

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
OFFICE OF THE FACULTY SENATE

From the 656th meeting of the Faculty Senate held on October 19, 2006.

ADDRESS BY SENATOR STANLEY ROSENBERG
(D-HAMPSHIRE AND FRANKLIN DISTRICTS)

Thank you very much. I am really delighted that I was here to witness the adoption of this resolution honoring Craig Mello's Nobel Prize, and it is really so exciting. I talked with Chancellor Lazare and the State House was abuzz with this piece of news. It is really great that the whole University community is taking pride in this enormous accomplishment. Sometimes we worry that we have these five silos and that, within each of the silos, there are a bunch of other silos and we worry about whether people are connecting with each other and see themselves as part of the whole system that is advancing together and hopefully taking pride in each other's accomplishments. So, thank you for doing this while I was in the room as opposed to after I left the room because it boosts my spirits a little as well.

This is my semi-annual visit to the Faculty Senate, and I am glad to have an opportunity to spend a few minutes with you and provide some update about what is going on in Boston. Although most of us would like to see the University get a lot more money from the Commonwealth, we still are the largest annual contributor, so I think it is appropriate that Ellen Story and I come by occasionally, and maybe some of our other colleagues, to give you a sense of what is happening in Boston and what we can do to keep the ball moving forward.

The winds of change are blowing in many different arenas and I will leave some things for later discussion if you choose to bring it up. The reason I was hoping I could come by sooner rather than later was because of the major changes that recently occurred at the Board of Trustees level here at the University and changes that are going on over at the Board of Higher Education. I thought it might be appropriate for us to have a little exchange of ideas and thoughts about this so that you have some sense of the perspective of some of the legislators and the perspective from afar. This is a very dynamic set of changes that is going on at this particular point. The Board of Trustees that was established when we went from a three-campus to a five-campus system basically took one-third of the membership of what was then the Southeastern Massachusetts University, one-third of Lowell University, and one-third of the UMass Board of Trustees. That brought a lot of people together who had not worked together before, and created a set of dynamics which have basically played out since about 1991 or 1992, when this new Board was established. A lot of the same players were involved as members on the Board, and a lot of the same players were involved behind the scenes as, shall we say, architects and partners with people who served on the Board even though they may themselves not have been serving on the Board at the time throughout this period. I think some of us were concerned that the dynamics on the Board were not serving the interests of actually building a coordinated system, in which each campus could achieve its mission as articulated by the planning processes and as approved by the UMass Board of Trustees. There were serious questions being raised over these many years about allocation of resources and issues raised about whether we were getting the benefits on each of the campuses that this five-campus system was supposed to bring. The basic thrust behind, or at least the argument for creating a five-campus system from a three-campus system, was that we would add more political clout, and that political clout would translate into more support in the political arena for the University and that should translate into dollars.

Well, I think a review of the history will show that there were a few initiatives that we were successful in mounting and getting through, but I wonder and I actually believe that most of those initiatives would have happened even if it had still been a three-campus system. So some of us were questioning whether we were getting the benefit of a five-campus system and the political clout that was supposed to come with that. The Governor took a very hands-on approach at this point. The Law School debate was of great concern and a series of other decisions that the Board took, and the processes that they used, and this basically brought real focus on the University system in the Governor's office. The Governor's articulated concerns were that he did not believe that we were building a five-campus system where all the campuses were being treated in the appropriate manner and, more specifically, he was concerned about the fact that the flagship campus was not benefiting. The Governor and I do not agree on many things, but we definitely agreed on that, and it was not because of parochial concern. Obviously, I represent the largest campus in the system and the flagship and so it would be my job to defend and advance the interests of this campus. I think I have been criticized by at least some of you in this room and others who are not in this room today for talking too much about a coordinated system, because my job is only to represent this campus and I do not believe in that kind of parochialism. I believe that each of the campuses deserves the resources because the students who go to those campuses deserve the best education possible, but I also believe and continue to believe in the flagship mission of this campus and I believed it was being compromised by the dynamics over the last number of years.

So, I, for one, am very pleased that there is a lot of new blood, which is not to say that some of the new blood that was added in recent years was not welcome, effective, and contributing. It is just that the concentration of power in the hands of long-serving people with narrower agendas was getting in the way of advancing the interest of the whole system, and, in particular, in my opinion, the flagship campus. I was pleased when the new set of appointments was made. I had hoped that there would

be live bodies from western Massachusetts, but that was not the result of this process. I was pleased that at least one of the new Trustees was a UMass alum, and, more importantly, that the Governor and Steve Tocco, who, as you all know, has recently been elected the Chair of the Board, have been articulating very forcefully that the flagship campus has to have renewed focus on the Board of Trustees and in Boston and I believe that these changes will lead to that. We will not agree with every pronouncement and every decision and every policy of Steve Tocco's, and we know that because we have already disagreed with him when he was the Chair of the Board of Higher Education. That said, he comes to this Board as Chair with the idea of spreading power within the Board and getting every member who is willing to do so involved to the maximum and bringing new focus on the flagship campus and assisting and helping each of the campuses refine their mission and stay on mission and allocate the resources in a fair and reasonable manner. Time will tell how successful he will be in this, but I believe that he means it, and I have worked with him for a number of years and so I am pleased that there is some new energy on the Board and new focus. Just this week, they are working on a reorganization plan creating two vice-chairmanships with portfolio and with responsibility in these areas. There is a revision, or, let's say, a reconsideration of the existing committee structure and membership on committees, and I think this shows that he is thinking, they are thinking, in new ways and I hope that this will bring some new benefit to us on the campus.

So that is the good news. The bad news is that I am disappointed with the outcome of this year's budget process and the reason that I believe this year's budget process went as it went was because the hope and the possibilities that should come with having the first-ever Higher Education Committee in the legislature have yet to be realized. That is because there are a lot of politics going on at this point. People are working out their roles and relationships. There is a certain amount of ego stuff going on, but, most importantly, as I say I think every time I come here, if not virtually every time I come here, this system continues to be factionalized. It still cannot bring itself together and work together, making the compromises that are necessary in order to achieve the greater good. If you study the history of funding in public higher education over the last forty or fifty years, you will see that virtually every year, the Senate is the high watermark. You see virtually every year that the result of the budget process is a number closer to the Senate number than either the Governor or the House. That is because the Senate has become the protector and the body that advances the interest of public higher education. Once again, this year, our budget contained the \$57 million we said was necessary over a five - to seven-year period to fully fund the formula. The House came in at a lower number, but not a bad number, but the fact that we came out with a number closer to the House than the Senate should send a very big message, and people should be very concerned because the Senate, by that action, was essentially saying that, if we are not going to get together and we are not going to work together, then you are going to have to accept the results of this process. The Senate is fully committed to doing \$57 million on average, each year for five to seven years, to fully fund the formula, but we are not going to do it unless the system is going to work together and is going to focus on these agenda items in action, not just words, in action. Everybody is talking about affordability, controlling the growth in student charges, pumping more capital money into the system, and pumping more financial aid into the system. Well, that comes with certain requirements, and there are minimal requirements that the Senate has placed on the debate and the House and the Senate engaged in very aggressive negotiations as we headed to the end of the legislative session. We came to compromises on every issue that the House had a problem with and, in our opinion, these issues were raised only to keep the bill, the bill that we have been working on, from becoming law, because every time we resolved an issue, a new issue was thrown up. So, the Senate, as a result of this process, ended up trading away toward a lower number in the Conference Committee. The consequence of that is very clear. For this campus, it meant the money for the 250 Plan was not in the budget. It is not that the 250 Plan has a tag on certain dollars, but in order to move on that agenda and make those investments, you have to have enough money in the budget. That is part of the growth, and first you have to meet the ongoing expenses and deal with the range of decisions that have already been made that are now built into the base budget.

I have heard concern expressed and I would like to address it straight on, that there is a trade-off here between capital and faculty. In my opinion, that is not what is going on. That may appear to be what is going on, but that is not what is going on. What is going on is the budget is badly underfunded, and we are doing now what we did not do twenty and twenty-five years ago, which is that a substantial portion of the operating budget has to go to pay for capital. This is, in my opinion, as a former student, as a former employee of this campus, a very bad situation. When I was a student on this campus, the Commonwealth paid for one-hundred percent of the capital costs, and surely we were underfunding, even then, deferred maintenance. That is how we get deferred maintenance is by not doing the money. But all of those buildings that were built when I was a student, and all of those buildings that were built in the generation of building that happened after that were paid for by the Commonwealth, not by the students, and not out of your operating budget. I do not know what the number is on this campus, but when we met with the Presidents of the state and community colleges and the Chancellors of the UMass system, we asked each of them to tell us what percentage of your annual operating budget is now being used for capital and for financial aid. Two expenses used to be funded in separate items by the Commonwealth, both of which are now being funded out your operating budget. We are trying to change that, we must change that, and the only way I can see that we are going to get together and get this changed is if we get the whole system together, understanding the budget, the dynamics, the politics, and that, if we continue to be silos and we continue to be factionalized within the higher education system, we are going to continue to make bad decisions.

The UMass President's Office and the Board of Trustees put forward a plan, a capital plan, for, I think, \$1.7 billion. I think it has now grown to \$2.4 billion, and they are crowing about the fact that they are going to ask for seventeen percent from the

Commonwealth. We are crowing about asking for seventeen percent? Well, who is going to come up with the other eighty-three percent? It is coming from the students and it is coming from the operating budget, and you can only spend each dollar once. The campus is in desperate need of renewal. How many times have I heard from the faculty on this campus about the billion dollar UConn program. And you know what? They are on the second billion dollar program, one-hundred percent paid by the state. I met yesterday with the Chancellor of the Board of Higher Education, and they have released this financial aid report this week, which they say is not a plan, but just a set of recommendations. Well, I do not care what you call it, they are looking for \$200 million new dollars in financial aid. We are looking for \$3.5 billion in new capital, and we are looking for the balance of the \$400 million to fill the gap in the funding formula. If we cannot get ourselves together as a higher education community, we are going to keep getting the crumbs. I would urge you to take note and I would urge you to think about the implications of this year's budget process, which resulted in you losing in Conference Committee the margin that was necessary in order to fund this year's installment on the 250 Plan. This is a community of a million people, between the faculty, the students, the alums, and the parents. What will it take for us to get together? When will we do it? When will we stop arguing on the margins of policy and keep losing out the heart of the debate?

The good news is that there will be a new legislative term coming down the pike and the good news is there will be a new governor one way or another. The good news is that one of them is not only talking about public higher education but, since that person has not yet had a chance to demonstrate and the other has, we know what one administration has done, and it has not been particularly helpful except for the Board of Trustees, I might say. I think I am done for now, and I think I should just open it up to your questions and comments.