

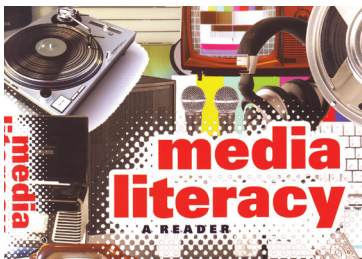
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

College of Liberal Arts

Annual Report
July 2008



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Successes

FY 08 was a very successful year for the College of Liberal Arts. In the area of research and creative activity, CLA faculty authored or edited eight scholarly books and five special issues of journals, as well as two translations and one textbook. They published one hundred seventy-two articles and book chapters, and fourteen short articles and encyclopedia entries, including six reprints. In addition, three music CDs, a novel, a novella, and a book of translations of Chinese poems were published. Thirty-four performances of original music by faculty and four performances of original plays by faculty were given. During the year there were eight solo exhibits of faculty art works, and additional works were included in seven group exhibits. Eleven poems were published and another eight poems were reprinted. One original faculty documentary film won the 2007 Studs Terkel Award for Media and Journalism. Faculty gave nine readings of their own literary works. Eighteen theatrical performances depended upon directorial, acting or technical direction by faculty. Twenty performances in music and dance (exclusive of performances of original compositions) were given by UMB faculty. This extraordinary diversity of productivity testifies to the strength of the faculty in the College of Liberal Arts.

Beyond this, the College generated \$2.7M in external grants.¹ The College's internal research support programs provided \$80,000 and 8 course releases to 69 faculty members to fund research and travel to present papers at scholarly meetings [\$30,000 for travel; \$50,000 for research]. I also support research by giving course releases to junior faculty who have completed a successful fourth-year review, and to all faculty who successfully obtain a Healey or Proposal Development Grant. Since it is clear that we as a University will need time to successfully move to a base 2+2 load, I plan to modestly increase the number of CLRs available through the Dean's Research Fund from 10 to 15 in FY 09. This is a small step, but will assist additional faculty in pursuing their research agendas.

During FY 08 we conducted fourteen searches for faculty to join us in September 2008. We successfully hired junior faculty in Anthropology, Hispanic Studies, American Studies/Latino Studies, Modern Languages, Performing Arts, Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology and Women's Studies. We hired an associate professor with tenure in Economics. We had failed searches in English and Economics, and searches in History and Psychology remain open and will continue into next year.

This year the college managed seven fourth year review cases, seven tenure cases, five promotions to professor and eight reviews of senior lecturers. We also conducted two AQUAD reviews of the Department of Classics and the Department of Modern Languages. We did eight PMYR reviews. Our personnel case load for FY 09 will be even heavier. This is good news in that the junior faculty we have hired are in the vast majority of cases moving successfully to tenure.

¹ Reporting on publications and grants lags one year behind. These figures are for FY 07.

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In conjunction with their research and teaching activities, the College's departments sponsored many talks, symposia and other service and outreach activities that enriched our curriculum and served the general public as well. These activities are too numerous to list here, so I will highlight only two. Three faculty members, Professors Rajini Srikanth, Elora Chowdhury and Leila Farsakh organized an international conference called "Engaging Islam," which brought scholars from across the world to UMass Boston. The conference was sponsored by a \$100,000 grant from the Ford Foundation. The Research Center for Urban Cultural History sponsored a two-day interdisciplinary conference "Cosmopolitan Culture, Consumption, and The Making of Taste 1600-1770," on April 26 and 27, 2008. The conference brought together scholars from across the US and abroad, and included the collaboration and support of the Confucius Institute, the History Department and corporate sponsorship from Peet's Coffee and Tea, and Chocolates by Sparrow.

Finally, the College is crafting a new strategic plan for 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 to reflect our current priorities and to mesh with the Chancellor's Strategic Plan.

Challenges

While our hiring record is good in terms of faculty quality, we continue to lag far behind the pace required to rebuild the faculty. The College has 17 fewer tenure stream faculty than it did in 2001, despite our hiring and increases in student numbers. In Fall 07 we offered 576 undergraduate sections, which were filled to 94.5% capacity after add/drop. We offered 60 graduate sections, filled to 76.5% capacity.² 46% of these course sections were taught by tenure-stream faculty and the remaining 54% by adjuncts. If CCDE courses are included the percentage of tenure stream instruction falls to 40%. As student numbers increase, the percentage of instruction by tenure stream in the college has decreased.³ It is important to note that there is considerable national data to support the idea that increased instruction by tenure stream faculty has a positive effect on retention and graduation rates.⁴

The structure of the faculty has changed dramatically from a ratio of senior to junior faculty of 150:45 seven years ago, to 113:65 last fall. During the transition period, until a good number of our junior faculty are granted tenure, the dearth of senior faculty puts a considerable strain on the College in the areas of personnel actions, governance and the mentoring of junior faculty.

Our budget situation continues to be very constrained. While the increased CTF dollars and staffing dollars received in the FY 09 budget are an excellent step

2 Does not include CCDE offerings.

3 The percentage taught by tenure stream faculty was 48.7% in Fall 05 and 45.3% in Fall 06

4 I will discuss retention below in the section on future goals.

An additional challenge to our budget is startup costs for new faculty.



PHOTO BY JOHN GILLOOLY

Space continues to be a daunting challenge for the College of Liberal Arts.

forward, CLA continues to receive the smallest amount of CTF dollars per FTE faculty and per IFTE student taught of any of the schools or colleges. We have the fewest support staff per FTE faculty or IFTE student taught of any of the schools or colleges. This constrains our ability to fulfill our mission on many levels, and the underfunding of the departmental budgets has a daily impact on the lives of our faculty and students in matters as simple and essential as the number of photocopies that can be made. In the face of these difficulties, and in the face of a pattern of departmental funding that, with some exceptions, was based on history and not department size or mission, I have for the past two years used a formula, based on FTE faculty, to set a floor for departmental funding, and to raise the least-well funded departments to that floor. In FY 07 and FY 08, I added a total of \$46,000 to the departmental budgets in this way. In FY 08, I devoted a small amount from this fund to the infrastructure-heavy departments, which are the best funded, although that funding is still inadequate. This is a program I will continue. An additional challenge to our budget is startup costs for new faculty. Although Vice Provost Richard Antonak has been extremely generous in helping me meet startup needs, the demands on the College budget continue to increase. I have had to set aside increasing amounts for startup—an essential ingredient in hiring first-rate faculty in today's market.⁵

Space continues to be a daunting challenge for the College of Liberal Arts. We struggle to provide faculty with suitable offices. The Departments of Art and Performing Arts have inadequate and indeed wholly unsuitable space for their teaching and creative activities. It is my hope that if this problem can be addressed by devoting a portion of the new academic complex to these needs, we could solve a series of persistent problems and free up space in the existing buildings for other activities. It would be less expensive for the University to create appropriate facilities anew than to continue to struggle with piecemeal, inadequate retrofit solutions. Laboratory space is also a continuing problem, which will be eased by the building of the new science complex which should resolve the problems in Psychology, and by freeing up additional space, ease the difficulties that Anthropology faces.

In terms of staffing, my effort to hire two half time business managers to centralize certain functions and relieve the burden on departmental staff ran into stiff opposition from the classified staff and some of the department chairs. After difficult negotiations with the department chairs, and work with Vice Chancellor Ellen O'Connor and Human Resources on the staff classification system and the grades assigned to staff in the College, I am moving ahead with a modified plan where one full-time business manager will serve an aggregate of six departments. In this effort, I have worked in close collaboration with Ellen O'Connor, since it is clear that as University processes become more complex, we can no longer expect single employees to do everything. This kind of change is very difficult however, since some staff, in this case at least, saw the initiative as an effort to block their access to promotions, rather than an effort to allow

5 The standard amount the University offers for startup has not increased in six years.

...the most pressing issue facing the institution in its undergraduate ... mission—our ... six-year graduation rate...



PHOTO BY JOHN GILLOOLY

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the College to function more efficiently in the era of People Soft's increasing impact on our everyday transactions. These difficulties delayed my efforts by many months.

Focus and Goals for the Future

During my first four years as dean, I have devoted much of my attention and energy to fostering research and to graduate programs. Among my activities in this domain, I created an internal research fund, put in place a number of measures to assist junior faculty in their research, increased the fund for travel to scholarly meetings, worked with the central administration to create a book subvention fund, collaborated with ORSP in hiring a dedicated research associate for CLA, worked with the Department of Psychology and the Provost to create and implement a five-year plan that will eventuate in a second PhD in developmental and brain science, made a senior hire in Psychology to bolster these efforts, used the merit system to encourage and reward high performance in research, and during the current year chaired the work group that created an implementation plan for the developmental sciences research cluster. We obtained approval for and implemented the MFA in Creative Writing, and gained independent degree status for the MA in Historical Archeology. The college also increased its number of graduate stipends.

While these efforts will be continued, I believe that it is now crucial to address what I see as perhaps the most pressing issue facing the institution in its undergraduate education mission—our lamentable six-year graduation rate [33%] and our very poor retention rates. Since my arrival at UMass Boston, I have advocated a system of College-based professional advising as one major way of addressing this multi-faceted problem. The Strategic Plan advocates creating college-based professional advising. I requested funds to implement such a program in last year's request. I requested such funding again this year, and am now in negotiations with the other stakeholders on the best allocation of this money. I believe that we need to look at national data that shows that strong advising programs especially for target populations of students are essential to retention. To accomplish this, UMass Boston needs to find a balance between centralized services and college-based ones. Since research shows that student fit to the institution is another crucial factor in retention, it is essential to make sure that CLA students, especially those who are undecided when they matriculate, have a sense of having an academic home here, and a future that seems more meaningful to them than a collection of required courses. It is my conviction that we cannot say we are accomplishing our urban mission, or that we provide access, if we do not make investments to address this issue. We cannot say we are a student-centered university if we continue to be a revolving door. Thus, in the coming years, I want to devote more of my attention to undergraduate education, and obtain the tools necessary to improve student success.

Below I have listed my goals for FY 09 in more detail. An accounting of success in implementing my FY08 goals is found in the appendix.

Goals for FY 09

- Developmental Sciences:
 - Finalize proposal for second PhD in Psychology.
 - Develop Infant Mental Health track in MA in Psychology.
 - Support and participate in creation of Developmental Sciences Research Center.
- Improve retention and graduation rates through college professional advising of incoming students/undeclared students.
 - Obtain sufficient funding to create College-based advising center to serve undeclared students, as first step to building full CLA student success center.
- Make concrete progress toward 2+2 load, by increasing bank of course releases available for research projects.
- Gain BOT and BHE approval for Asian Studies major.
- Recruit new director for Communication Studies, and begin to move towards major, based on task force report.
- Begin aggressive hiring of new faculty, over and above replacements, to rebuild faculty. Estimated need is ten new lines for the next three to five years.



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Appendix 1

Goals for FY 08

- Overall
 - Craft a new College strategic plan within in the framework of the University Strategic Plan. **Plan in progress, will be complete by September 2008.**
 - Obtain sufficient faculty lines to continue to increase the proportion of tenure stream faculty. **Goal not met. Majority of hires were replacements and not new lines.**
 - Obtain adequate office and laboratory space for the College's programs. **Some progress has been made for the new hires coming on board in September 2008, but the bulk of our space problems remain unresolved.**
 - Improve responsiveness to faculty/departments and to graduate programs with the presence of second associate dean. **Since one associate dean was on sabbatical in the spring, we were not able to fully meet this goal.**
- Research and graduate education
 - Draft plan for second PhD in Psychology. **Plan in progress, ongoing goal for FY 09**
 - Obtain a minimum of 10 additional graduate fellowships. **Three additional stipends received for existing programs, and one, as committed, for the new MFA.**
 - Obtain sufficient CTF allocation to base fund the College's research and travel funds. **Goal not met. CLA budget stabilized with one-time funds made part of base, but no base increase beyond this in FY 08.**
 - Increase sponsored funding. **\$2.7M in funding in FY 07 compared to \$2M in FY 04. New five year grants received during FY 08 include ±\$5M to Applied Linguistics and ±\$7M to Psychology for P20. Ongoing goal.**
 - Fund 10% of DRA's salary. **Goal met.**
 - Obtain sufficient CTF allocation to continue contributing to start up costs. **Goal not met [see above].**
- Undergraduate Student Teaching and Learning
 - Revision of standards for majors and minors is completed. **Revision completed; implementation in progress.**
 - Obtain funding for College based professional advisors, especially for our undeclared students. **Goal not met, funding requested again in FY 09 budget.**
- Financial Management
 - Improve staffing situation through addition of two business managers, each of whom would serve a cluster of six to seven departments that have only one staff member at present. **Because of intense opposition on the part of some departments and a number of the clerical staff, plan has**



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been modified. We are currently in the process of hiring one FT business manager to serve six departments.

- Increase operating dollars to departments. Goal accomplished. \$23K added to departmental budgets.