We believe that an excellent education should be accessible to all those who aspire to it. For students with financial need, the possibilities are often limited, but you can help open the doors of opportunity.
KEY FACTS

College graduation rates have increased sharply for wealthy students but stagnated for low-income students.

A college degree can be the ticket out of poverty and can play a pivotal role in improving social mobility.

The median family income is $37,565 for first-year students whose parents did not attend college.

Few investments yield as high a return as a college degree.

Public four-year colleges and universities educate 1.7 million of first-generation students. Private universities educate 623,000.

“The University of Massachusetts has remained a driving force in the democratization of higher education.”

UMASS AMHERST CHANCELLOR KUMBLE SUBBASWAMY

U.S. Senator Justin Smith Morrill (1810-1898) was the chief sponsor of the Land-Grant Acts, which opened up higher education to a broad spectrum of Americans. UMass Amherst was established as a result of the Morrill Act of 1862.

COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS

“Toward higher learning more widely disseminated,” the famous phrase by Justin Smith Morrill, remains a guiding principle for the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

The Community Scholarship Program, launched in 2014, will help ensure that the doors to an excellent education remain open and within reach for UMass Amherst students. Community Scholarships benefit students with demonstrated financial need with preference for either first-generation college students or those who are underrepresented on the UMass Amherst campus.

Nearly 60 percent of UMass Amherst students qualify for need-based aid, and approximately one-fourth of freshmen are the first in their families to attend college. Seventy-two percent of UMass Amherst students graduate with debt, and the average principal on their loans is more than $30,000.

Loan debt has become a national concern because of its effects on students and the economy as a whole. Large amounts of debt limit students from pursuing public-sector jobs that often are low-paying, attending graduate school, or starting their own businesses. Finances are also one of the main reasons students drop out of college.

Given the need and the importance of this effort to UMass Amherst’s mission and values, the university seeks to raise $5 million for Community Scholarships. These scholarships will ease the financial burden on families, enable students to remain focused on progress toward their degrees, and open up career choices including public service and entrepreneurship.

UMass Amherst has made successful strides in increasing diversity, creating a more inclusive campus, and strengthening the quality of the undergraduate experience. In particular, the university has increased the percentage of students from underrepresented groups and has made strides in persistence and graduation rates. Sixty-seven percent of students graduate in four years, and 76 percent graduate within five. Student satisfaction with their academic experience at UMass Amherst is at an all-time high.
“Students need to be able to study with less worry about how they will pay the bills because sometimes they can’t get help from home. Why is that important to me? Because that was me thirty years ago.”

GREGORY THOMAS ’91,
UMASS AMHERST FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
MANUFACTURING STRATEGIST AT CORNING INC. AND A COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP DONOR

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

In Morrill’s day, community members recognized that if more citizens received a college education, their prospects for the future would be lifted. The same is true today: never before has the need for a highly educated workforce been greater than it is now.

At the same time, following the Great Recession of 2008, many states cut funding for public university systems, and these reductions were passed on to students and their families in the form of increased tuition and fees. Nationwide, legislatures have sliced off 28 percent on average.

After several years of a decrease in spending from the state, Massachusetts for the last two years has made strategic re-investments in its higher education system. While UMass Amherst will continue to advocate on Beacon Hill for balanced and sustainable cost sharing, per student state subsidies have not and most likely will not return to past levels.

UMass Amherst’s 2013 strategic plan called for expanding revenue streams while changing the traditional cost structure of the university through pedagogical innovations, effective use of technology, and other efforts aimed at efficiency. The challenge for UMass Amherst is keeping tuition costs contained while making investments in all of the components of an excellent education: faculty, student services, infrastructure and facilities, and advanced tools for education and research.

Even with strong partnerships between public institutions and state and federal governments, private universities often have the advantage. With their larger endowments, they are in a stronger position to offer more generous scholarship aid. UMass Amherst must remain affordable for the large numbers of promising students from low to middle-income families, who have traditionally relied on public institutions for access to higher education.
“First-generation students tend to be more invested in the educational experience because a lot of them come from backgrounds where access to higher education isn’t taken for granted.”

THIERRY PIERRE-CHARLES ’16,
FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT AND ADVISER ON WORKING LEARNERS FOR THE ACT FOUNDATION

OUR STUDENTS

$54.5m
in need-based aid was provided to students in 2013-2014

1/4
of freshmen are the first in their families to attend college

$30,453
is the average amount students borrow for their education

3.8
is the average GPA of entering freshmen, fall 2015

72%
of UMass Amherst students borrow money for their education

28%
of UMass Amherst in-state students receive federal Pell grants

$40,000
and under is the family income for the majority of Pell grant recipients

22%
of UMass Amherst students are Asian, Latino, African American and Native American

88%
of seniors rated their educational experience positively in the 2014 National Survey of Student Engagement
THE NEED

Ensuring that higher education remains affordable and accessible requires a fresh commitment by every generation. “Toward higher education more widely disseminated” is an idea that calls for continued diligence, collective will, and investment.

To that end, the university has dramatically increased support for need-based financial aid in recent years. Ten years ago, the institution provided $19 million in need-based aid (which included annual gifts, grants, and tuition waivers) and in 2013-2014, the university provided $54.4 million, a 184 percent increase.

Twenty-eight percent of UMass Amherst in-students are recipients of Pell grants, the federal grant program established for the neediest families. The majority of families who qualify for Pell grants have incomes of less than $40,000 a year. The average Pell grant in Massachusetts in the 2013-14 academic year was $3,696.

Nearly two-thirds of African American undergraduates in the US and half of Latino undergraduates receive Pell funding, according to the Education Trust, a nonprofit advocacy group for the academic achievement of people of color or those from low-income families. Students who receive Pell grants are much more likely to borrow and borrow more.

The Community Scholarship Program is designed to help those students for whom a college education may be out of reach otherwise. Of 600 national, four-year public colleges and universities, UMass Amherst now ranks No. 29 by U.S. News & World Report and was also named to its list of the top 25 most efficient among top rated universities. Institutions on this list spend their limited resources most efficiently to produce the highest quality education.

UMass Amherst Chancellor Kumble Subbaswamy’s commitment to inclusivity and transparency in resource allocation has been integral to the university’s momentum. These scholarship resources are essential to the university’s leadership in providing a high quality, affordable education.
“What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child that must the community want for all its children.”

JOHN DEWEY,
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHER AND EDUCATOR

Randolph W. Bromery
A man of wide-ranging knowledge, Randolph Bromery (1926-2013) was a pioneering scientist, a trailblazer in public higher education, an accomplished cook, and a saxophonist. Dr. Bromery served with the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II and was a geophysicist before turning to academia. He devoted much of his efforts as an administrator to broadening access to higher education, especially for African Americans. Rising quickly through the ranks at the university, he served as chancellor from 1971-79. Dr. Bromery and his colleagues established the Committee for the Collegiate Education of Black Students, which supported and retained the institution’s first African American community. He also led campus efforts to acquire the papers of W.E.B. Du Bois, which are regarded as an important resource for researchers worldwide.

OUR MISSION
To provide an affordable and accessible education of high quality and to conduct programs of research and public service that advance knowledge and improve lives of the people of the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world.

OUR VALUES
Excellence. Whatever we choose to do, we do with excellence.
Leadership. We want to be a leader, helping to define what value means today and tomorrow.
Responsibility and stewardship. As a community, we set high standards for personal responsibility and institutional stewardship, recognizing that the integrity of our ideas, the strength of our society, and the sustainability of our planet rely on continuous creativity and commitment to act.
Social progress and social justice. We accept for ourselves and instill an ongoing commitment to create a more just world.
Innovation. We stimulate, recognize, and reward innovation and creativity.
Discovery and impact. We exist to advance the creation and discovery of knowledge that benefits society.
Engagement. Effective engagement leads to partnerships that cultivate mutually beneficial relationships built on trust, cooperation, and shared responsibility.
Diversity, equity, and inclusiveness. By embracing diverse people, ideas, and perspectives we create a vibrant learning and working environment. In this environment, we work toward an equitable society in which all enjoy equal rights and opportunities.
Opportunity. We welcome all those who share our aspirations and high standards of performance.
Openness and integrity. We are committed to free and open intellectual inquiry and expression and to high standards of professional ethics and integrity.
Integration and collaboration. We achieve more when our purposes are aligned and our efforts and resources are coordinated.
From Innovation and Impact: Renewing the Promise of the Public Research University
Office of Development and Alumni Relations

We work collaboratively to raise awareness of the university’s strengths, add value to the UMass Amherst experience, increase constituent engagement, and secure the financial support needed to achieve university goals.