

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
COMMISSION ON CAMPUS DIVERSITY
PUBLIC FORUM
CAMPUS CENTER AUDITORIUM
AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS
FEBRUARY 3, 2005**

MEMBERSHIP ATTENDANCE:

Chairman Orlando Taylor
Mr. Uri Strauss
Dr. Sid Ferreira
Dr. Anne Herrington
Dr. Martha Escobar
Dr. Esther Terry
Dr. Howard Johnson
Dr. Rosio Alvarez
Dr. Pamela Marsh-Williams
Dr. Mathew Ouellett
Dr. Joyce Bylander
Mr. Arthur Jemison
Dr. Jules Chametzky
Dr. Ernie May
Dr. Ruth Ellen Fitch
Mr. Eduardo Bustamante
Dr. Vanessa Rivera
Dr. Earl Lewis
Dr. Frances Horowitz

AGENDA
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2005
4:10 p.m. - 5:45 p.m.
PUBLIC FORUM
CAMPUS CENTER AUDITORIUM

4:10 Welcome - Chairman Orlando Taylor
4:15 First Presentation
5:45 Adjourn

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Good afternoon.

The second Public Forum of the Commission on Campus Diversity will come to order. My name is Orlando Taylor from Howard University in Washington, D.C.

And I have the honor and pleasure of serving as chair of the Commission. Before I ask each member of the Commission to introduce themselves to the audience, I want to take just a moment to thank the members of the University of Massachusetts Amherst campus community for its support for our work, for the outpouring of interest, for their caring about the topic at hand, for the manner in which they've made their presentations.

And I can assure everyone in attendance that the contributions to the faculty, staff, students, administrators, alumni and others have been extremely important to our deliberations and will contribute greatly to the conclusions that we draw from our work and the recommendations that we'll make to the university's Chancellor.

Our plan is to complete our work by the end of this month and present our findings in another Public Forum on Tuesday March 1, 2005 the location to be determined.

It will be a public meeting and as I understand it the campus community will be invited to attend. Again I want to thank everyone for coming today and particularly for those who have taken the time to prepare remarks, to step forward and be a part of the record.

I want to begin the far left and ask the members of the Commission to introduce themselves and then we'll ask Thomas Cois, I believe that's the pronunciation of your name, to standby to be the first presenter. Would you please.

MR. STRAUSS: My name is Uri Strauss.

I'm president of the Graduate Student Center here.

DR. FERREIRA: My name is Sid Ferreira. I'm the Associate Dean for Student Support Services.

DR. HERRINGTON: Anne Herrington, Professor, Department of English.

DR. ESCOBAR: Martha Escobar, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admissions.

DR. TERRY: Esther Terry, Afro-American Studies and Associate Chancellor for Equal Opportunity and Diversity.

DR. JOHNSON: I'm Howard Johnson, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, University of North Texas

DR. ALVAREZ: Rosio Alvarez, Executive Director for OIT.

DR. MARSH-WILLIAMS: Pamela Marsh-Williams, Associate Dean Undergraduate Advising Support Center here at UMass.

DR. HOROWITZ: I'm Frances Horowitz, assistant --

DR. OUELLETT: My name is Matt Ouellett. I'm the Acting Director of the Center for Teaching here at UMass.

DR. HOROWITZ: Excuse me, I didn't see you. I'm Frances Egan Horowitz. I'm president of the City University Graduate Center, City University of New York.

DR. RIVERA: I'm Vanessa Rivera, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at the College of Engineering here at UMASS.

MR. BUSTAMANTE: My name is Eduardo Bustamante. I'm the student body president.

DR. FITCH: I'm Ruth Ellen Fitch. I'm a lawyer and president and chief executive officer at Dimock Community Health Center in Roxbury.

DR. MAY: Ernie May, Secretary of Faculty Center.

DR. CHAMETZKY: Jules Chametzky, Professor Emeritus in English, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

DR. JACKSON: Bailey Jackson, Professor, School of Education.

MR. JEMISON: Arthur Jemison, senior project manager, Massachusetts Port Authority, alumnus of the university.

DR. BYLANDER: I'm Joyce Bylander, Associate Provost for Campus Academic Life, Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. Our procedures are as follows. Each presenter will have a total of five minutes to make a presentation and to respond to the questions that will come from the Commission.

And generally we've asked the presenters to take no more than two minutes, three at most to make their presentations leaving some time for interaction with Commission members.

Questions will only be fielded from the Commission members. I'm asking those of you who have to leave early to at least wait until a person finishes their presentation so as not to interrupt them.

We're asking for no clapping and cheering only to not take away from the time that the person has to speak. That's the only reason. Not in an effort to muzzle anybody's emotions or opinions.

And then finally I want to introduce you to Dr. James Leheny, Associate Chancellor, who will serve as Parliamentarian to monitor the presenter's time and to facilitate this evening's presentation and protocol.

You will notice a clock over here to my left and to the audience's right which will give us some index of the remaining time. Our first speaker is Thomas Coish. I hope I'm pronouncing your name correctly, president SEIU.

MR. COISH: That's close. Thank you. My name is Thomas Coish and I thank you for the opportunity to address this Commission today.

I'm president of the Amherst campus chapter of local 888 Service Employees International Union. We represent about 1100 professional administrative staff here. We represent another 1600 or so staff on the other UMASS campuses.

I was born in an immigrant working class family myself in New Bedford, Massachusetts, and I attended this university and was a once proud alum of the class of 1975 and I went on to get a law degree at Northeastern University.

I say once proud because based on recent developments here it's hard for me to maintain any sense of pride at UMass Amherst because of recent situations that have developed.

We have a checkered history here concerning diversity and fairness issues. Many of the policy changes that have diversified this campus and created a more just climate here have been the results of protests that in their time were quite disruptive and controversial.

It seems sometimes that the university has to be dragged kicking and screaming to do the right thing in these situations far too often.

We now seem to be in the midst of another crisis around these diversity issues. Let me talk about some of the more recent developments. You may have heard about some of these already from other speakers.

There was an incident two and a half years ago that I think in hindsight was a watershed in terms of where we are now. You may have heard of M. Ricardo Townes who was the Vice Chancellor -- associate -- Assistant Vice Chancellor for campus activities and oversaw several agencies funded by students, which advocated for the interest of students, particularly low income students and students of color. He also worked in a number of support programs on campus for about 25 years total. On the day that he got a 25 year anniversary reward recognizing his service to the university he was terminated from his position. It was because he was clearly an outspoken advocate for students, all sorts of students. And I think that from that point on an atmosphere of intimidation and silence has pervaded the university. I think the message from that action was clear. If you speak out in a controversial way and your job is on the line. A clear message again was sent. Since then at the same time that Ricardo Townes was terminated support programs have been quote "restructured". And then since Vice Chancellor Gargano arrived we hear that he has been quoted as saying that we need more students with high end designer labels on their clothes, that most of them should be in the Greek system in fraternities and sororities and that an effective student government is no longer necessary.

Let me talk about some other incidents.

The Office of ALANA Affairs it has been reported to me, the university has refused to hire an assistant director as soon as it became aware that the director was suffering from a serious medical condition. Instead it seized upon that information as an opportunity to try to drive him from his office by a combination of personal attacks, denial of support staff and manipulation of the Family and Medical Leave Act to try to relieve him of his duties. The administration violated longstanding university policy by disseminating personal information that is confidential in the university policy and law to students who had no business having that information in an attempt to undermine him. At the Stonewall Center which represents and serves the gay, lesbian

and bisexual students of the campus, the operating budget has been slashed by 40 percent I'm told. The Assistant Director position has been eliminated, two graduate positions have been cut, the office manager and director have been moved off of the full-time payrolls. Now we hear that people at the highest level of the administration have been leaking slanderous information about the director of the Stonewall Center in an effort to undermine her and have her leave.

The BCP, the Bilingual Collegiate Program the positions of Director, Office Manager, Academic Advisors and one TA position have all been removed. The story is the same at the Office of Native American Support Services. Positions slashed, no director, no budget and excessive workloads. Up to 12 current members I would say in terms of also union activity on our Chapter Board of our union almost half have had adverse and discriminatory actions taken against them by the administration in recent month and years. There has been an agenda here that is not only anti-advocate for students of color but is also antiunion. Most recently the Vice Chancellor announced a revision to the campus picketing program which sought to ban students --

DR. LEHENY: Tom, excuse me, you have 30 seconds left.

MR. COISH: Remaining demonstrations in campus buildings whether disruptive or not, this comes right after recent student protests of his actions. The new policy has been an embarrassment to this university. Fortunately the university seems to be backing down from it now but it has contributed again to the ongoing climate of abuse and intimidation to students and staff. I hope you can help us reverse these dangerous trends at this university and I look forward to the day when I can be a proud alum of University of Massachusetts Amherst again. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much.

Are there any comments or questions from the Commission? Thank you very much.

MR. COISH: I will submit my remarks in writing as well.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. Call now Joanne Levenson, Student Family Population.

MS. LEVENSON: Thank you for inviting me to speak today. Can you people hear me okay? Good, thank you. I'll try and be brief because I hope there will be questions and I also want to recognize behind me is Megan McDonough sitting down in the second row who is the GEO Family Issues Advocate who I also work with.

I'm speaking to you today on behalf of student parents because probably most people in the room don't realize that commuter service was actually founded by student parents in 1976. A group of undergraduate and graduate student parents thought that the institution wasn't providing them with the advocacy and services of programs they

needed and so through the student activities and the Graduate Student Trust Fund, they founded our office and that's why we've always had a voice in working with student parents and helping them do service within the campus program. I also want to share with you how many student parents there are. They are a small population but we think a significant one because the consequences for a student parent if they don't finish their education, should be obvious to all of us. They principally become female heads of households that work at McDonald's or other low paying service jobs and so the problems for them are typically also one of family, not simply of their own person.

So as I said there are approximately 600 students on the campus. We know this from getting some data from financial aid. There are approximately four hundred fifty of them that need to be ranked as so-called high priority needs, which puts them on the very lowest bottom of the totem pole in terms of income. Out of this four hundred fifty, a significant number again, are what I would call teen female parents. Extremely young, had their children sometimes sixteen, seventeen, fifteen. Some even at fourteen and out of that population we think somewhere between forty and 60 percent are also members of the ALANA community. In addition to these student parents on financial aid we've identified another approximate one hundred seventy-five to two hundred that are members -- that are international students of color. So again this is a significant diverse population that has we feel outsider status at the institution. I'm going to give you one anecdote, I hope I have time for it. I don't think it's typical of treatment but I want you to understand what can happen to a student parent. I met this parent, she came to my office because she was living in her car. She was living in her car with her two year old. I said, "How did this happen?" Because her apartment at family housing was not going to be ready for a month she was told. She was also told well, it's okay, you can get a room at a local hotel for four weeks and then we'll let you in.

Well, we called up many hotels. The cost for that was approximately \$1,000 in one month. This should not happen. If this was an undergraduate without a child who came to school, we would have found room for her either in so-called swing space or in the campus center. But these students do present special circumstances and the institution should have a way to respond to them. If you are a student on welfare and many of our young women are, they are parents as well as young men, they have to work 20 hours a week in order to preserve that stipend as well as taking a full course load. This is a strong burden on our students but I just want people to be aware of it. There is very little institutional support except for the very basics our office provides quite -- three series of programs for these student parents.

This is all funded by outside grants. I received for next fiscal year approximately \$80,000. We're hopeful in terms of grants to help our students. We get money to help our students from the United Way, from the community development block grants that recognize progress. So I hope that you'll recognize the position of these students and I'll follow-up or amplify my testimony more directly in looking at services. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. There is time for a comment or question from Commission members. Are there any?

DR. CHAMETZKY: I didn't get the name of the organization.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Student Family Population.

MS. LEVENSON: I represent student services.

DR. HERRINGTON: Is your position funded by university funds or student fees?

MS. LEVENSON: All the money that supports are family programs are student fee generated.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Any other questions or comments? Thank you. Next person is Ximena Zuniga from the School of Education. Thank you for coming, Professor Zuniga.

PROFESSOR ZUNIGA: Thank you for having me here. Good afternoon and Buenas Tardes. My name is Ximena Zuniga. I'm assistant professor at the School of Education in the Social Justice Education concentration. I come to you as a scholar practitioner who cares deeply about these issues personally, politically and academically. I would like to commend first the members of the Commission and the support staff for all the time and effort you have taken to take on this charge. This is hard work, this is edge work, this is mending work. Let me also commend all the students, faculty and staff who are coming to testify before me on this podium and privately. This is hard work, this is edge work, this is mending work. As someone who cares deeply about these issues, it is exciting to see so many people taking responsibility for the challenges that we face at this time. Issues of inclusion and exclusion run deep in the fabric of our society. They also run deep in the fabric of our community.

The good news is that despite of these challenges that we continue to face as a campus we do have a longstanding national reputation for developing and sustaining innovative programming, faculty development, curriculum development, co-curricular programming and residence halls and student activities, et cetera. So we have a lot of assets. Indeed we have to meet challenges and resources are sparse and indeed that has often, you know, created tension for us who care about these issues to continue the struggle in supporting students to continue to learn about these issues. In fact, we have developed a number of practices that have been nationally recognized as promising practices by national associations and peer institutions. As someone who often consults with other institutions of higher education regarding issues of diversity and pedagogy and models to address issues of community and diversity, I would like the Commission to take a careful look at the general education curriculum and to find

ways of supporting and expanding what we already do well based on student evaluation and empirical research.

For example, as part of a national study that we did a couple of years ago, we looked at the impact of education 210 and women studies and took course on social engagement and cognitive development of students and the findings were quite promising. Students do learn to appreciate diversity from multiple perspectives, to engage in it, to understand the dynamics that divide us and bring us together and to take responsibility for change when we use the appropriate pedagogy and the curriculum. We also want you to look carefully at the practices that support closer interaction and meaningful dialogue. We know from research that there are two main predictors of change in higher education when it comes to diversity issues. Closer interaction and diversity courses. Those are the key most important predictors of student development on the college campus. So we have to find ways to develop innovative practices inside of the classroom to support, engaged in as well as meaningful dialogue in learning for all students including for our men students. And I say this because I teach many diversity courses, some of them elective courses and I see the divide between men and women. Women come to the table more often than not to talk about difficult issues; race, class, gender, sexual orientation, et cetera.

So we have to find new models to invite -- to bring men to the table. As someone who has worked in residence halls developing initiatives around years working in diverse communities, I know that there are mentors that we can develop to support and to encourage more involvement from all students. I also have a word of caution. Teaching about diversity and social justice issues can be extremely challenging and demanding. We need to find ways to recognize, reward and support this kind of teaching. I also would like the Commission to take a closer look at the first year experience of undergrads and living learning communities. I have spent quite a bit of time working in residence halls here and in Michigan over the past ten, 15 years. And I know from experience, from political research and from my own practice that the first year is critical. So if you want to encourage, explore to see the world differently, we have to support --

DR. LEHENY: Excuse me, 30 seconds left.

PROFESSOR ZUNIGA: Thank you. We need to find ways to develop mentors that bring students together in the first year. This campus has a strong trajectory of collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs. We have to develop a strong appreciation and structures that bring faculty, staff and students grappling with grants to try new methods so we can create more intentional living communities that support these issues. I also have a word of caution. Bridging the student affairs, academic affairs can also be extremely taxing. We need to find ways to recognize, reward and support the students, staff and faculty who are willing to cross these boundaries to benefit all students. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. Bring forward Erin Naomi Lemkey.

MS. LEMKEY: Hi. My name is Erin. I'm here from Take Back UMASS and as the new student coordinator for SCERA which is the Student Center for Education, Research and Advocacy. I know this afternoon there will be much mention of recent decisions by the administration to undermine free speech, to change the picketing code and the purchase of tasers. To elect a few students for its celebration, so I'll not elaborate on it here. However, I want to highlight these two things as key evidence of a complete and concerted disregard for student voice and safety and also a loud warning signal that there is serious efforts to undermine student voice, creativity and advocacy in this campus. UMASS is very significant and to be tied to an extreme lack of oversight and accountability on the part of our administration and other decision making bodies.

This is not a conspiracy. This is a part of a plan that was imagined almost a decade ago to restructure and change the general culture of UMass. This plan involves the focus on contributions for private companies to fund their Science and Engineering Department, a gradual removal of funds from the humanities that has profoundly undermined the quality of their degrees, an effort to undermine the strong and longstanding tradition of student input, agency and work. This tradition of student involvement can be seen in our many student run businesses, strong advocacy and support agencies such as ALANA Affairs, community services, the SGA, SCERA, the student paper and many active cultural and inter -- RSOs

These are organizations that sometimes with the help of professional directorship are administered and run by students for students and have profoundly shaped the culture of this school and the quality of its students. I want you to think about these two words, quality and agency and what they have to do with this university. The problems that we face right now are about the way public and I stress public education is conceived and run. What you see here is a university administration with a long-term plan to unhinge itself from its community and its statewide obligations to provide affordable, accessible and supportive education to foreign working class students of all races. UMASS is attempting to catapult itself into an institution with a nationally recognized name and it seeks to achieve this by stuffing the campus to the gills with as many out of state and full fee paying students as possible. It is no secret that you see administration desires a complacent campus of students who act more like consumers and clients than active, intelligent, creative people who are learning how to live and create a better world.

These students will be hustled from a 500 person lecture hall to hockey games to X rated hypnotist to a snack bar filled with Coca-Cola products and this is what frightens me about UMASS more than a hurtful image drawn by a bunch of drunk students. I'm frightened that we have an administration that openly seeks to sell its students to the highest bidder and converse secretly with the students they feel support their vision. It

frightens me that our administrations from Boston to Whitmore is that they counter to the basic ideas and tenets of public education, that students who cannot afford private colleges should have a place to get an education and actively have a large part in creating the culture and direction of their university. How will we be expected to be capable people in the world without any part in the making of our own educational experience? As I near my close, I would like to make one simple request of this Commission. I would like the Commission to formulate a document to be signed by the Board of Trustees, the president and every Chancellor that fully commits them to the protection, continued funding and student leadership of our cultural advocacy and support agencies. At the current time the administration is refusing to find an interim director for the SCERA office, an agency that's been without a director for two years.

The money is there and we are being blocked from using it for its designed purpose. This lack of leadership may have a lot to do with the incident earlier this year to create the need for this Commission in the first place. I will be very honest with you. I'm afraid this office and many others like it vital to the research of higher education, advocacy for students and education of the general student body will cease to exist under our current university administration. Multiple members of this administration are stonewalling any new paid employees for our student agencies. And it's not just SCERA. We're struggling against an administration that tells us that we have no say over the funds that every student pays at the beginning of every year precisely for the use by these student agencies. We are struggling against administrators refusing to let us carry out search committees and interviews to hire directors and managers for our own offices.

This university is plainly not functioning and this fact must be very plain to you all at this point. Our ability to do our work and create the university that we want to see is completely and utterly taken away from us often through corrupt and illegal means. I am not here because I like to moan about what goes on at UMASS. I am up here because the agency inability of the students to fulfill their obligations as university students, to improve their environment --

DR. LEHENY: You have 30 seconds.

MS. LEMKEY: Thanks. To improve – the obligations of university students to improve their environment, to creatively come up with solutions to problems and to actively participate in our own world is completely being taken away. And I know myself and many people in this room are not going to sit back and watch this happen.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. Thank you very much. Could we please receive a document to which you -- next speaker will be Andres -- I'm sorry, Theresa Austin, co-chair of the Asian Asian-American Certificate program.

PROFESSOR AUSTIN: Good afternoon. My name is Theresa Austin and I co-chair the Asian and Asian-American Studies Certificate program. My co-chair is C.N. Le in

the Sociology Department and I am an Associate Professor in the School of Education in the specialization called language, literacy and culture. I would like to thank the Commission for granting me time to address you today about the pressing issue of dwindling support for diversity on this campus. I will limit my remarks to those that are relevant to the Asian American Studies Certificate program. Though as a biracial person of African-American and Okinawan descent I've been privileged to work on many issues of diversity and recruitment within a community of scholars across different departments on this campus some of whom are members of this Commission. Let me begin by pointing out that there are no less than 34 faculty and staff who serve Asian American Studies Certificate programs. With a minimum financial support from Dean Lee Edwards but with maximum faculty commitment, our certificate program has continued to be vibrant, to sponsor events, to invigorate the intellectual and social lives of the university community by means of increasing the visibility of the contributions from Asian and Asian-Americans.

We have organized lectures and seminars, cultural events that features art exhibits, performing artists and leading intellectuals in our field. We are actively seeking grants and recently are engaged in revising our vision of this field to promote transnational scholarship, to meet the new international realities of the century. In meeting for this purpose, the faculty involved in this program for Asian and Asian-American studies as well as students we are taking on personal overloads and yet we all continue, despite the fact that our resources are becoming more and more inadequate. At the same time the numbers of students interested in Asian and Asian-American studies is growing. We have experienced an increase in participation in our colloquium greater than 150 percent over last year alone. With the growing numbers of students' interest not just Asian or Asian-American we are strapped to meet these demands. In a fall survey of entering students in 2000 that was conducted by Zuniga and others, she reported that most students saw their ability to work collaboratively with diverse people as a strength yet far fewer rated their knowledge of the cultural background of others as strong. White students were least likely to rate their knowledge of the cultural background of others as somewhat -- at least somewhat strong.

Eighty percent across all groups felt that racial and ethnic discrimination is still a problem, 77 percent of white and 92 percent of multiracial or ethnic students agreed somewhat or strongly that part of the university's mission is to enhance a student's ability to live in a multicultural society. However, the intolerance and recent racial behaviors is a function of the larger institutional framework. When programs that serve diverse populations are singled out to justify their existence, this action ignores the broader, societal university intolerance and blindness that the programs themselves aren't just about hyphenated Americans, but are programs that are meant to contribute to maintaining a presence and participation in learning, that transforms how the mainstream is seen. The vulnerability and the lack of ongoing institutional support given to diverse student support organizations helps maintain a position that the administration is not fully responsible for the larger cultural of intolerance at the

university. Quite to the contrary. The intolerance and lack of respect for diversity has been directly influenced by major cutbacks in leadership in all the various academic and support programs such as UALRC and BCP. Rather than putting the burden on the support programs and others to prove that they are doing their work --

DR. LEHENY: 30 seconds, please.

PROFESSOR AUSTIN: -- our institution needs to be expanded rather than cutting these services back. At least three actions can be taken to seriously consider expanding efforts of promoting diversity at the institutional level. A strategy for international student recruitment, a better strategy for recruitment and retaining diverse students and faculty and third, grants and full-time positions to those certificate programs that are working on issues and working on the -- working through commitment to the whole campus. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. We will be pleased to receive any written documentation you wish to leave with us. Our next speaker is Andres Gomez, Take Back UMass.

MR. GOMEZ: Who I am is of no consequence. I stand before you blindfolded and gagged with my hands tied behind my back. You are my blindfold and this microphone is my gag. As you might have noticed this morning there were no smiling, colorful faces waiting for you as you walked into your meeting. Instead you have three faces. One dull and inexpressive, shrouded in a suit sitting behind a desk and two police officers. I would like to start by apologizing for that. We would have liked to be there. After all what else is there to do a Thursday between seven-thirty and ten in the morning? But low and behold we could not be there. Under the new picketing code that was secretly passed by Chancellor Lombardi during the winter break, we would be liable for expulsion because as you and all of us knows any kind of protest inside a university building is inherently disruptive especially when the target of every protest gets to write the rules. Surprise. I am blindfolded and gagged and my hands are tied behind my back. You are my blindfold, my gag and a little plastic thingy that binds my hands.

You are my blindfold because when this Commission becomes the sole focus of attention, I cannot pay attention to my own problems. You are my gag because when a Commission of outside experts is created to deal with my problem, my voice is negated. You are the bind that hold my hands behind my back because I can no longer take action to advocate for myself. Instead I am here speaking so that you can advocate for me. Let me say it this way. We do not need a Commission of outside experts to tell us what the problems we are experiencing are. We know what those problems are and we are not being heard. What we are facing is a trend to homogenize the student body. We are being transformed from student to consumers. We don't have an administration that has any interest in education it seems, much less public education. Instead we have shopping mall rent-a-cops standing on the side of

the aisle with their batons or their pepper spray gun, their suits and their disempowering rules making sure that we spend our money and don't break anything. In this environment it is futile to speak about diversity. The color of customers does not matter. To hear the Chancellor or the Provost or the Vice Chancellor Mike talk about diversity is akin to hearing some president talk about justice or freedom.

When they say that they are color blind in their admission process, it is true. They only care about who can pay and who can pay the most. Once the fee paying student come, they must be kept in line the only way this administration knows how to with fun little shows and a healthy dose of violence. Bread and Circus, then come the rent-a-cops. This is, of course, the treatment for -- given to the good students. Then there are all the pesky students who need financial aid and who don't like the fact that in spite the hockey games, they can't get into the classes they need in order to graduate in four years. Or the ones who need extra support to be able to come to public universities like students with children. Don't they know this is a university and not a childcare center or female students who want the race hot line to be operational 24 hours a day every day. Well, for these students, for us, there is a zero tolerance policy. They are -- we are peripheral to the mission of this university. When we denounce our advocacy agencies to staff, they respond with arrogance and indifference stonewalling our hiring processes. When we exercise our right to speak our mind they respond with the din of the riot gear and their illegal moves. The words that I speak here are not for this Commission. I refuse to be blindfolded and gagged and I will use my hands for they are all I have.

DR. LEHENY: Thirty seconds, please.

MR. GOMEZ: I know, thank you. Because we are all part of this university. And we should take an active part in shaping it. Because if we don't do this now, others like us will not be able to come here in the future. When every door is closed in our face, all we have left are our brains and our bodies to stop this administration that is trying to transform us from students, from citizens of this university into consumers. We cannot let this happen.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Gomez. I remind the audience in the interest of time and respect to refrain from clapping and other expressions, please. Thomas Lindeman.

MR. LINDEMAN: My name is Thomas Lindeman. Over the past 40 years I've had a variety of relationships with this campus. In the '60s and '70s I was campus minister here. Since returning to Amherst ten years ago I've been a member of the Civility Commission and then its successor, the Council on Community Diversity and Social Justice.

As a part of the council I chaired the task force which created the long range plan now being implemented as the CDSJTs across campus. I worked for the development

office for a year creating public events to showcase the Springfield UMASS partnership. As a trained organization development consultant, I've worked with a variety of university and five college offices. I am an alumnus of the university with a Master's degree in history. Thus I've had the opportunity to see the Amherst campus from many perspectives. I believe there is a larger theme which has not yet been addressed in these hearings or your public statements. The most recent public statement of the key areas you are considering according to an article in the Springfield Republican this past Tuesday includes quote academic advising, admissions, diversity curriculum, faculty diversity, graduate student representation, financial aid and campus climate. Each of these themes is critically important. But I would contend that it is impossible for UMASS to receive, educate and graduate students unless a central aspect of that education is helping them function in a global society which is inherently diverse and multicultural.

Today's university graduates may work in any country on the globe and at least one has already worked in space beyond this globe. That study of diversity is rapidly becoming the norm for us all. It is not just important that we deal with diversity for the sake of improving the campus climate or improving the experience of students of color. It is essential in tomorrow's world, which is rapidly emerging, that every student, every faculty member, every administrator, every staff person, every trustee, every legislator, every person who in any way relates to this great university become aware of diversity as a major given in our world and learn how to deal with it. This is the central educational tenet which binds all these many issues together. The most urgent reason for improving the funding of special programs is to make it possible for UMASS to accomplish its central educational mission. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: We have time for any comments or questions from the Commission members. Are there any? Mr. Lindeman. We call to the podium Joannah Whitney, Doctoral Candidate in Anthropology.

MS. SUBRAMANIAM: That is not me.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: That's not you? You'll be next. Thank you. Good afternoon.

PROFESSOR WHITNEY: Good afternoon. Can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Yes, we can. Thank you.

PROFESSOR WHITNEY: Let me open with a quote. A curb in someplace is no curb at all but instead drainage ditches or voice activated programs or equipment that demand a certain steadiness of the hand to operate. The built world surrounds us. Many people never notice aspects of this maintenance. They walk over these elements of the built landscape, speak into them. They may find that the way the environment is built makes their lives more negotiable, their bodies smoother but they may also

discover that in some environments, their bodies suddenly seem cumbersome or what once had seemed convenient, suddenly becomes inconvenient. Wheelchairs, wide-bodied buses, on time tests can seem irksome and moreover can seem exceptional having to do with a minority population. Who needs the banister? Who needs the brace? I want to speak very briefly today about disability as a category of experience on this campus. Look around you. Have you noticed that thanks to the construction going on around campus, the boy's library which used to have two handicapped parking spaces near the library, have now been replaced by staging trailers for the construction for the library. Have you noticed the entrance labeled the handicapped entrance to the library has no parking next to it at all. What percent of the computers in the computer labs on campus or in the library are apparently intended for public use could be used by somebody with a hand tremor or a condition like arthritis that can limit the ability to type or use a mouse.

If these aren't problems for you or for someone you know, very probably you haven't noticed. If you think there are support services in place to assist people with disabilities on campus, I can only say that's not been my experience. I can tell you there is a university protocol outlining the process for requesting accommodations. There is nothing in this protocol that addresses graduate student needs either in the non-classroom related educational context that is typical for graduate students nor in their work experience which usually involves short-term appointments, these days often multiple appointments, ten hours here, five hours there, another five hours someplace else. I can't speak to the experience of others but I can tell you I've followed the institutionally defined process as best I could and have been routinely treated as if my needs are bizarre and completely unreasonable. Chronic illness doesn't fit the stereotype of disability and its inconvenience to imagine what it might be. I hear discussion about why or whether we need ALANA organizations. I know the answer is yes.

As a community, do we need to educate ourselves more aggressively on diversity issues? Yes. Why? Because the university does a very poor job of self-monitoring -- it provides the environment where diverse individuals can flourish academically. I'll stop there.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: We have about 45 seconds for comments or questions from any member of the Commission. Is there any questions or comments?

MR. STRAUSS: Can I ask a question? What are your experiences with the Office of Disability Services?

PROFESSOR WHITNEY: Very poor. I find that they have a very poor sense of appropriate forms of address. They've been routinely unhelpful frequently because my disability is not stereotypic. They seem stumped at the kinds of requests that actually would be helpful to me. And as much as I've been willing to be flexible about my

request, they've never been able to answer questions like so what would be an example of a reasonable accommodation?

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: How would you describe the faculty's knowledge and competence in meeting the educational needs of students with special needs from your experience?

PROFESSOR WHITNEY: From my experience I would say the faculty that I personally work with have been very supportive. In fact, if it weren't for them, I probably still wouldn't be here. There is limits to what they can do but within the realm of what they actually can do, they've been as helpful as they can be.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. Call now to the podium Banu Subramaniam. I think I got that right.

PROFESSOR SUBRAMANIAM: I am Banu Subramaniam. I am an Associate Professor of Women's Studies here. And I was informed three days ago that I would be allowed to speak at this forum while in the midst of teaching an introductory women's studies course. As I prepared for both I was struck by the profound irony of our situation. The Women's Study Program at UMASS celebrates 30 years this academic year. The field of women's studies, the many ethnic, postcolonial and queer studies are all also a few decades old. We teach this material. Yet in watching how the conversation on diversity is unfolding on campus, it seems like these academic fields have never existed. However, they do and have developed a wealth of knowledge. And I would like to highlight just two points to illustrate how. Firstly, we must move beyond the monolithic diversity talk; gender, race, class, sexuality are not the same thing. Each of these has unique histories and unique processes that structure inequality. The history of African-Americans is not the same as that of women or Asian-Americans or those with disabilities. And our interventions cannot assume that they are. In 2005 we must not reinvent the other by putting all marginalized groups into one term called diversity. To be sure identities are multiple but they are not the same.

We can and must be more nuanced. The second lesson that literature teaches us is that sexism, racism, classism, homophobia are not only the actions of individuals but are structurally embedded in institutions and their processes. I want to speak as a biologist who works on issues of race, gender and science. The comments of the president of Harvard University a few weeks ago is a reminder that women students and students of color are still getting subtle and not so subtle messages that they do not belong in the sciences.

Similarly faculty of color are routinely exposed systemically to practices that have racist and sexist undertones. We need to work with students, with faculty, with administrators and the institutional practices that we are embedded in. And most importantly we need to focus on the curriculum, on the content of courses, of whom

these courses represent and how they understand the nature -- the natural and social worlds around us. This is what the literature tells us, to examine things systemically and systematically. Many of you on this Commission welcome these issues and are aware of this scholarship and I implore you and hope that in your recommendations you will use the vast insights from these scholarships and to lay out recommendations for this university.

We've recently heard of plans to put various so-called marginalized groups on campus into one group entitled diversity, equal opportunity and civility. And so many decades -- after so many decades of academic work we cannot return to a model of colonizers and others. How telling is it that the other is the one that must always attend to civility. This is an academic institution, an institution of higher learning. The leadership understands it must be clearly and forcefully in words and more importantly actions, that in this university, that this university values academic learning and is willing to learn from academic knowledge. We cannot afford not to. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, Professor Subramaniam. We have time for about a minute and a half of comment or question.

DR. HERRINGTON: Around the area of curriculum. Do you have any recommendations for us? Anything we should do --

PROFESSOR SUBRAMANIAM: Yeah, I think to me the main thing is that the ways in which -- I think it is the nature of the when we were before that we developed programs like women's studies and ethnic studies and we have a diversity requirement. But what has happened is that that is the only place that diversity gets taught. So the intro to U.S. history will not mention women, will not mention people of color. You have to take a women's history course or an African-American history course to get that. I think we really need to work to get this material into introductory level courses and mainstream diversity not as a ghettoized structure in some parts of the curriculum and some parts of the university but that they work right through within it and take back --

MR. JEMISON: That's one of the benefits of the past is that the structures evolved and now we have these courses and departments and it's wonderful. And so again talk on how you take that to the next level is a question we've all been thinking a lot about.

PROFESSOR SUBRAMANIAM: I think it has to be done at a lot of different levels. And I think that's part of what the literature teaches us. There is no simple solution to it. So I think with respect to the curriculum it is about finding ways to support faculty that do this teaching, of educating faculty that don't. I mean there is faculty still -- I mean I hear from students who tell women they can't do sciences. This is still happening on this campus. So why is it that we don't have faculty development programs? Why is it that faculty of color are hired on -- you know, departments that have no faculty of color are given incentives to hire someone of

color. So we are always rewarding people who don't know how to retain faculty of color, more money to hire and it's a paradox that I've never understood and we have retention problems.

So why not reward the problem but do a good job of retaining faculty of color, give them more money to let the reward structure be about rewarding people who take diversity seriously and know how to work with it.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much for those comments. I would like to share with the Commission, I would appreciate your not only leaving a copy of your remarks with us but also perhaps making some comments about how we could infuse this kind of academic preparation to graduate level because it appears, speaking personally, it seems that the effort is only focused on undergraduates and its substantial population of students here are now undergraduates who maybe not have the same kind of competence that you were just talking about. Thank you very much. I call now Juan Zamora. Mr. Zamora is from the Council on the Status of Minorities of the Faculty Senate. Thank you for coming this afternoon and welcome.

PROFESSOR ZAMORA: For the record, I'm happy to see that we're discussing diversity now. But at the same time I'm sorry that we still have to be talking diversity. Because I remember when I came to this campus about thirty, 35 years ago we organized an African-American Faculty Association, an Hispanic Faculty Association and an Asian Faculty Association and an umbrella association which was called the Minority Faculty Association. That's 30 years and we're still discussing this program. But let me get to another point. A university is essentially an institution where students come to learn. It follows that students are the most important component because without them faculty and administrators would not have the reason to be. Hence, when we speak about campus diversity, it is understood that the university should try to have women and minorities well represented in the student body. However, the minority and female students are going to think that once they graduate they're going to find it difficult to find a job in an academic institution. For that reason diversity of faculty, of minority and female faculty is also important.

That is the reason that made me want to speak in this place. It is important to say to UMASS students that the faculty senate, as the Council on the Status of Minorities of which I am a member and the Council on the Status of Women. As indicated in the protocol of this forum, I will now answer any questions on the subject.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much, Professor Zamora. The floor is open for questions.

PROFESSOR ZAMORA: Yes?

MR. BUSTAMANTE: Do you feel that the Council on the Status of Minorities should have been called to issue earlier this year --

PROFESSOR ZAMORA: Excuse me, I didn't hear the --

MR. BUSTAMANTE: Do you feel that considering the things that have happened this year, that this council should have been called into action to make recommendations?

PROFESSOR ZAMORA: Yes, I think so because that the problem is that it seems that we keep on doing and acting in a way that we still have to keep on doing. It's not something that's new. It's something that's been here at least from the 30 years ago or 35 years ago when I came to this university.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Professor Zamora, we heard from a number of persons that a great need at the University of Massachusetts is to have more diversity on the faculty. But since it is the faculty itself that recommends persons for the faculty, how do you account for this discrepancy?

PROFESSOR ZAMORA: This is something we have to deal with. And the faculty itself recommends but the faculty itself does not appoint. The faculty when we have a search and when we're out to do a search and we do the search, we recommend but it is then the administration that makes the appointment or not.

DR. FERREIRA: Professor Zamora, I know that after the Goodell take over in 1998-

PROFESSOR ZAMORA: Excuse me?

DR. FERREIRA: After the Goodell take over in 1998 and the Living Document was signed, part of the Living Document called for the -- for the council to oversee see the implementation of the agreement. Do you know what happened to this -- to that type of agreement where the council was supposed to see and oversight?

PROFESSOR ZAMORA: No, I don't know exactly what but I do know that it's a long road.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Are there other questions because there is more time for Professor Zamora?

MR. JEMISON: Professor Zamora, do you know how a committee that runs searches and makes the selections are formed? What's the process of forming those selection committees?

PROFESSOR ZAMORA: Departments when they feel they need somebody to teach in a certain area will request from the administration that we do a search to find a

person to teach in that area. Once that is authorized and again I can speak only for how we do it in the humanities and fine arts and specifically in languages, once we are authorized, we advertise the position, we get – we interview people in an association meeting, and in our case in the modern language association conference, every year in December, then we decide to bring two or three into campus to interview them. And after all of that, we then recommend to the administration that X, Y or Z be appointed. At that point the administration is responsible for doing one thing or the other.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much, Professor Zamora. We call to the podium Mr. Thomas Taaffe, graduate student of the department that he'll identify.

MR. TAAFFE: Anthropology.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you, sir.

MR. TAAFFE: Thank you. My name is Tom Taaffe. I recently defended my dissertation in anthropology.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Congratulations.

MR. TAAFFE: Thank you. Over the years I've been here I've served as GEO chief negotiator, as an officer for that union, as the president of the Grad Senate and as an editor for the Graduate Voice, my current position. I'm giving you two documents. One is the Educational Access Report commissioned by the Graduate Senate. It traces the decline of poor working class students on this campus between 1985 and 1998. The second document is a compendium of articles published in the Graduate Voice over the past eight years on issues of diversity, discrimination and university restructuring.

Some of the findings included in these documents are students from families making less than \$60,000 when calculated in constant dollars declined 40 percent between 1985 and 1998 while students from families making more than \$60,000 increased 132 percent over the same period. The average family income for a student -- average family income for student at UMASS was \$85,000 in the fall of 2000 while the national average household income was forty-four thousand and African-American, Latino American, Native American households averaged between thirty-one and thirty-three thousand.

African-American graduate enrollment peaked in 1974 at six percent of the total graduate population. Only three percent of the total graduate population are African-American today. Throughout the life span of affirmative action on this campus African-American graduate enrollment declined 51 percent in terms of total numbers and while the overall graduate population increased by nine percent. Between 1997 and 2000 African-American freshmen enrollment declined 45 percent. Between 1996 and 2000 Latino freshmen enrollment declined 41 percent and Cape Verdean freshmen

enrollment declined 61 percent thanks to changes in admissions and the collapse of affirmative action in 1999. Eighty-eight percent of our student parents on public assistance disappeared from the school in fall of 1998 thanks to welfare reform. That's 805 out of 911 at risk student parents. When efforts were made to save the remaining population, UMASS declared that not one penny would be spent on anybody coming off of welfare to keep them in school. Geographically speaking people from northwestern Massachusetts are the least likely to attend UMASS. Franklin, Berkshire and Hampshire counties rank at or near the bottom in terms of representation in any incoming freshmen class. Nontraditional students are also unwelcome. Only point two percent of any incoming freshmen class received a high school degree three years or more before coming to college and very few students transferred from local community colleges to UMASS.

In 1998 one third of all graduate programs had no African-Americans. Five departments had no ALANA students at all. Four out of nine of our college -- our campuses, colleges and schools had less than two percent ALANA enrollment, of graduate enrollment and only the School of Education had more than five percent. Two thirds of all African-American graduate students, at least that's as of 1998, can be found in four places on campus; the School of Ed, Afro-Am, social sciences and English. Most ALANA students can be found there as well. Generally speaking the best funded academic programs has the lowest ALANA enrollment especially African-American enrollment, while the worst funded programs have the greatest ALANA and Afro-Am enrollment. Some programs have had no African-Americans at all between 1985 and 1998 the years that we studied and a couple had no ALANA students.

Most women are also clustered in the same poorly funded programs. One more comment. The statistics that I cited can be found in the documents that SGA and GSS requested six months ago from the university. These documents allow us to track enrollment by ethnicity, class and geography in significant detail. The administration's refusal to comply with the state order to release those records violates state and federal law and shows contempt for the government bodies of the school and students in general.

DR. LEHENY: 30 seconds.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. I assume you're going to leave copies of those documents for the Commission. Thank you. The floor is open for any question or comment.

MR. JEMISON: Did you ever get the data that you requested?

MR. TAAFFE: No. The university is hiding behind FERPA. They tried twice. In 1999 I requested similar documents and the university told me that they were covered under FERPA and they couldn't release the data. I went to the state. The state said it

was nonsense and forced them to release the data. And then Eduardo Bustamante made a similar request. The university has been hiding behind FERPA and despite the fact that the state has again ordered them to release the documents, they're refusing to do so. They are refusing to do so because they know it's going to reveal the state of affairs of the school in excruciating detail and that detail needs to be made public.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Other comments or questions from the Commission? Thank you very much.

MR. JEMISON: What is FERPA?

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Would you please define the acronym FERPA, Mr. Taaffe? Some of the Commissioners --

MR. TAAFFE: FERPA is the federal education -- basically --

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: The privacy act.

MR. TAAFFE: Yeah, the privacy act. Basically it's giving you privacy to say that you can't release your personal records but these records are statistical records. They are not somebody's name or address or phone number or Social Security number. There is no personal data, there is no grades, there is nothing. It's statistics.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. If I might, Mr. Taaffe, since you said the data was not available, where did you get your numbers?

MR. TAAFFE: Whitmore leaks like a sieve.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. Ask and it shall be answered. I call Ruhaina Raza I believe is the right name, I hope it's right. Good afternoon.

MS. RAZA: Good afternoon. As Secretary of Diversity Issues for the Student Government Association, I bring to you the plight of the students whom I've heard speak at community meetings, senate meetings, GLBT roundtables, diversity roundtables and the dorms where I serve as a community leader for residence life. I bring to you the concerns of students who are being stripped of their rights as the door of freedom of speech is being shut in their faces left and right with the implementations of either shameless acts or even clearly unconstitutional policies such as the one that had recently been instituted which forbade all forms of protest in university buildings. At the same time the university police have purchased tasers that cost \$800 each plus the cost of training for their use so that they may electrocute students for gathering as if the student body was cattle. At the same time students have disgustingly watched their Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, Michael Gargano, treat with unprecedented leniency those individuals who were at the very root of the racial crisis across campus. At the same time students have witnessed the Chancellor

stand behind the Vice Chancellor, an administrator who was caught in an E-mail scandal which proved his desire to dismantle the Office of ALANA Affairs by exploiting the illness of its director and by harassing a Latina grad student, an outspoken critic of the administration by illegally withholding her pay for over a month.

At the same time students have witnessed this same Vice Chancellor single out a student antiracism group on campus and threaten to suspend and disband their organization all at the behest of the very student caught in those despicable pictures last semester. When we, the student body, agreed that we no longer wanted to work with such a corrupt administrator, we didn't protest, we didn't riot.

Instead through the officially sanctioned channels we passed a motion of no confidence in Michael Gargano with an overwhelming majority of 85 percent in student senate. How more civilized, how more plainly could we have made our voice be heard? The response from the administration? Our Chancellor, John Lombardi conveniently overlooked our grievance and decision, announced that he was standing behind Michael Gargano giving us no alternative but to work with that very person who we no longer could trust. Moreover hurdles are now being placed to prevent SGA from hiring an interim director for another agency, an agency and a position that we the students fund. And now after attempting to proceed civilly and through officially sanctioned channels yet again the response we received from the administration is that, in fact, we have no right to control our funds, that we have no right to hire staff, that we essentially are not anything but a quaint facade. This is a land grant institution which carries a legacy of a diverse and accessible public university.

I tell you now that this administration is deviating from that very premise that this institute was founded on. Making bad faith promises that the university is increasing its efforts to recruit members of the ALANA community has very little bearing on any of us for the solution to this campus' issues is not to increase the numbers of ALANA students, the answer is to treat the ALANA community, the GLBT community, women, the disabled, those from low income households with respect. To take their demands into consideration and to take them seriously. We may be young but among us we have some exceptional minds and great thinkers. With all due respect to the members of the Commission, the dominating opinion across campus remains that we do not need a Commission to decide what our needs seem to be. We know what we want to see on this campus and we can articulate this well; however, in a time of an administration that is taking all steps necessary to silence the student voices, we in embarrassment and desperation turn to you, the Commission to plead our case. I ask you very respectfully that in the list of recommendations which as many believe, including myself, should definitely include that the OAA needs an assistant director ASAP. That the search for the interim director for SCERA needs to be signed off on immediately. That a search for the Director of the Everywoman's Center begin immediately, that staff and other resources be given to the Stonewall Center

immediately. That funding for the existing programs on campus be increased so they don't hang on by the skin of their nails when trying to serve the students. That ESL and academic advising in support services be restored. That all buildings on this campus be wheelchair accessible and that there be more gender neutral bathrooms on campus. However, above all it should also include that the administration return to us, the students, the autonomy that those before us fought thirty odd years for. Above all there must be a mechanism for administrative accountability. At the same time a 500 seat lecture hall is being built, a lone director in the new Africa House tries to keep a support program going all by herself. Privatization and prestige is being valued over student needs and demands by the present administration of this campus, a campus which many of us here call home. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. Call on Aeryn Jessie, People's Market. Is Aeryn Jessie in the house? Oh, there you are. Thank you. Good afternoon.

AERYN JESSIE: My name is Aeryn Jessie and like somebody else who was up here I was informed three days ago after being told on Friday that I was not allowed to speak today. So this is why my speech is handwritten and this is what I have to say. I'm here tonight as a four-semester student business co-manager for People's Market, the co-chair of the Board of Directors for a youth nonprofit organization and full-time student of sociology. Eight weeks ago I thought I'd have a lot to say but after weeks of sleepless nights, I realized I don't want to say much as this is not the way I do things. I work in a student business run by students for our students and faculty. I volunteer in a youth nonprofit organization that's program is determined by its youth members and leaders. I work, I volunteer and I'm a full-time student but I feel foolish up here. I don't know any big words, I don't have any nice clothes. What I do know is that despite how hard I've tried to look at this Commission with optimism, I've been unable to achieve that goal. Earlier I felt like I needed to do the transgender community justice by standing here and telling you our problems, like the need for gender neutral bathrooms. But I was informed that to change the designation of a bathroom on this campus the building must also be brought up to code and made wheelchair accessible and that's just too much money. Heaven forbid. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. Ms. Jessie, would you care to respond to any questions or comments? The presumption that you would not I would ask Ms. Ann Ferguson please come forward, Women's Studies and Philosophy.

FROM THE FLOOR: (Inaudible.)

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Oh, okay.

FROM THE FLOOR: (Inaudible.)

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: You have five minutes. I think you had about three minutes left if you'd like to add -- I don't know whether there are any questions or comments or not. Are there?

AERYN JESSIE: If I could say one more thing. I respect everybody who's been up here but I feel like the T is left out of GLBT way too often and that the trans people on this campus are fighting very hard as well. And I feel like it's very difficult for people to understand the amount of anxiety that comes with me having to walk into the women's bathroom and get kicked out because of the way I dress and the way I look. And we fought really hard to get gender neutral bathrooms and that's all we really, really need is gender neutral bathrooms. But it's hard enough to sit in a class with 50 people and have to work in groups and use my voice and be called she and not have anybody understand me. And I'm furious and I honestly -- I don't feel like this Commission can do anything for me because I feel like a lot of you and a lot of the students on this campus are uneducated. So that's why I'm pissed off.

DR. OUELLETT: Aeryn, I appreciate your -- and I'm delighted that you're here tonight. I think it's very important that you came forward and I appreciate your courage in doing that. You've mentioned one important recommendation which is bathrooms and you've just begun to talk about what goes on in the classroom. Is there anything more you want us to know about sort of your academic experience here as well?

AERYN JESSIE: I spent \$230 legally changing my name last fall because I couldn't go up to a professor and not have him look at me funny when I wanted to say that I'd rather be called Aeryn. So I had to spend 230 bucks. I had to -- my family because I had to spend 230 bucks and get my papers changed. And to see the lack -- it's that there is a lack of education of the faculty and of the students on this campus. I was sexually harassed by a student on this campus because of who I am and what I am. And I don't work past six o'clock because I don't like walking to the bus at night and walking back to my apartment at night. So I live in Northampton because the dorms are too hard to live in. And this isn't just me. This is all the trans people on this campus who aren't hurt. So it's very difficult to be here and the only thing that keeps me sane is living in Northampton, my hometown that I know and that I trust.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Question please?

MR. BUSTAMANTE: We have the Stonewall Center which is the GLBT center on campus is severely understaffed and under-funded and has been cut drastically in the last few years. I don't know how long you've been on campus. If you could comment on the impact of that center being in its current diminished state on your experience here we'd appreciate it.

AERYN JESSIE: I don't have much to do with the Stonewall Center. I don't have much to do with like the Pride Alliance. I can't speak about the Stonewall Center

because it's not been an area of interest for me because it's definitely -- other than, you know, it's definitely not -- hasn't expressed any way of getting information to me about helping me. So I look to my youth organization, my GLBT, TQA youth organization for support. So I can't say much about that. Pride Alliance got Leslie Feinberg here last semester. That was amazing but even when I walk into a Pride Alliance meeting, they say gay and I say, "I'm not gay, I'm trans." It has nothing to do with my sexuality, it's my gender. I don't feel like I can be a part of anything on this campus. And everybody told me to start a trans group and I work 35 hours a week and I'm a full-time student, I can't start a trans group.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much.

AERYN JESSIE: Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I call Ann Ferguson to the podium, Women's Studies and Philosophy.

PROFESSOR FERGUSON: My name is Ann Ferguson. I'm a professor of both philosophy and women's studies and I'd just like to say that I've been really moved by the courageous speeches of some of the students, particularly the last student, and I'm hoping that this Commission, which I welcome and thank for investigating diversity issues and racial issues at UMASS, will help to improve the climate here for students who are diverse and who are under supported. I've been a faculty member at the university since 1964. And during this time there have been a number of racial incidents on campus. I think this ongoing problem is in part a structural one. It has to do with the fact that we have a majority white campus population who for the most part come from racially segregated suburbs and neighborhoods where they have never really experienced people of color as peers and acquaintances. Racist behavior based on stereotyping and ignorance of the social inequalities that are involved have often been the result here. Racial minorities have had to form their own student advocacy organizations to maintain a sense of group pride and to defend themselves from this evaluation. In addition, through the various public activities that they sponsor these groups are very important in their role in educating white students about minority cultures and their achievements. In this way it seems to me the support and existence of these cultural advocacy groups is key to the educational function of the university as many people have said before me.

It should be promoted and given adequate funding by the administration. In the past before this particular administration, they have been supportive of the demands of students and faculty of color although usually only after periodic student demonstrations and unrest around these issues. Policies targeting recruitment of more faculty and students of color, tutoring for minority services and general education diversity courses have gone some way toward creating a positive racial climate on campus. However, the proportion of students of color and working class students are diminishing as we've heard partly from the public demise of affirmative action

programs and also at the university student tutoring services have been cut and so forth. And let's see here. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs has lost trust with racial minorities because he appears to have sided in a partisan way with white student senators in the debate about ALANA's position from the student senate. It's clearly delayed staff searches at the Office for ALANA Affairs and everyone in the center. Administrative leadership in supporting racial diversity and other forms of social justice on campus is basic to a positive climate for racial and social equality. So one of my recommendations is to urge the Commission to critique these recent budget cuts in the student services and the recent actions of the administration and to recommend that they, including the Chancellor of the university, proactively take actions to address these criticisms. Key areas that require more leadership on the part of administration and faculty are continued recruitment and retention of faculty of color in the traditional disciplines, not just in the ethnic studies programs where the bulk of faculty of color work. The traditional disciplines still tend to be predominantly white in their faculty with a narrow western focus in their core courses. For example, in my department, the Philosophy Department, most of the required introductory courses in the history of philosophy sequence does not even include philosophers of color nor does it deal with non-western philosophy. So I think that this is an important area that the faculty needs to be given incentives. Their need to be -- the administration needs to be more proactive in providing various faculty development and grants for inserting this diversity material into core courses in the curriculum.

DR. LEHENY: Thirty seconds.

PROFESSOR FERGUSON: Thank you. With respect to recruitment and retention of faculty of color, I would urge the present administration to be more proactive. Both students of color and white students need to experience the authority and expertise of such faculty as comparable to that of white faculty. We need more faculty of color to relieve the unfair burden of mentoring and student services that fall on the too few existing faculty and staff of color. I would also encourage serious investigation into predominantly white departmental cultures which still provide a chilly climate for faculty and students of color.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. Our time has expired. Are there any questions or comments that you really wish to raise? Hearing none we'll move finally to Nora Ritchie, SGA Senator.

MS. RITCHIE: First off, I'd just like to say thank you to the Commission for allowing this much needed dialogue to take place and I'd like to thank my fellow speakers for their insightful and brave statements. Students are what make this university possible and I believe it is the students who can create the vision necessary to overcome issues of diversity and bigotry in our campus. The means to achieve this is only possible by confronting the institutions that breed this bigotry. I see this Commission and the possibility of what it decides as truly exciting if and only if it is followed through with. As a student still relatively young to campus politics, I was

amazed to learn of the history and the lack of institutional support for diversity and in more frank terms, the institutional racism that is bred here at UMASS. The university is stuck in a cycle of reactively dealing with these issues. The steps in the cycle are one, an event occurs that forces the university to act. A building is taken over after years of racism at UMASS or representatives of student government are photographed with racist drawings. Two, a Commission is formed or an agreement is reached, the Tillis Commission, the Living Document, this Commission. Three, some progress is made but the students were the catalyst for change gradually and administrators change. Four, gradually the progress made dismantling the institutional racism is undermined. It is undermined by a lack of funds, by a change of administration, by a lack of institutional memory and by a litany of other unacceptable excuses. Five, the climate of the university slides back into old patterns of not respecting diversity but institutionally eradicating it. Students and faculty asked the university to live up to its promises, to support diversity. Six, the university did not respond or offer partial solutions that do not address the embedded, systemic problem. One, an event occurs that forces the university to take action and the cycle repeats.

I ask you to break this cycle. Be the last Commission formed reactively. How can you do this? You can demand that the university live up to its past promises and its current obligations. That EveryWomen's Center director position must be filled, the Office of ALANA Affairs must be allowed to fill its Assistant Director position, the Interim Director position of SCERA must be filled, funds that have been cut to cultural centers and support services must be restored. Let me note these are bare operational requests. Any agreements made around issues of diversity must enforce a mechanism that compels the university to abide by its agreement. The university must have a designated group that closely monitors the status of diversity on campus. And any group that makes decisions about issues of diversity must allow for meaningful student participation. Every action must have a follow-up to track progress and to hold the administration accountable. By follow-up I mean three months from now, six months from now, a year from now, a year and a half from now. We need to be in this for the long haul. This is critical to the success of this university. I leave you with a small snippet of the emotional hurt that this cycle of institutional racism can cause. I can clearly remember the face of a young black woman at a meeting to organize and respond to the incidences of racism in the beginning of last semester. She shyly raised her hand, wiped the tears and mustered up the courage, I am scared. I do not feel comfortable at UMASS. The emotion shook me to my core.

This is a university. It should be a place of growth, depth, safety and possibility for all. I trust what you decide will honor the testimonials of what you've heard today and the previous Commission. And I beg of you to hold values, accountability, checks and balances and real change in mind while making your decision. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. Ms. Ritchie, we have time for a comment or two. Question?

DR. BAILEY: Assuming that this Commission makes some recommendations to move forward, it sounds like what I'm hearing you say is that they would have more credibility if we also made some recommendations that the promises from past grievance be honored; is that correct?

MS. RITCHIE: Yes.

DR. BAILEY: My hunch is that – first of all, I like the idea -- by hunch is though or my fear is that we would not necessarily get all of those promises or be able to renegotiate all of those. Is there some level of recouping of those past promises that is sort of minimal from your perspective?

MS. RITCHIE: Well, I stated those minimal positions that need to be filled just to keep these offices running and not have people be so overwhelmed.

DR. BAILEY: Are there any others? The ones that you stated you think would make the difference?

MS. RITCHIE: My personal feelings but I'm sure there is a variety of others that are just as important.

DR. BAILEY: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: One other, please.

MR. BUSTAMANTE: I have a comment. I would say one thing possibly to add to the cycle is that when things get bad, we see tremendous amounts of money invested in programs like multi-culture programming. I think that's what we're seeing right now also. Is that as opposed to making institutional changes a facade is created whereby so this year \$50,000 allocated for, you know, multicultural programming which is brand new but it's not going to address anything lasting.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much, Ms. Ritchie. I'm sorry. I will use the prerogative of the chair to allow one additional minute. Ms. Ritchie, will you please return to the podium? Thank you.

DR. HERRINGTON: One question. You made reference to meaningful student participation.

MS. RITCHIE: Yes.

DR. HERRINGTON: What would be a move towards that?

MS. RITCHIE: Well, for example, I appreciate everyone on this Commission but we only have one student and one graduate student, I think. I think that's really -- that's uncalled for, it's ridiculous. We are the students on this campus, we're why the university is here. It was stated earlier, you know, we cannot -- create a vision for what this university needs to be and I think we are essential to making it happen.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Are there any comments? Just a quick comment.

DR. TERRY: Just one quick comment. I note your comment about being in this for the long haul. I appreciate that and I think that's absolutely right.

DR. CHAMETZKY: May I speak to a previous speaker, Ann Ferguson? Is that all right?

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I'll recall Ms. Ann Ferguson. Any other questions or comments for Nora Ritchie? Thank you. Professor Ferguson.

DR. CHAMETZKY: Ann, you and I have been colleagues for a long time and you've been around a long time. I really appreciated your observation that no one else made about the constitution of the large body of our students. They come from racially segregated neighborhoods and separate you said and that's true. And they come with their prejudices and biases and racism, a lot of them. Not all by any means but a lot. Then we have the -- you brought in the larger context, nobody else did. There is the state of Massachusetts and its state. There is the legislature and we've dealt with them over forty, 45 years with them. What can we do in the face of all that? The other limitations about how far this era of budget cuts and deficits and so on. Where would we go? What's a good strategy in your estimation?

PROFESSOR FERGUSON: Well, I don't think there --

DR. CHAMETZKY: This is a challenge and I really want to get some ideas.

PROFESSOR FERGUSON: Well, there can't be one strategy. There just has to be a multi-based strategy of, you know, our unions have to keep pushing for a more adequate funding for our public universities so that we can have more programs, more faculty. That means that often courses that deal with diversity issues in the traditional disciplines tend to be cut because those faculty aren't replaced because they're not seen to be teaching core courses. I think we need a strategy which -- in which departments -- I agree with my colleague Banu that departments are now rewarded by getting positions when they have all white faculty when they haven't really been trying. I mean right now we have no faculty of color in the Philosophy Department. No one is holding our feet to the fire to try to get minority faculty. And that would partly have to involve a priority on the part of the department to put into its core courses a content which specializes in diversity issues which faculty of color would be likely to be teaching. And so those kinds of motivations for faculty, incentives for faculty, money

that goes from the administration towards that at the state level, we have to be pushing for more quality -- funding for higher quality and keep the quality at UMASS as high as we've had it in the past and make it much better for dealing with this problem, structural problem of diverse students coming here and needing a whole -- a life education in diversity which we cannot do with the resources that we now have and with the motivation structure we now have for faculty and curriculum development.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much, Professor Ferguson. I want to close this Public Forum by informing the audience that initially this Commission had agreed to have a three-hour Public Forum. And because of popular demand, you might say, we decided to have two additional hours today and there are some persons who might not have known that until rather late because we produced more time, put up more slots and in fact there were some persons who were able to speak who were not on the original docket. So we want the public record to show that the Commission, as I think, have bent over backwards to make sure we hear all voices. And the voices that we've heard have been very important, very impressive and very persuasive. As the public might understand, there are -- these are challenging issues, there are many opinions. But I will assure this audience and assure this university community that this entire Commission is very sensitive, well informed and diligent in its task and we'll make a public statement on March 1st. Thank you very much and good evening.