

ADDRESS BY JACK M. WILSON,
INTERIM PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
AT THE 623rd REGULAR MEETING OF THE FACULTY SENATE
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Thank you very much. I first have a confession to make. I'm not going to do an address, but I will talk to you, be happy to answer a lot of questions, and just tell you a little bit about what we're trying to do in the long month-and-a-half it's been since I became the Interim President of UMass. Actually, I've got to say, I think we're on an upward trend. Now, you might reply, "That's because we had nowhere to go." It's been a tough year. We all know it's been a tough year. We know what some of the issues are out there that we have to deal with, and we're going to deal with those issues. The message that I have been carrying everywhere I go is that UMass does amazing things in spite of what we've faced -- in spite of the obstacles, in spite of a fact that the contracts weren't funded, in spite of the fact that we took an \$80 million budget cut last year --\$40 million on this campus -- in spite of the fact that the two years before that we had to take \$55 million out of that -- because then you turn around and look at what this campus has accomplished.

I was out here not too long ago for the announcement of an Engineering Research Center. Now, in my previous work -- 34 years as faculty, but not all at the University of Maryland -- I was at RPI in my two recent incarnations, and I've been four different flavors of a dean. I've been Physics Department Chairman. As my mother says: I've tried all the jobs, sooner or later I'll find one I can hold. That's fine, I'm enjoying it. I like the different jobs -- including Director of a Research Center during that 34-year period. But I come to this job and I look out and see a University that is doing things like this ERC that I just mentioned which could bring a potential \$17 million dollars up front, \$35 million dollars over a longer period potentially, a \$5 million match from the state, and -- I don't know if I'll get this right, but Dave McLaughlin or anybody from the ERC could correct the title -- Collaborative Adaptive Sensing in the Atmosphere. I do understand the science behind it, and I think that's terrific, and I understand some of the applications for this ERC. I particularly understand how difficult it is to get an Engineering Research Center, because I have participated in these things on both sides -- as an evaluator for the NSF of Engineering Research Centers and as a faculty member -- an administrator -- trying to get these things. It's extraordinarily difficult to do it, and you did it. You did it, and you did it on the first try, which almost never happens. That's one example of the kinds of successes that UMass has been able to accomplish in spite of the challenges that you've seen out there. Another example that I picked out was Derek Lovley getting a \$900,000 grant from the Department of Energy to study removal of Uranium from water-using microorganisms. Perhaps this struck me because my daughter worked on a similar kind of a project. She's an Environmental Engineer now working for the Putawatomi Indian tribe, removing PCB contaminants from the bottom of a lot of the rivers in Western Massachusetts and upstate New York and the Hudson watershed. I was up here just last Saturday for the 50th Anniversary of the School of Nursing. The energy in that room was incredible -- the alumni there, and what they brought back -- their memories and the energy of that young student -- a present student there and her experiences -- these are the reasons why what we do is important.

Now, it's been popular to beat up on public employees in the press, and certainly we have taken our share of that. Telling the UMass story, I've gone to the Governor and sat with the Governor many times, including having breakfast with him. I and my ten-year-old daughter, on her birthday, were in his office on the morning that we announced the trustees. I sat with a speaker last Friday, and several other times we were on speaking podiums together, so we had a chance to go off and have a chat. I spoke with Senate President Travellini, and when I spoke with Senate President Travellini, I was there to tell the UMass story. I sat down and he started to tell *me* the UMass story -- why UMass was so important to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. So we have a certain underlying level of support, and somehow we have to galvanize that support to turn it into tangible support that we all need for your work. That's one of my jobs. I call my job "friendraising" -- the University needs friends. Yes, we need funds, too, but you can't do fundraising until you've done "friendraising." I spoke earlier today with representatives of the union. I know that the contract is an issue out there. I've spoken publicly on that. My statement is the same one I started with: UMass does incredible things in difficult times. When contracts are out, they should be funded. They deserve to be funded, and we want to get them funded. I've taken in each of the constituencies to the legislature. I've sat with, as I mentioned earlier, the leadership. I've sat with the chairs of the Committees on Education. And, in fact -- I say I'll take the UMass story anywhere -- I went to a pig roast in Leominster for Senator Antonioni who's been a terrific supporter as Chair of the Senate Education Committee. He put me on to speak between the Botticelli impersonator and the polka band. And I did it. I did it because I'll take the UMass story

anywhere. And when I did it, out of the hundreds of people, or a thousand people, present at this pig roast -- tons of UMass alums -- I don't know how many -- came rushing up, so glad to see us. We talked and had a wonderful time. When I went to visit Antonioni later in his office, to have more serious discussions, I found a very receptive and a friendly face, because people are receptive to the UMass story. Yes, it's tough. We're out there. We're facing a \$1.9 billion deficit, as they're calling it this year, and I don't like the looks of that. But what they're telling me is that they feel that UMass was hurt more than they really should've been in the appropriation process in the last two years. I think that's a good sign. We'll have to see what it translates into. I'm an optimist, as Ernie will tell you -- all the time, always optimistic -- but I'm not a Pollyanna. It works against the pragmatism of what we need to do to get some of these things done. And I can tell you, there's a lot of respect for the things that you do out there.

I'm also working on finding other ways to get support to the University. That includes other ways to get state support for the University. We have been working with MASS Insight on a science and technology initiative. From two jobs before this at UMass, I have been part of the Science & Technology Caucus which is co-chaired by Senator Magnani -- a UMass Amherst graduate -- and Representative Atkins and Barbara Burke from the Governor's office. That's a bipartisan consensus on why research, development, and emerging technologies will be important to our economic development. One of the points that I always make is that, when we start talking about economic development in Massachusetts, first of all, UMass did the economic study that showed that we are a knowledge economy. We're based upon innovation, and that's based upon our universities -- our educational workforce, and our research. Therefore, investments in that are investments in the economic development of the Commonwealth. By the way, UMass is third in the Commonwealth -- after Harvard and MIT, great institutions both -- in research funding. We *are* the research outside of the greater Boston area. Ninety-five percent of our research is outside of the greater Boston area. So if you're talking about regional economic development, you've got to talk to UMass. And we're making that point in the Caucus. We're doing a science and technology roadmap to identify some areas of investment for the state. Speaker Finneran has filed a bill that we worked with, and it has been passed by the House -- called the Emerging Technologies Bill -- that puts money behind that: matching money for research, money for outreach, money for education and, specifically, identified UMass as a key recipient. At the announcement of that bill, Senate President Travellini stood with him and said that he agreed, in principle, with that. The Senate would have some differences on that. I testified before the Senate and found general agreement there. Meanwhile, the Governor has filed his own version of the bill, and the issues that are important to UMass are in that bill as well. Now, the press focuses on the differences between the bills -- how they're funded and various other kinds of things -- but the thing that impresses me is that UMass is in each one of those and we are identified as the catalyst for regional economic development.

It has been a tough year, and we've all been through that last year. The President's Office, obviously, has taken an 18.5 percent budget cut. We elected to leave all new revenues on the campuses and do the cuts that we needed within the President's Office. That means people have left. People have left on this campus and the other campuses. It's been a tough year for all of us. We're hoping that next year is a better year. We're all going to have to work together to make it a better year and that's why I'll go anywhere, anytime to talk to folks about UMass and to tell the UMass story. I'll stop there because I really want to open it to questions. So, thank you very much. I'd be happy to take questions now.