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UMass Chooses a Political Executive

The Politics of a Presidential Search

Richard A. Hogarty

Horace Mann, the father of American public education, had served as president of the Massachusetts Senate prior to becoming the state's first secretary of education. Since then, as reformers succeeded in removing politics from the sacred groves of academe, appointing a politician to head the state's educational system fell into disfavor. Relatively recently, however, there have been two abortive attempts by politicians to reach the executive pinnacle of public higher education. Both James Collins, in 1986, and David Bartley, in 1991, were defeated in the quest to achieve this goal. Historical understanding of these battles is necessary to comprehend what followed. In 1995 William Bulger, another well-known politician, sought the presidency of the state university. This article focuses on the fierce controversy surrounding his appointment. Most faculty believed that only career academics were qualified to run the institution. Others felt that while the next president should be someone who cherished and respected scholarship, such a person need not necessarily be a scholar. These conflicting propositions were severely tested during the battle that ensued. The episode reveals the alliances, hostilities, and intrigues that thrive in Massachusetts school politics.

There is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things.

— Niccolò Machiavelli
The Prince

A Stormy Changing of the Guard

This is a study of political power in academic life. By the term "power" I do not mean something derogatory or petty, but rather something comprehensive involving all that people can do or draw upon to influence others to take desired actions on matters of public policy. The purpose of this article is to focus explicitly on the search for a new president of the University of Massachusetts that took place in the fall of 1995. After much public wrangling and controversy, its twenty-three trustees chose William M. Bulger, the president of the Massachusetts Senate, to fill the position. Urbane and erudite, he was a man of power and influence who personified the Boston Irish. A dedicated and unrelenting professional politician, Bulger was perceived as a nonacademic and a native son who was not likely to leave the state. As Massachusetts's foremost

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Chronology, 1990–1995

This is not a complete chronology but a list of dates relevant to the events reported in the article.

1990

- February 20 University of Massachusetts trustees appoint Joseph Duffey president to succeed David Knapp.
March 16 David Knapp officially retires.

1991

- March 1 Joseph Duffey accepts presidency of American University. June 5 Elbert K. Fretwell is appointed interim UMass president.

1992

- May 27 Michael K. Hooker is appointed UMass president.

1995

- May 11 Michael Hooker is reportedly in line for chancellorship at the University of North Carolina.
May 15 Trustees map presidential search strategy.
May 17 Trustee Peter Lewenberg meets with Governor William Weld to discuss upcoming search.
May 19 Michael Hooker accepts chancellorship at the University of North Carolina. Sherry Penney is appointed interim UMass president.
June 7 Board chairman Daniel Taylor appoints presidential search committee.
July 12 Search committee holds organization meeting.
September Search committee makes campus visits to discuss the search. Lewenberg interviews campus chancellors.
October 20 Search committee narrows applicant pool from sixty-six to fourteen candidates.
October 27 *Boston Globe* files lawsuit to open search process.
October 30 Search committee winnows candidate pool to seven semifinalists.
November 7-18 Two semifinalists drop out of search.
November 20 Search committee unanimously recommends three finalists to board of trustees.
November 28 Trustees appoint William Bulger UMass president.

Democrat on Beacon Hill, he was shrewdly attuned to its politics and political culture, which was of great significance in his selection.

To be sure, Bulger's nomination to the post touched off an intense and protracted struggle. Activists, from a variety of positions and perspectives, made a concerted effort to influence the outcome of the search, which seemed like a foregone conclusion. Most of the central actors favored Bulger as the candidate best suited for the job. Much impressed by him, the trustees firmly believed that his strong character, knowledge of the state, intellect, and passion outweighed other concerns, including his lack of experience in higher education. They also believed that changing conditions in the commonwealth demanded someone with a different background and different skills from those normally possessed by career academics. What was critical, of course, as far as Bulger's prospects were concerned, were the commitment of the trustees and the governor.

While most faculty endorsed the trustees' calculated decision, several expressed serious reservations about putting an old-style politician in charge of the public university system. The idea thoroughly alarmed them and evoked the expected outcry. This opposition manifested itself most notably on the Boston campus and in varying

degrees of intensity. Some politely questioned Bulger's appointment as a dubious proposition. Others vigorously objected on the grounds that it was politically intrusive and inappropriate. Still others ridiculed it as sheer folly. Appalled by the choice, they expressed their distaste for what they considered a *fait accompli*. In more ways than one, the Bulger option was anathema to them.

The media also expressed some caution, not so much about Bulger's lack of academic status but rather more about whether he could unlock the state treasury and make increased funding a reality. Other intervening elites viewed the controversy as symptomatic of a troubled university. Meanwhile, all this took place in a highly charged political atmosphere and the turbulence of a succession fight in the state Senate. In the end, however, the old-fashioned politics of personal power held sway. The twenty-member search committee unanimously recommended Bulger, a choice approved by every trustee except one. The motivation and interplay of forces behind his selection are developments worth examining. The story of this adventure, with all its palace intrigue and surreptitious maneuvering, deserves to be better known.¹

What is expected of a University of Massachusetts president? Ask the men and women who have recently held the office, which I have had the privilege of doing, and different answers come forth. In their view, they believe that university decisions are always collective — and have to be. Sheer size has something to do with it. Since the merger of its three-campus system with two other public universities in 1991, the UMass academic enterprise includes campuses at Amherst, Boston, Dartmouth, Lowell, and the Medical Center at Worcester. These five campuses enroll some 58,270 students, including 13,000 graduate students. The university employs 3,300 faculty members. In addition, there are 180,200 alumni living in Massachusetts and another 90,900 elsewhere.

Given the size and magnitude of the state university, the former presidents believe that a chief executive has to discover, rather than be told, how to effect change: by figuring out the five-campus system as a whole and by finding one's own personal style as an administrator. They see a university administration as a collection of individuals who have useful talents rather than as an arrangement of formal categories; as a team of effectively cooperating personalities rather than a group with sharply delineated functions. The basic challenge is whether the individual campuses will continue to operate with relative autonomy or adhere to a more centralized system.

Presidents perform at least three major roles in the operation of a public university. First and foremost, they are academic leaders who must struggle with the tensions between its teaching, research, and service responsibilities, between its moral and scientific functions, and between its personal and intellectual luminaries. This places tremendous demands on them — on their understanding of people and goals, on their patience, and on their ability to orchestrate highly discordant elements. Second, they are business managers who have to run a multimillion-dollar enterprise. In budget and management terms, this means agonizing over the difficult decisions that have to be made to keep the institution operating on a sound financial basis. Third, they are politicians who spend much of their time raising funds, lobbying state legislators, meeting with faculty, students, and alumni, and otherwise building a statewide constituency. Of the three, the academic leadership role is by far the most critical. A president can be active or passive in the roles of business manager and politician and still survive, but one who mishandles the academic leadership role is almost doomed to failure. A vice president for academic affairs can render valuable staff support, but the buck ultimately stops with the chief executive.

Day in and day out, the modern UMass president remains the chief initiator of policy and the mainspring of its governing system. He or she shapes the action. The tempo of presidential initiative varies with the disposition of the incumbent. Ever since Robert Wood was named to head the newly created three-campus system in 1970, the president's office has been the departure point for deciding the magnitude of budgetary resources devoted to each of its campuses and the priorities among those campuses. To succeed in the job, a president must be able to communicate effectively with the citizens of the commonwealth and to get along well with its political leaders. According to Wood, who was at the helm from 1970 until 1977, "No university president has ever had the commitment of a governor, and the future of the university has always depended on the legislature."²

The Clash of Two Cultures

A portrait of the university as a cohesive community of faculty scholars living the genteel life of the revered college professor is far too simplistic to capture the reality of academic life. It is far more complex than this portrait suggests. Most faculty members are intensely committed to a demanding career of teaching, research, and publishing, but they live quite apart from the activism and the rough-and-tumble of the political arena in Massachusetts. The two professional groups represent different cultures with much different value systems. Indeed, a wide disparity of values separates them. The contentious nature of politics underscores the tensions between the active and the contemplative life.

The academic culture is characterized by a commitment to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake or in a manner fundamentally unconcerned with practical application. Sheer intellectual curiosity drives the research endeavor, a characteristic that is especially alien to the quid pro quo and the pragmatism of Beacon Hill. Universities are the neutral ground where open debate and all points of view are welcome. Their primary mission is the discovery and dissemination of knowledge. As Gerhard Casper, president of Stanford University, has suggested, "In the best universities, teaching, learning, and research are all equally important elements of the all-embracing search to know."³

By contrast, the political culture is steeped in partisan politics, party discipline, and patronage. Ambitious politicians submit to leadership and discipline in anticipation of future rewards, working at solving real problems with the expectation of achieving political gain and partisan advantage. A politician is, above all, a person whose career depends on the successful negotiation of bargains. When confronted with conflicting demands, he or she helps to maintain a viable society by the process of mutual concessions. Political bargaining and compromise lie at the heart of the political process. The will to conquer and to make a difference also comes into play. As Robert Dahl and Charles Lindblom pointed out,

The role calls for actions such as compromise, renunciation, face-saving of oneself, which are morally ambiguous or even downright immoral to people with morally rigorous standards. Yet without the work of the politician a bargaining society would fly into its myriad separate warring parts.⁴

The distinctions between the two cultures are striking. The pragmatic creed of Beacon Hill differs remarkably from the objectivity prized by the rationalist academy.

The two cultures represent different professional callings that attract different personalities. Taking note of these distinctions, Robert Wood writes,

The personalities attracted to serious research are not typically endowed with the extroverted bonhomie of the successful politician . . . Qualities of empathy, gregariousness, warmth, and charm do not figure (at least formally) in evaluations for promotion or tenure. The typical academic is preoccupied with work and pursues avocations of an individualistic, not a team nature. Egos are strong, but they are more likely to express themselves in the satisfaction of objective research accomplishments than in affiliating with or manipulating others.⁵

Like many citizens in the Bay State, the faculty have become increasingly distrustful and cynical of the political realm. Given this deeply ingrained skepticism, it is not surprising that they are antagonistic toward politicians. Such hostility does little to encourage real links with real political actors within the system. Whenever academic interests collide with political interests, there is almost bound to be conflict. Only grudgingly and under pressure does the academy work out a piecemeal accommodation with the established order.

Russell Jacoby, a history professor at the University of California at Los Angeles, describes the American professorate as politicized, yet apolitical. Purely cerebral faculty members often know almost nothing beyond their own department, and they may be confined to a particular niche within it. Although most of them would never openly acknowledge it, and however much collectively they deny it, the granting of tenure is essentially a political act. Academic politics is often more sophisticated and played more subtly than real-world politics, but it is every bit as cunning and devious, if not more so. The late Wallace Sayre, a political science professor at Columbia University, was fond of saying, "The reason academic politics is so sordid is that the stakes are so low."

Purists will object to this conclusion, but it has a ring of truth about it that disarms the most sensible and responsible critic. Let me avoid any misunderstanding; I'm not attacking the faculty; each of us has unique strengths, and the university needs us all. But I do wish to sharpen our perception of the other culture.

Lessons from the Past

Unlike other regions of the country, New England has never been overly generous to its public institutions, assuming that much of the burden for higher education would be assumed by the private sector. Public ambivalence and competition from elite private colleges have inhibited the growth and development of the public sector. The history of academia is one long struggle between scholars, who want to govern themselves, and the outside world, which wants to hold them accountable. Massachusetts is among the states in the nation notorious for political interference in public higher education. School politics is played with much greater intensity than in other states. A *Boston Globe* editorial said it most succinctly: "Taking politics out of the Massachusetts public university system is like taking the coals out of Newcastle: A total scrubbing is probably futile."⁶ To explain why this is so, it is necessary to go back a bit.

From the genesis and infancy of public education, the lawmakers on Beacon Hill have always taken a proprietary attitude toward the state's public colleges and universi-

ties, speaking and acting as if they own them. This attitude and political behavior harkens back to the time when Horace Mann's oratory sparked the creation of the teaching "academies" before the Civil War and the Morrill Act of 1862 made Mass Aggie possible.

Because public colleges and universities are creatures of the state, they are accountable to the general public and its elected representatives. Their boards of trustees are appointed by governors on the recommendation of civic advisory boards. The budgets and programs of public institutions must not only be approved by the lay boards of trustees but by the governor and the General Court as well. Only the public sector is directly responsible to the public for its performance, assuring that its campuses serve the public good. These characteristics thus make the public higher education system susceptible to political control and manipulation.

The lesson that drove home the point was the major battle that erupted in 1986, when the state Board of Regents ignored the recommendations of its search committee and appointed James Collins, a state legislator and a nonacademic, as its chancellor. In response to these challenges, Governor Michael Dukakis, who felt that the integrity of the search process had been compromised, took a series of actions, firing the chairman of the Board of Regents, packing the board with three new members, removing Collins from office, and replacing him with Franklyn Jennifer, a black educator from New Jersey. It was a classic power struggle in which Collins was disparaged as a hack politician.⁷

A second major battle erupted in 1991 when former Speaker David Bartley sought the UMass presidency. The scenario followed almost the exact same script as the Collins affair. In fact, the similarity between Collins and Bartley as Irish-American politicians who hailed from the western part of the state was striking. In what turned out to be a bitterly fought contest, Bartley, who was then president of Holyoke Community College, was denied the job. Instead, the trustees appointed Elbert K. Fretwell, a career academic, as interim president.⁸ More than the personal hostility and bitterness that typically develops in these searches was involved. The refrain "hack politician" was the same as before. To be sure, Bartley was savaged by his adversaries. Four years later, having adduced one lesson from the experience, Bartley poignantly remarked, "I say, with humor, that if Bill Bulger becomes the savior of UMass, then I want to be known as John the Baptist because I got beheaded for it."⁹

A special irony lay in the defeat of Bartley at the hands of the palace guard. State legislators did not take kindly to the way in which their former colleagues had been mistreated. Bulger himself felt that an unfair standard is set for legislators. In his words, "We should not be disqualified for having served there."¹⁰ Anyone who watched these dramatic events unfold could have foreseen that the two great laws of timing and momentum were moving in the direction of a political executive. In hindsight, the Collins and Bartley skirmishes were only warm-ups for the main bout, setting the stage for the events that followed. Although it took a decade for the academic community to catch up with this thinking, the handwriting was on the wall.

In the aftermath of these two bruising battles, another important shift in the political winds would occur. Public higher education in Massachusetts and across America encountered a more hostile environment when protracted economic hard times began in the late 1980s and continued through the early 1990s. Indeed, the public mood had turned angry and sour. In April 1994, the Pew Higher Education Roundtable released a report about the realities of American higher education. Highlighted in the report was a

sentence that read, "The real anger at higher education comes principally from the makers and shapers of public policy — governors, legislators, regulators, heads of public agencies, and surprisingly, an increasing number from the world of private philanthropy."¹¹ With the faltering of the national economy and the collapse of the Massachusetts Miracle, this anger and the deterioration of the academic environment manifested itself in the Bay State.

The Leadership Roller Coaster

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the University of Massachusetts went on a roller-coaster ride of executive leadership. Between 1990 and 1995 it saw five presidents come and go without much to show for it by way of improvement; in fact, little change occurred. With the notable exception of David Knapp, who was at the helm from 1978 to 1990, most of these CEOs lasted only a year or so. This menagerie of short-timers included Joseph Duffey, Elbert K. Fretwell, Michael Hooker, and Sherry Penney. Starved for resources, the university, on their watches, floundered on the shoals of fiscal instability. Budget-tightening exercises so preoccupied their administrations that they overlooked long-range planning and resorted to deferred maintenance of campus buildings that fell into disrepair. Some presidents were ineffectual and unable to get the job done on Beacon Hill. A clue to the answer lies in the sober words of Jerome Mileur, professor of political science at Amherst, who commented: "The folkways of Massachusetts politics have caused previous presidents of UMass to stumble and sometimes to fall."¹²

As the economy went from boom to bust, the system CEOs had tough sledding in hard times. State appropriations for UMass dropped from \$352 million in 1988 to \$271 million in 1992 as the recession took its toll. The situation was alarming, adjustment painful. Faculty and staff, who received no salary increases for three years running, at one point were furloughed without pay for a brief time. Working under the pressure of recurring deficits, antitax pressures, and the rising costs of higher education, the presidents faced a series of reversals, creating a deepening sense of a missed opportunity. Four did not stay very long. Both Fretwell and Penney had been appointed as interim presidents, and as such were given short-term limits. Both Duffey and Hooker proved to be birds of passage, moving on to greener pastures whenever the first opportunity presented itself. Some would say they opted for better jobs. Duffey had previously served as chancellor at Amherst for eight years, from 1982 to 1990.

On balance these five presidents believed that given the pressures under which they worked and the limitations of the office, their personal performances were at least the best that could be expected, and in Knapp's case exceeded justifiable expectations. State appropriations at UMass, adjusted for inflation, had fallen 26 percent over the past sixteen years, compared with a national average of 11 percent.¹³ Cutbacks in state funding threatened the institution's well-being and compelled severe curtailment of academic programs. At the flagship campus in Amherst, combined verbal and math SAT scores for the entering class had declined from 1,050 in 1989 to a new low of 994 in 1994. Meanwhile the tuition had increased sharply, from \$2,000 in 1988 to \$5,500 in 1995. With fees, room, and board, the cost was \$9,702 for state residents and \$16,048 for out-of-staters, making it one of the most expensive state universities in the country. The aging buildings on the five campuses were in deplorable shape, needing almost a billion dollars' worth of repairs. One professor took up a collection to replace the broken elec-

tric clock in his classroom. In January 1995, Charles Baker, the secretary of administration and finance, wrote a letter to President Hooker in which he indicated that UMass faculty were overpaid and underworked. To make matters worse, Governor William Weld vetoed a \$10 million increase in the state's higher education budget, but his veto was subsequently overridden by the legislature.

Instability at the top, along with low faculty morale, were part of the overall problem. These forces combined to make the forging of presidential policy a hard job. It is one on which the outside world has imposed more and more pressures; internal resources have dwindled steadily, and reinforcement and private support seem to be urgently needed. Massachusetts ranked thirty-eighth among the fifty United States in per capita state taxes appropriated for public higher education.

The Hooker Disaster

Anytime something goes wrong in the system, the tendency is to blame it on the president, which is essentially what happened to Michael Hooker. The West Virginia native did not find a receptive political culture in Massachusetts. Recruited to the University of Massachusetts in 1992, he came highly touted both for his administrative experience and for his professional achievement — he had served as president of Vermont's Bennington College and the University of Maryland at Baltimore. The trustees, who were naturally attracted to this cultivated figure, praised their choice.¹⁴ But for all his reputation as an academic leader, Hooker's ideas and recommendations tended to be unpopular.

It must be remembered that Hooker had never headed a multicampus system. While he was being courted for the UMass position, he assured the trustees that he would stay for a minimum of ten years, turning the institution into one of the best and most responsive public universities in the country. However reassuring he may have been, the truth is that the bloom was off the executive rose in less than three years. In evaluating his performance, Ian Menzies, a respected journalist, wrote:

Michael Hooker was a near disaster in terms of raising the quality and image of the five-campus system. A not unintelligent man, though outwardly stiff and seemingly humorless, Hooker never surfaced in Massachusetts, either with the legislature or the public. Faculty reaction was ho-hum. He lacked style, did not mix easily, seemed uncomfortable with others and had no idea how to deal with the media or speak successfully on behalf of the 60,000 students and 12,000 faculty and staff. Perhaps the one remark the public will recall, a virtually meaningless comment, was the grade he gave the university — a "C[+]." How can you grade an entire university? Oh, and some may recall him pledging to stay 10 years to make UMass a world-class university.¹⁵

Menzies's judgment is harsh, but it was widely accepted. Although Hooker succeeded in Vermont and Maryland, he clearly fell flat on his face in Massachusetts. The faculty did not share the enthusiasm that the trustees showed for him, discouraged in part no doubt by the lack of salary increases. To students, Hooker was distant, arrogant, and difficult to connect with, and he did not get along well with state legislators, who also found him pompous and arrogant. One example will suffice to illustrate his political ineptitude. Prior to a scheduled meeting, Thomas Finneran, then chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, had instructed Hooker not to bring along his entourage. But Hooker ignored the advice and brought his staff, which earned him only the contempt of the future Speaker.

Worse than that, Hooker had seriously alienated the faculty who were outraged by the report card he had issued. They saw this action as a major public relations blunder, precipitating his inevitable downfall. Cynics felt that he had assigned a grade of C+ so that he could later change it to make his administration look good. The president's personal credibility suffered accordingly. The Amherst faculty complained about his over-centralizing power and his not doing enough to promote intercampus collaboration. They derisively referred to his staff as the Baltimore Dolts in employing a slash-and-burn strategy against the president. As one participant recalled, "Hooker was demonized by the campuses as a bad guy."¹⁶

On May 19, 1995, Hooker, not surprisingly, decided to leave UMass to accept the chancellorship of his alma mater, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Before leaving, he acknowledged that he had underestimated the difficulty of convincing Massachusetts citizens and their elected officials about the importance of public education. His hasty departure, coming just three months after he had initiated a broad review of instructional programs, was a major embarrassment. Rumors had been circulating for months that he was a candidate for president at various other institutions. Critics viewed him as an "opportunist" and "little more than a carpetbagger."¹⁷ Ralph Whitehead, professor of journalism at Amherst, remarked, "My sense is that Michael Hooker won't leave that many footprints. He always behaved like a short-timer." John Bracey, secretary of the Amherst Faculty Senate, wanted to eliminate the president's office, saying, "We can use this as an opportunity to assess whether we really need a president's office and whether we've gotten our money's worth."¹⁸

Under the circumstances, the trustees were shocked and dismayed by what was happening. They were also angry because they had learned from newspaper reporters, not from Hooker himself, that he was a finalist for the North Carolina position. Board chairman Daniel Taylor was the most disappointed trustee, because he had invested so much faith and confidence in Hooker.¹⁹ It was *déjà vu* for some trustees, who still winced recalling how Joseph Duffey suddenly jumped ship in 1991 to accept the presidency of American University in Washington — not a gracious exit either. Burned once was bad enough; burned a second time was more than some trustees could countenance. They had become disenchanted with career academics who breezed in and out of a revolving president's door. Both Fretwell and Hooker were perceived as not having "standing" with either the legislature or the business community.

All of which meant that the trustees were skeptical of the academic model. Now most of them were receptive to embracing a feasible alternative model such as a "good manager" or a corporate executive. In discussing a strategy for the upcoming search at their meeting on May 15, the trustees argued about how inclusive the process should be, with vice chairman Robert Karam suggesting that by including all constituencies, "We run into a problem of time and control."²⁰ He wanted to restrict the search process to the trustees alone, which elicited strenuous arguing because some of the trustees felt that it would undermine the effectiveness of any candidate selected. For the moment, however, this issue remained unresolved.

On May 19, the very day Hooker departed for North Carolina, the trustees appointed Sherry Penney as interim president. Having served as chancellor of the Boston campus since 1988, she was the most senior academic administrator within the system. However, the trustees stipulated that she could not be a candidate for the permanent job; by accepting this constraint, she took herself out of consideration.²¹ During her brief eight months in office, Penney successfully negotiated the faculty contract and got the bond bill to repair the physical plant passed.

The Complexities of Searching for a System Head

A review of the complexities of a presidential search seems in order. Recruiting such a person is a lot more involved than recruiting a campus chief executive or provost. Attracting someone with the necessary leadership ability and experience is a daunting task. For one thing, the talent pool is relatively small, and the growing intrigue of the job discourages most academics from applying. In another sense, it is a major leap to go from being a campus provost to a system head. Keeping such a person in the post for any appreciable length of time is even more problematic. Conventional wisdom these days indicates that the average tenure of a public university president is about five years.

Writing in the September 1995 *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Courtney Leatherman reported that three major public universities — California, North Carolina, and Washington — had experienced difficulty in attracting a qualified person to head their systems. For one reason or another their presidential searches had been botched. Leatherman went on to say

Many watchers of the presidency believe that tough searches at public institutions now represent the rule, rather than the exception, because the jobs are so complicated, the climate so political, and the scrutiny so public. But a few others believe that botched searches have become the rule because most public colleges refuse to change the way they look for presidents.²²

Tradition has always played an important role. In the past, most colleges and universities, both public and private, have tended to select administrators with good faculty backgrounds: men and women experienced in the teaching-learning process and primarily concerned with that, but willing to devote a certain portion of their professional lives to manning top administrative posts and able to do so effectively. Most faculty consider the recruitment of a president the exclusive domain of the academy.

One long-standing myth in American academic folklore is that unless an institution spends from nine to ten months engaged in a nationwide search, the search is somehow not legitimate. By contrast, private enterprise takes much less time to find a chief executive. Add to this the scholar's natural dislike for administrative work, and the recruitment problem becomes even more complicated. As Sherry Penney describes it: "Gone are the days when you took . . . faculty [members] who had written ten books and made them president. What is needed is a miracle worker. What's needed in a college president nowadays is growing and changing all the time. You need a variety of skills."²³

Another complicating factor is the open meeting law in Massachusetts. This statute assures the general public the right to know what is going on. In reality, it means that the media are allowed to attend the meetings of the search committee and to print the names of the semifinalists in the applicant pool. These constraints apply only to public institutions; private universities are exempt from the requirements of the statute.

The Search Process

On June 7, 1995, Daniel Taylor appointed a presidential search committee to identify the most qualified candidates and to recommend three of them to the board. This committee consisted of fourteen trustees, including two students. Taylor named trustee Peter

Lewenberg, a prominent Framingham businessman and an ardent UMass Amherst alumnus, as chair. Originally, the board informed the faculty governing bodies that it intended to appoint only one faculty member to the search committee. Disturbed by this announcement, faculty leaders from the five campuses got together as an intercampus committee to file a formal protest. They met with Lewenberg in Worcester on the evening of June 19 to discuss the matter and to plead their case for increased representation. At one point they threatened to withdraw their participation unless more faculty were added, arguing that such a boycott would deprive the search of a "system voice," and therefore lack a certain authenticity from the start.²⁴

As a result of their protests, Lewenberg recommended to Taylor that he appoint five faculty members, one from each campus, and one alumni member, a move that gave faculty 20 percent of the vote on the search committee. The board, which controlled the search committee, reserved the right to select the faculty from a list of names submitted by their respective campus governing bodies. When fully constituted, there were four women and two minorities on the committee.

In a manner similar to most corporate executives, Lewenberg gave almost single-minded attention to the task. With a businessman's perspective and an assignment affecting the entire university, he made sure that an able deputy managed the internal affairs of the search committee, which set up its own office at 10 Tremont Street, separate from the president's office and from any of the five campuses. Elizabeth Farrell served as its executive assistant, while Joyce Kirby acted as its legal counsel.

At its first organizational meeting on July 12, the search committee was divided into three working groups and assigned specific tasks: (1) selecting a search firm; (2) drafting a position profile; and (3) drawing up a compensation package. These subcommittees were chaired, respectively, by trustees Myra Kraft, Robert Karam, and John Naughton.

Because they recognized early on that the talent pool of academic system heads would be small, they took great pains to establish search procedures that went by the book. During the month of September they visited each campus and solicited campus views on the search. Lewenberg himself took responsibility for conducting interviews with each of the five campus chancellors. He also consulted with Judith McLaughlin, a lecturer at Harvard University who specializes in the study of presidential searches. Over and beyond this, the search committee advertised the position in the standard professional journals and newspapers, especially those which reach out to women and minorities. For his part, Lewenberg wanted to err on the side of inclusion rather than exclusion. He was ready to move.

The search committee hired A. T. Kearney Education Practice of Alexandria, Virginia, one of the nation's leading search firms. Of the several criteria the committee established for selecting candidates, the primary ones were (1) the capacity for strong institutional leadership; (2) a strong commitment to the ideals of the academy; (3) effective managerial and communication skills; and (4) the ability to represent forcefully the university's interests in the commonwealth. "We feel we need to cast our net further and wider than has been done in the past," said Lewenberg, speaking to a group of faculty at Amherst. "The job requirements may be as much managerial as they are academic."²⁵

During the next three months, John Phillips, the A.T. Kearney consultant, proceeded to assemble and display the usual academics from the usual public institutions. The committee also recruited prospects from the business community and government. To

ensnare the latter, Lewenberg cast a broad and loose net. The committee did not impose a deadline or cutoff date for nominations, mainly because they wanted to continue searching until they had identified the best qualified person.

Working with Phillips, they compiled an impressive list of candidates. Unfortunately, Phillips, who was good at his job, had to be hospitalized for an illness during the week of October 23. Thereafter remaining unavailable, he was replaced by another Kearney firm corporate headhunter. By October 30 the search committee had considered more than seventy qualified candidates from across the country. It narrowed its list to seven semifinalists for a round of interviews and background checks, and chose the three finalists from this list.

Bulger: Consummate Politician and Public Personality

From start to finish, William Bulger emerged as the dominant figure in the search, so the specter of the Senate president loomed over the search from the very outset. The prime mover behind his nomination was trustee James O'Leary, both a UMass Boston alumnus and a former MBTA general manager in the Edward King and Michael Dukakis administrations. Familiar with the operations of state government, he had known Bulger for many years, and the two were good friends. O'Leary initially probed to find out whether Bulger would be interested in the job.²⁶

O'Leary was not alone, for he was soon joined by other trustees in promoting Bulger, namely, Michael Foley, Heriberto Flores, Robert Haynes, and later Robert Karam, all on the search committee. Before long Bulger signaled his interest. The governor's office also floated a trial balloon, which proved favorable. O'Leary then lobbied his fellow trustees and other influential state officials. Bulger was nominated for the presidency by three different people — John Cullinane, a businessman, Thomas Aceto, the president of North Adams State College, and John Okray, the student trustee from the Boston campus. They acted on their own without contacting Bulger.

Once the trustees knew that Hooker was leaving, they were convinced that what the university needed most was a leader who understood the political culture of Massachusetts, one who could make its case with the legislature and articulate its mission to the public. In their eyes the Senate president was the ideal person to fill that role. They considered him a point man of star quality. One of the motives behind such an action was expressed directly by trustee Robert Haynes, who said, "The thing that the university lacks is a relationship with the governor and the legislature. We need someone who can make the connection up there."²⁷ Afterward Dan Taylor acknowledged that Bulger's appointment was motivated by a recognition that if the university was to rise to the first rank, improved relations with the legislature were vital. Lewenberg felt that Bulger's access to private and corporate philanthropy was just as important as his connections with the legislature.²⁸

Bulger had a good working relationship with the business community as well as with a host of civic groups. He strived hard to convey a posture favorable to business and devoted much of his time to helping various cultural and community service organizations. He sat on the boards of trustees of the Boston Public Library (BPL), the Museum of Fine Arts, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the Massachusetts General Hospital. Coming off a successful \$16-million-dollar fund-raising drive for the library, Bulger had tapped into a rich reservoir of private philanthropy as well as a network of influence and wealth. While he appealed politically to the deprived urban lower classes, he always

courted the rich and the powerful. As historian Thomas O'Connor puts it, "Publicly, Bulger plays to the crowd, but privately, he walks with the elite. There's always that fascinating love-hate relationship of the Irish toward the Yankees. On the one hand, you've got to tweak the Yankees. On the other hand, there's a desire for a certain level of respect."²⁹

Before examining the furor over the appointment, it is worth taking a careful look at Bulger's public career and rise to power. It can also better illuminate some central themes that arose during the search. A complex and controversial personality, Bulger was a man of obvious talents and skills. Adept with people, he usually displayed a certain personal charm and Irish wit. A shrewd judge of character, he was at the same time a man of warm sympathies. Neither a liberal nor a conservative, Bulger was an operator of quick intelligence and strong ambition who stated many lofty principles convincingly, eloquently, and even passionately. Some people felt that his actions did not always match his rhetoric.

A native of South Boston, Bulger was regarded as a loyal son of Southie, where he grew up as a poor boy during the Great Depression and first learned the ways of the political world. His father was a blue-collar worker who had lost an arm as a result of a railroad accident in which he was pinned between two freight cars. With no worker's compensation in those days to tide them over, the family lived amid poverty in the Old Harbor public housing project.

From these humble origins, young Bulger was educated in the Jesuit classical style, graduating from Boston College High School, Boston College, and Boston College Law School. These three credentials earned him the sobriquet triple eagle, the common insignia for all three Jesuit institutions. The story is told that an elderly priest who spotted his potential for learning talked him into attending BC and put up the money for his first year. Bulger then interrupted his college education to serve in the army during the Korean War, returning from military service with the benefits of the GI Bill to finance the rest of his education.

As Senate president, Bulger had close ties with John Silber, the outspoken and controversial president of Boston University who had run unsuccessfully for governor on the Democratic ticket in 1990. He had helped Silber obtain the Commonwealth Armory for BU in 1982. In addition, Bulger held an adjunct faculty post at Suffolk University and taught courses at Boston College Law School.

Psychologically drawn to politics at an early age, Bulger worked in political campaigns during his youth and became president of his senior class in high school. He displayed a flair for political showmanship by entertaining his classmates with impersonations of the incomparable James Michael Curley. During his last year in law school, Bulger entered politics and got himself elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives, where he served from 1961 until 1970. Enduring the typical frustrations of a freshman legislator, he chafed under the lackluster leadership of Speaker John Thompson, who was known as the Iron Duke. While sparring with Republicans, Bulger settled into place and managed to get his share of bills passed, among them the first child abuse law in the history of the state. Thereafter, Bulger was on his way.

Short in stature, Bulger had charisma. His dramatic oratory flowed in the classical style and was laced with quotes from Greek and Roman statesmen. His intelligence won him grudging acceptance from many of his fellow state legislators, but his constituents remained almost in constant siege. The liberal press maligned them as racists or bigots; occasionally they retaliated sharply. Although Bulger was open-minded in discussion,

once he made up his mind he clung to his opinions with unbending Irish stubbornness. This, however, did nothing whatsoever to diminish the fervor with which he worked to achieve his goals. Constant achievement was as necessary to his spirit as to the most dedicated athlete, and he seldom allowed himself to get rigidly boxed into a corner without finding some avenue of retreat. He usually obeyed a pragmatic political ethic, but many believed him to be also a man of compassion and political courage. Like his boyhood idol James Michael Curley, he could be trusted to confront the power and arrogance of the Yankee privileged class.

In 1971 Bulger moved up to the state Senate, where he quickly made a name for himself. His elevation, less than a decade later, to head of the Senate was an indication of his native intellectual ability and of his superb political skills. He pushed through landmark legislation that opened the wet-sand stretch of coastal beaches to the general public. He also fought for interdistrict school choice, charter schools, and a constitutional amendment that was intended to remove blatantly anti-Catholic language. This provision had been put in the state constitution in the mid-1850s during the heyday of the Know Nothing movement, whose driving force was anti-Catholicism. Critics, like the Massachusetts Teachers Association, charged that his amendment would allow public school money to go to Catholic and private schools. But Bulger was a lonely voice in the turbulent sixties and seventies. The city of Boston had a powerful friend in him when local aid was distributed each year, and he played a pivotal role in the creation of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority and the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority.

Bulger then pressured the board of the Convention Authority to hire his top aide, Francis X. Joyce, as its executive director. It gave Joyce, an alumnus of UMass Boston and Suffolk Law School, lifetime tenure. This episode triggered a firestorm of controversy that would not subside, for the media's revulsion toward cronyism was fairly constant over the years. Yet patronage, in Bulger's view, was simply taking care of one's own. Among his Boston Irish constituents, it was the first rule of life. Over time, Bulger had distributed countless jobs to urban ethnics with a deliberate eye to elections. He even joked about the MBTA's standing for Mr. Bulger's Transportation Authority. The Carmen's Union was one of the most powerful public service employees unions in the state.

More than was appreciated at the time, Bulger managed to restore the tarnished image of the Senate after it was rocked by scandal and political corruption in the late 1970s. Two state senators, Republican Ronald MacKenzie of Burlington and Democrat Joseph DiCarlo of Revere, the majority leader, had been convicted of accepting bribes from a construction company that had built the UMass Boston campus. Both were sent to federal prison. The Ward Commission was established to correct these abuses. As fate would have it, DiCarlo's going to jail gave Bulger his big break. With the way clear, Kevin Harrington tapped Bulger as his successor for Senate president.

During his thirty-five years in state politics, Bulger became a force to be reckoned with in Massachusetts. As much as any politician in the Bay State, he understood the essence of the political game. He was a formidable competitor in the fierce competition for attention and approval that always exists in state government. His long legislative career had made him a master of institutional politics as practiced on Beacon Hill. A power broker and a deal maker, he was proud to be called a mere politician. More than this, he was an urban populist who fought for the interests of the poor, the disabled, the elderly, and blue-collar working people. In their eyes, Bulger appeared as the champion

of the common man who wanted what they wanted. He reached out for contact, and indeed, for confrontation.

In political parlance, Bulger was known as a hardball politician who played for keeps. He was as shrewd, as cunning, and as ruthless as they come. For such politicians, winning is all important, whatever the issue or whatever the cost. In doing battle with his political competitors, Bulger earned a fearsome reputation, which, inevitably, invited others active in state affairs either to ignore him or to risk defying him. A reputation for strong leadership depends on more than just personal qualities.

Possessing the means to punish or reward is also important, and Bulger did not hesitate to use those resources at his command. One episode revealed more than any other his forceful tendencies. In 1981 Bulger used the state budget as an instrument to punish George Daher, chief justice of the state Housing Court. Daher had angered Bulger by refusing to appoint the son of his friend and political mentor, Patrick “Sonny” McDonough, to a clerkship. Incensed by having his court budget slashed and his judicial power diluted, Daher blasted Bulger, calling him a corrupt midget. Later, Daher was pressured by his judicial colleagues to apologize for his intemperate remarks.

A similar fate befell Democratic senator William Keating of Sharon, who challenged Bulger’s leadership. Keating was furious at Bulger for not having appointed him chair of the powerful Senate Ways and Means Committee. Internal dissension in the Senate grew. In 1994 Keating and his small band of followers — Democrats who hailed from all parts of the state — fielded a slate of candidates who ran to oppose Bulger. Taking their Beat Bulger campaign on the road, they made him the target of their rebellion. After a tough fight, the Keating forces were soundly beaten by the Bulger organization.

This was not the first time that Bulger’s leadership had been challenged. In 1973 state representative Barney Frank of Newton, who is now a congressman, forged an alliance between the liberal Democratic Study Group and the Black Caucus. This coalition attempted to gerrymander Bulger out of office by creating a district that would guarantee the election of a black senator. Frank’s redistricting scheme, which would have unseated Bulger, was not adopted. The danger in such a game is that it can boomerang — liberals were astonished, several years later, when the House Democratic leadership gerrymandered Frank’s congressional district, making it difficult for him to win reelection. Turnabout was considered fair play.

“All politics is local,” to use Tip O’Neill’s favorite expression, but it is also a matter of perception. Because Bulger frequently played his tough brand of politics, his bureaucratic enemies perceived him as vindictive, mean-spirited, dictatorial, tyrannical, iron-fisted, secretive, intolerant, and frighteningly authoritarian, using these pejorative adjectives to describe him whenever it was convenient. In their view, he was a modern despot. Other politicians tended to defer to him rather than resist. Bulger’s brilliance lay in fashioning political strategy and tactics, his intuitive grasp of personalities, and his manipulation of men and women to do what they otherwise would not have done.

Bulger plunged heartily into ethnic politics. He enjoyed marching in the annual Saint Patrick’s Day parade in South Boston and in hosting a breakfast gathering at the Bay-side Club, where he delighted his guests by singing Irish folk songs and roasting his fellow politicians. American presidents like Ronald Reagan, George Bush, and Bill Clinton called him at this celebration and engaged in jovial banter. His public style and strategy endeared him to his supporters but infuriated his enemies.

Loved and hated with equal passion, Bulger was a figure of controversy from the outset of his career. In the seventies and early eighties, he found himself thrust into the

crucible of Boston's busing crisis. After nearly a decade of political and legal battles, reflecting more than a century of stored-up fears and antagonisms, desegregation came to the local public schools. Discontented minorities remained anxious but isolated. The racial tensions behind this conflict fueled a political fire that would burn with increasing intensity. The Irish of Charlestown and South Boston stood fast and fiercely resisted federal court-ordered school busing with a passion. The antibusing movement provided local Democratic leaders with an organizing focus for a variety of discontents and aspirations. Bulger, confronting police commissioner Robert DiGrazia outside South Boston High School, accused the tactical police force of overreacting in arresting and beating up protesters.

No other question did more to divide and inflame the city than this highly volatile issue. Vehement conflict shattered lifetime friendships and pitted race against race and class against class. Desegregation contributed to a mass exodus known as white flight to the suburbs. Because federal judge Arthur Garrity refused to involve suburban communities in solving the problem of racial imbalance in the schools, the burden fell entirely on the central city. The Irish regarded Judge Garrity as a lace-curtain Irishman from the suburb of Wellesley who had turned on his own people. The same characterization was applied to U.S. senator Edward Kennedy, who could not calm the unsettled old loyalties. The busing conflict, which fed Irish hostility along with the inequities of class and race, exploded into episodes of racial violence in September 1974. The racially troubled city was torn apart by the ravages of righteous pride, of anger and fear, and of tribal clan-nishness. Civility and its restraints largely disappeared, compounding the atmosphere of hatred and distrust. The bitter residue had left its emotional scars as well as its legacy of racism.

During the busing crisis the media anointed instant heroes and villains, Bulger, of course, being cast as a villain. Because of his role in the antibusing movement, the press branded him a provincial South Boston politician, a redneck racist, and a maverick Democrat. Bulger seized the opportunity from these upheavals and recognized the power of images and stereotypes in determining voting behavior and party loyalty. While explaining his opposition to forced busing, Bulger again demonstrated that his strongest antipathies charted his course. His reaction to busing was understandably complex. He obviously experienced intense cross pressures, of which his school choice and school voucher ideas may have been a manifestation.

His position was realistic, even if it was not embraced by liberals. The real issue in the busing controversy, as Bulger saw it, was not between black parents and white parents but between parents and the state. He was not opposed to bringing students into communities such as South Boston, but he was opposed to sending them out of their local neighborhoods. No parent, in his view, should be forced by the state to send a child elsewhere. To this day Bulger insists that he was right.

That definition of the issue seemed to me to compel an obvious solution: give all parents a genuine opportunity to choose a school for their children. The goal, after all, was to rescue children from undesirable schools, not to evict them from desirable schools. Those ends could not be achieved by wielding the hammer of the state in the form of forced busing.³⁰

Bulger was vilified in the press for taking such a defiant posture, but he was hailed as a hero in his own district. The voters returned him to office by comfortable margins whenever he ran for reelection, a sign that constituency and leader were attuned to each other's calculations. Much of his success depended upon a secure political base. Never-

theless, his resistance to busing had statewide repercussions. The conventional version, as interpreted by Anthony Lewis in *Common Ground*, is that the conflict played to status and racial politics that made Bulger unelectable outside Boston.³¹

Burned by the press for his defiance of busing, Bulger became distrustful of the media, particularly the *Boston Globe*, which blamed the conflict on Irish parochialism and white racism. At the same time, it could hardly disguise its own thinly veiled anti-Irish and anti-Catholic bias. Given Bulger's opposition to abortion and gay rights and his support for school choice and a voucher plan, he was viewed by the liberal media as not being politically correct on these hot-button issues. But he showed no signs of buckling under the pressure.

Meanwhile, fellow Democrats like Governor Michael Dukakis and Mayor Kevin White, who supported busing, flourished as media favorites, the darlings of the liberal press. While they could do no wrong, Bulger could do nothing right. He knew instinctively that no matter what he did, he would never have the approval of the media or the liberal wing of his party, but he would have their respect. Since it was a no-win situation for him, he made it a policy not to grant interviews to the press.

Strangely enough, even though he had a running battle with the press, Bulger became a subject of media fascination. Part of it could be attributed to his charisma and part to his political resiliency. Some of it was no doubt owing to his maverick tendencies of bucking the incoming liberal tide. Whatever the reason, he remained in the public lime-light. In a September 1992 CBS television profile on *Sixty Minutes*, Bulger was portrayed in a favorable light by Morley Safer, who described him as a political relic or throwback to a bygone era and a vanishing breed of Irish political bosses. Favorable articles also appeared in *Gentleman's Quarterly* and *The New Yorker*. Bulger's capacity to perplex, confuse, and contradict the prophecies of media observers and commentators was legendary. His unpredictability simply added to the legend.

Like the fabled James Michael Curley, Bulger had earned a place in the state's political folklore. He once threatened to reroute a section of the Massachusetts Turnpike through the middle of the Boston Edison plant unless it stopped polluting the air over South Boston. The company got the message and soon cleaned up its act. No one captured Bulger better than newspaper reporter Scot Lehigh, who wrote,

Perhaps no figure in recent Massachusetts history has inspired more contradictory emotions than Senate President William M. Bulger. He is either revered or reviled, with precious little middle ground. To his many fans, the South Boston Democrat is a populist hero, a political scholar who has survived three and a half decades of rough-and-tumble, bloody but unbowed. To his equally numerous detractors, Bulger is nothing but a martinet, an iron-fisted pseudo-intellectual who gets his own way through naked power and intimidation.³²

It is in this twin context that Bulger's rise to power and his subsequent behavior as Senate president are best understood. Whatever his motivations and limitations, he was an astute and nimble political leader. He put men and women of proven ability in charge of the Senate Ways and Means Committee. With a hardheaded attitude to match Bulger's, Chester Atkins — a liberal, left-leaning Yankee with a patrician pedigree, Patricia McGovern — the first woman in the history of the state to hold this position, and Thomas Birmingham — a Harvard alumnus and former Rhodes Scholar who eventually succeeded Bulger as Senate president, did an admirable job. All three distinguished themselves in the post.

Nonetheless, Bulger had some image problems. Patterns of negative reaction can be explained by the urban and rural rivalries inherent in state politics and by the ideological rifts and bifactionalism within the Democratic party, but they do not explain all of it. Compounding his negative image problems was the fact that his brother "Whitey" was a convicted felon who had served hard time in Alcatraz for bank robbery. Bulger was aware of the negatives and bothered by them, but he made no adjustment, nor did any of his chief advisers suggest he do so. He never disavowed or repudiated his brother, for loyalty was highly valued in the Irish-American culture.

Bulger's worst crisis, and the one that scarred him the most, was the 75 State Street affair. Allegations surfaced in 1989 that he had split a \$500,000 payment that his long-time friend and law associate Thomas Finnerty was accused of extorting from real estate magnate Harold Brown. Bulger claimed that the money he received was a loan in anticipation of legal fees from another, unrelated case. Although he soon repaid that loan in full, the media smelled blood. After an exhaustive investigation, the federal prosecutors exonerated Bulger of any wrongdoing. U.S. attorney Jeremiah T. O'Sullivan found that there was insufficient evidence to proceed with a case. He admitted that it was not even a close call. Three years later, Massachusetts attorney general Scott Harshbarger reached the same conclusion.

While the perception of Bulger as an autocrat and a South Boston provincial may have been accurate to some extent, much of it was the creation of the media and its ability to shape public opinion. He was viewed with suspicion by liberals because of his social conservatism, but few liberal legislators championed human services more vigorously than he. More often than not, Bulger used his control of the Senate agenda and his parliamentary skill to push through measures that funded subsidized housing, provided higher cash benefits for welfare recipients, and secured more home care for the elderly.

Clearly, Bulger represented many things to many people. He responded to social injustice not as a warmhearted liberal but as a tough-minded, very self-centered, self-oriented man. But still, he was a fascinating creature — quick, clever, doggedly hardworking, ruthless, and not without wit. Veteran reporters Don Aucoin and Frank Phillips saw him as a complex phenomenon containing contradictions and ambiguities.

The same man who can be ruthless in dealing with State House foes — yanking their chairmanships, freezing their pay, burying their bills — shows a kindly face to the wider world: delivering Thanksgiving turkeys to shut-ins, working tirelessly on behalf of Marian Manor and the Laboure Center, helping raise funds for food pantries and organizations that help the disabled.³³

Whatever Bulger's personal and political contradictions may have been, he was adept at engineering consensus and getting legislation passed. In this regard, he was more of a workhorse than a show horse. He did not crank out the plethora of press releases that most legislators liked to issue. A maverick such as Bulger, educated, traveled, possessed of insight and knowledge about politics, moving among a variety of social groups, had a street-smart mentality that enabled him to outwit and outmaneuver most of his opponents. All of which made them furious.

Several of Bulger's political peers regarded him highly. According to David Locke, the state Senate Republican minority leader,

There are two Bill Bulgers. The one you read about in the press, and the one you know. He's going down as one of the great leaders in Massachusetts history. I probably

fought with Bulger more than any other member of the legislature, but I come away — after the smoke has cleared — with a strong feeling of respect and affection for him. He's a good man.³⁴

Former governor Michael Dukakis, who epitomized good government and political reform in Massachusetts, shared similar sentiments. He praised Bulger for raising the ethical standards of the Senate after years of decline: "He doesn't get enough credit for that because the public portrait painted of him is way off the mark. He is no dictator. He works very hard to build consensus and that's why he's been so successful."³⁵ State representative Ellen Story, an Amherst Democrat, voiced the same opinion: "His public persona is fairly different from his actual persona. He's much more open to suggestions and his experience dealing with the personalities in the Senate will be very good practice for dealing with faculty. My one worry is that he's used to deference, and you don't get that on campus."³⁶

The Role of Governor Weld

One can speculate on Bulger's motives for pursuing the University of Massachusetts presidency, which were grounded in the faith of a poor boy in the power and efficacy of education. The plain fact that a Catholic had never held the position may also have sparked his interest. Richard Freeland, a former UMass Boston dean, now president of Northeastern University, points out that as late as the mid-1950s, when Bulger was still in college, "many Boston politicians were convinced that UMass, with its traditional ties to the Republican, Yankee, yeomanry of the west, discriminated against Catholics in both admissions and hiring."³⁷ Personal considerations probably influenced Bulger as well. When asked by news reporters if he was interested in the job, he merely replied that he was intrigued at the prospect, a purposely vague response because he did not want to seem overeager.

By all accounts, Bulger wanted to create the impression that he was being drafted for the position rather than considered to be actively seeking it.³⁸ Thus, he ran the idea up the flagpole then went home to see whether the trustees would salute it. Though he would remain aloof throughout the search, he would keep himself available by waiting in the wings. With the mistakes that David Bartley had made in 1991 etched in his mind, Bulger decided to stay out of the fray. By removing himself from the line of fire, he did not take the political hits directly, nor did he respond to any of the personal attacks launched against him.³⁹

Despite his aloofness, Bulger was very much interested in the position. Wanting to get out of the Senate, he was looking for a "comfortable time" to leave. There was also a great deal of pressure on him to get out. After all, he had ruled the Senate for a record-breaking seventeen years, and many people felt that he had stayed far too long. Bulger clearly had some irons in the fire. In his aptly titled autobiography, *While the Music Lasts*, he says, "I had been urged to run for administrative office, but it held no attraction for me. I had been offered a judgeship, but I wanted to make law, not apply it."⁴⁰ Yet he confided privately to friends that there was no place else for him to go. Earlier he had floated his name for dean of Suffolk Law School. In 1994, Bulger had been prominently mentioned for the presidency of his alma mater, but nothing came of it. In the time-honored fashion of the Jesuits, Boston College selected someone from the religious order to head the private Catholic institution.

Throughout the course of his public career Bulger had made powerful allies in both the public and private sectors. These connections were an important source of his power. Among his allies was Republican governor William Weld, who occupied the corner office on Beacon Hill. As Shakespeare would say, the two men made for strange political bedfellows, confronting each other not only across party lines but also across a chasm of class and culture. While running for governor in 1990, Weld had caricatured Bulger as an old style pol who padded the state bureaucracy with his cronies.

Weld, a wealthy Yankee who was raised on Long Island, went to Harvard and lives in Cambridge. His family roots and Harvard degrees made him a Brahmin. Bulger, who came from a working-class neighborhood in Southie, had none of Weld's advantages of family fortune and Ivy League education. Somehow their polarities drew them together, each strangely attracted by their differences. Soon to follow was an alliance born of political necessity.

When Weld took office in January 1991, the state faced a genuine fiscal crisis. His predecessor, Michael Dukakis, left him a \$1.8 billion deficit, and the state's bond rating had sunk to junk bond status. The time of genuine reckoning was at hand. Burying their partisan differences, Bulger and Weld worked out an accommodation and together turned the budget crisis around. The Senate president helped Weld get several of his policy initiatives passed in the upper chamber. As Bulger described their relationship, "There was a degree of trading. At times when Weld lacked the votes for something he wanted, I would present his views to senators or even in a caucus. Occasionally that was helpful to him. There were times I wanted something . . . We worked together in many ways, and much good was done."⁴¹

Some observers felt that Weld needed Bulger more than Bulger needed Weld. The classic illustration was the confirmation battle over Weld's appointment of Charles Fried, a conservative Harvard law professor, to the state Supreme Judicial Court in 1995. When the confirmation appeared in serious trouble, Bulger used his influence to persuade Kelly Timilty, who sat on the Executive Council, to cast her vote for Fried. Much to the chagrin of liberals and feminist groups, Fried was confirmed by the narrow margin of one vote.⁴²

Before Michael Hooker left town, Peter Lewenberg paid a courtesy call on Governor Weld on May 17 to discuss the upcoming UMass presidential search. During their discussion, William Bulger was mentioned as a possible candidate. Weld, who thought that Bulger would be a good as well as a natural choice, urged Lewenberg to move expeditiously in conducting the search. Lewenberg then asked the governor why, if he felt that way, should they bother to have a search. The governor responded that the search process should consider all candidates on their merits and that he would respect the outcome. At the end of their meeting, the governor expressed doubt that they would be able to persuade Bulger to apply.

Shortly afterward Weld publicly praised Bulger and endorsed him for the post. The governor declared, "I personally think he would make an excellent university president. He really is an intellectual, very well educated, cares desperately about standards in education, cares a lot about access. Obviously, he would be helpful at the state legislative level in terms of funding."⁴³ This, coming from the supreme executive magistrate, was no small praise.

Lewenberg says that Weld never inserted himself directly in the search process and that he heard from the governor only once. Robert Karam, the vice chairman of the board of trustees, agrees with this assessment: "I wasn't lobbied by the governor's

office.” Karam was quoted in the press as saying, “This is a strong board. I’m not the only one who would get off the board if I’m told how to vote.”⁴⁴ But one gets the impression that the governor did not have to exert much pressure to get what he wanted. After all, most of the trustees were gubernatorial appointees. One senses the interconnections between them. Political insiders and journalists, who were exquisitely attuned to every nuance and innuendo of the search, read these signs accordingly. They surmised that between them, Bulger and Weld had already lined up their political ducks in a row.⁴⁵ Weld’s glowing endorsement of Bulger provided evidence that their interests were clearly aligned.

Lewenberg Visits Bulger

On August 7 Peter Lewenberg met privately with William Bulger to get acquainted with him and to find out what he meant when he said that he was intrigued by the job. Operating on the assumption that the role of the chair was to seek out prospects, Lewenberg naively initiated this visit, which was held at the home of James Julian, a Bulger aide who lived on Beacon Hill. As Lewenberg put it, “I thought it was important to have personal contact. I wanted to make sure he understood what the job is and to get some feedback.”⁴⁶ He also wanted to know if Bulger would submit to an interview by the search committee. Like a good politician, Bulger kept his options open and refused to make a commitment one way or the other. He was a complex man who never revealed himself completely. Even so, he was impressed with Lewenberg’s dedication and affection for UMass.

Given the secrecy with which the search committee operated, it is difficult to separate fact from fiction. Unhappily for Lewenberg, his private meeting with Bulger backfired on him. Before he even walked out the door, it had in effect become a public meeting that aroused suspicion. The episode leaked to the press, as such things do when someone wants them known.

Three days later reporter Robert Connolly broke the story in the *Boston Herald*, which published an account of the meeting. The journalist’s impulse to find a clandestine plot soon became evident. Columnist Wayne Woodlief, a hard-bitten newspaperman, warned that the skids were “greased for Boss Billy, notwithstanding the usual nationwide search.” He quoted an anonymous university source as saying, “If [Bulger] wants it, it’s his. He can have it by Thanksgiving.”⁴⁷ Some mysterious insider was already leaking stories to the press.

Bear in mind that at this point the search committee had met only once in July, and that was an organizational meeting. No one else on the committee knew of the visit, and they first learned about it in the newspapers. As it happened, this was a mistake that would come back to haunt Lewenberg. To the general public it appeared as if Bulger was getting preferential treatment. The problem was that no other candidate received similar treatment. The unintended consequence of this snafu was to create the impression that the search was rigged. The Woodlief warning all too quickly became prophecy. Rumors that the search was fixed soon began circulating in the press as well as in academic circles.

Whether intended or not, Lewenberg’s private visit sent a signal that frightened faculty aspirants or at least made them wary. Once they heard that Bulger was a candidate, they either pulled out of the search or simply did not apply. As William Bowen, vice chairman of the search firm of Heidrick and Struggles, remarked, “People who

might otherwise be interested drop out before their names become public. People don't run to lose."⁴⁸ Even those who stayed in the contest came to believe that the search was wired.

Perplexed by what they read in the newspapers, trustee Myra Kraft and faculty member Janet Stein, both of whom served on the search committee, telephoned Lewenberg, inquiring as to whether the board of trustees had already picked Bulger. He assured them that such was not the case. Still, the rumors persisted. Even his brother called Lewenberg to say that he thought the chair was being manipulated. Stung by the criticism, Lewenberg could not stop the rumor flow nor could he undo the damage done by the adverse publicity.⁴⁹

The Karam Boat Cruise

Three weeks later, on August 29, vice chairman Robert Karam, a Fall River businessman who owns two radio stations, took several of his fellow trustees for an ocean cruise aboard his privately owned power boat. They departed from Falmouth in the morning, lunched at the Black Dog Restaurant on Martha's Vineyard, and returned home the same day. One trustee, who did not go on the cruise, inadvertently let it slip that the purpose of this event was to persuade "recalcitrant" trustees to get in line for Bulger. Karam denies this rumor, claiming that the trip was scheduled well before the search had started, that it was purely a social event. "There was no discussion of the search at all. It was not intended for such a purpose. I decided to get the trustees together socially."⁵⁰

All this independent and secret activity may have had no relation to the search. Possibly it did. Yet manifest appearances do not always coincide with latent realities. Myra Kraft, who went on the cruise, along with Mary Reed and Ogretta McNeil, indicates that they had a great time and that no undue pressure was applied to them. She commented, "The male trustees apparently thought that I would be against Bulger."⁵¹ It should also be noted that Karam initially pushed hard for a business leader from the private sector. Like Lewenberg, he felt that the major problems facing the university were more managerial than academic. Times and conditions were changing, and the trustees' complex set of attitudes reflected such change.

Among the fourteen trustees who served on the search committee, board chairman Daniel Taylor and trustee Derek Bok, the former president of Harvard, had misgivings about the Bulger candidacy. They felt that it would reflect poorly on the university's reputation. Bok wanted someone who had an inside view of running a university and who would be engrossed by the opportunity to build the institution. Somewhat curiously, he believed that if the proper infrastructure was in place, as at Harvard, almost anybody could do the job. Bok himself did not hold an earned doctorate. "I do not feel that only someone with a Ph.D. or someone who spent a life in teaching and research is qualified for this job," he said. "We can't afford to lay down arbitrary exclusions. We ought to consider everyone and make the best choice we can."⁵²

For his part, however, Bok was never genuinely on board. Once he sensed that Bulger's candidacy was on a political fast track, he bailed out early. By this time the train had already left the station. Unhappy with the way the job description was written, Bok absented himself from the interviews as well as the meetings in which the final votes were taken. Although Taylor, an important Boston lawyer, had initial misgivings about Bulger, he later changed his mind and voted for him. Apparently, he was per-

suaded to do so not only by his fellow trustees and his associates at his law firm but also because he thought it was in the best interests of the university.

At this stage of the process most of the faculty on the search committee were still sitting on the fence and remained undecided, but two were leaning in the direction of Bulger. In their deliberations, Janet Burke, who represented the Lowell campus, let it be known that she was a double eagle in terms of her Boston College degrees. Not unexpectedly, she favored Bulger. So did Daniel Georgianna of the Dartmouth campus. As president of his local faculty union, he was under considerable pressure to vote for the Senate president. Ernest May of the Amherst campus, who missed the organizational meeting in July, took a hands-off approach and did not weigh in as heavily as he could have. It was a rough go for Philip Quaglieri, chair of the Faculty Council at the Boston campus, who was getting hammered by his faculty colleagues and feeling the anti-Bulger heat. As a result of this pressure, Quaglieri wanted to poll his faculty to ascertain where they stood, but he was informed by the trustees that the process didn't work that way. He would have to render his own independent judgment on the merits of individual candidates. Janet Stein, who represented the Medical Center in Worcester, indicated that while many faculty on her campus felt that the outcome had already been decided, they didn't particularly care who got the job. In the end, she "reluctantly agreed that Bulger was the best choice under the circumstances."⁵³

The Gathering Storm Breaks over the Academy

Evidence abounds of vigorous antagonism between the pro-Bulger and the anti-Bulger forces. Both sides appeared poised to demolish the other's arguments. No sooner had Bulger's name been mentioned for the UMass presidency than opposition surfaced. Ruth Batson and Mel King, both prominent leaders in Boston's black community, immediately came out against him. They felt that his record on school busing made him unfit for the position. Bulger's involvement in the antibusing movement remained a political flash point.

In an open letter that Batson released to the press on June 12, she wrote,

During the twenty years since Judge Garrity's decision, I can find no attempt by Senator Bulger to grow, to learn, to understand or to heal. This is certainly not becoming of any candidate for the presidency of an educational institution. He hasn't demonstrated the qualities needed. UMass has had a great deal of racial unrest. What would he do about that?⁵⁴

This strategy was intended to hurt Bulger where he seemed most vulnerable and to nip his candidacy in the bud. Relations between blacks and Irish had many abrasive edges, some dating back to the antebellum era.⁵⁵ Intervening elites were now adept at generating symbols and encouraging ambiguity with rhetoric that appealed to fear and distrust. Minority trustees like Mary Reed and Ogretta McNeil were under a lot of pressure from the black community. Batson's counsel was prelude to the more concerted assault that followed.

Almost simultaneously, a storm was gathering in the academic community. Bulger was vigorously opposed by a group of activist faculty on the Boston campus. Because the school was located in his district, they were knowledgeable about his use of patronage at the university. Philip Quaglieri faced the agonizing dilemma of having to represent a divided faculty. On the one hand, moderate and conservative professors urged

him to look for a good academic, but not to rule out the possibility of Bulger. On the other, liberal and radical-left faculty wanted anybody but Bulger. In the current academic climate, they saw him as the wrong person in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Meanwhile, John Okray, the Boston student trustee, had nominated Bulger and strongly supported him. Okray voiced student complaints about increased tuition and fees and lauded Bulger by saying, "As far as academia is concerned, his traditional values are a much needed asset; many students complain that the curriculum is being used by some as a vehicle for pushing personal agendas on the student body. We believe he will put his fist down on much of this nonsense that is mandated upon the student body through course requirements."⁵⁶

Stridently anti-Bulger, many Boston faculty found his positions on busing, gay rights, civil rights, and affirmative action abominable. They probed and picked over his record, dredging up old stereotypes to denigrate him and casting doubt in general. In their view, Bulger was nothing more than a hack politician who had never championed public higher education. They not only lambasted him for having presided over the budget cuts, they also portrayed him as a political Neanderthal who would take the university back to the Stone Age. They spoke about his mobster connections and brought up his brother Whitey's criminal record. In short, they found him totally unacceptable.⁵⁷

It was another slash-and-burn strategy. Charles Knight, who served as the Boston faculty representative to the board of trustees, expressed great fear of Bulger as a coercive leader. Some faculty even objected to him on religious grounds. Roger Prouty, a history professor, cited a speech that Bulger had given in 1993 to the Catholic Lawyers Guild in which he lashed out at secular humanists, referring to them as moral nihilists who contributed to the decay of society. "We live in a secular state," said Prouty. "If that's indicative of his true feeling, it's inappropriate for a college president."⁵⁸ The Boston faculty left no stone unturned. All these resentments came together at the climax of the search.

Looking for a Cash Cow

The Amherst faculty was much more circumspect. Because they were deeply resentful of the Michael Hooker regime, they became suspicious of the trustees. On October 11 Amherst members of the Massachusetts Society of Professors held a protest at a trustee meeting on campus, which was the first public sign of how deeply many faculty members had come to distrust Hooker's circle on the board. In the protest itself, and in faculty comments to the press in its aftermath, was a challenge to the legitimacy of the five-campus system.

When the search committee visited the Amherst campus, only one faculty member spoke against the Bulger option. Everyone else endorsed it outright. Frank Hugus, head of the Germanic languages and literature department, chose his words carefully. "We've had some disasters in the president's office. I don't want any more disasters. I'm not really in the market for a world-class thinker. I want someone who knows how to get money, and then stay out of the way and let us do what we do best." Echoing similar sentiments, George Sulzner, a professor of political science, put it more bluntly. "What we really want is a cash cow. That's what we want — somebody that produces money for the system."⁵⁹

John Bracey, the outspoken secretary of the Amherst Faculty Senate and professor of Afro-American studies, was critical of Bulger on the busing issue, but he tempered his criticism by saying, "This is the biggest minus that popped up. I think you'd have to

look at it in the context of his overall record. It's a gamble."⁶⁰ Ernest May, chairman of the music and dance department and a member of the search committee, estimated that roughly two-thirds of the Amherst faculty favored Bulger, while one-third was opposed to him.⁶¹

Ellsworth Barnard, a professor emeritus, wrote a letter to the editor of the *Boston Globe* in which he asked a series of questions about Bulger.

Specifically, what are his views on who should be admitted to a public university? On the relative reliance for funding on legislative appropriations, tuition, and private support? On the proper balance between teaching and research, and between liberal education and professional training? Where does he stand on the issue of traditional versus multicultural curricula? Or on the value of ethnic diversity and the related problem of reconciling ethnic cultures with loyalty to the broader community? What are his views on affirmative action, academic freedom, tenure, and the governance of a university — the proper role of trustees, administration, faculty, and students? The university community and the public have a right to know the answers.⁶²

There were also some rumblings at Amherst about Bulger's role in having delayed the construction of the Mullins Center, which was now used for basketball games and as a convention complex. Knowledgeable sources said that this delay resulted from an ongoing dispute between Bulger and Speaker George Keverian. In their view, it amounted to "pure Beacon Hill horse-trading."⁶³

The Expected Public Outcry

At this stage the controversy captured public attention. With the expanding media coverage, considerable public hostility materialized. Suddenly the debate became far more emotional and vituperative than it had previously been. Much of this had to do with the distrust and cynicism that citizens manifested toward politicians and their desire to see term limits imposed. Bulger had been in public life for thirty-five years. His negative-image problems now worked against him.

The *Boston Globe* sponsored a public opinion poll which showed that 59 percent of the public was opposed to his getting the appointment, while only 20 percent favored it. For further emphasis, the newspaper published a cartoon by Paul Szep showing a crowd of Bulger look-alike fans wildly cheering for their friend from Southie. The caption read, "The nationwide search is over . . . Billy Bulger is our man."⁶⁴ It was vintage Szep.

What now emerged was a search process that mixed outside and inside participation. To these reservations must be added the tactics that outsiders used to stop William Bulger. To be sure, the Senate president had more than his share of critics, among them Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz, whose long-running feud with Bulger was well known. The two men loathed each other. Dershowitz launched a vicious attack, accusing Bulger of bigotry and anti-Semitism. He also questioned his lack of scholarly attainment and raised the specter of his "questionable dealings" in the 75 State Street affair.⁶⁵ The initial confrontation between the two men had taken place in 1990, when Paul Mahoney, a Bulger aide, was confirmed for a district court judgeship. At that time Bulger referred to Dershowitz as a ubiquitous self-promoter and a murderer of reputations. Since then their clash had become a highly charged personal vendetta. Whatever the grievance between them, Dershowitz's rhetoric was filled with venom and rancor. He seemed determined to stop Bulger dead in his tracks.

The verbal pyrotechnics continued unabated. State treasurer Joseph Malone, a Republican with strong gubernatorial ambitions who had previously sparred with Bulger on Beacon Hill, stoked the fires of opposition. In a *Boston Herald* op-ed piece Malone wrote, "Bulger has displayed a character so unsuitable for the office of a university president that any other candidates who acted in such a manner would be automatically disqualified. I fear that the university will suffer from the insult of his patronage and power." Malone angrily denounced Bulger as "autocratic, vindictive, and secretive."⁶⁶

This fusillade of rhetoric no doubt pleased Bulger's opponents, who bashed him unabashedly. Conservative columnist Jeff Jacoby, who was allied with Alan Dershowitz, delivered a scathing diatribe, complaining bitterly about the search being "a foregone conclusion the moment Bulger expressed an appetite for the job. But nobody was fooled by the charade." Jacoby then vented his spleen.

Does anyone believe that Bulger's leadership will add luster to the university's name? Wait until word gets out that the most despised man in Massachusetts politics has just muscled his way into the presidency of UMass. A sneering, petty, vindictive bully, a man notorious for his intolerance of dissent, someone whose own brother is a gangster wanted for murder and armed robbery — oh, yes, this'll do wonders for the image of UMass.⁶⁷

Less cynically, Rachelle Cohen of the *Boston Herald* wrote a more balanced piece, but it too was heavy with sarcasm. Her column "Trouble for Happy Valley?" read in part,

The Bulger appointment could, of course, be either the best thing ever to happen to UMass or the worst — and that depends entirely on which Bulger shows up for work at the president's office.

There's William, the erudite, Greek-and-Latin-spouting, intellectual elitist with a populist's heart who allegedly never allowed a TV in his house. Now this Bulger would have precious little patience with the kind of numbskulls who waste their time and energy trying to erase from the Amherst campus that most evil of war-mongering white-guy symbols — the Minuteman.

But then again there's his evil twin, Billy. Now Billy's the guy who never met a relative he couldn't — or wouldn't — find a good-paying state job for, never met an ex-rep or senator he wouldn't help place, and whose idea of affirmative action is naming Sen. Lou Bertonazzi his majority leader.

What those supporting the Bulger candidacy obviously hope is that the Bulger political clout — which translates into budgetary clout — will remain intact even in the UMass president's office.⁶⁸

What are we to make of this rhetoric? Of course, it served many purposes and there is no intention here to divest it of meaning in terms of the politics of the search. It excited emotions in order to prevail; it also absorbed traditional ethnic group antagonisms and reflected cleavages generated by different status and class positions of social groups. It was reminiscent of the smear campaign that had been used to savage David Bartley in 1991, but some participants thought that the Bulger bashing amounted to overkill. For his part, Bulger appeared unruffled by most of his critics and made no attempt to engage them.

The Prescribed Antidote

In an effort to determine the validity of these charges, Peter Lewenberg, who is Jewish, did some checking on his own. For starters, he touched base with the anti-Defamation League with regard to Alan Dershowitz's charges of anti-Semitism. This organization gave Bulger a clean bill of health, indicating that there was no basis in fact for such charges. As far as they were concerned, it was a "personal thing" between Dershowitz and Bulger. In short, the Jewish community gave Bulger a solid endorsement. Albert Sherman, a vice chancellor at the Medical Center in Worcester, did much to garner support for Bulger within the Jewish community.

Similarly, Lewenberg met with the Black Legislative Caucus, which cleared Bulger of any charges of racism. Differentiating his position on busing from a myriad of other important public policy issues, the black leaders in effect gave him their stamp of approval. Although they stopped short of endorsing Bulger, they did not attempt to torpedo or block him. According to spokeswoman Shirley Owens-Hicks, a Democrat from Mattapan, their main concern was to ensure that the person who was eventually chosen president would be responsive to racial diversity.⁶⁹

The Bulger supporters had a ready reply. His candidacy especially heartened columnist David Nyhan, who came to his defense. Nyhan wrote,

Bulger's great strength is his first-rate mind, and steely determination. He is focused, disciplined and not easily knocked off his pins by mud pies tossed by critics. He is a leader, tempered in the fires of politics. He has great reach within the state's corporate community. He's done yeoman work for the Boston Public Library and Massachusetts General Hospital, where he's a trustee. He has good relations with private universities, by and large. When he commits to an issue, he's in all the way.⁷⁰

Thomas Aceto, president of North Adams State College, who had nominated Bulger for the post, also came to his defense. Having previously worked in public higher education in the states of Maine, New Hampshire, and Michigan, Aceto observed:

Massachusetts is a very different place. It's a highly politicized process, and you need to know what buttons to push and who to see. I am not saying it's a devious system, but with his knowledge of the way things are done in Massachusetts, Bulger can move the system forward.⁷¹

This exchange involved fundamental issues of direction for the university.

The Role of the Media

The media, both print and broadcast, played a heavy-handed role throughout the search. David Starr, publisher of the *Springfield Union News*, came out early and endorsed Bulger, the first editor to do so. His newspaper was influential in the central and western parts of the state. People living in the Berkshires mostly read the *Hampshire Gazette* and the *New York Times*, both of which showed a lively interest in covering the search. So did the *Patriot Ledger* in Quincy, the *Salem Evening News* and the *Lawrence Eagle Tribune* on the North Shore, the *Standard Times* in New Bedford, and the *Providence Journal* in Rhode Island.

Journalists, who had a major influence in shaping public opinion, systematically kept foretelling the outcome and acting with reference to their own foresight. Some of this news was distorted through political oversimplification and erroneous interpretation in the media and elsewhere. One need not accept Wayne Woodlief's conspiracy theory to acknowledge that the perception of Bulger's having a lock on the position became the prevailing view. As things turned out, it proved to be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

What is the truth about these claims? There is no simple answer. In reality, several trustees were predisposed toward Bulger, but most members of the search committee wanted to keep an open mind. Peter Lewenberg repeatedly told the press, "This search is not predetermined," but the more he reiterated his statement, the more they disbelieved him, or so it seemed. Try as he might, he could not convince the skeptics otherwise. His actions, however, spoke louder than his words. Some said that he later regretted the Bulger visit because it was so misconstrued and misinterpreted. From Lewenberg's perspective, the *Boston Globe* was intent on discrediting the search and portraying it as a done deal. He blamed its State House reporters for this and not its educational reporter, Alice Dembner, who, he felt, tried hard to be professional.

The intervening elites were using the media to speak to one another and to work out their strategies. Raising the specter that the search was fixed played nicely into the hands of Bulger's adversaries. They wanted to string out the search as long as possible with the expectation that he might stumble and fall somewhere along the way.⁷²

The anticipated firestorm of opposition to Bulger did not develop on the four campuses outside of Boston. Once the effort to stop Bulger failed to materialize on campus, it became a draft Bulger movement. In the closing weeks of the search, when the pressure built in the Senate over Bulger's successor, the press was all the more determined to report on the search. Some State House reporters were writing stories based on groundless speculation. Their depiction of Bulger as an automatic shoo-in was the distortion. As journalism professor Ralph Whitehead explains,

I think the search committee was wise to avoid commenting in the press. What it didn't anticipate, because it would have been impossible for anyone to anticipate, is how the press would allow its coverage of the search to be driven by events and gossip in the Statehouse. Thus, the stories that first asserted that Mr. Bulger would be named to the University presidency were written in the [State House] as part of the Senate succession story, and not by higher education writers as part of the search story. And the [State House] press asserted that Mr. Bulger would be named before it became clear in the search itself that this was definitely the case. This made it appear as if the silence of the search committee was an effort to mask its intentions. In fact, it was a wise effort to protect its deliberations against the disruption of leaks and other efforts to drive the hiring decision through the press.

The search committee clearly meant its silence to be a neutral principle: it wasn't supposed to create an advantage or disadvantage for any particular candidate or candidates. If it did create a bias, however, it was a bias in favor of the academic candidates on the short list. Their ability to seek the job was hurt if news of their candidacy got back to their current campuses. Thus, to the degree that the vow of silence favored the academics, it disfavored Senator Bulger.⁷³

Student trustee Matthew Morrissey says that there was overwhelming student support for Bulger on the Dartmouth campus.⁷⁴ Speaking to a group of undergraduates in 1994 on the topic of public service, the Senate president had stirred their imagination and won a rousing ovation, and they remembered him well. From Morrissey's vantage point,

students, who had felt the financial pain of budget cuts, increased tuition and fees, and diminished services, wanted someone who was nontraditional. Similar concerns were voiced by Brian Andriolo, the student trustee from Lowell.

Michael Morris, who represented the University of Massachusetts alumni and alumnae, brought an interesting perspective to bear on the search. As he put it, "There was widespread agreement on the ills that beset the university — the lack of a positive image, the lack of an advocate, the lack of political clout, and the domination by private education."⁷⁵ Morris entered the search looking for a candidate who would make an impact on these problems. He then went out and found someone who he thought could do the job: Carol Eastman, the senior vice president at the University of Hawaii, was a career academic who had graduated from UMass Amherst. Morris had grown up with her in the city of Lawrence.

On October 20 the search committee met and reviewed their list of sixty-six candidates. Using evaluations based on the position profile, they narrowed the field to fourteen people from whom they requested additional materials for further consideration. Of these, one was a woman, seven were from academia, three were from business, and four were from government. At this point there was one vexing problem — Lewenberg discovered that there was a leak on the search committee. Their confidential discussions were obviously getting out. They talked about the problem among themselves with Myra Kraft describing it as dirty pool, but the leakage continued. The trustees on the committee felt that it was a faculty member who was disclosing information to the press.

Ironically, the faculty saw it in directly opposite terms. Janet Stein felt that the leaks were purposely placed by a trustee to discourage other candidates, that they were not accidental. She commented, "Publicity along the way was sufficiently well placed and made a lot of people disinterested."⁷⁶ According to Daniel Georgianna, "Whatever leaks happened were minor. There wasn't some deep throat out there."⁷⁷

On October 27 Alice Dembner and two *Boston Globe* editors filed a lawsuit in Suffolk Superior Court to force the university to make the search process public and to reveal the names of the semifinalists. Invoking the state's open meeting law, they sought a temporary injunction to prevent the search committee from meeting in secret on October 30. The university was required by law to post its meetings. Although the plaintiffs knew about the meeting in advance, they purposely waited until Friday afternoon before going to court. Such short notice gave legal counsel Joyce Kirby precious little time to prepare the university's defense. Since she was attending a meeting at the Worcester campus that day, her associate, Terance O'Malley, had to fill in for her.⁷⁸

The presiding judge, Charles Barrett, denied the *Globe's* request for a restraining order, distinguishing the case from that of *Attorney General v. School Committee of Northampton*, 375 Mass. 127 (1978). Weighing the candidates' rights of privacy against the requirements of the open meeting statute, Barrett ruled as follows: "It seems to this court that, at least, until the time a job candidate is a finalist, a candidate has a legitimate expectation that his or her present employment status will not be jeopardized by a public disclosure that he or she has sought, unsuccessfully, another position."⁷⁹

The Closed Meeting

The upshot of this litigation was that the search committee voted to close its meeting on October 30. Instead they held an executive session, which the court had deemed permissible, barring Alice Dembner from attending it.⁸⁰ There was a lot of gamesmanship

going on by way of moves and countermoves. The committee then considered six additional candidates whose résumés had been received during the interim — four with academic experience and two who had major roles in the business community — bringing the total number of candidates to seventy-two. Including these late entries, the committee considered nineteen candidates that day.

From these deliberations the committee narrowed its list to seven semifinalists, five with academic backgrounds and two from government. Of these people, one was a woman, Carol Eastman, and one was a member of a minority, George Wright, the interim provost of the University of Texas at Arlington. Five interviews were eventually conducted.

During the next two weeks two semifinalists dropped out of the search, the first to bow out being Andrew Sorensen, vice president for academic affairs at the University of Florida in Gainesville. After receiving warning phone calls from friends in Massachusetts, who sent him faxes of Boston newspaper stories, he concluded that “the outcome of the search is pretty well determined.”⁸¹ The second to withdraw was Roger Johnson, a UMass Amherst alumnus, currently the head of the General Services Administration in Washington. During his interview, he spent an extra hour and a half talking about the criteria for the position. Unlike Sorensen, he did not use Bulger as an excuse for his pulling out, citing his main reason as follows: “The relationship of the university to the political structure and to financing decisions is quite muddled.”⁸²

Braving it out, the five other candidates stayed in the search. Though Bulger refrained from making any public statements and continued to play hard to get, he let his supporters know that, under the right conditions, he would be willing to accept the job. Supremely confident, he also made it known that he wanted a strong and unequivocal vote. “He wants to be asked, and he wants it to be unanimous,” an unidentified source remarked. “Those are the kinds of things he appears to be looking for. And I sense that will probably happen.”⁸³

The Three Finalists

A series of candidate interviews was conducted on three separate days at three separate Boston locations — on November 5 in the Hyatt Harborside Hotel at Logan Airport, on November 15 at Hill and Barlow, at One International Place, Dan Taylor’s law office, and on November 20 at the Parker House. All these meetings were posted in advance. The media activity at this point was intense — so many television and newspaper reporters were camped out and clamoring to get the story that one needed a human wedge to get through the crowd. Daniel Georgianna claims that he had “never seen such a media frenzy. It was almost like a murder trial. You had to show your identification, because the security was so tight.”⁸⁴

The scenario smacked of covert operations. To avoid the media crunch at One International Place, Taylor led reporters down one flight of stairs while Joyce Kirby escorted candidate Roger Johnson up another stairway. Five days later, an enterprising *Boston Globe* photographer who positioned himself in an alleyway caught William Bulger sneaking into the rear entrance of the Parker House for his interview. It was a weird situation, to say the least. Legal counsel had to decide what was public space and what was not, especially when the committee went into executive session.

During his interview, Bulger committed himself to the university’s goals, including expanding the diversity of the student body. He told the search committee that he recog-

nized the need for pluralism and diversity in a university setting. He was then grilled by the committee on the tough questions of gay rights, civil rights, and busing. According to Robert Karam, who posed some of the hard questions, "Bulger hit the race issue head on. . . . Busing was not skirted. He explained his position fully."⁸⁵ The same was true with regard to the other controversial issues.

Bulger scored points with the faculty members when he told them that he did not intend to run the individual campuses. The critical issue for Georgianna was whether Bulger would use his staff as line managers, as Michael Hooker had done. Bulger assured them that he had no intention of micromanaging at the campus level.⁸⁶ On the cash-cow issue, Bulger was candid in acknowledging that positions of power don't last forever, and therefore he was careful not to promise more than he could deliver by way of a windfall of money. Realistically, he felt that there would be slight increases over the years.⁸⁷ The interview was concluded on this note, Bulger having done much better than some expected.

No academic star reached the final cut. Besides Bulger, the two other finalists were Michael Baer and Charles Manning. Baer, the provost at Northeastern University, had spent the past five years dealing with an institution mired in budget problems and buffeted by changing demographic trends. Manning, chancellor of the West Virginia university system since 1990, came from a state that faced no real competition from prestigious private schools.⁸⁸

On November 20 the search committee, by unanimous vote of the eighteen members present, recommended these three men to the board of trustees. Although they forwarded the three names unranked, they nevertheless conveyed their strong belief that Bulger would be the best choice for the position. Speaking with their system voice, all five faculty members voted for him, including Philip Quaglieri from the Boston campus. Notably absent were trustees Derek Bok and John Poduska.

By this time it was apparent that Bulger had the votes on the board of trustees. Everyone knew that. The only holdout at this juncture was trustee Ogretta McNeil, a black professor of psychology at Holy Cross College, Worcester, who chaired the trustee committee on academic affairs. Besides Bok, she was the only other academic on the board. Because of family problems, McNeil had been unable to attend the interviews and did not know Bulger very well.

On the morning of November 28, the day of the final vote, Taylor and Peter Lewenberg hastily arranged a breakfast meeting that brought them together. This was supposed to enable McNeil to get to know Bulger better and to allow her to find her comfort level with him. Like Lewenberg's earlier visit with Bulger, this meeting backfired. McNeil frankly informed Bulger that she was not going to vote for him. Not concealing his displeasure at this rejection, he pointedly told her that she could not expect any help from him in her position as chair of the academic affairs committee, then quipped, "What am I doing here?" The latter remark, coming from a politician who was accustomed to gathering votes, was intended lightly.⁸⁹

McNeil emerged from the breakfast meeting shaken and visibly upset, for she was not accustomed to this kind of hardball politics in academic life. The clash of the two cultures was glaringly evident, yet she was gracious and very professional in describing the way Bulger had handled the situation.

True to her convictions, McNeil was the only trustee who voted against Bulger when the final tally was taken that same day at the Medical Center in Worcester. Explaining her viewpoint, she said, "I had to make a professional judgment. It was not done on a

personal basis. For me, he was not the best candidate.” Contrary to Patrick Healy’s report in the April 19, 1996, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, she did not vote against him for his stance on busing. “I was not the vindictive little bitch that the media made me out to be. Now that Bulger is in, I’m impressed with him. We need to let go of who voted for whom. Higher education is the loser if we don’t. The other members of the board were respectful of my vote.”⁹⁰ The irony, of course, is that she was a black woman who taught at a private Catholic institution.

And so it would be. All the trustees present, except McNeil, voted for Bulger, thereby ratifying their search committee’s top choice. Their letter explaining the outcome is insightful and worth quoting at length.

Our university has not enjoyed adequate access to top business leaders, who must respect the quality of our education and give us financial support before we can join the top rank of state universities. Mr. Bulger enjoys the confidence of a wide cross-section of Massachusetts business and civic leaders. The private sector relationships he brings to the presidency will help the university broaden its base of allies and of private funding.

In the public sector, our university faces perilous times. Federal responsibilities, but not sufficient federal funds, will soon shift to the states and lay claim to our state’s limited revenues. The university must be able to obtain its fair share of public funds. Mr. Bulger understands public processes and has worked effectively with many legislative leaders and governors of both parties. He is well suited to lead us in stating our case for fair public funding.⁹¹

The Mixed Reviews

The search and its aftermath reverberated throughout the Bay State and well beyond its borders. Overall, the reactions to the William Bulger appointment were varied. It is almost impossible to read any of them without getting a sense of partisanship. Supporters like Paul Tsongas, the former chairman of the state Board of Regents, saw it as high risk, high gain. In his opinion, however, it was a risk worth taking if Bulger could improve the university’s profile in political and business circles.⁹² Surprisingly, the *Boston Globe*, which had long been Bulger’s nemesis, endorsed him. Its editorial gingerly declared, “While his assets would not likely qualify him for the presidency of any other university in any other state, it is not too much to hope that they can work here.”⁹³

However, not everyone jumped on the bandwagon. When *The New York Times* weighed in later the next month, it ran a highly critical editorial. “Mr. Bulger could probably have stayed a Senator forever. Instead he is retiring to become president of the University of Massachusetts, a public university system that deserves far more care than the state has thus far given it. He could enhance the university or harm it, depending on whether he plays to his strengths or his weaknesses.” With an air of disdain, the editorial chided Bulger about his penchant for patronage and cronyism, comparing him to machine bosses like “Richard Daley of Chicago, John McClure of Pennsylvania, and Willie Brown of California.”⁹⁴

Many influential scholars remained skeptical of the appointment and the assertions about the objectivity of the national search. They regarded the capabilities of the man thrust into the office as sharply limited. Among the well-known skeptics was Ernest Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, who flatly said,

It's disturbing to see university leaders chosen on the basis of their political strengths. A university president with strong academic credentials is a symbolic figure who can speak out on the great issues in a way that a political leader cannot — on issues like the role of our institutions in a fragmented society.⁹⁵

The Cambridge academics, or a good number of them, saw the selection of Bulger as a sign of the university's vulnerability. More than this, they viewed it as a symptom of a troubled university. One individual critic, the strongest in knowledge and status, was David Saxon, the architect of the five-campus University of Massachusetts system and the former head of the California university system. Although he declined to comment specifically on Bulger or his qualifications, Saxon said he was "skeptical that a politician is the right way for UMass to go."⁹⁶ He aimed a slap at the optimists and another at the trustees.

Perhaps the harshest criticism was rendered by an anonymous Harvard scholar, who poured scorn on Bulger, "This is a guy who comes out of the lowlife of Massachusetts politics. If you think of UMass as a distinct second- or third-rate institution that has conceded the high ground to the private institutions, this is a perfectly appropriate appointment. If you think it can become a leading American state university, you'd be quite disturbed."⁹⁷ Beneath the surface of this statement lay a powerful class and ethnic bias, not to mention its academic arrogance and snobbery.

By contrast, the renowned Harvard economist John Kenneth Galbraith was much more diplomatic. He believed that UMass needed political muscle more than it needed a gifted intellectual at the helm. Galbraith buttressed his remarks by saying, "Education and its guidance in the university is the divine right of faculty."⁹⁸

Not surprisingly, both Derek Bok and Daniel Taylor announced that they would soon be stepping off the board of trustees. Bok did so immediately whereas Taylor waited until his current term expired in August 1996. Journalists speculated that they wanted no part of a Bulger administration.⁹⁹ In truth, Bok and Taylor also recognized that Bulger would probably want trustees more to his liking. Robert Karam succeeded Taylor as chairman of the board.

Reactions among the UMass faculty were varied. Ernest May at Amherst said of Bulger, "We don't need him to solve all the little problems of the campuses, if he can solve the big problem. His leadership ability as a spokesman and an advocate is in a class by itself."¹⁰⁰ May's faculty colleague Jerome Mileur put it somewhat differently. "For those who don't agree with him, it will be much more of an intellectual challenge than those of the past, when simply protesting carried the day."¹⁰¹

Displeased by the choice, Charles Knight at the Boston campus was much more caustic, underscoring the fact that Bulger had done nothing to prevent the budget cuts which had an adverse impact on the university. As Knight expressed it, "This is like making the fox president of Chicken U. There's a mix of embarrassment and curiosity right now. Some people feel we have a real leader; some feel he's a political hack."¹⁰²

Knight's acerbic response drew a sharp rebuttal from Daniel Georgianna, who saw the outcome much differently.

It is true that most selection committee members — I was one — wanted Bulger because he knows the legislative process better than anyone and has been the state leader most willing to fight a powerful governor intent on cutting the state university's budget and pushing through other restrictive legislation. He is also a tough-minded advocate of quality education, who will not be an easy mark on or off campus.¹⁰³

Finally, *Mass. High Tech*, which spoke for the business community, weighed in with a favorable reaction. Its editor, Patrick Porter, told his readers,

The fix may have been in from the beginning, but the selection of Senate President William Bulger to head the University of Massachusetts is a smart move on a number of counts. Bulger has the political instincts and contacts needed to succeed in the job. He knows how to build a consensus on difficult issues among a fractious group of know-it-alls. He's smart, tough, loves the life of the mind, and has a streak of conservatism that will do UMass a heap of good. Indeed, if nothing else, the place needs more discipline and tougher standards.¹⁰⁴

To what extent was this an atypical or idiosyncratic search? What actually happened was neither messier nor more convoluted than previous UMass presidential searches. Complicating factors — a lawsuit designed to open the search to public scrutiny; faculty demands for greater representation on the search committee; semifinalists who dropped out when they realized that an insider has an unfair advantage; and a search process that eventually became politicized — were not something new. These complex phenomena had all occurred previously.

Put another way, the decision to appoint a political figure worked marvelously. The trustees reached a consensus with only one dissenting vote, which was nothing short of remarkable. Indeed, the game plan of the Bulger promoters was well conceived and well executed. Few people understood the operations of state government better than trustee James O'Leary, who skillfully maneuvered among the various forces. A decade earlier he had blown the whistle on secretary of transportation Barry Locke, who was convicted and sent to prison for conspiracy to commit bribery and larceny.

This search differed from previous ones at the University of Massachusetts in at least four important respects. First, the search committee purposely recruited candidates from nontraditional fields of endeavor, not restricting the applicant pool solely to academics. In plainer language, this meant that the academic model was no longer king. Second, the overwhelming presence of Bulger as the dominating figure in the search no doubt scared off the timid and faint of heart. The latter saw the search as a dangerous exercise in futility. Third, the search process attracted outside participants as well as those inside the academy. Some of this had to do with the large number of Bulger critics. Fourth, it was the first time in the history of the state that a sitting governor played such a critical role in influencing the search. It is true that Governor Michael Dukakis had intervened in the Board of Regents search in 1986, but he did not so until after James Collins was appointed. Otherwise, he had studiously refrained from influencing the search process itself.

From time to time public universities find it expedient to bring in someone from the political world to respond to a particular political situation. This raises the question of the suitability of most politicians as leaders of academic institutions. In recent years there have been a number of such appointments. Some, like John Brademas, the Indiana Democrat who served in Congress for twenty years before becoming president of New York University in 1981, have been widely praised. Brademas, a former Rhodes scholar, is credited with having had the vision and determination to build a residential campus in Greenwich Village. The experience of David Boren, who resigned from the United States Senate in 1994 to become president of the University of Oklahoma, has drawn mixed reviews. The same is true of former Governor Lamar Alexander, who served as president of the University of Tennessee from 1988 to 1991. They were brought in to

serve in a political buffer role. Both men are lawyers who raised millions of dollars for their institutions, but they were also criticized for dispensing university jobs like political patronage and for lacking a coherent vision.

The political model has become a viable option in some states as public universities and their boards of trustees become more politicized. Yet it would be a mistake to discount the difficulties that political leaders encounter when they make the leap from bureaucrat to university president. As Judith McLaughlin, a distinguished student of presidential searches, says, "They have a negative image to overcome. The question often lingers: Was this a legitimate appointment or was this a favor granted, an inside job?"¹⁰⁵ Peter Magrath, president of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, concurs. "The danger with a political president is that that's all they know. Just because they know how to work the State House doesn't mean they can effectively work the academic house."¹⁰⁶

Organized professional groups tend to promote their own kind when it comes to operating organizations in which they have a major vested interest. In this sense, university professors are no different from other professionals. Over the years, the medical profession in Massachusetts had steadfastly believed that only a board-certified psychiatrist could properly manage the Department of Mental Health. In fact, state law required as much. As an interest group, the medical community had been powerful enough to get this requirement written into the statute books. After fierce resistance on the part of nonpsychiatrists, the law was changed in 1973, and several of them have since managed the department. Their opposition was remarkably similar to what took place in this search. Sometimes professionals act as impediments or barriers to change.

From a practical perspective, the most positive take on all of this is that the time may be right for a nonacademician to run the central office at UMass. This is especially true in light of the failure of Michael Hooker and the other career academics who were ineffectual and clumsy and could simply not get the job done. In his case, Bulger is faced with a negative image problem as well as a coherent vision problem, both of which he will have to overcome if he is to be successful. Already a bridge between academics and state policymakers, he has a lot going for him. Newspaper reporter Scot Lehigh makes the case for Bulger as follows:

Add it all up, and the potential rewards of putting Bulger at the helm of UMass seem to outweigh the risks. On the down side, Bulger's sometimes parochial world view may well collide with the university's more cosmopolitan culture. But the position also plays to his unique strengths — and he to its institutional needs. The job is important, prestigious and high-minded. Its mission is something he cares deeply about. And it's a post that could sorely benefit from a little leadership, stability and political clout.¹⁰⁷

Lehigh is probably right overall, yet the implications of his stunning assessment remain to be seen. Only time will tell how it plays out. On accepting the university presidency, Bulger articulated his vision for the future.

At the end of five years, I hope everybody in Massachusetts is cheering for it and that no one thinks of it as a fallback school instead of a first choice. In the University of Massachusetts, with its limitless potential, we have an opportunity to create an enormous treasure. To accomplish that, the university must achieve academic excellence. It must have a strong faculty. It must have a qualified student body, and it must have the funding, the educational tools and the physical plant to get the job done. Those goals will not be easy, but they are possible.¹⁰⁸

In retrospect, Peter Lewenberg insists that the search was valid. "We did the right thing for all the right reasons. Every step of the way, it was an absolutely legitimate search, but I don't think that I will ever convince the skeptics that we did the right thing."¹⁰⁹ That may be true. But the trustees and the governor landed the person they most wanted for the job. The political calculus and alchemy had favored Bulger from the very beginning. Unquestionably, he and his supporters had the political power to make it happen. Even so, an amazing consensus was reached among the key participants, including the trustees, faculty, students, alumni, and alumnae. None of the major constituencies had been left out of the picture, which is what made the final choice legitimate.■

Notes

1. University of Massachusetts trustee Peter Lewenberg, chair of the search committee, initiated this article. I am grateful to Chancellor Sherry Penney and Provost Louis Esposito for providing me with a modest summer research grant.
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3. Quoted in Martin F. Nolan, "Stanford Puts New Emphasis on Teaching Undergraduates," *Boston Globe*, May 10, 1996.
4. Robert A. Dahl and Charles E. Lindblom, *Politics, Economics, and Welfare* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), 333-334.
5. Robert C. Wood, *Whatever Possessed the President?* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 24.
6. See "Looking for a UMass Leader," *Boston Globe*, editorial, May 21, 1995.
7. See Richard A. Hogarty, "The Search for a Massachusetts Chancellor: Autonomy and Politics in Higher Education," *New England Journal of Public Policy* 4, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 1988): 7-38.
8. See Richard A. Hogarty, "Searching for a UMass President: Transitions and Leaderships, 1970-1991," *New England Journal of Public Policy* 7, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 1991): 9-46.
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11. See the Pew Higher Education Roundtable, *Policy Perspectives* 5, no. 3, Section A (April 1994): 6.
12. Quoted in William H. Honan, "An Icon of State Politics I Picked to Lead UMass," *New York Times*, November 29, 1995.
13. See James O. Freedman, "Our Impoverished Public Universities," *Boston Globe* op-ed article, September 25, 1995.
14. For a detailed account of the recruitment of Michael Hooker, see Richard A. Hogarty, "UMass Selects a New President: Elements of a Search Strategy," *New England Journal of Public Policy* 8, no. 2, (Fall/Winter 1992), 9-50.
15. Ian Menzies, "Bulger May Deliver Much-needed Makeover to UMass," *Patriot Ledger*, December 16, 1995.
16. Interview with trustee Peter Lewenberg, May 15, 1996.
17. Alice Dembner, "UMass President Was Opportunist Some Critics Say," *Boston Globe*, May 23, 1995.
18. Quoted in Alice Dembner, "Hooker Leaving Throws UMass a Curve," *Boston Globe*, May 14, 1995.
19. It should be noted that trustee Daniel Taylor declined to be interviewed by the author.
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21. Alice Dembner, "Penney Gets Firm Vote in Interim," *Boston Globe*, May 20, 1995.
22. Courtney Leatherman, "Troubled Searches," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 15, 1995.

23. Quoted in Laurie Loisel, "The Ideal UMass Leader," *Hampshire Gazette*, September 23–24, 1995.
24. This information is based on interviews conducted with faculty members Janet Burke of Lowell, May 28, 1996; Daniel Georgianna of Dartmouth, July 23, 1996; Ernest May of Amherst, May 28, 1996; Philip Quaglieri of Boston, May 7, 1996; and Janet Stein of Worcester, July 22, 1996.
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26. Frank Phillips and Peter J. Howe, "Spot for Bulger Atop UMass?" *Boston Globe*, May 17, 1995.
27. Alice Dembner, "UMass Search Targets Commitment, Political Know-how," *Boston Globe*, June 8, 1995.
28. Honan, "An Icon of State Politics Is Picked to Lead UMass."
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30. William M. Bulger, *While the Music Lasts: My Life in Politics* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 118.
31. See J. Anthony Lucas, *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1985).
32. Scot Lehigh, "Bulger 101: A Guide to the BMOC," *Boston Globe*, November 26, 1995.
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35. Ibid.
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42. See Connie Paige, "Fried Confirmed to State's Top Court," *Boston Herald*, August 31, 1995.
43. Quoted in Robert Connolly, "UMass Brass Made Pass at Bulger," *Boston Herald*, August 9, 1995.
44. Quoted in Alice Dembner, "UMass Seen Close on Interim Leader," *Boston Globe*, May 19, 1995.
45. See Phillips and Howe, "Spot for Bulger Atop UMass?"
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47. See Wayne Woodlief, "UMass Should Follow Boston's Lead," *Boston Herald*, August 10, 1995.
48. Quoted in Alice Dembner, "UMass Candidate Count: 13 + Bulger," *Boston Globe*, October 25, 1995.
49. Lewenberg interview.
50. Interview with trustee Robert Karam, July 3, 1996.
51. Interview with trustee Myra Kraft, July 30, 1996.
52. Quoted in Dembner, "UMass Seen Close on Interim Leader." It should be noted that Derek Bok declined to be interviewed.
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54. Quoted in Alice Dembner, "Blacks Address Bulger Fitness for UMass Post," *Boston Globe*, June 13, 1995.
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57. Quaglieri interview.
58. Dembner, "Bulger — UMass Prospect Raises Hopes, Questions."

59. Quoted in Loisel, "The Ideal UMass Leader"; see also Laurie Loisel, "UMass Faculty, Trustee Rift Deep," *Hampshire Gazette*, October 14–15, 1995.
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63. Peter J. Howe, "Bulger's Record on Higher Ed Called Unclear," *Boston Globe*, June 12, 1995.
64. See "Szep's View," *Boston Globe*, November 26, 1996.
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66. Joe Malone, "Bulger Is Wrong for UMass," *Boston Herald*, November 1995.
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73. Ralph Whitehead, Jr., letter to author, August 22, 1996.
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76. Stein interview.
77. Georgianna interview.
78. Interview with Joyce Kirby, June 10, 1996.
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82. Alice Dembner, "2d Finalist for UMass Presidency Withdraws," *Boston Globe*, November 18, 1995.
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87. Morrissey interview.
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89. Bulger interview.
90. Interview with Ogretta McNeil, June 4, 1996.
91. Letter from Daniel Taylor and Peter Lewenberg to members of the university community, November 28, 1995.
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93. *Boston Globe* editorial, November 29, 1995.
94. *New York Times* editorial, December 14, 1995.
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96. Quoted in Dembner, "2d Finalist for UMass Presidency Withdraws."
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101. Quoted in Healy, "A Shrewd Politician Assumes Presidency of U. of Massachusetts."
102. Ibid.
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108. Quoted in Alice Dembner, "UMass Trustees Make Foregone Choice Official with One Dissent," *Boston Globe*, November 29, 1995.
109. Lewenberg interview.