Presiding Officer W. Brian O’Connor called the 724th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate to order on February 21, 2013 at 3:30 p.m. in Herter Hall, Room 227.

A. PANEL DISCUSSION
“PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION AS PUBLIC GOOD: REVERSING THE DECLINE IN STATE SUPPORT”

MODERATOR
CHANCELLOR KUMBLE SUBBASWAMY

PANELISTS
STANLEY ROSENBERG, MAJORITY LEADER, MASSACHUSETTS STATE SENATE
STEPHEN KULIK, VICE CHAIR, JOINT COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS, VICE CHAIR, HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS AND MASSACHUSETTS STATE REPRESENTATIVE
ELLEN STORY, JOINT COMMITTEE ON RULES, HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND MASSACHUSETTS STATE REPRESENTATIVE

(QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION TO FOLLOW)

Presiding Officer W. Brian O’Connor introduced Senator Stanley Rosenberg, Representative Ellen Story, and Representative Stephen Kulik. None of these individuals are strangers to the Faculty Senate. Presiding Officer O’Connor has been with the Senate a long time and he personally thanked all three for their graciousness to speak to the Senate at least once a year, and sometimes twice a year, to let the Senate know what is going on in the State House in Boston.

Chancellor Kumble Subbaswamy noted that he is the newest arrival to the Faculty Senate. He joked, however, that he has had enough experience with Senator Rosenberg to know that whatever he says as a moderator, Senator Rosenberg will say whatever he wants to say. He then proceeded to the first question for the panel:

Is higher education a public good, a private good, or both?

Representative Stephen Kulik stated that he knew this wasn’t a trick question because the answer is, of course, both. It is a public good and a private good. The people that we educate on public campuses across the Commonwealth—most prominently at UMass Amherst—contribute in so many ways to the wellbeing of the Commonwealth and its economy. They add to innovation. The universities provide a well-educated and well-trained workforce. As a state, we have an obligation to provide the very best access and affordable opportunities and options to students of the Commonwealth and those who wish to come here from elsewhere. We have an obligation to turn out well-educated graduates from this and the other institutions. It is cross-pollinating between the public and private good. They are closely intertwined. Sometimes public policy makers forget about that. Hopefully, there has been an increase in the understanding of the importance of the public higher education institutions in the private sector of the economy in this state.

Representative Ellen Story seconded Representative Kulik’s remarks and added one of her favorite phrases: public higher education is a cornerstone of democracy. It is just a true fact.

Senator Stanley Rosenberg noted that earlier he was asked to help frame the conversation by giving a little history. This question allows him to do that. For about a decade and a half, Senator Rosenberg and some of his colleagues have been working on legislation seeking to codify the Carnegie Commission’s answer to that question, which is that it is both a public good and a private good, and that the public’s benefit is, in the case of a university or state college education, two-thirds of the good and one-third is private good belonging to the individual. In the case of community colleges, it is a three-quarter to one-quarter split. Senator Rosenberg and his colleagues have tried twice through different bills and modalities to codify that and get a multi-year commitment for the State to provide two-thirds of the budget towards public higher education. They have been unsuccessful in doing so. Now, UMass President Caret has changed the discussion by calling for a 50/50 split, arguing that if we can get 50/50, then we have made progress and can go on to 55/45 or 60/40 or whatever comes next. Since we can’t get to the two-thirds to one-third ratio, we should at least try to get to 50/50. The Governor has bought into that concept, and he reflects that in his revenue package. Senator Rosenberg has filed legislation that takes that concept, puts it into bill form, and then adds one other component which is another method of achieving 50/50. It requires the Secretary of Administration and Finance to work with the Department of Higher Education and the UMass system to come up with a plan to capture the capital portion of the campus’ budgets and flip it over to the state’s capital budget, which would then free up hundreds of
millions of dollars in total. It would relieve the Amherst campus of approximately $80 million per year. That $80 million would put the state support of UMass Amherst beyond the 50/50 aspiration. The goal of that component is to attempt to relieve public higher education of some of its burden even if the state is unable to raise the revenue necessary to achieve the 50/50 plan.

Chancellor Subbaswamy noted that we know where the legislative leadership stands on most of these issues, but these are questions that are asked everywhere in the Commonwealth, and they are worth thinking about. The second question for the panel was one that is implicit in the minds of a lot of people in the Commonwealth, especially influential opinion leaders in the greater Boston area, which is: Does the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which is home to two of the finest research universities in the world, really need a publicly-funded research university?

Representative Story remembered when Michael Dukakis—a democrat—was governor and he actually said publicly, “Why do we need a state university when we have Harvard and MIT?” There is an answer to that question. Not everybody can get in to Harvard or MIT. Not everybody can afford to go to one of those schools. And not everybody wants to go there. You have to have an excellent state university that is affordable and accessible for residents of the Commonwealth to attend. Every state needs a state university. Massachusetts is no exception. Representative Story graduated from the University of Texas in Austin. It was very respected and supported. She did graduate work at the University of Wisconsin. There was tremendous support for that university in the state’s legislature. Massachusetts does not have the history of support in the legislature. Part of that is due to Harvard and MIT and Tufts. And part of it is that Amherst is so far from Boston. Many legislators have never even been to Amherst. Many of her colleagues came to UMass for the first time when John Calipari was coaching the basketball team. At that time, they told Representative Story that Amherst was a long way out.

Representative Kulik noted that this debate has been going on in Massachusetts for generations. When Michael Dukakis made the comments that he did 35 years ago or so, he was just expressing the prevailing opinion of the time. It has been a struggle to raise the profile of public higher education institutions. Many have been involved in this struggle for years. UMass competes extremely well with the privates academically, but it is difficult to compete for the attention, the state allocations, and research dollars. It has been harder to adequately fund and maintain the public sector of higher education because we have such a strong private one. Those battles continue without question. All of the major private institutions in Massachusetts have their presence on Beacon Hill. The Governor has reflected this by including a significant increase in his budget proposal for scholarships for students attending private institutions. That is a significant expenditure in the state budget, approaching $200 million. The private schools have a presence. They get legislators’ attention. The work to continue making the presence of UMass felt is very important. If that work wasn’t done, there is no question that UMass would be overshadowed by the strength, the visibility, and the proximity to Boston of the private schools.

Senator Rosenberg added that if UMass President John Lederle’s plan would have been allowed to be carried out 50 years after he put it forward, the UMass system would look totally different. The medical campus would be in Amherst, and there would be a law school, dental school, and veterinary school. If that were the case, there is no doubt that today Governor Dukakis’ question would be phrased by noting the three leading research universities. The fact that we were unable, due to the politics of the state, to carry out President Lederle’s plan means that UMass has to be even more creative as to how it goes about making its mark. Worcester and Amherst are an hour apart. If you think of those research campuses together, you have a campus that is equal to or even greater than any other research campus in Massachusetts.

Chancellor Subbaswamy noted that the questions he has put forth are still on the minds of many opinion leaders, and we need to be mindful of them as we think of our plans. Coming to the crux of today’s discussion, he asked Senator Rosenberg and Representatives Kulik and Story to share their views of the Governor’s budget proposal, both on the revenue and expenditure side; any specific support and misgivings; and alternative suggestions that address some of the goals put forth by the Governor.

Senator Rosenberg stated that you could hear a pin drop in the House Chamber when the Governor presented his State of the State address and surprised everyone, including legislative leadership, when he called for a $1.9 billion increase in taxes and not only said that the state needs to spend about $1 billion more on transportation—which everyone expected—but also added that another $800 to $900 million was needed to be spent on education, from pre-kindergarten through lifelong learning. It was really quite a shock to hear it. If a professor on the UMass Amherst campus at the master’s or Ph.D. level sent a group of students off to come up with a plan that would emphasize some of the most critical pieces of the state budget that are necessary to have a strong economy and to make our tax system more progressive, given that we live within the restraints of our constitutional prohibition of any kind of differentiated taxes or graduated taxes, you could not come up with a better proposal. For that, the Governor deserves an “A plus plus.” The question is whether or not the people are ready to see a 2% reduction in the sales tax, an increase to the highest income tax rate in the country, the elimination of a number of deductions and credits on the one hand, and an increase in credits and exemptions on the other in order to make the system more progressive. It is an extremely complicated proposal. The people have the ability to get their heads around it, but, as Senator Rosenberg knows
from 25 years in the legislature, simply raising the subject of increasing taxes—especially this dramatically—is enough to stop the conversation. The work that is going to be necessary in order to get people to go beyond shutting down upon hearing that the legislature is talking about the possibility of raising $1.9 billion in new revenue is going to be a huge job. That is a job not only for legislators and the Governor, but for every citizen and resident of the Commonwealth who wants to see increased public investment and has the willingness and ability to go out there and convince, first, themselves, then their families, then their neighbors, then people at the rotary club or church or wherever they gather, that they want this to happen. There is a very narrow window to accomplish this. If it’s not done this year, it’s not done at all. Massachusetts has two year legislative terms. It will be very hard to find 81 representatives and 21 senators to vote this year. It will be virtually impossible to find that number to vote in favor of it next year, because they will be on the ballot for reelection that year. A further complication and sensitivity is that Massachusetts is one of the states that has referendum. If the legislature doesn’t do this carefully; if it pushes the envelope beyond what is absolutely needed, whatever it does will be lost on the ballot. That will weigh heavily on the minds of the legislators. It is one thing to take a tax vote. Most people don’t take tax votes on principle. They take tax votes because they want to see something get done without costing them their election and their job and not to have it undone at the other end. The legislature has had tax votes that went on the ballot and were undone by the voters.

Representative Story noted, for example, the recent referendum vote on the sales tax on alcohol. The legislature decided to get rid of the sales tax exemption on alcohol. For some reason, alcohol had no sales tax. The legislature decided that sales tax should be paid on alcohol. A lot of arms were twisted to vote for that. The people were so outraged that the legislature would do that that they gathered thousands and thousands of signatures and put a referendum on the ballot and beat the legislature. They said, “No, you cannot have a sales tax on alcohol; we will not stand for it.” So the legislature lost that battle. That tax would have added less than $200 million to the state’s budget. In the same year, the sales tax was increased from 5% to 6.25%. There was a lot of arm twisting involved with that. Many legislators did not want to vote for that, but there was a lot of pressure because the state absolutely needed the money. It did pass. And some legislators received death threats because they voted to increase the sales tax by a penny and a quarter of a penny. It is easy to understand why legislators are nervous about raising the income tax. Representative Story believes that the sales tax and the alcohol tax are particular and peculiar taxes in that individuals are reminded of them daily. Every time that you buy something, you are reminded of these taxes, and they are an irritant. Moreover, people didn’t like the new arithmetic. Five percent was easy; six point two five percent is hard. When you pay your income tax, you write a check one time a year. It doesn’t hit you in the face every time you buy something. You do it one time a year and then you basically forget about it. We are no longer “Taxachusetts.” Massachusetts ranks about in the middle of the 50 states in terms of state and local taxes. Massachusetts has, moreover, the third highest per capita income in the country, so we can afford to do it. The Governor didn’t give anyone an indication of what was going to be in his speech, so the entire legislature was stunned by his address. Representative Story was practically leaping out of her chair in the Chamber. She was so excited. The more she thought about it, the more brilliant she thought that it was. If you say you’re going to raise the income tax by 1%, that doesn’t sound like much. Representative Story has been arguing to raise it to 5.95%, which sounds more complicated. The Governor is also proposing to lower the sales tax from 6.25% to 4.5%, and to have that money dedicated to public works. Representative Story thought that was a brilliant idea as well. She has since talked to some of her progressive colleagues who disagree strongly with her. They claim that once a tax is raised, it should never be lowered. It is so difficult to raise any tax and legislators will not get much credit for lowering a tax. She does not believe that the legislature will do what the Governor proposed, and that the Governor knew that all along, but it has certainly started the conversation in a very constructive way.

Representative Kulik agrees that the Governor has started the conversation and he further agrees with Representative Story’s assessment that the Governor’s proposal is unlikely to happen. Representative Kulik largely blames the Governor for that, although he applauds the Governor’s creativity and boldness in putting something forward. The Governor did not lay the groundwork for the kind of sustained effort that will be necessary to sell a plan like this to the public and then to the legislature. He also left very little time. The budget was filed in the third week of January, and the House will have to release its own version of a state budget in six weeks. Representative Kulik is Vice Chair of the Ways and Means Committee, which is right now conducting budget hearings on the Governor’s proposal. Two have taken place and six more will come before March 8. On Tuesday, February 26, a meeting will take place at Greenfield Community College on the subject of local aid in education, from pre-kindergarten through higher education. It is a hearing primarily designed to hear from the administration and from representatives of organizations that interact with municipal governments and education in any form. The Ways and Means Committee is anxious to hear from anyone who wants to submit testimony or opinions about the Governor’s proposal. The Ways and Means Committee is going through the Governor’s proposal right now. As Senator Rosenberg noted, it is very complex. There are many layers that the Committee is trying to unravel in order to understand what the assumptions are both on the revenue side and on the spending side. Part of the hearing process of the Committee is to draw out that information from the administration. The Committee is in communication with the Governor’s Office of Administration and Finance every day in order to get a full understanding of the impacts of what is being proposed. They are very significant and very complicated. One fact that makes the Committee pause when looking at the proposal and thinking about implications on the economy, employment, and the business climate, as well as the positive side of the spending proposals he’s making, regards the income tax. When you combine all state and local taxes and look at the tax burden per
capita for Massachusetts, the state is about in the middle of the pack for the 50 states. But when you look at the income tax, we are in the top ten. When you look at property taxes, we are in the top ten. When you look at sales taxes, we are near the bottom. Out of 45 states that have a sales tax, we are the 42nd lowest in the country. That is because our rate is a bit lower, at 6.25%, but also because we have a fairly progressive set of exemptions built into the sales tax. Massachusetts does not tax basic clothing, groceries, and other necessities. We are low in sales tax burden per capita, but high on income tax burden per capita. What the Governor is proposing is actually to raise the one where we are already high and lower the one where we are already low. It takes a lot of analysis on the part of the Ways and Means Committee to determine if that really makes sense to do. The Governor is also proposing to eliminate approximately 40 tax deductions and exemptions. He is proposing to double the personal exemption, but also to do away with some very popular tax deductions such as for child care, college tuition, the sale of a primary residence, and many others. The Committee is looking deeply into it. It is very interesting that when the Governor put this proposal out, the institutional response from the leadership of both the House and Senate was very open. It was not what was heard in recent years of the recession when the leadership said it would not talk about raising any taxes. This year, the Senate President and Speaker of the House acknowledged that this is a big, bold proposal that would be given the necessary consideration. That is exactly what’s happening, but there is not much time to do it. In about six weeks, the first response from the legislature will be seen in the form of the House budget.

Senator Rosenberg added by laying out some alternatives to the Governor’s budget. Representative Story has a really good bill that was filed last term and has been re-filed that would bring the income tax back up to 5.95%. It would generate a substantial amount of revenue. It also makes the system more progressive by increasing exemptions so that lower income people would be hit less by the increase. In fact, people below a certain income wouldn’t be negatively impacted at all. It seeks to make it more progressive. That is a big leap as well, but it is definitely less complicated than the Governor’s proposal, it sounds more manageable, and it’s less money. The other piece in this puzzle that keeps getting lost in the conversation is that the federal government has to pass legislation in order for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to collect online sales tax. If you buy something on Main Street here in Massachusetts, you’re going to pay the sales tax. If you buy the same item online, you’re not going to pay the sales tax. It is not fair to the businesses on Main Street, and it is also a drain on revenue. It would bring in about $400 million per year in the short run and within a very short time is estimated to increase to $800 million per year. So now talking about where to find $1.9 billion in order to do both the education piece and the transportation piece of the Governor’s budget, we are able to talk about getting $800 million of that on the basis of that sales tax collection if we could convince our Congressional delegation and the U.S. Congress to do the right thing here. It won’t benefit all states because not every state has a sales tax, but most states do. Senator Rosenberg clarified that he was not claiming that the state should raise $1 billion on the income tax and $800 on the sales tax, only that other configurations can be created that would allow the state to get to the same place in the same time without having the kind of shock that the Governor’s proposal would visit upon the state.

Chancellor Subbaswamy noted that he recently met with representatives from PHENOM, a group that has been highly effective in campaigning and advocating for public higher education at all levels. One question that came up was about what the most effective way that PHENOM—and particularly the students—can participate and help state legislators support public higher education. Is it a message of total support for the Governor’s budget? Is it simply support for higher education? What is the most effective way to participate in this campaign in the short amount of time we have to get this done in the legislature?

Senator Rosenberg stated that the most critical thing is speaking with one voice. Higher education is famous for forming a circle, raising their guns, and starting to fire on all cylinders. By the time the exercise is over, there is nobody left standing, and the legislature gets to divvy up the little new money it has on other causes where people have, in fact, set an agenda and spoke with one voice. Right now, Senator Rosenberg suggested the message be: We need additional revenues and we need higher education to benefit by those revenues and we want the revenue package to be as progressive as possible. It is that simple. The next step would be to get behind President Caret’s 50/50 plan. That is a multiyear approach allowing for planned budget management and expansion of revenue for the system.

Representative Story stated that the main thing is that everyone be in touch with their own legislators—the people they have the power to vote in and out of office. It is important to make it clear that we need new tax revenue, and that you will vote for legislators even if they raise taxes.

Representative Kulik agreed that it is better to argue for a general, progressive revenue increase with some dedicated to public higher education instead of any specific proposal. At this point, even the Governor doesn’t believe that his plan will go through, so people shouldn’t be campaigning for the Governor’s proposal. It is important to talk about the need for revenue and the revenue that has been lost in Massachusetts over the past decade as tax cuts have been passed, the biggest one by the voters in 2002, when the voters, in their wisdom, cut the income tax down from 5.85% to 5%. A couple years later, the legislature halted that three-year phase down at 5.3%. Still, that decrease has taken hundreds of millions of dollars out of the revenue stream for the Commonwealth. Talking about revenue, talking about progressivity, and talking about its importance
in higher education is essential. Representative Kulik echoes Representative Story in stating the importance of students to talk with their own legislators. Most legislators have office hours in their own districts. It is very important to reach them on their own turf.

Chancellor Subbaswamy stated that there is a good game plan among UMass students to contact their legislators and influence family members to do the same. As the flagship campus, UMass Amherst gets students from across the Commonwealth. Before turning to questions from the Senators, Chancellor Subbaswamy urged the faculty to allow students to participate in Advocacy Day. Last year was very effective. About a thousand students showed up at the State House and, in a very persuasive and respectful way, made the case for higher education. It is especially important this year considering the proposal the Governor has made. He encouraged the Rules Committee to urge faculty members to make accommodations for students attending Advocacy Day.

Senator Richard Bogartz stated that he loved all the present legislators, who are fantastic friends of the University, their districts, and the Commonwealth. That being said, he made some suggestions. While speaking of taxation in Massachusetts, Representative Kulik twice used the word “burden.” Senator Bogartz asked that that word be reconsidered. Rather than talking about burdens, talk about dues. Taxes are the dues that we pay to belong to the Commonwealth. Our dues are too small. We are undertaxed. We should be paying more dues. Senator Bogartz told his local legislators, Senator Rosenberg and Representative Story, that if they raised his taxes, he would still vote for them. He added that even if they don’t raise his taxes, he will vote for them, but he won’t be nearly as delighted. As senility has been gradually taking Senator Bogartz over, he cannot remember a time when he did not vote for Senator Rosenberg and Representative Story. He has urged Senator Rosenberg every year to consider higher taxes. With a little senility, it is possible to forget some of the lessons about how hard it is to get taxes to get raised. Senator Bogartz encouraged the legislators to fight the good fight. Even if it gets reversed by referendum, there is satisfaction in fighting the good fight.

Randall Phillis, President of the Massachusetts Society of Professors, began by thanking the Representatives. They do such good work for everybody and it is appreciated by him and the faculty at large. He also thanked the Chancellor for providing transportation to help students get to Advocacy Day. It is a critically important enterprise, and to have the real voices of real humans who are suffering the debt and suffering the payments and suffering the lack of investment by the Commonwealth in public higher education voicing their concerns to their legislators is incredibly important. UMass students come from all over the state. On Advocacy Day, the students are able to find their own representatives and cover every district in the state. Their voices are critically heard and the Chancellor should be thanked for providing support for that effort. The MSP recently sent out a call to faculty members across campus to write a letter about how better investment in public education could aid each faculty member’s intent to properly educate the citizens of the Commonwealth. Each faculty member will write what matters to them. Largely, these letters will be addressed to the present Representatives, since most faculty members live nearby. But these letters will also be sent to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the Ways and Means Chairs and Co-Chairs, so all those individuals will be able to hear those voices. Should the Governor’s budget, in some form, come through, it will be the educators that will become enabled to take advantage of it, and, in the end, it is the students who will benefit from that fine work. Realizing that it is the education of the students that matters the most is the mission that the MSP is attempting to communicate. It has long been the position of many legislators that there is a structural deficit in the state with respect to the budget. This Governor’s budget is the first attempt that President Phillis has seen in his 24 years of living in the state that tries to correct that. He appreciates that there are variations on that theme, and that there are other alternatives. But he grows weary of hearing that there is a fundamental structural deficit in this state and that there is nothing we can do about it. There is something we can do. And, in fact, given the political structure of this state, there is probably not a safer place to be a democratic politician than the state of Massachusetts. Standing up and doing what is actually right is something that President Phillis encourages strongly, and he is sure that many others will as well. By doing so, we can reverse the negative trends that have occurred over the past 24 years of cutting funding for public education, especially public higher education. If we could turn that trend around, many would benefit. Finally, President Phillis commented on student voices in regard to student debt. The faculty hopes that by educating the students so that they can have gainful employment and have enterprising ideas and build business and do all the goodness of student goodness, that it will really lead to economic growth in the Commonwealth. That is our goal. We all share that goal. President Phillis does not know anybody who is against that. But when universities burden those people with debt and saddle those individuals with the inability to earn a reasonable income and move their hard-earned money, upon graduation, into the economy of the Commonwealth, but instead send it to Wall Street and the financial institutions that they are paying their debt services toward, we are making a fatal error. The fact that one of the goals of the Governor’s budget is supporting the MassGrant program to relieve the debt burden on students and prevent the increase of tuition and fees that is inherent to public higher education is a great value and can only have tremendous benefit to the Commonwealth.

Ernest May, Secretary of the Faculty Senate, thanked the legislators for the fine work they have all done over the years. He then posed a more challenging question. There are two beneficiaries of the Governor’s proposal: one is transportation and one is education. In transportation, the main problem is the MBTA. Then there are some secondary problems around the rest of the
Senator Max Page

happens, it is crucial that the people being educated today will have more stable futures. They can benefit so that this cycle won’t happen again the next time—and there will be a next time—the economy falters. When this happens in a more positive way than most states. We have a slightly better unemployment rate. But the stories about people working two and three jobs and having to drop out of school are very real and very much a product of the changing economy.

The MBTA impacts a very large percentage of the state’s population that is centered in Boston. It is therefore going to be something of a priority. Education is a surprise, and it is probably the most vulnerable part of the proposal. All those present understand the value of public higher education, but there are many outside this circle who are skeptical of putting this much money into public higher education. There are many points of view. There are arguments other than the one that questions the necessity of a public research university because of Harvard and MIT’s stature. There are things like the amount we spend for the aging population versus the amount we spend for the younger population. There is the fact that our fee increases have been directly proportional to the decreases in state funding over the last five years. It has gone down from something like a $10,000 state subsidy per student to around $7,000 per student. Some of these things are puzzling and dramatic. What are some of the key points that might get legislators outside of our circle to get on board with a less skeptical attitude toward increasing taxes? The response to the issue of raising taxes this time was not one of it being dead on arrival, but it will still be a tough sell to get the kind of package that will actually impact higher education and the University of Massachusetts.

Representative Story stated that one of the things that she has noticed among the mixed group of 200 legislators is that the argument that resonates with the most legislators is that students are having to pay too much money. Even people who don’t think public higher education is the cornerstone of democracy have a lot of constituents who are in public institutions. And the fact that they are having to pay so much money and have to have three jobs while they’re in school and have a big debt when they get through is the most powerful argument. The argument of how much students are having to pay is much stronger than any other, such as the need for new faculty.

Senator Frank Hugus wanted to address the issue just brought up by Representative Story, access and what students have to pay. Senator Hugus had three conversations with students recently. One of the students was a very good transfer student in several of Senator Hugus’ classes. That student is not in school this semester. He can’t afford it. He doesn’t know whether he’ll be able to come back next year or not. Another student had the same problem. He is married and has a family and has to drop out so he can work and support his family. He can’t afford to be here either. Another student, a recent graduate, is not working in the field in which he graduated because he has to work three jobs in order to pay off his student debt. If ammunition is needed for this argument, everyone at the Senate meeting could provide similar stories. Senator Hugus was reading in the Chronicle of Higher Education recently about how much the cost of education has increased as opposed to when he was an undergraduate. He came from a modestly well-off family. All five siblings went to public universities and received degrees. He was wondering if his family would have been able to do that in 2013, considering the high cost of public education today.

Representative Kulik stated that the increasing problems with affordability are directly attributable to the increase in fees and the corresponding drop in state investment in public higher education. But it is also a general symptom of the economic problems we’ve had worldwide for five years now. Massachusetts can pat itself on the back a little bit, because it has gotten through in a more positive way than most states. We have a slightly better unemployment rate. But the stories about people working two and three jobs and having to drop out of school are very real and very much a product of the changing economy. Representative Kulik is hopeful that higher education will be an integral part of figuring out the new economy and how people can benefit so that this cycle won’t happen again the next time—and there will be a next time—the economy falters. When this happens, it is crucial that the people being educated today will have more stable futures.

Senator Max Page wanted to gently and respectfully push back against Representative Kulik’s concerns over which taxes the Governor is proposing to adjust. If the Governor’s proposals were implemented exactly the way they have been proposed, the state would still have, overall, a regressive tax system. The poor would still be paying more of their incomes in taxes than the wealthy. There is a worry that Senator Page has heard that if the taxes are raised too high, then the state will scare off business and individuals. Jeff Thompson, who used to be at the Public Economy Research Institute, has a great paper showing that that has not happened, even though Massachusetts already has a big differentiation between its neighboring states. That idea is a red herring, and Senator Page urged the legislators to think about that while evaluating these tax proposals. Even if these proposals were implemented, we still don’t get back to nearly where the state was a decade ago. Senator Page was taken by the State of the State address. In it, the Governor asked what the point of building up capital was if you don’t spend it. The three present legislators have spent years in public service building up capital. They are all in leadership positions. This is the moment to spend that capital. Many will be there on March 5th and afterwards to support the legislators in advancing progressive revenues and in funding for higher public education. This is a once-in-a-generation moment for taxes and for investing in public higher education.

Senator Curt Conner posed his question to the Chancellor. It is a question he asked when Chancellor Subbasswamy was interviewing for his position. The increase in cost for education has come mostly out of increases in administrative costs. We have no more faculty than we had ten years ago. We have twice as many administrators. Can we make the administration more efficient such that we use the funding we do get more effectively to actually teach our students and not to administer things that the government might want us to do?
Chancellor Subbaswamy addressed one element of Senator Conner’s question, noting that UMass currently has $60 million in debt payment, and that is increasing up to $80 million. That is more than 600 administrators. This University has not taken on 600 more administrators in the past five years.

John Reiff, Director of Civic Engagement and Service Learning, added his thanks for the stand that the present legislators consistently take for public higher education and for UMass specifically. The work that Director Reiff does involves him with faculty and students who are engaged in making a difference in the communities surrounding Amherst. They work with community-based organizations, schools, and other kinds of organizations to create a public good in those communities. This is one of the really important functions of a public university or system that is not talked about a lot. The importance of educating students has been discussed, and that is a central purpose of the campus. Doing public service as a university is another central part of UMass’ mission. He wonders to what extent that value might be used in pushing for funds for public higher education.

Representative Kulik stated that examples of student engagement in the communities and around the state would be a very important part of those students’ advocacy when they contact legislators and talk about the opportunities they have at a public university to engage communities. It’s a part of the story at UMass that doesn’t exist everywhere in the private higher education sector, so a big deal should be made out of it.

Representative Story noted that Mr. Reiff’s program picks their best citizen scholar every year to serve as her intern all summer. That has been going on for a long time. That student gets to know the State House inside and out.

Chancellor Subbaswamy noted that he has had the opportunity to live in four different states and work with its legislative and political leaders. He can say without any hesitation that he is privileged to live in the extended community of core group legislators serving all the communities in which UMass people live. These legislators are the most thoughtful, knowledgeable and devoted political leaders and legislators anywhere in the country. We are really fortunate to live in this community.

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS

2. The Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Ernest May, Secretary of the Faculty Senate, stated that the extensive strategic planning process is well underway. It is led by Chancellor Subbaswamy and his staff but has broad Senate representation as well. An additional Faculty Senate meeting has been scheduled for May 9 in order to do the final deliberations on that Joint Task Force’s findings. The draft report will be sent out right after spring break. There will be time for councils and committees to comment on it, and, at the May 9 meeting, the Senate will be asked to affirm it in broad principle. The Senate will not get into the weeds of the details of every recommendation. The Task Force is deliberating what level of detail will be in the report. This is quite a process, but it is an important plan. Chancellor Subbaswamy will need it going forward. Many events are going on, including the Chancellor’s inauguration and the Sesquicentennial celebration. It’s going to be a very busy spring. Secretary May reinforced what Senator Page and the legislators said. This is a once-in-an-academic career opportunity. This is the first time in Secretary May’s 40 years at the University that there has been this much support for a change in the state’s financial structure that could benefit public higher education. It is key to have students take the message to the State House, as well as faculty taking the message about students. It’s important to have one voice about that and to not get into too many side discussions. The rising tide will lift all boats. Secretary May acknowledged the importance of the work of Senator Page over the years in MSP and with the founding of PHENOM. PHENOM was something that Secretary May had hoped President Bulger would be involved in years ago, with his prominent statewide voice. That didn’t happen. Many people from the grassroots, including Senator Page, deserve a great deal of credit for getting that going and creating an organization that has legs and will be making a great case for public higher education.

5. The Representative of the Massachusetts Society of Professors

Randall Phillis, President of the Massachusetts Society of Professors, encouraged all present to go to Advocacy Day. He repeated this encouragement, stating that there are buses that need to be filled. Everyone needs to go. It is really critical. It is simple to sign up for a place on the bus at: bit.ly/advocacyday2013. There were 67 people present at the Faculty Senate meeting. Everyone should go, meet their legislators, go to the Speaker of the House’s office and talk to the person interfering with you to keep you from talking to the Speaker of the House and say, “I am here from the University of Massachusetts. I am a professor and I feel deeply about this. I need to tell you how important this is for the students of the Commonwealth.” Public higher education needs money. UMass Amherst needs some of it. If you don’t stand up at this time—during a once-in-a-generation opportunity—and stamp your feet and pound your fists, or at least politely ask your legislator for support, then you are disserving the students of this University. Stand up, get on the bus and go. March 5th. Moreover, write a letter. Faculty
members write for a living. President Phillis sent out a notice encouraging faculty members to write a letter to be sent to their local legislator, the Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate, and the Ways and Means Chairs and Co-Chairs. Write a letter. The MSP has arranged to compile all the letters and print the duplicates of them for each of these individuals. The MSP can also determine the local legislators for each faculty member if that faculty member provides a home address. The MSP will also print duplicates for other individuals. Then, on March 5th, because you’ll be on the bus, you can carry a big fat stack of those letters and plop them on the desk of the Ways and Means Chairs and say, “Here. These people care a lot about this, and you need to do something about it.” President Phillis encouraged all faculty members to stand up and do the right thing.

D. NEW COURSES

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<td>CMPSCI 630</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMPSCI 650</td>
<td>“Applied Information Theory”</td>
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<td>CMPSCI 670</td>
<td>“Computer Vision”</td>
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<td>PUBP&amp;ADM 611</td>
<td>“Comparative Public Policy”</td>
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<td>PUBP&amp;ADM 656</td>
<td>“Topics in Urban and Housing Policy”</td>
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MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the courses CMPSCI 630, 650 and 670 and PUBP&ADM 611 and 656, 34-13 as recommended by the Graduate Council.

The motion was seconded and adopted.

E. NEW BUSINESS


MOVED: That the Faculty Senate adopt the 2015-2016 Academic Calendar, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 13-033. 35-13

Senator David Gross stated that he planned to vote against this motion, acknowledging that, generally, business such as academic calendars is simply rubber stamped by the Faculty Senate. In 2008-2009, UMass had 14-week semesters. Since then, UMass has had 13-week semesters. He understands the reason for this change, but noted that it represents a 7% decrease in contact time. He cannot cover the material that he used to be able to. This is the equivalent to a 7% increase in tuition and fees because the students get less of the faculty’s time. He encouraged the Senate to vote no. It is time to get back to a real academic semester.

Presiding Officer Brian O’Connor stated that he can remember 16-week semesters. They’re gone.

The motion was seconded and failed by a vote of 11 in favor to 15 opposed.

Secretary May noted that he is not sure where to take this. A poll was taken at the request of Chancellor Lombardi that created this calendar. It came out of Student Affairs. Students wanted to get out of school faster so that they were not penalized with respect to internships and jobs compared to other institutions. Most institutions have a calendar similar to the one proposed here. While the second semester could be lengthened a little bit, there is no way that we could get the first semester in with 14 weeks between Labor Day and Christmas while observing the holidays that we observe. There is no way that the business processes of the University having to do with advising students can take place in less than the amount of time that we have them in now, which is essentially between about the 28th of December, when grades would be due on this calendar, and the Tuesday after the Martin Luther King holiday. That two weeks, or little more than two weeks is required to advise students who have gotten into academic trouble, who don’t have prerequisites for courses, et cetera. Secretary May noted that he is not sure what the people who voted against the motion would recommend. There is also the question of symmetry between the first semester and the second semester. If we can only have a 13-week semester in the fall, then there would be an asymmetry between the semesters that would make for a problem regarding courses offered both semesters. The answer is to do what many schools do which is to start before Labor Day. When Chancellor Lombardi’s administration proposed this, a survey was taken. Over 80% of students voted in favor of the calendar such as we have now. The faculty was in favor of the longer semester. The difference was split. The students didn’t get as short of a semester as they wanted, and the faculty didn’t get as long of a semester as they wanted. Secretary May wondered what the people who voted against the calendar are looking for. Do they want to start before Labor Day?
Presiding Officer O’Connor noted that he has been at UMass for 45 years. The semester never started before Labor Day, but there were 14- and 15-week semesters. The spring semester is different. According to Presiding Officer O’Connor’s scientific study involving watching college basketball on ESPN, around January 5, you see that the students are all on campus at Duke, Virginia, Michigan State, Michigan, Purdue. Our students are not on campus. The spring semester could start earlier in January. When the University tried to do that, the idea was shot down by many, many faculty members who said that that would take time away from their research. Two weeks? Presiding Officer O’Connor doesn’t think so. He can see the solution in the wintertime by starting school on January 6 or 7. Ask any student what they do during the last two weeks of January, and they’ll say, “Drive my parents crazy,” because all of their friends have gone back to school. Presiding Officer O’Connor has not been able to figure out, for 45 years, why January is so long. The Five Colleges present a situation that must be dealt with, but do the Five Colleges care about UMass’ calendar?

Secretary May stated that the Five Colleges do care about UMass’ calendar. He receives tons of feedback any time that UMass makes a change. This is especially true of Hampshire College, where they have a January session. The other colleges have activities that take place in January that UMass really trespasses on by having January courses. Secretary May has heard tremendously critical feedback from the Five Colleges.

Senator Marta Calas, having lived through both academic calendars, noted that the idea that students need to come earlier to campus or go earlier to their job is false. Whenever she mentioned this to her students in the School of Management, they would say that they had never heard of that problem. It is a mystery who moved this idea forward. UMass had a longer semester but also had time in January for research. The end of the semester on the proposed calendar is April 29. There is no evidence whatsoever—that any student did not get to work in the summer because they didn’t start early in May. Senator Calas thinks UMass should carefully revisit what it used to do, which was very functional and included a 14-week semester. The Five Colleges have always been an issue.

Senator Frank Hugus stated that he recalled, when he first got to campus, that the fall semester ended just before Christmas, in terms of classes, and then everyone came back for a couple weeks in January for finals. That’s how we got 15 or 16 weeks. We could do that again. He believes that the reason UMass went to the system it has now is because of the oil crisis. We couldn’t afford to heat the buildings.

John Reiff, Director of Civic Engagement and Service Learning, wondered if the other members of the Five Colleges did the swapping of Monday and Tuesday class schedules that occurs at UMass.

Secretary May stated that masquerade days occur only at UMass. As a state university, UMass is required to observe state holidays. The private colleges are not. They do not observe holidays like Patriots Day.

MJ Peterson stated that there are a small number of state universities that are able to ignore Monday holidays during the term. They have to make a deal with their staff unions and the state. The University of Maryland runs through Monday holidays during term time. The way they square that with the staff is that they close the university at noon on December 24 and restart business January 2. That gets time and a half and has a benefit for the staff in terms of family activities during the holiday. It is possible, but you have to get your state government to give you an exemption from the rule that all state agencies must be closed on legal holidays, and that is probably not easy. It’s much more important to go after the 50/50 plan right now.


MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Revision of the B.S. Pre-Veterinary Science Entrance Requirements, 36-13 as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 13-034.

Presiding Officer O’Connor noted that this motion is the first time he can remember the Senate voting to eliminate a requirement. It is not a requirement for a major. It is a requirement to get into a major. Still, it should be written into the record that the University is growing and the faculty does not seem to be growing proportionally, because there is a department that is not allowing majors in their own college to take a course, and therefore the department has to drop a requirement. If UMass had an official Pre-Med major, Presiding Officer O’Connor, the Provost and the Chancellor would have their phones ringing off the hook with parents saying, “My son or daughter can’t graduate, can’t apply to medical school, because they haven’t had the necessary requirements.” Veterinary schools do not require the second half of organic chemistry before students apply, and that’s why this revision is okay. They are not dropping a requirement for the major, just a requirement to be admitted into the major. Still, it should raise the consciousness of everyone on campus. We have to be able to accommodate the students that we take into the University.
Secretary May stated that this type of bottleneck is one of the big issues being addressed in the Joint Task Force on Strategic Oversight’s section on courses and curriculum, being led by Vice Provost Carol Barr. It is not something that is going to go away. Just because we are studying it does not mean that we can solve it. This is one of the things that prevents students from graduating on time. They get so far along in a major, and then determine that it is not the major for them. It decreases graduation rates. It is a very inefficient use of student time and University resources. This policy and the next order of business, a continuation policy, attempts to better funnel students into places where they can be successful. Student success is Secretary May’s theme. UMass has to do a better job of promoting student success, so that successful UMass graduates feel that their success is because of UMass and not in spite of UMass. Eliminating bottlenecks is important. We are creating barriers that say if a student doesn’t advance beyond a certain point, he or she needs to find another major. Having students butting their heads up against walls that they are never going to get through is not productive. Secretary May agrees with Presiding Officer O’Connor in that the motion is okay because it is a requirement to get into the major, and not to graduate.

The motion was seconded and adopted.


MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Continuation Requirements for the Major in Kinesiology, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 13-035.

The motion was seconded and adopted.


MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Master in Business Administration (MBA) with a Focus in Marketing, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 13-036.

Senator Linda Smircich wondered what the staffing implications of this proposal would be.

Senator D. Anthony Butterfield stated that there would be no staffing implications. Students will now be able to select three electives in marketing and their MBA will reflect a focus in marketing. The electives are already offered. This is a way for an MBA student to differentiate him or herself.

The motion was seconded and adopted.


MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Replacement of the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) Degree with the Education Specialist (Ed.S.) Degree in the School of Education, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 13-037.

The motion was seconded and adopted.

The 724th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate stood adjourned at 5:07 p.m. on February 21, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

Ernest D. May
Secretary of the Faculty Senate