

To the Board:

As UMass Boston welcomes the start of the new academic year, I am pleased to present this quarterly report highlighting the progress we have made in enacting our mission around the university's signature strengths: our dedication to advancing knowledge in service of Boston and the commonwealth, our devotion to student success, and our resolute commitment to impactful education and research. Our cover story highlights the Green Ribbon Commission's recent launch of its Boston Area Thermal Energy Network feasibility project at an event on the UMass Boston campus. The event showcased support from city and state leaders and featured a tour of UMass Boston's seawater cooling system as an example of a potentially larger thermal energy network for the region—and a cleaner energy future right here where we work and live.

Also in this report:

- UMass Boston announced a related \$5.3 million grant from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources to support the university's campus-wide decarbonization plan. The grant will enable the university to replace gas-powered boilers with electric heat-shift chillers and, in doing so, reduce its fossil fuel consumption and carbon emissions by 82 percent before 2030. (page 4)
- The university continued to deepen its engagement via philanthropic donors, alumni events, and annual giving. In addition to securing \$26 million in private revenue to expand academic programs, scholarships, and research, UMass Boston connected with nearly 5,000 alumni and received Annual Fund contributions totaling \$1,807,547, a 6.2 percent increase from FY2025. (page 4)
- UMass Boston's College of Management celebrated an important milestone by earning a six-year accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Not only does this accreditation represent the highest honor and "gold standard" in business education held by fewer than 6 percent of business schools worldwide; it also affirms the university's commitment to excellence in business education. (page 7)

I trust you will appreciate this report on our progress.

– Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco



(From left) Boston Chief Climate Officer Brian Swett, Mayor Michelle Wu, Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, GRC Executive Director Lindsey Butler, City Councilor Erin Murphy, Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper, State Senator Nick Collins, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center CEO Ben Downing, and City Councilor John Fitzgerald

Green Ribbon Commission Kicks Off Boston Area Thermal Energy Network (BosTEN) Project at UMass Boston

The Boston Green Ribbon Commission (GRC), a business membership association that partners with the City of Boston to accelerate climate action, launched its Boston Area Thermal Energy Network (BosTEN) feasibility project at an event at UMass Boston. The kickoff event showcased support from key city and state leaders and included a tour of the campus's seawater cooling system as an example of the possibility of a larger thermal energy network for the Boston region.

The BosTEN project is identifying the most effective ways to use the waters of Boston Harbor, the Fort Point Channel, the Charles and Mystic Rivers, and the bedrock beneath the rivers as a thermal energy source to provide winter heating and summer cooling to universities, hospitals, and other large energy users through a closed-loop network. The year-long project aims to demonstrate how thermal energy networks (TENs) can deliver long-term cost savings, lower emissions, and reduce peak demand on gas and electric infrastructure as Massachusetts transitions to a cleaner and more affordable energy economy.

Continued on page 2

Cover story (cont.)

In operation since 1974, UMass Boston's pumped-seawater cooling system is now being upgraded to provide heat as well and enable UMass Boston to phase out use of natural gas. Joining the GRC for a tour of the system were Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, Massachusetts Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center CEO Ben Downing, UMass Boston Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, Boston Chief Climate Officer Brian Swett, and State Senator Nick Collins (D-South Boston).

"Today's announcement is both a milestone for UMass Boston and a blueprint for increased climate resilience in Massachusetts," said UMass Boston Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco. "Through bold investment and strong public partnerships, we're demonstrating how large institutions can dramatically cut fossil fuel reliance, lower long-term energy costs, and build a cleaner, more resilient future. We are grateful to Governor Healey, Mayor Wu, the Massachusetts Legislature, and our many other partners."



The Green Ribbon Commission took a tour of UMass Boston's pumped-seawater cooling system.

Strengthen the University's and Development Enterprise



(From left) Professor Tracey Baynard, Associate Vice Provost of Graduate Education; Serena Wang, Director of VPR Operations and Finance; Associate Professor Daniel Haehn, Director of the AI Research Core Facility; and Shen Ning, CSO and Co-founder, INIA Biosciences

AI Researcher Receives \$745K Bits to Bytes Award from Massachusetts Life Sciences Center to Create the World's Largest Annotated Spleen Ultrasound Dataset

Associate Professor Daniel Haehn, director of UMass Boston's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Research Core Facility, has received a three-year, \$745,000 award from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center's (MLSC) Bits to Bytes program to advance the SPLEEN-US project, which will use artificial intelligence to improve ultrasound-based spleen detection.

The project will create an open dataset of more than 2,000 spleen ultrasound video scans, paired with metadata such as age, sex, BMI, and socioeconomic indicators. The dataset will help train AI models to identify spleens automatically on ultrasound, addressing a challenge caused by the organ's location behind the stomach and ribs and its soft, difficult-to-detect structure.

SPLEEN-US builds on Haehn's previous MLSC-funded project, the Oregon-Massachusetts Mammography Database (OMAMA-DB), the world's largest breast cancer database, and reflects his research focus on using computational methods to accelerate biomedical discovery.

The project's industry partner, INIA Biosciences, will use the dataset to support development of a wearable device designed to deliver therapeutic stimulation to the spleen, with the goal of helping manage inflammatory conditions.

Haehn was connected with INIA Biosciences CEO Dragana Savic through UMass Boston's Venture Development Center, which helps start-ups access university expertise and research resources. The project also includes collaborators from the Donna M. and Robert J. Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences, including Dean Bo Fernhall, Tracey Baynard, and PhD student Rowan Fitzpatrick, who will lead ultrasound data collection.

Since joining UMass Boston in 2019, Haehn's research has earned more than \$3 million in funding.

Strengthen the University's Research and Development Enterprise (cont.)



Shoubhik Banerjee (left) and Albert Kao (right), authors of this paper, use a drone to study birds at Savin Hill Cove.

Virtual Birds Challenge Assumptions About Pigeon Navigation

As part of his PhD research at UMass Boston, Shoubhik Banerjee has co-authored a paper published in *eLife* that challenges long-held assumptions about how homing pigeons improve their navigation skills.

Homing pigeons have the remarkable ability to find their way back to their coop, even when released many miles away in a new location. Using computational models and geospatial data from GPS-tracked pigeons, Banerjee and collaborators found that the birds rely on cognitively simple strategies—rather than complex learning processes—to find increasingly efficient routes home when flying together.

The research revisited a widely cited 2017 study in which experienced and inexperienced pigeons were repeatedly paired on an 8.4-kilometer route. As the birds' routes improved over successive flights, researchers proposed that the pigeons were exhibiting cumulative cultural evolution, a sophisticated form of social learning in which knowledge builds over generations.

Banerjee, working with advisor Albert Kao and postdoctoral researcher Fritz Francisco, tested that hypothesis by simulating different learning mechanisms and found that simpler explanations better matched the birds' behavior, offering new insight into collective animal navigation. Despite their impressive abilities, homing pigeons are relying on cognitively simple techniques to improve their route when they fly together.

University Research Awards for the Past Quarter

- Catherine D. McCusker/Biology received \$2,539,083 from the National Institutes of Health–National Institute of Child Health and Human Development for *Cellular Regulation of Pattern in the Regenerating Limb*.
- Rachel C. Skvirsky/Biology received \$2,156,650 from the National Institutes of Health–National Institute of General Medical Sciences for *U-RISE at the University of Massachusetts Boston*.
- Tara Parker/Academic Affairs received \$1,500,000 from the Carnegie Corporation of New York for *Civic Works: Building Skills for Democracy and Careers*.
- Kazuki Ikeda/Physics received \$940,000 from the U.S. Department of Energy for *Quantum-Classical Hybrid Simulations for Nuclear Physics*.
- Daniel Haehn/Computer Science received \$745,400 from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center for *SPLEEN-US: Open Annotated Spleen Ultrasound Dataset for Precision Neuromodulation*.
- Kai Zou/Exercise and Health Sciences received \$580,443 from Remedium Bio for *Novel Therapeutic Gene Therapy for Treatment of Type 2 Diabetes*.
- Staci Jones/Institute for Community Inclusion received \$558,550 from the University of Georgia Research Foundation, Inc. (sub from the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities) for *Georgia DBHDD Provider Training, Technical Assistance, and Evaluation*.
- Labib Rouhana/Biology received \$440,000 from the National Science Foundation for *Collaborative Research: Evolution of Neurons Through the Lens of mRNA Regulation*.
- Jessica A. Whiteley/MCNHS received \$300,000 from the University of Massachusetts Foundation (subaward from the Linde Family Foundation) for *Nurses Connect+: Expanding Peer Mentoring into a Developmental Pathway for Nursing Student Success*.
- Daniel Pomerleano/Mathematics received \$140,000 from the National Science Foundation for *Arithmetic and Symmetry in Quantum Cohomology*.

Develop First-Rate Infrastructure

UMass Boston Receives Decarbonization Grant for Renewable Seawater Heating System

UMass Boston received a \$5.3 million grant from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to support the initial phases of its campus-wide decarbonization plan, accelerating goals of reducing on-campus greenhouse gas emissions from natural gas by 7,500 metric tons annually, starting in 2029. To achieve this reduction, UMass Boston will install a unique heating system that would not be possible on any other UMass campus: one which relies on seawater.

The current seawater cooling system has been in place since 1974, when it was installed during the construction of the Columbia Point campus. A pipe reaches out from the seawater pump house into Savin Hill Cove, taking in seawater at a rate of up to 20,000 gallons per hour. Similar to how geothermal systems operate with air exchange, the seawater is currently used to cool fluids sent through UMass Boston's buildings. The fluids are never mixed, and the seawater is released back into the harbor near the campus center, a few degrees warmer than it initially was.

Over the next several years, the university will expand this system, installing a set of three electric heat-shift chillers in the central plant to capture excess heat and use it for winter heating. Once the system comes online, the seawater that is released back to the harbor will be cooler.

"We are deeply grateful to Governor Healey and the Commonwealth for this forward-looking investment in UMass Boston's decarbonization efforts," said UMass Boston Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco. "This partnership is transforming our campus infrastructure to benefit our students, our community, and our environment for generations to come."

With the DOER DIG grant, UMass Boston will be able to speed up the timeline of its Energy and Carbon Master Plan, published in 2023, to implement the electric heat-shift chillers. This process will cut projected natural gas consumption significantly by 82 percent, helping the campus to meet its 2030 state targets for carbon reduction.

Increase Endowment

UMass Boston Alumni Engagement Reaches Record Highs During FY2026

During FY2026, philanthropic donors made gifts and pledges totaling more than \$26 million to UMass Boston. This fundraising success, guided by University Advancement and university leadership, increased private revenue to strengthen the university's educational programming, scholarship awards, research, community partnerships, and campus community.

Strong relationships with alumni remained essential to these efforts. For the eighth consecutive year, alumni engaged in the Beacon community at record rates. The Alumni Engagement team hosted 52 events, connecting with alumni in new regions, including Chicago, Philadelphia, and Atlanta, and increasing engagement in the Boston area by hosting new events. These new events included a summer outdoor gathering on the UMass Boston quad and sports game outings on campus that Alumni Engagement hosted in partnership with Athletics. In addition, more than two dozen alumni returned to campus to serve as classroom speakers. In total, 4,946 alumni and friends joined in these opportunities for connection to UMass Boston's community, campus, and future.

Donors and alumni also increased their participation and engagement in annual giving. Annual Fund contributions reached \$1,807,547, a 6.2 percent increase from FY2025. A testament to the ongoing connection, commitment, and generosity of Beacons, 4,530 alumni donated to UMass Boston, a 9.1 percent increase from the previous year.



Alumni and their families had fun at a Summer on the Quad event.

Increase Endowment (cont.)

Hawk Rock Foundation Establishes Endowed Scholarship for UMass Boston Students with Financial Need

Hawk Rock Foundation made a \$500,000 gift to endow a scholarship to support promising UMass Boston students who are facing challenges affording their education. The Hawk Rock Foundation Endowed Scholarship Fund provides financial aid to students who have a tuition shortfall and may not otherwise be able to participate fully in their academic experiences at UMass Boston.

Through the FY2026 Public Higher Education Endowment Incentive Program (PHEEIP), Hawk Rock Foundation also leveraged a 50 percent match to commit an additional \$250,000 to the scholarship fund. This match will empower even more students to take advantage of every opportunity available to them at UMass Boston.

Inspired by the PHEEIP match, Hawk Rock Foundation has subsequently pledged an additional \$250,000 over the next five years. This bold commitment will ultimately grow the fund to over \$1 million, deepening its impact for students with financial burdens and advancing UMass Boston's mission to provide education to all who seek it.

Continue a Positive Focus on Diversity and Positive Climate

New Community Garden Brings Urban Agriculture to UMass Boston

A new community garden is taking root on the UMass Boston campus, creating a space where students, faculty, staff, and volunteers can learn about urban agriculture while growing fresh produce for the campus community.

Located on a triangular plot of land behind University Hall, the garden features eight raised beds filled with flowers, vegetables, and herbs, including tomatoes, lettuce, squash, rosemary, peppers, kale, and amethyst basil. The project is a collaboration between UMass Boston's Office of Campus Planning and Sustainability and Green City Growers, an organization that provides urban farming expertise and education to more than 150 sites throughout New England and beyond.

"This is our pilot year for the project, and we're already seeing a lot of enthusiasm for it," said Janna Cohen-Rosenthal, UMass Boston's sustainability and resiliency planner.

The garden offers weekly opportunities for volunteers to learn about sustainable agriculture and participate in hands-on activities, from planting and watering to harvesting crops. No prior gardening experience is required. Green City Growers leads educational sessions on topics such as garden design, growing techniques, and the challenges of urban farming.

Students have played an important role in bringing the garden to life, helping assess campus interest, and supporting ongoing programming. "It's been a great experience, watching the beds go in and seeing the enthusiasm from other students," said Arina Khalil, an undergraduate sustainability assistant who helps publish the garden's weekly newsletter.

When the crops are ready for harvest, produce will be shared through the U-ACCESS food pantry, helping provide fresh, locally grown food to members of the UMass Boston community. The garden represents another step in the university's commitment to sustainability, experiential learning, and building connections across campus.



Two volunteers work on raised garden beds at the first planting session of UMass Boston's community garden.

Position University in the Higher Education Marketplace



Rafaela Astudillo and her contest-winning Bluebike design.

Graduate's Winning Bluebikes Design Celebrates Boston Communities

Recent UMass Boston graduate and art major Rafaela Astudillo has won a design contest to create a custom Bluebikes wrap representing healthy communities in Boston.

Sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBS) in partnership with UMass Boston's Art Department, the contest invited students to create moving works of public art as part of the Boston 250 celebration. This competition included a \$5,000 donation to the Art Department from BCBS and a \$5,000 prize for the winning student, whose design was selected by a series of voting committees including the City of Boston's Creative Team.

Astudillo graduated this spring with a bachelor's degree in studio art and a minor in cinema studies. Her work focuses on the intersection between sculpture and video installation, though she was originally trained in painting and printmaking.

For her design, Astudillo drew inspiration from the ways people move through the city. She used a map and blue-print with positives and negatives of the city to create her design and show all the neighborhoods that make up Boston. Starting June 22, riders can see Astudillo's Boston 250 bike design moving through the city.

New Conductor Rebecca Roesler Brings Fresh Vision to the UMass Boston Orchestra

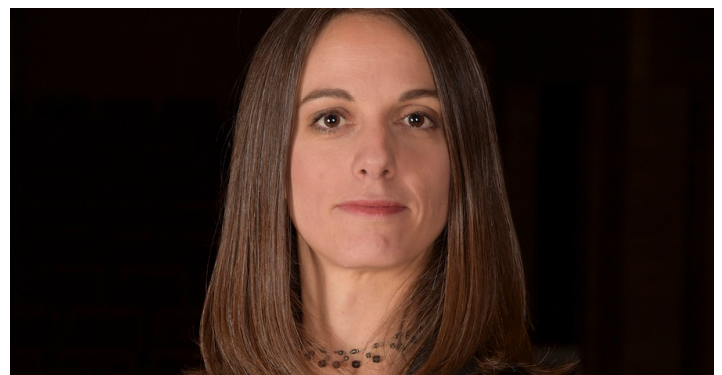
The UMass Boston Orchestra will begin a new chapter this fall under the direction of Rebecca Roesler, who has joined the Performing Arts Department as the orchestra's permanent conductor and director of music education.

An accomplished conductor, educator, and violinist, Roesler brings a passion for connecting audiences with classical music through creative, interdisciplinary programming. Her first concert with the orchestra, scheduled for November 20, reflects that approach, using the music of *The Lord of the Rings* films as a gateway to explore the history, literature, and composers that shaped J.R.R. Tolkien's world.

"The principle I often teach prospective educators is to start with what is familiar," Roesler said. "Then reach beyond and come to know the surroundings and influences. *The Lord of the Rings* soundtrack will act as a gateway into the turbulent, pivotal period of world history in which Tolkien lived. We'll hear music of Tolkien's day, including Gaelic traditions and compositions by suffragette Ethel Smyth, Gustav Holst, and Gustav Mahler, many of whom influenced Howard Shore's film score."

Roesler joins UMass Boston from Brigham Young University–Idaho. She has also taught undergraduate and graduate courses in orchestra, studio violin, chamber music, rehearsal techniques, and music cognition at Boston University and the University of North Texas. She earned her PhD in music and human learning from the University of Texas at Austin.

She succeeds Ryan Noe, who served as visiting assistant professor in music during the 2025–2026 academic year. Before Noe, Sommer Forrester led the orchestra from 2015 to 2025, overseeing a decade of growth in both membership and audiences.



Rebecca Roesler

Position University in the Higher Education Marketplace (cont.)

At UMass Boston Commencement, Senator Markey Praises Graduates as Embodiment of America's Future

Telling graduates they are entering a world shaped by rapid innovation and unprecedented technological advancement, Senator Edward Markey urged UMass Boston's Class of 2026 to "be bold" and use their talents to advance justice, equality, and opportunity around the world.

"In this era of innovation, you may have jobs that have not yet been imagined in fields that have yet to be created within industries that don't yet exist," he said. "Be bold. You can shape the course of history....Use your talents and your innovative tools to help all people everywhere build a more peaceful, prosperous future for them and for their families."

Former Paris Mayor Ana Maria Hidalgo addressed the graduate commencement ceremony the day before, highlighting global leadership and the importance of civic responsibility in an interconnected world.

This year, UMass Boston conferred more than 3,950 degrees (2,740 undergraduate; 1,090 master's; and 122 doctoral) during its 58th commencement ceremonies.

Garceau Awarded 2025-2026 LEC Student-Athlete of the Year

The Little East Conference (LEC) announced recent UMass Boston graduate Aryianna Garceau has been named the 2025-2026 LEC Female Student-Athlete of the Year, becoming the first student-athlete in UMass Boston history to earn the honor. As such, she will be nominated for the Division III Commissioner's Association (D3CA) Student-Athlete of the Year Award.

The LEC Student-Athlete of the Year Award is presented in recognition of a student-athlete's athletic and academic prowess, leadership, and community service. The student-athlete must have exhausted their collegiate eligibility in their primary sport.

Garceau was a four-year standout on the track, concluding her career among the most decorated track and field athletes in LEC and UMass Boston history. She was named LEC Track Athlete of the Year four times, sweeping the indoor and outdoor awards in 2025 and 2026, while totaling (18) LEC championships across the 60-meter hurdles, 60-meter dash, 100-meter hurdles, 100-meter dash, 200-meter dash, long jump, and 4x100 relay.



Senator Markey addresses graduates at commencement.

College of Management Soars to Full Six-Year AACSB Accreditation

The College of Management at UMass Boston has earned full reaccreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) for a six-year term. This achievement is a celebration of the college's remarkable transformation and unwavering commitment to excellence in business education.

As Boston's only public AACSB-accredited business school, the College of Management continues to set the standard for accessible, high-impact learning that launches careers and strengthens communities. AACSB accreditation is the highest honor and "gold standard" in business education, held by fewer than 6 percent of business schools worldwide.

"We are absolutely ecstatic to receive full AACSB reaccreditation for another six years!" said Venky Venkatachalam, dean of the College of Management. "This is a triumphant moment that reflects the passion, creativity, and dedication of our entire community—faculty, staff, students, and alumni. It underscores our commitment to academic excellence, groundbreaking experiential learning like BEST Boston, innovative scholarship, and creating life-changing opportunities for student success and social mobility."

Renew the Faculty

UMass Boston Professor Will Be ASLO's Next President-Elect



Professor Bob Chen

Robert Chen, professor and director of Grand Scholarly Initiatives will serve as president-elect of the Association of the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography (ASLO) for two years before becoming president.

Earlier this year, Robert (Bob) Chen was elected to ASLO's highest leadership position. To maintain continuity within ASLO's leaders, Chen will begin by serving a two-year term as president-elect. In 2028, he will become president, and in 2030 he will take on the role of past president.

Chen has long considered ASLO to be his "professional home," and taking on the presidency is a natural progression of his commitment. He served on the ASLO Board from 2016 to 2022. He was the co-chair of the biennial Ocean Sciences Meeting in 2020 and served as chair in 2022. He has contributed to ASLO's journals, serving as an associate editor of *Limnology and Oceanography: Methods* since 2019.

Chen's work at ASLO built upon his responsibilities at UMass Boston, and vice versa, as he progressed through his career: "By the time I stepped up to become the interim dean of the School for the Environment, I had a lot of experience with leadership at various levels," Chen said. "You can manage a funded project, and you can lead a lab group, but this was on a larger scale. Serving on the board of ASLO and managing large grants helped prepare me for the next role."

Vice Chancellor Ferrer-Muñiz selected for 2026–2027 Executive Leadership Academy

UMass Boston Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Karen Ferrer-Muñiz and 35 other higher education leaders gathered in Washington, DC, this summer to begin the Executive Leadership Academy (ELA), a distinguished program designed to prepare experienced administrators for senior executive roles across colleges and universities.

"Karen's selection to the Executive Leadership Academy is a testament to her exceptional leadership and unwavering commitment to student success," said UMass Boston Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco. "Throughout her career, she has championed initiatives that foster belonging, opportunity, and achievement for students from all backgrounds. I am confident that the knowledge, relationships, and perspectives she gains through this experience will further strengthen her leadership and benefit the entire UMass Boston community."

ELA is offered through a collaborative partnership among the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), and the American Academic Leadership Institute (AALI). Together, these organizations provide participants with a comprehensive experience that emphasizes leadership development, mentorship, and professional networking.

Maintain and Improve Affordability and Access

New Graduate Admissions Role Strengthens Recruitment Strategy

The Division of Enrollment Management has expanded its Graduate Admissions team with the addition of a newly created associate director position, reinforcing the university's commitment to advancing graduate enrollment and enhancing support for prospective students.

Mercy Lara-Bautista joined UMass Boston this summer as associate director of Graduate Admissions. In this new role, she will focus on graduate student recruitment and engagement while providing oversight and support for Graduate Admissions staff. Her work will help strengthen recruitment efforts, expand outreach to prospective students, and support key enrollment initiatives across the university's graduate programs.

Lara-Bautista brings valuable admissions experience from Saint Anselm College and Boston College. Her expertise will enhance the team's capacity to enroll graduate students while continuing to deliver a high-quality, student-centered admissions experience.

The addition of this role reflects UMass Boston's continued investment in the people and resources needed to achieve its graduate enrollment goals and support long-term institutional growth.

Maintain and Improve Affordability and Access (cont.)

Enrollment Management Advances UMass Boston's Reputation

The Division of Enrollment Management continues to enhance UMass Boston's national and international reputation through thought leadership and professional engagement, with staff invited to present at prominent conferences and forums that influence higher education policy and practice.

Director of International Admissions Stav Boutsis presented at the EducationUSA Middle East & North Africa Regional Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, leading discussions on strengthening partnerships between U.S. universities and Saudi high schools. Her expertise also led to an invitation from EducationUSA Saudi Arabia to deliver a nationwide follow-up webinar, Balancing Holistic Review in College Admission Decisions, extending UMass Boston's reach among counselors and education leaders across one of the university's priority recruitment markets. These engagements reinforced UMass Boston's reputation as a trusted partner in international education while strengthening relationships that support future student recruitment.

Senior Assistant Director of International Admissions Zhanna Owens presented at the 2026 International Association for College Admission Counseling Annual Conference, where she shared UMass Boston's approach to English language proficiency waiver policies with an audience of approximately 1,500 admissions professionals, counselors, and education leaders representing more than 90 countries. The presentation highlighted the university's student-centered admissions practices and generated a post-conference invitation from IELTS USA to collaborate on an educational session proposal for the 2027 NAFSA: Association of International Educators Annual Conference.

Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, John Drew, participated in a panel discussion on Hanover Research's Admitted Student Survey. Hanover Research surveys thousands of admitted students to understand the factors that influenced their enrollment decision. Enrollment leaders provided their insights on how they are demonstrating the value of a college degree and incorporating additional outcome metrics in their recruitment strategies, two key findings from the survey. There was also a discussion on how AI is changing the way students are approaching the college search process.

These speaking engagements underscore UMass Boston's growing prominence as a leader in higher education and a trusted voice on the issues shaping the future of the field.

Develop a Leadership Role in Public Service

The Andrew Carnegie Foundation Invests \$1.5M to Create New Pathways for BPS Students

The Andrew Carnegie Foundation has awarded a \$1.5 million grant to UMass Boston to support Civic Works, a three-year initiative to develop career communities and stackable microcredentials that will prepare students for quality jobs, further education, and democratic participation.

Aimed at connecting education and skill development to local and global challenges, the project will build competency-based pathways that integrate career preparation, civic learning, and climate resilience. Grounded in UMass Boston's College of Education and Human Development's existing efforts to create pathways for high school students to access higher education, the Civic Works initiative will focus on five Boston Public Schools (BPS) high schools, with the goal to design flexible, stackable pathways that connect high school, postsecondary education, and early career through a comprehensive, competency-based model.

UMass Boston currently partners with these five high schools—including Ruth Batson Academy, Massachusetts' first university-assisted community school—through the Early College partnership with BPS, which enables students to earn college credit and receive academic advising, tutoring, and career exploration support while in high school.

With this new investment from the Andrew Carnegie Foundation, UMass Boston will co-design and implement approximately 25 microcredentials, train 225 educators, and serve 2,355 students from predominantly low-income backgrounds. Beyond the immediate impact for these students and educators, the initiative will create a replicable district–public university model for economic mobility and civic capacity. Over the long term, this model will have the capability to expand to additional BPS high schools and align with community college partners across the region.

Enhance the Learning Experience



The CSM showcase took place in the sunlit atrium of the Campus Center.

CSM Showcase Highlights Innovative Student Research

Every year, graduate and undergraduate students from the College of Science and Mathematics (CSM) gather to present their research to peers, mentors, and the public.

This year, which marked the tenth annual CSM Showcase, allowed students from across CSM's many disciplines to present their latest findings. In May, in the atrium of the Campus Center, students gathered around rows of portable screens, eager to explain the graphs and figures of their virtual posters to a parade of visitors.

"This is the culmination of the research that our students—both undergraduates and graduates—have done throughout this year," said Hazel Sive, dean of CSM. "It's really a celebration of STEM research."

This year's showcase featured 98 posters. For many participants, this was an opportunity to discuss the practical applications that their work could support. One student's studies of individual molecules could someday form the foundation of new liquid crystal-based tests for diabetes, and another's AI models could help to optimize ocean-based power generators.

UMass Boston Hosts High School Program in Urban and Environmental Planning

This summer, the School for the Environment welcomed a cohort of high school students from across the Boston area to explore careers in urban planning, transportation, and community development. Through a combination of classroom instruction, hands-on activities, field experiences, and internships, students learned how planning decisions shape neighborhoods and influence quality of life.

A highlight of this year's program has been the partnership with the City of Boston Streets Cabinet. Following an introductory planning curriculum at UMass Boston, students transitioned into internships where they worked alongside city staff on real-world projects related to bicycle infrastructure, active transportation, and community engagement. Their work has included conducting bike rack inventories using GIS-based field data collection tools, supporting Bike Town pop-up events, and developing a youth engagement initiative focused on active transportation.

At the culmination of the program, the students will plan and lead a teen-focused community event in August, where they will put into practice the planning, budgeting, marketing, partnership development, and project management skills they have developed throughout the summer. The event is designed to encourage active transportation and civic engagement while showcasing the students' creativity and leadership. The program continues to demonstrate the value of creating meaningful pathways for Boston-area youth into planning and public service careers while strengthening the university's partnerships with local government and community organizations.

Enhance the Learning Experience (cont.)

Emerging Leaders Program Celebrates 25th Cohort at Annual Project Showcase

UMass Boston's Center for Collaborative Leadership (CCL) celebrated a milestone on June 25 as fellows from the Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) presented solutions to real organizational challenges during the program's annual Project Showcase and Commencement.

The celebration honored the program's 25th cohort, coinciding with the Center for Collaborative Leadership's 25th anniversary. The event also marked the completion of ELP's first hybrid cohort since 2020. Over the course of the nine-month program, emerging leaders from the corporate, nonprofit, and public sectors engaged in a blend of virtual learning and in-person experiences, including orientation, a leadership residency at Boston Logan International Airport hosted by Massport, fireside chats, and collaborative team projects.

With the graduation of the 2026 cohort, ELP's alumni network has grown to 930 leaders across Greater Boston and beyond.

The celebration concluded with a commencement address from Annis Gill-Miller, chair of the CCL Board of Advisors, director of Youth Development at Mothers for Justice and Equality, and a member of the program's inaugural 2002 cohort. Gill-Miller encouraged graduates to stay connected with one another as they continue their leadership journeys. "The promise of the Emerging Leaders Program is not one-time leadership, but a network of leaders of 900+ working across sectors to strengthen our region," she said.



2026 Emerging Leaders Program Graduates