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# The UMass/Boston Friday Report #2

News and information about and for  
the Community from the Chancellor's Office

October 25, 1991

**Enrollments Down, Minority Percentages Rise** -- More minority students are attending UMass/Boston than ever before, despite a seven percent overall decrease in student enrollment, according to figures for the fall of 1991 just compiled by the University's Office of Policy Research and Planning. Minorities now represent more than 24% of the University's degree-seeking undergraduates for the fall 1991 semester, an increase over the previous high of 20.6% recorded a year earlier. The number of minority graduate students at UMass/Boston is also on the rise -- from 9% of the total degree-seeking graduate student population in 1990 to 11% in 1991.

The dropoff in enrollment to a total of 11,606 students was entirely in the undergraduate population, which experienced an 8.6% decline between 1990 and 1991, representing a loss of 885 students. Graduate school enrollment at UMass/Boston actually increased slightly during the same period, from 2,142 to 2,155, a 0.6% growth. While the overall total of freshmen applications received by UMass/Boston for the fall 1991 semester was lower than the previous year, the number of minority applicants rose by 11.8 percent, up to 768 from 687. The freshmen yield rate -- the index for measuring the number of students who are accepted and wind up attending the University -- climbed from 49.5% to 53.7%. Among minority students the rate was much higher -- 65.7%.

The University is concerned about the decline in enrollments. Both Chancellor **Sherry H. Penney** and Provost **Fuad Safwat** have made it clear that budget allocations are linked to enrollment levels. The Office of Enrollment Services is recruiting aggressively for new students for the spring and fall semesters, and the University Community has been asked to collaborate on ways to enhance student retention.

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**Calendar Dates** -- The Trotter Institute is sponsoring the first in a series of forums on Thursday, October 31, that will feature **Piedad Robertson**, Secretary of Education. She will be speaking at 2:30 p.m. in the Faculty Lounge, 11th Floor, Healey Library. Responding will be **Miren Uriarte**, director of the Gaston Institute, and **John D. O'Bryant**, vice-president for student affairs at Northeastern University.

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**Federal Grant to Project Alerta** The Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT) has received a three-year federal grant of \$441,821 that will be used to provide intensive instruction to talented and gifted Hispanic students at six Boston elementary schools. The grant from the Department of Education provides ILT's Project Alerta program with \$141,759 in the 1991 academic year, and the remainder of the funds in the following two years. Modeled after the University's highly successful TAG Hispanic program, which provides intensive learning sessions for talented and gifted middle school and high school Latino students, Project  
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## The Friday Report Cont'd

Alerta focuses on students in the 3rd through 5th grades.

Project Alerta has been operating as a pilot program for the last three years. According to director **Lucia Mayerson-David**, a staff associate at ILT, the new federal funds will enable the program to increase enrollment, expand its curricula and run year-round. The project's aim is to identify promising young students and place them in the type of challenging academic environment that will help them attain their full potential. One of the program's specific goals is to prepare these students for the entrance exam required by Boston's three select academic high schools -- Boston Latin, Boston Latin Academy and Boston Technical. About 240 students from six schools are now participating at our campus in accelerated hour-long courses in mathematics, science, computers, writing, and drama.

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**Conferences** -- The lack of financial security most older women in the United States face was the topic of a Gerontology Institute conference held on Tuesday, October 22d, at the John Hancock Conference Center. The meeting, involving a number of national experts, focused on the dynamics that contribute to the high poverty rates among women. It examined the impact low wages, part-time work, interrupted work history, and an outmoded Social Security and pension system have on women throughout the nation. The conference took place in the context of national statistics that attest to the growing problem of impoverishment among older women.

• **Lois Rudnick**, director of American Studies, has been coordinating a seminar this week on "American Studies for Curriculum Developers in History, Geography and the Social Sciences" that has drawn participants from such nations as Australia, Ghana, Mexico, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe. The aim of the conference, funded by the Academy for Education Development in Washington, D.C., was to focus on regional perspectives in American society and culture.

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**Faculty Notes** -- McCormack Institute staff members are working with **James Carlin**, receiver for Chelsea, on ways to bring financial stability to the bankrupt city. Involved on a "pro bono" basis are Interim Director **Raymond G. Torto**, and colleagues **Lou Di Natale**, **Murray Frank**, **Richard Hogarty** and **Joseph Slavet**. • English Professor **Lloyd Schwartz** recently published an article in *The New Yorker* magazine titled "Elizabeth Bishop and Brazil," which included two of her previously unknown poems he discovered during recent trips to Brazil, where for many years the poet had made her home. • **James Green**, director of the Labor Studies Program at the College of Public and Community Service, is advising the producers of an eight-part television documentary on America's Great Depression. According to Green, the PBS series, produced in Boston, promises to offer a perceptive view of life in America during the 1930s.

• Please send items of interest for publication in *The Friday Report* to **Walter D. Littell**, c/o Office of the Chancellor. Your submissions will be gratefully received.