"Reclaiming and Maintaining Excellence in a Changing World: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Amherst"

MODERATOR:
AMILCAR SHABAZZ, PROFESSOR OF AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES

PANELISTS:
NILANJANA DASGUPTA, PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY (4 Min.)
DÉBORA FERREIRA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY OFFICE (4 Min.)
MZAMO MANGALISO, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF MANAGEMENT (4 Min.)
JOEL MARTIN, VICE PROVOST FOR ACADEMIC PERSONNEL AND DEAN OF THE FACULTY (4 Min.)
XIMENA ZÚÑIGA, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION (4 Min.)

Senator Amilcar Shabazz noted that today’s panel discussion emerges in the context of the recent arrival of our new Chancellor and our preparing to celebrate the University’s 150th anniversary next year. Chancellor Subbaswamy has observed, "While much has changed over 150 years, perhaps more remains the same. We are still defined by our original core principles of teaching, research and engagement. And we remain strongly committed to that once radical vision that every deserving citizen should have the opportunity to attend college." Our effort here is an expression of the strong commitment of which he speaks.

The University faculty members and administrators participating in this forum will outline key ideas about the work to recruit and retain a gender-balanced and diverse faculty at UMass Amherst as a key part of developing sustainable inclusive excellence at the University. This is but a part of a larger, ongoing mission to reclaim and to permaculture, if you will, a reality of inclusive excellence at UMass Amherst. The larger project is a major cross-cutting element in the strategic planning process that is getting underway. As Co-Chair of the Joint Task Force on Strategic Oversight, Senator Shabazz invited the Senate to help inform and infuse the work of the four committees that are setting out a process to look at where we are as an institution of higher learning, our strengths and our weaknesses, the opportunities before us as well as the threats of fiscal cliffs and other factors that challenge the realization of our "radical vision" as never before in our history.

The order of the panelists follows:

Joel W. Martin is Vice Provost for Academic Personnel and Dean of the Faculty. At UMass's annual academic leadership retreat at the beginning of the year he presented an overview of some gender and diversity trends and challenges in the UMass faculty. He will share a part of that presentation with us today. A Distinguished Professor of History at UMASS, Joel has written books and received major grants to direct research and educational projects on Native America, held the Costa Endowed Chair in American Indian Affairs at the University of California Riverside, served as Dean of UCR's largest college, and as Dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts at UMass.

Débora D. Ferreira was born in Cape Verde Islands, West Africa and raised in New Bedford, MA. She graduated from UMass Amherst with a double major in Legal Studies and African-American Studies. She then graduated from Boston College Law School in 1996 with a Juris Doctorate. From 1996 to 2002, she continued working in the civil rights arena including working with the Attorney General’s Office for the State of Maine directing their school’s civil rights program and she also had her own diversity consulting firm called The Harriet Project. Then in 2002, she began working at UMass Amherst as the Associate Director for the Office of Equal Opportunity and
Diversity (EO&D). Since 2006, she has been the Executive Director for EO&D that includes Disability Services and then, in 2009, became the Chief Diversity Officer for UMass Amherst. She is also the Title IX and ADA Coordinator for the University.

Mzamo Mangaliso is the co-chair of the Faculty Senate's Status of Diversity Council. He is a former Director of MBA Programs at the Isenberg School of Management where he teaches courses in business strategy, international leadership and management, and corporate social responsibility. He is the winner of several teaching awards, including the 1999 University-wide Distinguished Teaching Award. His research outputs include two books and several scholarly articles one of which won the 2010 CEBC Halloran Prize in the History of Corporate Responsibility from the Academy of Management. In 2006-2008, he served as President and CEO of the National Research Foundation in South Africa. The NRF is an organization that provides major funding for all the research conducted at the country’s institutions of higher education and also manages the country’s large-scale research facilities in Astronomy, Particle Acceleration, Geosciences, and Earth Observation.

Ximena Zúñiga, Associate Professor in the Department of Student Development in our School of Education, teaches and writes about social justice education theories, research, and practices, and is a national leader of diversity education and intergroup dialogue in higher education. Her current research activities include assessing the impact of an intergroup dialogue initiative in the Five Colleges involving faculty and staff in Western MA., and the impact of undergraduate intergroup dialogues on college students in nine institutions for which she served as a Co-PI. She has served as faculty associate of the Center for Teaching and is currently affiliated with our Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies and the Women Gender Sexuality Studies Department.

Psychology professor (Nilanjana) Buju Dasgupta focuses on prejudice, stereotyping, and the self-concept, with special emphasis on the ways in which societal expectations unconsciously or implicitly influence people's attitudes and behavior toward others and, in the case of disadvantaged groups, influence their self-concept and life decisions. She has examined these issues in relation to race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and nationality. She is particularly interested in identifying how changing the structure of local environments might reduce implicit bias. She recently gave a research talk at the White House as part of a mini-conference on finding effective ways to increase the participation of underrepresented youth and the overall numbers of technology innovators & entrepreneurs in the U.S.

Amilcar Shabazz has been at UMass since 1997, entering as Chair of the W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies. That department has been at the leading edge of diversity work at this campus since its founding in 1970, and even in its pre-department experiences in the 1960s.

This presentation includes “reclaiming” and “maintaining” in its title because UMass has been a real leader in terms of diversity, inclusion, access, and equity. The University may have strayed from that mission at certain times, and there have been problems along the way, but since the very first African-American that we know of graduated from UMass in 1901—when many institutions wouldn’t let African Americans on campus except to serve as janitors—UMass has been an advocate for diversity. UMass was out there in the early 1970s, when Chancellor Randolf Bromery, an African-American, headed the University. UMass was out there in the founding of the Du Bois Department. There is much for the University to look at in its experience and in the work it has done. But to really permaculture this work, it must be analyzed strategically to make sure that it informs and infuses the work that is to be done over the next few months in the realm of strategic planning.

Joel W. Martin, Vice Provost for Academic Personnel and Dean of the Faculty, thanked the Senate, Senator Shabazz, and Marilyn Blaustein, who helped Dean Martin prepare the charts that present an overview of where the University stands collectively in terms of faculty diversity. Dean Martin likes Senator Shabazz’s metaphor of permaculture. Permaculture cannot succeed without good soil, good conditions, good grassroots. It is essential that the University focus on its roots: the faculty that make decisions about how the University works. It is important that the University be invested in this project together, doing everything it can to make the most sustainable commitment and achieve the best outcomes in terms of diversity and inclusion.

The first set of charts shows a distribution of faculty by rank. This includes lecturers, who are 17% of faculty. The University is very committed to its tenure stream faculty. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has a lecturer rate of 25%. UConn has 22%. UMass has a large number of full professors. Seventy five percent of those
full professors are male. This is not an anomalous figure, as it reflects the academy over the last few generations. If you look at where UMass is hiring in terms of assistant professor faculty, it is equally divided by gender. Many narratives could be constructed by comparing these charts. It shows the epic shift that is occurring in the academy towards gender equality—a shift the entire University is participating in and a shift the entire University has a role in helping to facilitate. Last year, UMass actually hired significantly more new assistant professor female faculty than male faculty. This reflects the trend of the University becoming an institution with a gender-balanced faculty. In the assistant rank, the University has achieved gender parity; it is moving toward parity in the associate rank; but it is not leveling out as quickly at the full professor rank. Débora D. Ferreira in OEO has prepared a chart addressing the STEM disciplines. It compares the number of earned doctorates and utilization availability by gender. Many departments are under-utilized in terms of gender equity and availability. The chart is discipline specific, based on the number of candidates that have earned doctorates and are on the job market. It does not conform to some cookie cutter rule across departments; the goals are based entirely on the available candidate pool. There is a lot of work to be done here. There is also much good work being done. Some departments are doing exceptional jobs in hiring and mentoring female faculty.

Shifting to race and ethnicity, there has been incremental progress, from 7% underrepresented minority faculty to 10% recently. There is much work that needs to be done, many issues to be discussed, and many innovations that different deans and departments have tried. Dean Martin always singles out Psychology for the great way that department has built a pipeline for hiring minority faculty. That department does an excellent job in its searches—so much so that the University made that process a model that it shares with every department that is active in a faculty search. It is now part of the University’s search process to ask departments to show how they are building the pipeline to bring in the most diverse, gender-balanced pool possible. There are many best practices on this campus to help build the permaculture Senator Shabazz mentioned. Overall in terms of diversity, UMass has 32% Asian and underrepresented minority in the most recent hiring cycle. That is good, but the number of underrepresented minority is only 8%. It is important to increase that figure for UMass to build the most diverse, best faculty possible.

The University saw a drop in hiring during the global economic meltdown that also affected diversity. Hiring will hopefully increase this year, and with it, the diversity of the University.

Débora D. Ferreira, Executive Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, noted her honor for being part of such a distinguished panel. As Dean Martin noted, UMass is incrementally and slowly progressing in terms of diversity. We can still do more and we can still do better. Director Ferreira’s office is focused on using search committees and search charges to increase diversity. The office wants to make sure that search committees understand their roles. They are the ones on the ground, day in and day out, figuring out how to oversee the search processes and making sure that the University’s recruitment search is flawless. OEO lets search committees know about the laws relating to their searches, and lets them know that what they are doing is an integral part of the University’s function. It is not taking them away from their research; it is not taking them away from their teaching; it is part of their duties and responsibilities to the campus. OEO has doubled the amount of search charges that they have been working on over the years. For the past three years, OEO was involved in 50% of search charges, now it is at 80%. These charges make sure that search committees understand that it is very important for them to focus on their work. OEO sends a message to search committees telling them that their role is extremely important for the University to increase diversity. The goal is to hire qualified, experienced faculty who can also be from underrepresented groups. When OEO meets with search committees, it reviews the entire search process, making sure that they understand affirmative action and equal opportunity as well as search procedures in place. The Office reviews the advertising plan, making sure the search committees understand that outreach is key to having a robust, healthy, diverse pool. For the University to augment diversity, it must do outreach. UMass has to go out to colleges and universities where underrepresented groups are at. It has to go to the pipeline programs. If qualified, diverse candidates don’t know about the positions at UMass, how are they going to apply for them? We want a qualified, experienced faculty, but, if possible, we also want a faculty that can be from underrepresented groups. That is what OEO is really trying to explain to search committees. When OEO reviews the recruitment process, it wants to make sure that the committees understand that goal and can work towards it fully. As Dean Martin stated, working with the Provost’s Office, OEO focuses the committees on evaluations. When OEO works with the Provost’s Office, reviewing candidates, it is working at both the interview stage and the office stage. At each point, OEO makes sure that the search committee has evaluated each candidate fairly and given each candidate due consideration. If that has not happened, and there is no diversity at each point, OEO will go back to
the search committees to have them review their selections again. Searches can be delayed or failed if they do not comply with OEOD’s search procedures in terms of a fair process. This process goes right along with the University message of having a diversity plan, diversity website, diversity committee, and diversity mission statement. UMass is sending the message that diversity, equity, and inclusion are parts of excellence. It is not separate; it is integral to the University. For an institution to be excellent, it must be diverse, it must be inclusive, and it must be equitable. It is important that the faculty connect to that message. It impacts every population at the University. Looking at the student population, the faculty is out there in front of the classrooms preparing students for a future that is going to be more and more diverse. Global mentalities will be essential for the generation now at our University, as will cultural competencies, as future workers engage with an international workforce. The faculty are the ones connecting with the students, making sure they understand that. OEOD hopes that the faculty is sharing with the students ways to be allies, ways to intervene, how to report situations around such incidences as sexual harassment and sexual assault. Students need to know the resources. OEOD wants faculty to help students broaden their horizons. Many students come to the University after having experienced a narrow worldview for 18 years. The faculty need to make sure that they understand issues like bias and targeting based on race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, or any other civil rights status. OEOD is also relying on faculty in terms of accommodating students with disabilities. We need technology to be accessible. We need to implement universal design for all students. Faculty are needed to help reintegrate veterans of military campaigns back into the academy seamlessly. Many of these veterans are maimed, seriously injured or disabled, and the faculty need to have an inclusive mentality in order to integrate these veterans. Regarding the faculty itself, retention is essential. Faculty come to OEOD confidentially in order to address the fact that they feel they are being discriminated against, because of their gender—more specifically because they are women—or because of their race/ethnicity, most often African Americans and Latinos. These faculty members come to the OEOD aggrieved, at their wit’s end, saying that they are miserable because when they put forth their cases for promotion or for tenure, they are not taken seriously, because obstacles and undue challenges are put in front of them, because they are not able to be judged based on their teaching, research, and scholarship. They are being judged on their gender or race/ethnicity. It is heartbreaking. When they are at the point that OEOD can no longer help, those faculty members are leaving. These are some reasons why we want to increase faculty diversity and gender equity and have an inclusive model. UMass wants to recruit to make sure the faculty is robust in order to deal with some issues among the student population, and it also wants to retain diverse faculty. The University cannot retain a diverse faculty if some of the University’s employees are going to OEOD saying that they are miserable and will be leaving. OEOD wants to affirm that the University is an equal playing field. The University needs to do better and it needs to do more, and it has to be done together. This goal must be a real priority and commitment. OEOD often hears faculty members ask why they are serving on search committees. It’s because that is an important task and the University must work together in order to become more diverse.

Mzamo Mangaliso, Professor of Management and Co-Chair of the Status of Diversity Council, stated he is happy and proud to be part of a University that celebrates diversity the way that UMass does. UMass has taken diversity as a central principle of its operation. He is very glad that the Faculty Senate set aside time to have a conversation on diversity. He is also aware, as many are, that diversity has taken many setbacks and challenges over time. The most recent of these setbacks is the Supreme Court case Fisher v. University of Texas. As they always say, the struggle continues. Many people have asked how Professor Mangaliso became involved in the School of Management. He was in charge of the South African National Research Foundation, the South African equivalent of the NSF, overseeing many large-scale laboratories. His background is in physics and he is not particularly comfortable talking about social issues, but, as he was thrust into the co-chairmanship of the SODC, he is forced to address it. The charge of the Status of Diversity Council is “to make recommendations on matters affecting the status of diverse and underrepresented communities on campus, including such matters as the recruitment, retention, promotion and salaries of faculty, librarians and staff; the recruitment, admission and retention of undergraduate and graduate minority students; granting of financial aid; and the development of programs to reflect the needs of our diverse community.” This is a broad mandate that the Council is trying to stick to. At the end of the year, the Council will present a report. This whole conversation begins by restating the conviction about the centrality of diversity as a key ingredient at the institution. Students will benefit immensely from an education that takes place in diverse settings. Diversity should be one of the factors taken into consideration among the various factors used in the University’s various policy decisions across the campus.
There are three arguments for diversity. The first is the correctional argument, noting the fact that there has been historical discrimination. Diversity refers to the various ways we are and speak and look, et cetera, but because of historical discrimination, some groups have been on the receiving end of the stick of discrimination, of being excluded, of being treated unequally. Diversity really focuses attention on addressing issues that relate to those individuals and those groups. The most prominent of these issues concern gender and race/ethnicity. Status issues are also there. Among other issues are sexual orientation, religion, and other things. The second argument for diversity is competitive advantage. It has been proven through studies that groups that are diverse actually outperform groups that are not diverse, everything else being equal. In some cases, less capable groups that are diverse tend to outperform high-powered groups that are not diverse. Diversity trumps homogeneity. On a related note, diversity fuels innovation. Chancellor Subbaswamy was in a forum called “Immigration Nation.” A speaker at that forum discussed how diversity adds to innovation. Innovation is very important. Diversity accelerates our ability to think outside the box. The final argument relates to Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream. At the height of their power, they popularized a program called the One Percent for Peace Plan, in which every corporation was invited to take one percent of their profits and donate it to a fund that would allow people to spend a year or so in another country. The idea was that by getting to know people in other countries, individuals would be much more reluctant to send bombs into those countries.

As Professor Shabazz has mentioned, UMass has been at the forefront of diversity over the years. William Bromery was the first black chancellor of a major university in this country. The Afro-American Studies Department here at UMass started a wave of similar programs opening up around the country. The associated Ph.D. program allowed UMass to graduate doctoral candidates in that field long before other universities. There have been giants in the performing arts from diverse backgrounds at UMass—people like Archie Shepp, Billy Taylor, Max Roach, Yusef Lateef, and others. Chinua Achebe has been a visitor at the University, and other highly prominent individuals have come to UMass to talk, such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who came in 1992, and Nadine Gardimer—both Nobel Laureates. Recently, Eddie Daniels came to the University. Mr. Daniels spent time on Robben Island with Nelson Mandela and was hosted at UMass by Provost Staros. Also recently, Fatima Shama was invited by a group consisting of Jewish student leaders and Muslim student leaders. She works for Mayor Bloomberg in New York City, and spoke of how diversity is the way of the future. The Chancellor was present at this forum and indicated the importance of diversity in innovation.

The Status of Diversity Council is asking how the University, as a system, can function with diversity as its central point. Diversity is a driving force of the University—it’s in the University’s DNA. Diversity has a moral virtue that drives decision making and becomes a foundation of that decision making. Diversity could be called the University’s sumnum bonum—the highest value it has. Diversity drives strategies and missions. A vision driven by diversity is more likely to be embraced by people than one that is not. The importance of diversity must be articulated by the highest offices at the University. Diversity has to be integrated in the processes, such as selection, recruitment, et cetera. It must be in the protocols. The topic for today connects diversity and excellence. The strategic oversight group discusses the particular who’s and where’s regarding diversity. Diversity must be measurable and attainable. If we say that we want to have 50% representation by gender, we should go for it. The University needs to bring diverse students into classrooms. The Ph.D. Project, which promotes people of color coming to universities to pursue doctorates, has a motto that goes, “Diversity in the classroom begins with diversity in front of the classroom.” You can talk all you want about diversity, but if the professors are all, primarily, white males, you will be bashing your head on the rock for a long time. The SODC is sitting in the position of strategizing. The Council will take the lead from the Chancellor and Provost moving forward, and will work with the Joint Task Force on Strategic Oversight, the Chancellor’s Advisory Committee, OEOD, and other stakeholders. The SODC hopes to collect information on best practices at UMass. There is much good work being done across campus, but much of it is being kept within departments, away from the campus at large. The SODC also wants to study the leading institutions on diversity, such as the Universities of California, Texas and Michigan. Finally, the SODC will look at UMass’ peer institutions before making recommendations to the Faculty Senate.

It is necessary to acknowledge where you have done well, but there is a fundamental notion in high-performance systems that says they are self-critical. They do less patting on the back when they talk to one another. Professor Mangaliso asked the University to raise the bar for itself and not pat itself on the back yet. Vigilance is needed on diversity in the recruitment and retention of faculty of color; in the applications and admissions of minority students. Maintaining a welcoming campus community is very important. Finally, the University must reinforce the rights of each of its members so they feel like they belong on campus.
For the last four years, Professor Zúñiga has been involved with helping the Five Colleges develop a program for faculty and staff using a process that has been used with students for 20 years called Intergroup Dialogue. This technology helps support difficult conversations in a facilitated environment. In the Five Colleges, days of dialogue and sustained efforts of dialogue have been put in place to invite faculty and staff about class and rank, race, and gender. Most faculty and staff are more interested in talking about class and rank than race or gender. These efforts have brought people together in groups that meet for six weeks. These groups attempt to help people connect to the issues. They attempt to affirm to faculty and staff that these issues are worth investing in on campus. They attempt to show why and how these issues matter. The data suggests that the power of conversation across differences—especially sustained conversation—across race, class and gender, really has an impact. Sixty people were surveyed; 27% were men, 53% were white, and more staff than faculty participated in the experience and responded to the survey. Participants were asked about activities in the workplace following their diversity experience. All respondents took some step related to diversity. Ninety three percent had talked to co-workers about the topic of their dialogue (rank, class or gender). Many joined a committee at work related to the topic. This is important, as many faculty joined search committees in part because of stories they heard in the dialogue. Sixty one percent spoke against injustice at work. Many continued to read about the topic discussed. Sixty seven percent participated in a social event with people that were a part of their dialogue group. Some of these groups continued to connect for at least a year. The power of conversation is that people connect, engage and develop networks. The next data set shows that 38% of people networked with people across the five campuses. It was very important for faculty of color to meet other faculty of color from other campuses. Sometimes it is safer to talk to someone from a different campus than your own, especially at small colleges. Sixty one percent networked on their own campuses. Fifty four percent initiated a conversation with a co-worker regarding the issues discussed in the dialogues. Many agreed to facilitate dialogues with their peers. These experiences are demanding. It requires time and energy to coach and train the faculty leaders across the campuses. But the impact these dialogues have had across the campuses is astounding. About 25 people who participated were interviewed, and it is clear that these processes break isolation and help people develop a capacity to engage in difficult conversations. Compared with a one-day dialogue, the perception of a sustained dialogue is much higher, partly because participants are able to develop more skills, more confidence, and the capacity to support and create a safer work environment.

So what are the implications? This process increases participants’ ability to become engaged in diversity issues. It also has an impact on the campus culture, as it creates a positive environment for minority groups. It also supports faculty and Student Affairs personnel to work with these issues in classrooms and residence halls. For many, it became a professional development experience. Finally, faculty reported feeling more empowered. This was especially true for faculty of color. Professor Zúñiga spoke to many faculty members from all the campuses, some of whom said that, without these empowering experiences, they would have left the valley. These experiences helped them learn how to navigate the institutions. They felt validated and recognized, they developed relationships with people that struggle with similar questions, and formed friendships. It is not easy to survive and navigate these issues, and friendships and relationships make a difference. We have to develop connections to change the systems that marginalize individuals. It is about hard understanding and skills. A certain faculty member that participated at a small college was elected to run that college’s Faculty Senate. She spoke highly about how the experience really changed how she approached her colleagues. For two years, she couldn’t speak with her colleagues. This process helped her navigate faculty and department meetings and ask for the things that she needed.
Buju Dasgupta, Professor of Psychology, discussed the ways that faculty make decisions and judgments about hiring, promotion, and related topics. We often assume that decisions like these are conscious, deliberate and well thought-out, but there is much data in the mind sciences that reveals that much human judgment and decision making is quick, automatic and happening without awareness. Professor Dasgupta calls these processes mind bugs. A large portion of human thinking and decision making happens unconsciously and automatically, much like a computer’s operating system running silently in the background of our mind while our conscious thoughts are similar to applications running in the foreground. Mental processes like memory, perception and learned associations comprise this unconscious system, and this system guides our judgments and decisions, often without our awareness. Typically, this unconscious system is very adaptive and efficient. It allows us to process huge amounts of information in very little time. But sometimes, there are glitches in the system. Sometimes, this automatic system leads to errors in perception, mind bugs. A few images can reveal the power of mind bugs. Professor Dasgupta showed two images of the Mona Lisa, one of which was grossly distorted, but which, when turned upside down, appears to be the correct image, because our visual system registers the image it was expecting to see. Humans are expert face processors. We have pre-conceived expectations of what we should be seeing, and this expectation guides our perception of reality. Similarly, Professor Dasgupta showed an image where parallel lines look crooked because of the way the light contrasts and the way the black tiles are arranged. Even though it can be proven that the lines are parallel, subjective experience still holds that the lines are crooked. This illustrates another important quality of mind bugs: that some errors of perception are difficult to control simply by telling yourself not to do something. The way we process things in the social world is often full of errors. We may feel confident about what we see, but confidence doesn’t correlate very well with accuracy. There is a lot of research in social psychology and cognitive science that proves this. Mind bugs also illustrate that what we already know affects what we see. Perception and preconceived expectations affect our current judgments. These errors in perceptions, or mind bugs, are ordinary, or normal. They are ordinary in three senses of the word. They are ordinary because they are by-products of normal mental processes that we need. They are ordinary because they are not intentional; they happen without awareness. So what does this have to do with diversity and inclusion? There is another kind of mind bug that gets at these concepts very closely. Briefly, the idea is that some concepts automatically go together in our mind because we have learned that association by being absorbed in a larger society, and simply by observation. If you were asked to think of a scientist or engineer, who comes to mind? Probably, someone who is male, mostly white, sometimes Asian, “brainy,” “nerdy,” “geeky,” et cetera. Now think of the quintessential successful person in humanities and arts. A very different demographic of people come to mind here. Here, our learned association is that the ideal, quintessential humanist or artist is someone who is often female, white, sometimes black or Latina, artistic, creative and intuitive. These learned associations of what is representative or prototypical of our disciplines or any one of our departments is what can be called an error in perception. The reason it is an error is because it goes beyond the one most important quality that matters, talent. It makes a big overgeneralization about the specific narrow demographic or narrow personality type someone has to be in order to be the most likely best. These learned associations, these automatic associations that come to mind, are known as implicit bias or implicit stereotype. These implicit stereotypes are not just random initial thoughts that pop into mind. There is a huge amount of data from the last 15 years showing the real world effects of implicit stereotypes on three things Professor Dasgupta briefly mentioned: hiring, promotion, and recommendation letters. It turns out that in hiring decisions, there is often a quintessential idea of who the hiring committee is looking for. This perception, this prototype, guides who is projected to be successful and who the committee will therefore take a chance on. There are many studies citing this. In one, a pair of economists sent out résumés to a huge number of real jobs in two major cities, Chicago and Boston. Each résumé had a large amount of the regular information: education, work experience, et cetera. The only thing that varied in each pair of résumés was the name of the candidate. The name was either someone who sounded African-American, for instance, LaKeesha Washington or Jamaal Jones, or someone who sounded white, such as Emily Baker or Greg Walsh. The economists were interested in who would get called back for an on-site job interview. They found a huge disparity in the call backs. Candidates who sounded white were 50% more likely to get called back for an on-site interview than candidates who sounded African-American. These were real jobs with real HR professionals and other individuals making the evaluations. Similar effects have been found for gender. Simply changing the name of the person on a CV affects who is seen as more competent and hirable, and whose research record is seen as superior. There was a great study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science a few months ago showing how faculty in STEM disciplines are particularly prone to this sort of implicit gender bias because there is a much stronger stereotype of who the ideal scientist is. Another interesting fact is that both male and female faculty fell prey to the same bias. Implicit bias is an equal opportunity virus that all are prone
to because we have all seen the same successful exemplar. Implicit stereotypes likewise affect promotion decisions, and the best evidence for this comes in terms of gender. The idea is that there is a strong but unspoken expectation for women to be interpersonally warm and likeable. That expectation is not there for men. There are many studies both in lab and in the field that show when it comes to likeability, women who are more aloof and less warm are less likely to be promoted or less likely to get professional rewards, even once they are in the job. Identically performing male colleagues may not be evaluated in the same way. For women to be successful, they must be equal in terms of confidence and superior in terms of warmth and likeability. Finally, concerning recommendation letters, there has been much research, typically at medical schools, looking at faculty hiring and the types of recommendations written for faculty applying to be research faculty. The data consistently shows that letter writers emphasize research more in writing letters for male applicants, and emphasize teaching more in writing recommendations for female applicants, holding constant the candidates objective qualifications. In these situations, you have candidates who look very different because their letters sound very different, even though by objective standards they might be quite similar.

On a more positive note, there are four known ways to reduce implicit bias. All of these are data driven. First, whenever possible, evaluate job applications after masking the candidate’s race or gender. Knowing that information introduces—completely unintentionally—assumptions about the candidate’s future trajectory that wouldn’t be triggered without that information. Second, implicit bias is erased if evaluators, before they review applications, create a list of the top merit criteria they are looking for. Importantly, those merit criteria should be ranked in order of importance. This simple intervention, identifying the criteria being looked for and ranking it, wipes out bias. What often happens in searches, implicit bias influences which criterion is emphasized and which is deemphasized. There are real experiments showing this. Third, implicit bias is least likely when people are not in a rush and are not distracted. The more that time pressure is increased, the more people are distracted or multi-tasking, the more likely it is that these preconceived expectations fill in the gaps in our information processing system. Finally, structured interviews are more successful at minimizing implicit bias than free-flowing conversations are. When candidates have the same questions that they are responding to, the data show that there is less likely to be bias in the interview process.

Senator Richard Bogartz expressed his appreciation to all the presenters, and extended special thanks to Professor Dasgupta, who cast the light of science into the picture. Senator Bogartz stated that there is no doubt that ideation is occurring in people’s heads about race and bias. Some of it they are aware of and some of it they are not. Racism is a reality. The lack of diversity is a reality. But there is another reality for Senator Bogartz: the reality—that we’ve known about since at least the human genome project, and, actually, since it was mentioned by Immanual Kant—that race is not a reality. There is no biological evidence for race. That portion of the light of science should also be introduced into this. Best practices have a struggle with innovation and leadership. When you look at the best practices at other universities, there is no innovation or an attempt to originate something new. It might be new to try to introduce the fact that race is a fiction, and cast that into the leadership and excellence the University is trying to produce by dealing with this. In a certain sense, at the bottom of the problem that we are dealing with, is that race is a reality for the minds of some people. In many ways, an unfortunate state of affairs results from that mental reality.

Veronica Quiles, Undergraduate Student, noted that she is part of a student organization, Student Bridges, that works with underrepresented students. She recently spoke to Professor Shabazz about how faculty can work with students more regarding diversity, particularly in terms of admission. Diversity in faculty is very important to create an environment in which underrepresented students feel like they belong once they are in the classroom, but what support or what next steps could there be to get more underrepresented students into the University?

Michele Klingbeil, Professor of Microbiology, noted that she had had great discussions with Professor Dasgupta. Professor Klingbeil feels that her department is following the criteria laid out at the end of Professor Dasgupta’s presentation. However, it is nearly impossible to mask the candidate’s identity. This is because in the sciences, hiring committees look at where candidates did their studies. Committees comment on the candidates based on such criteria as whose laboratory they did their post-doctoral work in.

Professor Dasgupta noted that that criterion was the hardest to adhere to, but that the best data is also related to that criterion. She recently gave a long version of this talk at Michigan State, and the same issue came up. We often use CVs and personal statements that include initials instead of full names, which can mask gender and race.
Gender and race—especially gender—come through in letters of recommendation. If the name of the person is masked, even in the first half of the search, when you narrow the search down from the full applicant pool to a long short list. If that happens, what is being evaluated is the impact of publications, authorship, quality of work, vision, programming and such. When the short list is determined, then letters can be scrutinized and the identity of the candidate can be made apparent. If you could do it in the first cut, it is effective. The bias is often more apparent in the negative, when you deny rather than accept a candidate to remain in the hunt. It is interesting to do two initial cuts, one blind and the other not, to see if a different applicant pool is formed. Names of individuals are redacted routinely when candidates get letters back for tenure or promotion. The idea of masking names is something that is part of the academy’s process. It is just not in the general norms of evaluation for search committees.

Director Ferreira, added that, in OEOD, they notice that there are other ways than names that candidates’ identities can be determined. If time is taken off to raise children, if there are gaps in work that could relate to a disability, if a candidate attended an accessible college or university, then certain conceptions may be inferred and an unfair evaluation can occur. When OEOD does search charges, these complex issues are addressed. There are aspects other than a candidate’s name that committees must be mindful of.

Professor Dasgupta added that, whatever the search committees’ procedures are, if those procedures are discussed and the committee comes to a consensus concerning how important some of these issues are, that discussion makes explicit something that may otherwise not be acknowledge. This relates to the idea of identifying the qualifiers and disqualifiers and ranking them by importance. Procedure matters more than the demographics of the people serving on the committee. Many studies show that these biases occur regardless of who the candidate is or who is on the search committee.

Professor Zúñiga stated that the challenge is in being thoughtful and mindful. Individuals and committees alike often rush to conclusions. If they were mindful, these biases could be interrupted.

Director Ferreira stated that OEOD often gets complaints from departments and the Provost’s Office that they are taking too long in reviewing cases. OEOD takes its time to avoid these implicit biases. The Office looks at everything, double checks it, goes back to search committees and asks them thoughtful questions. Process and procedure are very important. A criticism of affirmative action is that qualified individuals are not being hired. That’s wrong: qualified candidates are being hired, but they may also be from underrepresented groups.

Professor Zúñiga thanked Ms. Quiles for inviting the faculty to join the admissions process. Faculty involvement in admissions is something that was discussed at the Chancellor’s meeting. It is something that UMass used to do, and something that could be done in the future. There have to be ways to support faculty as they attempt to bring minority students to UMass.

Director Ferreira added that increased diversity in faculty includes an increase in the size of the faculty in general so that they can be active in the classroom and in admissions, as well as serving as mentors and role models. It is all connected. As we increase the number of faculty, everyone will have a little more time to be involved in other campus issues.

Professor Zúñiga believes that CMASS needs to be better linked with admissions, as was done in the past. There are structural issues that need to be addressed.

Senator Ralph Whitehead asked about the charges OEOD presents to search committees. He wondered if there was anything that would prevent OEOD from presenting the suggestions offered by Professor Dasgupta at the end of her presentation in the content of search committee charges.

Director Ferreira stated that structured interviews in which the same questions are asked of all candidates are already part of OEOD’s charges to committees. She noted that all of the criteria could likely be included, possibly with some minor changes.

Professor Shabazz stated that there will be more to this University conversation on diversity. MSP President Spencer is looking to organize a more extensive diversity conversation with the Faculty Senate next year. Many initiatives are underway across the campus, among both faculty and students, as this is all about the students. This
campus has had a long history of diversity work. There was a great panel put on by students recently, titled "Mission Unaccomplished," including a four-to five-hour teach-in. The Chelsea Compact is simply not working, and there will be much more concerning how to move the University forward.