

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST  
OFFICE OF THE FACULTY SENATE

Presiding Officer Robert Wilson called the General Faculty Meeting to order on October 26, 2006 at 3:30 p.m. in Herter Hall, Room 227.

Professor Max Page, President of the Massachusetts Society of Professors stated that it was terrific to see so many of his colleagues. What he saw in front of him were, without fail, people of good will, dedicated to public higher education and especially to Amherst, the flagship campus. He saw people who were united in the belief that the state had, over the past generation, consistently reneged on its responsibility to provide adequate resources to this University: adequate to hire enough faculty and staff and pay them well enough, to maintain its buildings and build new ones as needed, to keep the cost of attending this University low enough so that it honored the mission of the University, and to create an absolutely top-ranked public research university, which was what the citizens of the Commonwealth deserved. He also saw people who agreed that rebuilding the faculty must be at the very top of the list of priorities for the University if it was to fulfill its mission. Just this week, the MSP received the results of the survey of their members, which indicated that, while the faculty demanded good wage increases paid reliably, they ranked the hiring of 250 additional faculty higher than the raises for existing faculty. This was remarkable, but, in some ways, not surprising, given his conversations with many of the people in the room. He saw many people who testified about the desperate need to rebuild the faculty at their campus hearing two years ago, and on the DVD they produced, which was available at the back of the room. Many traveled to Boston to deliver the MSP's report and DVD on the impact of the decline of the numbers of faculty to each and every legislator and to the Governor. Everyone in this room cheered when the Chancellor followed their lead and announced the visionary 250 Plan a year ago. On all of this, the people in this room agreed. Where most of us in this room disagreed with the administration is in how the glorious vision is reflected in the budget. Many of us feared that the commitment to rebuild the faculty is not being honored. We had often been told, and we believed, that, if you want to know the priorities of an institution, look at its budget. What many of us were shocked to find out this fall was that the bulk of the money that was listed under the 250 Plan was going this year, and for the foreseeable future, to debt service on new and old buildings. Many were also dismayed to see how much money was being spent on items that were unrelated either to the 250 Plan or another top priority, the severe capital needs on this campus, into the millions. The MSP had called this General Faculty Meeting and circulated the petition for four key reasons: (1) we were concerned that the 250 Plan, a once-in-a-generation opportunity, was, after just one year, disintegrating. They feared this would become, at best, a 20-year 250 Plan; (2) we were concerned that the Chancellor had not followed his word and made the 250 Plan the number-one priority. There were many legitimate needs on this campus, and when he heard that it was said by a few people that the President of the MSP did not like buildings, he just had to laugh. He taught Architecture, for God's sake. He loved buildings. But, if the rebuilding of the faculty is at the top of the list of priorities, the budget should reflect it. We felt it did not and it was not projected to in the foreseeable future; (3) we believed that there was very little debate over the priorities on this campus. Given the lack of adequate resources, that debate was more important than ever and; (4) We had taken this extraordinary step of calling on our faculty to call for a General Faculty Meeting in order to make it clear that the faculty wanted the Chancellor to revise the priorities to fund more faculty positions. The 250 Plan was a visionary plan for rebuilding the faculty. It was the essential development that could propel UMass to the very top ranks of public universities.

Professor Stephanie Luce stated that she understood from the Chancellor that he had told them of the approximately \$6 million that was allotted to the University and the 250 Plan and noted now that he needed about \$4 million to go to servicing the debt on buildings. We wondered about the priorities of other spending and noted that, from 2005 to 2006, due to the increase in the number of administrators and large administrator salary raises, there was about \$1 million going to the administration in that year alone. \$1 million out of \$4 million seemed like a large chunk. We thought that perhaps the priorities were a little off, including, in fact, the Chancellor's own salary increase of about \$100,000 from 2005 to 2006, bringing him up to about \$350,000. She asked the Chancellor about the priorities of that spending and if, in fact, this trend that had gone on for the last few years of increasing the number of administrators and administrator salaries was going to take precedence over hiring new faculty.

Professor Robert Zussman stated that he wanted to follow Professor Luce's question on a little bit of a different slant. One of his concerns was that, since the legislature earmarked budget increases specifically for hiring faculty, the diversion of funds away from hiring faculty was going to wind up disappointing the legislature. In fact, it could wind up undermining any future budget increases, so that whether it was buildings, salaries, or hiring new faculty, we would not get any of them unless they made hiring new faculty the first priority.

Senator Steven Brewer stated that, at the last Faculty Senate meeting about a week ago, Senator Stanley Rosenberg came in and rather took the faculty to task. He did not know if people saw it, but he was actually quoted in the paper as being one of the faculty who did not take his remarks too kindly, although he thought they perhaps took his remarks a little bit out of context. Still, he asked Senator Rosenberg what he meant by that, by saying that it was the fact that the University system could not communicate with the legislature with a coherent message, and he had a few specific things that he pointed out, but he said that was the main reason that the budget was small. Last year, he was one of the faculty who actually went to the State House and lobbied the legislators. Every single office that we went to, the people said, "this is exactly the right thing you

should do: communicating to us the importance of the needs of the University and showing us what it means that there are not enough faculty teaching classes.” That was exactly what they needed to know to make good decisions. One little pitch that he made was that it was one of the things that membership dues at MSP can be used for, but if you were an agency fee payer, your money cannot be used to support those kinds of lobbying activities. He was particularly concerned that he went in and spoke to legislators over the course of a whole day about the needs of the campus and the fact that the University needed to have more faculty to be strong, and that the 250 Plan appeared to him to be faltering, that they were not going to hire 250 new faculty over the course of five years, as it was originally projected. One of the things that a number of them had been working towards was having more coherent higher education advocacy, where all of the higher education constituencies could get together and come up with a single message that could be communicated to the legislators. But to do that, we needed to have leadership, to have a coherent vision and a common set of priorities that they could take forward, and he worried that, if the 250 Plan was not going to be the priority, they were speaking across purposes.

Senator Enoch Page asked for a point of information. He wanted to know if people were just going to make statements and express frustrations and get no answers.

Presiding Officer Robert Wilson answered that he could not tell him. The agenda was, as it was written, that anybody was free to attempt to answer a question or to make a point, and he was not going to require anybody to stand up and ask them to respond or tell them what they thought. It was entirely voluntary.

Professor Dean Robinson stated that he was curious to know about the strategy for meeting the goal of 250, with four years now remaining, in terms of the number of authorized searches. They fell short of that goal in the first year, and he was just curious to know if the strategy going forward would include actually a greater number of authorized searches, such that we could be more sure about meeting the goal of 250 with four years remaining. Otherwise, it seemed like the goal would be in the sixth, seventh, eighth, or tenth. He was curious what the strategy of meeting that goal going forward would be with respect to authorized searches.

Professor Sara Lennox stated that she wanted to talk specifically about what happened in Languages, Literatures, and Cultures. She believed there were 48 searches authorized last year. That was not even the fifty that we would need, but only 21 of those were filled for all sorts of reasons and people left on top of that, which people always do. It seemed to her, as Professor Robinson said, if they were trying to get a yield for incoming students, they do not accept 5,000 if they want 5,000, they accept a lot more, thinking that the yield is going to maybe be 5,000. To address some of the problems, especially in the Spanish section of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, was devastating because of failed searches and people leaving, they needed to authorize a lot more searches than even fifty to make the fifty they wanted every year to satisfy the 250 Plan.

Professor Nancy Folbre stated that she thought it was a rare opportunity for the faculty to engage in dialogue with the Chancellor and it would really helpful for her to hear from him about how he planned to meet his goals. She thought he did articulate some goals that we really rallied behind and felt very positive about. Some of us were just very confused, as well as disappointed, that things were not quite going the way they should. She thought that it would be really helpful if he could just offer them his own explanation of how he thought they might have gone off-track and how he was going to get them back on track.

Professor Dan Clawson stated that he did a little math from the Chancellor’s tables on the budget that were up on the web site. If they looked at mandatory student fees and what students paid in FY2003 and what they would be paying this year, they were paying an extra \$68, 335, 559. That was the figure on the web site. If we assumed that a new faculty member cost \$130,000, which was the amount that the Chancellor budgeted, and that was obviously not the amount that they got in salary. That included a TA line for each new faculty member, extra staff support, and assorted other things. If we did a long division, how many faculty would they get if the student fee money were all going to pay for additional faculty? How many additional faculty would they have given the amount of extra student fees that they were paying since FY2003? It was an interesting number. It would be 525 additional faculty on this campus, if the student fee money had all gone toward hiring additional faculty. Now, he knew it could not all go for that, but could half of it go for that? That would be the 250 Plan plus. If students were paying so much more, and they were not getting many more faculty in classrooms, it seemed an outrage to students and to parents and to alumnae, and in terms of our ability to build support for the University, that they were totally undercutting it.

Professor Paula Chakravarty stated that her question had to do with both the issues of recruitment and retention. Her understanding was that the administration wanted to support the recruitment and retention of faculty of color, and, if they stepped back from recruiting 250 new faculty as was promised, what did this mean in terms of minority faculty? The question of retention was an important one. She knew that Provost Charlena Seymour and others in the administration supported groups that we were forming on campus informally to support one another in terms of faculty of color, but she really thought it was a devastating blow for the institution in terms of questions of diversity if they did not move on this issue.

Professor Miliann Kang stated that she just wanted to reiterate the concerns about the diversity of the faculty. A lot of people had been leaving at all levels, and for faculty of color who were here, it was very demoralizing that there were so few people here, and then if there were not going to be new hires, again, it just felt, not just in terms of body counts, but in terms of the areas of research and teaching, that it would really affect the diversity of the curriculum as well. She also wanted to speak about the burden of a shortage of faculty for junior faculty. She thought that junior faculty at the University were very heavily burdened by service, and she thought that became a major retention issue because, at all levels, but particularly at junior levels, you were not protected and felt like you were not able to focus on research during that period. She thought that the lack of new hires really was a cause of concern, particularly for junior faculty in that area.

Professor Suzanne Daly stated that she wanted to follow up on Sara Lennox's question and ask about the number of failed searches last year. She was told that they only got 12 non-replacement hires for this incoming year, and she wondered if the administration was going to do some kind of review to oversee that process or to figure out what went wrong, if it was at the department level or at the administrative level. She wanted to get some understanding of what was going on with the failed searches.

Professor Ann Ferguson stated that she wanted to point out that there were some of our departments which were at risk because we were already so small from the 1990s shrinkage of their numbers that we were having a really hard time just meeting our service and teaching, let alone their research commitments. In their case, we had two junior faculty. We were down to three and a half people right now because we had a person who got a grant and someone on leave, and we were engaged in an intense benchmarking research project, hoping that this would allow some of our departments to show that they would have a competitive advantage if they were simply allowed to do more hiring. They had potential and they could achieve it. She said that it was really frustrating, having done that whole report, to feel that now that work was just stalemated, that all that work we did is under jeopardy of not really proceeding to do what they hoped it would do, which was to build on our strengths: not only research, but teaching, especially with small programs. A particular problem was the lack of personnel.

Senator Mokhtar Atallah stated that one aspect of the new hires that had been shown to be a stumbling block in fulfilling even the numbers that were authorized was the start-up money for areas where the start-up money was usually high. We were told that there was a formula. That formula meant that the department had to come up with money to be able to match that money with other money to be able to support new faculty. That formula meant that the poor departments that need the faculty the most cannot hire the people they want, the qualified people that they need, while the rich departments get whoever they want. This defeated the purpose of the philosophy of the 250 Plan in supporting the whole campus where the new faculty were needed.

Senator Page asked if there was any real business that we could get done while we were here. For example, were motions in order?

Presiding Officer Wilson answered that a motion would be in order if there were a quorum. A quorum for a general meeting for items on the agenda was a majority of those present. A quorum for new items, for example, a new motion that was not contained on the agenda, and there were no motion items contained on the agenda, was the majority of the membership, which they had calculated to be one-half of the faculty, 475 people. He would not allow any motions because there was not technically a quorum.

Senator Page asked if Presiding Officer Wilson was suggesting that the agenda was established by half of the faculty?

Presiding Officer Wilson answered that no, he was establishing that the General Faculty Meeting was called for pursuant to the Constitution, 10% of the general faculty. The agenda was worked out along with the union and the Rules Committee and it basically was in accordance with what the MSP wanted to do, which was to have a general meeting on these issues.

Senator Page stated that he was not trying to be obstructionist. He was very concerned about the fact that he was told that we were coming here for a discussion. We had already, among the faculty, discussed these things. It was not interesting to hear what other faculty still had to say in addition to what we had already discussed. The definition of a discussion was with who they were talking to who had the power to change the situation, and he came here thinking that what had been set up was a discussion. He was expecting it to be a dialogue, and that was not what he was perceiving. He was perceiving a one-way kind of litany of faculty members who are frustrated as he was without getting any feedback at all from the administration and, personally, he found that insulting. So, that was the reason why he was asking if there was no legal way whatsoever for us to pass a motion, because perhaps we could change the agenda and say "okay, well, since it was not going to be a discussion, then they should move as a general assembly that they wanted the 250 Plan implemented immediately."

Chancellor John V. Lombardi stated that it was generally his position to try to hear people before he responded, and so he had come to this meeting because the meeting was called for the faculty to express a variety of opinions, ideas, sentiments, and perceptions about what has come to be known as the 250 Plan. He had now heard what everybody who wanted to speak had said, so he tried to respond in some way that may or may not be helpful to this conversation. The first thing to say was that

the 250 Plan was a document that described exactly what it was that the University set out to try to accomplish. It was very important that when we had conversations about projects, activities, promises, and goals, we made reference to the text because it was the text that defined what it was that we were trying to accomplish, both in terms of hiring of faculty, why we needed to hire the faculty, what the purpose of hiring those faculty was, and what was required to effectively hire those faculty. The essence of the 250 Plan was very simple, although very difficult to achieve: in order to be competitive as a national research university, we had to have something on the order of 1100-1200 faculty members at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. This was the result of an analysis of what goes on out there in the world and what is required to have critical mass to be competitive. Having recognized this requirement, we then had to say, "where is it that we are going to find the revenue to hire those faculty?" So we invented the 250 Plan, with the support of the faculty in various departments and programs, the appropriate committees of the Faculty Senate, and we invented the 250 Plan to articulate clearly what it was that was required if this University wanted to be a major, national research player, and to sustain a reputation that had been built over many generations of outstanding work. In that 250 Plan, at the very beginning, it had been absolutely and fundamentally clear that we could not hire faculty unless we had the full package to support them. That includes the space, the library, the technology, and all of the pieces that are required to sustain the faculty. It was not enough to simply generate people and hope that God would take care of the rest, because those who have lived here much longer than him have learned that God did not take care of the rest. God did not rebuild the buildings, God did not provide capital funds, and that God did not even barely support what we had. So, consequently, we wrote up an elaborate 250 Plan to make clear to our legislative friends and neighbors that, if they wanted the University to fulfill the mission they had assigned, they had to do all the parts. They could not get away with simply doing some of the parts. They could not say, "you're a big success, because we took away \$40 million and you raised the price to students and filled in that gap. Congratulations." When we looked at what happened to student fees, we saw the replacement funds for the lost state revenue that you all experienced, those of you who lived through those years. So consequently, we went to the legislature and we said, "if you want this place to be first-rate, you have to not only support the incremental cost that is associated with inflation and all the other things that drive up the cost of higher education at a rate faster than a regular price increase, but, in addition, you have to give us extra money to sustain this 250 Plan so that we can build extra faculty on top of what we now have, and, in addition, you have to fund the capital renewal that is essential for this institution." That was what the 250 Plan text said. That was what we told every legislator we talked with throughout the course of the last two years. That was when everybody nodded and said they understood, but that was not what they funded. Senator Rosenberg told us at his meeting that he was terribly disappointed to find that the legislature did not invest in the 250 Plan. Instead, we simply have a reasonable increment associated with the inflationary costs of running this place. We nonetheless wanted to demonstrate to the legislature that we believed that faculty were the highest priority for this institution, along with the supporting structures that make faculty possible. So, in the first cycle of the budget, we said, "okay, you don't get it, that this place is crumbling around us and we need capital support. We will demonstrate, with all of the money we get, we will put it all into the 250 Plan." And so we did; we rolled that out with all the support of the 250 Task Force and all these task forces, and we authorized all the hires, some of which were still pending, but all of which continued to be authorized. The second year, we went and we said, "look, we did what we said. Where's your part? Where's your investment in the capital? Where is the ability to fix these buildings and these spaces and all the stuff that we need in order to support the faculty?" They said, "that's somebody else's problem," and they went and gave the University another general increment, which we respect and we love and we were glad to have, but it was not extra for the 250 Plan. It was not designated for the 250 Plan. It was nothing special relative to any other campus in the state university system. There was not a single nickel extra that came to UMass Amherst to support the 250 Plan out of the state budget. We got exactly the same distribution we always get. We got the same amount as Boston relative to their scale. There was no difference in the money that we got. Nonetheless, the administration went ahead and said, "well, even if we are not going to fund the things we need to do, we will still try to make progress on the 250 Plan." Enough progress? No, of course not. Was it enough money to support the kind of faculty additions this place needed? Of course not. Did it allow us to deal with all the issues that people have raised here? Of course not. But was it something? Yes, it was something. Now, people were mad because we had taken money out to spend on critical maintenance to the campus. Well, he was with them. He would prefer to hire people and then retire. This was the way to get ahead. If we looked at the history of this campus, this was the plan. Hire people and leave, and, therefore, the buildings, which took forever to build and the renovations to be done and the investment that we needed to happen did not happen, because everybody said it would not break on their watch. It would break on the next person's watch, and so they did not have to worry about that. Well, he had news for people: stuff was breaking, we had a list of critical maintenance that was going to be on the order of \$77 million and we did not have \$77 million for critical maintenance. So we took \$4 million plus out of the allocation given this year, and we said, "if the legislature will not fund capital, if the Governor will not release the bond issue that is sitting up there and the money that is available, if nobody will appropriate money for this place, then we will have to do something to keep it functioning." So we took out \$4 million plus which we would use to borrow about \$50 million that we could spend on the \$77 million or more of critical maintenance over the next two to three years. That left only enough money to do about 23 additional positions in order to support the 250 Plan. Now, what did this say? This said very clearly to the legislature, "if you do not fund us the way we said you had to fund us extra to do the 250 Plan, we cannot do the 250 Plan. We cannot do it with the money you have given us. It is not fair." So that was what we said to the legislature. That was what the legislative delegation understood; everybody was on the same page on this. So where were we today on the 250 Plan? We were 73 positions ahead, over the steady state, replacing all the positions of people who had retired or left and, in addition, an additional 73 positions authorized. Was that 250? No, it was not. Was it enough to get it done in five years? It certainly was not because we had not been appropriated enough money to get it done in five years. Unless the

legislature found a way to appropriate money, not only will we not get the 250 Plan done, but the price to students would continue to rise, because it was the legislative support that discounted the cost of higher education so that students could find it more affordable. That was the story, that was where we were. Was he happy with it? No. Were we doing the right thing? Yeah, he thought so. Were people not going to be happy about it? Possibly, but that is the way life is.

Professor Dan Clawson stated that the Chancellor said that the policy of his predecessors has been to hire people then leave, but the faculty was down 250 since 1990. They had not exactly gone out of their way to hire people. Every part of the campus had not gotten the funding that it needed, and there had been a reduction in the faculty at least as serious as the reduction in buildings. Yes, they needed new buildings, and yes, they needed repairs, but in making choices, they could go through the specific choice which was probably not the most helpful thing, but there was always a question in a budget of this size: what were the priorities? To fully fund the 250 Plan in terms of the faculty salaries and the basic support that was needed for it was about 1.25% of the University's overall budget. That was something that was attainable, it was something that we would like to see, and we wanted to see it as a priority. At the same time that, to the extent possible, we also wanted the buildings done. As far as getting more money from the legislature, the Chancellor knew that we were always there to work on it, we were always there to work with students on it. There was a lot more capacity to mobilize the political force of this campus, employees, students, alumni, and parents, to achieve goals that people believe in.

Professor Stephanie Luce stated that she just wanted to add to that, because she thought that it was still confusing to them. How could it be that, over the past two years, the net increase in the number of administrators on this campus was almost the same as the net increase in the number of faculty? So, it seemed as if the Chancellor was right, money was tight, but decisions were being made that did not seem to prioritize time in the classroom and time with students. If the administration was growing faster as a percentage than the number of faculty, then that seemed to be about where they put the money that they did have. Second of all, what he seemed to be saying was, unfortunately, he failed miserably in his job at getting enough money from the legislature to do what they needed to do. We failed, too, as the faculty; we needed to do more to get that money. She was curious, though, how he might justify the increase in his salary of \$100,000 dollars given the failure to get the money that they needed to run this University from the legislature.

Professor Millicent Thayer asked about other priorities and things they seemed to be spending money on, such as the new dorms and the recreation center, which were big capital projects. She was wondering, should those really be the priority, and did that not already start to change the character of our institution? Was there somewhere else, such as faculty, into which they should be putting their limited resources?

The General Faculty Meeting stood adjourned at 4:15 p.m. on October 26, 2006.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Ernest D. May  
Secretary of the Faculty Senate