Breaking Ground at UMass Boston—
The Integrated Sciences Complex

BY CHRISTINE DEPALMA, ASSISTANT CAMPUS PLANNER

The facility—the first major new academic building on campus in nearly 40 years—represents a historic first step in the university’s ambitious 25-year master plan that will transform the campus with additional new academic buildings, residence halls, parking facilities, and green space.

“I cannot overstate the impact this building will have on our university community,” Chancellor J. Keith Motley said. “Our physical facili-

Construction of the new Integrated Sciences Complex on the UMass Boston campus kicked off with a ceremonial groundbreaking on June 8.

Imagining Mars: Questions and Answers with Robert Crossley

In his new book, Imagining Mars (Wesleyan University Press), a history of our literary preoccupation with the planet Mars, Professor Emeritus of English Robert Crossley surveys the surprisingly vast number of scientific and literary texts written about the Red Planet since ancient times. His book has already received a very positive review from the Wall Street Journal, and found an audience of both science fiction and popular science fans. Recently, we had the opportunity to ask Professor Emeritus Crossley some questions about his inspiration for the book and its development.

Q: How long have texts (both scientific and fiction) about Mars been a research interest for you?
A: Like many of my projects, this one really did originate in the classroom. For
many years I taught an undergradu-
ate course on the history of science
fiction and at some point in the early
1990s, I was struck to notice that my
syllabus contained three novels about
Mars. I found myself wondering about
the importance of Mars to the literary
imagination and began preparing time
charts for my students to trace what
was known about Mars, when it was
known, and how that knowledge was
used (or abused) in a number of famous
literary texts. As my curiosity about the
subject of Mars and its importance to
literature grew, I applied for a fellow-
ship from the National Endowment,
which was granted to me in 2000.

Q: What inspired you to turn the
research into a book? Was there an
“a-ha” moment?
A: Before I began the research I actually
had no idea how vast the body of work
would be. It embraces ancient and
medieval myths and texts that were
developed before the invention of the
telecope. Others from the seventeenth
through the nineteenth centuries
followed on Galileo’s and other early
astronomers’ telescopic observations
of Mars. Then came the great flood of
stories of claims of having observed
“canals” on the Martian surface. Finally
the outburst of new writing about
Mars followed from the NASA missions
to Mars in the 1960s. The amount of
material was overwhelm-
ning—and a lot of it surprised
me, perhaps especially the
slaw of books written by psy-
chics and mediums between
1890 and 1930 and which
claimed not to be fiction but
tavelogues! For that I had to
educate myself about parapsychology
and the Society for Psychical Research.

Q: Can you describe what the re-
search process was like?
A: My research took me to the Library
of Congress, the New York Public
Library, the unparalleled newspaper
archives at the Boston Public Library,
the H. G. Wells Archive at the University
of Illinois, the Popular Culture Library
at Bowling Green University, the library
of the Harvard-Smithsonian Observa-
tory, and probably most fascinating of
all, the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff.
I had a week’s residency at the Low-
ell Observatory to work in Percival
Lowell’s archives and had the amazing
experience of being the only literary
scholar in residence with about half a
dozn astronomers.

Q: How has being retired helped
or hindered the process of writing
this book?
A: When I returned to UMass Boston
after my NEH fellowship I had the
chance to begin trying out some of my
ideas for the book in a
university honors course
called “Imagining Mars.” I
actually had an opportu-
nity to teach two versions
of that course, the first
when I was still in a fairly
early stage of research
and writing and the second when I had
nearly completed the book. Because
the honors program is interdisciplinary
and its members come from virtu-
ally every academic department on
 campus, the students were my ideal
audience. I learned a great deal from
their questions about what needed to
be in the book and how things needed
to be presented.

Q: What’s next for you?
A: The book was written mostly while I
was still on active duty as a teacher and
department administrator, but by the
time the final revisions were done and
the production process completed at
Wesleyan University Press I had crossed
over into retirement. I’ve written one
more essay on the subject of Martian
literature for a collection that is coming
out next year from the University of
Liverpool Press, and this summer I’ve
completed two new pieces on Milton’s
Paradise Lost. So far, retirement is giv-
ing me the breathing space to try to
expand my repertoire and to continue
to learn new things.
The Office for Faculty Development (OFD) was officially launched in spring 2011 with close to 200 university faculty and staff members attending the inaugural celebration. The creation of the OFD was an initiative of Provost Winston Langley, who commissioned a Faculty Development Committee to make recommendations for faculty development priorities that were laid out in the committee’s 2009 report. The committee conducted a faculty survey to ascertain their perceived support and development needs at all career stages. Both tenure track and non-tenure track faculty were asked about their roles in research and scholarship, teaching, and service activities. The mission of the OFD is to implement and expand upon the committee’s recommendations in the face of significant transformations taking place in higher education.

OFD has hosted workshops on the tenure process, brought in successful grant awardees to speak about how to cultivate a grant consciousness, held a Department Chairs’ retreat, and hosted the New Faculty Orientation for the 2011–2012 cohort, among other activities. Collaboration with all the colleges and departments as well as offices on campus is an important goal of OFD as it develops programs and activities. As part of the university-wide redesign of the website, OFD created its web pages to serve as a useful resource to faculty as they seek to fulfill their scholarly, research, and service aspirations. Most importantly, OFD continues to seek feedback and suggestions from faculty at all career stages in order to be as supportive as possible.

The Office for Faculty Development is located in the Healey Library on the 4th floor in the Reference Librarian section. Along with the office, there is also a new Faculty Lounge, a quiet space that can be used for working individually or to host meetings. It also has two computers for faculty use. The space welcomes all faculty, who can drop by at any time or reserve it.

The OFD website can be found at www.umb.edu/ofd.

Office for Faculty Development
BY CAMILLE MARTINEZ, FACULTY DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

Breaking Ground at UMass Boston (Continued from page 1)

The building will encompass 220,000 gross square feet of space featuring:

- Wet and dry research labs for biology, chemistry, environmental sciences, physics, and psychology
- Undergraduate introductory biology teaching laboratories
- An interdisciplinary undergraduate sandbox teaching lab
- An infant cognition lab
- The Center for Personalized Cancer Therapy, a partnership between UMass Boston and Dana-Farber Harvard Cancer Institute
- The Developmental Sciences Research Center

Designed by architecture firm Goody Clancy, the building is expected to be LEED-silver certified, with classes opening in September 2013.

With a cost of approximately $155 million, the Integrated Sciences Complex is funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the UMass Building Authority, and MassDevelopment.

For more information on the Integrated Sciences Complex and the Campus Master Plan (Professor Emeritus Peter McClure serves on the Master Plan Steering Committee), please visit: http://www.umb.edu/the_university/masterplan/.
number of foreign scholars attending our International Visiting Scholars Academy to 15, and the portion of international students in our freshman class has risen to seven percent. We also established the Institute for International and Comparative Education in the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD).

In another important development, we completed our strategic planning process. The final report, which captures the most ambitious plan we have ever adopted, will be placed on the web for your reading.

The national rankings of our programs and the amount of our extramural funding have also enjoyed significant positive developments. For the first time in our history, we had four programs ranked in the top 100 programs in the country. According to the latest rankings of US News and World Report, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences nursing program ranks 50th in the nation, third in New England after Boston College and Yale. The College of Education and Human Development’s Rehabilitation Therapy program placed 56th, while the Clinical Psychology major in the College of Liberal Arts was judged 83rd. The Public Affairs program in the McCormack Graduate School for Policy and Global Studies was accorded a 90th ranking. Other programs, such as those in the life sciences, were also ranked, but they did not fall in the top 100. In the case of extramural funding, we had over $53 million.

We are pleased to share these developments with you, and look forward to future elaboration on their meaning for the campus.