demanding but least glamorous professions in medicine...”

Kay Mc Ardle Lives Up to Yearbook’s Prediction

Agnes Meehan juggled work and family duties to earn her degree.

In 1924, Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin died, New York’s Computer Tabulating Recording Co. became IBM and the Washington Senators won the World Series.

It was also the year that Agnes Burns Meehan graduated from Lowell Normal School and began a distinguished teaching career that saw her become one of Lowell’s most devoted and influential educators.

“My goals as a teacher,” she said when she celebrated her 100th birthday last year, “were to motivate students to work to the best of their ability and to instill a desire and joy for learning. Teaching is a very satisfactory profession if you love children and have an interest in their future.”

It is safe to say she achieved her goals as she saw former students go on to become doctors, lawyers, priests, nurses, teachers, business people and parents.

The daughter of James and Agnes Burns began her teaching career by substituting at various schools in Lowell. In 1928, she was assigned to the Riverside School as a seventh-grade teacher where she remained until her marriage eight years later. At that point, she was forced to resign because the law prohibited married women from teaching.

As her family grew, Agnes accepted a seventh-grade teaching position at the Immaculate Conception School under the auspices of the Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart. In 1954, in the midst of her 10-year career at the Immaculate, she decided to pursue a college degree. So, she enrolled at the State Teachers College at Lowell and earned a bachelor’s in education juggling night and summer school, raising a family and teaching school.

In the late 1950s, the Lowell School Committee abolished the law barring married women from teaching and, in 1960, at age 55, Agnes passed a teacher qualification test and returned to the college system. She was assigned to the Moody Junior High School where she taught English to ninth graders for 15 years. She finally retired in 1975 when she reached the mandatory retirement age of 70.

In addition to her teaching duties, Agnes also served as a member of a number of church and professional organizations, including the UMass Lowell Alumni association.

The editors of the Knoll, the State Teachers College yearbook, must have been prescient about Catherine “Kay” Healy McArdle ’35. Her entry read, “dignified, gracious, neat and charming, Kay has been a popular and active member of our class. We’re sure that Kay’s disposition will bring her much success in the future.”

Kay lived up to that prediction, achieving success in the classroom and as a principal in the Lowell school system. She died in 2004, but left $80,000 through her estate to establish the Catherine J. McArdle ‘35 Endowed Scholarship Fund to aid students in the UML Graduate School of Education.

The scholarship will continue her life-long quest to help students. The annual award will be given to UML students studying a master’s degree in education administration with licensure as a school principal. This is the largest scholarship fund benefiting students studying at the Graduate School of Education.

McArdle, a resident of Lowell, graduated from State Teachers College with a bachelor’s in education. She earned a master’s in education from Farming State College and taught at Burlington High School. She served as the teaching principal at the former Rogerson School.

She was married to the late Bernard McArdle and is survived by a stepson, Edward F. McArdle of Lowell, as well as nieces and nephews.
EE Majors Find Aiding the Disabled a Satisfying Capstone

Dressed in a smart business suit as he flipped smoothly through a PowerPoint presentation, electrical engineering student Michael Darish told his classmates about a little girl in Italy who is paralyzed from the neck down and would like a voice-activated mouse for her computer. Manuel Madira talked about a teacher at Lawrence High School who requires a machine to teach autistic children how to count. And Billy Driscoll showed how his project will allow a man with cerebral palsy to operate a TV and turn the lights in his room on and off without help from others.

Over the course of the next four Thursdays, 38 electrical engineering students in this pre-capstone course explained how they will spend their fall semesters—some budgeting up to 500 hours per project—to create devices to help improve the lives of disabled people. Another 70 seniors will do the same next semester.

For the past 15 years, Donn Clark and Alan Rux of the Assistive Technology Program have helped improve the lives of the disabled. Clark showed how his project finally drove him to recognize his real strengths. "The outcome of the projects is the icing on the cake," says Rux.

"The program has had many success stories in 15 years. There was the blind and physically handicapped Perkins School for the Blind student who was able to operate the school's switchboard using Morse Code thanks to a student project. Or the man who was paralyzed from a car accident who now lives in a "voice-activated" apartment, controlling all the electronics with his voice. Another young man walks better because a student project sends him a signal when his gait is faulty. And just last semester, a student created a pitching machine for a wheel-chair bound, limited-mobility teenager who wanted to play baseball like his peers."

Dorn Clark, Sanait Hallaselessie (first and second from left) and Alan Rux (third from right) join their students in presenting senior capstone projects to clients at the Nashua Center for the Multiply Handicapped in Nashua, N.H. For the past 15 years, thanks to an initial gift from alumnus Roy Zuckerberg, students in the Assistive Technology Program have helped improve the lives of the disabled.

Students can be steered toward a project that meets their skill level—or an outstanding student may be encouraged to go beyond the requirements, says Rux. Some projects take existing technology and modify it, while other projects require assessment over several semesters to get it perfect. All students must be realistic in judging what they can accomplish over three months.

The program is paid with many success stories in 15 years. There was the blind and physically handicapped Perkins School for the Blind student who was able to operate the school's switchboard using Morse Code thanks to a student project. Or the man who was paralyzed from a car accident who now lives in a "voice-activated" apartment, controlling all the electronics with his voice. Another young man walks better because a student project sends him a signal when his gait is faulty. And just last semester, a student created a pitching machine for a wheel-chair bound, limited-mobility teenager who wanted to play baseball like his peers.

"The outcome of the projects is the icing on the cake," says Rux.

The students must call upon varied skills: people skills to meet with disabled clients and their caretakers to analyze their needs; presentation skills to receive approval from their advisors; business skills to estimate the true cost of the project; and technical skills to complete the project.

The students choose their project from a list compiled by Clark, Rux and colleague Senait Hallaselessie from inquiries received from care providers, local agencies, or individual e-mails or phone calls from people who have heard about the program. Clark received a call from the Italian girl's mother, for example, who had discovered UML by surfing the web looking for information.

"We essentially provide a custom engineering service. We have 100 young electrical engineering students who need to prove they are electrical engineers. They apply three and a half years of knowledge to this senior capstone project," says Rux.

Over the past 15 years, electronics have gotten smaller, cheaper and faster, according to Clark, opening up more project possibilities. On the not-too-distant horizon may be a "mind mouse" that moves a cursor based on a user's thoughts. All the project needs is a few bright students to attack it over a few semesters, he says.

Corporate sponsorship and an initial $250,000 donation by alumnus Roy J. Zuckerberg '58 and support from the National Science Foundation fund the materials needed for the capstone projects. Clark says more funding is needed to create a resource center that will improve communication between the program and the people who could benefit from the student projects.

"This is a great program that gives a level of hope to an individual that often changes a person's life," says Zuckerberg. "At the same time, it takes an engineering student from the classroom to the real world."
Gift-Card Business, Launched from UMass Lowell Incubator, Is a Two-Year-Old Success Story

From a family of 11 children, she conceived her project as a means of keeping up on gift-giving for her sisters, who are spread across the country. That was two years ago. Within six months, she was getting 11,000 hits a day on her new company's website; by the end of a year she was on the cover of a Boston beauty magazine; and in November of last year, only 12 months after her launch, she was presenting the company’s business plan before 350 would-be investors at Harvard Business School.

Her name is Joan Beeson Healy, and her company is giveBeauty, a Web-based business that contracts with beauty salons around the country to provide services to her customers, who purchase them online in the form of a giftBeauty gift card, for which they pay in advance.

Beeson Healy, with her enterprise only barely off the ground, has grown out of its partnership with the UMass Lowell Commercial Venture and Intellectual Property (CVIP) Center in Wannalancit, from where it was launched nearly two years ago as an incubator business, and where it remains today.

“It’s just a great space, a great place to be,” says Beeson Healy. “It’s almost like living at home when you’re young—there are all those things, like the rent and the heat and the phone, you just don’t have to think about. And Paul [Wormer, CVIP associate director of external funding] is always there to help—to lend an ear, make a phone call, help with a spreadsheet, whatever you might need. You just can’t put a value on that.”

Beeson Healy, with her enterprise only barely off the ground, met her first investors at a Lowell charity fashion show for which she was modeling clothes. More than $250,000 in initial investors got her past the start-up phase. “There are a lot of really great Lowell people who have put their faith in me,” she told reporters at the time.

Some of these have been local women with important Lowell-area business ties: Susan Anton Pasanen, from the family that owns Anton’s Cleaners; Linda Chemaly, co-owner with her husband of Trinity Ambulance; and Celeste Wertherall, formerly married to CMGI Chairman and CEO David Wertherall.

One of giveBeauty’s recent landmarks has been a link-up with the Aveda salon chain, with 2,500 stores nation-wide; several Aveda outlets, including one in Andover, are already accepting the giveBeauty card. Other local participants include Lowell’s Inizio Day Spa, Salon City and Body Therapies. The list is expected to grow. GiveBeauty realizes income through a fee on each gift-card purchase, as well as from payments made by the salons to be included in the network.

The next step for Beeson Healy, this time in tandem with her husband, may be a gift-card for male sports enthusiasts. The two are in preliminary talks about launching a card to be used at golf courses around the country.

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\textbf{‘89 Alumnus Will Be the Creative Source for New Hollywood Series}

Kurt Dumas, a 1989 University of Lowell graduate with his bachelor’s in art, has been using his skills in Hollywood for at least the last several years. Formerly an assistant director with Fox’s “Family Guy” and Nickelodeon’s “Hey, Arnold,” both animated cartoon comedies, his most recent project has been with BKN International as storyboard director for a new series, “Dork Hunters From Outer Space.”

“Dork Hunters” is being directed by Rob Hughes, who also was involved with “Hey, Arnold” and “Family Guy,” as well as the wildly popular “SpongeBob SquarePants.” It is expected to be available for delivery in the fall of this year.

“This property has the potential to be a global hit, and we are not sparing any funds or energy to achieve this goal,” says BKN Director of Production Jeff (“Swampy”) Marsh of “Dork Hunters.”

\textbf{Chancellor Hogan Retires After 25 Years at the Helm}

In his announcement to the faculty and staff, Chancellor Hogan said, “I love my job. I have been fortunate to work with an incredible group of people, from those responsible for keeping the buildings running to the deans and vice chancellors. But, after 25 years (as president and chancellor), it is time to retire.”

Citing a number of projects now underway – including the campus Transformation project and the $266 million campus renovation plan — the 73-year-old chancellor said it was “highly unlikely” that he would be able to remain on the job long enough to see them completed.

“I love my job. I have been fortunate to work with an incredible group of people, from those responsible for keeping the buildings running to the deans and vice chancellors.”

— William T. Hogan

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Mary Jo Leahey: The Music Is Her Legacy

When Mary Jo O’Donnell was a senior at Lowell Teachers College in 1937—
one of only seven students in the Music Department—she sang an aria from Verdi (possibly from La Forza del Destino) as part of her graduating requirement. Six months later, in her first job after college, as superintendent of music for the Island of Martha’s Vineyard, she wrote the score for a musical that was put on at the Edgar-town high school. “We had a full, formal orchestra,” she remembers. “It was very well received.”

But at almost the same time, around Christmas of that year, the man in her life proposed marriage. He was a doctor, Brendan Leahey, with a practice in Boston at Massachusetts Eye and Ear. She agreed to be married the following April—and Martha’s Vineyard, at least in those times, was too far from Boston to commute. So she gave up her job, and moved with her new husband back to Lowell, where she’d been born and raised, would give birth to six children and live the next 50 years. (Her grand-son today is the sixth generation to live in town; the O’Donnell Funeral Home, on Pawtucket Street, was founded by her grandfather in 1884.)

“But I missed the music,” she says today. “I missed it very badly. Growing up in Lowell, my mother and father both played the piano. There was lots of piano-playing, lots of singing, we were surrounded by music all the time…”

“As a child I wanted to go to music camp”—in Interlaken, Michigan—“but it was the middle of the Depression, and when my mother sent away for the catalogue and it came back and she saw what it cost, she said ‘I’m sorry dear, we can’t afford that. You’re going to have to find something else.’ ”

So she went to college instead, first for a year to Mount Saint Vincent’s in New York, then to Lowell Teachers’ College, which was only a year or two old at the time (it had been the Nor-mal School) and under the direction of Clarence M. Weed. “I was very happy there,” she remembers. “I was learning to be a vocalist, and I was learning how to teach, and both were important to me.”

Growing up in Lowell, my mother and father both played the piano. There was lots of piano-playing, lots of singing, we were surrounded by music all the time. — Mary Jo Leahey

But then, for the next several decades, as a doctor’s wife and mother to a houseful of children, there was little room in her life for teaching or for song. She and her husband remained in Lowell until 1989, when he retired and they moved to Florida. Three years later, in 1992, Brendan Leahey died.

Then one day, not long after, as Mary Jo recalls it: “I was contacted by the [advancement] office asking for a contribution. And I said no—I didn’t feel the Music Department was doing enough for young people. I thought they needed some sort of music camp in town. And I told them so.”

Not long after, she recalls: “They sent me a list of what the costs [of such a camp] would be. And I read it, and we talked about it, and we decided to go ahead. And ’97 was our inaugural year.”

Since that time, as a result of the $1 million endowment her gift has made possible, the UMass Lowell summer band camp program began 10 summers ago with 55 students—nearly all of them ninth-through-twelfth graders from Greater Lowell—has grown to twice that number.

“What Mary Jo Leahey has done for the University is impossible to measure,” says Advancement Director John Davis. “She has given a vibrancy to our music programs that is going to inspire many hundreds of students for many years to come.”

Mary Jo, who has a summer home in Rye Beach, N.H., still manages to put in occasional appearances at the band camp, though not as often as she once did: “I’m 90 years old, you know. I don’t get around quite as well anymore.” But her enthusiasm hasn’t ebbed:

“It’s just a wonderful experience for the kids. It teaches them teamwork, it builds a passion for music, it carries over to their schoolwork, into all sorts of areas of their lives. And they learn, by the time they’re finished, they have a gift that can have an influence on the world…”

“This is really its great value, I think. It’s what I most hope for—that they’ll learn that there are other things they can do with their music other than just the performing part. There is teaching, sound recording, the technical aspects, the value of music to family life. That’s the lesson I hope they all go away with—that whatever their particular gifts or talents, they have a gift to offer the world.”

“...and we’ve had kids from Texas, from South Carolina, even two from Israel,” Mary Jo says proudly in a call from Florida. “The experience has been wonderful for them. A few years ago, we had Rosiland Elias”—a mezzo sopra-no from the Metropolitan Opera in New York—“who comes from Lowell originally, as a guest singer for the kids. She was accompanied by a faculty member. It was extraordinary to hear.”

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