Report to the Board of Trustees

from the University of Massachusetts Boston

September 2025

To the Board:

As the 2025–2026 academic year begins, I am honored to present this quarterly report, highlighting recent achievements at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

I was pleased to lead a delegation, along with School for the Environment Dean Carol Thornber, to the UMass Boston Nantucket Field Station. The visit enabled us to assess the future needs of the Nantucket Field Station facilities, which serve as a setting for ongoing research projects investigating unique conservation and resilience issues affecting Nantucket Island and the surrounding marine ecosystem.

Also in this report:

- Recently, UMass Boston's College of Science and Mathematics established a Networked Artificial Intelligence (AI) Lab designed to pursue solutions to complex societal challenges and prepare the next generation of engineers and computer scientists in the emerging field of networked artificial intelligence. The work of the new lab, premised on prospects for building and deploying collaborative autonomous systems, will explore AI applications to public interest problems in areas such as transportation safety, emergency response, environmental monitoring, and defense. (page 3)
- The College of Management celebrated the accomplishments of the third group of student-faculty teams participating in BEST Boston, UMass Boston's signature venture to develop a pipeline of diverse, talented professionals for the small-business sector in Boston. This year, 70 students, 24 faculty mentors, and 34 small businesses participated in the program. (page 10)
- During the summer, I co-organized two regional climate summits in support of the Pontifical Academies of Sciences and Social Sciences' Global Initiative, From Climate Crisis to Climate Resilience. The Resilient Africa and Resilient Europe Summits brought together mayors, governors, scientists, academics, and civil society advocates from across Africa and Europe for discussions on how to implement the MAST vision to make local communities more climate-resilient. The summits generated a wealth of strategies for climate mitigation, adaptation, and social transformation that can be replicated globally. (page 5)

I trust you will appreciate this report on our progress.

– Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco

Nantucket Visit Highlights Commitment to UMass Boston Field Station

Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco visits with students in ENVSCI 480: Biodiversity of Freshwater Invertebrates in the lab at the Nantucket Field Station.

A delegation of a half-dozen UMass Boston administrators and faculty—led by Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco and School for the Environment Dean Carol Thornber—traveled to Nantucket Island in early August to tour the university's field station and discuss its future needs and support.

"This is a jewel in such an extraordinarily unique ecosystem," Chancellor Suárez-Orozco said while meeting with Dean Thornber, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance Kathleen Kirleis, and Field Station Director Yvonne Vaillencourt. "We need to focus on how to sustain it to support the research here, our students learning here, and our relationships with the Nantucket conservation and philanthropic communities."

The Nantucket Field Station is home to ongoing research projects focused on environmental concerns such as microplastic pollution and eelgrass affected by environmental changes. This summer, it is also host to courses including ENVSCI 480: Biodiversity of Freshwater Invertebrates, a course led by UMass Boston Professor Helen Poynton. The small lab building at the field station was filled with nearly a dozen students poring over microscopes in furtherance of their research.

Continued on page 2

Cover story (cont.)

"I started my college experience at a field station, and I can say it was a transformative experience that led me to where I am today," Dean Thornber said. "We need to keep this possibility alive for our UMass Boston students."

Among the challenges facing the field station is coastal erosion. The main building—which provides meeting spaces, kitchenette facilities, and dormitory accommodation for 14–16 students—is located on Nantucket Bay just a few dozen yards from a 30-foot bluff where winter storms take a few inches or feet of shoreline each year. Estimates range from 10 to 15 years until the building falls into the sea.

To address this issue and other infrastructure needs, UMass Boston will begin developing a strategic plan for the future of the Nantucket Field Station. The plan will also focus on growing support for the field station both on and off the island to ensure its future.

The field station property was donated to the UMass system in 1963 by summer resident Stephen Peabody, who hoped it would be used for education and scientific research. Since then, UMass Boston has used the field station to pursue research projects, conduct classes, and engage with Nantucket's vast nature and conservation efforts.

This Nantucket Field Station building sits dangerously close to a steep ocean bluff.

Strengthen the University's Research and Development Enterprise

UMass Boston Research Shows Exercise May Slow Growth of Advanced Prostate Cancer

(From left) Elizabeth Carey, undergraduate research assistant; Catherine He, undergraduate research assistant; Nicolas Berger, graduate research assistant; Jared Lourie, lab technician; Associate Professor of Exercise and Health Sciences Kai Zou; and Chuanpeng Tang, undergraduate research assistant

A new interdisciplinary study at UMass Boston, led by Principal Investigator Kai Zou, associate professor of exercise and health sciences in the Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences, has found that exercise may play a powerful role in managing castration-resistant prostate cancer (CRPC). The study was published in the journal *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*.

CRPC, an aggressive and treatment-resistant form of the disease, poses a significant clinical challenge because it no longer responds to conventional hormone therapies. Remarkably, this study found that exercise disrupted many of the same biological pathways that current therapies aim to target.

"Through our research, we found that exercise altered several key biological processes within the tumors," said Zou. "The exercise lowered activity in genes that promote cell growth and DNA replication, decreased the hormone signaling that fuels prostate cancer, and reduced expression of genes linked to blood vessel formation, which tumors need to grow."

Zou collaborated closely with Changmeng Cai, associate professor of biology and a leading expert in prostate cancer biology, who played a vital role in shaping the study's design and molecular analyses. The project also benefited from support from the Genomics Core Facility and the Center for Personalized Cancer Therapy.

Strengthen the University's Research and Development Enterprise (cont.)

UMass Boston Scientist Leads International Expedition to Study Freshwater Under the Ocean Floor

An international team of scientists, including UMass Boston Professor Karen Johannesson, embarked on an expedition off the coast of New England.

Although scientists first discovered freshened water under the ocean floor in the 1960s, many fundamental questions remain unanswered: Where did the water come from? How long has it been there? And how does it interact with its surrounding marine environment?

An international team of scientists embarked on an expedition off the coast of New England to investigate one of the ocean's most intriguing mysteries: the presence of fresh or freshened water beneath the seafloor. At the heart of this effort is UMass Boston Professor Karen Johannesson, a renowned environmental geochemist, who is serving as co-chief scientist of the mission alongside Professor Brandon Dugan of the Colorado School of Mines.

The expedition is being conducted by the European Consortium for Ocean Research Drilling (ECORD) as part of the International Ocean Drilling Programme (IODP³), funded by IODP³ and the National Science Foundation (NSF).

The scientists plan to take a closer look at and take samples of this freshened water stored beneath the ocean floor. The expedition, which departed from the port of Bridgeport on May 19, and is using a special platform, the liftboat *L/B Robert*, equipped with a small drilling rig, to access the sediments below the ocean floor at up to three locations on the New England Shelf offshore from the coast of Massachusetts. The mission—IODP³-NSF Expedition 501: New England Shelf Hydrogeology—brings together 41 scientists from 13 countries, making it one of the most globally collaborative ocean research efforts of the year. The expedition includes two phases: offshore sampling from May through August 2025, and onshore analysis in January 2026 at the Bremen Core Repository in Germany.

Networked AI Lab Established at UMass Boston

Located in the College of Science and Mathematics, the Networked AI Lab will seek solutions for complex societal problems while preparing the next generation of engineers and computer scientists in the emerging interdisciplinary field of networked artificial intelligence (AI).

As autonomous technologies continue to advance, the networked AI research lab is introducing a unique approach to these systems, one that emphasizes collaboration between different types of autonomous vehicles. Self-driving cars equipped with laser-based light detection and ranging (LiDAR) and drones supplied with 360-degree cameras work together, combining unique perspectives to develop a stronger and more intelligent network than any one vehicle could achieve alone.

Bo Sheng, principal investigator and associate professor of computer science, leads research activity in the newly launched lab. The work that takes place in the lab addresses significant challenges in transportation safety, emergency response, environmental monitoring, and defense applications by advancing the science of collaborative autonomous systems.

"The idea is similar to how human teams with different areas of expertise collaborate together by sharing complementary insights," said Sheng. "Through collaboration, they build a more complete understanding than any one person could achieve alone."

Sheng's research applies this principle to artificial intelligence and autonomous systems by developing advanced communication protocols and data-integration techniques. The researchers pair sensing technologies with autonomous cars and drones. The cars are equipped with LiDAR systems for creating precise 3D maps, depth cameras for spatial understanding of the environment, and regular cameras that capture visual information from multiple angles. Meanwhile, the drones provide 360-degree visibility with a combination of regular and depth cameras.

Strengthen the University's Research and Development Enterprise (cont.)

University Research Awards for the Past Quarter

PI Alexey Veraksa/Biology received $2,131,298 from NIH - National Institute of General Medical Science for *Signaling Networks Controlling Organ Growth and Tissue Patterning*.

PI Jens Rister/Biology received $1,726,627 from NIH - National Eye Institute for *Mechanisms that Specify Subtypes of Photoreceptors for Color Vision*.

PI Balakrishnan Balachandran/Sustainable Solutions Lab received $1,099,169 from the Department of Transportation (sub from the U.S. Department of Transportation) for *MA DOT Cape Cod Rail Embankment Stability*.

PI Tiffany Donaldson/CEHD – Dean's Office received $960,000 from the University of Massachusetts Foundation (sub from Richard K. Lubin Family Foundation) for *Community Schools Education and Training*.

PI Patricia Janulewicz Lloyd/Urban Public Health received $711,013 from the U.S. Department of Defense for *Examining the Reproductive Health of Gulf War Veterans and the Subsequent Health and Development of Their Children*.

PI Tashauna Blankenship/Psychology received $571,311 from NIH - National Institute of Child Health and Human Development for *Episodic Future Thinking in Early Childhood: Neural and Behavioral Indices of Memory and Planning*.

PI Jonathan Rochford/Chemistry received $560,068 from National Science Foundation for *Selective Carbon Dioxide to Formate Conversion by Electrolyte Engineering and Tailored Electrocatalytic PCET Strategies*.

PI Daniel Haehn/Computer Science received $500,000 from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for *Expanding Culture Change across STEM Disciplines at the University of Massachusetts Public University System: Scaling the Partnership Between UMass Boston (MSI) and UMass Amherst (PWI)*.

PI Linda Huang/Biology received $464,083 from NIH - National Institute of General Medical Science for *Coordinating Cellular Events During Spore Development*.

Develop First-Rate Infrastructure

Globe Lounge Brings International Focus

This past May, the Division of Student Affairs cut a ribbon on a remodeled Globe Lounge. This newly refreshed space aims to be a hub for international activity, offering dedicated support for international students, study abroad information sessions, and hosting international visitors.

(From left) Deputy Chancellor Garrett Smith, Provost Joseph Berger, Vice Chancellor Kathleen Kirleis, Vice Chancellor Karen Ferrer-Muñiz, Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, Senior Campus Planner Tina Perez, Assistant Vice Chancellor Mike Metzger, and Executive Director of Global Programs Shaun Morgan gathered at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

A vibrant mural in the Globe Lounge creates a space that reflects global connection and community.

Develop a Leadership Role in Public Service

Chancellor Leads Global Summits on Climate Resilience

The Africa Resilience Summit

Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco is leading the coordination, programming, and execution of 11 global summits occurring worldwide from 2025 to 2026 as part of a joint initiative between the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences. These regional summits follow up 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 at UMass Boston in March 2025 in coordination with the Healey Administration. The summit developed a global roadmap for a whole-of-government approach to climate resilience, which was the focus of regional summits in California, Kenya, and Austria this year and will be the focus of upcoming summits scheduled in Brazil, Italy, Senegal, India, Australia, Hong Kong, and Japan in the coming months.

The primary outcome of the regional summits will be a global blueprint for climate resilience that can be adopted by any community worldwide. The foundation for this blueprint will be the best practices of governors and mayors worldwide who exhibit scalable, replicable leadership.

This effort has elevated UMass Boston's reputation as a global leader on efforts related to the Mitigation, Adaptation, and Societal Transformation (MAST) Strategy. The three-pronged approach focuses on mitigation efforts to diminish climate risks, adaptation strategies to cope with inevitable risks, and societal transformation that fosters and accelerates ongoing mitigation and adaptation measures.

"Climate change knows no borders; all feel its cruel effects. We must move beyond division and narrow self-interest and embrace solidarity and shared resilience—standing together behind concrete actions and policies that prioritize climate resilience *for the public good*," said Suárez-Orozco.

This global initiative is supported wholly by private philanthropic funds and will culminate with a reconvening at the Vatican in 2027, to be presided over by His Holiness Pope Leo XIV.

Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco presents a copy of From Climate Crisis to Climate Resilience *to Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo at the climate summit in Austria in August. The volume, coauthored by Chancellor Suárez-Orozco and Nobel Laureate Ram Ramanathan, was published by the Vatican earlier this year.*

Read more about the global climate summits.

Develop a Leadership Role in Public Service (cont.)

Six Boston Public High Schools Celebrate Graduation at UMass Boston

In a powerful show of partnership between public education and the city's only public research university, UMass Boston welcomed more than 1,000 Boston Public Schools graduates and their families as six of the city's high schools celebrated their graduation ceremonies on campus in June.

The ceremonies marked not only the culmination of academic achievement but also a new chapter for hundreds of students, including four from Ruth Batson Academy who have been awarded full Starratt Scholarships to attend UMass Boston.

The high schools that participated in the on-campus celebrations were Excel High School, John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science, Ruth Batson Academy, Dearborn STEM Academy, Boston Latin Academy, and Madison Park Technical Vocational High School. Boston Mayor Michelle Wu spoke at the Boston Latin Academy graduation.

These events reflect a broader collaboration between Boston Public Schools and UMass Boston aimed at creating seamless transitions from high school to college, especially for first-generation and underrepresented students. The graduations provide an opportunity for graduates and their families to experience the environment of a public research university, many for the first time. The use of UMass Boston's campus underscores the university's ongoing commitment to serving the city's youths and supporting pathways to higher education.

"Our university is more than a venue—it's a gateway to higher education and pathway to success. This partnership is a powerful symbol of access, opportunity, and what's possible for Boston students," said UMass Boston Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco. "We are honored to welcome these students to our campus as graduates."

Increase Endowment

Anonymous Gift Expands Global Opportunities for Art and Art History Students

A recent anonymous gift of $250,000 has significantly expanded the Ruth Butler Endowed Travel Fund—an enduring tribute to a faculty member whose life's work continues to shape students' lives and expand their creative horizons. Established by Professor Emerita Ruth Butler, the fund supports global travel and research for students in the Department of Art and Art History. A renowned scholar of nineteenth-century French art and an advocate for public education, Butler believed that travel was essential to artistic and intellectual growth. Her endowed scholarship fund—open to both studio artists and art historians—requires students to propose a meaningful international project, demonstrate prior engagement with collaborators abroad, and possess working knowledge of the local language.

Since its creation in 2003, the fund has supported 29 Butler Fellows, who have conducted research and creative work across Europe, Asia, and Latin America. Their experiences have enriched not only their own artistic practice and scholarship but also the broader learning environment at UMass Boston and the regional arts community, as the fellows return to share the perspectives and lessons they gained abroad.

Beyond international travel, the endowed fund also provides access to world-class museums and cultural institutions, funding student visits to the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, among others.

UMass Boston Fundraising Surpasses $30 Million for Fourth Consecutive Year

Philanthropic donors made gifts and pledges totaling more than $30 million to UMass Boston in FY25, marking the fourth year in a row that the university's campus-wide fundraising total exceeded this benchmark.

This past fiscal year also showed increases in donor participation and alumni engagement. Annual Fund contributions climbed to $1,701,687, an 8 percent increase over FY24. Alumni donors contributed in record numbers, with 4,151 making a gift—a remarkable 29.5 percent jump from last year.

Engagement across the Beacon community reached new heights as well. The Alumni Engagement team hosted 52 events that welcomed 4,047 alumni and friends, marking the seventh consecutive year of record-breaking attendance. From the thought-provoking symposia to seaside and rooftop gatherings, each event was a celebration of connection, community, and shared pride in UMass Boston's future.

Maintain and Improve Affordability and Access

Belonging Remains Key Driver in Student Affairs Work

This year, the Office of Student Activities and Leadership achieved an impressive milestone with 160 student organizations officially registered—a remarkable 23 percent increase compared to last year. These groups offered over 1,800 programs, representing a 25 percent year-over-year increase.

The programming board, the Student Arts and Events Council (SAEC), reported more than 21,000 participants in its programs, a new high for the fifth consecutive year. Student Multicultural Affairs increased its participation by nearly 2,000 individuals, representing a one-year increase of over 50 percent. And, in just the first year of the newly opened Military Affiliated Student Center for Belonging, membership doubled.

One Stop Enhances Student Support with Mongoose AI Chat Tool

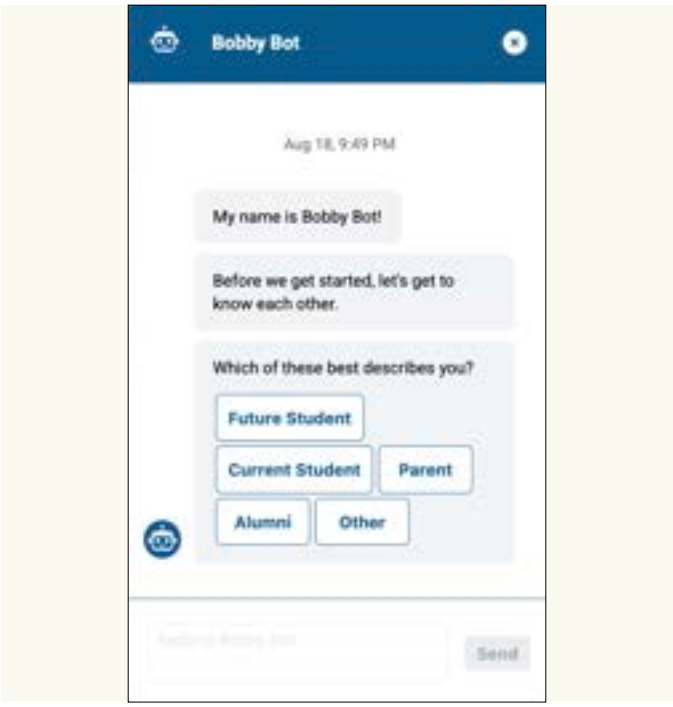
UMass Boston's One Stop, a center that assists students with financial aid, billing, and registration questions, has introduced a powerful upgrade to its student support services with the integration of the Mongoose chat tool, featuring a new AI chatbot that provides 24/7 assistance. This tool ensures students can receive timely answers and support beyond standard business hours.

At the One Stop, students can take care of several transactions in one centralized location.

The AI bot replaces the previous chat-only feature on the One Stop website, and improves workflow efficiency by handling frequently asked questions, allowing staff to focus on more complex tasks and questions. The bot is informed by combing the UMass Boston website. Integrated with Slate CRM, Mongoose supports seamless tracking and management of student interactions, which allows staff to better assist students and supports retention efforts.

Key features include chronological conversation histories for context-rich follow-ups, insights into student inquiries to identify trends, and a holistic view that combines chat interactions with student record information. Additionally, the chat tool, deemed "Bobby Bot," is built to manage high volumes of inquiries, ensuring reliable support during peak times like registration and payment deadlines.

Overall, the AI chatbot enhances service accessibility, operational efficiency, and student engagement.



Bobby Bot AI chat tool

Continue a Positive Focus on Diversity and Positive Climate

Transmutation *greets visitors outside University Hall.*

Cannupa Hanska Luger Art Installation Connects UMass Boston Community with Indigenous History

New public artwork now greets visitors outside University Hall, *UMass Boston: Transmutation* by the highly acclaimed artist Cannupa Hanska Luger. The sculpture, a feature piece of the inaugural Boston Public Art Triennial, is both a monumental installation and a collaborative act of remembrance and resilience formed by hundreds of student and community hands.

Presented in partnership with UMass Boston Arts on the Point and the Native American and Indigenous Studies Program, *Transmutation* is a living memorial that calls upon the collective community to reflect on loss, celebrate resilience, and begin the journey of healing.

A towering pair of sculptural portals form the foundation for *Transmutation*, each crowned with a buffalo skull cast in resin, based on clay originals sculpted by Luger himself. Between them stretches a suspended net adorned with thousands of black and white ribbons, inscribed with handwritten reflections and messages of hope.

The visual impact is immediate, but the meaning runs deeper. Over the course of six workshops in spring 2025, more than 250 students, faculty, and community members participated in the piece's creation. Participants were invited to reflect on the prompt "Call back the buffalo," writing messages on ribbons that were then tied to the sculpture's mesh fabric.

UMass Boston Vice Chancellor Jacqueline Schuman Named 2025 Women Leaders in Sports Nike Executive of the Year Award Winner

Jacqueline Schuman is being recognized by Women Leaders in Sports.

Vice Chancellor of Athletics and Recreation Jacqueline Schuman has been selected as a 2025 Women Leaders in Sports Nike Executive of the Year Award Winner, as announced by the Women Leaders in Sports organization.

She is being honored for her outstanding leadership and transformative impact in collegiate athletics. She will be recognized at the 2025 Women Leaders in Sports National Convention, to be held October 12–14 in Kansas City.

Schuman was appointed director of Athletics and Recreation at UMass Boston in the summer of 2021 and elevated to vice chancellor in August 2022. She is the first woman in university history to hold this role and serves on both the Chancellor's Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team.

"This award is a reflection of the remarkable team I work with at UMass Boston and the shared commitment we have to champion excellence, equity, and opportunity for all student-athletes. I am especially honored to represent such a diverse, dynamic, and important university on a national stage," Schuman said. "I am also hopeful as I receive this award that I can serve as a model for other women to have the confidence, determination, and resilience to rise repeatedly, despite the obstacles they encounter along the way, so they too can lead."

Position University in the Higher Education Marketplace

Ryan Noe Named Conductor of UMass Boston Orchestra for 2025–2026 Season

UMass Boston Orchestra Conductor Ryan Noe

The UMass Boston Orchestra has a new conductor for the coming year, as accomplished music educator and trumpeter Ryan Noe has been named visiting assistant professor in music. Noe has played trumpet with the orchestra many times since joining UMass Boston in 2021 and is looking forward to leading students and community members he previously sat next to. In addition to conducting, the position includes teaching Music Education and a Special Topics in Composition course.

"Working with college students is something I enjoy a lot, and I wanted to expand on that," Noe said. "It's exciting to be at the podium making musical choices. This fall, we're doing Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7* and *The Unanswered Question* by Charles Ives where we will feature trumpeter Karl Stanley, one of our graduating seniors."

In recent years, particularly since COVID, the UMass Boston Orchestra has grown both on stage and in audience through the leadership of the previous conductor, Sommer Forrester, and significant commitment from the Performing Arts Department and the College of Liberal Arts. Forrester, who joins the faculty of the University of Toronto this fall, began in 2015 with an orchestra of just 28 members, only 12 students, and an audience of fewer than 20. The spring 2025 concert saw 52 musicians, 28 students, and the Recital Hall is now routinely at full capacity, selling out far in advance.

Noe takes the helm understanding that momentum and embracing the unique "community" aspect of the UMass Boston Orchestra, composed not only of students but also a number of faculty, staff, and alumni, as well as experienced musicians from the Greater Boston area.

UMass Boston Brings Home Its First-Ever National Title at the 2025 NCA College Nationals

Members of UMass Boston's cheer team at the 2025 National Cheerleaders Association College Nationals

Members of UMass Boston's cheer team competed against nine other teams in the Intermediate Small Coed Division III category at the 2025 National Cheerleaders Association College Nationals in Daytona Beach, Florida, this spring. During their two-day competition, the team delivered a hit-zero routine, meaning there were no mistakes or deductions. They were the only team competing that was able to accomplish this, leading them to bring home a national title.

"This was the first time in UMass Boston history that UMass Boston Cheer is coming home with a national title," said Katie Armstrong, assistant director of first-year recruitment in undergraduate admissions and the team's advisor. "This year was a new division for us, and our athletes worked very hard to earn the spot. Our season is over a year long, with fundraisers, events, late-night practices, and competitions. I am proud of my athletes, and proud to represent them as their coach."

While the team wasn't able to practice on campus for the majority of the season, the team members drove an hour each way to nearby cheer gyms to practice three times a week. For Armstrong, this act "showed their dedication, and determination to come out on top despite this barrier all season."

"One of the biggest highlights of competing at NCA College Nationals in Daytona was not only making UMass Boston Cheerleading history by performing zero-deduction routines both days of the competition and bringing home a national championship title," said team captain and treasurer Ella Reardon, "but being able to accomplish it with my best friends."

Enhance the Learning Experience

College of Management Dean Venky Venkatachalam with a group that worked with CERO Cooperative, Inc., in Dorchester

BEST Boston 2025 Triples in Size, Triples the Impact

The College of Management celebrated the third annual BEST (Business Engagement for Students) Boston program, a fast-growing business and community initiative that equips business students with experiential learning while helping local companies thrive.

This year, 70 students, 24 faculty mentors, and 34 small businesses participated in the 10-week program, which has grown dramatically since its launch in 2023 with just 10 students and 5 businesses. Through BEST Boston, students provide pro bono consulting support to small businesses across the Greater Boston area, helping solve real challenges in marketing, finance, accounting, business analytics, and more.

Each team is matched with a faculty advisor, ensuring their recommendations are grounded in both academic rigor and practical value. Businesses receive fresh ideas and actionable strategies tailored to their goals, while students build meaningful relationships and real-world skills that extend far beyond the classroom.

"BEST Boston is the definition of community impact," said Dean Venky Venkatachalam of the College of Management. "We are preparing students to lead with purpose and confidence, and we are giving local businesses the tools they need to succeed. This is public education at its best, where learning and economic development go hand in hand."

Walk with GRACE Event Highlights Mental Health and Wellness for Campus Community

This spring, University Health Services (UHS) hosted the first Walk with GRACE event in honor of Mental Health Awareness Month and GRACE Trail Month. The event brought together students, faculty, and staff for a day of connection, reflection, and wellness—highlighting the importance of caring for ourselves and our community.

Responding to the Mental Health Awareness Month theme "Turn Awareness into Action," the Campus Center Terrace was transformed into a hub for well-being, which featured over 25 interactive tables and activity stations, representing the eight dimensions of self-care: emotional, physical, social, spiritual, intellectual, environmental, financial, and occupational. Participants had the opportunity to explore campus and community mental health resources, engage in fun and restorative activities, and leave with practical tools to support their everyday wellness.

The event focused attention on the UMass Boston Harborwalk GRACE Trail®, a one-mile self-guided walking path that stretches from Fox Point Dock to the Harbor Point apartments, anchored with five provocative questions centered on Gratitude, Release, Acceptance, Challenge, and Embrace (GRACE). Originally installed in 2022, the GRACE Trail encourages reflection and movement as tools for mental health.

The event was a demonstration of campus-wide care and collaboration, organized by UHS Mental Health Educator Beatriz Louzado and cosponsored by UHS, the Chancellor's Office, the Office of Housing and Residential Life, the Office of Student Leadership and Community Engagement (OSLCE), and the Black Faculty and Staff Association.

Students learn more about the GRACE trail at the first Walk with GRACE event.

Enhance the Learning Experience (cont.)

UMass Boston Athletes Achieve Record-High GPA Across Programs

UMass Boston Athletics is celebrating not only a successful competitive season—with 2 Little East Conference (LEC) Championships, 4 NCAA appearances, and 12 conference Player of the Year awards—but also a standout year in the classroom, setting the highest cumulative GPA in over a decade.

UMass Boston's LEC-affiliated teams recorded a combined 3.29 GPA for the academic year, while the department's overall GPA—including teams competing under the New England Hockey Conference (NEHC)—rose to 3.30.

Leading the way was the women's volleyball team with an impressive 3.68 cumulative GPA. Close behind were women's cross country (3.59), women's lacrosse (3.57), women's hockey (3.56), and women's soccer (3.52), reflecting the department's strong commitment to academic achievement.

Several teams made remarkable academic improvements over the year. Men's tennis saw the largest jump, increasing its team GPA by 0.50 points from spring 2024 to spring 2025. Men's basketball improved by 0.28, men's soccer by 0.25, and both women's basketball and men's lacrosse improved by 0.24.

Campus Launches New Collaborative DeafBlind Graduate Certificate Program

A new collaboration between the UMass Boston Vision Studies program, New England Consortium on DeafBlindness (NEC), Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI), and Northeast Resource Center for Vision Education at UMass Boston (NERCVE) has culminated in a DeafBlind Graduate Certificate program, available this fall for UMass Boston students and education professionals interested in expanding their skills.

Students who are deafblind face unique challenges in school that require the attention of specialized instructors. UMass Boston's new DeafBlind Graduate Certificate program will prepare education staff to work with students who are deafblind.

The certificate program includes five courses in the Vision Studies program that cover a variety of topics like multicultural perspectives of deafblindness; psychosocial implications of deafblindness; communication strategies for deafblind children; literacy access, assessment, and practice application; assistive technology; and research-based practices.

The UMass Boston Vision Studies program was ranked as one of the Best Online Graduate Education Programs by *U.S. News & World Report*.

Renew the Faculty

UMass Boston Archivist Meghan Bailey Awarded Innovation Grant for "Unresidency" Project

Meghan Bailey

Meghan Bailey, processing archivist in Healey Library's University Archives and Special Collections (UASC), is using her Innovative Grant award from the artists' foundation Art + Everywhere to fund her project *Intersections of Art and Archives: An Unresidency Program*, which aims to expand traditional uses of archives.

Her grant-funded pilot will launch an "Unresidency," an artist residency without the residence, that will invite five local artists to explore UMass Boston's archives and special collections as inspiration to create original artwork.

The resulting artwork will be featured in a public exhibition in the Grossmann Gallery at Healey Library, on view from January 26 to May 15, 2026. The exhibit will be co-curated by Bailey, Art + Everywhere board member Jeremy Andreatta, and Art History Professor Carol Scollans.

Improve Delivery of Administration and IT Services

Hazel Sive Named Dean of the College of Science and Mathematics

Dean Hazel Sive

Provost Joseph Berger has announced Hazel Sive, PhD, as the new dean of the College of Science and Mathematics and professor of biology, pointing to her proven record of transformational leadership and scholarly achievement.

Sive joins UMass Boston from Northeastern University where she has served as dean of the College of Science since 2020. For 28 years prior, she was a biology professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), member of the Whitehead Institute, and associate member of the Broad Institute. A native of South Africa, Sive's ground-breaking research focuses on neurodevelopmental disorders, as well as fundamental processes underlying brain and craniofacial development.

As dean of science at Northeastern University, Sive promoted excellence through innovation in science research and education, amidst an overarching culture of belonging and respect. She has promoted a framework of the Good Power of Science that commits to ethical, responsible research and to communicating the essential contributions that science research makes to everyone, every day.

Pratima Prasad Named Dean of the College of Liberal Arts

Dean Pratima Prasad

Pratima Prasad, PhD, has been named dean of the College of Liberal Arts (CLA), after serving in the interim dean capacity for the past two-and-a-half years with great skill and dedication.

Prasad began her tenure at UMass Boston as a faculty member in the Department of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures. She has held several key administrative roles, including department chair, associate dean, and currently as the interim dean of the college. Her research has investigated the intersections of French and francophone literature, colonialism, and race.

As associate dean, Prasad streamlined personnel processes, expanded undergraduate research participation—tripling engagement—and established data-driven practices in staffing, scheduling, and faculty mentoring across CLA. During her term as interim dean, she spearheaded the development of a comprehensive 10-year strategic plan that articulates a forward-looking vision for CLA's teaching, research, and service mission.