

A Time For Bold Action

Chancellor's Convocation Address

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Chancellor

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Good morning. Let me add my welcome to everyone who joins us this morning to celebrate all that is great about our university, as we embark upon a new academic year.

First, I want to express my appreciation to President Wilson and to the trustees of the University for affording me the privilege of leading this campus of the university at a most exciting time in its history. Further, let me state that Dean Flotte's leadership and partnership during our time together on this campus has been outstanding. I thank him personally and applaud his work.

Being on this campus I cannot help but recall on a daily basis my first thoughts about becoming a physician. Viewing an early 1960's *Time* magazine pictorial about surgery on an arthritic hand that would become the subject of my first elementary school class report, I can remember the excitement I felt in the realization that physicians had the opportunity to reconstruct the structures of the hand, restoring it to purposeful use for patients with debilitating diseases.

Many years later, the hand again emerged as a powerful reminder to me of the responsibility caregivers accept when they provide care for patients. During my medical school course in anatomy I clearly remember dissecting a hand and having a revelation of the awesome responsibility assumed when a physician recites the oath and commits to a life of service and care of others. In that anatomy class, as we identified the structures of our cadaver's hand—hand in hand as it were—there came rushing the understanding that one day soon, into *my* hands would come the responsibility for the lives of others.

Thereafter, of course, came the powerful translation of that responsibility into privilege: the privilege I had as a health care professional to care for patients.

Being on this campus I am reminded daily of the enormous privilege it is for this local boy to be given the responsibility and privilege, together with the deans and our administrative colleagues, to lead our state's great medical school. With your continued support and encouragement, I look forward to the year ahead, as the united work of our hands furthers our commitment to our tripartite mission of education, research and service to our patients and communities.

A New Beginning

The year is off to a most auspicious beginning. We continue to make tremendous progress guided by our strategic plan.

We have welcomed new classes of highly accomplished students to our three schools. They come to our campus full of promise and altruism replete with superior academic ability and lives characterized by a commitment of service to others.

We have learned with great pride of the marvelous contributions members of our community made to the health care of people throughout the world, due to the volunteer efforts of students, faculty and staff during the summer months.

We have been impressed, once again, by the accomplishments of our dedicated faculty, as our campus has been and continues to be the beneficiary of a healthy infusion of research funding, including stimulus funds that support and promote the research interests and commitments of our faculty. What is most impressive about this accomplishment is that it is not due to directive or coaxing. The success of our faculty derives from their initiative and efforts and the merit of their work.

We have concluded successful years at Commonwealth Medicine and at our Massachusetts Biologic Laboratories. In doing so, we continue to care for the disenfranchised and provide state entities with care models and designs. Our colleagues at MBL have completed the licensing of a monoclonal antibody to C. Diff and its rabies monoclonal is in clinical trials in India.

We have been very pleased with the success and efforts of our clinical system. Working together, we have recruited outstanding faculty, we have deepened our dedication to those for whom we provide care, and we have furthered our resolve to move into the future in full recognition that ours is a linked destiny.

We have redoubled our commitment to our community. Throughout central Massachusetts, the Commonwealth, and indeed the world, members of our university actively seek opportunities to aid those who are in need. From the seven hills of Worcester to the hillsides surrounding Port au Prince, from AP science classes at North High to maternal and child health instruction in Central and South America, and from the public health task force in our own community to the public health needs of Liberia, Ghana and Mumbai, the University of Massachusetts Medical School understands its responsibility and privilege to care for citizens in our community and throughout the world.

A Time for Bold Action

We gather today at a moment when our nation and Commonwealth continue to struggle with the economic downturn, even as we glimpse on the distant horizon the prospect of a return to prosperity, modest as it may be. Our state has become a model for the nation as the new administration and Congress grapple with much needed reforms to our health care system. Though stimulus funding has helped us circumvent the direst of financial predictions, many people believe we stand at the precipice of a grim economic cliff and, looking across the chasm into an uncertain economic future, see there is no clearing immediately ahead; in fact, some claim that it will be years before we emerge from the woods.

We have important choices to make, such as: Should we hunker down and shield ourselves as best as we can from external factors that will impinge upon our success? That may seem to be an option, but not one I would recommend nor choose to pursue.

I believe instead that now is the time for bold action! Our mission is too critical for us to choose otherwise; our vision is too clear to be clouded by uncertainty. Our commitments to create the health care delivery system of the future, to educate the workforce of tomorrow, to establish an ideal learning environment, to focus on translational research endeavors, to be efficient and effective as an academic health sciences center and to make a global impact—these commitments are too important to abandon or to postpone. So I insist: Now is the time for bold action!

Faculty Recognition

The academic life of our institution centers on the roles and responsibilities of our faculty. This campus is the locus of superlative and innovative efforts by our faculty. Not one of our scientists or clinicians is satisfied with the status quo; in fact, they are charting the future through their initiatives. No lab or clinic will settle for yesterday's methodology or be deterred by the uncertainty or complexity of today's greatest challenges; in fact, they are stimulated to resolve the most difficult questions. And not one of our patients expects us to approach them solely with dire predictions or clouded prognostications; in fact, they come to us with hope and expectation, even in the darkest of hours. Our faculty are bold and determined in their actions.

Because of our success-filled history we have been most fortunate to be able to attract outstanding individuals to join our academic community. When we are speaking with a faculty recruit about joining our campus, we are inevitably asked what the future of the medical school is. Recruits, rightfully, want to know of our commitments to their areas of inquiry. They want to join our schools because we have a bright future. Many of them come to us because we have chosen and choose to be bold.

At this time, I would like to ask our community to welcome all members of the faculty who may be new to our campus or recently promoted.

When a university awards tenure to a faculty member, it chooses to establish a life-long academic relationship with that committed scholar. These rigorous decisions, reached after much scrutiny and a most thorough process, acknowledge outstanding accomplishment in scholarship, teaching and service to our campus. It is a privilege to recognize those members of our faculty who, for their outstanding accomplishments and commitment, were awarded tenure this past year:

Faculty Tenured in 2009

Lucio H. Castilla, PhD, associate professor of molecular medicine and biochemistry & molecular pharmacology

Paul R. Clapham, PhD, associate professor of molecular medicine and molecular genetics & microbiology

William V. Dube, PhD, associate professor of psychiatry and pediatrics

Patrick Emery-Le, PhD, associate professor of neurobiology

Neal S. Silverman, PhD, associate professor of medicine and molecular genetics & microbiology

Please accept our deepest appreciation for your continued good work and for the promise your future portends.

A faculty looks to its most senior members to provide leadership and mentoring. An academic community benefits greatly from the wisdom of its full professors. At this time, I would like to recognize those faculty who have been recently promoted to full professor:

Faculty Promoted to Professor in 2009

Eric H. Baehrecke, PhD, professor of cancer biology

Suzanne B. Cashman, DSc, professor of family medicine & community health

Sybil L. Crawford, PhD, professor of medicine

Stephen J. Glick, MD, professor of radiology

Anthony N. Imbalzano, PhD, professor of cell biology

Evelyn A. Kurt-Jones, PhD, professor of medicine

Dannel McCollum, PhD, professor of molecular genetics & microbiology

Michele P. Pugnaire, MD, professor of family medicine & community health

Liisa K. Selin, MD, PhD, professor of pathology

We celebrate your extraordinary accomplishments and commitment.

It is most unusual for a university to award full professorship as well as tenure to new members of the faculty. Such awards occur only in the instance of superior scholarship and in recognition that this member of the faculty is among the finest in the world in that academic discipline. The following full professors have the distinction of being both tenured and new to the university:

Faculty Tenured and New to the University in 2009

Jeroan J. Allison, MD, MSci, EPI, professor of quantitative health sciences and medicine

Robert Brown, MD, DPhil, chair and professor of neurology

Andrew Karellas, PhD, professor of radiology

Catarina I. Kiefe, MD, PhD, professor of quantitative health sciences and medicine

Jason K. Kim, PhD, professor of molecular medicine and medicine

We welcome you to our university and look forward to your continued success and scholarly contributions.

Throughout my time on our campus, I have been most impressed with the accomplishments and dedication of our faculty. Yet I have observed that our campus could do more to celebrate the commitment and success of our faculty throughout all three mission areas. Faculty who are based on our campus are the heart and soul of our curricular efforts in the pre-clinical years. Faculty who are established at our clinical affiliates demonstrate the finest commitment to the oath physicians profess to participate in the education of our younger colleagues.

To be bolder in our recognition of faculty accomplishment, I shall ask the Provost to seek counsel from across the campus community regarding faculty recognition, with one goal being the establishment of Chancellor's medals in the areas of education, research and distinguished service:

My vision is that the recipient of the Chancellor's medal in education would be recognized for commitment to teaching and be invited to present a newly instituted lecture, which we shall call, as many campuses do, the Last Lecture, to occur near the end of the academic year.

The recipient of the Chancellor's medal in research would be recognized for extraordinary research efforts and accomplishments and be invited to make a keynote presentation at an important research seminar, such as the Woods Hole retreat.

The recipient of the Chancellor's medal for distinguished service would be recognized for numerous contributions to our campus throughout his or her career and would be provided with an opportunity to discuss the importance of service to our campus, perhaps at Convocation, each year.

I propose that we make the presentation of these medals during the proceedings at Convocation, which shall now continue to occur at the start of each academic year. I believe that as we begin an academic year it is appropriate to recognize the commitment and contributions of our faculty. I shall look forward to receiving your thoughts on this initiative.

Establishment of an Institute for Health Policy

Earlier in my comments I alluded to the challenges facing the nation as we strive to reform our system of health care and attempt to provide access and coverage for all Americans. We know that the debate has been difficult and at times rancorous. We know that there are many people with vested interests who would choose to maintain the status quo. We know that all patients must get closer to the purchasing decision when obtaining their health care, as this may be the only means to control costs. We know that preventive health care measures, better outcome studies and further understanding of variances in practice patterns are essential to assure the health and well being of the nation.

Our new president has called on all of us to participate in the debate. Specifically, he has asked those most involved in the education of health care professionals and the provision of health care delivery to take ambitious steps to assure that this time our country succeeds in the effort to reform and improve our health care system.

Throughout this past year, I have been impressed with the efforts of many of our faculty members, and with the leadership and initiative of our colleagues in Commonwealth Medicine, to stimulate debate, offer constructive options and wholeheartedly participate in review and reform efforts.

Yet I think we could do more. I believe that our actions could be bolder.

Today, I would like to ask our campus community, its governance bodies and leadership, to work together to establish an Institute for Health Policy.

Our medical school occupies a unique position as the Commonwealth's only public medical school. A number of our academic departments have made significant contributions in the health policy arena, including the departments of Family and Community Medicine, Psychiatry, and Quantitative Health Sciences, as well as our entities such as Commonwealth Medicine, the Meyers Primary Care Institute and the Center for Outcomes Research, among others. This substantial volume of health care and service delivery and health care consultative work presents a unique foundation for health policy and health services research. Last year, I asked the Provost and a group of campus leaders to come together to consider the establishment of a new Institute for Health Policy (IHP) dedicated to academic research and scholarship in this field. I am grateful for their efforts throughout this consultative process, which greatly informed my objectives.

Specifically, an Institute for Health Policy would:

- Formalize the UMMS role as a health policy expert and advisor in the federal, regional and state health care arenas;
- Enhance communication and collaboration among health policy experts on our own campus, throughout Commonwealth Medicine, as well as across the other campuses of the UMass system, by providing a centralized health policy "home";
- Expand the depth and breadth of the UMass health policy work and expertise; and
- Bring state, national and international recognition and distinction to the medical school and UMass overall, as a voice of leading health policy experts.

I would like to propose that we recruit, through a national search, an internationally recognized, outstanding academic health policy researcher as the founding director of the Institute, with these expectations:

- To establish a matrix structure and close collaborations with faculty and staff engaged in health policy work within academic departments and school entities, such as those I mentioned earlier and with the other UMass campuses, maximizing academic research and training opportunities associated with their health policy efforts;
- To recruit up to three tenure track faculty to be housed primarily within the Institute for Health Policy, with the further expectation that each will garner extramural research funding to cover 50% or more of their efforts;

- To recruit associate members of the Institute from related academic departments, enabling such members to access methodologic resources and a public affairs function resident within Institute; and
- To work collaboratively with colleagues from across the medical school as a point person for external contacts with the media, government officials and potential donors for health policy-related communications and commitments.

I shall ask the Provost to begin processing this recommendation throughout our campus organization, with the hope that we can begin to establish the Institute and successfully recruit a new leader before the close of the academic year. Such bold moves will afford us the opportunity to take our rightful place in academic research and scholarship in health policy and assume more important responsibilities as we more forcefully enter the health care policy arena.

UMass Medicine Cares

Shortly after I arrived on campus two years ago, I was struck by the extraordinary efforts of the members of our campus community to interact with and serve the needs of our local friends and neighbors. Many people on our campus volunteer their time and talents to assure that those who are most in need are supported. We teach in the schools, we serve in the free clinics, we care for those who are lonely or abused, we coach and mentor, we welcome the disenfranchised, we partner with others who care, and we do so willingly and with great enthusiasm. We constantly confront challenging circumstances with imagination and courage and therefore we consistently act boldly.

Yet I was struck that these heroic commitments were not known. In fact, at times we as a university were criticized for not doing enough to contribute to our local communities; indeed our efforts elsewhere in the world often achieved more acclaim than those around the corner. Such criticisms were audacious and untrue.

Not for a moment do I think that volunteerism should be performed solely for the recognition that often accompanies it. In fact, I believe just the contrary. Yet I am concerned that the efforts of our academic health sciences center are not fully appreciated and, thus, will lead to calls for reduced funding or increased taxation. Neither claims are warranted nor in our communities' best interests.

Through the ingenuity of our colleagues in Information Services, Community Affairs and Public Relations, and in partnership with our health care system, earlier this month I announced the launch of UMass Medicine Cares. This interactive website allows all members of our community to proudly view the endeavors each of us undertakes on behalf of others in our community.

Because I am truly pleased and proud to receive so many compliments about these efforts, and fully understanding that many people do not choose to recognize their good works in a formal way, I am determined to quantify and commend your myriad deeds to reveal the important contributions we make in the name of service to others.

Thus, in the years ahead, we will encourage all members of our community to utilize the UMass Medicine Cares website to record volunteer efforts. We shall establish methods to acknowledge those who make exceptional contributions to our local population. In a year's time, we shall welcome members of our university and leaders from local communities to honor your many commitments. Together, we can present a record of our service efforts, communicate our resolve to do more, and celebrate all that is good about our service mission.

Our communities need us, just as we need our communities to support us. Let us take bold measures together to demonstrate that UMass Medicine Cares.

The Albert Sherman Center

Last evening, we took a bold step to secure our future as an institution of national distinction in education and research.

Over the past year, we have been involved in the planning of a new structure, the Albert Sherman Center, that will allow us to intensify our commitment to research, resolve many of our needs for educational space as we anticipate the launch of our new curriculum, and structurally unite our campus. The Sherman Center and supporting infrastructure will afford us the opportunity to continue to attract outstanding investigators, clinician-scientists, educators, students and industry partners to our campus, as we enhance the medical school's and the region's position as a leader in medical education and research.

As such, there is an impressive vision for this center. Through its establishment we shall be in a better position to promote "T1" bench-to-bedside translational research, resulting in early phase human trials of gene therapy, stem cells and RNA-based and other innovative therapeutics. We shall integrate quantitative "dry lab" methods, such as bioinformatics, biostatistics, interactive health outcome assessments and electronic health care data systems, with the work of biologists and chemists in their "wet labs." In addition, we shall create the ideal learning environment for innovative elements of the medical, nursing, graduate biomedical and inter-professional curricula, such as learning communities, simulation and standardized patients. In doing so, we will foster interactions between students, faculty, staff and members of our community in public and social forums.

This is a bold undertaking, and some people have suggested that we postpone or scale back our plans to move forward while we let the economy shake out and the markets begin to grow again. After careful consideration, we have rejected those suggestions because this is the moment for our campus, for the life sciences in Massachusetts and for the patients we serve who cannot wait indefinitely. This is the time for bold action.

Why? You might ask.

First, the discoveries that shall occur within this new facility could change the face of medicine and conquer diseases that we thought heretofore incurable. We must not allow the work of our hands to be deprived of the opportunity to make incredible scientific discoveries, to cure a child, to give sight to the blind, or to improve lives in some way.

Secondly, this facility will have an enormous economic impact on the central region of our Commonwealth. Our bold actions will bring thousands of jobs—good jobs—to our region; it will bring over a \$1 billion in economic stimulus to our state; it will solidify Worcester as a hub for the life sciences and allow us to leverage state funding into an investment that will serve our campus throughout the entirety of each of our lifetimes and beyond.

Thirdly, within this facility our colleagues will develop new therapeutic products, allow for their commercialization and afford us the opportunity to partner with our other campuses and companies throughout Massachusetts. This facility is the centerpiece of the Massachusetts life sciences initiative. Long before economic stimulus plans were conceived at the national level, Massachusetts leaders saw the opportunity to stimulate our economy and secure our future with an investment in our medical school. Interest rates are at historical lows and our state chooses to invest alongside us. We must seize the moment.

Over the next few months, our new facility will rise out of the Basic Lot. Nothing will be basic about it as nothing is basic about this medical school. We are advanced in our planning, in our mission and in our vision. We are advanced in our science, in our care and in our recruitment. We are advanced in our recognition, our commitment to others and in our global reach. We are advanced because we choose to be bold.

An Auspicious Beginning

As we start this academic year, let us be grateful for the opportunities afforded to us. Through the work of our minds, our hearts and our hands we have been given the tremendous responsibility to care for and about the human spirit. The University of Massachusetts and its medical school chooses to chart its future, determine its path and create its destiny through bold acts. It does so with all of us as the temporary stewards of its mission.

Let me return to where I began: It is a privilege to be here at this moment in our university's history. I look forward to the year ahead and to being with you, as, together, we shape the future of this great medical school.