

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
AMHERST•BOSTON•DARTMOUTH•LOWELL•MEDICAL•LAW**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS**

Wednesday, November 20, 2024; 10:00 a.m.

Remote Meeting via Zoom

**Pursuant to the Governor's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the
Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30A, §20 dated March 12, 2020, and subsequently updated
and extended by the Governor and their staff**

Committee Members Present: Chair Paris Jeffries; Trustees Epstein, Haviari, Maguire Keches, Nicum, Osa-Agbontaen, Raymond and Scheibel; Mr. Moreau (representing Trustee Tutwiler)

Committee Members Absent: Vice Chair Ramos Gagliardi; Trustees Delgado, Lewis, Okwara and Tutwiler

University Administration: President Meehan; General Counsel Lowy; Senior Vice Presidents Calise and Subbaswamy; Deputy Vice President Walker; Chancellors Reyes, Suárez-Orozco, Fuller, Chen and Collins; Provosts Abd-El-Khalick, Berger, Balasubramanian, Hartman and Flotte

Faculty Representatives: Professors Hoagland, UMass Amherst; Marchand, UMass Lowell

Documents Used:

- Meeting Minutes: September 18, 2024 (Open & Executive Session)
- Appointments to Named Professorships and Endowed Chairs, UMass Amherst, Chan Medical School, Doc. T24-058
- Early College Across UMass: Expanding the Pathway to College through Innovation and Collaboration, Doc. T24-052
- Academic Quality Assessment and Development (AQAD), Doc. T24-053
- Periodic Multi-Year Review (PMYR), Doc. T24-054

Chair Paris Jeffries convened the meeting at 10:05 a.m. and welcomed everyone. He stated that any member of the public wishing to address the Committee regarding an agenda item or issue related to the agenda, or to make an audio or video recording of the open public session of the Committee meeting, was provided notice by the Secretary of the Board through a posting indicating that such written requests needed to be received no later than 24 hours prior to the Committee meeting. Under the law, the Chair has complete discretion in granting or denying the request to speak and may limit the duration that the public has to address the Committee.

He reminded the Committee members to unmute themselves and state their name when moving or seconding the action items.

Consideration of Minutes of the prior meeting of the Committee

Chair Paris Jeffries stated that the Committee was provided with the draft minutes of the September 18, 2024 meeting's Open and Executive Session and asked for any corrections. With no corrections, the minutes were approved.

Chair Paris Jeffries announced the meeting's agenda: one action item, one discussion item, two information items and three items for action in Executive Session.

President's Report

President Meehan reaffirmed the University's ongoing commitment to equity in higher education, emphasizing that UMass remains focused on advancing this critical area. He highlighted the University's recent achievement of enrolling its most diverse incoming class, with 50% of students identifying as people of color. This accomplishment positions UMass as a leader in diversity among Massachusetts institutions. He provided an update on the Advisory Council to Advance Representation in Education (ACARE), which was established following the Supreme Court's decision to ban race-conscious admissions. In mid-October, the Healey-Driscoll Administration released a report from ACARE, offering recommendations for advancing equity in public higher education. President Meehan was proud to note that many of these recommendations were informed by the equity policies UMass has been implementing for years. He recognized Deputy Vice President Nef Walker and Deputy General Counsel Denise Barton for their valuable contributions as members of this council.

In further efforts to address affordability and equity, President Meehan announced a new program across all UMass campuses that will fully cover tuition and fees for students from families with incomes of \$75,000 or less. This initiative is supported by UMass's record investment in financial aid, which has increased by 73% since the President took office, and by the state's MASSGrant Plus Expansion program. The President commended the Chancellors for their leadership in launching this program.

The President discussed the ongoing success of UMass's early college programs and the Community College Advantage Scholarship, both designed to expand access to higher education. He noted that the Community College Advantage Scholarship would be further promoted with a ready-made promotional kit to help attract eligible students. He will continue to provide updates on these important initiatives in future meetings.

Later today, the UMass Chan Medical School will celebrate the investiture of eight new endowed faculty chairs, made possible by a \$5M donation from UMass Memorial and a \$2.5M match from the UMass Foundation. This funding supports UMass Chan's continued rise as a leader in medical research and education. He also recognized Dr. Victor Ambros, a faculty member at UMass Chan, for being awarded the 2024 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his co-discovery of microRNA, marking the second Nobel Prize awarded to a UMass faculty member and reinforcing the University's standing in the global life sciences community.

The President announced the retirement of Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and UMass Amherst Chancellor Emeritus, Kumble Subbaswamy, who will retire at the end of the calendar

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year. The President praised Senior Vice President Subbaswamy's transformative leadership, particularly his efforts to elevate UMass Amherst's national profile, increase diversity, improve graduation rates, and expand research, and acknowledged his exemplary leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and expressed deep gratitude for his partnership. The President announced the appointment of Deputy Vice President Nef Walker as the new Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Equity. He highlighted her exceptional leadership and experience, noting her academic and administrative accomplishments, particularly her work in diversity, equity, and inclusion. He expressed confidence that Dr. Walker would continue to advance UMass's academic mission and further its commitment to equity and inclusion.

Chair Paris Jeffries congratulated President Meehan and Chancellor Collins for being recognized as the Boston Business Journal's 2024 Power 50. Trustee Epstein congratulated Chair Paris Jeffries for also being recognized this year, and recognized Vice President Subbaswamy on his retirement.

Trustee Epstein inquired about the projected cost of the tuition reduction, to which President Meehan responded that nearly 93% of students at UMass Lowell and 92% of students at UMass Amherst, in this income category, already received free tuition and fees. With the reduction, it is expected to increase need-based scholarships and demonstrate to the legislature that additional funds are being used effectively.

Senior Vice President's Report

Senior Vice President Subbaswamy thanked Chairman Karam and President Meehan and congratulated Dr. Victor Ambros of UMass Chan, who was recently awarded the 2024 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his co-discovery of microRNA, alongside Dr. Gary Ruvkun of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School.

There were two information items for the Committee. Academic Quality Assessment and Development (AQAD) and the Periodic Multi-year Review (PMYR). AQAD is a component of the University Performance Measurement System, and the primary purpose of this component is to assess and improve the core academic functions of teaching and learning, research activity, and public service and academic outreach through an ongoing system of quality control and program assessment at the department and program level. Each campus establishes, within guidelines established by the President's Office, procedures for implementing the Academic Quality Assessment and Development. Guidelines include specifying that the length of time between reviews may be no more than five to seven years, and a requirement that the review team include no fewer than two external reviewers from outside the campus. AQAD concludes with the Dean reviewing and commenting on the written reports with recommendations for improvement which is distributed to all Program faculty.

Another item in quality assurance pertains to faculty work. In addition to the severe competition for tenure-track positions which ensures that only the most accomplished candidates are hired, quality assurance comes through the stringent review for the award of tenure, the annual faculty activity report, and finally, the Periodic Multi-year Review (PMYR) of all tenured faculty. PMYR evaluates faculty performance over a seven-year cycle, considering teaching, research, and outreach. The review often leads to development plans and adjustments in faculty workload, with

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some faculty members opting for retirement as a result. The AQAD and PMYR reports were provided for information on Boardvantage.

Senior Vice President Subbaswamy provided an update on the priorities of the Academic and Student Affairs and Equity Division, noting that the priorities are in line with those of the campus Chancellors, the System President, and the State's goals for increasing access to higher education. The division is focused on building partnerships with community colleges and high schools to expand college access. UMass is also actively contributing to the Advisory Council for the Advancement of Representation in Education (ACARE), where UMass is represented by Deputy General Counsel Barton and Deputy Vice President Walker. Under the leadership of UMass Trustee and Secretary of Education Patrick Tutwiler and Commissioner Noe Ortega, the council has outlined five main recommendations: increasing exposure and access to higher education for K-12 students, re-engaging adult learners, implementing innovative recruitment and admissions policies, improving financial aid equity, and enhancing support for underserved students. All campuses are engaged in efforts aligned with these recommendations, and the university will continue contributing to the ACARE's implementation and accountability efforts.

Senior Vice President Subbaswamy highlighted the state's investment in community colleges through MassReconnect and MassEducate, which have led to significant increases in community college enrollment. In support of these efforts, UMass has launched the Community College Advantage Scholarship, which guarantees up to \$10,000 for top community college students who transfer to UMass campuses. Nearly 70 students have already benefited from the scholarship, with expectations for further growth as the program expands. Additionally, UMass has created student success initiatives such as the Future Beacon Joint Admissions Program, a partnership between UMass Boston and Bunker Hill Community College, aimed at streamlining the transfer process for community college students. Similar programs are in place across all UMass campuses to provide students with clear, evidence-based pathways to success.

He noted that the Committee will hear from Kate Copans, UMass Director of Commonwealth Collegiate Academy and early college directors from each campus as they discuss the aspects of UMass early college programming that makes it uniquely situated to contribute to State goals to increase access to K-12 students across the Commonwealth. UMass is committed to the goals and values of early college and appreciates the guidance and support received from the Department of Early and Secondary Education, and its partner high schools across the state.

Chair Paris Jeffries thanked Senior Vice President Subbaswamy for his service and congratulated Dr. Walker on her appointment.

Action Item #1: Appointments to Named Professorships and Endowed Chairs, UMass Amherst, Chan Medical School, Doc. T24-058

Chair Paris Jeffries asked for a motion to approve the Appointments to Named Professorships and Endowed Chairs at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Chan Medical School. The motion was moved by Trustee Scheibel and seconded by Trustee Epstein.

To recommend that the Board take the following action:

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To concur with the President in the appointment of Professor Seth Cable for the title of the Edward Sapir Endowed Professor of Linguistics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

And further,

To concur with the President in the appointment of Professor Richard Gregory for the title of the Eleanor Eustis Farrington Chair in Cancer Research at the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School.

Chair Paris Jeffries asked for questions or comments. With none, the Secretary called the roll with each Trustee asked to vote yes or no. Chair Paris Jeffries voted for the motion as did Trustees Epstein, Maguire Keches, Nicum, Osa-Agbontaen, Scheibel and Mr. Moreau (representing Trustee Tutwiler).

Consent Agenda

Chair Paris Jeffries asked for a motion to place Action Item 1 on a Consent Agenda for the Board Meeting on December 18, 2024. The motion was moved by Trustee Scheibel and seconded by Trustee Epstein.

Chair Paris Jeffries asked for questions or comments. With none, the Secretary called the roll with each Trustee asked to vote yes or no. Chair Paris Jeffries voted for the motion as did Trustees Epstein, Nicum, Osa-Agbontaen, Scheibel and Mr. Moreau (representing Trustee Tutwiler). Trustee Maguire Keches' vote was not heard.

Discussion Item: Early College Across UMass: Expanding the Pathway to College through Innovation and Collaboration, Doc. T24-052

Deputy Vice President Walker introduced the discussion item. In July 2022, the President's Office was awarded an incubator grant to implement a pilot early college program for the 2022-2023 academic year. The Commonwealth Collegiate Academy (CCA) was launched in September 2022 with 12 courses taught by instructors from UMass Lowell and UMass Dartmouth, in collaboration with teachers from seven partner high schools. Since then, the program has grown to over 85 courses and 16 partner high schools. In addition, the program includes a more traditional early college partnership at UMass Boston with Boston Public Schools. This year, UMass added pilot programs at UMass Amherst which explores the innovative approach to early college can increase access to more rural parts of the state.

Kate Copans, Director of Commonwealth Collegiate Academy, gave an overview of Early College across UMass; Francine Coston, Associate Director of Early College Initiatives at UMass Lowell, discussed enhancing student success at UMass Lowell and the Early College faculty-teacher partnership; Erin O'Rourke, Director of Pre-College Programs at UMass Amherst, discussed the Commonwealth Collegiate Academy at UMass Amherst; Traci Almeida, Teacher Preparation Programs and University Licensure Officer at UMass Dartmouth, discussed campus visits and college acculturation activities; and David Graham, Vice Provost of Student Equity, Access, and Success at UMass Boston discussed designing collaborative early college career-connected pathways.

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Chair Paris Jeffries thanked the presenters for their work on these important initiatives. Trustee Epstein asked if the goal of participating students is to graduate in less than four years? Director Copans shared that the students have different goals when they enter the program, but graduating in less than four years is certainly one of them. Another goal is when they do enroll in UMass, the students are already more engaged on campus in advocating for various needs as well as other executive functioning skills.

Trustee Haviari inquired about increasing student visits to campus and whether this could be a growth opportunity, particularly for access to the career center and advisors or mentors. It was noted that high school bell and bus schedules, especially in rural areas, can make it challenging but it is certainly an opportunity to consider.

Executive Session Announcement

Chair Paris Jeffries asked the Committee for a roll call vote to enter into Executive Session to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law necessitating confidentiality, as permitted under Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 30, Section 21a, Purpose (7), See MGL c. 75, Section 4, subsection (2) regarding awards of tenure since an open meeting may compromise the purpose for which the executive session is being called and have a detrimental effect on the University; and to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law necessitating confidentiality, as permitted under Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 30, Section 21a, Purpose (7), See MGL c. 75, Section 4, subsection (1) regarding awards of honorary degrees since an open meeting may compromise the purpose for which the executive session is being called and have a detrimental effect on the University. Chair Paris Jeffries stated that the Committee meeting would not reconvene in open session and asked for a motion. It was moved by Trustee Epstein and seconded by Trustee Maguire Keches.

Chair Paris Jeffries asked for questions or comments. With none, the Secretary called the roll with each Trustee asked to vote yes or no. Chair Paris Jeffries voted for the motion as did Trustees Epstein, Maguire Keches, Nicum, Osa-Agbontaen, Scheibel and Mr. Moreau (representing Trustee Tutwiler).

Chair Paris Jeffries announced that the Zoom meeting will be closed by the host and instructed those participating in the Executive Session to join that Zoom meeting with the specific link that was provided.

The time was 11:18 a.m.

Chelsey L. Burke
Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees