Utility and Roadway Work Begins

Neighbors and visitors to the UMass Boston campus have likely noticed an influx of workers in hard hats and neon vests, installing miles of new pipes and operating a fleet of digging machines.

The Utility Corridor and Roadway Relocation project, critical to the renewal of the UMass Boston campus, began in late summer. The project is creating roadway, parking lot, and pedestrian changes that will continue throughout the next two years. Tucked behind fences on several campus sites, crews are currently installing a new drainage system and seven mechanical vaults that will serve as underground utility hubs.

“We are witnessing a physical enhancement to embrace the natural beauty that surrounds us,” said Ellen O’Connor, vice chancellor for administration and finance.

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The final weeks of a semester lend themselves to taking stock of progress made and assessing the challenges that lie ahead. This is particularly true for large and complex undertakings such as the University of Massachusetts Boston’s far-reaching plans to enhance our beautiful campus, making it greener, smarter, and more inviting and efficient.

In this issue of “Building Connections,” we take a look at all the major projects underway and some that are still in the distance. I think you will agree that we are making substantial progress toward our goal of enhancing our teaching, learning, researching, and working environments.

Over the past couple of years I’ve had the pleasure of watching our new Integrated Sciences Complex take shape outside my office window. Our progress is causing excitement among our faculty science researchers, as you’ll hear from chemistry professor Shelley Foster (page 3). You’ll also get a better idea of just how beautiful our new General Academic Building No. 1 will look with the new rendering on page 7.

These improvements will allow us to continue to provide excellent education opportunities to our students, and to support our community through our scholarship and outreach. They are no less than what our students have asked for, and no less than what they deserve.

In this issue you will also learn about the critical importance of the Utility Corridor and Roadway Reconstruction project underway now (page 1), and plans to build out a section of the HarborWalk next year (page 6). And those are just some of the highlights.

Also underway is planning for the former Bayside Exposition Center and General Academic Building No. 2, Healey Library roof repairs, and our continued work to bring residence halls and above-ground parking garages to campus.

I’m grateful to the University of Massachusetts Boston students, faculty, staff, and community members like you who have helped make these changes possible. And I encourage everyone to check in on our progress at www.umb.edu/construction.

Chancellor J. Keith Motley

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Utility and Roadway Work Begins (continued from page 1)

“We are implementing this utility and roadway work to try to minimize the impact on the campus community as we strive daily to improve our teaching, research, learning, and working environments.”

Campus utilities, currently housed in the garage under the plaza, will be moved to a new corridor beneath the reconfigured campus roadway. This project will also allow the university to remove the current plaza, creating a central quadrangle and a greener, more inviting campus.

“It’s a critical step in the process to open up the campus,” said Vice Chancellor O’Connor. “This project will make all spaces more accessible and create improved connections to our neighbors and the surrounding community.”

The new campus landscape will better connect to the waterfront and create a more accessible environment for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles. Eco-friendly bioretention areas will be added, including native plantings that will absorb storm water.

The new utility corridor will include 17 miles of underground piping and duct banks to provide reliable and redundant utility services to all campus facilities.

Once it is fully rebuilt, University Drive will be a two-way street, improving overall traffic circulation.

A new University Drive North will be created and will align with Mount Vernon Street. This new campus gateway will provide direct access to future UMass Boston facilities as well as neighboring institutions such as the JFK Library, Edward M. Kennedy Institute, and Massachusetts Archives. The Beacons Walk, a well-lit pedestrian thoroughfare running the length of the campus, will replace the current University Drive North.
Chemistry researcher and professor Shelley Foster toured her new lab space at the Integrated Sciences Complex recently.

Upon entering the Integrated Sciences Complex construction site, chemistry professor Shelley Foster proclaimed, "It's like the holodeck!"

Like the Star Trek virtual reality simulator, the ISC is currently a blank canvas waiting for scientists like Foster to bring it to life with creative research and experimentation. Even with unfinished walls and floors, Foster can envision the work that she and her students will accomplish in the new facility.

"This will be the best building I've done science in, in my career," Foster said. She points out a state-of-the-art hood system designed for an easy traffic flow between labs and common spaces.

"Having the research students hanging out in the common spaces, they'll start talking to each other, and they’ll bring in other techniques and other points of view," Foster said. Interdisciplinary collaboration is nothing new to Foster: In her own research, she collaborates with physicists and biologists to study everything from lithium ion batteries to Alzheimer’s disease.

Foster is quick to point out that some of the biggest beneficiaries of the ISC facilities will be undergraduate students. The new sandbox lab will allow undergraduates to pursue hands-on, large-scale, independent research projects. Unlike traditional "cookbook" labs where experiments must be set up and taken down for every class, students working in the sandbox lab will be able to design, execute, and even publish their own original research, all under the guidance of UMass Boston faculty and graduate students.

"It’s so vitally important to getting a degree in science to actually have worked on an independent research project, something that nobody’s ever seen before," says Foster. "Hopefully we’ll be able to give the majority of students in the College of Science and Mathematics a research opportunity before they graduate, which will help them get jobs, get into graduate school, get into professional school, and all the things they need to be successful scientists."
New System Will Provide Sustainable Energy on Campus

A new, environmentally sustainable energy-producing facility will provide additional heating and cooling capacity for future buildings on the UMass Boston campus, beginning with General Academic Building No. 2.

UMass Boston is currently working with the University of Massachusetts Building Authority to select an owner’s project manager to oversee planning, design, and construction of the project for the authority. Planning includes options analysis for facility site location.

A utility master plan completed in 2010 recommended the planned facility, which will produce chilled and hot water and will also generate electricity as a byproduct of steam produced by the boilers.

Bayside Demolition Slated for 2014

The university is developing plans to demolish the former Bayside Exposition Center starting late next year. UMass Boston is working with neighboring businesses to separate utilities now shared by Bayside and nearby properties, a necessary step before the buildings can be taken down. The four buildings that make up the Bayside complex will be demolished one at a time.

Crews will also raise the elevation of the Bayside site to prepare for the possibility of flooding associated with sea level rise. This work is already underway in the UMass Boston Bayside parking lot, where some traffic islands have been raised two to four feet. New parking booths with automated equipment were installed this fall.

Planning Underway for General Academic Building No. 2

Request for proposals (RFP) will soon be issued for design services on UMass Boston’s newest facility, General Academic Building No. 2 (GAB No. 2). The university is collaborating with the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance to develop the RFP. The designer should be selected in 2014 to begin site analysis and building programming. Governor Deval Patrick has designated $100 million from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Higher Education Bond Bill to fund the construction of GAB No. 2.

Renovations to Existing Academic Buildings

Preliminary planning is underway for renovations to UMass Boston’s existing academic buildings. The opening of the Integrated Sciences Complex and General Academic Building No. 1 will free up spaces in McCormack and Wheatley halls and in the Healey Library. Once these spaces are vacated, they will be renovated and filled with a combination of classrooms, offices, and teaching labs. The university is working with the UMass Building Authority to select an owner’s project manager to oversee design and construction of the project. A designer will then be chosen to begin programming work.
Getting Here

Due to construction work, please allow extra time when traveling to campus. We encourage everyone to use public transportation and the free UMass Boston shuttle whenever possible. To make the use of public transportation easier and more convenient, you can track the location of shuttle buses on the web at www.transloc.com or by downloading the free Transloc app from the iTunes App Store or the Google Play store.

If you drive to campus, please consider using the UMass Boston Bayside lot on Mount Vernon Street. A dedicated Route 3 shuttle bus is scheduled to run every 5-7 minutes from Bayside to the Campus Center. You can also continue on Mount Vernon Street for direct access to Parking Lot D.

For more information about parking and transportation, visit Getting Here on the web and see our YouTube videos for quick and easy directions to campus.

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The master plan is a guide for the physical realization of the university’s strategic vision and will transform the campus into a cutting-edge, sustainable, and attractive environment. The master plan framework above identifies sites for new buildings, landscapes, circulation corridors, and utilities.
Walkers, joggers, and bikers will be detoured off the HarborWalk through the UMass Boston campus for a nine-month construction period starting in 2014.

A new detour route for pedestrians and cyclists is being built through the campus as a temporary replacement for the HarborWalk, which will be under construction for nine months next year.

The detour route will lead HarborWalk users off the waterfront using a walkway just beyond the Harbor Point apartments. The walkway will enter campus at Mount Vernon Street toward University Drive north, then pass in front of the Massachusetts State Archives before rejoining the HarborWalk.

The HarborWalk project will fortify an 800-foot stretch of shoreline and create a paved walkway closer to the waterfront than the current dirt path. The new stretch will feature benches, lighting, gathering spaces, an area to display artwork, native plantings, and interpretive signs with historical narratives.

The project continues with environmental review and final design.

A new detour route for pedestrians and cyclists is under construction.

The East Hall of the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate will draw visitors further into the institute and teach them about the basic tenets of the US government. The 62,000-square-foot facility, slated to open in 2014, is now under construction on the UMass Boston campus. To see more renderings, visit emkinstitute.org/pages/renderings_dev.

Construction updates are posted on the UMass Boston website, available on the homepage at www.umb.edu. To view the construction webcams or sign up for updates to be delivered to your email box, go to www.umb.edu/construction. If you have questions or concerns, contact UMass Boston Customer Service at 617.287.4000 or construction@umb.edu.
New Academic Building Rises on Campus Waterfront

An artist’s rendering shows the campus after 2015, when the new academic building adjacent to the Campus Center will be open.

The lights at the UMass Boston Campus Center illuminate the late evening sky in Boston, serving as a beacon for visitors traveling north into the city. And the campus’s latest waterfront gem is taking shape right next door.

UMass Boston’s General Academic Building No. 1 (GAB No. 1) will serve a large and diverse group of students, faculty, and staff from the performing arts, sciences, and other disciplines, as well as visitors. Targeted to open in fall 2015, GAB No. 1 will support the university’s growing student enrollment and course offerings.

Crews have been hard at work since early spring installing the foundation for this exciting four-story building, which will house nearly 2,000 seats for general classroom space, the arts and performing arts departments, and chemistry teaching laboratories. Special instructional spaces will include a multimedia classroom, case-method classrooms, studios for digital media, drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, and sculpture, as well as venues for video, dance, drama, and music.

Visitors and members of the campus community now have the opportunity to gain a concrete appreciation for the future building. A model set up on the second floor terrace of the Campus Center shows the new building’s design, its proximity to the waterfront, and the striking views that will be available from the new café and atrium. The model also highlights the building’s major public spaces such as the theater, recital hall, and 500-seat auditorium.

You can see the building’s steel beams rising on our GAB No. 1 live webcams by visiting www.umb.edu/news_events_media/news/construction/gab_webcams.

Punch List

Roof Replacement and Waterproofing at the Healey Library

A major roof replacement and waterproofing project will continue through December at the Healey Library. Crews are working to repair major damage to the Healey drainage system and roof sustained last year during superstorm Sandy. The storm, and a nor’easter that followed, caused substantial water damage on the 10th and 11th floors of the library. The university has applied for more than $2 million in funding from FEMA to replace the roof.
Ironworkers assemble reinforcing steel for the foundation of UMass Boston’s General Academic Building No. 1. The Project Labor Agreement governing construction on campus has workforce hiring goals of 50 percent Boston residents, 25 percent minorities, and 10 percent women.