Presiding Officer Robert Wilson called the 685th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate to order on May 7, 2009 at 3:30 p.m. in Herter Hall, Room 227.

A. ADDRESS BY STEPHEN KULIK, STATE REPRESENTATIVE AND ASSISTANT VICE CHAIRMAN, HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
(QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION TO FOLLOW)
(See attached)

Senator Steven Brewer thanked Representative Kulik for his presentation. He stated that Massachusetts has a fundamentally regressive tax structure—more taxes are paid by the lower quarterlys than by the upper quarterlys. The sales tax is also a regressive tax as well. Given the fact that Question I was defeated fairly soundly in the fall and Obama was overwhelmingly elected in the fall, it is clear that people are considering progressive taxes. Is it time to revisit the idea of producing a more progressive tax structure that would put money into the hands of people who do spend it and raise revenues?

Representative Kulik stated he is frequently asked this question. Communities in Western Massachusetts are a little more progressive in their general outlook on matters of taxation and revenues. He infers that Senator Brewer is suggesting the legislature create a progressive income tax that taxes people at different rates depending on income. The only problem is it is prohibited by the Massachusetts Constitution. It has gone on the ballot as a constitutional amendment four times in the last forty or fifty years. It has been soundly defeated every time. The last time was in the early 1990s—still recently enough to be fresh in people’s minds. He is not sure whether sentiments have changed, but there has not been an appetite to revisit an expensive and bruising ballot campaign to change the State Constitution. The soonest such a question might be able to put on the ballot would be 2014, because of the requirements that a constitutional amendment be voted on by two different sessions of the state legislature.

There is also the question as to how much money that would really raise, especially with incomes being fairly stagnant. There are probably fewer people in the upper income levels in this recessionary time then there have been.

Senator Brewer’s comment about the sales tax being relatively regressive compared to a progressive system of graduated income tax is generally true, but Massachusetts actually has a fairly progressive tax as far as the sales tax goes. The state does not tax food, basic groceries, or non-luxury clothing. It does not tax heating oil and other items which are taxed in many states. The Massachusetts sales tax rate is among the lowest of states that have sales taxes, including neighboring states. If the state goes to 6.25 percent, it will be just a little higher than Vermont, which is at 6 percent. Rhode Island is at 7 percent. Connecticut is at 6 or 6.5 percent. If you combine the state, county and local sales taxes in New York, you get over 8 percent. By raising the sales tax, the state is remaining generally progressive. The legislature does not think this is upsetting the state’s competitive posture, and it is the politically most palatable and immediate major revenue source to visit right now.

Joyce Hatch, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, asked if the rainy day fund is enough to get through this year.
Representative Kulik stated the legislature only has about seven weeks to figure this out. The Governor already used his budgetary authority to make 9C cuts in October. At that time, local aid was cut, and there were cuts to higher education and to other items throughout the budget. It is pretty late in the year to do another round of 9C cuts. At least 80 percent of the state budget, if not more, has been spent already. It is hard to find large pools of money. The legislature is most likely going to use the rainy day fund. The House budget deliberately did not touch the rainy day fund. The House received some criticism for this, but the House thought it might need it to balance FY 2009. Alternatively, they might need to use it in FY 2010 or FY 2011. The State has about $1.3 billion in its rainy day fund right now. A year ago, the State had about a billion dollars more than that. Although the legislature has used a billion already, it still finds itself in a huge hole. There will be a combination of layoffs, unpaid furloughs, rainy day funds and spending freezes over the next several weeks to balance the ’09 budget.

Senator Curt Conner stated some of the stimulus money will be used for energy projects. It is hard to find out where to apply for that money. It seems to have disappeared somewhere in the state coffers. Senator Conner stated he is trying to figure out that component of the stimulus money and its potential uses here at the University.

Representative Kulik stated he would get Senator Conner’s contact information. The legislature is sorting through some of the stimulus money. Representative Kulik’s position on the Ways and Means also places him on a special committee that will exist for two years. It is an oversight committee for federal stimulus spending. They have had several hearings, including one on energy and environmental issues, which he had to miss because of other Ways and Means work. Jeffrey Simon is the stimulus tsar in the state and is overseeing all of this.

There has been a shortage of really well-informed and candid reporting on the state budget issue. Representative Kulik wanted to provide this information straight from the “horse's mouth.” If there are any further questions, please feel free to contact Representative Kulik’s Office.

B. PRESENTATION BY BRYAN HARVEY, ASSOCIATE PROVOST FOR ACADEMIC PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

“UPDATE ON INSTITUTIONAL REACREDITATION PROCESS”
(QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION TO FOLLOW)
(See attached)

C. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Principal Administrative Officers

Paul Kostecki, Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement, stated that faculty members have most likely heard about the stimulus money, NIH and NSF and so forth. One of the big targets was the April 27th NIH Challenge Grant deadline. He wanted everyone to know that they have sent out 64 proposals worth over $20 million. Those are more proposals than have ever gone out in one month from this campus. It was a very coordinated effort of the research community, the faculty and the administration. They tried to coordinate the location of the stimulus money and the University’s contacts in DC as well. Vice Chancellor Kostecki wanted everyone to be recognized for all of the hard work they have done. There has been a 50 percent success rate and, if the University can get half of that $20 million, it will be on its way to a great year.

Joyce Hatch, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, spoke on behalf of the Provost Search Committee. She reiterated that the Vice Chancellors should have received emails with an attachment and a link for each of the three candidates who are visiting at the beginning of next week. Vice Chancellor Hatch wanted to encourage everyone to go to the open meeting for faculty and staff. Vice Chancellor Hatch also encouraged Heads and Chairs to attend.
2. The Secretary of the Faculty Senate

*Ernest May, Secretary of the Faculty Senate,* stated that it has been a potentially turbulent year, but it looks like the University has entered the “eye of the storm.” It does not seem as turbulent as the Senate thought it might have been in December or even February.

The Budget Planning Task Force is going to continue its work. Various groups have assessed multiple issues. Today the Senate is going to vote on the consolidation of these groups into the Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Oversight. At the next Faculty Senate meeting, senators will deliberate on the Chancellor’s Reorganization Proposal. This is the most significant organizational proposal which has occurred here in 30 or 40 years. Secretary May hopes there will be a good turnout to discuss this issue.

3. Chair of the Rules Committee

*John McCarthy, Chair of the Rules Committee,* stated that as he looked at this mostly empty room, he thought about what this room would be like next week when the Senate will be discussing the Reorganization Plan. It is likely to be quite full. This is an interesting contrast because it reflects two somewhat different views of faculty governance. In the view of some, faculty governance is something you put on the shelf until you need it or until something really important comes along. In the view of others, faculty governance is something that you have to maintain every week, every month. Sometimes, it is maintained just through the routine that you see on today’s agenda and sometimes it is maintained through the discussion of very important issues. For example, in the case of the Chancellor’s Reorganization Plan, the same Councils and Committees that discussed that Reorganization Plan and presented its work to the Senate are also the ones that produced this long agenda of totally routine items that we will be voting on today. So, it is important to realize that the work of the Senate is mostly routine, but it means that those structures are always in place when important work needs to be done.

E. **BYLAW CHANGES**

Special Report of the Rules Committee concerning Bylaws Changes, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-034 with Motion No. 36-09. *(Report Previously Distributed)*

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Bylaw Changes, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-034. 36-09

*(Inasmuch as these are changes to the Senate’s Bylaws, this is the second of three readings of this motion. It will be read again at the 686th Regular meeting of the Faculty Senate. The motion may be debated and amended at all three meetings.)*

F. **NEW COURSES**

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<td>CMPSCI 503</td>
<td>“Embedded Computing Systems”</td>
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MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the course, CMPSCI 503, as recommended by the Academic Matters and Graduate Councils.

The motion was seconded and adopted.

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<td>COMM-DIS 615</td>
<td>“Evaluation Processes in Speech-Language Pathology”</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDUC 603</td>
<td>“Computer Mediated Communication”</td>
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MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the courses, COMM-DIS 615 and EDUC 603, as recommended by the Graduate Council.

The motion was seconded and adopted.

G. **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Special Report of the Rules Committee concerning the Establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Oversight (AHCSO), as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-042 with Motion No. 47-09.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Oversight (AHCSO), as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-042.

The motion was seconded and adopted.


MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Social Justice Education (SJE) Graduate Certificate in Teaching for Diversity, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-043.

The motion was seconded and adopted.


MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Graduate Certificate in African Diaspora Studies, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-044.

The motion was seconded and adopted.

4. Special Report of the Academic Matters, Academic Priorities and Program and Budget Councils concerning a Revision of the Bachelor of Science (BS) Degree Program in Computer Science, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-045 with Motion No. 50-09.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Revision of the Bachelor of Science (BS) Degree Program in Computer Science, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-045.

The motion was seconded and adopted.

5. Special Report of the Academic Matters, Academic Priorities and Program and Budget Councils concerning a Revision to the Minor in Computer Science, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-046 with Motion No. 51-09.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Revision to the Minor in Computer Science, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-046.

The motion was seconded and adopted.

6. Special Report of the Graduate Council concerning a Revision of the Master’s of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-047 with Motion No. 52-09.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Revision of the Master’s of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-047.

The motion was seconded and adopted.
7. Special Report of the Graduate Council concerning a Revision to the Speech-Language Pathology Master’s Degree Program, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-048 with Motion No. 53-09.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the a Revision to the Speech-Language Pathology Master’s Degree Program, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-048.

The motion was seconded and adopted.

8. Special Report of the Committee on Committees concerning Nominations to Faculty Senate Councils and Committees, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 09-049A with Motion No. 54-09.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Nominations to Faculty Senate Councils and Committees, as presented in Sen. Doc No. 09-049A.

The motion was seconded and adopted as amended.

Secretary May thanked all of the Councils and Committees. In addition to dealing with reorganization and the budget, this agenda and the next one show that the Councils and Committees spent a lot of time doing some very hard work on curricular and others items as well. It passes through the Senate in ten minutes, but these Councils and Committees spend a lot of time working on the details of this. Secretary May wanted to express his thanks to them. Last year, the Senate had a retirement party for Mokhtar Atallah who was very stalwart in the Academic Matters Council for a decade or more. Carol Barr and others have come and really chipped in to replace him. The Senate has to ensure that everything complies with University regulations and practices. It is a very complicated process, and the Councils and Committees had to participate in many other more grand issues this year, but the “to do” list was taken care of.

The 685th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate stood adjourned at 4:38 p.m. on May 7, 2009.

The proceedings of this meeting are available on audiotape in the Faculty Senate Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Ernest D. May
Secretary of the Faculty Senate