

To the Board:

As we reach the midpoint of the academic year, I am pleased to present this quarterly report highlighting recent progress UMass Boston has made furthering our mission. Of particular interest in this report are stories that demonstrate the ways the university continues to build on our innovative, student-centered learning; advancement of knowledge in service of the public good; and impactful, pioneering research.

- With a view to restoring continuity to critical research interrupted by the termination of federal research grants, Provost Joseph Berger joined President Marty Meehan and leaders from across the state to testify in support of Governor Maura Healey’s Discovery, Research and Innovation for a Vibrant Economy (DRIVE) Initiative, proposed legislation that would provide bridge funding to research universities impacted by federal cuts. The DRIVE Initiative would sustain the Commonwealth’s unprecedented investments in UMass Boston’s research enterprise. (page 6)
- A \$10 million gift from the James M. and Cathleen D. Stone Foundation will enable the Stone Living Lab to support critical research projects directed at nature-based approaches to managing the impacts of climate change. With this investment, the Stone Living Lab, led by UMass Boston’s School for the Environment and Boston Harbor Now, will expand research into Boston Harbor’s Living Seawalls; establish boulder fields off the coast of Massachusetts; explore approaches to mitigating compound coastal and inland flooding; enhance its climate-change observatory; and launch a competition to identify new nature-based adaptation innovations. (page 3)
- We were delighted to welcome the largest in-state first-year class ever this fall, with 1,994 students attracted to Boston’s only public research university, its historic free college Beacon Pledge, and its innovative academic programs. The Class of 2029 was drawn from a record pool of more than 22,000 applicants. This record-setting in-state enrollment marks a new milestone in the growth of UMass Boston as the Commonwealth’s premier public institution for academic excellence and diverse learning opportunities. (page 8)

I trust you will appreciate this report on our progress.

– Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco



Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll announces the \$3.8 million quantum grant at an event at UMass Boston.

UMass Boston Secures \$3.8M for Collaborative Expanding Quantum Hardware Development, Commercialization

The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MassTech), alongside the Massachusetts Executive Office of Economic Development, has awarded UMass Boston a \$3.8 million grant to build upon the state’s leadership in the “Second Quantum Revolution.” The new funding will support emerging technologies such as quantum computing, sensing, communication, and cryptography, all of which are poised to transform industries ranging from cybersecurity and finance to pharmaceuticals and materials science.

“As we stand at the threshold of the next quantum leap for Massachusetts, this bold collaboration lights the way to a future fueled by discovery, inclusion, and shared prosperity,” said Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco. “With vision, clear purpose, and in partnership with Western New England University, we are forging an innovation ecosystem that will empower our students, strengthen our economy, and shape the technologies that will define tomorrow.”

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Cover story (cont.)

The new grant builds on an initial \$1 million investment from MassTech in 2022 that launched a partnership between the UMass Boston and Western New England University in Springfield, Massachusetts. That funding helped establish a statewide network of quantum research centers to accelerate quantum hardware development and commercialization.

“Innovation and research are foundational to the Massachusetts economy,” said Governor Maura Healey. “While the federal government is turning their backs on research and development, Massachusetts is leaning in to support our knowledge-based economy. We are proud to deliver this funding to UMass Boston to expand their work with quantum computing to drive innovation and discovery.”

The 2022 investment focused on building critical infrastructure for small businesses, providing access to advanced cryogenic test beds and specialized measurement hardware. This included the acquisition of state-of-the-art dilution refrigerators and the creation of UMass Boston and Western New England University’s quantum core measurement facility, which now serves as a hub for quantum product validation and commercialization.

By leveraging state investment into infrastructure and the establishment of a quantum collaborative network, UMass Boston was able to secure \$5 million in federal funding to continue to build out quantum research and a Data and Quantum Science (DataQS) Center at UMass Boston.

Strengthen the University’s Research and Development Enterprise



Alexander Richards, Elm Brook in Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord, Mass.

Biology Team to Survey Reptiles and Amphibians in National Parks with \$190K Award

Professors of Biology Rob Stevenson and Doug Woodhams have received a two-year award for \$190,000 from the Department of the Interior’s National Park Service to develop a comprehensive survey of reptiles and amphibians in participating parks.

The field sampling is being led by graduate student Alexander Richards and co-advised by Stevenson and Woodhams. With the grant funds, the team will document the presence, absence, and relative abundance of various species to compare these findings with herpetological surveys from 2001 and assess the health of these animal populations and their habitats.

The project includes a disease ecology component, targeting emerging threats such as snake fungal disease and chytrid fungus in amphibians. Field and lab teams will collect and analyze samples to generate early-warning data that can guide rapid response and habitat management.

Field teams of undergraduate students and recent biology graduates will work alongside participating park partners to collect and analyze the data. Park partners include Minute Man National Historical Park and Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site in Massachusetts, and Morristown National Historical Park in New Jersey.

Nitrogen in Fossils Indicates Climate Resilience in Pacific Ocean Upwelling

Across the eastern and central Pacific Ocean, near the equator, westward-blowing winds drive upwelling that pulls nutrients to the surface of the sea, up from the cold depths. This “cold tongue,” a tendril of chilled water along the equator, begins off the coast of Central and South America, and stretches westward as it reaches toward the shores of Asia. The nutrients in the cold tongue feed surface plankton—which, in turn, form the base of a mighty food web that includes some of the Americas’ largest fisheries.

However, when the sea becomes unusually warm, as it does in periodic climate events known as El Niño, the temperature gradient of the cold tongue vanishes... along with its nutrients. As a result, in El Niño years, the fisheries yield fewer fish. Some ocean researchers have suggested that, as the global climate warms, El Niño-like conditions may become more common, and these vital fisheries could completely collapse.

A new study, however, suggests a more hopeful future for the nutrient upwelling in the eastern Pacific, along with the fisheries that it supports. Jesse Farmer, an assistant professor in the School for the Environment, and his colleagues have reconstructed prehistoric ocean dynamics using data collected from seabed sediment, and from the shells of fossilized plankton. Their paper, which was published this fall in *Science*, shows that during the Pliocene Epoch, the cold tongue faded, but the nutrient upwelling continued.

Increase Endowment

Stone Living Lab Launches Crucial New Nature-Based Research Through Landmark \$10 Million Stone Foundation Gift

Researchers and partners at the Stone Living Lab will launch and expand five vital nature-based research projects this year, thanks in part to a groundbreaking new \$10 million donation from the James M. and Cathleen D. Stone Foundation that was announced this fall.

Under this significant new investment at a critical time in climate research, the Stone Living Lab—which is led by the UMass Boston School for the Environment and Boston Harbor Now—will expand research into Boston Harbor's Living Seawalls, establish boulder fields off the coast of Massachusetts, explore approaches to compound coastal and inland flooding, enhance their climate change observatory, and launch a competition to identify new nature-based adaptation (NbA) innovations. These initiatives, along with the lab's educational programs and policy innovation work, will continue to develop strategies to help address the climate crisis in Massachusetts and globally.

"The Stone Foundation is honored to continue our support of the Stone Living Lab and their groundbreaking work in partnership with UMass Boston," said Cathleen D. Stone, president of The Stone Foundation. "We look forward to building on the successes this partnership has brought to the climate resilience field."

"UMass Boston is proud to deepen this effort and, as an internationally recognized leader in climate resilience work, we remain dedicated to helping our students at the Stone Living Lab develop a toolbox of innovative, evidence-based, and nature-inspired resilience solutions for Boston and beyond," said Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco.

Returning Faculty Member Launches Endowment for Early Career Professors

Professor Linda Eisenmann, former director of the higher education program in the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD), made a \$58,000 gift in August to establish the Eisenmann Early Career Faculty Support Fund. Her two-part gift will provide both immediate and perpetual support for the university's Junior Faculty Research Seminar—a career-development program for untenured faculty—by creating a new \$50,000 endowment and providing \$8,000 in current-use funds to support the seminar until the endowment is fully invested.

The seminar's monthly meetings are designed to foster productive research and scholarship and a sense of community for early-career faculty members who are building the experience and research portfolio needed to gain tenure. Eisenmann, who was on the CEHD faculty from 1994 to 2005, returned to UMass Boston as an adjunct professor last year after distinguished service as dean of arts and sciences at John Carroll University and provost of Wheaton College.



UMass Boston alums and their families gathered to run the annual Beacon 5K.

Rebranded Beacon Bash Brings Alumni Back to Campus

More than 500 Beacon alumni from 19 states came to campus on September 19 and 20 to celebrate the university's fourth annual Beacon Bash: Homecoming Weekend. The event was rebranded this year, adding "Homecoming Weekend" to the title to give UMass Boston alumni a true homecoming event.

Attendees, whose class years ranged from 1959 to 2025, enjoyed dinner and a movie, the annual Beacon 5K and barbecue, boat cruises led by School for the Environment faculty, campus tours, and receptions with university deans. Saturday night culminated with the university's second Golden Reunion Society celebration, a gathering for alumni of the Classes of 1975 and before. More than 125 people attended that event, a testament to the hard work of this year's Golden Reunion Society volunteer planning committee, which drove much of the programming.

Alumni Create Graduate Fellowship to Honor Late Son's Passion

Former UMass system Vice President for Communications Robert Connolly '78 and Nancy Kelleher '76 donated \$40,000 in October to create the Aidan P. Connolly Endowed Graduate Fellowship at the School for the Environment in honor of their late son, Aidan. A graduate of UMass Amherst, Aidan worked in the solar energy and electric car fields and was passionate about combatting climate change. He also had a deep connection to the Boston Harbor Islands, often walking at low tide from Quincy to Thompson Island (now Cathleen Stone Island), where he supported Outward Bound camps for schoolchildren. The Connolly Graduate Fellowship will provide support for full-time masters or doctoral students in the School for the Environment, connecting Aidan's memory directly to students involved in environmental research.

Strengthen the University's Research and Development Enterprise



Jens Rister, an associate professor in UMass Boston's biology department, in his office.

In Fruit Fly Eyes, Biology Researcher Sees Potential Medical Discoveries

Jens Rister, an associate professor in UMass Boston's Biology Department, has been awarded more than \$1.7 million from the National Eye Institute of the NIH to research a protein that guides the development of color vision in fruit flies. By learning more about the underlying mechanisms, Rister hopes to learn about human diseases such as Oculoauricular syndrome, a genetic condition that affects eyes and ears.

Humans see color using three separate kinds of photoreceptors, scattered across the back of their retinas. Each kind of photoreceptor cell can detect a different color: blue, red, or green. Rister's lab focuses on one particular step of photoreceptor development: how each cell develops into a specific kind of color sensor.

Rister's lab studies a protein, Hmx, which plays a key role in nerve cell development in many different organisms, including worms, sea urchins, mice, and humans. Hmx is a transcription factor, which determines how DNA is read and how its instructions are carried out by the cell's internal mechanisms.

Despite its widespread use in the animal kingdom, Rister says, until recently, the family of Hmx transcription factors was relatively understudied. "There was very little known, other than the fact that it's expressed in nervous systems, especially about what it could do in developing eyes." With the new National Eye Institute grant, the Rister lab will be able to continue their investigations.

University Research Awards for the Past Quarter

PI Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, chancellor, received \$2,000,000 from the Gross Family Foundation for the *Building Climate Resilience Initiative*.

PI Tongjian You/Exercise and Health Science received \$3,132,723 from the NIH - National Institute of Aging for *Tai Chi Intervention for Geriatric Pain Syndrome*.

PI Anne Douglass/Institute for Early Education Leaders received \$2,549,312 from the University of Massachusetts Foundation (sub from Saul Zaentz Charitable Trust) for *Zaentz Increasing Access to Higher Ed Pathways*.

PI Jonathan Celli/Physics received \$1,555,339 from the NIH - National Cancer Institute for *A Comprehensive Platform for Low-Cost Screening and Image-Guided Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) of Pre-Malignant and Malignant Oral Lesions in Low Resource Settings*.

PI Allison Taylor/Institute for Community Inclusion received \$1,500,000 from the Administration for Community Living for *Rapid Engagement Team Approach (RETA): Expanding Implementation of an Evidence-Based Practice Improving Employment and Wage Outcomes for People Receiving SSDI*.

PI Jean Winsor/Institute for Community Inclusion received \$1,500,000 from the Administration for Community Living for *From College to Career: Strengthening Employment Outcomes After Postsecondary Education for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) (FCTC)*.

PI Joseph Berger/Provost and VC Academic Affairs received \$1,000,000 from the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development for *Offshore Wind Workforce Development Center*.

PI Heike Boeltzig-Brown/Institute for Community Inclusion received \$750,000 from the Administration for Community Living for *(CRP Survey) Assessing the Impact of Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) Characteristics and Service Delivery Models on Employment*.

PI Rachel Skvirsky/Biology received \$748,758 from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center for *Strengthening Undergraduate Life Sciences Training at UMass Boston*.

PI Joanna Dahl/Engineering received \$617,325 from the NIH - National Cancer Institute for *Biomechanical and Biomolecular Characterization of Large Extracellular Vesicles*.

PI Ozgun Babur/Computer Science received \$639,214 from the National Science Foundation for *CAREER: Computational Infrastructure for Building Causal Models of Molecular Biology*.

PI Olga Goulko/Physics received \$609,266 from the National Science Foundation for *CAREER: Non-Equilibrium and Time-Dependent Phenomena in Strongly Correlated Fermi Systems*.

Lisa Maeng/Psychology received \$406,073 from the NIH - National Institute of Mental Health for *Hormonal Contraceptives and Mental Health: Synthetic Hormone Influences on Fear Behavior, Neurocircuitry, and the Gut Microbiome*.

PI Robin Côté/DataQS Center received \$375,000 from the National Science Foundation for *Charges in Hybrid Samples Under Extreme Conditions*.

PI Catherine McCusker/Biology received \$351,966 from UMass Amherst (sub from NIH) for *Production and Validation of Monoclonal Antibodies to Enhance Rigor and Reproducibility in Research Vertebrate Animal Model*.

Develop a Leadership Role in Public Service

Chancellor Leads Global Environmental Summits, Strengthens International Ties

Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco continues to lead the coordination, programming, and execution of the world's most extensive initiative on climate resilience: a global series of summits that are part of a joint initiative between the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (PAS) and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (PASS). This fall, Chancellor Suárez-Orozco convened leaders from more than 20 nations at the Pan-European summit in Vienna and representatives from across Latin America at the ResilientBrazil summit in Brasília, Brazil.

These regional summits follow on the Vatican Climate Summit convened by Pope Francis in 2024, where he and fellow attendees—mayors, governors, scientists, academics, youths, indigenous leaders—signed the Planetary Call to Action. They also build on the momentum of the highly successful Resilient Mass Summit, hosted by UMass Boston in March 2025 in coordination with the Healey-Driscoll Administration.

This global effort led by Chancellor Suárez-Orozco also convened a global Jubilee of Knowledge Summit, which focused on “Braiding Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge in the Cherishing of Our Common Home, Societal Transformation and Integral Human Development through Education for Climate Resilience.” The summit took place in Rome and brought together leading scientists, social scientists, Indigenous knowledge holders, educators, and youth to explore how braiding scientific and Indigenous knowledge can drive societal transformation and integral human development, locally and globally, primarily through education for climate resilience, using the approach of Climate Resilience: Mitigation, Adaptation, and Societal Transformation (MAST).

Chancellor Suárez-Orozco and other UMass Boston administrators also met with German universities this fall to strengthen UMass Boston partnerships. The UMass Boston team, including Bala Sundaram, vice provost for research and strategic initiatives, and Michael Metzger, assistant vice chancellor, student affairs, met with civic and university leaders in Frankfurt to explore joint research initiatives and strengthen and develop current UMass Boston partnerships with German universities, including Goethe University and Technical University of Darmstadt (TU Darmstadt), part of the Rhein-Main Universities (RMU).



(From left) Robert Bullard and CEJM founder Steve Curwood on stage at the Bridging Communities with Hope conference.

UMass Boston Hosts Groundbreaking National Environmental Justice Conference

UMass Boston recently hosted a major national environmental justice (EJ) conference, “Bridging Communities with Hope: An Environmental Justice Conference for All,” drawing together community activists, scholars, policymakers, and nationally recognized EJ experts for two days of powerful dialogue, learning, and action in the Campus Center.

The September conference was hosted by the Center for Climate and Environmental Justice Media (CEJM), a collaboration between UMass Boston’s School for the Environment and Living on Earth, as well as the Sustainable Solutions Lab, with financial support from the Waverley Street Foundation. CEJM works closely with community member storytellers to amplify their voices and bring to light the real environmental justice issues that communities face, according to principal investigator Robert Chen, a professor in the School for the Environment and the director of Grand Scholarly Initiatives.

“Over 300 participants at this conference are now considering storytelling to engage hearts and minds for a more equitable future as we all face historical environmental injustices, as well as new inequities presented by climate change,” Chen said.

The event featured talks with two iconic figures in the environmental justice movement: Robert Bullard, widely regarded as the “father of environmental justice,” and civil rights activist Rev. Benjamin Chavis. Together, their appearances set the tone for a gathering focused on grassroots empowerment, systemic accountability, and community resilience.

Develop a Leadership Role in Public Service (cont.)



Provost Joseph Berger (right) testifies on the DRIVE Act at the state house.

UMass Boston Backs DRIVE Act to Protect Vital Research and Innovation in Massachusetts

UMass Boston Provost Joseph Berger recently joined President Marty Meehan and researchers and leaders from across the UMass system to testify in support of Governor Healey's DRIVE Act—legislation that would provide bridge funding to research universities and hospitals impacted by federal cuts.

At UMass Boston, those cuts have already affected vital work like Professor Callie Brusegaard's Braille education initiative, a program that has trained 100 in-service teachers and rehabilitation therapists reaching more than 2,000 blind and low-vision students and adults each year. Its loss threatens access, equity, and opportunity across Massachusetts and beyond.

The DRIVE Act is a critical step toward sustaining innovative research, retaining world-class talent, and strengthening the commonwealth's economy.

Athletics Hosts Successful Fall Blood Drive and Special Olympics Event

This fall, the UMass Boston Athletics and Recreation Department made a meaningful impact through its community engagement efforts, hosting a blood drive in collaboration with the American Red Cross. The event brought together students, faculty, and staff from across campus in support of a vital cause.

The initiative was led by the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), and the results were inspiring: 35 presenting donors participated, contributing a total of 23 units of lifesaving blood. Notably, 20 of those donors were giving blood for the first time.

In addition to hosting the blood drive, UMass Boston student-athletes strengthened their community ties by partnering with Special Olympics Massachusetts (SOMA) for a "Fans in the Stands" Community Basketball Game, held in the newly renovated Clark Athletic Center. The event brought incredible energy and school spirit, with more than 50 student-athletes filling the stands to cheer on Special Olympics athletes.

Develop First-Rate Infrastructure



(From left) Vice Chancellor Marie Bowen, Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, Vice Chancellor Kathleen Kirleis, and Vice Chancellor Jacqueline Schuman cut the ribbon on the Clark Athletic Center renovation.

UMass Boston Unveils Major Upgrades to Clark Athletic Center

UMass Boston celebrated the grand reopening of the Clark Athletic Center this fall, following a comprehensive renovation project that ushers in a new era for Beacon Athletics. The upgraded facility represents a major investment in the university's commitment to student-athletes, coaches, and the broader campus community.

The large-scale renovation has transformed the Clark Athletic Center into a modern, unified hub for athletics, featuring state-of-the-art locker rooms, coach and staff offices, and cutting-edge technology enhancements.

Highlights of the renovation and additional capital improvements include new locker rooms featuring modern amenities, 18 offices centrally located to streamline operations, upgraded common areas and a new multipurpose room, and high-definition video boards in the ice rink and gymnasium.

"This project is about more than just bricks and mortar—it's about building a better future for our student-athletes and advancing the legacy of excellence of our alumni," said Jacqueline Schuman, vice chancellor and director of athletics.

Enhance the Learning Experience



Pictured from left to right, Erika Perez, Helina Almonte, and Parker Fay at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum's Ambassador Program

Isabella Stewart Gardner Ambassadors Program Connects Students to Museum Careers

Since its first cohort in 2019, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum's Ambassadors Program has provided opportunities for students interested in the arts, culture, and museum work. The internship focuses on opening doors for students historically underrepresented in the field. Students from UMass Boston and Bunker Hill Community College receive firsthand experience across different museum departments through a paid, part-time internship meant to build professional skills and networks.

"The Gardner Ambassadors Program is a unique part-time internship program designed to give students firsthand experience in museum work, education on the history of the Gardner Museum, and customer service training through working with our visitors," said Rachel DeLuca, academic programs manager at the museum. "Students of any major can apply. The main goal of this program is to open up opportunities for historically excluded students: low-income students, students of color, and first-generation students."

Each cohort spends the summer working with museum staff across different departments while attending weekly seminars. The experience is designed to give students a deeper understanding of museum operations and the larger role of art institutions in community life.

The museum plans to expand the program for both schools into a full academic yearlong model starting in fall 2026.



Students engage with the Wellness Web at the annual Beacon Wellness Walk.

University Hosts Beacon Wellness Walk

On October 1, students, staff, and faculty members joined University Health Services, UMass Boston Dining Services, and various on-campus departments for the second annual Beacon Wellness Walk. It was a vibrant event, promoting health and wellness within the UMass Boston community.

The event featured wellness resources, the smoothie bike, a hydration station, fun and healthy activities, and various UMass Boston-themed giveaways along a scenic walk across our new quad. This event also is an official launch of the new Beacon Wellness Initiative aimed at promoting a broad range of campus resources and fostering connections across departments.

Position University in the Higher Education Marketplace



UMass Boston student-athlete Luana Batista Soares

Luana Batista Soares Appointed to NCAA Division III National Student-Athlete Advisory Committee

UMass Boston women's lacrosse standout Luana Batista Soares has been appointed as a member of the NCAA Division III Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), representing UMass Boston and the Little East Conference (LEC). Her term of service began on April 23, 2025, and will continue through January 22, 2028.

The NCAA Division III SAAC provides a platform for student-athletes to voice their perspectives on national issues affecting Division III athletics. As a committee member, Batista Soares will help sustain and advance the association's mission and values, serve as a liaison between student-athletes and NCAA leadership, and participate in shaping policies that impact the Division III student-athlete experience.

"This is a phenomenal opportunity for Luana to grow as a leader and connect with like-minded individuals from across the country," said Matt Taiman, assistant athletic director of compliance and student-athlete development. "Her selection is a testament to her work ethic, character, and potential, and it brings national visibility, influence, and representation to both UMass Boston and the Little East Conference."

Record Number of In-State First-Year Students Welcomed at UMass Boston Following Historic Beacon Pledge Commitment

UMass Boston welcomed its largest in-state first-year class ever this fall, with 1,994 students drawn to Boston's only public research university, its historic free college Beacon Pledge, and its sustained growth in academic excellence.

From within Dorchester and across Boston, the commonwealth, and around the globe, the class of 2029 was drawn from a record pool of more than 22,000 applicants. It marks a new milestone in the growth of UMass Boston as the city's premier public institution for academic excellence and diverse learning opportunities.

"At a time when the world continues to ponder the benefits of higher education and institutions struggle to adjust to dynamic changes on a seemingly daily basis, the historic level of interest in and commitment to UMass Boston is indeed a milestone moment," said Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco. "This couldn't happen without our visionary team, our incredibly talented scholars and academic staff, and all who support our work on campus, in our city, state, and beyond."

Maintain and Improve Affordability and Access

Strengthening Pathways for Urban Scholars: Partnership with New Heights Charter School

In October, UMass Boston formalized a new partnership with New Heights Charter School, the first Early College charter school in Massachusetts. The school aims to have all its students graduate with a minimum of 12 college credits. As Boston's only public research university, UMass Boston's goal of providing a high-quality and accessible education aligns closely with New Heights' focus on empowering urban students to achieve their goals of college attainment.

Through this partnership, UMass Boston will provide targeted support and guidance to New Heights students pursuing admission and enrollment at the university. Key initiatives include increased campus and

school visits and generating unofficial transfer credit evaluations shortly after acceptance to help each student understand how their earned credits apply toward a UMass Boston degree.

The collaboration builds on an already successful relationship: over the past four years, 58 New Heights graduates have enrolled at UMass Boston. This new agreement formalizes and strengthens that pipeline, reinforcing the university's commitment to college access, affordability, and student success.

Maintain and Improve Affordability and Access (cont.)

University Strengthens International Recruitment and Engagement

This fall, UMass Boston has strengthened its international recruitment strategy through expanded global travel, increased visibility, and deeper engagement with students and educators around the world.

Over the past six months, new Director of International Admissions Stav Boutsis has led an ambitious expansion of the university's international presence. The International Admissions team increased its membership in a number of leading international educational organizations, welcomed various professional and student groups to campus, and visited upwards of 50 schools and universities across 8 countries and 12 cities. Under her leadership, the team has also expanded outreach and virtual programming to strengthen connections with prospective students around the world.

Looking ahead, UMass Boston continues to broaden virtual initiatives across Africa and Asia and enhance domestic engagement with regional schools serving international populations. Additionally, the university is involved in educational initiatives and events with organizations such as NAFSA: Association of International Educators, the International Association of College Admissions Counseling (IACAC), and the Council of International Schools (CIS). UMass Boston was pleased to sponsor the IACAC Annual Conference at Northeastern University this summer, connecting with more than 1,600 international educators and reinforcing its leadership within the global admissions community.

Through these strategic efforts, UMass Boston is broadening its global footprint and advancing its mission as a globally connected, inclusive, and forward-looking institution.

U-ACCESS Launches PantrySoft to Enhance Student Support

The implementation of PantrySoft, a new software application for the U-ACCESS on-campus food pantry, has been successfully completed.

With this tool, students are now able to schedule appointments for basic need services much easier, order specific food items in our pantry that meet their dietary needs, and pick up their pantry order on the day of their appointment. The software is multilingual for our diverse student population. It will also improve data collection and reporting.

Renew the Faculty



The Honorable David Lowy speaks at Convocation.

Chancellor Calls for Resilience and Responsibility at Fall Convocation

At UMass Boston's 2025 Fall Convocation, Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco urged the university community to meet today's challenges with resolve, resilience, and responsibility—calling resilience not just a virtue, but “an imperative.” Addressing students, faculty, and staff in the Campus Center Ballroom, Suárez-Orozco underscored the urgent crises shaping our world right now.

“These are not ordinary times. The challenges before us are not distant—they are immediate, urgent, and profound,” he said. “As this year begins, let resilience guide your actions and ambitions. Resilience works. Resilience is good. But above all, resilience is necessary.”

Suárez-Orozco also welcomed the Honorable David Lowy, general counsel to the University of Massachusetts and a former associate justice on the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, to give the keynote address. Lowy encouraged the incoming class to be open to hearing new ideas, because they will be the ones to reinvent civil debate.

“No good comes from shouting people down, or shouting down their ideas,” Lowy said.

Earlier in the program, Provost Joseph Berger welcomed 37 new tenure-track faculty members and congratulated 58 faculty who have been recognized for being promoted to the rank of associate professor, full professor, and senior lecturer.

Continue a Positive Focus on Diversity and Positive Climate

UMass Boston Receives *Insight into Academia* 2025 Higher Education Excellence and Distinction (HEED) Award

UMass Boston has received the 2025 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from *Insight Into Academia* magazine. The HEED Award is the only national award that honors individual institutions that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to academic excellence, belonging, and community-building across all levels of campus life.

UMass Boston was featured, along with 61 other recipients, in the October 2025 issue of the magazine. This is the third year the university has been named a HEED Award recipient.

“On behalf of UMass Boston, I’m deeply honored that our work toward equity, inclusion, and belonging has been recognized with the Higher Education Excellence and Distinction (HEED) Award,” said Calvin Hill, vice chancellor of inclusive excellence and belonging. “This acknowledgment belongs to every student, faculty, and staff member who contributes daily to cultivating a campus where all voices matter.”

“We take a detailed and somewhat holistic approach to reviewing each application in determining who will be named a HEED Award recipient. Our standards are high, and we look for institutions where academic excellence and belonging are woven into the work being done every day across their campus,” says Lenore Pearlstein, co-publisher of *Insight into Academia* magazine.

UMass Boston Celebrates Sixth Annual Black Lives Matter Day, Focuses on Resilience

This year’s Black Lives Matter Day program, “Still We Rise...Black Cultural Resilience in Challenging Times,” explored what Black culture is, how erasure has happened across history and continues today, and how emerging technologies, especially artificial intelligence, are shaping the struggle. Participants reflected and took part in acts of resistance, imagining new ways to protect freedom and justice through culture.

Activities included a panel discussion, artistic performances, and a community fair featuring local organizations and campus partners. Imari K. Paris Jeffries ’97, G’99, G’03, PhD’23, president and CEO of Embrace Boston—where he is leading a citywide racial equity transformation through *The Embrace* monument—delivered the keynote address.

“Cultural and artistic expression have been central to the life, health, and well-being of our community,” said Michael Johnson, special assistant to the chancellor for Black life, an organizer of the event. “To reinforce the understanding of the centrality of Black history, culture, and experiences to the American experience requires us to think of art and cultural expression as not only an appreciation of beauty, not only a way to understand what it means to be human, but as a motivator for an outcome of social change.”

Chancellor Takes a Turn as Dining Commons’ Celebrity Chef



Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco joined the UMass Boston Cooking Club and Vice Chancellor Karen Ferrer-Muñiz this fall, serving as Celebrity Chef as they cooked his Abuelita’s famous Tuco Sauce at the UCook Station in the Dining Commons.