The 19th Annual Retired Faculty Luncheon was held Wednesday, October 5, 2016. Jack Looney, professor emeritus of environmental, earth, and ocean science, served as an ever-amiable emcee.

Chancellor J. Keith Motley addressed the group about the connection between retired faculty and the university and discussed the physical transformation of the campus, including new academic buildings, a residence hall, and a parking garage.

Provost Winston Langley acknowledged 10 newly retired faculty members and recounted academic affairs highlights from the past year. He also reported on the financial status of the 2016 Faculty Career Development Award, which received $4,100 in contributions last year and a total of $8,000 in matching funds from the Chancellor’s Office and Provost’s Office. At the end of fiscal year 2016, the fund had a fair market value of $163,914.58.

The 2015 Faculty Career Development Award winners gave presentations on their research. Keren Horn, assistant professor of economics, discussed her project, “Are We Punishing Our Poorest Neighborhoods: Evaluating the Consequences of No Child Left Behind.” Douglas Woodhams, assistant professor of biology, presented, “Controlling Amphibian Disease with Skin Microbiota.”

The highlight of the event was the announcement of the 2016 award winners: Matthew Bell, assistant professor of electrical engineering, and Ayesha Irani, assistant professor of Asian studies. The provost thanked the members of the Faculty Career Development Committee for their hard work.

New Buildings
We have been in need of residence halls since the birth of the university. We have also, since early 2000, been in dire need of improved parking facilities. The university’s vision of its possibilities can never be fully realized without the appropriate accommodation of these two areas. We have been progressing with both.

We expect that by fall 2018, we will have a residence hall with approximately 1,000 beds and a garage that will provide 1,400 parking spaces. These new facilities will appreciably add to a sense of community on the campus and contribute to an improvement in the physical appearance of the Point.

The spring semester brings with it a number of important developments on campus. These include new buildings, newly accredited programs, academic achievements, the work of our Confucius Institute, and the stance of our campus community, at a time of significant changes in Washington.
Accreditations

As we have expanded and further developed our professional schools and colleges, we have correspondingly faced the increased need to have them prepare for and satisfy accreditation requirements. We have four accreditations to report.

Last November, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences had two programs accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing: the Post-Master’s Certificate in Advanced Nursing Practice (APRN) and the Doctoral Program in Nursing Practice (DNP). In February, the College of Management joined 51 global business schools that received reaccreditation by the Association of Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Accreditation by AACSB is earned by only five percent of business schools throughout the world.

The College of Education and Human Development’s doctoral program in counseling also received accreditation related to professional practice. One is not seen as properly prepared for professional practice by simply earning a doctoral degree; one must also pass a professional exam. The accreditation allows those who earn their doctoral degree to take the professional exam.

Other Academic Successes

We had another record year of extramural funding—$64.2 million. I would like to highlight a grant from the National Science Foundation that was awarded to Associate Professor of Chemistry Hannah Sevian, along with collaborators from the University of Arizona and the Boston Public Schools. The $2.5 million grant focuses on research and curriculum development to help educators promote a new type of learning and teaching in chemistry.

We have also accomplished a spectacular achievement in the area of archaeological research. A team of researchers (including graduate and undergraduate students) from our Andrew Fiske Memorial Center located evidence of the original Pilgrim settlement in Plymouth. Supported by a three-year grant of $200,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the team more than met the objective to find the location before the forthcoming 400th anniversary (2020) of the founding of the Plymouth Colony.

Five students from the Department of Performing Arts, led by Associate Professors Carrie Ann Quinn and Rafael Jean, won either national or regional awards, including the Irene Ryan National Acting Scholarship Award, the New England Meritorious Award in Design and Technology for Costume Design and Presentation, and the National Partners of the American Theatre (NAPAT) Classical Acting Award. Professor Quinn also won the Classical Acting Mentor Award. These achievements by the department, most for the first time in the history of the university, are outstanding. They attest to the promise of the department and the college, as well as to the importance of the marriage between brilliant faculty and physical infrastructure.

Online Programs

The university’s faculty and staff have generally been skeptical about the learning and teaching effectiveness of online delivery of academic programs. It has therefore been quite slow in developing such programs. Over recent years, however, we developed a system of assessment to ensure that online courses have the same quality of advice and mentoring as on-campus counterparts and established a Center for Innovation and Excellence in eLearning to do research on what we and others are doing. The results have been quite encouraging.

In a recent issue of U.S. News, 10 online programs from 7 of our schools and colleges ranked among the top in the nation. There are many lessons to be drawn from these results—among them, that online learning and teaching are being normalized nationwide (which is why U.S. News is paying so much attention to them); that we, as a campus, have come very far in our use of this approach to learning and teaching; and that the College of Advancing and Professional Studies’ leadership in these efforts has been vindicated. We are also in better alignment with our sister campuses.

Confucius Institute

In October, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of our Confucius Institute. It has been a commendable success for the university, the commonwealth, New England, and the nation, whether one views it in terms of Chinese language programs, the annual Chinese speech contest, or its summer school programs with Renmin University.

For the language programs, there are now nine Confucius Classroom Schools, four teaching sites, and more than 2,000 registered students per year. The institute also offers more than 15 classes on campus for community members and has more than 500 students taking Chinese Proficiency Tests, and it has worked with more than 15,000 people in the past 10 years. Linked to the language programs were 11 annual Chinese speech contests for U.S. high school students from across the country and six annual Chinese speech contests for 120 final contestants from New England universities.

The institute also held professional development programs for local teachers of Chinese and an annual professional training program for guest teachers from China. The latter program hosted 600 teachers who returned to China with a sense of teaching in the United States. Finally, 30 Renmin University students came here and 20 of our students went to Renmin University for summer programs, and the China Today program for MBA and Asian studies students, as well as educators, has sponsored more than 200 students to study in China.

Stance of Our Campus Community

Changes in our national government have resulted in a number of corresponding changes in national policies, including those affecting states, universities, and, above all, immigrant communities. Chancellor Motley is on record, offering support to students, faculty, and staff. On February 17, 2017, we sent the following memorandum to the university community:

As you know, political changes in the leadership of our national life have resulted in actions that have been producing concerns and anxieties among many of our students, faculty, and staff, in clear contrast to the inclusive security and environment they should be experiencing within our university community.

A Travel Ban for those from certain countries, as defined in the President’s Executive Order in January, typifies some of the anxiety-producing actions. As of this writing, the Order has been stayed by the courts, but new developments with respect to that Order and other actions potentially affecting our students, faculty, and staff, are a likely part of our future.

To help us keep abreast of the news and certain responses to it, allow me to encourage you to visit https://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/support_resources. This site will provide the current information available to us and the services available to those in our community in need. For those faculty members seeking help to work with in-class students suffering from uncertainties, contact the Office of Faculty Development at 617-287-6074.

The University of Massachusetts Boston, the very identity of which is defined by transnationality, diversity, inclusiveness, civility, and fairness—grounded on an ethic of care—intends to preserve and defend its identity.
Retired Faculty Luncheon 2016

19th Annual Retired Faculty Luncheon
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Selection Committee for their service: Pamela Annas, John Lutts, and Peter McClure. Professor Bell’s project, “Novel Low Noise Amplifiers for Quantum Computer,” will advance his research into microelectronics and microwave engineering to increase the feasibility of quantum computers. Professor Irani’s research on “Situating the Bengali Fakir: Texts, Practices, and Communities of Reception in Early Modern and Colonial Bengal,” will be used to produce a monograph on the vernacular texts of Sufi gurus and poets.

To learn more about what’s happening in the Provost’s Office, visit us at www.umb.edu/academics/provost.

Phone: 617.287.5600

Location: Quinn Administration Building, 3rd Floor, Room 61A

For Retired Faculty Newsletter story ideas, please contact Cindy Gullicksen or Aimee Ladner.

Upcoming Events

April 6–8 and 12–14
The Comedy of Errors
Spring theater arts production
University Hall

May 1–5
Spring Enrichment and Engagement Days
Campus Center

May 25
Graduate Commencement
Blue Hills Bank Pavilion

May 26
Undergraduate Commencement
TD Garden

June
Retired Faculty Leadership Council Meeting

June 20
UMass Boston Athletics Golf Classic
Pinehills Golf Club, Plymouth

October 6
Retired Faculty Luncheon
Campus Center Ballroom

Retired Faculty Luncheon

What “Out of the frying pan, into the fire” meant
I never quite knew ’til my “early retirement”
Last June at the age of 86,
At which time I confronted a daunting mix
Of decisions: Plan A, Plan B, or Plan C;
TIAA/CREF or Fidelity.
Along with which if, as Retired Professor,
I’d be able to keep my office, or
If not, would I ever be able
To clear out my Wheatley Hall Augean Stable!
Add on issues of Parking and Library Passes
And by now I’m feeling like one who, alas is
Hopelessly and haplessly wandering
About with Beebe (my cellmate) pondering
Options presenting such complications,
Such mathematical permutations,
I long for the pressures I once dreaded:
The five committees I was embedded
In, one being the Personnel
(That deepest level of Dante’s Hell),
Not to mention conference and classes
And exams and all the array of UMass’s
Obligations, some greater some lesser,
Laid upon the Working Professor!
But happily, upon the scene,
There came to our rescue BarbaraJean
Conneely, whose real-world know-how whipped
Us both into shape in re “Silver Script,”
et al and et cetera -- the myriad
Issues confusing us during this Period
Of Transition, of ”being put out
To pasture” while knowing little about
What for a poor Retiree is in store!
So what mostly I come to this Luncheon for
Is some privy council. Pray tell what you think
May help me survive my dive over the brink?

Duncan Nelson
English Professor and Poet Laureate
1967-2016, and I hope in one form or another beyond...