Edmund Ferszt, Assistant Provost for Summer Programs, noted that he is relatively new to UMass, having been here for nearly two years. His role was created primarily to address on-campus summer activity. Beyond giving an overview of the current summer initiatives on campus and where they may take the University, his presentation spoke to the increasing desire for internationalization at UMass. To accomplish this, UMass will need to reach out to some audiences that have not been acknowledged as much as they could be in order to increase and enhance diversity at the campus.

The first slide of Assistant Provost Ferszt’s PowerPoint shows two things. On top is the lush green grass that grows across the UMass campus during the summer. Acres and acres of it are untrammeled and untouched except by the heavy earth-moving equipment shown on the bottom in the process of constructing new buildings on the campus in the fall and spring. Assistant Provost Ferszt’s understanding is that there is a strong desire to trammel some of that green grass in the summer and see if it could turn into opportunities and money for the campus. The building program and expansion of the campus has been discussed at length. The downside to that is that the University is very busy in the fall and spring. In the summer, it doesn’t seem quite as busy. It would be good to see more activities—teaching and learning—in the summer. This campus has been very active in trying to sort out how it arrived at the situation it is in, with the very busy fall and spring and less busy summer. There were times in the past when this campus was very busy in the summer. The current situation is not one that UMass is alone in having. A summary report of 2009 from the Education Advisory Board made a number of suggestions to various institutions. UMass was not a part of that, as it had its own summer committee working at the time. Some suggestions from the Advisory Board include making summer enrollment mandatory; using a block schedule, which UMass does in the summer; strategically offering courses according to popularity and need, which is also done by UMass; tightening transfer credit policies, which is probably impossible for a public institution like UMass; and encouraging faculty participation. At the same time that that report came out, UMass had its own summer task force that determined that it would be very difficult to mandate summer participation for both faculty and matriculated students. That is pretty much the history of most institutions. This task force looked at about 80 schools. It was determined that UMass should focus on programs and offerings in which students voluntarily enroll; that faculty and other instructors should be incentivized to volunteer for summer service; and that a standardized policy of revenue sharing—which is in place and very effective—should be moved on.

UMass is, in some ways, suffering from its own success. Enrollment numbers for the last four years for summer courses in Continuing and Professional Education show an increase of 5% to 7% on a consistent basis. Going back a few more years before that, it can be seen that the general trajectory is continuing to go up. The campus made a decision a number of years ago to invest and participate in online activities. It has proven to be an extraordinarily successful venture. It has been part of the way that revenue has been distributed back to the colleges and ultimately back to the departments. On the other side of that, figures on housing residence life activity show that it has plummeted at a rate equal to the increase in online course activity. As we’ve seen students find it easier, and have more access to courses that they both need and want online, fewer and fewer and fewer of them are staying on campus. We have lots of buildings, we have lots of capacity, but our student population has moved away. They are still tethered to the University and connected to it via online courses, but they are not on campus during the summer.
Senator Richard Bogartz asked if the fact that many students at UMass have to work during the summer and therefore cannot be on campus would be acknowledged.

Assistant Provost Ferszt stated that there are very good reasons for why students are doing what they are doing. Looking at the history of what UMass has tried to do as an institution, it has tried to pursue its own students, and the online access to courses may be the very best possible way to reach them. It is known anecdotally that students have to work, but UMass has never looked at it in a comprehensive way. It is unknown how true that is, or to what extent that is true. Assistant Provost Ferszt accepts the fact that UMass students have to work during the summer on face value, but there is not any data. One of the other stories that Assistant Provost Ferszt heard when he arrived on campus was that there weren’t any jobs on campus for students. Then he talked to all the students who were working on campus, and they told him that there are lots of jobs on campus, you just have to know where to look. He is not going to argue about working students. It appears that that is the reality of the situation, and his sense of the matter is that it is not worthwhile to pursue UMass students in attempting to fill in the gap in residence hall activity over the summer—at least not yet. If opportunities were created for UMass students—if programs were created where they could work on campus—then the University could think about how to make that a better program experience for them.

The University has a big investment in buildings and grounds, and it is designed to be used heavily. The New Classroom Building is hoped to satisfy the needs of all UMass’ students, but that building is meant to accommodate a large number of students on the campus. The two semesters of the academic year leave mid-May to mid-August with lots of excess capacity. There are other institutions just like UMass attempting to deal with the same issue, as a report from 2011 from Penn State shows.

UMass needs to see if there are other audiences that can be brought to campus that will benefit from being here and draw upon the University’s resources.

Senator Bogartz stated that he believes the question is about if UMass can find other audiences that are interested in what the University does, and what it is good at. Is there something more that the University can do to be inviting to those populations?

Assistant Provost Ferszt stated that his approach was to go after the low-hanging fruit first. The question is not only about whether or not UMass can find new audiences for what it is doing, but about how UMass can think about what to do differently in order to be appealing to other kinds of audiences. Last summer, UMass launched a pre-college program for high school juniors and seniors. There were a couple of intentions to this program. UMass wanted to create an opportunity for high school students to spend somewhere between two and six weeks on campus to get a sense of what the campus is like and what it is like to be in a university environment. It is also hoped that they can see a window into the University. Offerings were and are continuing to be developed that give the students a sense of what they might want to major in. It is known that switching majors slows students’ time to degree completion. Data shows that students who enter the University with a better sense of what they want to study tend to finish within four years. Students who don’t have as clear of a sense of what they want to study tend to wobble around a little bit and lose opportunities to take prerequisites and so forth. If we can give high school students an opportunity to test out where some of their interests may lie, it may be easier for them—wherever they matriculate—to have a clear sense of direction. Last summer, about 18 sections were offered. They were course intensives between two and six weeks. The student cost was about $2,100, or just over $1,000 a week, including room and board. Residence Life takes over after the students are done with class for the day. Weekend opportunities were also provided. A program has been developed with the School of Education for next summer which will include a series of workshops helping students learn about what the college selection process is like, how to choose a major, how to write application letters, financial aid information, and so forth. A packet of materials will be created that those students can take back home with them so that they can begin to understand what some of these things are. This will help families as well. They will be able to see some of the issues surrounding where their children may go, how to deal with the financial aid piece of it, and what the potential outcomes could be. All levels of faculty were included.
in these programs, from full professors all the way down through associate and assistant professors, graduate students, and—in some cases—undergraduate mentors. One program that was offered was research related. The opportunity was created to let high school students be embedded in an actual research project on campus. A system was worked out with three research programs in Biochemistry. The first cohort that came through—three young men—had a great experience; the undergraduates that worked with them had a great experience; and the faculty that worked with them have said that it was the most productive summer they ever had. This summer there will be nearly 20 programs. Four or five more have been added in Biochemistry; many have been added in Biology; and another group has been added in Clinical Psychology. These students bring with them the ability to be able to pay for and support the activity of a doctoral student, a post-doc, a master’s level student, or an undergraduate mentor. In places like Biology, there is a real need for that support, so that department really jumped at the opportunity, and it is hoped that there will be enough qualified students to really take advantage of this.

Last summer, there was quite a diverse group of students in programs such as a design academy, summer leadership in sustainability, equine management, forensic chemistry, algebra, and sport management. There was a broad range, and we are looking to double that for the coming summer. Programs have been added in kinesiology, food science, geoscience, and others. Last summer, students came from all over the country. Obviously there was a big draw from the Northeast. The majority were not Massachusetts residents. Most came from New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. There were a few from the Midwest, California, and the Southeast. There were a very small group of international students, as well: one from Italy, one from England, one from Korea, and one from China. There were a number of departmental initiatives that support was provided for. The Center for International Education put on a global citizenship program, which was a professional development program for a group of people. Sport Management put on a program for a visiting faculty member from Brazil. There are International Marketing workshops scheduled for the coming summer from the School of Management, and an International Hospitality Summer Academy, which will bring representatives from four or five Korean institutions here for a three-week exposure to the hospitality and tourism industry in this country. For 2013, the number of summer college students is hoped to be increased. The research initiatives will be expanded. And it is hoped that the international student population will be increased.

Three countries are being focused on in this endeavor: India, China, and Brazil. We are trying to build off of our existing relationships and understand what some of the audience needs in those countries are. It has been pretty well covered in the news that the middle class is growing in China. Those students don’t necessarily want to use the system that the Chinese government has had in place for a long time. They are looking for alternative routes. Very frequently they are going to Australia, England, or the United States. What we are seeing is a big influx in undergraduates from China who are interested in going to American schools. It is a different population and a different demographic. UMass is working with a number of partners to be able to find a good pathway for that. We also have partners in Brazil. We have a number of MOU’s that have been recently signed down there. We have a couple of institutions that we have been working closely with. They have introduced UMass to some other organizations. As a culture, Brazilians encourage their high school students to go abroad for short periods of study, so we think there is a natural audience for UMass down there. India’s educational institutions cannot meet the demands of its population. UMass is working with some other organizations to help develop ways to encourage and invite Indian students to come at least for a summer program. The Massachusetts International Academy has an existing partnership with Cernet, a Chinese government organization that runs a high school in Massachusetts. They have started working with a private high school in Beijing for students who want to study English. We are expecting somewhere between 12 and 20 of those students to come to UMass next summer. We are working to take advantage of our existing partnerships. As many know, there is a big push to send Brazilian students abroad. Seventy-five thousand have received government funding to do so. Another 25,000 have received private funding. So we are trying to work with faculty to understand the nature of some of those organizations are and where there are opportunities to invite some of those students to UMass.
There are two interesting things that are happening now, both on a micro and macro level. Fuyan Wortelboer is a Chinese-American woman married to a Dutchman who called Assistant Provost Ferszt last summer saying that two high school students from China called looking to study with her in Massachusetts. This year, she has received 20 requests. She is looking for places to recommend to those students. She asked the students and their families why they did not go through an agency, and they said that they do not know the agencies and therefore don’t trust them. The flipside of that is University Center, an agency made up primarily of representatives of higher education institutions on the east coast. They know UMass and many of its faculty members, so discussions have begun about how to use their connections, especially at the high school level. We want to be able to invite those students to campus so they can get to know UMass and the UMass community can get to know them.

*Presiding Officer O’Connor* noted that it is great to see excitement going on around campus in the summer.