

**Build UMass Teach-In March 11 and 12, 2003**  
**Sponsored by the Massachusetts Society of Professors**  
**Talking Points for Instructors**

"This place we call UMass-Amherst, where we embrace the academic imperative, is the founding campus of the University of Massachusetts, and the system's flagship institution. We carry a proud tradition of academic achievement and enjoy a high national reputation for the quality of our programs. This is a classic American research university."

Chancellor John Lombardi, Inaugural Speech, February 7, 2003

**Introduction: Why UMass Matters**

The University of Massachusetts is based on three principles:

- ... it seeks to promote cutting-edge research,
- ... it seeks to offer a first-class education to undergraduate and graduate students,
- ... it seeks to make top-flight higher education accessible to the citizens of this state, no matter what their wealth.

The potential for serious additional cuts the UMass budget put these principles at risk, principles that have anchored public higher education in this state for nearly 150 years.

On March 11 and 12, hundreds of classes across this university have a common lesson plan:

- ... to remind our students of the greatness of this institution and the ideals on which it is based,
- ... to educate them about the assaults that have been made on it, and
- ... to call them to become active in what Chancellor Lombardi called the "fight for the future of this classic American research university."

**The Budget Cuts and Their Effects**

Over the past three years, UMass has experienced serious budget reductions

- ... Funding for all public higher education institutions in the state has been reduced by more than \$221 million, or 20 percent, since 2001.
- ... Just weeks ago, Governor Romney cut \$15.9 million from the present year's higher education budget; UMass-Amherst must absorb around \$3.1million of that cut in the next four months.
- ... Whether or not Governor Romney's recently-announced reorganization plan takes effect, next year's budget for higher education will almost certainly be cut, unless we act. In every aspect of the university, quality and accessibility has suffered:

Faculty and Staff: It is critical for the long term health of the institution that the numbers and pay for faculty and staff increase

- ... Over the past decade, budget constraints have reduced faculty numbers from a high in 1987 of approximately 1200 full-time faculty, to a current count that is below 900, even as the number of students has remained steady.
- ... As Chancellor Lombardi said at his inauguration on February 7: "Our faculty, intellectually powerful and committed to superb teaching and research, stand today in numbers insufficient to sustain the university's mission."
- ... Furthermore, the faculty and staff have now gone three years without a pay raise, although they signed a contract including cost of living raises each year. As the Chancellor said: "The faculty and staff come to work in excellent facilities for the opportunity to accomplish great things. The university must support them with good salaries and a context that rewards achievement."

Tuition and Fees: Continuing increases in tuition and fees are unfair to students and represent a unwise trend in the direction of state support for quality public higher education.

... Over the past year, tuition and fees have increased 24 percent – the largest increase of any state

... Monies for financial assistance have declined by the same percentage

... Governor Romney's reorganization plan is predicated on a tuition increase of 15 to 25 percent in addition to the increases of the past several years.

Courses, Programs, and Services: Further funding reductions would force the loss of the very courses, programs and services that make a UMass education great.

... The child care center is to be closed

... The language lab has shut down, the foreign language requirement may be eliminated because of the lack of staff.

... The state's allocation for the library acquisition budget has been cut by 90 percent since 2001. Further cuts are in Governor Romney's current budget proposal.

... The University's vaunted Commonwealth College had to lower its requirements because it could not provide enough courses for its honors students.

... Students are taking steadily longer to graduate, not out of laziness, but because they cannot get required courses.

... The curriculum for our students is being driven not by teaching philosophy, but by budgetary constraints.

The Prestige of a UMass Degree: Despite current underfunding, UMass is a widely respected institution, far beyond the Commonwealth. We must make sure this does not change. The long term reputation of UMass matters when our graduates seek jobs and work through their careers.

### **The State Budget Crisis: UMass is Bearing More Than its Fair Share of Necessary Cuts**

... Massachusetts has cut its public higher education system more than any other state in the country over the past three years, even as it has raised tuition and fees radically, and decreased financial assistance.

... Massachusetts is at or near the bottom of the rankings for state spending on higher education

### **Governor Romney's Proposals**

Governor Romney recently proposed a radical reorganization of the University of Massachusetts system. The exact shape of the reorganization plan remains unclear. What is very clear is that the UMass system budget is slated to be cut by \$150 million. The plan is predicated on massive tuition increases, and imagines a more privatized future, where campuses will increasingly depend upon fundraising for their yearly operating budgets.

### **A Better Way to Solve the Problem**

Stop the Cuts, Raise the Revenue The state government's budget shortfall does not necessarily require a choice between higher education and other important human services. The solution to the state's fiscal crisis should include efforts to raise revenue, in large measure by rolling back some of the tax cuts of the 1990s to corporations and the wealthy. The MSP is sponsoring this teach-in, and future actions and help the university live up to its promises.

### **Other Sources for Information on the Budget Crisis and on Ways to Get Involved**

--Massachusetts Teachers Association: [www.massteacher.org](http://www.massteacher.org)

--Massachusetts Society of Professors: [www.umass.edu/msp](http://www.umass.edu/msp)

--SaveUmass: [www.saveumass.org](http://www.saveumass.org)

**NEXT EVENT:** A campus-wide – students, staff, faculty – coffee break. Wednesday, March 12, 10 a.m., at Student Union steps and Whitmore Ramp