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Higher Education in the 1960's:

The Origins of the University of Massachusetts Boston

Prepared by:

**Diane D'Arrigo
December 2004**

Introduction

On June 18, 1964, Governor Endicott Peabody signed the bill to create the University of Massachusetts at Boston. Just fifteen months later, in the fall of 1965, the University of Massachusetts Boston opened its doors for its first class of students. Joining the more than 1200 students were 75 faculty and 10 staff people. They were pioneers in creating an institution which held enormous hope and promise of serving its urban community at a time of major change in higher education, specifically and in society, generally.

Today, the University of Massachusetts Boston is one of five campuses that make up the University of Massachusetts system. Located on 175 acres set on Columbia Point in the Dorchester section of Boston, the campus is adjacent to the Massachusetts Archives and John F. Kennedy Library. The current student enrollment is over 13,000 and the institution offers over 100 undergraduate programs, nearly 61 graduate programs and 14 doctoral programs.

In this paper, I will explore the impetus for the founding of UMass Boston within the context of the changing higher education landscape, both nationally and locally. This paper focuses heavily on the origins and planning of UMass Boston. To a lesser extent, this study also comments on the competing visions of UMass Boston's urban mission, which emerged in the first five years of the institution's history. While I make some speculations and interpretations in this area, further research is strongly recommended for this rich and complex subject. Also, it should be noted that this paper should not be construed as a total and comprehensive history of UMass Boston. For example, this paper does not discuss the permanent site selection process for the institution as that has

been previously documented (see Whittaker dissertation, 1990). In fact, each section of this paper could perhaps become a further research topic. Others have previously written about aspects of UMass Boston's history and this paper should be considered one more contribution to understanding the institution's early growth and development.

Methodology

For this research, a variety of sources were utilized including traditional primary and secondary sources as well as first hand interviews and oral histories collected by UMass Boston doctoral students in the Fall of 1998 and 1999. Primary sources were collected at UMass Boston's Healey Library archives and legislation and state commission reports relevant to the establishment of UMass Boston were collected at the State House Library. Additionally, primary documents were also obtained through the private papers of Dr. Paul Gagnon, a founding faculty member and first Dean of the Faculty at UMass Boston and President Richard Freeland, former Dean of Arts & Sciences at UMass Boston and current President of Northeastern University.

There were a number of challenges and considerations in researching and writing the early history of UMass Boston. The first challenge dealt with obtaining adequate source material, both in terms of the availability of materials as well as considerations presented when incorporating oral interviews into the research. There was a paucity of available archival records in the UMass Boston archives. This, however, is not necessarily unusual for an institution such as UMass Boston that was serving an "expanded student population." As the historian Bruce Leslie writes: "Although the rise of mass higher education is arguably the most important development in modern

American higher education, the institutions that served most of the expanded student population are those least likely to leave adequate records” (Geiger, et al., 2000, 83).

The collection and use of oral histories presented another interesting challenge to this research. Again, as Leslie states, “Historical memory is particularly tricky when dealing with living sources. When embroiled in controversy, participants see things differently with hindsight” (87). Additionally, I had to carefully use oral histories done by doctoral students for a purpose other than this research. While I did not consider them the final authority, they are considered here as recently collected retrospective accounts. As Leslie points out: “though imperfect, student interviews may be the only way to preserve some parts of the record” (86). Given the scarcity of available information, these oral histories provide some record where there otherwise might be none.

The field of researching and writing post-World War II college and university institutional histories is in the beginning stages. As Linda Eisenmann writes in a March 2004 proposed panel for the History of Education Society, “Historiography on this lively period of postwar collegiate growth remains at an early stage . . . [thus] . . . wider interpretive analysis is scant.” Historian Bruce Leslie furthers these concerns:

After WWII the boundaries of higher education were stretched by demands for access. The resulting institutions may have been part of one family, but some were only distant relatives. The next challenge is to integrate state colleges and community colleges, which enroll a majority of American students, into a larger narrative. For now, those writing the recent history of the institutions that drove mass higher education have to be content with providing the basis for further interpretations rather than fine-tuning existing scholarly interpretations (Geiger, et al., 2000, 86).

A final challenge was dealing with my own subjectivity about UMass Boston. As an undergraduate student, graduate student and former employee, UMass Boston holds

enormous personal and professional significance, providing me with numerous opportunities and benefits. On one hand, this can be a positive factor in my research in that I am passionate and informed about my topic. However, my potential nostalgia for the institution can also blind me to realities and criticisms. Acknowledging honestly my own potential biases about my subjectivity has hopefully led to the appropriate level of “scholarly detachment” (Geiger, 2000, 84).

American Higher Education in the Post-World War II Era: The National Picture

It is important to understand the post-World War II context out of which UMass Boston was born. Many factors contributed to unprecedented growth and change in American higher education during this time. Some of the major developments in higher education during this time period include:

- 1) demographic changes, contributing to explosive growth in student enrollments;
- 2) public policy shifts resulting in greater involvement and increased investment by both federal and state governments;
- 3) increased access which led to an increased democratization of the higher education system; and
- 4) societal changes, set in motion by the civil rights movement campaigns to end segregation, challenged the operation of educational segregation in higher education institutions and raised new questions about democratic access to these institutions.

Enrollment growth in higher education during the post-WWII era was unprecedented. The numbers are staggering: In 1955, more than 2.6 million students

were in enrolled in higher education. By 1965, the year UMass Boston would admit its first students, more than 5.9 million students were enrolled in colleges and universities. Of those, 67% would be in public institutions and 33% would be in private. This trend would continue and by 1970, more than 8.5 million people were enrolled in higher education with 75% in public institutions and 25% in private (Trow, 1989, 617).

One of the primary reasons for this unprecedented boom in college enrollments was the passage of the GI Bill of Rights immediately following World War II, which enabled veterans to attend institutions of higher education in unexpected record numbers. For example, “between 1945 and 1949, about 2.2 million former servicemen enrolled in college through the GI Bill, more than three times the maximum figure projected during the war” (Freeland, 1992, 74). A major reason for the continuing increase in enrollment into the 1960’s was due to the population increase created by these postwar baby boomers.

In addition to the GI Bill, a variety of other factors contributed to the increased rates of attendance at higher education institutions as well, including the increased societal need and future economic enhancement related to obtaining a college education. Young people from all different backgrounds, including low and middle-income students, were encouraged to pursue higher education as the need for unskilled workers decreased and the need for formal training through education for future jobs increased. According to a 1964 Legislative Research Council Report, “a college diploma seems to have become an indispensable credential for entry into the all-pervasive American middle class” (16).

There was also a growing national appreciation of the pursuit of knowledge and a determination to obtain a higher education that “goes beyond the economic advantages

and opportunities that accrue to those with advanced degrees; it also reflects among many a desire for learning for learning's sake and a rising aspiration for social betterment" (Legislative Research Council Report, 1964, 16).

During this time, state and federal governments invested in higher education at unprecedented levels. At the federal level, there was an increased focus on funding science research and other scholarly research in general as well as promoting graduate education programs. Naturally, this led to an increased emphasis at the campus level on research and graduate education. This was a radical departure for most higher education institutions, including in Massachusetts, where the traditional focus had been on undergraduate education and strength in teaching. As Freeland points out, "Prior to World War II, no university in Massachusetts outside of Cambridge placed major emphasis on research, and some academic leaders stressed their opposition to scholarship as a central function of their campuses. After 1945, every university...began to define research as a vital objective" (Freeland, 1992, 6).

In addition to the increased financial investment in higher education being made by the state and federal governments, targeted legislative initiatives marked this unique period. For example, "in 1963, John Kennedy proclaimed an explicit national interest in higher education and became the first president to propose legislation intended specifically to promote its development" (Freeland, 1992, 7). Also, in 1963, the federal government passed the National Education Improvement Act, which "ranks with the Morrill Act of 1862 which established our land grant colleges, and with the G.I. bills of post World War II" (Legislative Research Council, 1964, 22). The National Education Improvement Act focused on providing college aid to private and public institutions,

increased funding for vocational education and increased dollars for aid to students, specifically money made available for loans.

A radical shift in college attendance occurred during this time, both in terms of rapidly increased enrollment (as demonstrated above) and the population that was now attending institutions of higher education. Increased access and a simultaneous decrease in barriers for those not traditionally served by the higher education system – i.e. minorities, women, lower-middle class – would become a hallmark of higher education at this time and lead to the development of America’s system of mass higher education (Freeland, 1992; Trow, 1989).

The unprecedented growth in enrollments and access to higher education opportunities furthered the democratization of the higher education system and encouraged a broader diversity of student population. The demand on existing higher education institutions was enormous, both in terms of pure enrollment numbers as well as the new pressures and challenges of serving populations that did not traditionally have access to this kind of institution. For existing institutions, these challenges included new considerations about the appropriateness of their curriculum and the necessary academic and administrative support services (Freeland, 1992; Trow, 1989).

The college student of the 1950’s has been characterized as apathetic and called “the silent generation” (Astin, et al, 1989, 530). Spurred by issues, including civil rights and the opposition to the war in Vietnam, college students of the 1960s were no longer silent. Campus unrest and social protest could be found on many college campuses and would be a defining feature of the decade.

Students began to challenge universities on the right to free speech, the inclusion of minorities and women on the faculty and the university's implicit support for the Vietnam War through accepting contracts for war-related research and the presence of military recruiters and training personnel on college campuses. Student voices created new challenges for university faculty and administrators to respond to these concerns.

The Local Landscape: Higher Education in Massachusetts

In addition to understanding the national trends in higher education in the post-WWII era, it is equally important to understand the local higher education landscape, specifically the state of the public and private institutions which existed in Massachusetts. In 1963, the year before UMass Boston was authorized, there were a total of 96 degree-credit institutions of higher education, of which 21 were institutions of public higher education. These 21 public institutions included three technical institutes, the Maritime Academy, six community colleges, ten state colleges and the University of Massachusetts. For fiscal year 1964, the state appropriation given for direct operating expenses of these institutions totaled close to \$27 million (Legislative Research Council, 1964, 9).

In 1963-64, there were just over 170,000 students enrolled in Massachusetts colleges and universities. Of this number, 78.2% attended private institutions and 21.8% attended institutions in the public sector (8). This private/public ratio is dramatically different than that of the national trends, where enrollment in public higher education institutions at this time far outnumber those attending private institutions (see demographics previously cited).

Following the lead of other states in expanding access to higher education by adding a new track below the state university system, in 1958, Massachusetts created two-year community colleges to provide liberal arts and vocational training. By 1963, there were six community colleges with a total enrollment of 2,330 students. Ten state colleges existed at this time and, in 1963-64, enrolled a total of 10,530 full-time students. Boston State College, which had consistently pushed for expansion of its facilities over time, enrolled a total of 1,920 undergraduates and 58 graduate students as well as approximately 1,700 part-time graduate students (51). The University of Massachusetts, the only public higher education institution offering comprehensive undergraduate and graduate programs in the arts and sciences, enrolled approximately 8,300 students.

Private institutions dominated Massachusetts' higher education in terms of range, depth and quality. As the 1964 Legislative Research Council report states: "Massachusetts leadership in higher education rests on the extraordinary stature of its private institutions" (8). It is important to keep in mind the dominance and stature of Massachusetts private institutions of higher education as we consider the development of UMass Boston.

The Case for UMass Boston

An increase in enrollments in Massachusetts' colleges and universities would be the driving force to establish UMass Boston. Consistent with the demographic changes at the national level, the first enrollment crisis in Massachusetts occurred at the end of World War II, primarily because of the impact of the GI Bill. According to the Statistical Abstract of the United States for 1947 and 1948, Massachusetts colleges and universities

had a total enrollment of 34,484 students in 1944. By 1947, just three years later, the enrollment had grown to 93,087 (almost half – 46,250 – were veterans). The legislature responded to this crisis by authorizing the Massachusetts State College at Amherst (which would eventually become the University of Massachusetts) to establish a temporary branch facility at Fort Devens for returning veterans (Whittaker, 1990, 51).

The temporary establishment of this branch facility accommodated these WWII veterans, however these students were not satisfied with this temporary solution and a coalition of student veterans and alumni “began a campaign to convince the legislature to raise Amherst to university status” (Whittaker, 1990, 51). This lobbying effort was successful, and, in 1947, legislation was signed which transformed the Massachusetts State College into the University of Massachusetts.

The next enrollment challenge, caused by the population increase of the postwar baby boomers, occurred in the early 1960’s and would be the impetus for the creation of UMass Boston. To assess a response to the pending increase in enrollment in higher education, in Fall 1963, State Senate President John Powers commissioned the Legislative Research Council to study the issue and make recommendations to address the needs of higher education for Greater Boston. The projected future demand on the system was enormous. In 1963, there were 54,745 high school graduates and by 1973 the number was expected to increase to 86,575 (Legislative Research Council Report, 1964, 9).

While the enrollment crisis pushed the issue of the establishment of a Boston campus of the University of Massachusetts to the forefront, a number of forces converged

to make it a reality, including the role of the leadership of the University of Massachusetts and the leadership of the state legislature.

John Lederle was appointed President of the University of Massachusetts in 1960. According to a 1975 oral history interview with Lederle, shortly after arriving to the presidency, he “came to the conclusion that we had to get into Boston. This is obvious; it is the Hub ... This was one of the major cities in America that did not have a quality public university. Inevitably there would be one there; and the University of Massachusetts ought to be programming its development” (Oral history project, 1975, 80). Lederle, it seems, was interested in the development of the Boston campus for a few reasons. First, during the 1960’s, there was increased interest and investment in public, urban environments, including the expansion of public educational institutions. Expanding the University of Massachusetts into Boston would be in keeping with this national trend.

Additionally, since becoming President, Lederle saw a potential political advantage to a Boston campus. He was “increasingly conscious of the political gulf between the eastern and western parts of the state. Finding it difficult to interest Boston-area legislators in the needs of Amherst, he reasoned that a campus with close ties to the city could be an asset rather than a liability” (Freeland, 1992, 328). Lederle’s focus and political acumen in developing strong relationships with state legislators would be a key factor in the successful establishment of UMass Boston.

Lederle acknowledged that Boston State College, a school with roots as a teacher training institution, already existed in the city and considered partnering with that institution. Also, there had been bills introduced in the legislature at various times in the

past to expand Boston State College into a Boston State University. According to Lederle, “there were a number of problems [with that]. If we did [work with them], we would inherit a faculty fundamentally teacher-college oriented and very difficult to re-direct along university lines. And, I don’t want to damn everybody there, but this was a difficult thing to do” (Oral History Project, 1975, 81). Additionally, Lederle preferred to establish a new site for a Boston campus because of a “serious lack of space at the Boston State College campus” (Whittaker, 1990, 58). Another reason for the reluctance to expand Boston State College may have been due to the question of their ability to deliver quality liberal arts education. The State Teachers’ Colleges in Massachusetts had just received authorization in 1960 to grant degrees in fields other than education. According to the 1964 Legislative Research Council Report, none of the State Teachers’ Colleges “has yet achieved standards in the arts and sciences comparable to those of most private Massachusetts liberal arts colleges or the University of Massachusetts (10).

In his annual appearance before the Senate Ways and Means Committee on April 6, 1964, President Lederle announced that the University of Massachusetts had received more than 12,000 freshman applications for the fall semester and that 8,000 would have to be turned away because of lack of space (The Alumnus, 1969). Once this statement was made publicly, things moved with incredible speed. Lederle told the news media that, “If the Legislature was to decide that it wanted to expand the University by creating a branch in Boston, we are prepared to come into Boston and organize a branch there” (Whittaker, 1990, 58).

On April 13, 1964, the Legislative Research Council report commissioned by Senate President John Powers submitted its findings “Relative to the Needs of Higher

Education in Greater Boston.” The report addressed the changing nature of higher education, both nationally and locally, and put forth a set of recommendations to address the increased demand on higher education in Greater Boston. Their recommendations for “Alternative Higher Education Programs for Greater Boston” included the following:

- (1) Establish a “Commuting” Campus of the University of Massachusetts in Greater Boston;
- (2) Establish a “Commuting” Campus of the University of Massachusetts in Greater Boston, And Incorporate Into It, As Components of The University, The Massachusetts Bay Community College, The Boston State College, And The Massachusetts College of Art;
- (3) Provide Express Bus Service To and From the University of Massachusetts Campus At Amherst for Qualified Greater Boston Students;
- (4) Expand Professional, Technical and Vocational Programs of Existing State Institutions in Greater Boston (61-62).

On May 3, the new Senate President from western Massachusetts, where the University of Massachusetts is located, Maurice Donahue of Holyoke, spoke at the Amherst campus at the annual Newman Club Breakfast. At this breakfast, Donahue spoke publicly about his support for a Boston campus of the University of Massachusetts, citing the large number of qualified applicants that were denied admission. Ten days later, on May 13, Senate President Donahue, Senator George Kenneally of Boston and Representative Robert Quinn of Boston filed Senate bill 849 which called for the establishment of a branch of the University in Boston.

The filing of this bill is surprising, considering the speed with which it was filed and especially considering the lack of past support and investment in Massachusetts public higher education. According to the 1964 Legislative Research Council report, “Massachusetts historically pioneered in promoting both private and public education and

remains today a national leader in higher educational practices and innovation. Its leadership, however, is now based on the extraordinary stature of its private institutions. Public educational opportunities are less outstanding in the history of the Commonwealth. In higher education, the University of Massachusetts can be cited as the only state public institution of national eminence” (28). Richard Freeland emphasized the unusual dominance of private institutions on the Massachusetts higher education landscape in Academia’s Golden Age, when he stated, “Massachusetts is unique, harboring one of the greatest educational concentrations in the country, with an unusual emphasis on private schools” (5).

Previous legislative attempts to establish a Boston branch of the University of Massachusetts were introduced in 1960, 1961 and 1963. All of these attempts failed because there was no perceived need. The state legislature believed that the existing public and private institutions were already adequately providing educational opportunities for students in the Commonwealth (Whittaker, 1990, 54). Thus, the timing in 1964 of the perceived inability of the existing institutions to accommodate the current and future enrollment needs of the students in Massachusetts, combined with Lederle’s strong political connections, lobbying efforts and the promise of a new Boston campus admitting students in the fall of 1965, made a strong case for legislators to support.

Despite support from the Senate President, both the existing public and powerful private higher education institutions immediately opposed the establishment of a branch campus of the University of Massachusetts. The Legislative Research Council addressed this issue in their report:

Transforming an existing public institution into a university or creating a new public university in the Boston metropolitan area, within the shadow of the

nation's finest private institutions, pose problems of standards perhaps not found elsewhere. More specifically, a public university in Boston would not likely attain the necessary public support, faculty or standing in the academic world unless its offerings were approximately on a par with those of Boston College, Boston University or Tufts. Moreover, its better graduates would have to qualify for acceptance into the graduate programs of nationally eminent institutions such as Harvard and M.I.T. (38)

The report found that many of the private institutions had reservations about the establishment of a public university in Boston. For example, officials in the "Harvard administration appear to be skeptical of the need for a new public university in the Boston area, and appear to favor the strengthening of existing public institutions on the high school, junior and senior college level" (39). The Massachusetts Institute of Technology appeared to share the skepticism of Harvard and is "apparently concerned more with the quality of Massachusetts high school graduates and with the need to improve substantially already existing higher public educational institutions" (39). Tufts, while interested in the study of public higher education opportunities in the Boston area, "expressed an unofficial attitude that a public university in the area should be based on 'demonstrable need'" (40).

While the report does not mention Boston University's (BU) reaction to the expansion of public higher education in the Boston area, it is clear the leaders of the institution were very opposed to the idea. The president of BU, Harold Case, sent a letter dated June 4, 1964 to BU alumni informing them of the official university position relative to the bill to establish the Boston branch of the University of Massachusetts. In the letter he states that he and President Lederle "share a grave concern for the extension of higher education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We agree that there are new educational problems posed by increasing college applications. We desire higher

educational opportunity for all qualified youth. We differ in the sequence of steps to achieve this goal” (BU Letter to Alumni). President Case also made his opposition clear in his public testimony before the Joint Committee on Education (see below).

Northeastern University President Asa Knowles also spoke out about his opposition to the proposed Boston campus. According to the Boston Globe, Knowles stated “that a branch of the University of Massachusetts which was within commuting distance of Boston, with its low tuition of only \$200 per year, would be likely to draw off students from the area’s private institutions and end up being a greater expense to the state’s taxpayers than if the state paid to send the same students to the private colleges” (Whittaker, 1990, 68). Clearly, the administration at Northeastern University was concerned that the establishment of a Boston Campus of the University of Massachusetts would potentially put them in direct competition for the Boston students that traditionally enrolled in Northeastern’s programs. Additionally, Knowles, a member of the Willis-Harrington Commission established in 1962 to study education in Massachusetts, “believed there had been an unwritten agreement that no public university would be built in Boston in the immediate future” (Freeland, 1992, 328). Knowles not only saw the proposed establishment of UMass Boston as direct competition for students, but was also caught by surprise that the legislation was put forth in the first place. Given Knowles’ previous assumptions about the unlikely possibility of a proposed public university in Boston, he was most likely unprepared to respond with the necessary political speed to stop or delay the passage of the bill once it was moving forward.

Opposition was not limited to private institutions. Boston State College was very vocal in its opposition as well. A letter dated May 13, 1964 from Carolyn St. Pierre,

President of the Boston State College Alumni Association to state legislators, states, “the Alumni Association of State College at Boston is strongly opposed” to the establishment of the University of Massachusetts in Boston. She continues by stating, “we, the Alumni of the State College at Boston, feel that another university of this kind with campus and dormitories is a luxury which the taxpayer of Massachusetts cannot afford, and that it will not solve the problem.” Naturally, Boston State College was a strong voice of opposition, given their past, unsuccessful attempts to expand to a Boston State University. They believed that if they were given the resources, they could meet the current and future enrollment challenges faced by the Commonwealth. Additionally, it seems, they were also concerned that the expansion of the University of Massachusetts into Boston may potentially lead to decreased state resources and political support for Boston State College.

The public hearing for the bill took place on May 27, 1964 before the Joint Committee on Education in the Massachusetts State House’s Gardner Auditorium. President Lederle, speaking of that day of the public hearing in a 1975 oral history interview, said: “I’ll never forget the day of the public hearing on this ... I knew this was really going to be one of the high points in any career I’d ever have. I knew this was being opposed by Boston State, by the state college system, the private sector, etc.” (Oral History Project, 1975, 81). Lederle, in his public testimony before the Committee, tried to address the fears of the opposing institutions:

This University would not be established as a replacement for any existing school or program. Rather it would serve to augment existing facilities in order to extend educational opportunities ... The University of Massachusetts would maintain a close cooperative relationship with private colleges in the Boston area, building upon the experience gained as a partner in the Four College Cooperative Program

with Amherst, Smith and Mount Holyoke Colleges which has received national acclaim (Lederle Statement to Joint Committee on Education, May 27, 1964).

Speaking later about those who opposed the bill during the public hearing, Lederle shared these thoughts:

To begin with, there was a whole series of state college presidents who got up and opposed it. And, I don't want to say this too much in derogation, but I can't help saying it because I had been with these people for a long time and I've never said it publicly. Pam [his daughter] asked me, 'Are those really college presidents?' Harold Case, the then-president of Boston University, got up to speak, and he was just cut to pieces. He was arguing there was no need for the University of Massachusetts, that Boston University could do all that was necessary, etc. Well, the members of the committee had been properly provided with backstopping questions on this one and they proceeded to ask what was the Massachusetts student enrollment of Boston University five years ago and what was it now, etc. This showed that it had dropped down below 50%. Instead of just being Boston University, a commuter school for Massachusetts young people, it was now like the other private schools, becoming more national, which is, from their viewpoint, I think, desirable, although they were less national than Harvard or M.I.T. I really felt sorry for Harold Case (Oral history project, 1975, 82).

As mentioned previously, Lederle had done a masterful job of building a strong rapport with the state legislature and, once again, his political skills came in handy on the day of the public testimony. Knowing the types of arguments that might come from the leaders of both the public and private higher education institutions, Lederle prepared the committee ahead of time with questions and answers to avert any potential criticism that might arise during the public hearing.

The State Board of Education, represented by Commissioner Owen Kiernan, spoke in favor of the bill as did Kermit Morrissey, Brandeis Dean of Students and Chair of the State Regional Community College Board. There is no clear evidence about the reasons for the support from these particular people. Perhaps Commissioner Kiernan, given his role in K-12 education, viewed the expansion of the University of

Massachusetts into Boston as a potential positive development for the Boston Public Schools and its graduating high school students. Kermit Morrissey's support could have been based on two reasons. First, he worked at Brandeis and the primary author of the Legislative Research Council Report written in 1964 was Dr. Norman Greenwald, a Senior Lecturer at Brandeis. Another reason for his support may have come from his role as Chair of the Community College Board. Unlike the state college system and the private higher education institutions, community colleges would not have seen the expansion of a Boston campus as direct competition for students. In fact, UMass Boston may have been viewed as providing future opportunities to this sector of students.

The opposition, however, was vast. As cited previously, President Harold Case of Boston University publicly called the bill "premature and suggested that it be considered on the basis of 'hard logic and un-feeling fact, not emotion and sentimentalism.'" He cited a study which showed that 92% of the 9,000 freshman applications rejected by BU in a recent year had eventually gained admission at other accredited colleges" (Whittaker, 1990, 64).

As with many of the private institutions, strong opposition also existed among the state college presidents. In fact, nine of ten state college presidents spoke out against the bill. The only supporter was Daniel O'Leary, President of Lowell State. For example, John Gillespie, State College Director, criticized the bill as "woefully inadequate, hastily conceived, and providing unplanned duplication" (Whittaker, 1990, 64). President Looney of Boston State College spoke for the majority of the state college presidents at this hearing:

The University of Massachusetts in the Boston area will compete not only with Boston State College, but also with the state colleges at Framingham,

Bridgewater, Salem and even Worcester. Money spent on these colleges to give them just a few more buildings and educational equipment will enable them to do in the Boston area what the University wishes to do . . . They can do equally well on an undergraduate level what the University of Massachusetts can do. To expand them to meet our education crisis is the most practical and economical procedure. It can be done at less cost to the Commonwealth (Whittaker, 1990, 66).

President Looney continued his testimony recommending a proposal that had been

brought before the legislature many times in the past:

Another proposal is to do here what has been done in New York State. Organize the state colleges as a second state university independent of the University at Amherst. Each state college campus will be a campus of this new university and will have opportunity to develop at its own rate – some rapidly, some more slowly – all finally into the status of a university campus. These state colleges can thus easily fulfill the needs for more opportunity in public supported higher education in the Commonwealth (Whittaker, 1990, 66).

As previously stated, there was little support for the expansion of Boston State College, given the space limitations of the campus as well as the challenges of shifting from a traditional teacher-training institution to a comprehensive liberal arts institution.

After six hours of public testimony, the committee put forth a favorable report on the bill. Ultimately, the bill passed the house on a voice vote and the senate passed by a vote of 33-6. Those legislators opposing the bill felt that this was not the best use of taxpayers' dollars and that further study was necessary. Initially, \$200,000 was allocated for the planning of the campus, which, Lederle had promised, would open in September 1965 with 1,000 students.

On June 18, 1964, just thirty-six days after it was filed, Governor Peabody signed the bill creating the University of Massachusetts Boston. At the signing of the bill, President Lederle stated that “in terms of the future welfare of Massachusetts citizens,

this bill ranks with the most important legislation in the history of the Commonwealth” (UMass Boston Date Sheet, undated).

President Lederle and the leadership of the state legislature had successfully begun the expansion of the University of Massachusetts by establishing a Boston campus. While there were small pockets of support for this expansion, the vast majority of public and private higher education institutions were opposed to the establishment of the Boston campus. The biggest concerns seemed to focus on the competition for students as well as the perceived future shift in the state investment in public higher education favoring the campuses of the University of Massachusetts rather than the existing state college system.

The key factors to the success of this effort were a combination of Lederle’s commitment to the University’s expansion in Boston and his political acumen, which he used to build strong rapport with the leadership of the state legislature. Given the speed with which this legislation was filed, the existing higher education community was most likely surprised by the support that Lederle had from the legislative leaders and were not prepared to respond to the proposed legislation. Additionally, the timing was perfect and the actual rationale for the Boston campus was strong, given the rapidly increased enrollment at the time and for the foreseeable future.

Planning for the Opening

Once UMass Boston had been authorized, the doors needed to be opened by September 1965. President Lederle had assured the legislature that, if approved, UMass Boston would admit its first class of 1,000 students by the fall of 1965. This left just 15 months to build a campus almost from scratch, including finding a location, recruiting

faculty, developing curriculum, planning budgets, admitting students, and, of course, creating an educational mission and vision that would guide the institution's work.

President Lederle appointed a four-man task force to begin the planning activities; however, the group that drove the planning efforts for UMass Boston was formed later in September 1964. This group, a 12 person working group, made up of administrators and faculty from the Amherst campus, was called the New Concepts and New Departures Committee. President Lederle charged that committee with:

. . . the responsibility of proposing, evaluating, and recommending new and imaginative ideas that may be considered in the development of the Boston campus. The scope of its charge should be broadly interpreted to encompass philosophy, principles and practices that may provide new dimensions to public higher education, particularly in an urban-oriented institution (New Departures summary report, February 1965).

Lederle's charge to the committee pays particular attention to the focus of the new campus being distinctly urban in nature and calls for the group to be cognizant of the specific needs of the urban area and its population.

While there were a number of people involved in the planning of UMass Boston, for purposes of this paper, the focus will be predominantly on the influential role of Professor Paul Gagnon, who became the first Dean of Faculty at UMass Boston. Gagnon was the key figure in shaping the philosophy and direction of the early years of UMass Boston's development. As Gagnon stated in a seminar he gave to David Reisman's students at Harvard in the early 1980's, "I got myself on the ND [New Departures] committee with the personal determination to control its report, and to launch UM/B as a wholly autonomous campus, with its own curriculum, requirements, its own faculty and administration, most of all, its own way of using resources" (Reisman's seminar notes).

Other faculty also spoke about Gagnon's critical role in shaping the early years of UMass Boston. According to Dr. Thomas Brown, Associate Professor of History hired in 1965, "the single most important, most dynamic figure was Paul Gagnon . . . there's no doubt in my mind that the single most important person in the founding of this institution was Paul Gagnon" (Doctoral Student Oral History, 1998). This view was echoed by Dr. Edna Seaman, a biology professor and administrator who started in 1967, when she stated that Gagnon "conceptualized both the mission and the curriculum of the institution . . . there is no doubt that Paul left his mark on the University" (Doctoral Student Oral History, 1999).

Gagnon's key role was affirmed again in a recent interview with Richard Freeland, who worked with University of Massachusetts President Robert Wood and was the liaison with the Boston campus in 1970 before working at the UMass Boston campus beginning in 1971 as Assistant to the Chancellor. He would later become the Dean of the College of Professional Studies from 1974-79 and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences from 1982-92. As Freeland states: "Paul and his vision was the strongest defining element in the beginning and early years . . . Paul basically drove the set-up and early years in all aspects of hiring faculty, developing curriculum, etc. There was a minimum of oversight [and] no strong or clear vision from the state, public authorities or the Board; [there were] basically no constraints on Paul and his colleagues" (Interview, May 2003).

Gagnon was a faculty member in the history department at UMass Amherst when the need for a Boston campus was being considered. He had attended UMass Amherst (then called Massachusetts State College) on the GI Bill and was a 1950 graduate

majoring in history and government. He received his advanced degree from Harvard University in 1960. Gagnon had started teaching full-time at UMass Amherst in 1952. In the Fall of 1964, Gagnon was on sabbatical preparing to write a history of the Fourth French Republic. He was staying at Harvard sociologist David Riesman's house in Cambridge, at the same time that the new campus had been approved and planning had begun. Riesman, who researched and wrote extensively on American higher education, would play an "unofficial" advisory role in UMass Boston's development and many of the early faculty remember being interviewed by Gagnon in Riesman's house – as Shaun O'Connell, an English professor hired in 1965, states: "they had set up shop in David Riesman's house in Cambridge" (1998).

Gagnon had become dissatisfied at Amherst with the shifting focus away from undergraduate education to an increased focus on research and graduate education. He believed that undergraduate education was beginning to suffer with a move toward larger lecture classes and higher faculty-student ratios.

Prior to his "official" involvement in the administration and planning of UMass Boston in January 1965, Gagnon wrote a position paper in November 1964 for the New Departures committee entitled "Why Build UM/B in the Middle of Downtown Boston?" which contained his thoughts on the importance of being conveniently located in the heart of downtown Boston:

Because UM/B can come quickly to maturity, excellence and a sense of its own high adventure only insofar as it is plunged into the life of a great and reviving city. It can do more for Boston and her people if it rises in their midst, and – even more obviously – Boston can do much, much more for the University (1).

Gagnon recently discussed his interest and reasons for wanting to be involved with UMass Boston after 14 years at UMass Amherst:

I wrote up arguments for a Boston campus on my own, particularly because I, and the friends I had at Amherst, were eager to escape Amherst . . . It was in the sticks and, more importantly, they [UMA] were trying at that point to expand quickly their graduate programs, but neither the administration or the board was ready to plead for a change in the budgetary base which, at the time, was for every 15 students for a full-time faculty position, so as they kept putting faculty onto the graduate track, they were enlarging the undergraduate classes and turning to mass lectures for freshmen and sophomores and a good number of us thought that was really the very wrong direction to take for a public institution and that they should at least fight for the added faculty that they should have for the graduate programs (Interview, April 2003).

In February 1965, President Lederle appointed Dr. John Ryan, then Academic Vice-President at Arizona State University, as Chancellor of UMass Boston starting in fall 1965. In February 1965, the University secured the 13-story, former Boston Gas Building at 100 Arlington Street in Park Square in downtown Boston as the temporary campus.

The original plan for UMass Boston was that it would be a “branch campus” of UMass Amherst – located in Boston, but basically controlled administratively by UMass Amherst. However, the early planners of UMass Boston had different ideas about this arrangement and, early on, sought to ensure their autonomy. This is not to say the ties with Amherst were cut immediately. In fact, the admissions process for the first two years was handled through Amherst before finally being transferred to Boston with the admission of the third class of students.

Dr. Thomas Brown spoke of UMass Boston’s early relationship with UMass Amherst:

Initially, UMass Boston was a branch of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. And one of the early struggles, in which Paul Gagnon was a leader, was to sever our connections with Amherst and establish our own autonomy through the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor; control over admissions, and so on, budget. That was part of the early struggle, the faculty against administration took on a particular form in the early days at UMass Boston. It was the

administration at Amherst that we were struggling against to cut the connections with them ... And, Paul, who had been out at Amherst, was the leader of that effort to break the connection. (Doctoral Student Oral History, 1998).

The early founders of UMass Boston that had moved from the Amherst campus were disillusioned with the state of affairs at Amherst and they were determined to do things differently as they planned the Boston campus. In order to develop an independent Boston campus, they needed to ensure full autonomy from Amherst, especially in terms of resource allocation and development of educational philosophy.

Educational Vision: Commitment to Undergraduate Education

The educational vision and mission of UMass Boston was created primarily in response to the problems the founders were having with UMass Amherst. Their vision was also in opposition to the pervading general trends occurring in large public universities at that time. As previously discussed, many large public universities were shifting from their traditional commitment to undergraduate education and teaching to an emphasis on research and graduate education. Gagnon was displeased with the direction UMass Amherst was heading and, as early as 1961, wrote an extensive memo to UMass Amherst faculty on the perils of expanding graduate education and increasing the faculty/student ratio. Thus, the vision for UMass Boston was being developed in opposition to Amherst; UMass Boston was being defined by what Amherst was NOT rather than what Boston could be. As Dr. Thomas Brown stated: "...in many ways, UMass Boston was not to be Amherst. Many of the features of Amherst that were thought to be negative and unattractive were not going to be part of UMass Boston" (Doctoral Student Oral History, 1998).

The centerpiece for planning the vision of UMass Boston would be a heavy emphasis on undergraduate education serving nontraditional students, offering a traditional, rigorous liberal arts curriculum which would rival that of the best private institutions. This was in direct opposition to UMass Amherst's increasing focus on research and graduate education. The founders of UMass Boston were committed to a faculty/student ratio of 15:1 and small class sizes with intense faculty-student interactions. Again, this was in direct opposition to UMass Amherst's increasing growth in large lecture hall style course offerings.

Gagnon, in a recent interview, spoke about the commitment to providing a high quality undergraduate education to UMass Boston students: "We were interested in salvaging the undergraduate years and by 1964-65, we had given up that that could be done at Amherst and immediately as the Boston campus was authorized, we started saying to ourselves, hey, there's a place where the high school graduates will need even more catching up than the kids that are now entering at Amherst" (Interview, April 2003). He continued by outlining his educational vision for UMass Boston:

By the time I was recruiting faculty, I could tell them what we hoped. It would be a four-year college focused on undergraduate education with an emphasis on small classes and intensive faculty attention to freshmen and sophomores, in particular because we wanted them to be caught up to the kids in private colleges. They would be small classes for freshmen and sophomores in particular because not only would there be intensive instruction in the content but our students, probably the great majority of them, would have to be learning how to study, how to write (Interview, April 2003).

The seeds of the UMass Boston urban mission would be planted in this ideal of teaching nontraditional, often underprepared, students in small classes promoting close faculty-student interactions. While the model of smaller class sizes may have been based

on an elite liberal arts model, by providing for critical faculty-student interactions, this model ultimately allowed faculty to work with a more diverse population of students.

Dr. Thomas Brown spoke about his understanding of the university's early mission: "The mission of the university, as we understood it, was to serve the students of Boston and provide them with a first-class university education" (Doctoral Student Oral History, 1998). Shaun O'Connell, an English department faculty member who was hired in 1965, echoed these thoughts about the purpose of UMass Boston, specifically related to the population that should be served by this new institution: "A public university should serve the public and that means people from the inner city, people from the suburbs, people who are well prepared, people who are less well prepared, and that this was the university founded with that mission. I was excited by that. In a way, we were making up the university as we went along. Rather than walking into something that had decades or centuries of tradition established before us, we worked together to do the best that we could with what we had" (Doctoral Student Oral History, 1998).

Some of the early faculty, such as Professors Brown and O'Connell, were drawn to work at UMass Boston because of the idealistic vision of serving nontraditional students in a public, urban environment. This idealism was reflective of the growth of public service, especially serving diverse and traditionally underserved populations.

Resource Allocation

The negative model the founders saw at Amherst even determined the strategy for resource allocation. Instead of Amherst's approach to the budget, which Gagnon and others saw as top heavy with administrators, UMass Boston would devote resources to

faculty, direct instruction and minimize spending on administrative and support staff. In hindsight, Gagnon recently conceded that this may have been a mistake:

We were very careful to use all faculty positions for direct instruction and we prided ourselves on it. In some ways, that was a mistake. As the place had to grow by 1,000 every year and as we had to plan the expansion at Park Square and plan for the ultimate campus, and had hardly any staff, it meant that we worked too fast, we didn't think things through often, made mistakes and we put too heavy a burden on faculty committees. So, in the end, we did not do the students so big a favor as we had hoped. If we had used only two faculty positions and cut them into four staff, I think the students would have been better off also, but we didn't want to give an inch. So, that was a mistake. It was an over-reaction to the top-heaviness at Amherst (Interview, April 2003).

Dr. Thomas Brown also addressed the lack of administrative support in the early years of UMass Boston when he stated, "in the first year – years of the university, downtown in the old gas building, we all did what later became formal administrative jobs. For a while, I did what later would become the work of the Dean of Student Affairs. We pitched in on everything" (Doctoral Student Oral History, 1998). This rejection of a formal bureaucratic administrative structure is consistent with the structure of many alternative organizations and is both anti-elitist and egalitarian in nature.

David Riesman and Christopher Jencks, whose book, The Academic Revolution, became a well-known analysis of various types of institutions, reflected on the lack of resources and administrative support in the early years of UMass Boston in a 1966 paper about observations of UMass Boston in the first year:

A visit to the Boston campus during its first year of operation could have seen deans doing the work of janitors as in the small backwoods college struggling for financial survival: secretarial help in the process of recruiting faculty was hard to come by; travel expenses had to be scrounged; and, in general, time for planning either curriculum or campus was constantly eaten into by the demands stemming from niggardly staffing. Men will, at least temporarily, put up with hardships and frustrations of this sort in pursuit of an ideal when they feel that it is necessary, but many of the annoyances that hampered the early builders of the University of

Massachusetts at Boston appeared to them to reflect more on the indifference of Amherst and the General Court than on any real need for sacrifice (8-9).

It is clear that, while the founders intentionally diverted resources from hiring administrative and support staff, the lack of support from Amherst and from the state also contributed to the staffing and administrative challenges the UMass Boston community experienced in the early years.

In general, the inadequate investment in UMass Boston by the state legislature reflected the Commonwealth's historical record of minimal commitment to public higher education. Gagnon spoke about the tight resources, specifically in comparison with other institutions that were just starting out at that time and were far better resourced, possibly reflecting an increased emphasis during the 1960's on investment and interest in the urban environment:

I tried to talk with a good number of people at the new campuses that were opening at the time - there was the University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Louisiana at New Orleans, University of Missouri at St. Louis, SUNY [State University of New York], Wayne State in Detroit, Santa Cruz in California. In spring of 1966, I wrote to 12 of them to get their figures on how much it cost them to open their campuses and what they spent on books, what they spent on this and that in order to put together an argument for the trustees to ask for money . . . We operated on a shoestring. The state was really pinching us the whole time – they were really tight-fisted. Getting resources was always awfully hard (Interview, April 2003).

UMass Boston Chancellor Francis Broderick, who succeeded Chancellor Ryan in Fall 1968, speaking at UMass Boston's first commencement in 1969, acknowledged the state's lack of financial commitment in comparison with other states: "The Commonwealth of Massachusetts still ranks 50th in its per capita expenditure on public higher education. When you rank 50th, about the only way you can fall further behind is by admitting more states" (1).

Comparing the Commonwealth's commitment to public higher education in the context of other states revealed the extent of the inadequate funding by Massachusetts: "The average expenditure per student in public institutions of higher learning in the United States in 1965-66 was \$2,105 and rising sharply. The Governor's recommendation for 1968-69 for the Boston campus of the University of Massachusetts is less than half this figure, \$1,023. In New York the per student expenditure within the new public university system is nearly \$3,000" (Response to the Governor's Budget Recommendation for Fiscal 1969 for UMass Boston, 4).

This response to the Governor's proposed budget highlights the challenge of achieving the initial hopes and aspirations for UMass Boston in light of the state's lack of investment in the institution:

There was a widespread impression that this was to be an institution with first-class aspirations, and that the Commonwealth intended to give it the kind of support which a respectable university requires. Immediately, however, there was an obvious discrepancy between the budget appropriation and this kind of expectation. Each year the discrepancy has become greater, until the expectation of excellence hardly survives. And now, unless the Governor's budget recommendation for Fiscal 1969 is radically changed, to pretend that a university is being built at all will be a sham (1).

In addition to the lack of resources for staffing and physical facilities, the basic resources needed to be a credible higher education institution, such as adequate library materials and facilities, were also missing in the early years of UMass Boston. Riesman and Jencks observed, specifically related to the paucity of library resources during UMass Boston's humble beginnings: "one student said after a visit to a specialized Harvard Library, how little the University of Massachusetts at Boston had to offer in comparison, with its embryonic stacks and somewhat over 20,000 books" (Riesman and Jencks, 1966, 21).

James Smith, a student of the Class of 1969, who spoke of the lack of resources and also highlighted the library's shortcomings, mentioned the strengths as well, specifically of the faculty, of UMass Boston: "The school has its problems. It is under-financed, its library is too small, its future location is ill-suited for urban education, it is faced with a chaos-producing expansion program each year. But its future is unmistakably bright. It has attracted a challenging faculty, who themselves have attracted enthusiastic students" (The Alumnus, March 1969).

Intellectual Life vs. Social Life

The planners of UMass Boston modeled their hopes for a campus focused on teaching and learning. This was another implicit rebuke to UMass Amherst, with its reputation as a "party school" and its focus on sports and student life. Gagnon and Brown prided their planning efforts of UMass Boston on its distance from collegiate sociability.

Dr. Thomas Brown highlighted this divergence from Amherst when he stated: "One of the purposes was to found an institution which would not be a playground for students. Amherst was a – really a playground for students. We were not to do that; we were to have serious students who came to the university for their studies" (Doctoral Student Oral History, 1998). Gagnon spoke about the intellectual emphasis for UMass Boston students in his Spring 1967 address to the faculty: "The University of Massachusetts at Boston has no campus, no football, no fraternities, no parades or hoopla or giddy round of organized student fun. Students will be drawn to us by one thing only: what happens in our classrooms" (5). Gagnon echoed this once again in a recent

interview: “We did not use any faculty positions for anything but direct instruction – see, Amherst was already using faculty positions for administrative work and they were using them for physical education and ROTC and stuff and we said no to those things” (Interview, April 2003). Chancellor John Ryan, in his first faculty and student convocation speech on September 23, 1965, also emphasized the priority on intellectual pursuits: “We will provide space for formal and informal activities which are important to individual attention and to intellectual pursuit. We will not have room for the juvenile, the banal, the unnecessary” (5).

The leadership of UMass Boston made a conscious decision to emphasize students’ intellectual pursuits rather than promote the social aspects that are often part of university life. Given that UMass Boston was a commuter school, serving many students that were working full or part-time, it was perhaps easier to emphasize the intellectual pursuits of university life than it would have been had UMass Boston been a traditional, residential campus.

Faculty and Students

Prospective faculty found UMass Boston appealing for a variety of reasons including the attraction of being in Boston as well as the unique opportunity to contribute to building a public, urban university, with all of its hopes and ideals, from the “ground-up.”

Dr Thomas Brown spoke about his interest in being at UMass Boston: “This was the ‘60’s after all, an exciting time, a time that generated lots of hopes. Many of them were exaggerated. And we were all perhaps affected with that. At [my previous

institution], I was teaching rich kids. And so this was interesting, to start something new. I think most of us came with this notion that it was something new, to break new ground, to bring to bear our experience in a way that would produce something new and unique. We had such notions in our head” (Doctoral Student Oral History, 1998).

Riesman and Jencks, in their 1966 paper, discussed the appeal for faculty coming to work at UMass Boston, despite its lack of resources:

To attract faculty, the University of Massachusetts could offer neither spectacular salaries nor scenery nor, to anyone who knew the condition of higher education in New England, assurances of that increment of annual improvements that all of us Americans and especially academics take for granted as part of a natural escalator of the free man. What was offered was the academically and culturally inviting Boston area and the chance, as people put it, of being in on the ground floor in a potentially exciting urban university (9).

In a recent interview, Gagnon spoke about the teaching expectations he had for the new faculty of UMass Boston:

Faculty from other institutions and people just finishing their doctorates loved the idea of being in Boston. So, the city was a great draw. It was made clear to them that, of course, we would not have any advanced courses until '67 . . . and could not expect to teach their own specialties until '67. And, on top of it, I said, we were going to require that every member of the faculty, no matter how senior, teach a freshman course at least once a year to keep in touch with the students who are coming in and what they know and what they need. And, of course, they all said, what a wonderful idea and started to complain only the year afterward (Interview, April 2003).

While the number of faculty beginning in the fall of 1965 totaled 75, the number of students attending UMass Boston during that same time totaled 200 more than originally had been anticipated, placing great resource burdens on an already underfunded institution. While President Lederle had promised the legislature a first class of 1000, more than 1200 started class that September at UMass Boston. Gagnon

spoke about how this “over-enrollment” occurred and the unintended consequences for many of the students:

When the President of the University and the Trustees appealed to the state to open the Boston campus, they promised there would be 1,000 students at the start. However, by the early summer, June, there were only, I think, 700 or so applicants. So they panicked and thought they had to admit everyone who applied at all, which they did, against the protests of John Ryan and me and some of the trustees, so that’s why we opened with 1240 students. The awful part of it was that there were maybe 300 who shouldn’t have been there. The attrition was high for that first class of ’69 (Interview, April 2003).

And, as Chancellor John Ryan stated at the first faculty and student convocation on September 23, 1965, the unexpected over-enrollment of students “created some problems which required quick and effective solutions. In view of our personal and institutional commitment to honest, qualitative teaching, the major problem concerned the number of students for whom a faculty member was responsible. From the outset, then, we faced a problem at the heart of educational quality” (4).

Riesman and Jencks reflected on the composition of the early students of UMass Boston in their 1966 paper:

There were students who would not have become students had this particular institution not been available for them in this particular year. These included not only the specially recruited underprivileged, a group of less than 50 altogether, but a number of older men and women in the Boston area who wanted to continue their educations after a stint in the Army or after holding various jobs . . . these older students provided something of an “upperclass” group for the younger freshmen and brought an element of greater sophistication and sometimes of greater cavaliness into the classroom . . . some of these students had already severed their ties with home and were living in apartments in the Boston area (12-13).

In discussing the underpreparedness of the early UMass Boston students, Riesman and Jencks continued: “On the whole, these students were not in any way prepared for the academic fare being improvised for them. They were surprised when the Chancellor in

his convocation address warned them that studies would be tough and demands high . . . they had to try to cope with the level intellectually while learning how to take notes and to work at the pace a four-course program required” (Riesman and Jencks, 1966, 13).

The first class of more than 1200 students began classes in September 1965, as President Lederle had promised. The building on 100 Arlington Street in downtown Boston, which had been rented the previous February, was still under renovation. A few observations, which provide a vivid picture of these first days at UMass Boston, are documented below:

When the students arrived at the University of Massachusetts-Boston for the opening of classes, they found the building still swarming with workmen and with elevators in no way prepared to carry the load of academic diurnal scheduling; indeed, the elevators like the parking remained a headache throughout the year. One floor housed the makeshift library; another eventually provided a cafeteria; the lobby served as an all purpose gathering place, as well as for admissions and other such offices; while faculty offices and classrooms were scattered throughout the building. Some of the pioneers would often sleep at their desks during these first desperate days at getting started amid the hurly-burly of conversion, delays and shortages of books, laboratory equipment, student lists and everything else . . . Those first days at Boston were marked by the long lines and bureaucratic fumbles characteristic of registration even at its best, and by students wandering about in the area looking for places to get a snack or to buy notebooks while trying to make up their minds as to what it meant to be a student at the University of Massachusetts at Boston (Riesman and Jencks, 1966, 12).

James Smith, in his student Commencement address to the first graduating class in 1969, reflected upon the first days of UMass Boston: “The first sound heard by the first student was the roar of a drill hammer tearing away at the old Gas building. The building, to this day, has never stopped being remodeled. What was originally offices, then a cafeteria, then offices again, is now a science lab. What was once an office, then made part of the main lobby, then a shipping room, is now an art gallery. The ladies

room on the fourth floor is now a chemistry lab. Where offices once stood there now stands a thirteen floor staircase” (Commencement Talk, 1969). Smith continued, in more detail, about the confused and chaotic beginnings of UMass Boston:

We have been honored by one visit by Governor Volpe, have had two Chancellors, three Directors of Student Affairs, four locations of the science library, five serious campus-site proposals, six locations of the student government office and seven hectic registration days. We’re on our fourth Registrar now. But throughout the noise, remodeling, organizational blundering and general confusion we have survived. Earning a degree has required a sense of humor as well as perseverance. Each student can smile when he gets to a classroom only to find it full of maintenance men busily turning it into something else, and each student can chuckle when he find that what was room 1-0215 last semester is 1-0222 this semester (The Alumnus, March 1969).

Chancellor Ryan, in his speech at the first faculty and student convocation on September 23, 1965, apologized to the students for the physical inconveniences they would be experiencing:

I regret the inconvenience you will experience over the next week or two until the library is fully functioning. We have established reading and study rooms on the third and sixth floors and a reserved-book circulation room on the third floor which will begin service on Monday. The cafeteria is already in operation, as you know, and will be much more suitable for you with the installation of the furniture next week. We will continue to adjust the space arrangements in our building to assist you to make the best use of your opportunities as students (6).

These observations of the first days of UMass Boston provide stark images of an institution attempting to provide the full range of administrative and student services and, of course, teach classes while building an operational infrastructure and undergoing major construction of the physical facilities. The observations also provide some evidence of the flexibility and willingness of the students, faculty and administrators to do whatever was necessary to get things up and running.

Dissenting Voices: A Changing Mission

Internal conflict about the implementation of the urban mission would arise on the UMass Boston campus within the first few years. Critics began to question the early educational vision and the curriculum offerings developed by the founders. While Gagnon and some of the other early founders of UMass Boston believed that a rigorous liberal arts curriculum was the best method to provide educational opportunities to nontraditional, underserved populations, others believed that broader curriculum offerings, including more emphasis on professional programs, was the best way to serve the urban, working class population of UMass Boston. Within the first few years of UMass Boston's development, this difference in educational philosophy would be a dominant issue on campus.

The founders believed that UMass Boston students would have the best chance to gain greater access to societal opportunities and be served best by a classic liberal arts education. This educational philosophy was a radical departure from the traditional model for large state institutions, where there was often an emphasis on professional programs to support upwardly mobile students. As Freeland points out in his 1992 book, Academia's Golden Age, "the idea of creating a campus for urban commuting students that focused on high-quality undergraduate education in the arts and sciences was both idealistic and radical. At its heart was the belief that young people who were constrained by circumstances to seek education in a public, urban university should have access to programs comparable to those offered by the nation's top residential college" (331).

As stated previously, the planning and early years of UMass Boston were heavily influenced by Professor Gagnon's vision and implementation of the institution's "urban

mission.” Gagnon’s vision was clear from the outset of the founding of UMass Boston and would be reiterated after the opening. For example, in his spring 1967 address to the faculty, he emphasized his principles for a UMass Boston education which included an “intensive, rigorous education in the first two years of college . . . [and] concentrating much of our best faculty strength in introductory courses . . . [and] concentrating our resources on Arts and Sciences. This means saying No to requests for undeniably useful programs – business, education, physical education, engineering, and many others in the foreseeable future” (Dean’s Spring Address, 1967, 3). He continued by stating, “our ideal, then, is not different from that of the Renaissance, which was to prepare a small number of men for leisure and the exercise of political power” (4).

The disagreement about differing educational philosophies is highlighted in a memo written by Richard Freeland, who was the President’s Office liaison to the Boston campus, to President Wood in 1970:

From the beginning, UMass/Boston was intended to be a commuter institution accessible to the population of Boston and its immediate environs, and the rhetoric of the school’s officials has stressed consistently both academic excellence and educational and technical services suitable to a modern urban population and environment. The clearly articulated priority, however, was academic excellence ‘in line with the standards set by Boston’s best private institutions.’ In practice, as the national pattern of community-oriented programs in urban universities teaches, the two tendencies of the rhetoric have tended to be mutually exclusive, particularly in a situation characterized by severely limited resources of money, time and personnel (Freeland memo, 1970, 6).

In addition to the questions critics raised about the appropriateness of the classic liberal arts curriculum for UMass Boston students, questions were also raised about the institution’s connection to the community – or, in the early years, the seeming lack of connection to the urban environment and the major social movements of the times.

Freeland’s perspective was that UMass Boston was being developed “outside the context

of the times . . . and [lacked] a connection with city and major social movements of the time” (Interview, May 2003).

The rebellion against the classic liberal arts education would come in the late 1960’s with the arrival of Dr. Francis Broderick, who was hired as the new chancellor in Fall 1968. Broderick, who came to UMass Boston from Lawrence University in Wisconsin where he was academic dean, was a historian well known for his work on W.E.B. DuBois, as well as a former Peace Corps director in Ghana. While he acknowledged the founders’ emphasis on teaching and undergraduate education and praised their efforts to resist the pressure to emphasize research and graduate education, Broderick believed, according to Richard Freeland in Academia’s Golden Age,

That in their zeal to provide disadvantaged students with the best in higher education, UMass/Boston’s leaders were isolating the campus intellectually and culturally from large parts of the urban community. Convinced that a new direction was needed, Broderick initiated programs to connect with important external agencies, like an institute to work with the public schools and service centers in communities adjacent to the new campus. He also brought the planning of additional liberal arts colleges to a halt, announcing that the next major program would be a College of Public and Community Service (Freeland, 1992, 333).

Broderick, with a strong background in American social thought and the history of minority and religious leaders, as well as an authority on social change in the United States, was ready to move UMass Boston in a new direction, building on the strong liberal arts curriculum to combine it with professional training programs. The College of Public and Community Service, which was founded in 1972, would be part of that new direction. This College would provide a new model for undergraduate professional education, focused on public and community service programs in urban areas and distinguished by its competency-based system of education.

In a memo to the UMass Boston faculty dated February 16, 1971, Broderick acknowledged the liberal arts curriculum as the foundation of the university, but also believed that broader curriculum options should be made available to UMass Boston students:

We know that our students, even with poor educational preparation, can respond to a traditional curriculum with understanding and enthusiasm. We know also that many of our students come to the university to prepare for careers that do not require graduate work. As a public institution in a society that has already made a college degree the passport to professional advancement and that is well on its way to making it a pre-requisite for most jobs, we cannot ignore the needs of these students or the needs of the society around them. On the contrary, we must...think of ways to put traditional liberal learning together with programs that prepare students for careers after graduation (8).

Broderick wanted to serve what he viewed as the wide ranging needs of the nontraditional, UMass Boston student population by offering a broader liberal arts curriculum and additional professional program options that would more specifically prepare students for future careers.

Exploring the Meaning of the Early Years

The history of UMass Boston is a rich and complex subject. For purposes of this paper, the focus has been specifically on the origins and planning for the opening of the campus. I have also briefly explored the early, and at times, competing visions of the mission of UMass Boston. As previously stated, it is important to note that this paper is not intended to be a full and comprehensive history of the institution, but rather one contribution to previous work and, hopefully, future work on the topic.

The story of UMass Boston is one of potential, hope, opportunity and commitment. It is also the story of institutional struggle, both internally and externally.

UMass Boston was founded at a unique and exciting time of great opportunity and growth in both public and private higher education. At this time, enrollments were at an all-time high and unprecedented resources, at both the federal and state levels, were being directed toward institutions of higher learning. Unfortunately, UMass Boston did not necessarily benefit from the same type of investment in public higher education that was being funded in other parts of the country.

Two different educational philosophies played a dominant role in the first five years of UMass Boston's history. The early founders envisioned a university in the mold of an elite, residential, private institution, providing nontraditional students with the highest quality, classic liberal arts education possible, perhaps rivaling that of the best private institutions. There is clear evidence that some of the vision and early planning of UMass Boston was developed with an emphasis on being everything Amherst was not. Within the first few years, a different educational philosophy, focused on infusing professional training programs into broader offerings of the liberal arts curriculum and increasing the focus on an exploration of urban issues, would set up a competing vision for UMass Boston's urban mission and how best to serve its nontraditional students.

There are a number of different reasons for the development of the conflicting visions of UMass Boston. Charles Knight, an English professor hired in 1965, spoke about one possible reason for the conflicting voices: "It was a university that was very much done on the fly in the beginning years. Which is one of the reasons why it was so contentious. Because in a sense people who became the first cadres, basically came to a very unformed university and so, therefore, they could project on it whatever future they thought was appropriate to higher education" (Doctoral Student Oral History, 1999).

Additionally, it could also be that the conflict facing UMass Boston was indicative of what other public, urban universities were struggling with. As the 1974 Report of the UMass Boston's New Directions Committee states:

Any university that aspires to greatness must embody an ideal of scholarship and academic achievement. This is the classical ideal, emphasizing intellectual excellence and detached inquiry. The public urban university embodies another ideal as well, the American commitment to democratic higher education . . . This democratic ideal, with its pulls toward egalitarianism in admissions policy and social involvement in the form of public service by the faculty, has always contained the potential for conflict with the classical ideals of excellence and detachment. The most successful public universities represent carefully managed balances of these competing historical impulses (1).

Perhaps this conflict between the classical and democratic ideals of the early, and subsequent, years of UMass Boston's development were inevitable, especially given UMass Boston's urban setting. As the New Directions Report of 1974 further states:

Cities represent two extremes of modern American life. They are our cultural and intellectual centers [which] provide a natural setting for scholarship and intellectual community. Cities also represent concentrations of educationally disadvantaged people seeking admission to degree programs and concentrations of social problems that should command the attention of a university faculty. The public urban university finds itself drawn toward both natures of the city. Its persistent dream is to combine the two (2).

While the early years of UMass Boston were often marked by the competing educational philosophies described here, there are ways in which both educational approaches contributed positively to the development of UMass Boston's urban mission. For example, the emphasis by the early founders on providing a high quality undergraduate education for nontraditional students, small class sizes, and strong faculty-student interactions has been a hallmark UMass Boston's commitment to fulfilling its urban mission throughout its history. The competing visions that would arise in the first few years of UMass Boston's founding also contributed to its urban mission through an

expansion of its curriculum offerings to serve a wider range of students, establishment of an extensive academic support system for underprepared students and an increased engagement in addressing urban problems. The debate of the 1960's about how best to serve UMass Boston students often pitted these different educational philosophies against one another, portraying them as mutually exclusive approaches to educational opportunities. Perhaps the best approach for serving a wide range of students is to be mutually inclusive and bring together the best aspects of both approaches, providing options for students which combine the liberal arts and professional education programs.

While UMass Boston has experienced various periods of struggle around the conflicting views of how best to serve the urban population, some things have stayed fairly constant throughout UMass Boston's history. For example, while the founders intentionally diverted resources away from funding staff support positions in order to fully fund instructional positions, this precedent, combined with inadequate funding, has translated to a long history of a lack of administrative staff support. One of the continuous struggles and enduring tragedies of UMass Boston has been the glaring lack of state investment in public higher education, broadly and in the Boston campus, specifically.

Due to the commitment and vision of the founders, and many others that have followed since, UMass Boston, in spite of the many internal and external struggles, has provided a high-quality education, marked by incredible strength in teaching, to thousands of students that may not have gained access to higher learning otherwise. In this way, UMass Boston has been fulfilling its urban mission in the most fundamental way by serving the educational needs of a nontraditional student population.

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- Dr. Paul Gagnon interviewed by Diane Bourque
- Dr. George Goodwin interviewed by Sarah Collie
- Dr. Duncan Nelson interviewed by Johanna Duponte
- Dr. Shaun O'Connell interviewed by Cheryl Joy Daly
- Dr. Richard Robbins interviewed by John King
- Dr. Fuad Safwat interviewed by Shelley Fortin
- Dr. Maxwell Schleifer interviewed by Julie Bell-Elkins
- Dr. Nicholas Tawa interviewed by Marguerite McLellan
- Dr. Adorna Walia interviewed by Jane Carney
- Dr. Walter Weibrecht interviewed by Peter Schuyler
- Dr. Leverett Zompa interviewed by Mary Dunn

Fall 1999:

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- Dr. Joan Lucas interviewed by Elizabeth Young
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