What’s Up With Enrollment? It’s Way Up!

Don LaTorre Asks: ‘How Much Is Enough?’

For Kay Roberts, Strings Are the Thing
A Message from the Chancellor

The past year has presented UMass Lowell with an abundance of both challenges and opportunities. And, because of the enormous commitment and enthusiasm of our students, alumni, faculty, staff and the community, the University is surmounting the challenges and building on the opportunities. I am continually amazed and grateful for the can-do attitude, generous financial support and engagement with the campus that you, our alumni and friends, provide. Thank you.

I am happy to report that, despite a difficult economy, UMass Lowell continues to grow in a variety of exciting ways. While some cuts were necessary this year, the student body is larger, more diverse and more engaged than ever. The turnout at River Hawk hockey games has broken attendance records this year and the percentage of students living on campus has grown.

What’s more, we are planning new academic and research facilities, including an Emerging Technologies and Innovation Center on North Campus and a new academic building on South Campus. We also are bringing more students, conferences, activities and partnerships to downtown Lowell, which will help grow the economy and vibrancy of the city.

UMass Lowell 2020, the strategic planning initiative to chart the course for the next decade, is well underway. Hundreds of faculty, staff and students have been meeting to identify strategic goals. An external advisory board, made up of alumni, is helping to monitor the process. Additionally, the facilities master plan committee has begun to review building, lab, residential and other space needs on campus and lay out a strategy for implementation.

All in all, it is a remarkable time for UMass Lowell. With your help and generous support, the campus is turning challenges into opportunities. As you read in these pages about the extraordinary accomplishments of students and faculty, the ground-breaking research and the dedicated community engagement, I hope you will agree that UMass Lowell is better than ever, with its eye on an even brighter future.

Marty Meehan

Chancellor
SPRING 2009  VOLUME 12  NUMBER 1

Campus News

Arts & Sciences ............................ 2
Education ................................. 4
Engineering ............................... 4
Health .................................... 7
Management .............................. 8
Outlook .................................... 8
Outreach ................................. 13
Research ................................. 14
Athletics ................................. 36
Alumni Events ............................ 39
Class Notes ............................. 42
Alumni News ............................ 46

Features

16 A Look Back at UMass Lowell’s IT Program
18 Eyes of the Storm
20 Shorr Views Fundraising As an Exciting Challenge in a Tough Economy
22 Cover Story
Bringing Music to the People:
Kay George Roberts, Ambassador with a Baton

Features

27 She’s Raising a Beautiful Puppy — But Not for Long
28 Nursing Students Complete Life-Changing Mission in Africa
30 Face of Philanthropy
Enrollment: The Numbers are Up, the Energy is Palpable – But the Challenges Just Keep Coming

34 Everything (Almost) But Golf: The Brim-full Life of Don LaTorre

Page 22
Page 28
Page 30
Page 36
Prof. Kumar Receives Solar Cell Patent

Prof. Jayant Kumar, director of the Center for Advanced Materials, was among a team of researchers whose invention of new solar-cell manufacturing technology recently received a patent from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

The invention features a method of fabricating sheets of dye-sensitized solar cells on a flexible metal or plastic substrate. Funding for the research was provided by the Army Natick Soldier Systems Center in Natick.

Kumar says the solar cells can be mass-produced at low cost as roll-up sheets that can be made into lightweight, flexible canopies for military, commercial, residential and agricultural applications.

In addition to Kumar, the team of inventors included Kethinni Chittibabu and Srinivasan Balasubramanian of Konarka Technologies in Lowell; Lynne Samuelson and Lian Li of the Army Natick Soldier Systems Center; Jin-An He, formerly of Konarka and now with Sun Chemical in Parsippany, N.J.; and the late Sukant Tripathy.

Study Links Heating of Indian Ocean to Drought in Africa

A new study conducted by a team of oceanographers, climatologists, and environmental and atmospheric scientists suggests that global warming is raising surface temperatures in the Indian Ocean, which in turn is causing a dramatic decrease in rainfall over eastern and southern Africa. Such drought conditions could have a serious impact on the security and stability of the region’s fragile food supply.

“If the trend toward less rain continues, the number of undernourished people in the already-stressed region could increase by 50 percent or more by 2030,” says Asst. Prof. Mathew Barlow of the Environmental, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Department, who was one of researchers involved in the study. Their findings were published in the August 12, 2008, issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

According to records from ground stations and satellites, since the 1980s rainfall in Ethiopia, Kenya, Burundi, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe has declined by as much as 15 percent per year. Statistical analyses indicate that, as the central Indian Ocean warms up, it creates anomalous atmospheric conditions that disrupt the onshore flow of moisture, reducing the amount of precipitation over the African continent.

Barlow and one of his graduate students, Andrew Hoell, who was also a co-author of the paper, used a global climate model from the National Center for Atmospheric Research to validate this hypothesis. Their studies strongly suggest that, as greenhouse gases and aerosols accumulate in the atmosphere, precipitation would likely continue to decrease well into the 21st century.

“Analysis of agricultural productivity, however, suggests that a modest amount of agricultural development could largely offset the effects of the rainfall decrease,” Barlow says.

Noble Laureate Craig Mello Delivers Annual Tripathy Lecture

Welcoming Nobel Laureate Craig Mello, second from left, as speaker for the 2008 Tripathy Endowed Memorial Lecture are, from left, Daniel Sandman, associate director of the Center for Advanced Materials, Chancellor Marty Meehan and Jayant Kumar, director of the Center for Advanced Materials. Mello, professor of molecular medicine at the UMass Medical School, summarized and updated the research for which he won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for 2006 with Prof. Andrew Fire of Stanford University Medical School. Using their work on RNA interference or gene silencing, researchers have been able to suppress each gene and identify its function, leading to new research models and new classes of drugs. The lecture, which honors the late Sukant Tripathy, was sponsored by Konarka Technologies.
Grad Student Nagarajan Wins Bausch & Lomb Award

Subhalakshmi (Subha) Nagarajan was one of twelve doctoral candidates chosen from across the country to receive Bausch & Lomb’s third annual Student Innovation Award for “outstanding innovative research accomplishments.”

Nagarajan, who earned her Ph.D. in chemistry in 2008, won the award for her work in finding less toxic, more eco-friendly routes to synthesizing materials.

The award consisted of $2,000 in cash and a certificate of recognition. Nagarajan and her thesis adviser, Prof. Jayant Kumar of the Center for Advanced Materials, were also given an all-expense paid trip to Rochester, N.Y., to present Nagarajan’s research, attend the awards ceremony and tour the Bausch & Lomb Optics Center.

In 2008 Nagarajan was selected as the Outstanding Graduate Student in Polymer Science. She was also part of the UMass Lowell team that won the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s P3 award in 2006 for its project on using green chemistry to derive promising anti-cancer compounds from a component of green tea.

She now works at the UMass Medical School in Worcester.”

Proposed UMass Lowell Research Facility Wins System Funding

A proposal to develop a new materials science research and user facility using the UMass Lowell Radiation Laboratory’s high-energy ion accelerator has been chosen by UMass President Jack Wilson for funding under the President’s Science and Technology Initiatives Fund for academic year 2008-09.

Proponents for this interdisciplinary effort include physics Profs. Partha Chowdhury, James Egan, Gunter Kegel and Jayant Kumar. Kumar is the principal investigator for the project.

The initiative fund provides seed money for faculty research projects in science and engineering that contribute to the growth of the Massachusetts economy, especially in technology- and innovation-driven industries.

The UMass Lowell project was one of eight selected this year from across all five UMass campuses, and will be conducted in collaboration with Prof. Paul Calvert, chair of the Materials Science Department at UMass Dartmouth. The total award amounts to $125,000 for two years.

“The funds will be used primarily to acquire equipment and create a facility that is unique in the region,” says Kumar, who is also director of UMass Lowell’s Center for Advanced Materials. “The facility will expand research programs in priority areas for the campus — nanomaterials, nanomanufacturing, optoelectronics and biomedical devices — and promote further collaborations with industry. It will also provide valuable materials processing and characterization services to companies and research centers in New England.”

Alzheimer’s Association Presents Grant Award to Prof. Tom Shea of Biological Sciences

James Wessler, left, president and CEO of the Massachusetts Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association, presents a check for nearly $240,000 to Biological Sciences Prof. Thomas Shea, center, at an event hosted by Chancellor Marty Meehan. The grant, awarded competitively at the national level, will support clinical trials of MemoryXL® to see if the onset of Alzheimer’s can be delayed. The vitamin-based formulation has already proved effective in improving memory and brain function of normal adults and Alzheimer’s patients, and is the first non-prescription, low-cost intervention available. Wessler said, “Prof. Shea’s work couldn’t be more important. If we can push back by five years the onset of Alzheimer’s, then 50 percent of today’s Americans — who would otherwise get the disease — will never experience Alzheimer’s.”
Sound Recording Conference Positions
University Internationally

Phil Ramone, left, internationally renowned for his sound production, talks with Sound Recording Prof. Will Moylan prior to the Art of Record Production Conference hosted by the University in the fall. The fourth annual meeting was the first held in North America and Moylan said it was “a privilege to have been given the opportunity to present ourselves on the international stage.” Ramone delivered the keynote address to some two hundred leading academic and industry professionals. The University’s Sound Recording Technology program also was featured in a cover story in the November issue of Mix magazine, the industry’s leading publication.

Grants for Teachers-to-be Offered in Exchange for Service in Low-income Schools

This year, for the first time, UMass Lowell is participating in a national program that rewards the teachers of tomorrow for their pledge of service today.

The Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) grant program, administered through the U.S. Department of Education, awards up to $4,000 per student per year in tuition-relief to graduate students in education — providing they commit to serving at least four years, following their graduation, teaching a high-need subject area in a low-income school.

“There is a severe shortage of math and science teachers nationally and regionally, particularly in high-need districts,” says interim Education Dean Anita Greenwood. “The TEACH grants provide math and science graduates with the opportunity to finance a master's degree and gain a teaching credential in order to work in a community where their skills and knowledge will be highly valued.”

To be eligible for grants, students must maintain a 3.25 GPA throughout their academic programs, must be enrolled in coursework — or planning to complete coursework — in teaching a high-need subject, and must renew a service pledge each year of their schooling. They must also fulfill citizenship requirements and complete certain eligibility forms.

M2D2 Supports Medical Device Start-ups

In its first eighteen months of operation, the Massachusetts Medical Device Development Center (M2D2) helped twenty-three start-up companies and entrepreneurs bridge the gap between invention and production of new medical devices.

Ten start-ups received funding. Five of those received matching funds under M2D2’s “fast-lane” program, and five gained federal funding with M2D2’s assistance. Both the “fast-lane” and federal grant assistance programs were supported primarily through competitive awards to M2D2 by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative’s John Adams Innovation Institute.

“In this economic climate, there is a critical need for M2D2’s services to keep the pipeline of new medical device products flowing,” says Stephen McCarthy, who co-directs M2D2. “Credit is tightening and private investors are even less inclined to support early-stage medical device companies than they were only a few months ago. M2D2 helps companies cross that ‘Valley of Death.’”

Fellow co-director Sheila Noone, assistant vice provost for Clinical Research at UMass Worcester, says, “Both the Worcester and Lowell campuses are committed to helping grow the life sciences sector in the Commonwealth.” UMass Worcester doctors and nurses provide M2D2-applicant entrepreneurs a medical screen while Lowell’s management college provides a business screen—hurdles companies must pass before receiving more direct M2D2 support.

“Companies come to M2D2. We give them a lot of advice, and that’s a valuable part of our charge,” says M2D2 Steering Committee Chairman Hooks Johnston, former senior vice president at Smith & Nephew in Andover.
New Plant Helps Bring Biopharmaceuticals Closer to Production

Thanks to equipment and services donated by four corporate partners, UMass Lowell now has a BioManufacturing Pilot Plant geared to help Massachusetts companies bring new biopharmaceuticals closer to commercial production.

The plant was made possible through the donations of three main partners: Invensys Process Systems (IPS), Wyeth Biotech and Dakota Systems. Equipment donated by Millipore is being used in an adjoining lab that works in tandem with the pilot plant.

Together, the four companies’ contributions are worth $600,000.

“This pilot lab is a great example of how the University, state and private corporations can partner to advance technology, expose students to the latest industry trends and bring ideas to market quicker,” says Chancellor Marty Meehan. “Biotechnology is an important driver of the state’s economy, and this partnership addresses several critical challenges facing the industry. We thank IPS, Wyeth, Dakota and Millipore for their generous donations.”

IPS, a global technology, software and consulting firm, has installed its InFusion Enterprise Control System on a bioreactor donated by Wyeth. Dakota Systems and twelve of its suppliers donated a wide range of services, which included fabricating the frame, integrating the control panel, orbital welding all of the piping, installing all electrical devices and instrumentation and completing cGMP functionality testing. The lab is located on the second floor of the University’s Engineering Building.

The pilot plant is a part of the Massachusetts BioManufacturing Center at UMass Lowell, directed by Prof. Carl Lawton.

“Biotechnology companies that use this plant, and, just as importantly, students who train there, will learn about process automation and optimization using the latest technology,” says Lawton. “Our students will graduate with advanced knowledge that they can use immediately.”

The Massachusetts BioManufacturing Center is an interdisciplinary research, development and education center that helps biotechnology companies develop procedures leading to industry compliant manufacturing processes. Through education, applied research and process development, the Center offers solutions that improve productivity, quality and cost of biomanufacturing operations.

The Millipore Corporation Process Development Laboratory, adjacent to the plant, provides downstream purification and training for students and industrial professionals. Millipore Corporation is a Billerica-based life science company.

UMass Researchers Share in $12M Grant to Develop Network Infrastructure

Researchers from UMass Lowell and UMass Amherst are among twenty-nine academic and corporate teams that have been awarded subcontracts totaling $12 million by BBN Technologies Corporation to build, integrate and operate the prototypes of a groundbreaking suite of network research infrastructures.

Called GENI (Global Environment for Network Innovations), this suite is designed to support a wide range of experimental research in network science and engineering. Funds for the prototyping are provided by the National Science Foundation (NSF). BBN Technologies, an advanced technology solutions firm based in Cambridge, was the primary winner of the NSF grant.

Asst. Prof. Yan Luo of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department is spearheading prototyping efforts at UMass Lowell.

Other universities and institutions that have received funding to work on GENI include Carnegie Mellon, Columbia, Georgia Tech, Ohio State, the Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center, Princeton, Rutgers, USC, Stanford and SUNY Buffalo. Corporations that are working closely with academia include Ciena, Cisco, CNRI, Hewlett-Packard, Infinera, Microsoft Research, NEC, Netronome, SPARTA and Qwest.
Plastics Engineering Professors to be Honored

The Plastics Engineering Department, together with students, alumni and friends, will be honoring Profs. Rudy Deanin, Aldo Crugnola, Stephen Orroth, Stephen Driscoll and Nick Schott at a reception and dinner on June 23 at the Alhambra Palace Restaurant in Chicago.

“Our honorees have more than 200 years of combined educational service at the Lowell Technological Institute, University of Lowell and UMass Lowell,” says Department Chair Robert Malloy. “It was Profs. Russ Ehlers, Ray Normandin and Henry Thomas who founded the Plastics Department in 1954, but these ‘second-generation’ of plastics educators at the University have passed on their vast knowledge and dedication to those they’ve mentored for so many years. Many alumni they taught and influenced will be on hand to wish them well. We invite everyone to join us in this tribute.”

The reception takes place during the week of the National Plastics Exposition (NPE) from June 22 to 26 and the Society of Plastics Engineers’ Annual Technical Conference (ANTEC) from June 22 to 24. “Since both events will be located this year in Chicago, this is a good opportunity for us to get together, see old friends, and see our second-generation Plastics Engineering faculty,” says Malloy.

The dinner costs $75 per person. For more information, contact Gail Sheehy in Plastics Engineering at gail_sheehy@uml.edu; 978-934-3420; fax 978-458-4141.

Reports Cite Health Risks From Bisphenol A Exposure

Two recent reports have reignited the debate over the safety of long-term low-dose exposures of humans to bisphenol A, or BPA, a compound used in the manufacture of products ranging from food and beverage can liners to medical devices, plastic tableware and baby bottles.

BPA, an organic chemical compound, synthesizes DGEBA, a building block for an epoxy resin commonly used to make a whole array of consumer products.

The first report, published by the National Toxicology Program’s Center for the Evaluation of Risks to Human Reproduction, evaluated potential health threats of BPA, which mimics the hormone estrogen, to human reproduction and development.

“The report concludes that there is some concern for adverse effects on the brain, behavior and prostate gland in fetuses, infants and children at current BPA exposures,” says Prof. Susan Woskie of UMass Lowell’s Department of Work Environment, one of the expert panelists who prepared the Center’s paper.

Following the Center’s report, the American Medical Association (AMA) published in its journal a study by a team of British and American researchers that links urinary concentrations of BPA to medical disorders and laboratory abnormalities in adults.

Woskie says, “It’s important that studies be conducted to understand the most important sources of human exposure to BPA so that elimination efforts can be targeted at the most important contributors,” says Woskie.

The American Chemistry Council says, “The weight of scientific evidence continues to support the conclusion of governments worldwide that bisphenol A is not a significant health concern at the trace levels present in some consumer products.”

More information about this issue is available at www.bisphenol-a.org
Colleges - Health

Lowell G. Sims Coughs and Complains. That’s Why We Keep Him Around.

He complains, he breathes, he coughs. And, sometimes, he gags.

Named Lowell G. Sims, the new patient simulator has made its way into a UMass Lowell classroom.

Used successfully for training in other industries such as the military and aerospace, simulation technology is the most realistic way to teach nursing students before they work with humans.

“Considering the nursing shortage, we want students to succeed in the program, graduate, pass the national exam, and work as professional registered nurses,” says Jacqueline Dowling, associate nursing professor and principal investigator of the grant that funded the patient simulator. “Simulation-based nursing education is a powerful teaching strategy to improve the competence and retention of our nursing students.”

With a realistic anatomy and clinical functionality that nursing professors control with a computer, the high-tech mannequin is a convincing patient.

Partnering with Lowell General Hospital, the UMass Lowell Nursing Department received a $48,000 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education’s Nursing Initiative to fund the Laerdal patient simulator.

Endowed Scholarship Named in Honor of Former Dean David Wegman

The University has established a $186,000 endowed scholarship named in honor of Dr. David H. Wegman, former dean of the School of Health and Environment.

Hundreds of alumni, friends and colleagues donated money for the student scholarship fund. In addition, the University transferred donations made by DuPont for Wegman’s years of service as chair of the DuPont Epidemiology Advisory Board to the new fund.

The scholarships will be awarded to support students committed to an integrated vision of health and environment.

The School of Health and Environment, formed in 2004 under Wegman’s leadership, encourages new ways of thinking about the links between health and environment in the prevention and treatment of diseases.

Wegman stepped down as dean last August to spend more time with his wife, Peggy, who has been in ill health. Prof. Kay Doyle, former chair of the Clinical Laboratory and Nutritional Sciences Department, is serving as interim dean while a search for Wegman’s successor is being conducted.

“My goal for this fund is to alleviate financial roadblocks for a new generation of students who can learn how to prevent diseases, protect our environment and enhance our understanding of the relationship between them – with the ultimate goal of creating healthier individuals and communities, safer work environments and a more sustainable world,” said Wegman. “I hope what I’ve helped build in the School is a spirit of community to accomplish this.”
Campus News

Colleges - Management

College of Management Named Among Top Business Schools

UMass Lowell’s College of Management has been ranked among the nation’s best graduate business schools in the 2009 edition of The Princeton Review’s “Best 296 Business Schools.”

“We select schools for this book based on our high regard for their academic programs and offerings, institutional data we collect from the schools, and the candid opinions of students attending them who rate and report on their campus experiences at the schools,” says Robert Franek, Princeton Review’s vice president-publishing. “We are pleased to recommend UMass Lowell to readers of our book and users of our website as one of the best institutions they could attend to earn an M.B.A.”

The book, which does not rank schools numerically, features two-page profiles on each one detailing academics, student life and admissions. It also rates programs, selectivity and career placement services. In addition, the profile includes the results of an eighty-question student survey about themselves, their career plans and their opinions about the University.

“Our inclusion in Princeton Review’s 2009 guide again validates the high quality of UMass Lowell’s M.B.A. program, and our swelling enrollments reflect the popularity of our graduate management programs. We have attracted students from more than 120 different undergraduate colleges to our on-campus and online classes,” says Gary Mucica, director of Management graduate programs. “As one student reported to the Princeton Review, ‘UMass Lowell professors are firm but fair, available, and they have real-world experience.’ That’s what makes UMass Lowell’s College of Management ‘The Business School That Works.’”

New OIS Department Combines Manufacturing and Management

The College of Management has established a new Department of Operations and Information Systems. The move is designed to group manufacturing operations and management information systems faculty and students together, separating them from the larger Department of Management, to increase recognition and understanding of research and instruction in those areas.

Those areas of study were previously together as a department but were moved into the Management Department about five years ago.

But as the number of faculty in Management grew and their areas of expertise became more diverse, it became necessary to spin off Operations and Information Systems, say Prof. Stuart Freedman, who chairs Management, and Prof. Luvai Motiwalla, who was chosen to chair the new department.

Freedman says the new department was created with existing resources: the same faculty members will be teaching the same courses they taught previously as part of the larger Management Department.

“It was something we knew needed to happen for a long time,” says Freedman, adding that he supported the move, as did Provost Ahmed Abdelal and College of Management Dean Kathryn Carter. It gives the Operations and Information Systems faculty an opportunity to focus on their own disciplines, he adds.

University Community Contributes to Master Plan Project

Representatives of all academic and major administrative departments and student groups met with architects and engineers over a period of several weeks early this year to provide input to the University Master Plan development.

The meetings were conducted under the direction of Selena Goldberg, project manager in the state Division of Capital Asset Management (DCAM), the agency overseeing the Master Plan process.

The Master Plan and the South Campus Master Plan are being implemented simultaneously as part of the University’s Strategic Plan, a long-range initiative intended to provide a blueprint for how the campus will plan and develop its physical assets over the next 5, 10 and 20 years.

The Boston firm of Perry Dean Rogers is the architect for the Master Plan while Cambridge Seven Associates, Inc. is responsible for the South Campus Master Plan.

Referring to the information-gathering portion of the planning, Tom Costello, interim Chief Information and Facilities Officer, says, “We want to listen to what people have to say and we want them to know that their input is important. Planning takes a while and requires the gathering of a substantial body of insights, perspectives and aspirations, as well as data.

“But we also want the campus community to know that progress is being made and that, in the end, they’ll see tangible action as well as long-range plans.

“As to the Emerging Technologies and Innovation Center (ETIC) the centerpiece of the University’s multi-million dollar expansion program the plan is to erect it on the North Campus site of
CampusNews

Smith Hall. At the moment, we hope to demolish that residence hall in August and do site preparation. By fall we hope to prepare the foundation and to see steel being erected before the December frost.”

Meanwhile, planning continues for the new academic building to be erected on the South Campus. The information gathering process for this project began at the end of the fall semester with many department interviews, and culminated when dozens of faculty, staff members and students gathered in O’Leary 222 to express their thoughts about the new building and the needs of the University community in general.

The South Campus building is likely to open shortly after the ETIC, Costello says.

For the South Campus project, Cambridge Seven Associates have been asked to look at a selection of existing departments, programs and space, and recommend which departments should be housed in the new academic building. Their second task is to recommend siting for the new structure.

The Perry Dean Rogers firm will be doing much the same thing for the overall Master Plan looking at existing conditions and projecting where the University should be in 5, 10 or 20 years. They will be considering a variety of scenarios, including the acquisition of space to expand the University boundaries, the closing of streets and the erection of residence halls or other structures.

“The explicit requirement,” Costello says, “is that whatever results from this study must contain some near-term achievable steps.”

The committee for the overall Master Plan co-chaired by Engineering Dean John Ting and Joanne Yestramski, vice chancellor for Administration, Finance, Facilities and Technology is one of a number of committees formed to carry out the Strategic Plan. Other committees are studying undergraduate and graduate academic programs, international partnerships, financial sustainability, information technology, research and scholarship, urban engagement and corporate partnerships, University advancement, and branding and marketing.

Lowell Campus and Queens University, Belfast, Develop Partnerships

Faculty and administrators at Queens University, Belfast, Northern Ireland and UMass Lowell are about to launch the first partnerships between the two institutions. Based on the many synergies between the two campuses, there will be more to come.

“We’ve been exploring possible programmatic, scholarship and research collaboration between faculty and students,” says Frank Talty, director of academic programs for the Division of Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. “There are a number of academic programs and strategic priorities at Queens that appear to correspond and complement programs here.”

Outreach to Queens is part of the effort to internationalize the Lowell campus, a priority for Provost Ahmed Abdelal.

“In the twenty-first century, all campuses need to be global in their thinking,” says Talty.

Last September, Chancellor Marty Meehan and Abdelal hosted Dr. Gerry MacCormac, pro vice chancellor of Queens. A group of Queens faculty in the polymer engineering cluster visited Lowell recently, where researchers from both institutions shared presentations on current projects.

Talty and Mathematics Prof. Anne Marie Hurley co-ordinated a Lowell delegation visit to Queens in November. Participating faculty included Prof. Susan Braunhut of biology, Asst. Prof. Bridgette Budhail of plastics engineering, Asst. Prof. Alex Case of sound recording technology and Prof. Stephen McCarthy, director of the Mass Medical Device Development Center (M2D2). The Lowell delegation also visited Trinity College Dublin and Dublin City University to initiate partnership conversations.

Talty expects a group of five to ten UMass Lowell students to spend the three-week summer semester in Belfast, studying Irish history, politics and literature. This would be the first of an on-going schedule of exchanges that would involve students crossing the Atlantic in both directions and participating in Irish studies in Belfast and American studies in Lowell.

Fox Hall Renovation Boosts Capacity, Introduces Learning Innovations

The University is in the midst of an $11.8 million Fox Hall renovation that will add 119 beds, create “living learning communities” in some areas and address infrastructure issues that have developed over the life of the 35-year-old building.

The project is scheduled for completion in time for the start of school this fall.

“A 23 percent increase in freshman student enrollment this year tells us more students are choosing UMass Lowell,” says Chancellor Marty Meehan. “By revamping our largest residence hall, we will have more rooms to meet some of that need. The renovations also will improve student life and provide about 200 construction jobs.”

Continued
The project began with demolition work on the fourth, fifth and sixth floors, which had consisted primarily of office and classroom space. This space is being reconfigured as clustered housing units that will enable 15 to 18 students with common interests to reside in “living learning communities” with their own bathrooms and lounges.

The plan also provides for improved security, kitchens for residential use, a more efficient hot water system, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance in elevators and living areas, and air conditioning for the first six floors of the building, which includes a dining hall serving the 1,500 students living on the East Campus.

The 18-story hall, the tallest building in Lowell, currently has 546 beds for both male and female students in all four classes. About 2,500 students live in University housing, including those in temporary quarters in the Radisson Hotel in Nashua, N.H.

Meehan has set a goal of a 50-50 mix of resident to non-resident students. Currently, that ratio is about 32 percent resident to 68 percent commuter.

The UMass Building Authority and the project’s architect, ADD Inc., had estimated the costs at $15 million. Dellbrook Construction, headquartered in Braintree, was chosen through a competitive bid process. The Building Authority is responsible for the oversight and maintenance of all residence halls across the UMass system. Revenue bonds will finance the Fox Hall project, and the debt service will be covered largely with student housing fees.

“We were pleased that Dellbrook’s bid came in below our original cost estimates, allowing us to get the most value for UMass Lowell’s students,” says David MacKenzie, executive director of the Building Authority.

Joanne Yestramski, vice chancellor for Administration, Finance, Facilities and Technology, says the campus also has contracted with a cleaning company, UGL Unicco, to provide daily maintenance in Fox Hall.

“Our goals were to protect our renovation investment with improved maintenance of the facility; serve students better by providing seven-day-per-week cleaning rather than five; and save money for UMass Lowell,” she says. The contract with Unicco saves the University more than $150,000, which, says Yestramski, “helped ensure that we could retain all our full-time housekeeping staff despite steep state-mandated budget cuts that resulted in layoffs in other areas.”

The Office of Residence Life and a Centers for Learning satellite branch will be located on the first floor of Fox for easier access. All student clubs will be relocated to the McGauvran Student Union on the South Campus.

### Honors Fellows Fundraiser Celebrates Academic Excellence

UMass Lowell honored seven retired faculty members and its first Community Fellow at the Honors Fellows Fundraiser, raising $45,000 for student scholarships. Those honored were chosen for their legacy of educational excellence that inspires the UMass Lowell Honors Program.

The 2008 honorees were Mary Beaudry, Faculty Teaching Center; Rudy Deanin, Engineering; May Furell, Nursing; Jon Hellstedt, Psychology; Brack Hinchey, Management; Thaddeus Osmolski, Biological Sciences; and William Phelan, Graduate School of Education. Human rights
activist Loung Ung was named the program’s first Community Fellow.

“This is a great institution because you all have committed your lives to making it a great institution,” said Chancellor Marty Meehan at the reception held at Allen House. “Thank you for all you have done for students.”

UMass President Jack Wilson congratulated the honorees, noting that “UMass Lowell is the heart and engine of economic development in this part of the state. Your commitment to challenging the UMass system’s top students is commendable.”

“This event has always been about honoring the past while building the future,” said Executive Vice Chancellor Jacque Moloney, noting the Honors Program was celebrating its 10th anniversary. The Honors Fellows Endowment, which supports scholarships and extracurricular events for the Honors Program, now stands at more than $150,000.

Prior to the Honors Fellows Fundraiser, Community Fellow Ung spoke in Mahoney Hall. The award-winning author who survived the Cambodian genocide as a child brought her experiences to life in the national bestseller “First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers.”

Ung spoke of her escape from her country at age 10 and the heart-wrenching decisions made by her family that allowed her to relocate to Vermont. She is a national spokesperson in the campaign to ban land mines, which still claim 18,000 lives a year in her country. “They are weapons of mass destruction, albeit in slow motion,” she said.

In calling for action against land mines, she offered a positive message.

“Even when we look in the newspaper, we are shown the worst example of man’s humanity to man. Our only tool is to be the best of man’s humanity to man,” she said.
blue, they are also more contemporary-looking and easier to maintain, says Lutz, who conducts the marching band.

Discussions about the need for new uniforms had been going on for some time because, despite some minor replacements over the years, they had become outdated. Lutz says it had seemed like purchasing new uniforms was outside the realm of possibility until a “stroke of wonderful luck and serendipity” during the fall 2007 semester when Chancellor Marty Meehan saw the band perform at Family Day and recognized the need to replace the garments. From there, Lutz says, the replacement moved quickly as students, staff, University officials and experts were called upon to weigh in on the new design.

The band wore its new uniforms at events from Convocation and Family Day to parades and charity walks to exhibitions at high-profile marching band competitions, including the Massachusetts state championship and similar New England and New York-Connecticut regional events.

Being a featured ensemble at such events is a big deal for the student musicians and is among the ways the marching band helps promote UMass Lowell, Lutz says. “The band has served as a draw for students entering college, offering the opportunity to continue to pursue their passion for music during their studies at the University.”

Winter Wonderlands Don’t Come Cheap

On those cold, snowy mornings when most faculty, staff and students are still snuggled in their warm beds, Facilities Services Director Tom Miliano is driving around the University, checking out the condition of parking lots, sidewalks and outside stairways.

The conclusion he draws as a result of this inspection tour will be a significant factor in the decision on whether or not to close the University for the day. But, close or not, the storm will set in motion a snow removal and de-icing operation that can cost anywhere from $10,000 to $50,000.

“We have to do something with any snow cover,” Miliano says. “Maybe we’ll need to just apply road salt. But if we get as much as one or two inches we have to start thinking of removing the snow with plows. Every storm is different.”

After the inspection tour, which he makes between 5 and 6 a.m., Miliano calls Vice Provost Don Pierson, whose responsibility it is to make the open-or-close decision. If the University closes, Miliano notifies the major Boston television stations and Lowell and Worcester radio stations, sends the notice via the University’s text message and e-mail Emergency Notification System, and records the information on the 934-2121 call-in line.

Regardless of the amount of snowfall, Facilities Services will ensure the safety of walkways, stairs and parking lots by spreading calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) or a sodium chloride and rock salt mix on the various surfaces.

CMA, which is used on walkways and stairs, is environmentally friendly, biodegradable, has low toxicity levels that make it safe for vegetation and a residual effect that requires fewer applications. It also is used in the parking garage on the East Campus because it’s a low corrosive product that’s safe for concrete.

“But we can’t use it everywhere because it’s expensive,” Miliano says. “It wouldn’t be fiscally sound to use it to cover our huge parking lots.”

Facilities can handle the removal of accumulations up to a point but the department has a limited amount of plowing equipment. Therefore, the University retains the services of two outside contractors to remove any significant amount of snow. One takes care of South Campus and the other does both North and East.

“We use two contractors to make sure there is enough equipment to do the job as quickly and thoroughly as possible,” Miliano says.

Depending on the size and duration of the storm, the snow removal operation could take anywhere from four to 12 hours.
Provost Announces Creation of Office of School University Partnerships

UMass Lowell has established a new entity that will work with regional school districts on teaching and research projects, the objective of which will be to ensure that K-12 students will be better prepared when the time comes for them to enter college.

Provost Ahmed Abdelal announced the creation of the Office of School University Partnerships at the second annual Chancellor’s Breakfast for Superintendents, held on campus.

Abdelal said the partnership will “provide a place for school and University partners to work together, to engage in professional learning, and to build new partnerships for our mutual benefit.”

Chancellor Marty Meehan told the attendees at the breakfast, part of the Superintendents Forum Series, “We are changing the dynamic of education. We want the University to be world-class, which means we need to work at getting students to come to our door better prepared.”

Judy Boccia, director of the Office of School University Partnerships, said, “The new Office signals the importance UMass Lowell places on its relationships with K-12 schools and our desire to deepen the collaborative work we do together. We’re very excited about the many opportunities that lie ahead for school-university partnerships at UMass Lowell.”

In introductory remarks to leaders of 26 local school districts in attendance, North Reading Public Schools Superintendent David Troughton said, “I hope you all learn what the University of Massachusetts Lowell has to offer us. The University is a beacon on the hill, not only for Lowell but for the greater Merrimack region.”

University, National Grid and Lowell Partner in Zero-Energy Contest

National Grid and the City of Lowell, in partnership with UMass Lowell, Advanced Building Analysis and the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, are sponsoring a competition called “Getting to Zero Energy Challenge” to help property owners in Lowell get their homes as close to zero-energy consumption as possible.

Such dwellings could serve as models for energy efficiency, conservation and independence throughout the region.

“Zero net energy homes refer to eco-friendly residential buildings that use zero dollars in heating and cooling bills,” says Prof. Sammy Shina of the Mechanical Engineering Department. “The challenge for contest participants is to come up with strategies that would make their existing homes, condos and buildings as close to zero-energy consumption as possible by using proper insulation and energy-efficient appliances as well as renewable energy sources such as solar and ground heat. The best proposals will each receive a $25,000 rebate from National Grid.”

Morse Lecture Features International Peace Activist Padraig O’Malley

International peace negotiator Prof. Padraig O’Malley, seated left, the John Joseph Moakley Distinguished Professor for Peace and Reconciliation at the McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies at UMass Boston, gave the keynote speech at the second F. Bradford Morse Distinguished Lecture. After discussing reconciliation work in Northern Ireland, South Africa and Iraq, O’Malley participated in a panel alongside UMass Lowell Political Science Prof. Ardeth Thawngmung and Prof. David Kalivas of Middlesex Community College’s Department of Global Studies and History. The lecture honors the late Congressman Morse who was recognized worldwide as a leader on humanitarian issues.
CWW Celebrates 10th Anniversary by Lauing ‘Everyday Heroes’

The Center for Women & Work (CWW) celebrated its tenth anniversary by honoring twenty-four people who have made extraordinary contributions to the lives of working women. More than 250 attendees — including former Lt. Gov. Evelyn Murphy — lauded the accomplishments of U.S. Rep. Niki Tsongas and other “everyday heroes.” The list included eleven UMass Lowell employees: Donna Allen, Lenore Azaroff, Oneida Blagg, Anne Ciaraldi, Elizabeth Fortin, Mary Kramer, Pauline Ladebauche, Martha Mayo, Julie Nash, Yana Shapiro and Donna Spellissy. Chancellor Marty Meehan lauded the event’s honorees for their “tenacity and commitment” and praised the Center for being “entrepreneurial.” Among those taking part in the event were, from left, former Massachusetts Lt. Gov. Murphy; Meg A. Bond, director of CWW; Meehan; Kristin Esterberg, CWW 10th Anniversary event chair; Darcie Boyer, CWW program manager; and U.S. Rep. Tsongas.

New Flame-Retardant Fabric Being Developed for Military Use

U.S. military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan face a wide array of threats in the field, including burn injuries caused by, among other things, artillery blasts and improvised explosive devices.

Dr. Ravi Mosurkal, an adjunct faculty member at the Center for Advanced Materials and a senior National Research Council fellow at the U.S. Army Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center (NSRDEC), says military clothing now made from Nomex and Kevlar provides adequate flame protection, but the cost to issue these fabrics to all military personnel is prohibitive.

Lower-cost solutions include treating cottons and nylon with flame-retardant coatings, but these treatments add 20 percent in weight and use toxic, halogenated polymers, many of which are being banned worldwide for environmental and human safety reasons.

“Melt drip is another undesirable property of synthetic fibers, which can cause additional serious burns,” Mosurkal says.

Therefore, he and his colleagues at the Center are developing flame-retardant clothing with a “green chemistry” approach that involves a highly selective class of enzymes called lipases. He says he expects that this new material will eliminate the generation of toxic materials and the leaching of toxic compounds in the environment.

Civilian applications include fire-retardant clothing for firefighters, upholsteries for household and aviation furnishings, and fireproof circuits in electronics and telecommunications equipment.

“This work was done as collaboration between Profs. Arthur Watterson and Jayant Kumar of the Center for Advanced Materials and Dr. Lynne Samuelson of the NSRDEC,” says Mosurkal. Through an Army Environmental Quality Basic Research Program, he was awarded a three-year, $390,000 grant to pursue this research at the Natick Soldier center.

$1.1 Million Grant Expands Worldwide Radio Sounding Network

Researchers at UMass Lowell’s Center for Atmospheric Research have received a $1.1 million grant from the U.S. Air Force Weather

Prof. Bodo Reinisch with a Digisonde-4D ionospheric Doppler radar built at UMass Lowell’s Center for Atmospheric Research.
The University of Massachusetts Lowell has been named recipient of a prestigious national honor that ranks it among the nation's top institutions in the benefits it confers to the world outside its walls.

In announcing its designation of a "community-engaged" university—one of 119 so named in the country—the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching found that UMass Lowell qualified for the honor in two distinct areas: both as a source of curricular (classroom-related) engagement benefiting communities and for its non-academic, community outreach and partnerships. The University of Massachusetts is the only public university system in which all campuses have received the Carnegie “community-engaged” designation.

Some examples of the work honored by the Foundation include the University’s assistive technology project, which develops creative solutions to the needs of disabled people; the Memory XL project, a path to working with healthy adults to try to delay the onset of Alzheimer's Disease; and the Arbotics program, which puts computer technology within reach of women and minorities for the creation of public art.

“Follow-up grants will increase the total to thirty.

“The ionosphere is extremely variable and dynamic, with the density of free electrons changing from 1,000 per cubic centimeter to 10 million, with varying effects on satellite-to-ground communication and GPS navigation,” says Center Director Bodo Reinisch, the project’s principal investigator. For this reason, Reinisch proposed some twenty years ago that the U.S. establish a worldwide network of about eighty Digisondes to monitor the ionosphere in the wake of solar flares, geomagnetic storms and other global space-weather disturbances.

“My proposal found wide support,” he says, “but there was not enough funding, and the proposal was eventually declined as too futuristic.”

However, the Center did build a smaller network of seventeen Digisondes in the late 1980s for the U.S. Air Weather Service. This network is still operational and continues to supply valuable data to World Data Centers and UMass Lowell’s Digital Ionogram Data Base (DIDBase).

UMass Lowell Earns Coveted Carnegie Designation

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“This national designation is a great tribute to the values that we honor every day in our teaching, research and service,” Chancellor Marty Meehan said of the Carnegie announcement. “UMass Lowell has a long history of innovative partnerships that have benefited the people in our region as well as our students.”

UMass Lowell’s Provost, Ahmed Abdelal, was just as emphatic. “The Carnegie Foundation has certified the excellence of our service learning, industrial partnerships, and urban engagement,” he said. “We are grateful for this distinctive honor that has been earned by our University community.”

The Foundation’s Community Engagement designation, conferred for the first time in 2006, describes itself as an opportunity to “address elements of institutional mission and distinctiveness not represented in the national data.” It was initiated, according to Carnegie President Anthony S. Bryk, partly as a means “to encourage other colleges and universities to move in this direction. Doing so brings benefits both to the community and to the institution involved.”
A Look Back at UMass Lowell’s IT Program

It has been twenty years since the decision was made to disband the University’s Industrial Technology (IT) Department, but the indelible academic legacy and memories the program left lives on in the professional careers of many of its graduates.

The IT Department’s seeds were sown in 1969, when Jack Apfelbaum was hired by Prof. William Hogan, then chair of the Mechanical Engineering Department at the Lowell Technological Institute. Apfelbaum had just returned to the U.S. after two years in India, where he was a consultant to the Indian government on how to improve the country’s engineering education.

A few years after coming to Lowell, he proposed the creation of a Department of Industrial Technology to Hogan who, by that time, had become dean of the College of Engineering. “The country back then badly needed well trained manufacturing engineers,” says Apfelbaum.

He drew up the specifications for the department to ensure its graduates would have a strong background in manufacturing and management. “The IT program’s entry requirements in mathematics and the physical sciences were not quite as strict as those for the standard engineering program,” he says.

The IT program was approved, and the first students enrolled in 1975. It was one of the first academic programs at the newly formed University of Lowell to provide internships for students. During its heyday, the program graduated about eighty students...
The success of the short-lived IT program can be measured by the many fine positions its graduates have achieved.

For example, in 2000, after a decade in the medical device sector as product designer, Mark Johanson ’88 founded Scandius BioMedical, a private venture-backed orthopedic device company that successfully developed advanced, patented technology for the arthroscopic reconstruction of torn knee ligaments. In 2007, Scandius was acquired by the medical technology giant Covidien.

Johanson is now president and CEO of Simplicity Orthopedics, a privately held orthopedic medical device company specializing in bone fractures.

“My IT education and training at UMass Lowell had proven extremely valuable during my early career,” he says. “The focus on designing and manufacturing cost-effective, high-quality medical products was central to the growth of the businesses I had worked for and managed. My IT degree helped carve my professional career path from manufacturing engineering to design engineering, eventually providing me with the broad expertise necessary to establish and successfully grow my own medical device company.”

Steven Millette ’87 says, “The IT curriculum provided me with both engineering and business knowledge to bring continuous improvements to every aspect of the individual businesses I have worked for. These improvements were recognized and rewarded throughout my career, leading to the position of vice president of operations for the multinational company Vitronics-Soltec.”

Steven met his future wife, Donna Thibodeau, while both were enrolled in the IT program. The couple received their bachelor’s degrees in 1987.

Today, Steven runs his own New Hampshire-based company, Business Velocity Services LLC, which helps other businesses improve the speed of their returns on investment, whether it is people, processes and/or product development, while Donna is a Performance Improvement Project Manager at Lahey Clinic in Burlington.

She says the IT curriculum offered a remarkable balance between hands-on lab experience and coursework.

“Professors like Jack Apfelbaum and Robert Tuholski helped lay the foundation to my career,” she says. “Of course, I am also grateful to ULowell, as this was where I met my husband of eighteen years!”

Apfelbaum is very much involved in the Massachusetts Climate Action Network. “In Littleton, we have an active group promoting green, energy-saving concepts within the town,” he says. “I am also on the board of the Littleton Conservation Trust.”

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“IT Graduates Reminisce”

The Lotus temple of the Bahai faith in New Delhi is a wonderful example of modern computer-designed architecture and engineering,” says Apfelbaum. “It is called the modern Taj Mahal and, as such, combines the traditional and the modern, and showcases India at its best.”

Steven and Donna Millette ’87

“IT Graduates Reminisce”

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Eyes of the Storm

There’s definitely something in the air at UMass Lowell. Ever since the University’s Department of Environmental, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences (EEAS) was established by Prof. Robert Curtis in 1967 as the Department of Meteorology at the then Lowell Technological Institute, it has proven to be a great springboard for launching careers as TV weather forecasters. Many of the big-city TV stations across the country have our graduates on their weather teams.

Just ask Danielle Niles, a Weymouth native who joined the New England Cable News (NECN) weather team in late 2008 as a meteorologist studying and forecasting New England’s challenging, ever-changing weather.

“The EEAS Department gives the fundamental math and science background that is essential for anyone interested in pursuing a career in meteorology,” says Niles. “While attending UMass Lowell, I really felt a close connection with all my classmates and professors — the department has a true ‘family feel’ to it, which isn’t the case for other bigger schools that offer meteorology.”

She received her bachelor’s degree (cum laude) in atmospheric science in the spring of 2006, and was captain of the women’s soccer team. She also earned a master’s degree in meteorology at Florida State University in 2008.

At NECN, she produces graphics and delivers on-air forecasts mainly on weekdays between 9 a.m. and noon. Before joining the network, she worked for Weather Services International in Andover.

“I’ve had a passion for weather since I was a little girl, and being a broadcast meteorologist has always been my dream,” says Niles. As a child, she was fascinated with severe weather,
like thunderstorms, blizzards and hurricanes, to name a few. She has even been storm chasing in the Midwest, where last year she saw her first tornado.

Last year, Niles was inducted into the Chi Epsilon Pi honor society for outstanding meteorology students. She is also an active member of the American Meteorological Society.

Shiri Spear, a New Hampshire native who joined the 22News Storm Team in Springfield in 2007 as the weekend morning meteorologist and environmental reporter for the station’s Green Team, says she would not have had the confidence to pursue her career without the support from her teachers at UMass Lowell.

“When I told Prof. Frank Colby that I was interested in becoming a broadcast meteorologist, he helped me get an internship,” says Spear. “I also had a great working relationship with Prof. Arnold O’Brien when I was one of his teaching assistants. The respect and commitment my mentors showed me are qualities that I strive to bring to the workplace, present and future.”

She received her master’s degree in 2007 and immediately joined the 22 News Storm Team as the station’s first female meteorologist. “I do the forecasts, build my graphics, update our website and record forecasts for our phone service and a couple of local radio stations before I go on the air,” she says. “As new data come in, I review them and make necessary adjustments to my forecasts.”

Prior to working at the station, she was a teacher, educating local preschoolers about the wonders of weather. “Since I was a young girl I wanted to know everything about the weather,” she says.

She lives in Springfield with her husband and high-school sweetheart Matthew, daughters Gabrielle and Mia, and their family Husky.

For Sarah Wroblewski, it was the UMass Lowell faculty and size of the classes that made a difference in her success as a TV meteorologist. “Since our classes were smaller, everyone knew one another and the faculty was ready to help with any of the problems we encountered,” she says. “I think the one-on-one attention we received helped bring confidence to our forecasts, and that confidence, in turn, continued into my professional career.”

Wroblewski received her bachelor’s degree in 2005, and in her senior year she was captain and most valuable player of the women’s soccer team.

She joined WBZ-TV in 2005 as the weekday morning weather producer. In 2008 she was promoted to be the weekend-morning meteorologist for the WBZ-TV weather team, which includes veteran meteorologist and UMass Lowell alumnus Barry Burbank. With fellow WBZ meteorologist Mish Michaels, she helps manage and critique the content of the Weatherwise exhibit at the Museum of Science in Boston.

A member of the American Meteorological Society, Wroblewski also works full time for Weather Services International, doing forecasts for Verizon Fios and CNN International, and her voice can be heard on several Time Warner TV stations across the country. She was also featured as an on-air meteorologist in episodes for HBO’s hit police drama series “The Wire.”

In her leisure time, the Connecticut native enjoys sports and visiting schools to encourage youngsters to pursue careers in math and science. She lives in the suburbs of Boston, where she and Danielle Niles are roommates.

Joe Venuti is a weather producer and fill-in meteorologist for WCVB-TV Channel 5 in Boston. He says his education at UMass Lowell enabled him to go on to graduate school at Penn State and become very competitive in the field.

“Profs. Keith Seitter and Frank Colby, my advisors at UMass Lowell, encouraged us to apply for internships while we were getting our degrees,” he says. “If it were not for their encouragement, opportunities might not have come my way.”

At WCVB, Venuti produces weather segments for the 5, 5:30 and 6 p.m. shows. “I act as the IT specialist for the HD computers that we currently use, and fill in on the air during severe-weather coverage and vacations,” he says.

Venuti received his bachelor’s from UMass Lowell in 1991 and master’s from Penn State in 1994. Prior to joining WCVB full time in 2006, he worked at WPSX-TV 3 in University Park, Penn.; WGME-TV in Portland, Maine; Weather Services International; Fox News in New York; and WLVI-TV in Boston.

In 1997 the American Meteorological Society recognized his professionalism in weather forecasting and reporting by awarding him its Seal of Approval.

“The Blizzard of ’78 was a big factor in my decision to become a professional meteorologist,” he says. “However, I’ve always had an interest in weather from as far back as I can remember. I used to watch Don Kent and Bob Copeland on TV, and then give the forecast to my kindergarten class.”

Born in Revere and raised in Reading, Venuti now lives in Billerica with his wife and two sons.
Shorr Views Fundraising As an Exciting Challenge in a Tough Economy

Taking over the fundraising operation of a large institution during the worst economic climate in decades could be considered a daunting task. But for Beth Shorr, the new vice chancellor for University Advancement, the task is more of an exciting challenge.

“Yes, we have serious economic challenges to face. But I am confident that our alumni and friends will recognize the importance of supporting UMass Lowell in these tough times,” says Shorr.

“We provide a vital, accessible learning environment for future business owners, engineers, teachers, nurses, musicians – really, the area’s educated workforce.”

Shorr brings private-sector experience to the job as well. She served as senior vice president of Corporate Affairs for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Maine, where she was responsible for marketing and brand management, community relations, public affairs and human resources.

“I was really impressed by the vision of the University’s leadership and the way Chancellor Meehan used his inauguration as a way to showcase the University while raising scholarship money.” — Beth Shorr

As one of her first priorities, she is leading the University Advancement staff in a strategic planning exercise that will help support the University’s overall strategic goals. Some of the initiatives for the coming year include increasing the number of major gifts, enhancing the alumni relations program with a particular focus on new alumni, increasing overall alumni participation in the Lowell Fund and developing the department’s infrastructure to support these initiatives.

“I am struck by the strong alumni support that already exists in certain areas of the University – particularly in College of Engineering and the College of Management. I would love to see alumni from other areas of the University become as vested in the success of their particular college or department,” says Shorr.

The campus is just beginning a year-long planning process called UMass Lowell 2020, which will provide a blueprint for how the campus will achieve national and international recognition as a world-class institution over the next decade. Shorr said that she fully expects this strategic plan to reveal the need for a capital campaign to support new initiatives.

In the meantime, the department will concentrate on raising private funds to help students pay for their education, a struggle most can relate to.

“Scholarship support takes on even greater importance in a tough economy,” says Shorr. “More students are relying on public education as costs keep rising. We are hoping that as our donors assess their ability to give, they recognize the value of giving today’s students a chance to shape their world.”
Scholarship Honors Memory of Dedicated Officer and Alumnus

Steven Parent ’11 of Leominster has received the first scholarship specifically dedicated to Criminal Justice students at UMass Lowell. It is the first awarded from the Michael B. Shanahan Memorial Scholarship Fund, established last year to honor the memory of Michael B. Shanahan, a 1985 alumnuus and retired lieutenant colonel in the Massachusetts State Police.

When Parent received the scholarship at a dinner at Allen House in November, Diane Shanahan spoke of how important education was to her late husband.

“My husband was a dedicated public servant, hard working and very determined. He inspired in his children, friends and colleagues the importance of a good education. And for you, Steven, it begins right here,” she said. “I wish you the best, and from our family — from our hearts — we are honored to give this memorial scholarship tonight.”

Mike Shanahan served two tours of duty in the Vietnam War as a Marine. He joined the Massachusetts State Police in 1971 and retired 25 years later after reaching the rank of lieutenant colonel. He joined Bank of America as a senior corporate security investigator/manager in 1998 and, after fighting an heroic battle against cancer, died in June 2006.

“The basis of this scholarship is to honor Mike’s spirit and commitment to law enforcement as a career and especially the field of criminal justice for the public good,” said Criminal Justice Department Chair Eve Buzawa.

Anyone wishing to contribute to the Shanahan Memorial Scholarship Fund should contact Major Gift Officer Demé Gy s, 978-934-4810.

In Memoriam

| 1931 | Eva Greenbaum Seigel | William Mills |
| 1933 | Irene Walsh | Rita James Dolan |
| 1934 | Jeanette Blanchard Shea | Frank Kilik |
| 1936 | Louis Dursin | Charles Zaharias |
| 1957 | Mary Meehan McGuirk | Beverly Axon Anderson |
| 1958 | Virginia Allgrove McLavey | Joan Wilson |
| 1959 | Myrtle Ripley Morton | Margaret Murphy Donnelly |
| 1961 | Helen Barsfsly Dilenk | Donald Crowell |
| 1966 | Mike Ploubides | Arnold Loving |
| 1939 | William Prescott | Gerald Thebodo |
| 1940 | Anita Dori | Philip Bartlett |
| 1942 | Mary Feeley Boghossian | James Guilo |
| 1967 | Irvin Levine | John Periman |
| 1943 | Berenice Hartman Margolis | Arthur Viola |
| 1944 | Anne Giragosian Allard | Curtis Roemer |
| 1945 | Gertrude Belanger | Bruce Barck |
| 1969 | Mary Furey Burke | Donald Barry |
| 1970 | Helen Wester OesERMia | Edward Callahan |
| 1944 | Mary Carol McQuade Giguerre | Marilyn Godfrey |
| 1945 | Dorthea Fm Riley | John Ryan |
| 1946 | Morton Langer | Gregory Starnabub |
| 1947 | Michael Maglio | Robert Daigle |
| 1948 | George Langlais | Carol Avedisian Garabedian |
| 1949 | Priscilla Turner Snell | Edward McDermott, Jr. |
| 1954 | Mary Parker Peterson | Paula Justusume Quinm |
| 1957 | James Sweeney | Jimmy Deng |
| 1955 | Joseph Priestley, Sr. | Peter Finerty |
| 1976 | Raymond Proulx | Robert Tucci |
| 1952 | Curtis Allen | Karen McCarthy Doherty |
| 1955 | Robert Adell | Elaine Zamanakos Gordon |

1978 | Norman Beland |
1979 | John January, Jr. |
1980 | Gary Letourneau |
1981 | Jimmy Case |
1982 | Stephen Hill |
1983 | Margaret McAvenia |
1985 | Joseph McDonald |
1986 | John Morrison, Jr. |
1987 | J. David Santos |
1990 | Mary Keddy |
1991 | Judith Kotok |
1992 | Diane Zielonka |
1994 | Mark Dimie |
1997 | Patricia McNally Moberger |
1999 | Irene Desmarais |
1992 | Douglas Mayer |
1993 | Mark Lucius |
1994 | Perry Toscano |
1995 | Edmund Tsai |
1996 | Robert Paoni |
1998 | Edward Kelley, Jr. |
1999 | John Walsh |

Faculty
Roger Baumann
Michael Frechette
Kuang Li

Staff
Robert McVicker
Leo Mello

William B. Prescott Dies at 90

William B. Prescott, a 1939 Lowell Textile Institute alumnum, died on October 2, 2008, in Kansas. He was 90.

Prescott retired from American Cyanamid in 1983 as Director of Analytical Research for the company’s Chemical Research Division. He was also a senior member of a Chemical Manufacturers Association committee that monitored the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s official analysis methods for priority pollutants from 1978 to 1982.

“He was the one who talked me into attending Lowell Tech and studying chemistry,” says Prescott’s nephew Tom McAvinew ’63, “although I switched to chemical engineering when Dr. Dominick Sama initiated that program.”
Nashville was a segregated city in the 1950s, when Kay Roberts was a child there. And when a local elementary school teacher, a man named Robert Holmes, asked to teach stringed music in the city’s public schools, the man in charge said no. “Blacks cannot learn to play string instruments,” Holmes was told. And the matter should have been closed.

But Holmes saw it differently. “Give me the instruments and I’ll try anyway,” he told the music superintendent — then formed an all-black youth ensemble that he called the Cremona Strings (named for the small Italian city where, 500 years ago, the Stradivari family first made its violins) and began rehearsing his kids.

One of that group was the young Kay Roberts. And if you want to understand how the schoolgirl came to be the musician, conductor and educator she is today — and the tireless advocate for all things new and overlooked — there is probably no better place to begin.

“As an African-American woman, I am a minority within a minority,” says the UMass Lowell music professor, who came out of that experience nearly fifty years ago as a violinist in the Nashville Youth Symphony — and not long after, still a senior in high school, as the youngest member of the Nashville Symphony Orchestra — before winning a scholarship to Tanglewood, then admission to the Yale school of music, where she would be the first woman, black or white, to earn her doctorate in conducting.
“Without that early exposure, I never would have pursued a music career. You have to fight the isolation black classical musicians face, once they enter the mostly white world of symphony orchestras.”

She has been fighting that isolation ever since, not only for herself but for others. Today, as founder and director of an orchestra whose mission is to link cultures through music – bringing to Lowell one opera that memorializes Cambodian oppression and another that fuses African drumming with jazz and gospel styles – and of a community-outreach program that offers stringed-instrument lessons to public-school kids, she has been championing overlooked causes almost since the days when she was part of one herself.

“Kay Roberts has dedicated her career to advocating for the under-represented and overlooked in society, promoting music education for children and using music as a bridge to connect cultures,” UMass President Jack Wilson said last April in announcing his choice of Roberts as one of six winners of the 2007 President’s Award for Public Service. “She utilizes her love of music to reach out to the community.” And, he might just as easily have said, to the world.

But it all began in 1950s Nashville – though not the same Nashville most other black Tennesseans would remember from that time:

“I grew up on the campus of Fisk University. My father founded the Psychology Department there; my mother was a professor of library science. Next door to us lived poets, writers, painters, musicians. It was an intellectual and cultural oasis.”

There was music all around, she remembers: in her home, where her mother played the piano, and at the university, where the family often attended local concerts. From the time she began taking violin lessons, with Robert Holmes in elementary school, it was clear she had an extraordinary talent. By junior high school, she had been chosen to play in the city’s just-segregated Youth Symphony; its conductor, Thor Johnson, the internationally known and widely loved former director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, became an early mentor, choosing her to play, as the youngest-ever member, in the Nashville Symphony, then later to tour the U.S. as a member of the World Symphony Orchestra, made up of 140 musicians from around the globe.

She had a way of attracting world-renowned mentors. Several years later, in the summer between her sophomore and junior years at Fisk, as winner of a violin fellowship at Tanglewood, she worked for a time under Leonard Bernstein, who persuaded her to change her major from mathematics to music. And three years after that, by now a student at the Yale School of Music, she came under the tutelage of master conductor Otto-Werner Mueller, who recognized her talents in conducting — as well as with the violin — and not long after, arranged for her to lead rehearsal performances of both the Nashville and Atlanta Symphony Orchestras. In addition to Bernstein and Mueller, she also worked or studied along the way with international conducting icons – and teachers – Seiji Ozawa, Andre Previn, Sir John Eliot Gardiner and Gustav Meier. Her professional debut as a conductor came, fittingly, with her hometown orchestra, the Nashville Symphony, in 1976.

Since that time she has conducted all over the U.S. and the world: the Cleveland Orchestra, the Chicago, Dallas, Detroit and Nashville Symphony Orchestras, the Bangkoks Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra Svizzera Italiana. In 2004, she served as co-conductor for the acclaimed Sphinx Inaugural Gala Concert in

Continued
Carnegie Hall. She is also the principal conductor for Opera North in Philadelphia, an African-American company of musicians who, for more than thirty years, have been bringing opera to the public and parochial schools of inner-city Philadelphia.

During most of this time — since 1978 — she has been a member of the music faculty at UMass Lowell. And for all her concert and conducting successes, it has been in this role, as a teacher and member of the Lowell community, that she has made her most remarkable, and most enduring, contributions.

Through most of her early years at the University, her time was divided between teaching and travel, as the demands of her conducting duties took her to points all over the globe. “I had been guest-conducting major orchestras, which was extremely rewarding,” she says. “But I was on the road a lot, and a decision needed to be made. I wanted to get more involved in the Lowell community.”

In 2001, she founded the UMass Lowell String Project, which some would say has been her trademark achievement. An after-school training program for inner-city schoolchildren, it offers stringed-instrument lessons under the guidance of a master teacher—adjunct faculty member and alumna Susan Turcotte Gavriel ’75, as well as UMass Lowell string students as apprentice teachers—to Lowell public school students from third grade through high school. The program was initially funded through grants from the American String Teachers Association and the Parker Foundation, with matching funds from the University and support from the city’s schools.

Her motives for founding the program are deeply personal—rooted in memories of a segregated city and a long-ago teacher’s vision and courage. The String Project could almost be said to be the legacy of Robert Holmes.

“I founded it, as a community outreach program for children in Lowell, because I experienced first-hand how important early exposure to music can be for a child,” says Roberts. “Our budget is very modest, with many in-kind services. But the master teacher, the student teachers and guest teachers still need to be paid, and the rental for the kids’ instruments is costly. Funding is a major priority for me—because it’s just so very worthwhile. Over the past eight years, almost a thousand Lowell public school students, some from the city’s most underserved neighborhoods, have learned to play a stringed instrument. Their joy of making music is absolutely contagious.”

The String Project, though, was only the beginning. Three years later, she founded the New England Orchestra (NEO), also based in Lowell, a professional chamber orchestra whose goal is to reflect the city’s diversity, linking its various cultures through the medium of music. In the early fall of 2007, NEO performed a concert in the Merrimack Repertory Theatre as part of a month-long “On the Road in Lowell” tribute to Jack Kerouac. Last year, on the occasion of the UMass Lowell Peace and Conflict Institute’s (PACSI’s) annual Day Without Violence, it put on a concert to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the death of
"We intend to nurture a new generation of concert goers with the discovery of the joy of music, and the young talent representing the next generation of artists."

— Kay George Roberts

Martin Luther King—this time, for the first time ever, with a side-by-side performance from Kay Roberts' String Project students.

“We intend to nurture a new generation of concert goers with the discovery of the joy of music, and the young talent representing the next generation of artists,” Roberts told reporters at the time.

Just a few months before the Kerouac event, in the spring of 2007, Roberts put together a very different kind of tribute – similar only in that, like all her signature work, its focus remained on the fusing of musical cultures.

She had been searching for some time for a work by a Cambodian composer that might reach out to Lowell’s vast Cambodian population – the second-largest in the U.S. She found it in “Where Elephants Weep,” a love-story opera by composer Him Sophy, that tells the story of Sam, a Cambodian-American who gives up his life in the U.S. to return to his native country, where he joins the monkhood in Phnom Penh, then falls in love with a Cambodian karaoke star. Based loosely on an old Khmer legend, it blends traditional Cambodian and Western music in a mix that calls on every style and genre from ancient Khmer lullabies to operatic arias and the sounds of cellphone rings. After traveling to Cambodia to conduct a workshop presentation of the opera in Phnom Penh, she was instrumental in

Benefit Concert to be Held in May

On Sunday, May 17, in line with her credo, “Making Music, Building Bridges, Engaging Communities,” Kay Roberts is launching Lowell’s first Youth Orchestra in a benefit concert at Durgin Concert Hall on South Campus.

The concert will feature guest artist, violinist Jésus Florido, a talented musician trained in the classical tradition. As a founding member of the National System of Youth and Children Orchestras – El Sistema – in his native Venezuela, Florido, who is also a long-time teacher, will be a particularly well-suited presence to a youth orchestra, Roberts says.

The concert will take place at 3 p.m. Donations, at the door, will be $20 for adults, $10 for seniors.
fusing together what the International Herald-Tribune later called “an unprecedented private-public partnership” to bring it to Lowell – where it rehearsed in the Lowell High School auditorium, to “roars of appreciation,” before making its debut, in April 2007, at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium.

“I can’t judge the importance of ‘Where Elephants Weep’ for a U.S. audience,” Kay Roberts says. “What I do know is that the production of this opera in Lowell brought the cultural community together, and that its performance here had the most diverse audience any event in Lowell has ever seen.”

In the end, though, she will tell you, she is a teacher. But the teaching doesn’t end in the classroom. And her students aren’t the only ones who learn.

“When I came to UMass Lowell thirty years ago, I experienced the University as an encouraging environment that stimulated my creativity and challenged my abilities. Inside the UMass Lowell community, the question seems to be how education can create a whole person – not only to open doors to a profession, but also to stimulate growth throughout the person’s life. Teaching here gives me the chance to share this attitude with my students, as well as to reach out to the Lowell community to give back what’s been given to me – education and opportunity.

“I think of the role of a conductor as an educator, in the broadest sense. Not only with musicians in rehearsals and performances, but in enhancing the audience’s understanding of what they will be hearing and seeing.”

Kay Roberts Named First Recipient of Donahue Professorship

Prof. Kay Roberts has been named the first recipient of the Nancy Donahue Endowed Professorship in the Arts, the first professorship in the arts at UMass Lowell.

A gift from the Richard K. and Nancy L. Donahue Charitable Foundation of Lowell, the professorship will strengthen the music, art and theater programs at UMass Lowell by expanding the University’s relations with local music, arts and theater communities.

The professorship was announced at the University’s Sounds of Spring Concert in April, at which Mrs. Donahue said, “I can not think of a better ambassador for this professorship (than Prof. Roberts). Her passion for teaching, the city of Lowell and her music is well known and very much appreciated.”

Roberts said, “I am very honored to be the first recipient of the Nancy Donahue Professorship of the Arts. To make a difference in the lives of others and to bring music to the Lowell community has been a wonderful experience for me.”

Prof. Roberts greets Nancy Donahue at the University’s Sounds of Spring Concert, during which it was announced that Roberts has been named the first recipient of the Nancy Donahue Endowed Professorship in the Arts.
Missy Farmer has a beautiful, frisky yellow Labrador retriever puppy named Camber. She takes him for walks, scratches his ears and teaches him to obey commands like “sit” and “stay” and “heel.”

When Camber gets to be eighteen months old she’s going to give him away. It’s all for the best.

A senior majoring in fine arts, Missy is one of more than four hundred “puppy raisers” who care for young dogs that are bred by Guiding Eyes for the Blind, an organization dedicated to raising and training dogs that give the blind and visually impaired individuals freedom and independence.

Missy was introduced to puppy raising when, while she was in the fourth grade, her parents volunteered to raise a Guiding Eyes golden retriever.

“I was always an animal lover,” Missy says, “so when I moved into my own apartment near the North Campus I was able to do what I had always wanted – raise a Guiding Eyes puppy myself.

“I feed Camber in the morning and take him out for a walk. Then for five minutes or so at a time during the day we work on his skills. And I pat his head, and rub his ears and his paws so he gets used to being touched. Doing that, I get him accustomed to being with a blind owner who’ll depend a lot on the sense of touch.

“In the afternoon I take him for a longer walk. It’s a lot of responsibility but it’s a lot of fun, too. He’s a good boy and he’s intelligent.”

Linda Damato, director of Puppy Program Support Services for Guiding Eyes, says, “Puppy raisers are the heart and soul of the organization. They’re phenomenally generous.”

Guiding Eyes graduates about 160 teams (dogs and clients) each year with the help of some 1,200 volunteers. The organization breeds its own dogs, about five hundred a year, at its Canine Development Center in Patterson, N.Y.

Every other week for six months, Missy takes Camber to Nashua, N.H., where a Guiding Eyes coordinator conducts an hour-long training session for puppy raisers. The objective of the training is to make sure the dogs can concentrate and obey common commands in different, and sometimes challenging environments such as busy supermarkets where they might naturally be spooked by things like noisy shopping carts.

“The dogs get evaluated when they’re nine to twelve months old,” Missy says, “and when the coordinator believes they’re ready for the next step, they get to wear a vest that has the Guiding Eyes logo on it. The vest makes it possible for the puppy raisers to take them into other places they’ll need to be accustomed to, like restaurants.”

Isn’t it difficult to raise a puppy and then give it up when it’s a year and a half old?

“Of course,” Missy says. “It’s hard. You make such a connection with the dog. But you go into it knowing that someone else is going to benefit. That makes it a little easier. I’m not giving up a pet, I’m giving up a pair of eyes.”

(Additional information about Guiding Eyes volunteer opportunities is available at 1-866-GEB-LABS.)
Eleven nursing students traveled to Africa in January to provide healthcare to the impoverished residents of Kpando, Ghana. They returned with a new appreciation for the power of teaching and life.

"Seeing people live in poverty make decisions about whether to use what little money they have to eat or go to the doctor really changed how I see things here," says Maggie Murphy.

Brianna Norton established Nursing Students Without Borders a year ago. Visiting Asst. Prof. Valerie King traveled with the students and Visiting Asst. Prof. Miki Patterson was instrumental in planning and fundraising.

"It was clearly a case of back to basics. To really help these people in just three weeks, we needed to teach them how to prevent health problems in the first place," says King. "We brought hundreds of rubber gloves but I wish we had brought thousands of bars of soap."

One day a small group of students visited a fishing village where they showed the Ghanaian people how to boil water, use a basin and, through proper hygiene, prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

In a home for children, the students presented a care plan for those with HIV. "Once we arrived, their smiles widened and they just kept thanking us over and over for just being there," says Erin Kane.

For Katie Hutton, bringing a Ghanaian woman to the hospital for ulcer pain, staying with her for more than six hours, and paying for her care, gave her more satisfaction than she’s every felt in her life. “After we left the hospital, I thought that I may have just saved a person’s life.”

This transformed group of students will graduate in May but vow to take with them the importance of prevention in their roles as nurses in the United States, as well as on other mission trips.

— Karen Angelo
Visiting Asst. Nursing Prof. Valerie King gets a warm welcome when she visits orphans from the Children’s Christian Home. UMass Lowell students brought the children two large boxes of toys, books, games and clothes.

Lauren Lynch takes a patient’s blood pressure at a local outpatient clinic, assisted by a Ghanaian interpreter.

Charly Darius embraces two children waiting in front of their father’s store in Kpando for a taxi ride to school.

Erin Kane, Sarah Merullo, and Maura and Brianna Norton with children from a rural fishing village in the Volta region of Ghana.

Standing in front of the Kpando Health Centre with members of the Centre staff are Brianna Norton, Sarah Merullo, Kathleen Garabedian, Heather Dwan, Melanie Burgess, Erin Kane, Ashley Hoefer, Maggie Murphy and Charly Darius.

While traveling between Accra and Kpando, Kathleen Garabedian, Maggie Murphy, Ashley Hoefer and Lauren Lynch visit with children at a fishing village.
almost doesn’t matter where you look. New freshmen, transfer applications, retention rates, student diversity, out-of-state students, total enrollment—the numbers all are up. There are more UMass Lowell students than ever before, and they are better ones: higher entering GPAs than at any time in the past, and higher SAT scores. It is a landmark moment in the University’s long history. And the horizon shows only improvement.

“There’s a renewed energy on the campus,” says UMass Lowell Undergraduate Admissions Director Kerri Mead. “You can feel it. The whole [University] community seems touched by it — the students, the staff, the faculty, even the alumni are involved.”

The University welcomed more than 2,300 new students last fall, among them the largest class of freshmen – 1,528 – in UMass Lowell history, a 23 percent jump from only a year before. And the 824 new transfer students, 214 of them from private institutions, marked an increase of 15 percent.

At the same time, more students are re-upping than at any time in the past. In the fall of 2008, 79 percent of the previous year’s freshmen returned to UMass Lowell as sophomores – a jump of close to 5 percent from only a year earlier.

Much of this sudden growth, says Mead, has been a function of financial realities, as applicants and their parents look for affordability against the backdrop of a rapidly souring economy. But there is more to it than that, she feels.

“The chancellor, I think, has brought a new recognition to the University. His name, his vision, just the energy he carries with him, has raised our image in the eyes of a lot of people out there.”

Still, even with affordable tuition rates and a new chancellor’s energy and vision, the University is leaving nothing to chance. It is likely that there are more outreach initiatives now underway – some designed to draw students, others to keep them – than at any time in the past.
There’s a renewed energy on the campus, you can feel it. The whole [University] community seems touched by it — the students, the staff, the faculty, even the alumni are involved.”

— Kerri Mead

“There’s a lot of work going into marketing this University,” says Tom Taylor, UMass Lowell dean of enrollment. “Whether you’re talking about new freshmen, returning students, international or out-of-state students, there’s a lot being done to raise visibility, and to get the numbers — and the quality — higher. “And we’re working on new approaches all the time.”

The most visible priority, says Taylor, may also be the most pressing: the campus’s buildings, classrooms, labs, dorms, common areas and athletic facilities. “Building infrastructure is a very big initiative,” he says. “It’s a key part of drawing students, especially international students. There’s a lot of attention going into this, and a lot of revenue.”

The Chancellor’s emphasis here has been widely chronicled; there have been upgradings lately to everything from the University’s labs and classrooms to the signage on its buildings and the lighting in its streets. The most ambitious of these, at least so far, has been the announcement of the $11.8 million renovation to the campus’s tallest building and largest housing facility, the 18-story Fox Hall, to accommodate 119 new beds for the start of the fall 2009 semester.

“A 23 percent increase in freshman enrollment tells us that more students are choosing UMass Lowell,” Chancellor Marty Meehan noted when the renovation project was announced this winter. “By revamping our largest residence hall, we will have more rooms to meet some of that need.”
(The Fox Hall project, he might have added, also puts the University a step closer to his own stated goal of a fifty-fifty resident-to-non-resident mix. Currently, only about a third of the students live on campus.)

Other outreach efforts are less conspicuous, but may be just as likely to bear fruit. These include a heavier promotion of student organizations to deepen social ties on campus, especially among residential students who might be a long way — even an ocean away — from home. Another, says Tom Taylor, involves a wider use of alumni to recruit students: “We’re doing more of that than ever before. We have a strong alumni presence in several states, like Florida and Texas, that are known for their high-tech industries” — which should help, he says, in attracting prospective students seeking a technology-based university.

Other measures being explored, he says, include a joint venture with Middlesex Community College to make use of its ESL program to attract international students; a three-way partnership with UMass Boston and a Chinese University, Tsinghua, to bring engineering students to UMass Lowell following a preparatory year in Beijing; and the use of out-of-state student fees to underwrite merit scholarships.

This last pair of initiatives, says Taylor, are aimed at least as much at raising the quality of students who apply as they are at lifting enrollment numbers. And there is clear evidence that the efforts are paying off: the average cumulative SAT score of incoming freshmen for the ’08-’09 academic year was 1085, the highest ever.

A different class of initiatives aims to draw students either by streamlining the application process or lightening the financial load. One of these, a measure known as “on-site decision days,” allows high-school students in Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire to receive same-day decisions on their applications; another, the “proximity program,” offers out-of-state applicants who live within twenty miles of campus — in the Nashua area, for instance — a reduction from normal out-of-state tuition rates.

The long-term goal of all this, says Taylor, is to maintain the number of freshmen — at its current, record level — while at the same time increasing the quality of the students admitted. This will constitute a growing challenge, he concedes, and one that will rely increasingly on the enrollment of out-of-state and international students.

“The graduation rate for high schools in New England is dropping — the projections are for a lower pool of students from the area in coming years — which means we have to replace those students from somewhere. At the same time, diversity is increasing, especially with the growing Hispanic population. It’s important that we remain sensitive to these trends, and that we do what we can to benefit. Tuition costs for international students used to be low. They no longer are, but we can’t let that stop us — not if we want to recapture the reputation we had then, as a destination campus for both national and international applicants.”

The Admissions Office is on the same wave-length. Outreach efforts to foreign and out-of-state students come in many forms, says Kerri Mead, and have never been more ambitious. “We’re exploring every avenue we know of, covering a wider area than ever before — New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania — working with our alumni, trying to get the message out about the things we’re best known for, the things we do best: sound recording technology, plastics engineering, meteorology. We’re also working with some of our faculty who have connections with international students, trying to see if we can capitalize on that.

“Diversity is definitely on the increase. And that’s a good thing for everyone, the students as well as the University. The more diverse our campus, the more it enhances the students’ experience here.” — Kerri Mead
campus, the more it enhances the students’ experience here.”

On the graduate level, while the challenges have been different, the trend is very much the same. Applications to last fall’s UMass Lowell graduate programs increased 13 percent over the year before; enrollments were up about 4 percent – not including the 14 percent jump recorded by Continuing Studies and Corporate Education, a number helped dramatically by the recent explosion in online courses. But as is true with their counterparts on the undergraduate end of things, the folks in charge of those numbers haven’t been sitting on their hands.

“The overall goal is to increase enrollment in the master’s degree programs,” says Don Pierson, the newly named vice provost of Graduate Education. “There are several distinct ways we’re looking to accomplish this, some of them in place already and some still in the planning phase.”

Foremost among the existing new approaches, he says, is the just-created “professional science” master’s degree program, which will grant a degree to students who take a core load of courses in the sciences – physics, chemistry and biology – as well as additional, non-science courses in such areas as management, leadership or business skills. The idea here, he explains, is to equip the student with a real-world grounding in the “whole spectrum of the industry” he or she may be entering, as opposed to a single specialty – which should translate to a more versatile, and thereby more valuable, employee. “It seems to fit well with the way industry is designed and run today,” he says.

“We are attracting more students because we are meeting a critical demand — affordable, accessible, quality higher education.” — Chancellor Meehan

A second new initiative, says Pierson, also already in use, is the so-called “Plus One” master’s degree program, which, by granting double credit — both undergraduate and graduate for work done as an undergraduate senior, makes it possible for a student to earn a master’s in only a single additional year of study. “We expect this one to be popular,” he says.

Another new development, also certain to be popular, is the increasing availability of scholarship aid for master’s-level study. Still another – although this one remains in the “planning phase” stage, Pierson says – will be the planned increase in the number of graduate programs in the fine arts, humanities and the social sciences.

In the meantime, he says: “The numbers are up, pretty much across the board. The new science master’s and the ‘Plus One’ program should help lift them higher still. But even with that, we need to do a better job in publicizing the programs we have.”

For all the numbers, though, and all the trends charted and ambitious initiatives planned, in the end it comes down to the names and faces — and stories of the students who come here, or don’t. Students like Shawn Morin of Nashua who had been attending BU as an engineering major, on an Air Force ROTC scholarship – his dream was an Air Force career – until he decided that engineering wasn’t for him, but was told he couldn’t change his major without losing his scholarship aid. Today he is at UMass Lowell, paying “proximity program” reduced tuition rates, going to ROTC meetings and studying psychology. Or Katherine Moran, who had been paying $49,000 at Worcester Polytech where, she says, she felt lost; she’s at UMass Lowell today, double-majoring in physics and philosophy, paying exactly a third of that.

“We are attracting more students because we are meeting a critical demand — affordable, accessible, quality higher education,” says Chancellor Meehan. “New freshmen and transfer students are increasingly turning to us because of the high-quality education we offer at a cost that won’t leave them with decades of debt.

“In difficult economic times like these, we know that mission is even more important.”
One day about fifteen years ago, when Don LaTorre, then in his mid-fifties, was still working seventy-plus hours a week — as president and COO of an international chemical company — his oldest son approached him with a question: “How much is enough, Dad?”

“That really stopped me,” LaTorre says today. “That caused me to rethink. There I was — seventy hours a week, and it still wasn’t enough. And I didn’t even really need the job. So when I couldn’t answer the question, I knew I had some deciding to do.”

Over the next two or three years, he groomed a successor — another alumnus, like himself, from Lowell Tech — and began weaning himself from the job. In 1997, after close to forty years of sixty- and seventy-hour weeks, most of them in upper management, he walked away from the chemicals field. He was almost sixty years old.

Today he is seventy-one, and still working.

But there are some very big differences. One of them, of course, is the workload — he no longer works the same kind of hours. But the bigger difference is what he’s doing with his time: instead of overseeing the daily workings of a company — taking the broad, macro view, from the lofty perch of the president’s office, with his emphasis on the success or failure of this or that new project — his focus is on people now, individually, on how they perform and why. It’s made for a whole new perspective, he says.

“It’s basically a coaching job,” he explains of his current position, as founder and president of L&G Management Consultants, the leadership-development company he founded nearly twelve years ago. “A company approaches me to work with a key employee, say the person they’ve chosen as their next CEO. Among other things, I’ll sit in on their meetings, watch how they perform with people, then meet with them afterward to discuss what leadership skills could be improved. It’s very gratifying. A lot more fun than just working on projects. I’ve met some pretty interesting people. And it’s taken me to places — one company was in Ukraine — I might never have seen otherwise.

“It’s been a better choice, for me, than living on the golf course. I’m not the type for that. And I don’t ever plan to be.”

The work ethic is bred pretty deep in a man like Don LaTorre. Raised in a then-thriving mill city, Amsterdam, in New York State’s Mohawk Valley, the son and grandson of millworkers — both men worked, one in the weave room, the other in the powerhouse, for the old Mohawk Carpet Mills — he watched his hometown decline slowly through his youth, then more rapidly, as the mills closed and jobs followed the lower wages south.

By the time he followed a friend to Lowell Tech in the fall of 1955 — on a textile-school scholarship offered by Mohawk — the valley was already showing signs that its best days were behind it. (Of its status today, he says: “I don’t have much reason to go back anymore — it can be pretty depressing. It’s one of the few regions in the country where the area code hasn’t changed in thirty years.”)

The LTI he remembers was a small school, “very focused in what it did, with dedicated faculty who would teach you things that didn’t just come out of books.” He recalls one particularly devoted textiles professor — Peirent — who inspired him, and another, an organic-chemistry professor by the name...
of Scattergood who “used to mix up samples for analysis in beer bottles, which we all thought was pretty great.

“I lived in a dorm at first, then in a fraternity house, where I met people from all over, exchange students, students from the South. It was good exposure for a kid from upstate New York.”

His first job after graduation was as a salesman for a small chemical company in Amsterdam — it is gone today, another casualty of the southern textile migration. He stayed seven years, finding a wife, Gloria, and starting a family in the process, all the while attending graduate school (“We were married in sixty-one — I met her in Lake George, where I was working summers as a bartender”). Their first three children, all sons, were born in Amsterdam.

Next would come six years in Cleveland, in planning and marketing/sales management for Diamond Shamrock, where a daughter, Amy, would be born; then ten years with BASF in Michigan, where he would finish, in 1982, as head of his own division. Then two years as executive vice president at Velcro USA. And, finally, the worldwide chemical company, Engelhard, based in New Jersey, a manufacturer of chemicals and catalysts for the automotive, plastics, petroleum and paper industries. He would stay there thirteen years — working all those seventy-hour weeks — and finish as the company’s number-two man.

And now, as he says, he is a “coach” — a sort of personal trainer to high-level executives, a former corporate leader who helps teach others how to lead. It is a job that seems uniquely suited to all that he is: his skills, his interests, the stage he has arrived at in life. As near-perfect a semi-retirement as anyone could hope to craft.

And yet there is more. And still more. For this is not a man, as he’s said, who is ever going to live on the golf course — or even, it might seem to some, find the time to unpack his clubs from the car.

His latest passion — and one of his favorite subjects these days — is the New Life Institute, of which he is a founder. Run by a Massachusetts psychotherapist named Jeanne Weikert, the NLI describes itself on its website as a program “created to help people get a fresh perspective on their lives.” Targeted largely at professionals in transition, middle-aged and older, its monthly workshops, at Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey, offer its participants — as Don LaTorre himself puts it — “the space and time to reflect on their options, and to ask themselves the question, ‘What am I going to do with the rest of my life?’”

“There I was — seventy hours a week, and it still wasn’t enough. And I didn’t even really need the job. So when I couldn’t answer the question, I knew I had some deciding to do.”

— Don LaTorre

His imprint on the program is clear from the moment you go to the website. The title-theme of the March 2009 workshop, the latest one scheduled as of this magazine’s press-time was — you might have guessed it — “How Much is Enough?”

Then there is that piece of his life that he likes to call “payback” — his relationship with higher education, especially with UMass Lowell. In addition to his former tenures on an advisory board at Mercer University in Georgia, several college boards and commissions in New Jersey — where he and Gloria now make their summer home — and this University’s School of Sciences Advisory Board, he is chairman of the newly formed UMass Lowell Nanotechnology Manufacturing Board — which, by contrast to most boards and commissions you’re apt to hear about, could provide a direct stream of revenue to the school.

The biggest share of credit for this, he will tell you, belongs to Marty Meehan.

“He and I met a while back and got to talking. The idea is pretty basic — that nano research can provide an opportunity to earn royalties from businesses, a way to earn income through the University’s research. We’ve spent some time on the phone about this, and traded a number of e-mails, trying to figure ways to facilitate the process. And it’s what drove us to start the board. But the real driver behind it has been the chancellor.”

Finally (if anything about Don LaTorre could ever be said to be final) there is his family. It is a large one: his wife, three sons — a minister, an anesthesiologist, an oil company executive — their wives, a married daughter and her husband, a sugar company executive, and (at current count) fifteen grandchildren. And when the full family gathers, as they did last summer on the North Carolina coast, the head-count is twenty-six.

“God has been good to me,” says the family patriarch who, with Gloria, spends his summers in northern New Jersey, his winters in Florida. Both homes are on the water, with a boat never far away.

And yes, he says, he does play golf.

“I’m not good, I don’t work hard at it. But I play.”

Face of Philanthropy
The UMass Lowell hockey team, which only two years ago was threatened with extinction or demotion to a lower level of competition, reaffirmed its credentials by soaring to a 20-win season and a berth in the 2009 championship game of the prestigious Hockey East conference.

“There were a lot of shining moments this year, both with the team and with the entire program,” says Coach Blaise MacDonald. “We have virtually the entire team coming back next season and we think we’re ready to take the next step to national prominence.”

MacDonald was justifiably proud of his scrappy young squad, which upset Northeastern University in overtime in the Hockey East semi-final game on March 20 to advance to the championship the next night against Boston University, the top-ranked team in all of college hockey. Unfortunately, the River Hawks fell to BU, 1-0.

The final, played before 13,000 fans in the TD Banknorth Garden in Boston, was not without controversy. Midway through the second period, junior Ben Holmstrom poked the puck into the BU net from a scrum in front of the crease, but the officials ruled that the goal had been scored after the whistle. Replays later showed that it had, in fact, been good.

“We lost tonight,” MacDonald said after the game, “But I told our guys that they’re still winners.”

The River Hawks’ only other trip to the Big East final came in 1994, ironically also a loss to the BU Terriers.

Before the 2007 arrival of Chancellor Marty Meehan and his efforts on the team’s behalf, the UMass board of trustees had considered eliminating the hockey program or moving it out of the Hockey East conference.

“A 20-win season is the benchmark of success,” MacDonald says, “and we were considered one of the best teams in
The River Hawks finished 20-16-2 but, over the final 19 games, they posted a 12-5-2 record.

“We had tremendous fan support and attendance was magnificent,” says MacDonald.

The Athletics Department, with the full support of the University administration, waged a stellar marketing campaign that packed the Tsongas Arena with students, faculty, staff, alumni and Lowell area residents throughout the season.

As one fan said, “There was just a spirit. You could feel it. It was everywhere.”

Director of Athletics Dana Skinner says, “We’re very excited about the support and enthusiasm the hockey program has received, both on campus and in the surrounding communities.

“The combination of a successful team, reasonable ticket prices and a more vibrant game-day environment produced the highest single-season attendance in school history. Average attendance reached almost 4,400 per game – an increase of more than 1,000 over last year and about 1,500 over the past two years.

“This growing number of fans will play a significant role in helping to advance the program.”

The club is losing only three seniors to graduation – wingers Mark Roebothan and Mike Potacco, and center/winger Nick Monroe. The 2009-10 team will have eight sophomores, six juniors and 13 seniors back. Plus, says MacDonald, “We had a wonderful recruiting year.”

The River Hawks’ journey to the Hockey East final included a two-game sweep of Vermont the weekend before the exciting semi-final overtime victory over Northeastern. In both the first Vermont game and the Northeastern game, the River Hawks tied the score with seconds left to send the contests into overtime.

Sophomores Scott Campbell and Maury Edwards were named to the All-Tournament Team.

Despite beating two teams ranked in the top 10 nationally, and playing Boston University tough to the very end, the River Hawks were overlooked when the NCAA tournament teams were selected.

“Remarkable Season Ends in Overtime Against Merrimack

The UMass Lowell basketball team lost a tough game in overtime in the NCAA Division II East Regional Tournament, putting a disappointing end to a remarkable season. The River Hawks lost to Merrimack College 86-84 at C.W. Post’s Pratt Recreation Center at Long Island University on Saturday, March 14.

The River Hawks finished the season with a 21-8 record.

Sophomore Max Kerman scored a career-high 20 points while freshman Kyle Caiola also scored 20, including 15 in the second half and 11 in the final 5:27 and overtime. The game included 17 ties and eight lead changes.

“That was a great college basketball game. Hats off to Merrimack,” said first-year Head Coach Greg Herenda. “I could not be prouder of our guys. They gave a great effort. We went toe-to-toe with one of the best teams in the region.

“We were picked to finish 12th in our league,” added Herenda, who played and coached under Merrimack Head Coach Bert Hammell. “We just got better as the year went along.

“I’m disappointed that we lost. We just wanted to play and practice together a little bit more. We have no seniors and next year we’ll be bigger, better and stronger. I’m already looking forward to next season.”

Herenda was named East Region Coach of the Year by the National Association of Basketball Coaches and Northeast-10 Conference Coach of the Year.

Caiola was named the NE-10 Freshman of the Year and Max Kerman was named the Defensive Player of the Year.
Ruben Sanca Is
Sports Illustrated
‘Face in the Crowd’

Ruben Sanca, who led the River Hawk cross country team to three trophies in the Northeast-10 Conference, the NCAA East Region championships and the New England Championship appeared in Sports Illustrated’s Faces in the Crowd section in January. Ruben, a senior from Boston, was also voted the Northeast-10 Runner of the Year by the conference coaches.

Brown Wins All-America Track and Field Honors at NCAAs

Sophomore Donte Brown earned dual All-America honors in the 400 meters and 4x400 meter relay at the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championship at the University of Houston’s Yeoman Field House in March. UMass Lowell finished tied for 22nd overall (among 41 teams) in the team standings.

Senior Ruben Sanca, who was seeded No. 3 for the 5,000 meter and distance medley relays, had to withdraw from the NCAAs with a hip injury. Despite that disappointment, Sanca earned many honors over the past two seasons: East Region Men’s Indoor Athlete of the Year, named by the U.S. Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association; USTFCCCA’s East Region Men’s Cross Country Athlete of the Year; Northeast-10 Conference Athlete of the Year for both cross country and indoor track; and NE-10 and USTFCCCA Cross Country All-Academic Team honors for the third straight year.

Ciszek/Yarnall Hall Dedicated

The foyer in the Costello Gym was recently dedicated as the James Ciszek/Rusty Yarnall Alumni Hall to honor two legends of Lowell athletics. Rusty Yarnall coached three different sports at Lowell Textile/Lowell Technological Institute over forty-six years. James Ciszek was an educator, coach and administrator for thirty-two years at Lowell State and the University of Lowell. Pictured during the dedication ceremony during half time at the men’s basketball game on Saturday, Jan. 31, are, from left, Gerry Hunt ’69, Jim Ciszek, Bob Boehm ’70, and Ray Yarnall, stepson of Rusty Yarnall.

Athletics Director Dana Skinner, left, presents former hockey coach Bill Riley with a framed collage, representing his 22-year coaching career. The presentation came during the Bill Riley Retirement Tribute on Friday, March 6, before the Maine game at the Tsongas Arena. Riley was the head coach from 1969 to 1991 and led the University to three Division II national championships. He is the program’s all-time leader with 363 wins and was the head coach during the transition to Division I and into Hockey East. Riley is retiring from the Athletics Department in June.
Fraternity brothers of Omicron Pi gathered at the Red Sox game in Fort Myers, Fla., in March were, from left, Bill Lipchitz '63, Jerry Lydon '66, Stu Pearce '64, Tom Burke '63, Dick Daukus '62, Chancellor Marty Meehan '78, Rick Hoeske '66, Dave White '64, Mike Anderson '66, and Doug Stagnaro '64.

Charles Hoff ’66 threw out the first pitch at UMass Day at a Red Sox game in Fort Myers, Fla., in March.

The Capital Grille alumni gathering in Naples, Fla., in March included Jean Bradshaw ’69, left, Prof. Tom Shea, center, and retired faculty member Carole Pearce. Prof. Shea was a featured speaker in the One-Day University event earlier in the day.

Clementine Alexis ’56, Chancellor Marty Meehan ’78, Bill Alexis, Executive Vice Chancellor Jacqueline Moloney ’75, ’92, and Joe Day ’66 took part in the Mar-a-Lago event.

Alumni Events

Dick Russell ’61, Carol Russell, Dr. Jeanne Whitten ’97 and Humphrey Moynihan take part in the reception at Mar-a-Lago.

Chancellor Marty Meehan ’78 with Margaret and Joe ’53 Flannery at the Mar-a-Lago reception.

Chancellor Marty Meehan ’78 presents Joe Day ’66 with a certificate announcing that a new scholarship was created in his name as a gesture of thanks for hosting the Mar-a-Lago reception each year.

Rick Coffin, Ida Simpson ’49, Maria Maughan ’87, Jimmy Sarantos, Helen Cappello and Vasiliki ’52 and Vito ’52 Selvaggio enjoy the Mar-a-Lago reception.

Alumni and friends attended an elegant evening at the Mar-a-Lago reception in Palm Beach, Fla., in March.
Alumni enjoyed the seventh-annual Epicurean Extravaganza on Sunday, Feb. 22, at L’Andana in Burlington. From left, Mark ’87 and Pia Webb and Thomas and Lisa ’84 Brothers.

Kathy (O’Reilly) Larmand ’82 and husband Marc ’82 were among the many UMass Lowell alumni couples who spent Valentine’s Day at Alumni Night enjoying River Hawks hockey.

Alumni enjoyed a wonderful evening of gourmet food and excellent wine at the seventh-annual Epicurean Extravaganza on Sunday, Feb. 22, at L’Andana in Burlington. From left, Dan Danecki ’81, Steve Noneman, Mary Barrett ’93 and Barbara Danecki ’80.

Crew alumni — Cate Fothergill Curran ’84, Shelagh Donohoe ’87 and Karen Scammell Meijer ’85 — watched the River Hawk hockey team take on UMass Amherst at the Tsongas Arena on Jan. 17.

The UMass Lowell All-Time Hockey East 25th Anniversary Team, as voted by fans, was honored in March during an on-ice ceremony. With Chaz Skoggins of the Lowell Sun are, from left, Jeff Daw (1992-96), forward, fourth in team history in power play goals; Christian Sbrocca (1982-96), a forward who is the program’s all-time leader with 158 career games played; Jon Morris (1984-88), forward, Hockey East’s all-time leading scorer; and Paul Ames (1983-87), defenseman, Hockey East Second Team All-Star in 1985 and 1987. Missing are Dwayne Roloson (1990-94), goaltender, Hockey East Player of the Year and Hobey Baker Finalist in 1994; and Ron Hainsey (1999-01), defenseman, first round pick (13th overall) of the Montreal Canadiens in the 2000 NHL Entry Draft and Hockey East First Team All-Star and All-America selection in 2001.
1965
Robert Lodie writes, “Lorraine and I recently moved from Los Angeles to New York City where I will continue consulting and speaking in the Financial Services Industry.”

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1973
Christine Cournoyer, president and chief operating officer of Picis, Inc., has been elected to the board of directors of BJ’s Wholesale Club. She is a leader across healthcare and information technology sectors and was named among the Top 100 Women in Business by Boston Magazine in 2003 and Top Ten Women in Technology by Business Week in 2001. Christine joined Picis, Inc., in 2006 from Harte Hank's, Inc., where she served as managing director from 2005 to 2006. Prior to Harte Hank's, she was president and chief operating officer of Lightbridge, Inc., a leading provider of outsourced customer analytics. From 1996 to 2002 she held senior management positions at IBM, including vice president of Business Transformation, vice president of Customer Operations and Technology, and chief information officer of the software group.

1974
Richard Davis, assistant vice president and senior engineering technical specialist at FM Global, one of the world’s largest commercial property insurers, has been appointed president of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers. The society is an international professional organization represented by more than 4,500 fire protection engineering practitioners. At FM Global, where he has worked since 1974, he is responsible for developing loss prevention engineering guidelines that are used by the company’s worldwide clients. He also has been an adjunct professor in fire protection at WPI and Northeastern University.

1976
Arthur Houle, associate professor of music at Mesa State College in Colorado, has had five original piano solo compositions published by the Hal Leonard Corporation in a book titled, “Cowboy Jazz.” He describes the selections as ranging “from early to late intermediate level, and as fun, accessible pieces with a jazzy flavor.” Two of the selections were performed live on National Public Radio’s “Eklektikos” in Austin, Texas, and one, titled “Melody for Dennis,” won second prize in a Music Umbrella of Austin Original Instrumental Composition Competition.

1977
Mary Anne Sahagian, First Justice of the Essex Probate and Family Court, has been appointed by the Supreme Judicial Court to the Commission on Judicial Conduct for a term of six years. She succeeds Worcester Probate and Family Court Judge Susan Ricci, whose term expired. Prior to her appointment to the Probate and Family Court in 1999, Mary Anne was in private practice for nineteen years.

1979
Ken Georgievits of Concord, N.H., a commander in the Naval reserve, was special events coordinator for the inauguration of President Barack Obama. As a member of the Armed Forces Inaugural Committee, he selected event sites and coordinated ceremonial support at each of the inaugural balls. Ken works at the Naval Air Systems Command in Patuxent River, Md.

1980
David W. Taylor of Tallahassee has been appointed executive director of the Florida Agency for Enterprise Information Technology and state CIO. Dave will oversee the state agency responsible for developing Florida’s enterprise strategic information technology plan. He has been interim director since last July, while continuing to serve as CIO for the Florida Department of Health. Dave credits his education in Lowell with providing “a rich and well balanced mixture of hard science and liberal arts. The science training taught a disciplined, analytical approach to solving complex problems, while the social coursework provided knowledge of the
larger social framework that surrounded those problems.” This experience, he says, helped him prepare for graduate studies and meet subsequent career challenges.

1984

Lisa A. Brothers, owner, vice president and COO of Nitsch Engineering was named 2008 Woman of the Year by the Boston Chapter of the Women’s Transportation Seminar. The award recognizes a member of WTS-Boston who is a leader in the transportation industry and has advanced the reputation and credibility of women and minorities within the industry through her career achievements. Lisa is a registered professional engineer with more than twenty-four years of experience and is involved in a wide range of professional activities. Her contributions to her community have been recognized by a range of organizations. The Boston Society of Civil Engineers presented Lisa with its 2004 Citizen Engineer Award. In 2003, UMass Lowell recognized her contributions with a Francis College of Engineering Alumni Award. She was honored with a 2002 Pinnacle Award as an Emerging Executive by the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce. In 2001, Lisa received the BSCES Lester Gaynor Award in recognition of her exemplary service as a public official in Wilmington.

1985

Sandra Brock, a civil engineer with twenty-three years of experience, has been promoted to chief engineer at Nitsch Engineering of Boston. She has been with Nitsch for fourteen years and is one of nine shareholders of the firm. As a leader of Nitsch Engineering’s Sustainable Sites Group, she frequently speaks on the topic of sustainable sites and also recently authored an article that was featured in the New England Real Estate Journal.

Mitchell Lutch received his doctorate of musical arts in instrumental conducting from the University of Washington in Seattle last year. He is in his fourth year on the faculty of Central College in Pella, Iowa, where he is assistant professor of music and director of bands. He also serves as conductor of the Central Iowa Wind Ensemble, an adult group based in Des Moines. From 1985 to 1988 he taught instrumental music in the Malden Public Schools before pursuing his master’s degree at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston where he graduated with academic honors in 1990. He then taught high school instrumental music in the Port Washington and Fayetteville-Manlius Public Schools, both in New York, before pursuing his doctoral studies. Artists he has collaborated with in his teaching career include Donald Hunsburger, Eric Ewazen, Dana Wilson, Ellis Marsalis, Frank Foster, Slide Hampton and Marian McPartland. Mitchell is past president of the New York State Band Directors Association and has been a guest speaker at several educational institutions, including the New England and Shenandoah conservatories. Conducting and speaking appearances include concerts and conferences throughout the United States, Quebec, London, Japan, The Peoples Republic of China, the former Soviet Union and Luxembourg.

1986

Curtis Davis has been named vice president of the PowerPSoC™ Business Unit of Cypress Semiconductor Corporation of San Jose, Calif., with initial focus on the LED lighting market. He brings to the position thirty years of power management and semiconductor experience, in both engineering and management roles. Curtis most recently served as president and CEO of iWatt, a provider of power management IC solutions where he grew the startup company to $20 million in revenue. Prior to that, he spent twenty-five years with Analog Devices, starting as a design engineer and ending as vice president and general manager of the Precision Linear and Power Management Business Unit.

Timothy Hoopes is working at NRG systems, in Hinesburg, Vt., where he builds wind assessment systems for the wind energy industry, which he says is “booming right now in the middle of a nasty recession.” Tim and his wife, Laura, have a 2-year-old son, Windsor, who describes himself as “strong and happy.”

Susan Tait Porcaro of Windsor, Conn., has been inducted into the National Association of Women Artists at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Her latest piece, “Grace,” an ethereal depiction of peonies, won honorable mention in the Connecticut Women Artists juried show last year, and was in the American Artists Professional League Grand National Exhibit at the Salmagundi Club in New York City. Her work can be viewed at www.susantaitporcaro.com and she can be contacted at (860) 243-3975.

Henrique Wilson uses his education degrees in Community, Social Psychology and in Regional, Social and Economic Development to help others through his work with One Lowell, an organization dedicated to increasing the integration and self-sufficiency of the City’s many newcomers. Henrique is overseeing an effort to increase the power of individual votes. A native of Liberia, he says the United Nations should hire every RESD graduate because the program gives students a mix of skills that help them “get things done, help communities and create change.”

1987

Charles Bartolomeo has opened a used car lot, Performance Auto Brokers, at a new location 100 Ford Street in Lynn where he is offering a discount to UMass Lowell alumni.

1988

Jeff Meisner has been named senior director of rehabilitation service at Exeter (N.H.) Hospital. He assumed this post in December after serving as director of Outpatient Services at Shaughnessy Kaplan Rehabilitation Hospital in Salem, Mass. In Exeter, he will help improve efficiency and share best-practice guidelines among the array of rehabilitation services offered through the hospital and its affiliates Exeter Healthcare and Synergy Health & Fitness.
**1988**

James Regan has been named chief executive officer of the Marlboro-based Digital Federal Credit Union, the largest credit union in New England. He has worked there since 1991, serving as CFO since 1996. The Credit Union has nineteen branch offices and a membership of more than 320,000.

**1989**

Patricia A. O’Donnell, who has spent nearly twenty years in the Air Force, is planning to retire this year. Patricia was deployed in the support of the war on global terrorism in the summer of 2005 and endured hurricane Katrina. She received a master’s degree in healthcare administration in 2000 and a master’s in community health in 2003. She will remain in Utah after retirement but plans to return to New England in the near future.

**1992**

Brian Evans is an audio engineer at Clair Audio Ent. and is currently working with Mary J. Blige and Alicia Keys. He previously worked with Rush, NIN, A Perfect Circle, Garth Brooks, Vince Gill, Janet Jackson, Lonestar and the All American Rejects. Brian has been married for nine years and is building a studio called Maximus Maximus in San Antonio, Texas.

Rick Knowles is vice president of engineering for AutoVirt of Nashua, N.H. A software executive with more than twenty years of product development experience, Rick has significant expertise in Windows, Windows real-time extensions, Linux, UNIX and several embedded operating systems. His earlier work included the creation of disruptive security appliance technology. Rick has a master’s degree in computer science from UMass Lowell.

**1993**

Sarah Jones is editor of Mix magazine, the leading publication for professional audio and music production. Sarah, who graduated with degrees in both Sound Recording Technology and Music Business, says the University’s academic programs “equipped me with the practical, real world tools that I needed to establish my career in this highly competitive, creative industry.”

**1994**

Carol Luers Eyman is the editor of a new history of the city of Nashua, N.H., “The Nashua Experience: A Three-Decade Upgrade, 1978-2008.” The book was written by three librarians at the Nashua Public Library where Carol is the outreach and community services coordinator.

Rashid M. Shaikh, a senior director of global supply chain operations at Nupro Inc. in Clinton, has announced his candidacy for the single seat on the board of selectmen in the town of Shrewsbury. Rashid has conducted change management workshops to companies and organizations around the world to train leaders in tactical and strategic management, increase efficiency and reduce cost while improving quality of service. He says he wants to use those talents and experience to help the community. He has been a town meeting member since 2007 and, last year, launched a cable TV show in which public figures are interviewed about current issues. “Shake It Up With Shaikh” concentrates on how to bring positive changes at the local, state and federal levels of government. He also has a website aimed at encouraging people to get involved to help make a change by voting. He is also a member of the India Society of Worcester. Both Shrewsbury and Worcester have large Asian populations, and he says he hopes his candidacy will inspire other minorities with talent to step forward. “This is not about being Asian. It’s about educating, dedicated people with talents getting involved in the town matters and providing their services just like they do with their companies,” he says.

**1995**

Deborah Belanger, executive director of the Greater Merrimack Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau, has been named a corporator at The Lowell Five Cent Savings Bank in Lowell. In addition to her role promoting tourism and economic development in northeastern Massachusetts, she also serves on numerous boards and organizations in the area, including the Cultural Organization of Lowell, the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce and Lowell General Hospital.

**1996**

Mary Jean Hughes published her first book, a true story titled, “The Wolf Who Cried Boy: A Labor of Love, A Story of Perseverance.” When Mary Jean’s son, Kyle, showed signs of dyslexia before the age of four, she expected assistance, guidance and compassion from his school. Instead, she says she ran into roadblocks, procedural violations, delays and delay tactics and exorbitant financial burdens. Regardless of the hurdles in her way Mary Jean, who holds a doctorate in education, fought the system and overcame obstacle after obstacle until finally, her quest for justice came to fruition. She describes “The Wolf Who
Cried Boy” as the story of a mother who wouldn’t give up on her son. Fortunately, she says, Kyle now thrives in an appropriate interventional and educational setting. She calls her book a daring and shocking look at our educational system that would educate parents who have children with dyslexia, help guide them in their advocacy, and touch the human spirit of anyone who cares about children’s education and happiness. She recommends the book to parents, teachers, therapists, principals, special educators, pediatricians and others. Mary Jean has received all five star reviews on the www.barnesandnoble.com website. The book may be purchased by e-mailing her directly at twwwcb@aol.com.

Wendy LaBate has been promoted to senior vice president of operations at Genesis HealthCare for the Northeast Area. In her new position, she will be responsible for providing day-to-day oversight and support to all of Genesis’ regional vice presidents of operations and administrators in six states in order to support center operations, improve efficiencies and promote patient-centered care. In addition, she represents Genesis and its services to local legislators, regulators and community associations throughout New England. Wendy has been employed by Genesis HealthCare for more than fifteen years, most recently as vice president of Clinical Operations for the Northeast Area. In that capacity, she had oversight for the nursing care delivery systems and outcomes for all the Genesis skilled nursing and assisted living facilities in six New England states. In her prior work for Genesis, she also served as an administrator, director of nurses, and a quality improvement coordinator at several Genesis centers in Massachusetts.

1997

German Laverde has been promoted to the position of Director of Sales, Latin America, of Gloucester Engineering Co. Inc. (GEC). In his new role, he is responsible for overseeing all sales efforts in Latin America. He has been with GEC for thirteen years in various roles, most recently as director of New Business Development. “The education I received at UMass Lowell was an excellent complement to the empirical experience I had collected working previously for some years in the plastics industry,” he says. “Even as an alumnus, the professors are still a great resource in assisting with guidance or advice to our company and our customers.”

1998

Michael Antonelli has been promoted to principal at Edelstein & Company LLP, a Boston-based full-service accounting and business consulting firm. He specializes in the areas of corporate, partnership and individual taxation. A CPA, he is pursuing a master’s of science in taxation degree at Suffolk University.

Karen Kirkpatrick and her husband David own a Curves facility in Peterborough, N.H. She says her degree in health education has been very beneficial. They invite all UMass Lowell graduates in the Monadnock region to stop in.

2002

Heather (McWatt) Pellegrino writes, “My husband, Michael Pellegrino ’02, and I just broke ground on our dream house! We purchased land in Dracut and are looking forward to the busy months ahead of us designing and building our new home.”

Ian Underwood writes, “After more than a decade away, I am happy to announce that I have purchased a house in my hometown of Leicester, where I hope to plant some roots with my wife, Sara, and 2-year old son, Owen.”

2003

Mary Lee Dunn was a RESD graduate student when she began work on “Ballykilcline Rising/From Famine Ireland to Immigrant America.” That book, about hundreds of Irish tenant farmers who were evicted by the Queen’s agents in 1847 and shipped to New York, has been published by the UMass Press. Mary Lee traced a cluster of those immigrants to Rutland, Vt. When she found a naturalization record filed in 1855 by Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin’s Irish ancestor, she earned praise from the New England Historic Genealogical Society and front page coverage in the Irish Times. Sheiran, who once lived in Rutland, was from Knockhall in County Roscommon, a town across a narrow county road from Ballykilcline. Mary Lee, a former journalist for the Boston Globe and other newspapers, was on the staff of the Department of Work Environment when she retired in 2003. Her book is available through the UMass Press website and Amazon.com.

2004

Anne Rakip has accepted a position as assistant professor of education at South Carolina State University in Orangeburg. Anne previously was a science faculty member at Palm Beach Community College.

David Sachs was promoted in spring 2008 to Senior Windows Administrator and Exchange Administrator at Draper Laboratory. He would like to send a great big “thank you” to all of his instructors who helped him get through his courses.
‘Lean and Mean’— Running a Start-up in the Teeth of a Recession

Brendan Cahill is one of those transplanted northerners who found the south by accident, then woke up one day to realize it was home.

He was born and raised in Massachusetts — graduated from UMass Lowell in 1993 — then worked in New England with GE till 1998, when he was transferred to Louisville to work as a processing engineer. By the time he left three years later, to open a consulting practice in Washington D.C., he had married a Kentucky native and the bluegrass was in his blood. The couple was gone four years; but it didn’t take that long before they knew they wanted to return.

“Traveling [as a consultant] was getting more extensive every year,” Cahill told a Kentucky reporter a year ago. “And Louisville is wonderful — everything from the weather, the amount of daylight we have, the people…."

Also, he says, he was asking himself: why should he be going on the road to help other manufacturers succeed when he had the knowledge and training to bring the success on himself? — or, as he put it at the time, to “take that expertise and bring it in-house.”

So the Cahills returned to Louisville. And in February 2007, Brendan opened his own plant across the river in Indiana — PTG Silicones, a manufacturer of thermoplastic molding — with three employees, 5,100 square-feet of floor space and half a million dollars in state-of-the-art equipment.

Right from the start, it was a lot of work; there were nights he had to sleep in his office to oversee the unmanned equipment that can operate twenty-four hours a day. But the company has prospered, winning clients in the healthcare, automotive, aerospace and industrial fields — even in the teeth of the recession.

“We’ve had to be lean and mean,” says Cahill today. “It’s not easy. We had to let go of three part-time employees not long ago; there’s no fat in the operation at all. But we’re a highly automated company — one of the very few in the country that can operate around the clock if we need to, part of the time unmanned. That keeps costs low, and wins us clients in the end.

“The challenge now is sales. We have to have the resources to go out and find new clients. It’s tough in this environment, but we’ll manage. And I feel very good about the future.”

Sarah Fahey ’05 Is Making ‘Dirty Sexy Money’

When Sarah Fahey was a senior at Chelmsford High, she lost several good friends to cancer and car crashes. Just before graduation, she wrote about the losses for the school paper, and surprised everyone.

“Before I wrote that story, nobody knew I could do anything besides play sports,” she says.

Fast forward four years, and Fahey is still writing – although it’s funny now — for the hit ABC show “Dirty Sexy Money.”

“I actually try to write drama, but people just laugh. I’ll pour my heart into a descriptive, serious piece and the writers are hysterical when I give it to them. Ironic, huh?” she asks.

Fahey, daughter of a Lowell firefighter, started with the show two years ago as an assistant show runner. Early this year she was working on the production side of a TV pilot being shot in South Boston.

“I can’t really say much about it, unfortunately. I sign all these contracts. I’m afraid if I leak anything, someone will come up to my dad’s house in Dracut after me!”

Fahey credits her English professors with directing her toward writing for film and television.

“Dr. Roberts was the chair of the English Department when I was at the University – he really helped push me in the right direction. I also loved Professors Hersey and Garreau. Professor Archibald drove me nuts – her classes were so hard! But I kept signing up for them.”

“Dirty Sexy Money,” starring Donald Sutherland and Blair Underwood, airs on ABC on Wednesdays at 10 p.m.
A Winter at the Bottom of the World

Renee Nicole Leclerc Douceur ’75 has spent an interesting, but very cold winter. Selected to participate in the National Science Foundation’s Antarctic program, Douceur left January 26 — following a two-day course in survival skills — for the McMurdo Ice Station, an NSF research station located, literally, at the bottom of the world.

While there, she reports, she served as the station’s facilities engineer, responsible for the on-site engineering, maintenance and upgrading of the nearly 100 buildings at McMurdo, the largest community in Antarctica with 1,200-plus residents. Winter temperatures at McMurdo, says Douceur, commonly dip below minus seventy degrees Fahrenheit.

Her trip began, she writes, with a two-day orientation and safety training course in Denver, followed later by two days of survival school, where she learned how to cut frozen ice blocks for an igloo, which she then spent the night in as 100-knot winds raged around her.

Toward the end of February, the last plane departed McMurdo, leaving Douceur and 130 other intrepid souls to spend the next eight months, much of them in darkness, among the ice and the Emperor penguins.

“It’s very collegial here,” she writes, “with plenty of partying. And the people are so varied — it’s not unusual to run into a forklift driver or mechanic with a Ph.D.”

When the plane does arrive for the return trip in October, she plans to spend some time exploring New Zealand before returning to the U.S. Longer term, she hopes to return for a second winter-long tour next year, this time to South Pole Station, where the ice is three miles thick and the weather even more severe.

Alumna’s Team Wins Environmental Prize for Work in Myanmar

Salinee Tavaranan ’04 is the project manager of an energy team that won this year’s Energy Globe World Award, the most prestigious environmental prize in the world.

The project for which her team won the award helped bring electricity and other quality-of-life benefits to displaced Burmese in the Myanmar/Thailand border area.

In ceremonies held in Prague in April, Tavaranan’s group, Border Green Energy Team (BGET), placed first in one of five categories in which more than one hundred nations participated. The team’s project was titled, “Myanmar: Burma Solar hospital project.” BGET also was voted winner of the overall Energy Globe World Award by fellow participants.

BGET provides ethnic minorities in the border area between Thailand and Myanmar with proven energy technology, training and financial aid. Previously, there was no electric power in the region, and hospitals were forced to operate at night without light and power.

For several years, Burmese medical personnel on the Thai side of the border have been trained to install and maintain solar energy systems. They then returned to their side of the border with the necessary equipment, where they installed the systems in hospitals.

In 2007, two larger hospitals were equipped with more powerful energy systems so that medicines could be refrigerated and medical equipment and computers could be powered. Additional courses from dental hygiene to solar energy have improved the quality of life in the borderland.

The BGET sustainable energy project ensures environmentally friendly solar power to provide around-the-clock medical services for some 200,000 domestic refugees.

Tavaranan earned a master of science in engineering-energy engineering (solar) at UMass Lowell in 2004.
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**Calendar of Events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>May 17</th>
<th>May 20</th>
<th>May 29</th>
<th>May 29-30</th>
<th>June 23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| One String at a Time Benefit Concert  
UMass Lowell String Project and Lowell Youth Orchestra  
Durgin Hall 3 p.m. | Speed Networking  
Alumni Hall | Commencement Eve  
Celebration  
Allen House | Reunion  
Weekend | Antec/NPE  
Alumni Dinner  
Chicago |
You may have received a call from one of our students asking for your support of the Lowell Fund. Each year a team of 40 students call more than 40,000 alumni. Here are answers to the top three questions these students are asked:

1. WHAT IS THE LOWELL FUND?
The Lowell Fund is the University’s annual giving fund that supports the many campus services that broaden academic experiences and enrich campus life.

2. WHY SHOULD I MAKE A GIFT?
Help the next generation of students benefit from the same great education you received. Only 25 percent of the UMass Lowell budget is state assisted. Private support is essential to keep tuition and fees affordable for every qualified student.

3. WHY IS MY PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT?
Every gift makes a difference. Grant funding and college ranking are often based on the participation level of alumni to gauge the effectiveness of, and satisfaction with, a UMass Lowell education.

Lowell Fund gifts, no matter the size, are put to immediate use to help meet current on-campus priorities, such as scholarships, faculty development, library and computer upgrades, special research projects and campus facility improvements.