Good afternoon.

I want to thank Nelson Lacey for riding the rollercoaster of this debate with a calm and thoughtful demeanor. I also appreciate the extraordinary work of Jamie Seguin of the Athletic Department who has spent an enormous amount of time explaining the athletic budget and answering our questions.

I want to offer a special welcome to the Deans and other administration officials who magically seem to appear on days when football is being discussed.

Our goal has been to present the financial costs of football and thereby assist with a robust and open debate. The findings of this, our second interim report, approved 11-1 by the committee, are fairly simple to summarize:

---Before we moved into the FBS, we used to spend about $3.1 million dollars in university resources to run a football program; now we spend more than double that - $6.3 million. That is after we count all the revenues from game guarantees and ticket sales, etc., we have doubled the subsidy to the sport.

---Next year, when we start paying off the debt on the football training facility and press box designed specifically for the MAC’s television requirements, and operating those facilities, we will more than triple the amount we spend to $9.5 million

---Over the course of the two years in the MAC, we have cumulatively spent a total of $8.3 million beyond what we used to spend.

Those are the facts. Let the debate continue.

Here are my views, which are shared by many of the critics in this room and across the campus and state:

---There are far, far better uses for the millions -- $6.3 million this year; over $9 million next year. $6.3 million. That is about 50 tenure-system faculty -- a nice down payment on the once and future 250 Plan. It is several hundred graduate fellowships. Hundreds of needy student scholarships. It is 250 full in-state scholarships to the Commonwealth Honors College. It is books and journals for the library. It is debt service on a new student union. It is new
equipment for our labs. For the coach at Alabama, it may not be much, but for a university like ours, $6 million a year is a lot of money. It is, frankly, obscene that the administration would choose to spend this amount of money chasing an ever-receding dream of big-time football.

--The costs have only grown, not shrunk. The building was to cost $30 million, then it was 34.5 million, then it was 36.8. In each year the operating budget grew beyond what was expected. Senators can expect to see all these numbers grow as the years go on.

--I believe there are many as yet uncounted financial costs.

--the cost of staff time, including that of the Chancellor who has said he spends about a ¼ of his time on football.

--higher costs for coaches. They cannot fire the current coach because doing so would require our university pay him $2 million to buy out his contract. But whenever he leaves, they will want to pay the next one much more. We were, just a few years ago, ready to pay the old basketball coach over $1 million a year to stay.

--the higher salary for the Athletic Director and other staff. Now that we are in the “big time” -- despite awful performance -- it is rumored that we will have to pay a lot more for our Athletic Department staff.

--it is an open secret that the next step, from Gillette, and back home to McGuirk is, drum roll, a new stadium. Chancellor Lombardi warned us that this was the natural progression and you can expect this idea to move forward in the coming years.

-- potential new costs that the NCAA will vote on at its annual meeting in January -- it may mean pay for players or at least dramatically higher “scholarships.”

--I urge everyone to beware of promises about the future of the program coming from the administration...given that none of the promises about the program have been realized. The attendance is far below what we were promised. the revenues are less than expected. The team has not performed well; the coach has behaved worse. The move to Gillette -- thought to be the ace in the hole -- has been a resounding disappointment, to say the least. This has been a failure of epic proportions.

And many knew it was coming. Had the previous and current administrations consulted experts in the field of college sports, or even just read the dozens of studies about the fate of the vast majority of schools who try to go “big time” they would have recognized that this was a train wreck waiting to happen. Many on the pro-football side will say: “give it time. Let’s see what happens.” How much of our precious resources and our tax dollars and our student tuition dollars should we waste on the enterprise -- is the number $10 million? $20 million? $50 million? I ask everyone to consider at what point will they agree that enough is enough. For me the question is simply how much longer the train wreck rolls down the hillside and how much of our university it takes with it.

Let me conclude by explaining why so many of us have been so dogged in our criticism of this move.
Do we hate college sports? No. Many of us enjoy watching or taking our kids to UMass sports events. All of us have cheered on the basketball team’s amazing run?

Do we hate the Chancellor and wish him ill? Quite the contrary. We find Swamy a refreshingly thoughtful and mature leader, who is doing many good things for our university and treats disagreements as part of university life and not an attack on his character. That is a wonderful change. Many of us, in fact, are motivated in part by the fear that the costs of football -- monetary and otherwise -- will undermine Swamy’s ability to advance the university’s core mission.

Rather, our passionate critique of the move to FBS football is motivated by an equally passionate love of this institution and what it stands for. We believe the investment in and emphasis on football is detrimental to our flagship campus.

--We think it is a waste of money.

--We think it has already brought negative publicity to our campus. We are now losing -- and losing badly -- to schools that are far outstanding institutions than ours. We lost to our FCS former rival, Maine. And two separate NCAA complaints by players, alleging mistreatment, and a video showing what appears to be some kind of hazing, sullied our reputation.

--And we can’t stand that we are banking our reputation -- and applications, and donations, and state funding -- on the success of a football team. We have all received emails urging us to attend games. Even my friend, Mr. Shafer, from the Library has sent out a message to the Friends of the Library urging that those library supporters show up at the football game! Our Deans have been directed to show up, not just to Herter Hall, but to Foxboro, to show their support. In my 12 years at UMass, I have never seen anything like the push around football. Is this truly the most important thing we are doing here?

This obsession with building a big-time football team speaks of a lack of confidence about our ability to get students, and state and alumni support for what we really do, and do very, very well at UMass: educate students, conduct research, serve the Commonwealth. The implicit message of this football mania is that we can’t focus wholly on investing in the core mission of the university because that will never draw students and their families.

I will end with the elephant in the closet: the human costs of football, due to concussions. You all read the papers and know about the growing research on concussions. The NFL is settling huge lawsuits related to concussion; the NCAA is facing many lawsuits as well. And hundreds if not thousands of former players are facing shorter lives, and lives of diminished quality.

It is not illegal to have this sport. But is pushing football as the centerpiece of our effort to reach the top ranks of public universities part of our values? Is this how we want to launch our next 150 years? Is this the kind of university at which you want to teach and conduct research?