

October 14, 2004

University of Massachusetts Amherst Commission on Campus Diversity:

Chair, Orlando Taylor, VP Research and Dean of Graduate School, Howard University  
Rosio Alvarez, Exec. Director/Deputy CIO, Information Technologies, UMass Amherst  
Eduardo Bustamante, President, Student Government Association, UMass Amherst  
Joyce Bylander, Associate Provost, Campus Academic Life, Dickinson College  
Jules Chametzky, Professor Emeritus, English Dept., UMass Amherst  
Martha Escobar, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admission, UMass Amherst  
Sidonio Ferreira, Assistant Dean, Support Services, UMass Amherst  
Ruth Ellen Fitch, President and Chief Exec. Officer, Dimock Community Health Ctr.  
Anne Herrington, Chair, Dept. of English, UMass Amherst  
Frances Horowitz, President, The Graduate Center, City University of New York  
Bailey Jackson, Assoc. Professor, School of Education, UMass Amherst  
Arthur Jemison, Sr. Project Manager, Mass. Port Authority, UMass Amherst Alumnus  
Howard Johnson, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Univ. of North Texas  
Pamela Marsh-Williams, Assoc. Dean, Undergraduate Advising, UMass Amherst  
Ernie May, Secretary of the Faculty Senate, Prof. of Music, UMass Amherst  
Mathew Ouellett, Assoc. Director, Center for Teaching, UMass Amherst  
Robert Ringel, Prof. of Audiology and Speech Sciences, Purdue University  
Vanessa Rivera, Asst. Dean for Student Affairs, College of Engineering, UMass Amherst  
Uri Strauss, President, Graduate Student Senate, UMass Amherst  
Ben Swan, 11th Hampden District State Representative (Springfield, MA)  
Carlos Vargas-Aburto, Provost and Vice Pres. for Academic Affairs, Central State Univ.  
Esther Terry, Ex-Officio, Associate Chancellor for EO&D, UMass Amherst

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of Chancellor John Lombardi, Provost Charlena Seymour, and myself, I thank you for your willingness to serve on the University of Massachusetts Amherst Commission on Campus Diversity. The purpose of this critical effort is to help the campus assess our programs, review our achievements, and identify our opportunities for improvement.

Although this campus has a long and exceptional history of efforts to enhance diversity and improve the campus services, support and climate for special populations of students, faculty and staff, we know that most of us are seriously concerned about the effectiveness of our current approach. We have a very strong commitment from students, faculty, staff, administration, alumni, and friends to this effort, but we have many conflicting voices

and alternative strategies offered to resolve both current issues and continuing improvement.

For that reason, we are grateful that you can lend us your collective experience, which is truly remarkable, your insight, and your expertise to guide us in taking the essential next steps to improving campus diversity.

The following can serve as a general charge to the Commission, and offers you a context for your work. We offer this charge not to express any limits to the topics or issues you deem important, but to offer you our perspective that prompts the formation of the Commission.

Knowing that the entire university benefits from a racially and ethnically diverse campus community, and that members of the student body, faculty, and staff recognize that the current practices are not meeting the needs of our multicultural, diverse community, we charge the Commission with reviewing and assessing those aspects of campus life related to diversity and the quality of experience for our students.

We charge the Commission to present a set of specific recommendations, campus guidelines, organizational structures, and funding models as it finds appropriate. We know that the Commission will offer these recommendations with the expectation that they will guide the UMass Amherst campus as it takes the next steps to meet the expectations of our current diverse student body and moves to provide the continuing infrastructure, programs, and support needed to welcome what will certainly be an even more diverse student body in the future. We charge the Commission to offer us the guidance that allows everyone on this campus to ensure the quality of our students' learning experience from successful matriculation to graduation.

Our charge to the Commission includes a commitment to provide whatever assistance, resources, information, and access to people and groups it requires. The faculty, staff, students, and larger UMass Amherst community will eagerly provide the Commission with their perspectives. The campus can provide, in addition to the materials included with this charge, any other information, budget data, or analysis that the Commission will find useful, including the full inventory of programs, offices, support staff throughout the campus' academic departments, student services organization, and other administrative offices. The Chancellor has asked the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs to provide whatever support your work requires from across campus.

The Commission will officially convene at the request of its Chair on November 13, 2004, and if at all possible, present its recommendations by February 1, 2005, to Chancellor Lombardi, Provost Seymour, and myself. These issues are, as you can appreciate, of great urgency for our campus and its communities, and we expect to proceed to implement the Commission's recommendations beginning in the second semester and carrying forward over the summer into the new academic year.

The Commission will want full and open access to the campus community, and to provide that accessibility, in addition to the open meetings scheduled at the Commission's request, the campus will be provided a specific e-mail address for individuals to use in addressing comments to the Commission: [CampusDiversity@umass.edu](mailto:CampusDiversity@umass.edu). In addition to the official documents associated with the Commission's work, such as those provided with this charge, the Commission's recommendations and findings will be posted on the campus website at [www.umass.edu/CampusDiversity](http://www.umass.edu/CampusDiversity).

All of us look forward to the work of the Commission on Campus Diversity with confidence based on the demonstrated commitment and success represented by its membership.

We stand ready to assist the Commission in any way.

Michael Gargano, Ed.D  
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Campus Life