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# The UMass/Boston Friday Report #9

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

January 31, 1992

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**Fall Conference Set on Italian Politics -- Professor Spencer**

**DiScala** has received a grant from the Italian government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to organize an international conference on the history of democratic socialism in Italy. The grant of 50 million lira, the equivalent of about \$45,000, will enable DiScala to bring together a panel of leading specialists on the history of Italian government and politics for the last 100 years. The conference, to take place at the Kennedy Library on September 10-12, is expected to draw numerous scholars and public figures, including **Arthur Schlesinger**, historian and White House aide in the Kennedy administration; **Richard Gardner**, ambassador to Italy in the Carter administration; **Valdo Spini**, undersecretary of state for the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; **Antonio Landolfi**, a member of the Italian Senate; and former Italian treasury secretary **Giuliano Amata**. According to DiScala, "The conference will reflect on the long history of the socialist movement in Italy, from its origin, through the Fascist years and on into the early years of the republic." DiScala is the author of two books on the socialist movement in Italy, and has written many articles on the topic for the *Christian Science Monitor*. A member of the faculty since 1970, he is currently working on a book that traces the history of Italy's government from the 18th century to the present day.

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**Debunking Eurocentric Theories of Black Culture -- Clinton**

**Jean**, a lecturer in black studies, has written a book titled *Behind the Eurocentric Veils: The Search for African Realities* in which he debunks long-held theories of black culture. Published by the University of Massachusetts Press last month, the book offers a critique of Eurocentric traditions of social and historical analysis, and argues in favor of studying African history and culture from a specifically Afrocentric point of view. Jean states that the poor fit between European theories on African culture and the realities of that culture has contributed to a tragic history of racism and exploitation of Africans and African-Americans. He argues for the historical priority of African culture and for the acceptance of African communal structures as models for peaceful, nonexploitative social organizations elsewhere in the world. Says Jean, "My book is a critique of liberal and Marxist sociology, and tries to address third world culture and history in a different way, especially black culture and history. Neither school of thought has been able to properly address the situation. They make assumptions of cultural practices and the history of evolution that do not apply in these cases. These people are at home in European culture, and reach mistaken conclusions."

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**Campus Notes** -- The McCormack Institute is making plans for a day-long April 8th conference at the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston to be co-sponsored by the University of Southern Maine's Muskie Institute. The conference will examine the fiscal crisis in the Northeast, with special attention to the economic, budgetary and political aspects. Leading

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## **The Friday Report Cont'd**

economists, policy makers and academics from throughout the region are expected to participate. • Management science professor **Sumer Aggarwal** has had an article published in the fall 1991 edition of the *Journal of General Management*. The essay, titled "Rewarding Top Managers for Company's Success," identifies the various ways in which successful managers typically are rewarded by large corporations, and offers a critique on the strengths and weaknesses of these practices, as well as a method for improving them.

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**Saving the State Money** -- Financial and accounting expertise provided by some 20 faculty and staff at UMass/Boston have helped Massachusetts improve its fiscal balance sheet by an estimated \$150 million through a combination of increasing federal reimbursements and instituting new cost-saving techniques. The so-called Revenue Maximization Project is spearheaded by the University's John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs, which is providing the service under contract at no cost to the Commonwealth. Since 1989, UMass/Boston faculty and staff knowledgeable in regulations governing federal entitlement programs and in public accounting and finance have been working with state officials to enhance non-tax revenues and to improve the efficiency of delivering these programs. Most of the work performed to date by McCormack Institute researchers has been in state agencies that deliver Medicaid services, since this is the largest of the federal entitlement programs. Massachusetts is reimbursed by the federal government for 50 percent of the costs of delivering Medicaid services. The thrust of the UMass/Boston project is to ensure that the Commonwealth receives all of the reimbursement to which it is entitled.

According to project director **Murray Frank**, a senior fellow at the McCormack Institute, the largest portion of new revenues has come about because of UMass/Boston's efforts to upgrade methods for claiming reimbursements. For example, by including all delivery costs and updating rates, UMass/Boston specialists working with the departments of mental health and mental retardation have been responsible for generating \$30 to \$40 million in new revenues for the state. Other recommendations for enhancing cost rates are now being reviewed by state and federal authorities, and may produce another \$50 to \$60 million during the next year. Upwards of another \$50 million in cost savings identified by Frank and his colleagues involve the close monitoring and modification of rate increase applications regarding Medicaid services. McCormack Institute researchers are working in other areas as well. In one project they are examining services provided under the special education law -- Chapter 766 -- to determine if these services are eligible for federal reimbursements. In another, researchers are trying to establish which personal care programs are eligible for reimbursements. Programs at the state's Department of Public Health are also being studied for their reimbursement potential. In still another example of their work, McCormack Institute staff members are reviewing how the Department of Revenue's child support enforcement program can be improved. They are examining child support enforcement procedures in other states and trying to identify aspects of the system that could be made more efficient through privatization.