

**RELEASE: IMMEDIATE**  
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Dec. 14, 2004  
# 84-05

**DIVERSITY PRESENTATIONS TERMED “THOUGHTFUL, ELOQUENT”;  
SECOND PUBLIC FORUM TO BE HELD IN EARLY FEBRUARY**

AMHERST, MASS. – Orlando Taylor, chair of the special Commission on Campus Diversity, said today the commission wants to thank the campus community for their participation in the Dec. 9 public forum at the Curry Hicks Gymnasium.

“The presentations were thoughtful, eloquent and passionate, providing commission members with valuable insight into our work for the university,” Taylor said. “I want to congratulate the presenters and the audience for the respectful manner in which the evening was conducted, particularly given the tight schedule.”

A second public forum will be scheduled in early February, after the start of spring semester classes. Advance registration for presenters reflected an outpouring of interest in campus diversity, Taylor said, and there was not enough time to hear everyone who responded to the commission’s invitation. Twenty-seven presentations were made Dec. 9, and the balance of registered presenters will be heard at the second forum.

As a result, Taylor said delivery of the commission’s final report with specific recommendations “may be pushed back about two weeks toward the end of February.”

Taylor said the commission now has a substantial amount of information, drawing on the public forum, presentations at working sessions and historical data. While its analysis remains in the early stages, he said several key themes have emerged that he expects the commission “may wish to address”: academic advising, admissions, diversity curriculum, faculty diversity, graduate student representation, financial aid and especially campus climate.

The 23-member commission will return to campus Jan. 9-10 and again Feb. 2-3, when the second public forum is expected to be held. Details of the forum will be announced soon.

UMass Amherst Chancellor John Lombardi appointed the commission Oct. 15, noting that he is “seriously concerned about the effectiveness” of the university’s current

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## **Diversity Presentations, Page 2**

approach to promoting diversity. “There is no doubt that doing the right things will require some new investment, but to make that investment effectively we need some expert guidance,” he said. “We must draw upon the best experiences of our colleagues around the country who face similar challenges.”

Detailed information on the commission’s work can be found at [www.umass.edu/campusdiversity](http://www.umass.edu/campusdiversity).