

**University Of Massachusetts
Commission On Campus Diversity
Public Forum
Curry Hicks Gymnasium
Amherst, Massachusetts
December 9, 2004
7:00 P.M.**

In Attendance:

Chairman Orlando Taylor
Esther Terry
Robert Ringel
Vanessa Rivera
Earl Lewis
Mathew Ouellett
Carlos Vargas-Aburto
Rosio Alvarez
Howard Johnson
Anne Herrington
Arthur Jemison
Martha Escobar
Pamela Marsh-Williams
Uri Strauss
Ruth Fitch
Sidonio Ferreira
Jules Chametzky
Joyce Bylander
Bailey Jackson
Eduardo Bustamante
Ernie May
Benjamin Swan

Agenda
Thursday, December 9, 2004
7:00 P.M. - 10:00 P.M.
Public Forum
Curry Hicks Gymnasium

7:00 Welcome: Chairman Orlando Taylor
7:05 First Presentation
10:00 Adjourn

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Good evening everyone.

My name is Orlando Taylor. I am the Chair of the Commission on Campus Diversity here at the University of Massachusetts. I welcome you to tonight's forum, and I believe all of you have received a statement of our organization and of our plans for the evening. I would like to say first of all on behalf of the Commission members, that we are extremely gratified by the response of the University community to come out tonight, and equally important, perhaps more importantly, for so many people wishing to make a statement before the Commission. It's because of this large outpouring of interest, that we will have to schedule a second forum, a much smaller one in terms of scope, probably after the beginning of classes in January. But our interest is hearing everybody. We want to hear all voices, all perspectives. We want to consider them in preparing our final report.

I am joined tonight by most members of the Commission, and they are seated with their backs to you. Don't interpret any meaning to that. But we simply want to make sure that the Commission members have good face-to-face contact with those persons presenting. I am going to read off very briefly the names of the Committee members. I will probably mispronounce someone's name, so I apologize in advance if I should do that.

Rosio Alvarez of the University of Massachusetts, would you please stand and let people see you; Eduardo Bustamante, University of Massachusetts; Joyce Bylander from Dickerson College; Jules Chametzky, Professor Emeritus University of Massachusetts; Martha Escobar University of Massachusetts, Sidonio Ferreira University of Massachusetts; Ruth Fitch Denmark University Health Center in Roxbury; Anne Herrington University of Massachusetts; Frances Horowitz could not be with us tonight. She is the President of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York; Bailey Jackson of University of Massachusetts, Arthur Jemison from the Massachusetts Port Authority, Howard Johnson, Provost, University of North Texas; Earl Lewis, Provost of Emory University in Atlanta. He cannot be with us tonight. I should say that all the members who are absent tonight will have access to the video recording of these events this evening. Pamela Marsh-Williams University of Massachusetts; Ernest May Secretary of the Faculty Senate, University of Massachusetts; Mathew Oullett University of Massachusetts for the Center for Teaching; Robert Ringel, Professor of Audiology at

Purdue University; Vanessa Rivera University of Massachusetts; Uri Strauss University of Massachusetts; Representative Benjamin Swan of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Carlos Vargas-Aburto for Central State University who is not with us tonight; and Esther Terry Associate Chancellor for Equal Opportunity and Diversity.

These are the members of our Commission. They are working diligently on processing a great deal of information, interviews, data, presentations and other sources of information. Two minor, but important points of information. Tonight's proceedings are being video recorded. You will see a video camera over to my left and to your right. I believe a campus radio station is also broadcasting portions of the proceedings tonight. If any of our speakers do not wish to be on the radio, you need to sign a waiver of a release of your voice reproduction. I should also say that we will strictly enforce the time. You will see the clock over in the corner. This is not the basketball game by the way, in case you're wondering. Mr. Hugus is here to keep time. We'll strictly adhere to a five-minute model. Each speaker will be allotted five minutes to speak. I've informed them that they should plan on speaking about three minutes, and there can be questions only from the Commission members, if there are questions of clarification. If there are none, the person may have two additional minutes. We have had to do this because so many persons wanted to speak and we wanted to be fair. On that note now, I will take my seat and we will begin. Thank you again all of you for coming.

MR. HUGUS: Good evening. My name is Frank Hugus, and I will be introducing the presenters this evening. The first presenter is Angela Fleet.

MS. FLEET: Good evening. Four years ago when I started here at the University having recently moved from Massachusetts, I ran into a group of former University of Massachusetts students in Boston who laughed at me and showed pity for me because I was a University of Massachusetts student. They expressed to me --they expressed to me that they faced a lot of hardships and lack of student support at the University. Some of them had actually dropped out because of it. Being fresh to the school, I ignored their warning, and thought it could not be that bad.

Now four years later, I stand here and tell you I should have listened to them. I too, like many other African American, Latino, Asian, Native American and some white students have witnessed the deterioration and/or lack of support for student affairs. Years ago these problems were foreseen by former students, and with hard work, they pushed for the implementation of these structures to combat these issues. Fortunately, the administration complied with these demands because they realized the need for it.

Recently, the current administration has been dismantling these vital programs by not supporting them, by completely cutting them, or by weakening their effectiveness. These programs have been proven to work since their implementation, so why dismantle proven successful programs and structure and replace them for chaos that we have today. The University needs to support and nourish these programs which are vital to the student body and the diversity on campus. Figures don't lie. There is a trend here. With the

deterioration of these programs, there has been a drop in minority enrollment, a decrease in rate of retention which ultimately decreases the diversity on campus.

Some at the University do not comprehend the reason as to why minorities need these programs. Well let me make something clear. Statistics prove that there is a very strong link between poverty, education and minorities. Most of the minorities that come to the University do not have the high quality of education that their white counterparts have. There is a clear disadvantage, and the University knows this because they have the statistics and data available them. The University knows that these students have a high probability of failure. Something that could be done is a summer program tailored for these students with efficiency in math and reading. This could be required before they enter as UMass students, so when they take University courses they won't be too behind.

I am a senior, and next semester I will be leaving. I could say I'm glad I'm leaving and turn my back to all this mess that's going on here like many other minority students have done before me. However, I do not want to leave this University with any disgust or bitter taste in my mouth. I want to be able to recommend this University to everyone and speak proudly of it, and feel proud that I came from this institution. I want other minorities to come after me to feel comfortable here, and to feel like UMass embraces them; something I've never felt here. With this in mind, I and my peers want to strongly urge you to keep in mind only the best interest for the students. We are depending on you to do what the administration has failed to do.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. Are there questions from the Commission?

REPRESENTATIVE SWAN: Miss Fleet, when you leave, will you recommend other students to come to the University of Massachusetts of Amherst?

MS. FLEET: As of right now, no. If things change, of course. Actually my sister wanted to come here, and I didn't feel comfortable for her to come here.

REPRESENTATIVE SWAN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Any other questions from the Commission?

DR. RINGEL: Ms. Fleet, if you had a single program to support of all the programs you have taught, which one would it be?

MS. FLEET: Academic advising and support programs.

DR. HERRINGTON: Ms. Fleet, what was your major?

MS. FLEET: My major is economics with a concentration in business and IT minor.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Anyone else? Would you like to make a closing statement?

MS. FLEET: Just that I love UMass, and I feel saddened by what's going on in my surroundings. I think the University has a lot of potential. It's just that things are not being allocated where they should be.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much.

MR. HUGUS: The next speaker is Barak Sered.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I should tell all the speakers, there's a chair behind the microphone, if you wish to sit and be comfortable. It's up to you.

MR. SERED: Hello. My name is Barak Sered. I am a senior representing social thought and political economy students. The lack of diversity at UMass is often framed in the following way. UMass has 17 percent minority students while the national average is around 20. Mass must close this 3 percent gap in order to be considered a diverse learning environment. This view of the racial tension at UMass is wholly inappropriate for this Commission. This Commission was called following an incident which white student leaders were caught on camera using racist caricatures of the Ku Klux Klan. The campus community was outraged, and the administration reacted by giving these students a slap on the wrist. The problem at UMass is not that we are 3 percent short of the ideal number of minority students. The problem is that student leaders find KKK images funny. The problem is that the white student body thinks the KKK are just white silly old men wearing dirty sheets on their heads. The problem is that the administration does not consider this type of behavior worthy of the mildest censure.

White students on this campus spend four years here without having to confront head-on the privilege that their skin color gives them. Most white students have never even heard the term white privilege and think that racism died in the sixties. This is the problem. This Commission should be focusing on racism on campus and not on symbolic recruitment of a handful of students of color. It should be focusing on the behavior of white students. The problems that lie behind the formation of this Commission are not addressed by restructuring support services for students of color or even by thinking of doing so. What the Commission has to do is figure out how it is that this community has grown so hostile that images of the KKK are not seen as exceptional. The diversity is indeed an important goal. The community can never achieve it so long as racist factions are supported by the people representing the institution itself. Vice Chancellor Michael Gargano, the same administrator who let the KKK nine off the hook has recently been caught with his pants down colluding with the same former student leaders in an effort to undermine the support network that many students of color at UMass have come to rely on. Vice Chancellor Michael Gargano has become a weight on the community, and in planning the restructuring of our University, I urge you to consider restructuring him out of the picture.

Lead females shown cooperating with the real leader of the racist bunch depicted in the photograph in trying to undermine the authority of the office of ALANA Affairs, the

prime advocate for minority students. His behavior has set an example for students to emulate. It is not the ALANA community's fault that racism is so pervasive here on campus. It is the fault of the administration as a whole for not instituting any policy that would, at the very least, keep racist tendencies at bay and educate privileged white population about the responsibility that comes along with that very privilege. The message that comes out of the Commission report must include the acknowledgement that white supremacist tendencies are to be found among the student body and the administration, and that these are the immediate cause of the racial tension that permeates this institution.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. I remind the audience if you clap too long, you're getting into the speaker's time. Commission members questions?

MR. STRAUSS: What structural recommendations, aside from personnel recommendations, would you make to UMass to change the atmosphere?

MR. SERED: One suggestion that has come up was instituting a better diversity requirement. We currently do have a diversity requirement at UMass, but it can be fulfilled by taking classes on Japanese government. I don't think that's appropriate. I think we have a racial history in this country and this University that requires closer attention, and I think every single student should be exposed to the kind of material that is offered in – one class that came up was Education 210. I personally haven't taken Education 210. That was one class that has come up, and I've heard that it's good at communicating the history and on the context in which, you know, the current white supremacy that we see is operating. There are many other classes, and I think that we should consider creating a new class that all students should take. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE SWAN: If you're asked when you leave UMass, if you were asked for advice relative to attending the school, would you advise them to come to UMass?

MR. SERED: I am a white student. I haven't suffered the same kind of treatment that many of my peers have. I would advise them to take certain classes. I would advise them to try to get involved with fighting the white supremacist tendencies that permeate this institution. I think that's it.

REPRESENTATIVE SWAN: Thank you.

MR. FERREIRA: Would you make that class mandatory to all freshmen students coming in or how would you make that class?

MR. SERED: I would make that class mandatory to all freshmen coming in.

MR. HUGUS: Time is up.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much.

MR. HUGUS: The next presenter is Makiri Sei.

MS. SEI: Good evening. Graduate

Employee Organization has been a strong advocate for graduate students since 1992. Needs of graduate students are somewhat different from undergraduate students because most of us rely on teaching or assistantships to support ourselves and to earn degrees. For many graduate students, different salary, health care, child care are absolutely necessary if we are to consider graduate school at all, unless we are from wealthy families. We decide to forego employment for Bachelor degrees for careers in higher education, for love of knowledge and/or for artistic achievement even if that puts most of us into debt. Because graduate students are so preoccupied with academic work and other commitments, it is very easy for us to spend our years at UMass with a little sense of belonging. The support programs help graduate students of color, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender graduate students; graduate students with families and international graduate students connect and lend emotional support as we earn Masters and Doctorate degrees. Many graduate students have been fortunate to meet life-long partners, and some of us have decided to start families. Many children at University Childcare Center have graduate student parents. More over, at least half of the children throughout the University Child Care Center are from minority families.

After the recent budget cut, the University Child Care Center had to close one of its classroom due to lack of funding. The GEO members with families contacted Dr. Taylor to testify tonight, but their requests were denied because the time is limited at the public forum, and the Commission needed to give racial diversity issues a higher priority. In fact, family issues and racial diversity issues are intertwined, and when one is negatively affected, the other will suffer as well. I request the Commission to hold a hearing session with family experts, family issues experts in January.

Many graduate students will become providers of higher education in the near future by helping graduate students from diverse backgrounds succeed in earning their degrees today. UMass is paving a way for a more robust higher education in the future. Diversity and faculty and graduate student bodies will result in more exciting ideas going into research and a more tolerant learning atmosphere for the students. The Graduate Employee Organization would like UMass to give diversity and educational accessibility issues on campus the same priority it has given to the academic performance. Specifically, we would like the Diversity Commission to look into one, waivable supplemental health insurance for international students if they have equivalent or a better health plan before they attend UMass. Two, under funding and under staffing of support programs such as but not limited to the Office of ALANA Affairs, Commuter Services, Every Women's Center and Stonewall Center.

Three, the case of possible collusion among Vice Chancellor Michael Gargano, the Director of Student Legal Service Charles DiMare and former SG House Speaker Patrick Higgins to have Gladys Franco, a graduate student, to fill her TA appointment. GEO has

initiated a grievance process on her behalf because we believe she fell victim of discrimination based on her workplace, the Office of ALANA Affairs, for statistics on recruitment and retention of minority graduate students, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender graduate students and graduate students with families. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Are there questions? I should say to the presenter, we have maintained a record of all persons who we were unable to schedule tonight, and we plan to schedule them in the January meeting. Questions from the Commission please? Hearing none, do you wish to make a closing comment?

MS. SEI: The University of Massachusetts is a land grant University, and we believe it should keep its commitment to the people, especially for those who cannot attend private institutions. We believe education is the ultimate solution to make people succeed in life and seek happiness, but the solution only works as it is made available, and it is becoming less and less affordable for the low income families. UMass needs to remain to be a system that provides opportunity to the working class people in order to minimize the economic gap. Keeping its mission to provide excellent and affordable education helps the children in the local community to retain help to live their lives to the fullest as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much.

MR. HUGUS: The next presenter is Pavel Payano.

MR. PAYANO: Good evening. My name is Pavel Payano. I am Chair of the ALANA Caucus, a junior. My major is in Spanish and political science. Here is my statement. To support racial and ethnic diversity at UMass will require more than the review, modification and adjustment of the University's program and approach supporting minority students on campus. It will require the analysis of the forces that have led to increase racial tensions and feelings of disenfranchisement. The problem is not the adequacy of the programs. The problem is not that we as students face nothing but indifference and paternalistic dismissal of the administration. The problem is not even the arrogance of the administration that refuse to hear any voices that offer criticism. The problem lies behind all of this. The problem we're talking about today lines the battleground of public visions of public education and the public role of higher education. It is a problem that goes far beyond UMass.

There is one vision that comes straight from Boston down to Whitmore. In this vision education is a privilege and not a right, and UMass Amherst will be accessible to only those that can afford it. As has been made clear in other forms, lower income students have no space in UMass. That is what community colleges are for. But there is another vision for the University. A vision that follows UMass Amherst's mandate as a land grant institution. A vision of a top level University, but not of an elite University. We see the University that serves the need of the community that it is a part of.

We are asked to come here and talk about the problems of diversity at UMass, but how can we pretend to free the problem we are facing under the vague grouping of diversity. Yes, there are problems of diversity on this campus. I can stand here and tell you about a simple request that the Student Government Association has made to the Administration of the demographics of the student body, and how the University is still in violation of an order by the State of Massachusetts to produce those records. I could talk about the Honor Caucus, a student organization which I am a part of that is a collaborate effort of white and ALANA students who are dedicated to eliminate racism and from one diversity. I could tell you how this organization was singled out and threatened to be eliminated by Vice Chancellor Gargano. I could talk about how support services and advocacy agencies are not only understaffed, but also under funded, but I will not because the Administration has a larger problem. I could also talk about administration that acts like a blinded cyclops throwing rocks into the sea when the solution to the problem that it needs to address it lie at its feet. I can talk about the conflict of interest of the Dean of Students in dealing with students in the pictures scandal when the ring leader was working in her office at the same time they were being investigated for disciplinary action. But why state the obvious?

Let me say this. If the Commission is truly concerned with racial diversity and confronting racism on campus, then the Commission will need to examine the student body as a whole. Rather than simply looking for advisory support and cultural programs for minority students, and examine the ways that the structures, policies and progresses of the University, foster environment in which white students feel that racist behavior is sanctioned. I hope the recommendations made by this Committee do not end in the drawer collecting dust along with the many other recommendations of the many other commissions. I hope that all of us here leave, if with nothing else, with an understanding of the urgency of the problem that the administration is trying to sweep under the rug. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you Mr. Payano. Questions from the Commission?

DR. CHAMETZKY: Mr. Payano, why did the administration want to get rid of ALANA?

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Repeat the question please.

DR. CHAMETZKY: What was the reasoning that the administration in your view had?

MR. PAYANO: In my view, with the meeting that we attended where the Vice Chancellor told us he was planning on getting rid of it, it was because he felt that it was totally for ALANA students, even though at that meeting several of the Caucus members were not ALANA students. They were not minority students. They were white.

REPRESENTATIVE SWAN: Mr. Payano, if you had the power to reverse or to establish a single policy, what would it be?

MR. PAYANO: The '92 ALANA agreements, I think you guys had a copy that. I think if the administration were actually following that, we wouldn't see all these problems we are facing today.

REPRESENTATIVE SWAN: So you would reestablish that or put that in --

MR. PAYANO: I would have the abatement. I'm sorry for interrupting. That they would actually follow it, yes.

REPRESENTATIVE SWAN: You referred to that as the '92?

MR. PAYANO: There was two in 1992, and '97 there was a living document.

MR. OUELLETT: Mr. Payano, would you please describe for us why you think the ALANA group works well with both undergraduates of color and also white undergraduates participating?

MR. PAYANO: Well, sir, there are white members in the group. Nobody sees a problem us interacting or us, you know, talking to each other or anything like that. I am not exactly sure.

MR. HUGUS: Time has expired.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you Mr. Payano. We look forward to your written statement.

MR. HUGUS: Gladys Franco.

MS. FRANCO: Good evening. When the time came for me to apply for college admissions, I only applied to UMass because I knew this was the place that I wanted to be. As a first generation college student, I appreciated the help that the Bilingual Collegiate Program gave to me by helping me with the application process, financial aid and easing my anxiety. I thought that it would be my home away from home. That the people who work there would become my base for support. When I finally got here in the fall of 1998, that is how it turned out to be. I was welcomed to the BCP family, and I benefitted from tutoring and academic advising. Adjusting to the college student life was not easy, but having the support of the BCP was a great asset, and I cannot imagine surviving my first three years in this institution without it.

I was shocked when I was told that the support programs had been reorganized; the budget had been cut and most of the staff was gone. I can do something about the issue effecting my community as my ancestors had done before me. As you may know, everything good, everything created in this institution was achieved after students fought hard for it. The Administration has never willingly given us anything. Our ancestors demanded to do everything necessary to provide an environment and opportunities for people like myself. I understood the support programs were being

dismantled little by little, and there was no serious commitment to them. Different people working the support programs were being threatened and harassed. The SUMA program, Bilingual Collegiate Program that brought me to this University was terminated, although it had been effective. Take me as an example. The Administration claimed that the support programs were not being dismantled, although they took away academic advising. When I became an active student leader of the ALANA Caucus, I was harassed by other student leaders in the SGA who did not believe in the mission of our organization.

I learned about the attacks on the Office of ALANA Affairs and its Director, Nelson Acosta. I have been an employee and also been a victim of the administrator's political games as I have been harassed by people like the Director of SLSO, Attorney Charles Di Mare, and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at Campus Life, Michael Gargano. Although we have announced these injustices against the ALANA community, the Chancellor of the University, John Lombardi, continues to give these people his full support.

UMass of Amherst appears to change, but these changes have not been positive for the ALANA community. Over the past six years tuition has increased over five thousand dollars while services to students and quality of education have taken a big blow. The University has not shown any serious commitment towards the surrounding communities, the inner city children or minority populations. A case that all is well is put on while people like Bill Cosby pressured the University a little bit. The current Administration is more business friendly than it is student conscious.

I understand that we are living in the moment of the political cycle and which have people in power who control the economy and wish to implement their ideals on the society. These people are making sure that all is continued to be oppressed. They want to make sure that others believe that we are now on an equal playing field, that affirmative action and other such programs are no longer needed, and that they are actually suffering from reverse discrimination. They put a facade on everything being perfect so they can seem like nice people like they do at this University. Whenever somebody raises an issue, whenever someone stands up with something effected in the community, the person gets shut down and blacklisted because it is a taboo to talk about certain things. It is a taboo to say certain words. We are living in the community that wants to create a bubble for students, shelter them enough so that they don't understand the social inequalities. Unfortunately, our University of Massachusetts is a microcosm of the issues affecting the country. Our administrators are as bad politicians as those of the national government. We'll continue to push how important multiculturalism is to UMass while taking no active measures to correct the problems that continue to effect our community, and consequently to a larger scale to effect our society.

We as students continue to struggle with the real issues of inequalities among race, ethnicity, gender, class and beliefs. As students, we have organized and let the Administration know how we feel. We have submitted recommendations. We have made pleas. We have done everything in our power to change the status quo and to try to

create a better future for those who will come after us. Unfortunately, our administrators are shifting the mission to serve those who can afford to attend Ivy League schools. Those international and out-of-state students who will bring in the money. We're going back in time. As years go by we take backward steps instead of looking for serious, honest and humanistic solutions for a brighter future. Right now the future seems very dark. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. Thank you very much.

MR. HUGUS: Ms. Franco, your time has expired.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Please leave us your statement.

MR. HUGUS: The next presenter is Autumn Banks.

MS. BANKS: Hi. My name is Autumn. I'm here tonight on behalf of the Native American Student Association Alumni, current students and parents, tribal nations from all across the United States, predominantly from New England and Canada though at this time. I want to read my statement, but first I just need to say to everybody that spoke before me ditto and congratulations you guys. When I was that age, I was so afraid to speak, and I was so afraid to have a voice. I just let things happen to me. We don't have to do that anymore.

The University of Massachusetts mission is to provide an affordable education of high quality and conduct programs of research and public service that advance the knowledge and improve the lives of people of the Commonwealth. That's on the website of the Office of the Provost. We understand that education is a business. We really understand that, but you know what? Many of us paid for our education too, and that's where we get that understanding from. In its purest form thought, education is a public service, but how can you serve the public if you ignore the fact that certain parts of it exist?

Now I want to talk about diversity and budget cuts. In fiscal year 2004 and 2005, Massachusetts House of Representatives recommended budget cuts for higher education. My suspicion is that at the University of Massachusetts outreach and retention were the first to go. The Indian community here have experienced a decrease in the number of faculty and professional staff. We lost our director position at our support service program. We lost our full-time cultural center director position and our native TA's, for the program no longer exists, and currently there is no native recruiter in admissions, though there are plans to put one there, but we don't have it now.

The admissions process for 2004 yielded 48 Native American students that were accepted to the University. Of that 48, seven enrolled in classes this fall. I smell money. I mean I don't know what anyone else thinks, but I think it comes down to funding. Seven potential students from the Navaho reservations in Arizona came to look at the University earlier this fall. They all opted to go elsewhere within the five college system because of funding, because of the University climate and all that. They just didn't want to be here.

When I first put up at the University as a returning student, I came in 1995. The spring of 1995 we started the way for Native American Student Support Services. A group of students that were here at the same time as I was. Then we planned for UMass to have the ability to monitor and track its students. At this point since 2000, that's declined and now it's severely limited. The programs are moving from proactive programs to more reactive in nature.

They once had access to the University mainframe. Today that's called SPIRE. Limited access to that; they don't get to track whether or not their students have financial aid, if everything is in place, if they filled out all the appropriate forms, if they have their shots. So I guess in a small way, all that happens not having access to that is UMass doesn't get its money on time. This semester we had between seven and eleven students that didn't have financial aid all squared away until the end of November. Other goals of that program were mentoring and creating education action plans. In the past, NASS advisors had the ability to see students' academic progress and assist with the goal of graduation. Not only that, but they also coordinated with students professors throughout the semester around attendance, homework and exams, kind of along the lines of mentoring, you know, and that's just what they did. Today a lot of those functions are limited or nonexistent as many of us know. The relationships from these support programs built with these students were the best possible insurance policy that the University had for academic success.

In reading the census from the year 2000, the summary of housing characteristics tell us that there were 5,000 Indian heads of household. That means 5,000 moms and dads. On top of that there are another fifteen thousand throughout Massachusetts that may not be the head of the household for a total of 38,050 Indian peoples across the nations, some of which may be mixed, may be of other decent also. This year we have Native American students. Those are undergraduates only. We only have ten --

MR. HUGUS: Time is up.

MS. BANKS: Am I over?

MR. HUGUS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I'm very sorry.

MS. BANKS: Can I just tell you one thing?

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Finish your thought, and we'll see your report

MS. BANKS: The programs need partners for University Advancement. Put us in the capital campaign and finally, try to remember that ALANA is a group of students and not things.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. We look forward to receiving your paper.

MR. HUGUS: The next presenter is Karen Fernandez.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Let's take a brief pause. We noted some speakers that wish to stand, and the papers were quite beneath them; and I will tell the other speakers, if you wish to sit, that's fine. If you wish to stand, you may. That is your choice.

MS. FERNANDEZ: Hello everyone. This is basically to the members of the Commission. My name is Karen Fernandez, and I'm writing to you on behalf of the Latin American Cultural Center staff. The Latin American Cultural Center is located in the Hampden Dining Commons. The LACC was founded in the spring semester of 1989 by a group of Latin American students. The mission of the Center is to provide an atmosphere where the Latin American student body can share their various cultural experiences. We sponsor and help many events like lectures, movie nights, dance lessons and educational workshops throughout the semester. However, the conditions of the Center continues to deteriorate. We also worry if it will be around in the future. The Center used to be a small area designated for studying. We have couches, computers and tables in this area. We also had a larger space right next to the Center where we could hold events.

About three years ago, the building was declared to be condemned. They walled up the larger room and refused to allow entry. Hampden Dining Commons is also home to the convenience store that has a constant flow of students. The Southwest Cafe is directly below the LACC where hundreds of students go on a day-to-day basis for dinner. In addition, the building has many classrooms.

What I am trying to get at is this is a very busy building. It should be one of the school's highest priorities to repair this building. Instead of repairing it, they have done nothing but put us in greater danger. In

LACC there is not one fire exit, and because of the wall being built, we have this rather long hallway so we can't get to exits that lead outside. If any type of fire would occur in the building, there would be extreme chaos and danger for students that would be in the Latin American Cultural Center. The reason for the building being condemned is because of a variety of broken regulations ranging from asbestos to not enough exits.

We as Latino students depend on this area and would love that the time, money and efforts were devoted to this building or alternative space with better accommodations were allocated to us. In addition, I also would like to mention the conditions of the Bilingual Collegiate Program. BCP used to have a staff of about ten people readily available for advising, mentoring, tutoring and help with financial aid. It currently has two staff members and can no longer offer advising. BCP has also had a tremendous budget cut within the past two years. This is just another example of how this University is slowly removing beneficial services for minorities. It seems like the University is

phasing the minority population out of their curriculum. Studies have shown that people learn better in better surroundings. The University should work to bring in more diverse student and faculty populations, and fully fund services to help minorities instead of taking them away every time the administration changes. In addition, all current staff and faculty should take mandatory training in diversity. Thank you for your time. And I also wanted to bring up a representative from the Bilingual Collegiate Program.

MS. AVAYA: Hi. I am Kaitlin Avaya.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Are there questions for the presenters?

REPRESENTATIVE SWAN: Do you have any reason to believe that when a budget cut is put upon the University, that your Center took a disproportionately large share of the cut?

MS. FERNANDEZ: I think it did because a lot of the minority, like CCEB's in addition took a large cut. We went from a staff of ten people, ten. We had somebody that ran the tutoring department, helped with financial aid specifically. We went down from ten to two in a matter of a few years. We need the help. Like when you go, departments have like thousands of students coming to them on a daily basis, on a weekly, monthly basis to get advising. BCP used to offer it on a walk-in basis where you can come in and get advised, get help on your financial aid. We all have financial aid problems. We all have tutoring problems. I, myself, had a tutor there. They had to go through outside help to get tutors to come in.

REPRESENTATIVE SWAN: Do you feel you're getting as much help as majority students as opposed to having previously received more individual help?

MS. FERNANDEZ: I wasn't here when it had the ten people. She was.

MS. AVAYA: Compared to before, I don't believe there is enough help because I was able to meet one-on-one with an appointment obviously, and on a walk-in basis actually, but there were times that it was so busy you had to make an appointment. I would be able to meet one-on-one for as much time as I could with a counselor, but now it's very limited.

DR. BAILEY: I assume that you all have presented your perspective to the Administration in the past. I am curious to know what kind of response you received.

MS. FERNANDEZ: Well they told us that the Bilingual Collegiate Program has just gone, like the budget has gone down each year, and they have taken it away slowly. The Latin American Cultural Center -- actually there used to be two cultural centers. One got flooded out, and we have yet to get a new space or have the space fixed and that happened almost two years ago.

MR. HUGUS: Time has expired.

MS. FERNANDEZ: And the Latin American Center, I mean they are working on supposedly Hampden Dining Commons, but we don't see nothing happening.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. We look forward to receiving your report.

MS. FERNANDEZ: Thank you.

MR. HUGUS: The next presenter is Hinlan Wong.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Care to stand or sit.

MR. WONG: I'm fine with this. Thank you. Good evening ladies and gentlemen of the Commission. My name is Hinlan Wong, and I am the General Coordinator of the YURI Kochiyana Cultural Center. I am a journalism and potentially a legal studies major. I have been working for the Center for almost one academic year. Our center serves an integral part for the Asian Americans by sponsoring cultural events as well as creating programs that improve awareness of cultural diversity at UMass. The YKCC has four paid staff members, including myself, that maintain the activity room in helping to coordinate our various duties. Our activity room is located in the basement of Worcester Dining Commons. The space was previously used as storage for the DC. Our room has no windows, and no form of ventilation except for a large hole in the wall by God knows what. Our activity room is so small and in such bad condition that the Registered Student Organizations like the South Asian Student Association or the Asian American Student Association cannot hold their annual meeting in our space. Even the staff and I use the activity room as a last resort to hold our weekly meetings.

As you know, Asian Americans are the largest minority on campus, and we also represent a majority of the Registered Student Organizations listed on campus. Last year out of our budget of \$20,000, we spent \$11,544.06 on cultural events. Out of this amount \$2,037 went toward various events for the community. The rest of the money goes toward our salaries and other things such as office supplies, cleaning equipment and materials which help keep the YKCC in perfect working order.

Our sponsorship has created many memorable events such as Asian Night, Salsa Night and the Cambodian Vietnamese New Years cultural shows. The YKCC serves as the Asian American community directly through its program and indirectly by funding culturally enriching events by Asian oriented RSO's. All the Asian American affiliate RSO's look to us for funding. During the 2003 to 2004 school year, we were able to fund the Asian Americans for Political Action, the Cambodian Student Association, the Taiwanese Student Association, the South Asian Student Association, the Students for a Free Tibet, the Asian American Student Association, the Vietnamese Student Association, then the Phi Epsilon as well as the Asian American Studies program. YKCC was able to allocate more than \$9,000 to events that directly contributed to cultural diversity on campus. Prices have risen at Administrative costs while the cultural

budget has stayed the same. It made it especially difficult for the YKCC to continue to provide financial support to student-initiated efforts to improve cultural diversity at UMass.

Last year was the first time that YKCC had to deny an excellent application for lack of support. There is a collective in different ethnic RSO's. This can be seen at YKCC cultural events where the participants range in culture as well as RSO/Greek life. We feel that the downward pressure on our sources of funding reflect the University's lack of support for cultural diversity on campus. Many other sources of funding have been cut leaving the YKCC as a primary location of financial support further stressing our ability to support RSO's.

In the face of racism on campus, we believe it is increasingly important that the University support efforts to improve opportunities for student-conceived cultural and ethnic diversity initiatives. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Questions from the Commission please.

DR. BYLANDER: Do you work with other of the support programs, and how does the YKCC work with other groups on campus?

MR. WONG: When you mean support programs, you mean other minority support programs? The example when we denied a cultural event was for ALANA last semester, and that was because we were running low on funds. So our programs usually comes by first come first basis, and most of our RSO's ask for money first, and it just happens when we tried to have a multicultural event, we ran out of money so we weren't able to have that.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I would like to ask a followup question please. Do you think that there needs to be any kind of coordination across these many support groups by minority students or do you think they best function as independent entities?

MR. WONG: I believe they do function good as an independent. I think the more diverse clubs they have, the more easier it is for people to find like their own identity, and hopefully, my group will be able to like have events to help them integrate and come back when they've evolved like personally, I guess, to culturally help themselves.

DR. RINGEL: When you schedule an event, when you have an event, a celebration, where do you hold a celebration? Do you pay for the place?

MR. WONG: When we sponsor a celebration, it is usually up to that club to find their own location. Usually, to my knowledge, they usually do not pay for it. If they do, then it's a smaller amount compared to if you are --

MR. HUGUS: Time has expired.

DR. RINGEL: Where is the celebration held; which building?

MR. WONG: Celebrations are held at the Campus Center auditorium, the Bowker auditorium, Fine Arts Center and other auditoriums.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Mr. Wong, thank you very much. We look forward to your statement.

MR. HUGUS: The next presenter is Azum Ali.

MR. ALI: Good evening. My name is Azum Ali. I am the undergraduate president of the Muslim Students Association. The MSA is both a Registered Student Organization and a Graduate Student Organization serving a very diverse array of students. Muslims on campus come from a variety of backgrounds and contribute to the betterment of our campus community in many ways as members of Student Government, house councils, other cultural RSO's, research assistants and staff and faculty. We estimate we have a membership of a hundred fifty people and a body of roughly four hundred people on campus who are interested in some of our basic religious services. While these members of our campus community contributed to the diversity and cultural richness of our campus, they have little support for their religious needs by this University. It is difficult for a student-run organization such as ours to support religious requirements as a Chapel would, but we try our best, as a UMass MSA is the only resource that Muslims in the five college area have. We provide Friday congregational prayer services known as the Juma (ph) prayer in the Campus Center if possible. We attempt to satisfy our dietary restrictions by providing meal plan exceptions and have our own dining hall that serves Halal food. Over fifteen years of MSA existence, Muslims have tried to provide for themselves as best as they can, and it is time for us to address our most critical needs.

We have a small office space in 321 Student Union. This space can only support four people at a time comfortably, and is supposed to accommodate our activities from our religious readings and discussions to our five daily prayers. MSA is a default support group for many new students on campus, particularly international ones who come to this University from afar expecting their religious services to be accommodated on campus, as there are no other institutions nearby to do so. Our weekly Friday prayer draws roughly sixty people, and the same amount at least, needs to be accommodated throughout the day every day in a new permanent facility for the MSA, that is a facility that can accommodate a larger group of people during the day in a more quiet and respectful setting.

One day we had visitors to our office who are not even Muslim who are faculty here, and they even commented on what they saw as disrespectful and noise-polluted accommodations for Muslims on campus. This year it is MSA's top priority to support the requirements of its diverse constituency by getting a larger permanent space from the University for our religious needs and more recognition for the needs of Muslims on campus in general.

We hope that this Commission makes this recommendation to the Administration, as part of your charge is quote unquote to welcome what will certainly be an even more diverse student body in the future. We would like the University to recognize that beginning to accommodate Muslims through assigning them a more decent space will, again from the charge, quote ensure the quality of our students' learning experience from successful matriculation to graduation unquote. If the University can support MSA and our need for space, MSA will be able to promote more diversity and awareness on campus. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you Mr. Ali. Questions from the Commission?

MR. BUSTAMANTE: Aside for the need for space, is there anything else that you would like to change on campus to be more supportive of Muslims?

MR. ALI: Yes. As I mentioned, we have a food requirement. We don't have any – there is a Kosher dining hall, for example. In this way our friends of Jewish faith have their dietary restrictions met. We don't have anything like that. So the best we can do is have our students get off the meal plan so they can provide for themselves somehow. Furthermore, we host many many events. I invite you all to check out our website umass.edu/rso/msa. You're all invited to all of our events. They are very public. We host many of them, but we are on a meager budget right now.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Mr. Ali, does the University provide space for any religious organization here on campus?

MR. ALI: As far as I know the University provides RSO's with office space. As far as activity space, there is none that I know of from the University itself. However, conveniently there is the Hillel House and the Newman Center nearby almost on the property, but not officially on the property of the University but available for those students.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Could you comment on matters of personal safety of Muslim students for the last two to three years, particularly about 9/11?

MR. ALI: I am a junior right now. I was not on campus when 9/11 happened. I do know from my predecessors there were incidents where they were threatened via phone and knocking on their dorm doors. I think since then, the situation has become safe for Muslims on campus, but yes, there have been many concerns in the past on incidents, I believe, filed with the UMPD.

MR. HUGUS: Time has expired.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much Mr. Ali. We will look forward to receiving your statement.

MR. HUGUS: The next presenter is Valerie Louis.

MS. LOUIS: Good evening Commission and audience. My name is Valerie Louis, and I am a junior here at UMass biochemistry and sociology double major. In response to the recent uproars concerning campus diversity, a Commission on diversity was created by the Administration with the hope of answering the question how do we make UMass more diverse. Well, I might I have a possible solution to that question. We can start by actually helping the programs already established on campus prosper by providing funding for full-time staff, support for the individual programs, and funding for the campus-wide initiatives. Maybe if the Administration began to do this instead of cutting these programs such as the Office of ALANA Affairs, the Stonewall Center, the Everywomen's Center, the CCEB's program, the NASS program, the Bilingual Collegiate Program and the cultural center and countless others. They would not have a need to create a quote Commission on diversity issues.

As a member of the UMass community, I believe that this Commission is being used as a facade for the Administration as merely a means for the Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor directly involved to say hey, we care about diversity too. When, in fact, the report submitted by this Commission will simply be filed along with the KKK-9 pic photos and controversial e-mails in a folder labeled UMass Diversity 2004. I say this not to offend the members of the Commission, but to encourage you not to fall into the role that the Administration has set for you. I beg of you that you take your job seriously. Diversity is more than just numbers. We need to begin by educating the students on this campus about what diversity is, and to teach them that diversity is not out-of-state students versus in-state students but instead gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender issues, color issues, religious issues, gender issues and social class issues. I believe with all my heart that UMass was the right choice in higher education for me, and although I sometimes regret my choice, I hope that this Commission can actually ensure a positive change for future generations on this campus. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Questions of Ms. Louis?

DR. FITCH: You were talking in terms of educating students. Can you speak to educating the faculty and staff?

MS. LOUIS: I can honestly say from the faculty that I've met and the staff that I have met are all wonderful people. I'm part of the Student Government Association, and a lot of the initiatives that we fight for, one of them being higher education for students who are in the lower social class of Massachusetts, and the faculty is behind us on that. I think we need to educate more of the students because they are coming from all different types of backgrounds. Somebody mentioned before that Education 210 class, it shouldn't even be a first year class. It should be every year you should be taking a diversity requirement. I think that if we do enforce it upon the students, then it will reflect upon the faculty also. I think we have a good faculty as it is.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Any more questions?

DR. JACKSON: There has been a suggestion that the student support programs, particularly in the area of academic support, should be housed in academic affairs rather than student affairs. Do you have any thoughts about that?

MS. LOUIS: Well I have a question for you. Academic Affairs, is that under the Administration?

DR. JACKSON: It's under the Provost.

MS. LOUIS: It's under the Provost. I'm not feeling that. I have a problem with the Administration running the programs that affect minority students, because I feel that ever since the Administration has put their two cents into any of the issues, everything has been cut.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Any other questions?

MS. RIVERA: Ms. Louis, I'd like to hear your experience with the quality of education in the classroom as a student of color?

MS. LOUIS: Quality of teaching? Like I said, I have met great faculty. I am a double major because UMass has had so many great majors that they offer. I am a double major, but I also take a whole bunch of random classes just because the teachers are great at this University. I think I am getting a very good education. The only downside to the degree that I am getting is that I feel like I spend too much time fighting for student rights instead of being able to just focus on my classes. So if I didn't have to fight, I would be able to take more classes I feel.

DR. JACKSON: You said that anything under the Administration would be suspect. Then how would you have the student support services organized?

MS. LOUIS: I could be wrong when I say this. To my belief, for example, the Student Government has control over a lot of agencies under it, one being the Office of ALANA Affairs, and I'm part of the Student Government also. If we were able to actually implement the power that we had which, I think, would mean student voices would actually implement what goes on in these offices, then I think it would be successful in running of the offices.

MR. HUGUS: Time has expired.

MS. LOUIS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you.

MR. HUGUS: The next presenter is Felix Poon.

MR. POON: I would like to talk about the Asian American Studies Certificate program here at UMass, which is not the same as Asian Studies which is a distinction that is commonly failed to be made. Since my enrollment in the program, I have been frustrated with the lack of course choices and stress I have felt in being forced to forage on my own for the knowledge I desire. I took classes in Asian American Studies originally with Sumana Mira (ph). Whenever I tried to get help from her outside of class, I got the strong impression that she was not very accessible. This is not because she was a bad professor. To the contrary, she was the best professor I've had the pleasure to learn from here at UMass. But it was because she was extremely busy given the responsibility of teaching courses and conducting research like many other professors, but on top of that she was the only Administrator of the Asian American Studies program responsible for recordkeeping of students, advising students, writing grants, coordinating courses, maintaining a website and organizing events. Of course, there is no way she did all this, although she tried her best under immense stress to fulfill what duties she could fulfill.

She left to UC Davis to teach in the Asian American Studies Department that has eleven full-time faculty, a program coordinator, a student affairs officer, and two student staff. Professor Mira tried to take on what fifteen faculty and staff take on by UC Davis.

The support that Professor Mira direly needed, not being given by the Administration, fell upon the shoulders of students. Myself, and Molly Agawa, for example, facilitated a screening and discussion of yellow apparel, a documentary on the issues behind appropriation of Asian culture. Professor Mira also wouldn't have been able to successfully organize this book and word event we put on two years ago when we brought in independence and Jau Lee (ph) had it not been for the help of sympathetic graduate students and undergraduate students. We also help with advertising the program by asking faculty and grad students to let us know what courses they are teaching. We then leave a brochure out at our student table and publicize the e-mail and word of mouth, so you can see that you actually need to be in the know to even be aware that the program exists and what courses are actually being offered.

Now this isn't a very effective approach, but it is the only approach seeing as how Asian American Studies isn't even listed in SPIRE, burdening more students to produce our own educational guidance. Isn't it true that educational resources should be made regularly available to students by the University? The problem of the program is obvious lack of support from the Administration, basically a lack of funding and lack of hires to take on the responsibilities that one person could never hope to fulfill on her own. Many of the courses are taught by graduate students, and unfortunately, they are very transitory by nature. I went to study abroad for two semesters last year. When I came back, I found the familiar faces of the program gone. Professor Mira was gone and the graduate student Nina Harl (ph) was gone, and nobody was hired to take the place of Professor Mira as full-time faculty and Administrator of the program. That shows how fleetingly transitory the program is. I go to study abroad. I come back. The program loses one hundred percent of its faculty and half of the graduate students, and the graduate students might as well be considered faculty since they are given the responsibilities equivalent to the faculty.

Currently, we have the goodwill of grad students and a couple of other faculty to fill in for the courses that Professor Mira formally taught, but I don't know how long that will be around for since the program has not been institutionalized, which I see as the main core problem. And problems have been said before that I don't agree with. It is not a problem of lack of interest. The courses that I took were all overloaded with students and some in fact, had to be turned down because they were so full. Equally important to mention is that these courses are not just for Asian American students. As anyone who has taken a course such as an introduction to Asian American Studies knows that there are many white students.

I think if we are to try to solve the problem here with the program is to designate an institutional space for our visibility and our administration, as currently we have no administration of the programs such as advertising, publicity website, student advising, recordkeeping. We have always tried to, as students, do the petitions and try to get the support we need, but we really have gotten nowhere.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you.

DR. RINGEL: Is there a major or a minor in the Asian American Studies?

MR. POON: We have a Certificate program. It's almost, but not quite a minor.

DR. RINGEL: Are there programs that have the same status involving minority students?

MR. POON: There are. For example, the Latin Studies Certificate program.

DR. RINGEL: Latin Studies.

MR. POON: Latin Studies.

DR. RINGEL: Is Latin Studies listed somewhere that Asian American Studies is not listed?

MR. POON: I'm not sure about that.

MR. HUGUS: Time has expired.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. I believe Ms. Angela Ho was substituted.

MR. HUGUS: Next speaker is Kaitlyn Soligan.

MS. SOLIGAN: Hi. My name is Kaitlyn Soligan. I am a member of Pride and a member of the Stonewall Center Speakers Bureau. I would like to say thank you to all

the people who spoke before me, and in support of Ms. Riley. I'm a Jewish student, and I attended Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashana Services in the Student Union Ballroom. So yes, the school does provide space for religious services.

I do not believe that you can support ALANA students or Muslim students or Catholic students or Jewish students or African American students without supporting the gay community because our community is made up of members of all those other communities and more. To not support the gay community is to not support members of those communities, and to further marginalize people who are already marginalized by something that is visible. They are no more important than this other part of their identity.

There is a department of Women Studies. There is a department of Afro Am. There are other departments that cover Japanese students, Chinese history, French history. There is no department of GLBT Studies. We do have the Stonewall Center which you've heard mentioned several times, which is one of the greatest things I've ever encountered on this campus. The Stonewall Center is a place where GLBTQ students go to learn about their history. There is a huge video library. There's a huge library of books and other resources. People from other communities come there. We had an ALANA Stonewall Center barbecue at the beginning of the year. It's a very open and wonderful community, and in the last three years, its budget has been cut by more than 40 percent from approximately \$150,000 a year to approximately \$87,000 a year. This has led to what used to be six employees turning into three. What used to be three graduate students turning into one. The biggest part of this program is we are not able to offer as many programs as we used to. We can't offer others the support to the other communities that were part of our community that we used to. There are other places on campus that offer information about abuse and suicide prevention. The Everywomens Center is a great example of this, but not only have all their budgets have been cut the same way ours have, they don't specifically offer the things that the Stonewall Center provides being things specifically geared towards the GLBT community. For instance, medical and safe transgender therapy isn't specifically covered by any of these other places. It's only covered by us. Restoring the Stonewall Center budget to the 2001 levels would only require less than half of the salary which the President of UMass makes, and until it's proven otherwise, I think we can do more with that budget than he can do with his salary.

So I have two requests and one recommendation for the Committee. The first request is that the budget of the Stonewall Center be restored as much as possible. We do understand that budget cuts are affecting everything at UMass. The second is that the Administration, the Committee recommend to the Administration that more GLBT classes be offered, even just one a semester would be more than we get right now. It would make such a huge difference in people's lives.

The third recommendation is that the general education diversity requirement, which has been brought up already here, be made much more specific and undergo a drastic change. Barak mentioned Education 210 which I'm taking currently this semester with Stephanie

Barrow, who is an amazing woman, and exactly the kind of person the Administration is hoping to keep as faculty. It covers heterosexism, ablism, agism, sexism, racism, and in this one semester I have seen so many students undergo such a change in the way they see themselves and this University. I've seen students who came in saying that the KKK-9 photos were being made too much of, and coming back three weeks later and saying do you know that this place is not wheelchair accessible. How can they let this go on. It really changes the way people see things. The whole point of this University is to end ignorance through education. I am not sure if it will work, but we can try it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Questions from Commission members please.

MR. STRAUSS: Are there faculty members who could teach courses on LGBT issues?

MS. SOLIGAN: In fact, there are, and I there have been courses on it in the past.

DR. CHAMETZKY: There are courses in the other four colleges in the area?

MS. SOLIGAN: Absolutely. There are courses in the other four colleges. There aren't many. None of the other four colleges offer a whole academic thing in it which is understandable. The other problem is that it's very difficult sometimes to get into courses in the other four colleges. If you do get in, you must have a way to travel there. If the bus system will not take you there in the way that coincides with the rest of your schedule, you simply can't attend the class unless you have a car which many students don't.

MR. HUGUS: Time has expired.

MS. SOLIGAN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. We look forward to receiving your report.

MR. HUGUS: The next presenter is Alex Austin.

MR. AUSTIN: Good evening everybody. My name is Alexander Austin. I am currently a second year student here at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I'm speaking on behalf of the student organization SOCA, Students of Caribbean Ancestry. As Treasurer of such a small organization, I understand how difficult it is to try and operate successfully by relatively low funding. That is why I am angered when I hear support programs that are focused towards helping minorities and the underprivileged being under funded. Much too often I hear the argument that these support programs, such as CCEB's are unethical and unfair to the entire population of UMass since they provide help to only certain groups of minorities. I remember before attending or visiting this University, I received a phone call from a woman by the name of Kathleen asking if I would be interested in joining a program called CCEB's. After getting more information about the program, I jumped on the offer and joined.

During my first visit to the University for the new student program, I met a myriad of fellow students who were also joining the CCEB's program. Looking back on my freshman orientation, I believe the CCEBS program already had an impact on us even before we had any official meetings. From what I gathered thus far, the mission of CCEBS program is to promote the recruitment, retention and graduation of students of color. The services promote growth in academic and personal life for having counseling available for career choices and graduate schools.

I remember taking an anthropology course freshman year with Dr. Page. Many of you know him since he is a very active member here on campus. Before I knew anything about his class, however, people in my residence hall tried to advise me against taking his class. Whenever I asked them why, I always received vague answers. It was to my surprise, however, when I walked into the class on the first day to see an African American professor. Suddenly, all the recommendations against the class came rushing back to me, and I knew why people were against it. In the end, it turned out to be the best class I've taken since I've stepped foot on this campus. That class helped make me more of an active member of my community as more I question things I've taken for granted. I raise this point because I feel there should be a mandatory class for all incoming students that question all the isms, such as classism, racism, sexism and the list goes on.

I have three younger brothers who are all doing well in school, and wish to attend college. Having seen firsthand how this University operates, I will not allow my younger brothers to attend this University. I do not want my younger brothers to have to stand before the Diversity Commission, as I am tonight, to try to prove how unethical this University is in its operations. Nor do I want my siblings to beg for funding for student organizations or support programs.

All that I am asking is not to revamp CCEBS and how it operates, but allow more funding for this program to help recruitment and retention of minorities on this college campus. Also to consider putting in place a class mandatory similar to English 112 to all incoming and freshmen students. This class will cover all the isms that plague our campus and our world. I walked away from English I not learning a thing, but I believe this class should at least be able to bring issues that concern us to a table instead of sweeping it under a rug. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much Mr. Austin. Are there questions from the Commission?

MR. JEMISON: With the cuts to the CCEBS and the other programs you have talked about, what is the factor that you think is the most badly needed?

MR. AUSTIN: The most needed, I would say the support programs and academic advising because as many people know, the advising on this campus already is suffering, but I went to like Kathleen, the person who called me. I talked to her when I got to campus, and she is also a biology major, and she helped me decide which classes I was going to take later to graduate on time, so advising.

REPRESENTATIVE SWAN: You have two more years here. What could happen in those two years that could make you recommend some other students, such as your siblings, to come here. What could happen to you that would allow you to do that?

MR. AUSTIN: What could happen to me is the program such as CCEBS or even funding in general, if they were given more money and more support, I would see -- I am sorry. I am very nervous.

MR. HUGUS: Time has expired.

MR. AUSTIN: Can you repeat the question?

REPRESENTATIVE SWAN: We are out of time.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: We look forward to seeing your statement.

MR. HUGUS: The next presenter is Elvis Mendez.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I would ask the ushers to please remove the signs from the table please so we don't confuse the audience. Thank you very much. Mr. Mendez, the floor is yours.

MR. MENDEZ: Good evening. My name is Elvis Mendez. I'm a freshman. I am a part of the public relations committee for CASA Dominicana, and I am also events coordinator for IOTA. As part of an RSO, I have witnessed firsthand many problems that hinder the performance of student-run organizations. These are problems that reduce productivity of organizations and deter the organizations from fully realizing their objectives. The purpose of CASA as stated in the organization's constitution, is to promote and preserve Dominican culture through programs that reflect political, social, cultural and economical issues. This purpose seems to be thwarted by several difficulties facing organizations. Among them, the inability for students to cook in the school kitchens. It is imperative that an represent their respective culture to the best of their abilities. Unfortunately, many organizations are not allowed to cook food in the kitchen, and thus must rely on catering services. Though we appreciate the effort, catering services simply does not know how to cook food that accurately represents our cultural dishes. What catering services attempts to pass for our cultural food, is a misrepresentation of our culture's cooking. If an organization is to attempt to get around this problem, it is faced with a long and seemingly unnecessary food waiver and vendor process. In addition, it has been my experience, if the organization were to rely on catering services to cook cultural food, catering services not only cooks the food incorrectly, but charges too much for their services. The students are faced with choosing lesser of two evils. Either they go through the vendor process or they allow catering services to butcher their cultural food. What makes matters worse, the student activities office is very slow in processing their paperwork. Many of the people who CASA paid for their services have yet to receive the money due to them. This tardiness reflects

poorly not only on the organization and the culture that it represents, but also on the University at large.

These are merely some of the issues that need to be addressed in order for organizations to reach their objectives. On a personal level, the racial tensions that have permeated the make it difficult for students to fully concentrate on their academic requirements. This racial tension does not create an environment which nurtures intellectual growth among students. It is my opinion that the University should put more effort into recruiting capable minority students, not only to diversify the student body, but to quell the stigma that this school has recently obtained of being a racially insensitive school.

I have heard unprovoked racial slurs directed toward my friends. I have heard inebriated students yell racial slurs also without the slightest provocation, and I have felt the alienation of being only one of two students of color in a class. I do not believe this is a racially insensitive school, and I am not advocating the acceptance of under qualified minority students into the University, but I am presenting the idea that perhaps the campus with a number of minority students more closely resembles national averages. A campus where students are not disturbed by degrading insults hurled in their direction would be preferable to the current situation that we have on campus. In closing, I would like to say that my semester at Amherst has been productive and mildly enjoyable. However, in regards to racial issues, I feel the school is underachieving and thus limiting the potential of the students on campus.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you Mr. Mendez. Question from the Commission?

DR. FITCH: Can you speak to the need for more students of color on campus; can you to your thoughts on faculty and staff?

MR. MENDEZ: The faculty here has, at least been my experience, has treated me as an equal in every respect. I personally have not seen, have not had a problem with faculty. The problem seems to lie with the way that the Administration deals with outbreaks of racism among students.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Other questions from Commission?

MR. BUSTAMANTE: I wondered how you classify the campus as racially insensitive while at the same time saying you hear that people are called racial slurs with no reason.

MR. MENDEZ: I believe that the faculty and Administration is sensitive, at least to some extent, or attempts to be to students needs, but I believe that students here are allowed to obviously first amendment rights, but they are allowed to express some ideas that are very negative without seemingly any punishment. So, in a sense, I feel that the faculty is sensitive in treating me as an equal, but they do not reprimand the students who do not treat me that way.

DR. CHAMETZKY: Have you found any racial insensitivity in the State of Massachusetts generally?

MR. MENDEZ: Yes. I feel that the University is a microcosm, obviously, of the world at large, but I believe that should not be an excuse for accepting such behavior.

MR. HUGUS: Time is expired.

MR. MENDEZ: Can I make one final statement?

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Five seconds.

MR. MENDEZ: I just would like to clarify that I don't want anyone to misinterpret my brief statement regarding catering as some ludicrous theory as suggesting catering services is responsible for the problems facing ALANA students on campus. The problem is deeper than that. The reason I chose catering services to highlight that is there is a wide range of problems effecting every ALANA student. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much.

MR. HUGUS: The next presenter is Arlene Avakian.

MS. AVAKIAN: I am absolutely delighted to be surrounded by these absolutely wonderful students. I feel very proud as a faculty member to be hearing these very moving and eloquent statements, and unlike everybody else, I am not going to be, for once, pleading for Women's studies. I am a professor and director of Women's studies here, and what I want to do is address issues of the curriculum, issues coming from my position as a faculty member. But before I say anything, I want to emphasize that I am not the only faculty member who wanted to speak today. I know many of my colleagues wanted to speak tonight, but I, for some reason, am the one person who was chosen, so here I go.

I want to address, as I said, two issues that concern me as a faculty member. The first is the ongoing problem of hiring and retaining faculty of color. For somebody who has been here for 30 years, I think back to the Hurst report of 1986, and I hope the Commission will be reading that report because many of us were very heartened by the recommendations in that report, many of which have not been implemented, and one of them was hiring and retaining faculty of color. So we need to do that, and we need to provide the support to keep those faculty here to get beyond the idea of tokenism.

The second issue that I want to address is a little more far reaching in a way and it's related to the first, and that is the place and history of life experience of the people of color in the curriculum. A number of people have spoken about the diversity requirement tonight. I have taught a course, helped design a course that fulfills that requirement. I support the diversity requirement. I have worked to make that requirement part of the curriculum, but the need for that requirement is itself a testament to the ethnocentricity of

the curriculum and to the marginalization of people of color and issues of race and racism in the curriculum. That this requirement is needed, signals to all students that this material is not part of the core curriculum. To students of color, it says your history, your families, your lives, your future are on the margins. To the white students it says you need to fulfill this requirement, but when you're done, you may never again have to deal with the issue that these courses raise. You can get back to the important courses, those which focus on whites, though they do not name themselves as such. Diversity courses can and do make a difference in some students perspectives on race, but they do not address the core curriculum. For real change in the curriculum, the issues the diversity courses address must be moved as Bellhook said from the margin to the center.

Departments need to evaluate the goals of their major asking how they address the lives of people of color. In other words, in what ways are the requirements for the major shaped by a white perspective. The experience of my department may be instructive. Women studies did such an evaluation over a decade ago, and we found that our curriculum and major requirements were not inclusive. While we had courses on women of color and some faculty did integrate this material into their elective courses, the conceptual framework in our required courses perspective. Neither the lives of women of color were central for focus of the required courses, nor was racism.

After deliberating for a while, we adopted what legal scholar, Kimberly Crenshaw has called an intersectional or integrated analysis in which gender is no longer seen as the only social formation that impacts women's lives, but one of a number. Gender then is no longer privileged, but it is imbedded in race, class and sexuality and each of these social formations is constituted in relationship to the other. In addition, our perspective is that these social formations effect all women and all men. In other words, we all have a gender, race, classism sexuality and these positionalities impact both our lives and our perspectives.

Women's studies on this campus and nationally had addressed patriarchy in the academy but not whiteness. We in Women's studies on this campus fundamentally changed the content of our required courses and revised some of our requirements. Creating a Women's Studies Program based on an integrative analysis has, I believe, put this program on the cutting edge of the field. We also have now more students of color in our classes, and I might say more faculty of color. What we did in Women studies, and I am not here just to celebrate that but to offer that as an example of what should be done in each department. I believe each department and the entire faculty --

MR. HUGUS: Time has expired.

MS. AVAKIAN: -- needs to address these issues, and just one minute. I want to say --

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: We can't give a minute. You can conclude that thought. You can give us a copy of your statement.

MS. AVAKIAN: That not having students of color addressed in classes effects the racial on the campus as much as overt acts of racism.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. Very sorry. The records will show that all persons who asked to speak tonight will be scheduled at our next forum and will be given equal time, proper consideration by the Commission. We scheduled heavily with the students because the student numbers were much higher than the numbers of the groups, and we also were aware of the examinations and some of them are graduating and will not be here next semester. Next speaker please.

MR. HUGUS: Next presenters are Ingrid Holm, Tamar Shadur and Kaitlin Barry.

MS. HOLM: I am a faculty member in the ESL program, and to my left is Tamar Shadur who is also a faculty member. The program makes a vital contribution to linguistic diversity on this campus. Any immigrant or refugee arriving in the U.S. after the age of ten benefits from second language training. Any foreign student seeking a graduate degree benefits from second language learning. Massachusetts is ranked the number ten state in the nation in regards to the number of immigrants it has, and the number seven state in regards to refugees. It seems obvious that the University will have linguistic diversity as a result. The ESL program contributes to this type of diversity.

About a thousand foreign graduate students are admitted to the University annually. To be competitive for research grants and write their dissertations, these students desire to have a second language course. The ESL program contributes to this type of diversity. Our concern is that the ESL program is being dismantled. This is based on the following. The program is inappropriately housed in a nonacademic unit instead of in an academic department as is the case of all other public research universities. The program has lost its director, its coordinator, its staff, its budget for a student worker. It has only one full-time faculty member because three have retired with no replacements. The budget has been reduced to a paltry level. One half of the funding for the remaining faculty line has been eliminated in order to provide budget relief. One faculty member has been reduced to part-time.

There have not yet been negotiations for teaching contract renewals. Faculty members no longer have a Personnel Committee. All of them are members of MSB. The ESL courses are no longer requirements for new incoming and transfer students. Many courses have been discontinued. Freshmen writing for ESL, students writing a research paper for ESL, students equivalent to speaking, intermediate reading, intermediate writing, oral communication, expository writing for graduate students, technical writing and conversation for discussion.

The ESL program is from matriculated undergraduate and graduate students. These students and others take courses for credit. They include exchange students, visiting students and five college students and faculty. If the ESL program were eliminated, these students would have no access to the study of English within this University. Multilingual students taking ESL courses are at an advanced level of language

proficiency; not only in English but also in one or more languages as well as being native speakers of their own language. They are not deficient as some may think. They are proficient learners who want to bring their English language skills from the advance level to the superior and then to the distinguished and then even to the near native level. To them English is a prestigious language which millions of people around the world want to learn. However, to the critics of the ESL program, English learning is not prestigious, but perhaps is viewed as remediation for students who supposedly don't belong in the so-called elite institution but belong back in the community college. Perhaps these critics of ESL think of the letters E-S-L as standing for English as a stupid language. The people who study it must be English as the stupid language learners. They then must not be ready for college work. It must then be their own fault for not knowing English. Certainly the critics should know better.

Most second language learners are bright, capable, talented, determined, hardworking learners who have a genuine interest in learning English and learning about its culture. So the ESL program gives them the opportunity to learn as does every other peer institution in this nation.

For example, Ohio State University attended by the Provost has a fine ESL program; Purdue attended by the Deputy Provost has a fine ESL program. The University of Minnesota attended by my Dean has a fine ESL program. Columbia attended by the Chancellor has a fine ESL program. George Washington University attended by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs has a fine ESL program.

An ESL program helps students like Nancy Rios (ph) excel. A single mother from Puerto Rico, she took intermediate and advanced ESL courses graduating with honors and earning her doctorate from the University of Massachusetts. Today she is a Diplomat to the country of Poland. She has outstanding communication skills. She is but one example of the thousands of students who have taken the ESL courses since the program started in 1974.

Other institutions of learning applaud their students like Nancy. They provide quality ESL programs for their non-English speakers. They know from research findings that the academic discipline of English second language learning based on second language acquisition theory and applied linguistics is effective. They don't close the admissions door to students like Nancy. They don't decide the best way to balance their budget deficits is to do so on the backs of immigrants, refugees and foreign students.

MR. HUGUS: Time has expired.

MS. HOLM: This institution should provide opportunities to learn for all students. Unless students are from Nepal, Cape Verde, Vietnam, Korea, China, The Dominican Republic India, Belarus, Taiwan, Poland and Albania, those are my students.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much Professor Holm. We look forward to receiving our written statement. Next speaker please.

MR. HUGUS: The next presenter is Jeff Napolitano.

MR. NAPOLITANO: I stand before you as a year's list student, an undergraduate studying biochemistry molecular biology, a member of the office of ALANA Affairs, an officer of the Student Government Association, but perhaps most significantly as a white student. With all due respect to all of you, this Commission's existence is at best suspicious and at worst an unwitting accomplice of the Administration. This Commission is as a result of the exposure of pictures of a handful of students in an office strewn with alcohol who are posing or mimicking caricatures of the KKK.

A couple of weeks later after the Administration promised to address the issue, but did not deliver, hundreds of students rallied against racism. The response for these students involved in the pictures was barely a slap on the wrist, even though they were involved in this act of hate. In fact, some of the students involved still work in that very office in which the escapable act of students took place.

Then there was a press conference announcing the creation of this Commission at which the Chancellor articulated the problem at this school as being a number of admitted ALANA students. He stated the problem on campus is that we simply don't get enough ALANA students enrolled. Let me emphasize what the Chancellor apparently did not get. The problem of diversity is not restricted to what the number of ALANA students submitted is. In fact, when the students get here, they are isolated and face a hostile environment. Although, I would not have dared to make this charge six months ago, I stand here today and say this Administration not only does not act to prevent this hostility, but it encourages it.

Thirty years ago, a group of frustrated ALANA students along with the SGA created an agency, the Office of ALANA Affairs, to advocate for and address the issues of ALANA students. Student Government decided to allocate a large sum of its budget to create an office to address ALANA issues. They did so because they did not trust the Administration to oversee these issues. In the past two years, and especially in the last two months, the Administration has demonstrated again why it cannot be trusted to deal with the issue of diversity at this school.

Many support services serving students of color under control of the Administration have been slashed, as you've heard tonight. Aside from the issue of racial and ethnic diversity, the Stonewall Center and the Everywomens Center have languished under the control of the Administration with staffing and funding cuts. Perhaps most odious of all, the one office the Administration does not directly control, the Office of ALANA Affairs, has been crippled by Vice Chancellor Gargano as he continues to prevent the OAA from hiring staff. This is one instance in which money is not even a factor. The SGA has had funding for this position all along. This is the position of the Assistant Director. After the SGA jumped through all the hoops presented by the Vice Chancellor, and after protest from students, staff and faculty alike, he claimed it was a personnel issue that he simply couldn't talk about. Then the day after this Commission was formed, he changed

his tune saying it was up to this Commission to call for an Assistant Director, telling the students although they paid for this office and its positions, they would have to wait until this Commission came up with a recommendation.

All of this, of course, was before it was revealed that the Vice Chancellor acted in secret with the very students caught in these racist pictures to disable the Office of ALANA Affairs, prevent the hiring of its staff and attempt to eliminate the ALANA Caucus, a student organization dedicated to fighting racism on this campus. All of this has come to light, and none of it has been denied by the Administration.

The Faculty Union has called for an investigation into Vice Chancellor Gargano, and the Graduate Student Government will be doing the same in a few days. The SGA has recognized the corruptness of this situation, has voted no confidence in the Vice Chancellor, and has appealed to the Chancellor with the minimal request to work with any other administrator on campus. Here again was an opportunity for the Chancellor to demonstrate that UMass will not stand for institutional discrimination, and a chance for him to, at the same time, respect the will of the student body. The Chancellor has since denied that request and insisted on standing behind an obviously unscrupulous administrator to the disappointment of all on campus and a potential signal to ALANA students, staff and faculty.

In closing, I would like to note the trend of the Administration to blame the organizations dedicated to dealing with the diversity issues, suggesting that organizational structures are to blame for the problems that we have on campus. This is outrageous and simply hypocritical. The Administration has now blamed racism, homophobia and sexism on those who are struggling for funds or staff to address these issues. It certainly does not have the right to do so, at the very same time it actively prevents the hiring of staff for these institutions. The very least it could do is stop gutting these programs, and give the existing organizations the resources they need to do their job. Only after that very minimal effort happens can the Administration put the blame on anyone else. First, however, it has to look in the mirror.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you Mr. Napolitano. Questions from the Commission please? Questions? Thank you Mr. Napolitano.

MR. HUGUS: The next presenter is Tulsa Fogatti.

MS. FOGATTI: Eboni is actually going to go first.

MS. RAFUS: Good evening. My name is Eboni Rafus, and I am a first year graduate student in the English Department. As such, I have only been on this campus for four months. However, it has been long enough to determine that I would not like to be here any longer than is absolutely necessary. As an African American woman, I feel under appreciated and under represented on this campus. I find that the racial climate here is more than tense. It's more than disheartening. It's downright frightening.

I completed my undergraduate degree at NYU, and I find the differences in terms of diversity between that institution and this one to be staggering. At NYU, there was a sense of diversity that was infused into the culture of the University as a whole. The student body, the faculty and the staff were diverse. The programs and events sponsored by the University, not just the RSO's, were diverse. Granted New York University is in the heart of New York City, which is obviously a more diverse area. It may seem unfair and unreasonable to compare NYU to UMass Amherst, which is located in Western Massachusetts in a more rural and homogeneous area. However, the lack of diversity in the community surrounding the campus makes it more essential that the University create a more balanced and diverse community on campus.

I have sought out resources to make my stay at UMass Amherst a more pleasant one. One such resource is the Women of Color Leadership Network. WCLN provides personal, professional, academic and community development for all women of color at UMass Amherst and the community at large. For me personally, it has provided leadership skills, life skills counseling, a professional and social network, and a comfortable study space. For example, when I leave my graduate African American satire course, which is taught by one of two faculty of color in the English Department in which I am the only African American student and often spotlighted, I come to the Women of Color Leadership Network. It is my sanctuary.

Due to recent budget cuts, I fear that my safe haven is being threatened and consequently, my existence here on this campus is also endangered.

MS. FOGATTI: Good evening. My name is Tulsa Fogatti. I'm a junior here at the University of Massachusetts and I work at the Women of Color Leadership Network. I'm here to talk about the importance of retention of students of color, and how programs such as WCLN play a key role in retention on the UMass campus. WCLN is a network that does what one advisor might not be able to do on their own. It works to help women identify their strengths and actively apply their skills through work within the network, the school and the community in order to gain practical and professional skills. Women of color connect with others like themselves who guides them academically and personally. WCLN also provides academic support and internship opportunities.

The network is one of the few places on campus where you're exposed to a variety of people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Most importantly, the Women of Color Leadership Network truly is a network. Being a part of this network has exposed me to a group of women nationally and internationally to continue to provide support long after they graduate. WCLN is one of the few places on campus with a voice of voices of women of color are heard. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you both. We have time for a question from the Commission.

DR. FITCH: I have a question. What activities in WOCLN do you say that could be replicated and used in other parts of the University for successfully setting a tone of what's more, I guess, inclusion?

MS. FOGATTI: What makes WOCLN unique is that it is available for all women of color, not just Latin American women or Native American women or African American women. We all come together to not only find support in our own culture, but also learn about others.

One of the programs that has been a cornerstone of our organization is the leadership training, which due to budget cuts is actually for the first time in seven years, most likely not going to be able to happen this spring. It offers thirteen workshops on topics such as "Being caught between cultures." It helps women in three areas; it's self-identity, self-expression and self care. It really saddens me that this kind of workshop is now no longer available at WOCLN, and I don't see this kind of work being done at other organizations either.

MR. HUGUS: Time is expired.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very--.

MR. HUGUS: For clarification, the speaker who just spoke, were you Eboni?

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: They were both in the Women of Color Leadership Network.

MR. HUGUS: Do we go on then to --

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Janelly Rivera.

MS. RIVERA: Good evening. My name is Janelly Rivera, and I am a senior here at UMass. I am currently the President of AHORA, a Registered Student Organization for all Latino students on campus. I'm also here on behalf of Boricuas Unidos, the bilingual collegiate program and as a member of the ALANA community. I believe that it is extremely important for me to inform you how the organizations that I am here representing have been effected by the ongoing issues here on campus. As I said before, currently I am the President of AHORA. We have experienced firsthand the issues effecting UMass. Since the late 1990's, the population at UMass has dropped 23 percent. AHORA, Boricuas Unidos, and BCP have been directly effected by this dramatic drop in numbers. You might ask yourself how have we been directly effected by this. Well let me tell you.

Attendance at cultural events, general body meetings, discussions and lectures and any other events that have been put on by either AHORA or Boricuas Unidos has dropped drastically. We blamed the lack of attendance in student participation on limited resources, budget cuts, and a big drop in our Latino population. Our organizations were much more stronger in the past, and unfortunately, this is not the case today. My

classmates feel let down, disrespected, and angry. We feel like the University does not want to acknowledge the problems that we are facing.

We are here tonight because we are not going to keep quiet about these problems, and we demand change now. When I came here as a freshman, BCP was there to back me up one hundred percent. When I came to student orientation in the summer of 2001, I met with the staff and students of this support program. My advisor at the time was Manuela Pacheca Littlefield. Without her help, I don't know how I would have survived my first few weeks here at UMass. She helped me with my schedule and made sure that my financial aid was all taken care of, among many other things. With her help and the services that the program provided, I was able to adapt more easily. This was the Bilingual Collegiate Program before it was dismantled by the University.

When I came back in my sophomore year, everything was gone. There were no more advisors, which by the way, there were academic advisors, financial aid advisors and staff that could help you with anything that you needed. If they couldn't help you, they would point you in the right direction. The counselors and the student mentors were also gone as well.

Currently, because of lack of funding and support from the University, we have a computer lab with computers that don't work. We have a small but compassionate and dedicated staff, but even through everything, they are still committed to finding ways of helping students. We need new furniture, computers and supplies, and most importantly, we need all of the things we used to have back and much more.

We need people like Jose Beau (ph), who if it wasn't for him, many of us, like myself, wouldn't be here today. He went to the low income communities with his successful outreach program and encouraged students to do well and always make sure that they knew someone would be there to guide them. We need passionate people like Nelson Acosta, that through the hardest times of his life has never given up and keeps fighting for the community he so strongly believes in. And dedicated people like Wilma Crespo and Sylvio Meldanodo (ph) who have kept the Bilingual Collegiate Program going even with the little resources that they have. But apparently, someone thought they were not working, and I know firsthand, and I can tell you it was working.

I am currently a Dean's list student, and have been at it for the past three years. They work well, but with poor funding and support, they are not able to help students in the way that they wish they could, and this is so discouraging. What we all had before and much more needs to be given back. We must remember if it wasn't for students, there would be no University. So I'm here as a student representative, not asking you, but demanding that we need things to start changing around here.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. Ms. Rivera, I would like to ask you a question. A number of speakers, including yourself, have talked about the support programs particularly advising, student advising provided by the support groups. Am I to

understand that you have little confidence in the advising provided through the regular channels of the college's department?

MS. RIVERA: When I came back my sophomore year, I was a freshman in intercession, I was still an undeclared major. I went to the pre major advising, and I sat there for one hour, and the advisor who was going to see me told me that he had gone over the time with another student and I needed to come back the next day. And so I did because I needed his help, but in the end, all of the classes he gave me, I ended up switching around because it was not what I wanted and it's not what I needed, and so they really didn't help me and I never went back there.

MR. HUGUS: Time has expired.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. Look forward to receiving your written report. Next speaker please.

MR. HUGUS: Next presenter is Rachel Woods.

MS. DUVEY: I am not actually Rachel Woods. My name is Rona Duvey and I'm here also on behalf of Student Businesses replacing Rachel. My colleagues, Rachel Woods, Kara Russo and I spent hours preparing for tonight, and in those hours we realized several problems, and several great ideas regarding diversity. However, none that three minutes could do justice. We realized though, in those discussions that the student businesses are the problem.

We are a blatant reflection of the lack of diversity on our campus, and no open membership without discrimination is encouraged. We are the majority white females. This homogeneity denies us exposure. It denies us experience, and it also denies us varying viewing points. But not only does it deny us the staff, but it denies our customers. It denies those customers a safe comfortable and informative space that we want, and that they deserve. We do have control over who we hire. We realize that it's not your fault. It's our fault. It is our fault that the student businesses are not diverse, but what isn't our fault is the fact that the University encourages segregation within the living areas. That there is this infamous three percent gap and that the University places importance on race and not ideology. It's very ironic that our University has failed to educate us. Our University has left us stranded. They have cut funding for classes regarding race, gender, age, ability. They have ignored our support organizations within our own Student Government, and by doing this they've denied us the opportunity to thrive in diverse situations. And so the student businesses are here not only to talk to you, the Commission, but we are also here to talk to everyone else present here tonight.

To the community, to AHORA, to the PRIDE Alliance, to the Muslim Students Association, to the Everywomen's Center, Alpha Phi Omega, CASA Dominicana, the Jewish, Pagan, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Black, Cape Verdean, Student Union, and you, also the Commission. We ask all of us to unite. The Student Businesses demand unity. We want unity in diversity. We want to be educated. We want to learn more. Our

University has failed. We need to go ourselves and get this education. And so we say that this public forum isn't the only way that the Commission and the community can learn about diversity. When we say diversity, we mean issues of race. But we also mean issues of gender, class, ability, and age, and so with that, I say thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. Questions from the Commission?

DR. CHAMETZKY: What are some of the student businesses?

MS. DUVEY: There are eight student businesses on campus. Earth Foods is a vegan vegetarian cafe, Peoples Market, Greeno's Sub Shop in Central. There are three student businesses that are located in residential areas. They happen to be the three most homogenous residential areas since our University splits up our diversity. It's very hard for us to hire a diverse staff. We don't have a pool to choose you know.

MR. BUSTAMANTE: I was going to ask you to elaborate more on secondary housing. I was wondering where you lived in the dorms and if you have lived in the dorms and what your experience has been with the way we segregate housing?

MS. DUVEY: Sure. I lived my freshman year in Southwest, and I found that there was more racial diversity in Southwest. Southwest is also the area where more sports athletes live. So, in that there was more diversity, more racial diversity. But then I also lived in Central where Greeno's Sub Shop is located where it's majority white and there's very little diversity in terms of race in Central.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Other questions?

DR. RINGEL: Tell me again, what is it that prevents you from encouraging minority businesses?

MS. DUVEY: It's not minority businesses talking about.

DR. RINGEL: Minority students being involved in businesses.

MS. DUVEY: We don't prevent it. We encourage it. The problem is that we don't have a pool to choose from. We are not educated. We go there. The residential areas are so segregated that the pool of people who apply just aren't there, and without a diverse staff, we don't have a diverse customer base. People don't feel safe. We are a reflection of the University. Why doesn't the University have diversity? That's why the student businesses don't have diversity as well.

MR. HUGUS: Time is expired.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. We look forward to receiving your report. Next speaker please.

MR. HUGUS: Next presenter is Lydia Petoskey.

MS. PETOSKEY: Hello. My name is Lydia Petoskey. I am a Holyoke Community College alumni who transferred to UMass because of supposed commitment to diversity. My view tonight of UMass is through the lens of a first semester student. At Holyoke Community College we addressed issues of diversity, and devised some of the solutions I suggest for the Commission tonight. Because people are complex and do not fit into single groups or categories, supporting students of color and a commitment to diversity is not separate from supporting students of differing religions, abilities, ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, classes, genders, et cetera. As any one person can be in any number of categories, supporting all students and making a commitment to diversity is the underlying goal in the suggestions that follow.

To ensure that student voices are heard, specifically undergraduate student voices, and that there is accountability for faculty, staff and Administration, it would be nice if the office where racist and other discriminating remarks was accessible to undergraduate students. To commit to putting all students first, please continue to support the Office of ALANA Affairs, increase the funding of the Everywomens Center, The Child Care Center, the Stonewall Center, the Office for Students with Disabilities, Learning Support Services, and all the other groups mentioned tonight, and if the work of this Committee increases the mandate of any of these office and others, please also increase their resources.

To ensure reputation of this institution condemns racism, please make a national apology and condemnation of the KKK-9, and make sure that they are removed from Student Government. To have positive role models and leadership for this institution, please dismiss leaders who are racist and subversive in their policies and practices like Gargano. To ensure access for students from surrounding areas, please provide bussing with direct routes to and from Holyoke to Springfield. Currently, a private bus company offers these services for five to eleven dollars; whereas, I take the bus to and from where I live for free.

To maximize student participation and further discussion, please do not schedule these meetings the week before finals. I know there isn't a lot of control during a religious holiday and note that classes start January 27th, not in the middle of January. I think there is one scheduled for January 10th. That's during intercession where a lot of the students are not going to be present. In your process, I ask you to keep yourselves accountable supporting all students so that future transfer students and other students are not humiliated by their choice of colleges, as I am because they support racism and discrimination.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. Questions from the Commission?

DR. OUELLETT: Would you please describe for me some of your experiences in the classrooms at HCC versus your experiences in the classrooms here at UMass?

MS. PETOSKEY: Absolutely. Some of the policies that are implemented in the classrooms at HCC, the faculty often have a nondiscrimination clause that creates a safe learning environment for all students. They also tell students where to go if they need help with these resources. Currently, I can speak of an incident in my class experience since I've been here with a racist and homophobic TA calling studies of race and history a load of crap. I see this as a product of an institution and not a part of an institution that I want to be a part of.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Questions?

DR. RINGEL: What is your degree status -- I'm not familiar with the switching around. Exactly what is your degree status?

MS. PETOSKEY: I transferred from Holyoke Community College with an Associate's. I am currently a junior here as a history major.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Are there other questions?

DR. BYLANDER: By the way, how has the University helped you as a transfer student, and do you think the University has a good transfer program so that more students who start at the community college level can come to the University?

MS. PETOSKEY: I think there is a great setup between community colleges for students who graduate because the first two years of gen ed are completed. However, I don't find that this University supports nontraditional students, and I will not recommend any nontraditional students here.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Any other questions?

DR. MARSH-WILLIAMS: The services for nontraditional students are -- which area in services in particular do you see lacking?

MS. PETOSKEY: I don't see any. I may not know about them, but I think that's also problematic.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you.

MR. HUGUS: The next speaker is Emma Tripp.

MS. TRIPP: Hi. Just as an opening statement, I have counted about seven police officers here tonight, so I just wanted to kind of point out that might reflect on our University's association with events that include the term diversity. As we have heard in bits and pieces this evening, this Commission was established unilaterally by the Administration as a last minute attempt to respond to an act of racism on campus.

However, rather than address racism on campus or meet the clear and consistent demands of students on this campus, the Administration has charged the Commission, this is a direct quote, to present the set of specific recommendations, campus guidelines, organizational structures and funding models as it finds appropriate. This Commission was not formed to increase racial diversity or reduce racism at UMass. It was created as a tool to exhaust and silence the students who are becoming increasingly disenfranchised by the direction in which this University is going. Many of the presenters here and myself included, have spent hours working on these statements to come up here and present for three minutes when we have been reiterating the same demands, the same sentiments through this semester.

Further, we fear that the Commission's recommendations, if actually implemented, will reverse students previous gains by issuing recommendations that will attempt to dismantle or reorganize the programs and agencies and support services that have been built by the hard labor of faculty and students over the years. I say this defensively and in response to the comments of the presenters who mentioned something before about shifting whether or not an organization would be under Campus Student Affairs or Academic Affairs.

As students on this campus, we do not want our programs reorganized or restructured. I have heard that overwhelmingly tonight. I have also heard overwhelmingly tonight that we want our programs funded and supported. Further, the supposed deed for this Commission is predicated on the mistruth that the voices on this campus are so obscure and conflicting that we need outside experts to mediate them. With all apologies to our Administration, at tonight's forum I have heard the conflicting opinions on campus are not between various support programs, but between active and passionate students and an Administration that is attempting to privatize and homogenize our University. Again students demands are not confusing or conflicting.

Throughout this semester and over the past thirty years, our demands and testimonials have been made abundantly clear. We want an affordable and diverse University that can meet the various needs of its student body. We want a University that is by and for those who depend on it, and further employment and their education.

If you're interested in our specific demands, we refer you to the living document, an agreement that ended a lengthy building takeover years ago and has yet been unfulfilled to this day. We should not need a Commission of experts to validate our demands nor to communicate them to the Administration. The problem is not that we have insufficient understanding of what needs to be done. The problem is that the Administration and the Board of Trustees lack the moral will to act on what we know.

As previous panelists have suggested, we haven't really gone into it too much tonight, but I'm sure that we could in the future. The Administrative has attempted to nullify the Student Government's decision-making power, and autonomy and unions on this campus are currently being attacked, and many previous supporters as I mentioned, the 1997 living document which is included in the packet that the Administration gave to everyone

on this Commission. They are not being honored. I am wondering what do we need to do in order to get our needs met.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you Ms. Tripp. Questions from the Commission?

DR. FITCH: Do you have suggestions to what you can do to get your needs met?

MS. TRIPP: It's hard. Something that we've been talking about is there is another level of accountability between the people who work at this University and the people who study at this University. Currently, the method that we do have has been the Student Government Association. However, the Administration has not been really complying with their end of what it would take for the Administration to be accountable to that government.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Other questions?

MS. TRIPP: So I guess overall, we need an increased amount of accountability and if the current Administration or Board of Trustees don't want to concede to that amount of accountability, I think we need an Administration who will work together with us as students and employees of this University.

DR. ABURTO: I have a question. Can you explain a little bit what you meant when you say that the unions are under attack?

MS. TRIPP: I know that the Graduate Employee Organization is currently in contract negotiations, and I know that part of their concerns have been increased health care costs. I also know that there has been threats about University childcare. I'm sure that Kerry or anyone else from Graduate Employee Organization could submit more information to the Commission about that. I also know that the faculty union, the faculty are owed back pay, and that has not been met, and that absolutely has to be taken care of.

MR. HUGUS: Time has expired.

MS. TRIPP: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. We look forward to receiving your written statement. Next speaker please.

MR. HUGUS: The next speaker is Marisha Leiblum. Are we out of sequence here? Who is speaking now please?

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Ms. Fonza.

MR. HUGUS: Thank you.

MS. FONZA: Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, my name is Annalise Fonza. I have been at the University of Massachusetts for five semesters. I have attended three major state universities all in the United States. I have earned three Masters' degrees and am currently working on a Ph.D. in urban planning in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning. I have taught for three consecutive semesters at UMass, and I come before you today to consider two issues.

The first issue is the OIT printing policies. The OIT classroom in the De Bois Library currently limits students to twenty pages per day. A new policy will be implemented in January I am aware. But even under the current policy, I want to say that this leaves few options for students. The appearance that this policy suggests is that printing is privatized. UMass has a captive audience, and it puts pressure on students to pay for copies. And in some cases, students have communicated to me they call their parents. They have their parents print for them their assignments at home. I think this also discourages an environment that is academically successful, and it also encourages students to be unwilling to use the library. This, I think, and these policies undermine diversity, they undermine academic success. I request that you review and change the OIT policies, especially where the Ph.D. is concerned. A Ph.D. student and twenty pages per day is hardly enough, and realize that these policies deter many students, and especially international students from accepting admission at UMass.

The second issue I have to talk about this evening has to do with my department. I am a student in the Landscape Architecture Regional Planning Department. I call this department a drive-by Ph.D. program. At the conclusion of my first two years, the departmental program had no funding for me. The lack of this internal funding and financial support, in my estimation, again discourages students from staying in the program and setting up residency. The Ph.D. students contribute to the reputation that a department has. I am the only visible African American student, and maybe I am the only African American student in this particular department. After two years, my colleagues often choose to leave the department and try to get back on their feet financially. International students who make up a large number of our department, I feel, are encouraged to pay their bills on credit cards. They have confessed this to me. Students from Turkey, Germany, from all over the world. Students over thirty who work jobs and are encouraged -- I mean they are almost forced to working jobs to provide for their children if they have children and families, and I believe this really exploits students of color and international students. The University recruits these students, but then when the students have no means whatsoever to support them financially, and if the department is serious about Ph.D. scholarship, then I think it will be serious about providing them with the needs to be in the department.

I also request, of course, that the department will put its money where its mouth is supporting students, supporting women, students of color, international students, and I also ask in addition to the obvious funding that needs to be increased, that faculty would be required to take Continuing Ed classes that help them to understand their complicit involvement in racist assumptions and stereotyping that goes on in departments such as my department, and perhaps this could be done through an evaluation by colleagues who

are versed in these subjects. Often faculty, I believe, give up thinking about these issues once they have finished their Ph.D.'s, and I think that is a tragedy.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you Ms. Fonza. Any questions from Commission members? What is the stipend levels in your department when fellowships are available, assistantships are available for graduate students?

MS. FONZA: My first year I was funded on fellowship, but I also paid \$1,400 in fees, but the stipend level was about \$600 a month. As a TA, I have made about \$3,200 a semester. I have a colleague from Germany who is being offered \$2,500 from the University to teach in the department. She is a Ph.D. student and a candidate, yes.

MR. HUGUS: Time has expired.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: A Commission member had a question that I really would like to get on the floor.

DR. RINGEL: Are assistantships at UMass on a quarter-time basis, a half-time basis. Is that the way they are awarded?

MS. FONZA: I am not sure I understand the question.

DR. RINGEL: For \$3,200 per semester, what do you expect them to do?

MS. FONZA: As any graduate TA, not a Ph.D. TA, but as a graduate TA, you're expected to, in some cases, teach a course. I have designed two courses, and have taught them one in our department and one in Afro Am, but you design to teach the course. I taught a class my first course as a TA with 63 students, no other assistants. I was the only instructor.

RINGEL: So you may teach one or two courses per semester?

MS. FONZA: No. One course as far as I am aware.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much. Next person please.

MR. HUGUS: Next speaker is Rosa DeRamus.

MS. DERAMUS: Good evening. I am Rosa DeRamus, and I am a Ph.D. candidate in industrial engineering, and I will graduate pretty soon. I have taught statistics and pre calculus here from 1997 to 2000 as a full-time lecturer. I am currently a professor and adjunct at HCC. My research is on older drivers. I am looking at ways of decreasing the number of fatal accidents in this age group. I would like to be a full-time tenured professor of industrial engineering. I have two major points that I would like to make.

One of them is that I believe the University of Massachusetts will benefit greatly by hiring more faculty of color. The second point is that my being an engineer, my being a problem solver, that there are ways that we can address the issues of isolation, the issues that students feel when they come into the graduate program like mine. My lab is very diverse with students from all different parts of the country, of the world. And so I go now to my first point.

My experience here at the University of Massachusetts Amherst teaching mathematics has been that students would come up to me and say you make me feel like I can get a Ph.D. too. I am glad you're here teaching mathematics. I'm glad to see a female of color teaching mathematics and doing a Ph.D. in engineering. I am glad to see someone that looks like me teaching math. The students of color would greatly benefit from professors of color. There is someone whom the students can identify with. It makes them feel I can be a professor too.

My second point, I have been here since 1994, seven of those years working toward my Ph.D. Three of those years I was on leave of absence teaching mathematics. I don't want to focus on the negative. We can talk all night about the negative, but as a problem solver, as an engineer, I want to talk about things that work. I want to talk about things that my advisor did to make me feel less isolated, that made me feel welcome in my lab. Mind you, the students are from all different parts of the world in my lab.

The things that I know now that I didn't know then are these. One, the graduate students must develop an excellent relationship with their advisor. My advisor made sure that I have at least four papers published to my credit. Therefore, graduate students must make sure that they work hard and publish as many papers as they can; attend as many conferences as they can, and the third thing that I learned is that students, graduate students should also seek to do a post doc.

I learned this summer with Dr. Taylor in Washington, D.C. that students of color have a hard time transitioning from their Ph.D. degree to an assistant professorship. That's what I would like to do. But I will need to do a post doc first, in order to be considered worthy after all of my years of training here at UMass. My Master's degree is from Howard University in systems engineering. I was an engineer when I got here. I spent two years on my Ph.D. at George Washington University in engineering management. I just happened to have a nineteen- year -old son who's at Northeastern now.

So what am I saying; what works? What works is this. In my lab, my advisor made sure that he took us out to dinner as a group when we worked well and completed a project. Some of our projects were for the Big Dig. Some of our projects were our own graduate work, but we worked together in teams. Another thing, he would e-mail us to thank us for the work that we did. He made sure that we got credit in publications for the work that we had done. And he also made sure that we trained each other. He made sure that we all trained each other from India, from Bhutan, from Armenia, from Alabama as I am.

MR. HUGUS: Time has expired.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you Ms. DeRamus. We look forward to receiving your statement.

MR. HUGUS: The next presenter is Ed Cutting.

MR. CUTTING: My name is Ed Cutting. I am a grad student in what they call the orphaned doctoral program in structural technology. I have been preceded by the beneficiaries of our academic spoil system. I, who believe in the traditional all persons being equal, am offended by much of it. For the record, I am not on the UMass payroll. I have never gotten a stipend from this institution.

I personally know a black South African who was kicked out of the ALANA Caucus when he was outed as a Republican. He was told, and I quote, to go look in the mirror. Dr. Harvey Salivas who was from Ecuador, became quote white when he tried to enforce the picketing code. I know an outspoken gay activist who joined the UMass Republican Club. He said it was the only group that would accept him as a person. And one of my personal favorite UMass stories involves a graduate student who shared a car with her husband. When he arrived for their daughter to give her a ride home from the Everywomens Center, he wasn't allowed in the building. Another favorite is the job search that had you thrown out because the appointing authority decreed that quote no white male will ever work in my office. What parts of Title 6, Title 7 and Title 9 do these people not understand.

A few years back, there was a great outcry about student information being stolen off of UMass computers. In that case the grades of certain basketball players. It was wrong then, and it's wrong now. Computer hacking is a Federal offense. The concept of a graduate honor code and employee codes of ethics become a joke when the Graduate Employee Union can parade the stolen intellectual property. I'm talking about the e-mail here, stolen intellectual property with impunity. Setting aside seats, the SGA has been unconstitutional since the 1970's. Zell vs. Friday, Friday vs. Zell. It went to the Supreme court twice both times.

If the Office of ALANA Affairs is a political advocacy group, and this is the current argument I'm hearing, then every other group on campus is entitled to equal resources. The United States Supreme Court has said so. And the fact, I am sorry, but the fact remains that if Gladys Franco is enrolled in the K-12 Certification program, the grad school regs say she can't be a TA.

All the ALANA folks who went to the Homecoming game got wet, not because of racism. They got wet because everyone else did because it was raining. Other than the petty power grabs and personal enrichment schemes, all of the concerns that you heard presented here tonight are those of students in general. All of us are equally oppressed. On this campus the racial slur is spelled S-T-U-D-E-N-T. Almost four percent of Southwest was arrested last October. Those kids were upset about something. There are

issues. Forget the parity of the Klan. I have actual pictures of police brutality. I haven't seen an investigation of that.

All persons are equal in the eyes of God. Instead of addressing the general issues of student concerns, and trust me, they are massive. Those who perceive to wish to basically exempt themselves because of their blood lines, I find that offensive to every civil rights principle that I ever heard. The ALANA accords; they were involved in lower acts of terrorism. In 1992 I believe it was, a mob went through and threatened to kill people on the basis of their race. This is documented in the Globe, the Herald and other papers. In 1997, Goodell was taken over for a whole week. I can go on at length on this, but I am just saying that Dr. King had a principle. I think we should honor it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Any questions from the Commission?

REPRESENTATIVE SWAN: What recommendations do you have to enhance cooperation and diversity among the various students on campus?-

MR. CUTTING: If we started treating people like people; if the student database didn't track people by race. Seriously, I don't know about the new database. The old database, look up a student, social security number, race, date of birth and gender. I have a problem with that. My race is human. If we started addressing people as humans; if we started treating people as unique individuals; if we started valuing these people as such, I think a lot of this stuff would end.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Other questions from the Commission?

REPRESENTATIVE SWAN: Do you believe that issues that you're discussing now should be included in the curriculum to help people?

MR. CUTTING: Absolutely not, and the reason why -- let me answer your question this way. I would not recommend any person, male female of any race, gender or sexual orientation to the political right of Vladimir Lenin attend this campus. This is all about politics sir, not race.

MR. HUGUS: Time is expired.

MR. CUTTING: Time is expired. Thank you sir.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: We look forward to receiving your statement. Thank you. Our final speaker.

MR. HUGUS: Final speaker is Catherine Adams.

MS. ADAMS: Good evening to the Commission, members, presenters and attendees. My name is Catherine Adams. I'm a doctoral student in the W.E.B. Du Bois Afro American studies department here at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and I am

the current President for the Study of African American Life and History, ASLAH, a Registered Graduate Student Organization and a branch of the national organization.

ASLAH was founded in Chicago in 1915 by a scholar who was acutely aware of the deficiencies of American history and culture when told as a monologue that Dr. Carter G. Woodson devoted his life to enriching the education of us all by researching, publishing and promoting the contributions of African Americans. Certainly we all continue to honor his work when we support Black History month during the month of February, an idea that began with Dr. Woodson. However, I don't believe he ever intended those of us who inherited his legacy, certainly all who are in attendance here tonight to rest without committing our voices and efforts to expanding the master narrative of this country to include everyone.

ASLAH was chartered on this campus in the spring of 2000. Its members, the Afro American Studies Department and the African American students on this campus have not abandoned their commitment to diversifying the University, even as they have suffered abandonment in affirmative action initiatives, and inadequate institutional responses to racism. If you will, imagine the University making a strong, unwavering financial academic and social commitment to diversity starting from the very top.

Imagine administrators who articulate a mission of social justice in every corner of the community. Imagine support for those departments, centers and students who are committed to diversity work, but more importantly, imagine departments, centers and students who are not committed, educated and engaged in conversations of anti-oppression. Imagine the University taking the lead and not the defense in transforming the campus community, the Commonwealth and the nation.

This kind of vision of transformation is the best way to honor the scholarly activism and legacy of Dr. Carter G. Woodson and his contemporary, Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois for whom my department is named.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much Ms. Adams. Are there questions from the Commission members?

DR. FITCH: I have a question. In your work and in your studies, do you see ways of helping the University, the administration, the upper level of faculty, staff et cetera think about how to support diversity and advocate for diversity and make that happen on the campus?

MS. ADAMS: Sure. Thank you. Well, I think that, and certainly UMass is not the only example, but a number of institutions are moving to a decentralized focus in terms of diversity, so they rely on an Afro Am Department or certain centers to bear the burden of diversity on the campus, and I think that kind of -- like a shift in the mission from the top down has to be articulated in just about every document that's put out. I think this morning, just kind of checking some of the websites of our administrators, it's just not there. So I wouldn't really expect students, TA's, even faculty members to move from

their comfort levels when it's not articulated from the top down. Certainly there are a number of resources. I've watched students transform in their thinking in terms of their course work in my department, which is certainly a haven housed in a building that is a haven for a number of students, New Africa House.

We have, I think, a very successful social justice program because I have watched some of the graduates get jobs, and be well appreciated on other campuses once they receive those degrees. So we have the resources here, but as long as we are the decentralized focus, then you have other places that bear the burden for diversifying the entire campus as opposed to people just being flooded with it every where you looked. So that would be my hope.

MR. HUGUS: Time has expired.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you very much.

MS. ADAMS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I want to, at this point, I think I speak on behalf of the entire Commission. I thank every person who came here tonight for your eloquence, for your depth of thinking, for your honesty, and for your openness to express your ideas. We will look forward to receiving your written statements. I'd also like to thank you for adhering to the time constraints which I know were tight. We finished a bit ahead of schedule because a couple of people did not come. I would like to use the privilege of the Chair to invite members of the Commission at this point, since there is a little time left to feel free to ask a question to the group as a whole. If you could please, either direct your question or your comment to a particular person or the group as a whole, and I ask people to come forward to make very brief responses. We will take about ten minutes for that.

DR. RINGEL: Professor Avakian please. I am particularly interested in your comment about retention of faculty members of color. Is the attrition rate different for faculty members of color than it is for faculty members of majority, and a second part of the question, does the University have a policy of debriefing faculty members when they leave the University?

PROFESSOR AVAKIAN: I have only anecdotal information on faculty of color and retention rates. I see faculty kind of revolving doors.

DR. RINGEL: Do you see people of color revolving more rapidly?

PROFESSOR AVAKIAN: Anecdotally, yes. I think the University should have figures on this. I would direct you to have them provide the data. I don't think there are exit interviews, but again, we've talked about that. I remember when I was on the Commission on the status of women, we did talk about that. I think one of the problems is, again it's anecdotal. It's what I see on this campus is a department will hire a faculty of color and say, okay. We've done that. So faculty of color, if you look around the

campus, many departments are isolated. They are the one person there, and I think that doesn't give the faculty of color the kind of support they need, particularly on a predominantly white campus.

DR. RINGEL: I just want to clarify, I don't think the issue of diversity is all color. I'd ask the same question about other persons who are minority status on the campus; gender.

PROFESSOR AVAKIAN: But if you look at the figures and you look at the number of women faculty compared to the number of faculty of color, you will see that the faculty of color, I believe, have remained the same. The percentage has remained the same, but the percentage of women faculty has risen.

DR. RINGEL: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Mr. Bustamante, I recognize.

MR. BUSTAMANTE: My question is for Alex Austin. I am aware that you are one of a few black students that I met that lived at Orchard Hill, and I was wondering if you could speak to your experience there and you live in Central now, right?

MR. AUSTIN: Yes, I do.

MR. BUSTAMANTE: Could you speak to your experience in both places?

MR. AUSTIN: All right. Currently, I am an RA in Gorman, which is they have a program there called Nuance which is focused towards international, and it's a very diverse program. While in Orchard Hill, I was one of the only -- there is very few people of color up on the hill. To get to your point and while there, people say oh I really don't see cases of racism, but when I was there, I witnessed it myself. People like in one of my classes, they say I don't believe that ever happened, but I tell them that it's happening on this campus and in these residence halls, and in this area. We should not just act like it doesn't happen.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. Dr. Bylander.

DR. BYLANDER: I have been struck by many of the speakers talking about an inclusive of diversity and really raising the issues that all people share. What I would like to hear from a couple of you is how do we balance the need for individual attention to specific dimensions of diversity, and the need to be able, as I think one needs to talk about, to affirm the wholeness of the diversities that one individual might, in fact, have. How would the institution -- how would the University do that because I also hear people advocating for maintaining a lot of the separateness of the offices. How is the University to balance this kind of inclusive diversity that you speak of as well as honoring individuals?

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: What is your name again please?

MS. FRANCO: Gladys Franco. I believe the University should have a commitment to each of the programs that were created, usually created from the demands of students because they were needed. They wouldn't just let's just have this program because it's fun to have it. The students demanded the creation of these programs because they needed support, okay? Now the administration should have a commitment to maintaining the mission of each of these programs while encouraging unity, while encouraging that these programs work together. There is no reason why we should put everyone under one umbrella. That's just like saying, here you want diversity? Have the budget just go into that corner. That's your space, and just figure it out. I mean what is that? No. It's not fair to any of us because every community, every group has distinct needs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. Any other ? Ms. Duvey?

MS. DUVEY: I would like to respond to you as well. My name is Rona Duvey. I would like to respond to your question by saying that I definitely believe that it's very important to celebrate personal diversity. If you take away the fact that I am Indian, you take away from who I am. But I can say in terms of fostering a general diversity that you're speaking of, education is the best way. We are all here at this University to be educated, and there aren't classes to foster that.

I actually have a friend who took a class on civil rights. She is a history major. Her professor or her advisor wouldn't count that class as a history class, and she had to fight with the Dean of the History Department to get that to count by stating that this is the history of the people. That class is now counted, but at first two years ago it wasn't. Diversity in our classrooms is null, nonexistent. I actually didn't realize until I sat here today that I have never had a professor of color at this University, and I will be graduating next semester.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you. Other questions.

DR. MAY: I would like a comment really from any of you on whether you have about equal connection with faculty who are concerned with issues of diversity or student affairs personnel, and how the interaction of academic affairs and student affairs personnel has effected you or supported you or perhaps not supported you?

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Anyone care to comment on that?

MR. SERED: One of the consensus that has emerged tonight is that we celebrate our faculty. Faculty have been, on the whole, unbelievably supportive. We have a new faculty at UMass, and I am told that people who are in the know, that the recent hires, especially at UMass, have been really really amazingly excellent and we expect them to support us as well.

In terms of administrators, it's very difficult to hunt down administrators who are willing to cooperate with you when the top two administrators are saying a big no. We have talked to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, and we have gotten to the point we don't feel very comfortable talking to him any more. The Chancellor himself has said that he will stand by the Vice Chancellor, and various other administrators as well have said that, you know, the Administration is supporting Vice Chancellor Gargano. We are kind of at a loss in terms of upper administrators to cooperate with, but like I said, faculty have been supportive on the whole.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: We have time for one last comment.

MS. FONZA: I want you to offer an opposing perspective to the one that was just offered. I have not been pleased with faculty here and the access that we don't have to them. Many faculty, at least the faculty that I have encountered, are tied up trying to write proposals for grants and research funding for the department. So many of those faculty don't have time or often treat students, and this is what I have encountered, with a sense of, you know, kind of fakeness, not a real commitment to their own academic inquiry. I also think that many faculty, because tenure is processed through evaluations from students, often buy their votes from students by not encouraging students to be scholars. So students are encouraged to turn in their work late. I mean, when they bring this work in, it's all right, or to be academically lazy. So I would not say that my perception of faculty at UMass is all that great, and I don't agree that that is the case. I have been in three major state universities, and I find them to be extremely aloof and not present with students.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you.

DR. MAY: Any impression about Student Affairs people being more able to deal with the issues that you have in mind?

MS. FONZA: I have had no contact at all with administrators in student affairs, with staff in student affairs. I don't have time when I'm dealing with the department and then to go down and try to deal with people in administration, unless there is some urgent need or some pertinent reason for me to be there.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: We may be hearing from undergraduate and graduate students.

MS. FONZA: That may be.

CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: I want to thank you as well. I have my back turned to you. I want to thank you as well for your participation tonight. We have been hearing tonight about the issue of the timing for the next forum, particularly the dates. Someone mentioned the 24th or the 25th will not be a good time. I will be discussing this matter tomorrow morning with the Commission members, and we will make an announcement shortly thereafter, and again thank you all very much and good night.

(Forum adjourned at 10:00 p.m.)

Transcript prepared by Shirley A. Riga, Registered Professional Reporter