

Debate at UMass Dartmouth: Baker vs. Coakley



The gubernatorial debate between Martha Coakley and Charlie Baker was held in the UMass Dartmouth auditorium on October 17.

This week I attended the October 17th gubernatorial debate between Martha Coakley and Charlie Baker, held in the UMass Dartmouth auditorium. Hosted by the SouthCoast Alliance, a group of various media organizations, chambers of commerce, and universities in the southeastern Massachusetts area, this debate was a final chance for the candidates to make their case before votes are to be cast. In this article I will attempt as objectively as possible to present the candidates' viewpoints, as well as the "feel" of their debate performance in order to help you the voter make an informed decision.

But to be clear: I am not endorsing either candidate. Much like the moderator of this debate I have sworn myself to complete and unmovable neutrality.

Speaking of the moderator, Political Science Chairperson Professor Shannon Jenkins had the honor of serving in that

role. As a researcher of public policy, specifically focusing on state governments and politics, and a seasoned debate moderator, Professor Jenkins was well suited for the task.

I met with Professor Jenkins just a day earlier to discuss the debate, and though she couldn't tell me much because of her own neutrality, she did tell me this about the importance of the debate, "In elections it's important for candidates to get their names out there so voters know who they are and what they stand for, and debates are one way of doing that. And it's a chance for voters of the south coast to hear where the candidates stand on issues that are important down here."

And indeed we did as the candidates battled one another over issues including transportation, energy, income inequality, healthcare reform, and who was fit to be governor.



*Current Attorney
General of the
Commonwealth of
Massachusetts.*

*Martha Coakley.
(Democrat)*

As the debate started that day almost all the seats in the auditorium were filled, and the air was full of anticipation over what the candidates were going to say. However, if like me, you had previously researched some of the candidates'

stances, then there were no real surprises.

In the first round the candidates dueled over the SouthCoast rail project. Coakley made it clear that she supports automatic indexing of a gas tax, (meaning the tax automatically increases according to the current rate of inflation), as one way of paying for it and other much needed projects, such as repairing an aging infrastructure in severe disrepair and rated among the worst in the nation. She also attempted to make it clear a few times in the debate that in past campaigns, Charlie Baker was not as staunch a supporter of the project as he now claims he is.

“One of the reasons it has taken a while to get here, unfortunately, has been financing on the Big Dig, that my Republican opponent was engaged in,” Coakley claimed, and indeed this claim would continue throughout the debate as a part of Coakley’s argument. The Big Dig was a major construction project in Boston that sought to relieve the overly congested traffic issues and crumbling infrastructure the city had. However the project took 8 years longer than estimated and ended up costing approximately 15 billion dollars, far more than the planners had originally expected.

Meanwhile Baker, pledged support to the ballot referendum that would repeal indexing the gas tax because he believes state legislators must vote on raising the tax and thus be held accountable to the voters. Even if the indexing is repealed, he maintained that the gas tax would remain in place and still bring in a sizable amount of money to the state’s budget. Referring to Coakley’s criticism of Baker’s role with the Big Dig, Baker said, “I worked on a bipartisan basis with the Clinton administration and with the Democratic legislature to come up with a financing plan to pay for that shortfall, which added up to 1.5 billion and it worked.”



Businessman and politician, Charlie Baker. (Republican)

He then elaborated on that by telling the audience how his financing plan allowed Governor Patrick to go ahead with his accelerated bridge reconstruction program. “The notion that the Big Dig is the reason that we can’t pay for projects in Massachusetts is simply not true,” Baker stated.

During the debate it was easy to see Baker as very personable, who at points even had the crowd practically eating out of his hands. “I’m looking forward to seeing the New Bedford Marine Terminal move forward,” he said. “You can clap on that one,” he encouraged the crowd, and a small somewhat quiet, gentle wave of applause erupted out immediately. Of course Coakley was not to let Baker get the better of her, and so while he adopted the role of a charming salesman, Coakley donned the persona of a determined boxer, getting as many jabs in on Baker as possible whenever she had the opportunity.

When she accused Baker of using “fuzzy math” to account for how he’d fund important projects while simultaneously lowering taxes and offering tax breaks to big corporations, he brushed off the hit and said with a smile, “I sometimes wonder if the attorney general has read my economic development plan.”

All in all this debate was an even handed fight fought by two opponents desperate to get an edge over the other before November 4th. If you’d like to see it firsthand, a recording of the debate is posted on the UMass Dartmouth website here: <http://www.umassd.edu/debate/>.

Although, for how long this will remain active I cannot be certain, so if you are interested please check it out immediately (skip to 20:00, that's when the debate actually starts).

Additionally you can find information for both the Baker and Coakley campaigns here: <http://www.marthacoakley.com/> and here: <https://www.charliebaker2014.com/>. I encourage any and all readers of this article to educate themselves on the issues in order to make a better an informed choice, and of course I encourage everyone able to vote to go out and do so.

Students Discuss Documentary About New Bedford and the Star Store



Star Store as it looked in 1914. (Spinner Publications)

This week I was able to sit down with a couple of my fellow students here at Umass Dartmouth and interview them about a documentary they're making, specifically focusing on the university's Star Store and in more broad sense its effects on the city of New Bedford.

For those unfamiliar with the Star Store, basically it's a satellite campus for Umass Dartmouth's College of Visual and Performing Arts. For the city of New Bedford however, it's far more than just a place for students to learn and display their works. According to Brooke Lyons, one of the students working on the project, "It's bringing in graduate students from all over the country and all around the world, and they end up staying in New Bedford...and with that it also boosts economic growth."

The other students working on this project alongside Brooke are Ross Gelmete and Nikhila "Nikki" Vijaybhaskar. Interestingly, instead of specifying in one area of the

production the trio shares responsibilities for all of their duties such as editing and writing. The one area these documentary makers aren't involved in is the actual filming, which is being provided as a public service by the Dartmouth Cable TV (DCTV) public access channel and its cameraman, Michael Fernandes (a current UMass Dartmouth MBA student).

In addition to promoting further cultural and artistic diversity, as well as the already established economic benefits, the Star Store also promotes community outreach programs. With all the benefits the city is reaping from this arrangement I couldn't help but wonder what the city offered that was so special.

Apparently though, New Bedford is one of the most artistic cities in the United States, and according to the documentary makers it provides a niche that may not exist in other bigger cities where these institutions may be more plentiful, a clear place where one can start their career.

Additionally it also provides plenty of room for the store to grow. This symbiotic relationship between the Star Store and New Bedford will be the primary focus of the documentary, according to the team.

Making this documentary has been a real challenge, right from the very beginning when the trio was forced to decide between multiple topics such as the Zeiterion theatre. In the end they chose the Star Store because of its connection to the university, not just a safe topic but one they felt especially passionate about working on. They also had to decide on what they would do with the Star Store topic and formulate a script without the benefit of interviews, meaning that as they now do these interviews there's a process of evaluation and adjusting in order to make sure everything fits a cohesive narrative. The interviews they've done so far are expansive, ranging from students to local citizens, and even the Mayor of New Bedford himself.

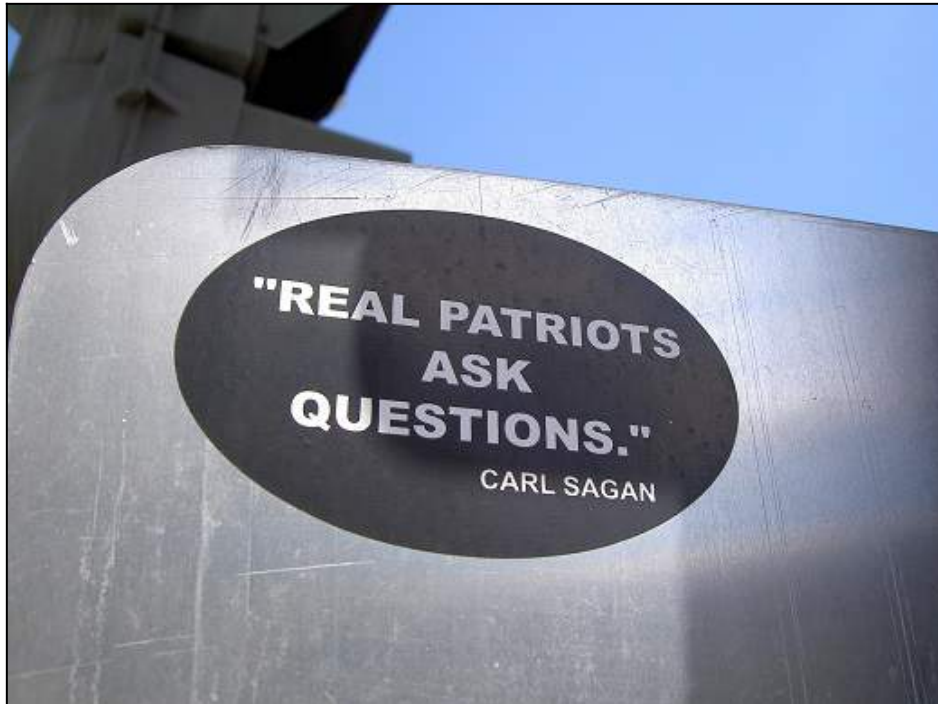
The documentary will be finished sometime in late November or early December at the latest, and when it's finally done there will be several screenings both on the university campus and off. It will also air on the DCTV public access channel. As to why you should tune in, according to Ross Gelmete, "You're sometimes not aware of the things going on in your community...Something like this offers you an in-depth look at the full picture rather than what an article in a newspaper or magazine can provide you."

This project is a positive look at the city of New Bedford, and a chance for us to learn about something we may have no knowledge of. Knowledge of the Star Store and what it offers can open a wide range of opportunities, and art is something important that connects people in their enjoyment of it.

So when the screenings for this documentary begin I'll be more than happy to attend and even if you aren't able to do the same I recommend you watch it on the DCTV public access channel. It's a solid, interesting topic that these three filmmakers are working very hard to realize, and for these reasons and many more it deserves your recognition. Unfortunately a precise date has not been decided for screenings as of yet, but when it is I can imagine it will be posted on the DCTV Facebook page here.

**UMass Dartmouth students
discuss millennials and**

political advocacy



Are you a millennial? What is your opinion of your government?

This week I sat down with my fellow Political Science and English double major student Jacob Miller, and talked with him about a book he's writing tentatively titled: A Field Guide to Volunteerism and Political Engagement.

The book is about getting involved in political advocacy and how in the long run it's a more effective way to have a voice in what government does. According to him, "Millennials are more disengaged with government and feel that government is a nasty, corrupt organization, and they feel that by volunteering they're getting more out of it, it's less judgmental, and they have more of a connection to helping people." By combining this sentiment of getting involved and advocating for the issues that one believes the government should be responsible for, he argues that a person can be far more effective and efficient in what they accomplish.

In the book Mr. Miller plans to propose ways, or at the very

least a framework that individuals can use to effect change in their governments through their advocacy, including everything from the smallest local government up to the federal government itself. And though the book's focus will be on millennials, (anyone born between around 1982-2000 approx.), Mr. Miller claims that the book will be written in such a way that it can apply to anyone regardless of age.

His overall goal is to complete the book within the next year as a part of his Honor's Thesis, and according to Mr. Miller he's already well on his way. With many of the interviews for the book finished and the literature supporting his argument assembled and reviewed he has all the building blocks and all that's left is to assemble it into a flowing narrative. His biggest obstacle at this point is the great equalizer, time. Not just in making sure the book is done on time, but also making sure that he doesn't waste what little time he has.

Though, Jacob Miller is not without a powerful advantage in the form of his level of experience and personal knowledge of the field of volunteerism and political engagement. Jacob has been involved as the Student Coordinator for SouthCoast Serves, a partnership of community organizations that meets at least once a month and discusses ways of becoming more involved in the area.

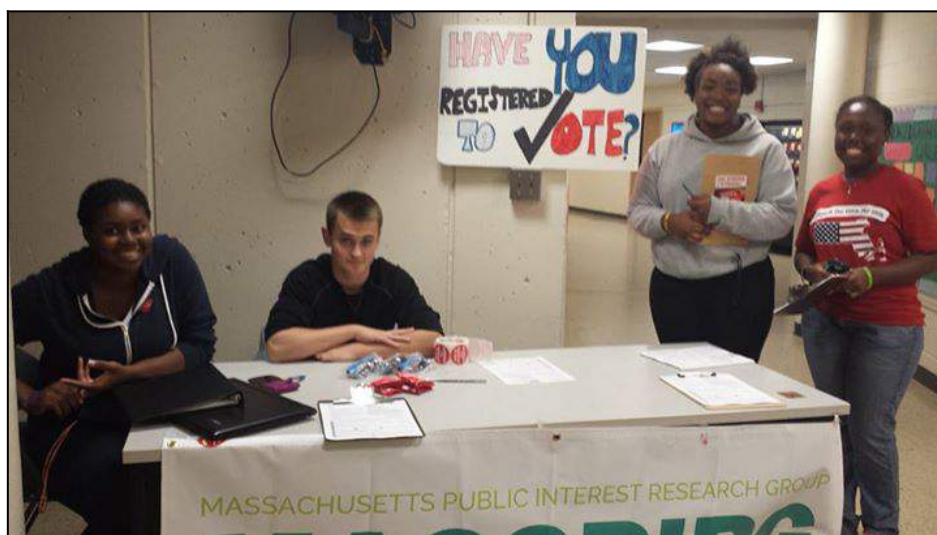
Not to mention that as an intern he assisted state senator Mark Montigny with passing a bill that protected students across the state from being kicked off of MassHealth. As Mr. Miller himself said, "By connecting both my volunteerism work, hearing about the issue in the field, talking to different people, and my ability to engage in politics I was able to see change happen, so I want to propose a way for others to do the same thing."

"Government is everywhere, you can't escape it...and I think that if you know how to engage a government correctly, if you know what the issues are and you know what you want to

advocate for, you can create a very positive change and that'll affect every part of your life." Jacob Miller is a serious student, composing what sounds to be a seriously interesting book, which could potentially impact a person's life in a positive way. And isn't that the goal of all good art, to effect change, to affect people in a positive way?

To me at least it is, and I know that when Mr. Miller's book is finally complete, I'm going to find a copy and read it.

MassPIRG: Through the Eyes of an Advocate



Last week MassPIRG was tabling and stopping all passersby in an effort to register more people to vote...

"You never truly know someone until you've walked a mile in their shoes." I must have heard that saying a hundred times in my life before now, but I don't think I actually understood

that statement quite as much as I do now.

It started earlier this week after I'd published my most **recent article** about MassPIRG, the Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group, as I couldn't help but feel an itch at the back of my mind like I'd forgotten something important, and surely enough I had. Upon reviewing the article I realized that while I had talked about the organization, its past and current projects, there was one crucial point that I was missing. The advocate's point of view, and so this week I endeavored to "write" this wrong by writing about what MassPIRG is like through the eyes of the students who serve it here on campus. After all according to campus organizer Tess Geyer from my previous interview with her, that is one of the major missions of MassPIRG, to get students involved in advocacy.



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Last week MassPIRG was tabling and stopping all passersby at Umass Dartmouth in an effort to register more people to vote, and so naturally I went not only to talk to them and gain a bit of their perspective, but to walk a mile in their shoes and see for myself what it was like. Most of the MassPIRG volunteers I talked to seemed genuinely excited about the prospect of registering people to vote, citing reasons such as liking to help and wanting to get involved and make a difference. According to them the experience could be chaotic sometimes, and of course they would come across people who didn't want to talk to them, but as one student put it, "You just gotta accept rejection and move on you know?"

Whether they were doing it for credit or just for the heck of it, many of the MassPIRG volunteers I talked to seemed happy about their choice and all of them said that they'd do it again in a heartbeat. For these students it's a way to advocate for something bigger than themselves. It's something that they truly believe is important, it's a way to get involved and make friends at the same time, and it's a way to build confidence and other important social skills.

My experience with MassPIRG didn't end with just talking to the volunteers however, for at 4 o'clock PM I reported for duty myself as a volunteer. Instantly I was handed a clipboard and instructed on what needed to be filled out and what the best ways for approaching people were. I was then sent off like a little worker drone to collect as many voter registrations as I could. To make a long story short, it was a lot tougher than I'd imagined.

It's easy not to think about ignoring these sorts of people when you're the one doing the ignoring, but suddenly when you're on the other side it feels completely different. With each passerby who says a polite, "No, thanks" or "I'm already registered" or just ignores you entirely, your heart sinks a

little lower or at least mine did. Perhaps it was that I wanted so badly to do a good job, or maybe it was because I had expectations that it would be easier from witnessing the chaotic bustle of earlier in the day, but either way with every person that passed me by I felt a little more disappointed and eventually numb to the rejection.

Then, after God only knows how long, somebody finally stopped and agreed to register with me. I felt such elation as he completed the form. This is what it was all about, this was what all the minutes of rejection had been leading to, and he ended up filling the form out incorrectly. My heart sank again, I was supposed to be the one to help him fill out the form but I couldn't even do that correctly. Luckily the young man agreed to fill out the form again, and once that was completed I went back to being rejected by the passersby.



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That moment had changed me though, because afterwards I no longer believed it was impossible to get someone to stop and even though I didn't end up getting another voter registered I never lost hope that it would happen. And knowing what I do now about the experience, it amazes me how many completed forms they were able to get, over 300 and that was just the first day. If the entire organization is as dedicated as the people I met, I have no doubt they'll easily surpass 11,000 statewide.

This was an enlightening experience to say the least, and I clearly had far more fun than I realized because in no time at all my time with the advocates was up. All in all I would be glad to do it again, and I'll never look at these volunteers the same way again. As I've said in my previous article if you're interested in getting more involved there are paid positions, internships, and of course they always accept volunteers. You can check out the general website here: <http://www.masspirg.org/> or if you happen to be a student here: <http://masspirgstudents.org/>

**MassPirg: A Legacy of
Advocacy**



MassPirg and some of the passionate folks involved!

As a college student, I've always just seen MassPIRG as a sort of nuisance at worst, and at best as easily ignored background noise. This past week however, I talked with the campus organizer at Umass Dartmouth and found that MassPIRG is so much more than that, and something that we perhaps have been taking for granted.

MassPIRG is an organization over 40 years old, based on college campuses and in communities throughout the state. Their primary goal according to Tess Geyer, the Campus Organizer at Umass Dartmouth is, "To get students involved in advocating for issues important to them." It isn't just students though, for MassPIRG boasts citizen membership in the thousands, and the organization advocates for them just as strongly.



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One of their biggest accomplishments is the Bottle Bill. Passed in the 1980's this law took a 5 cent deposit from consumers upon the purchase of canned and bottled beverages, and when these cans and bottles are brought back the consumer gets a refund of that deposit. Those that didn't claim their deposit would have their money recycled into the state's Clean Environment Fund, but now the money goes to the state's General Fund. The bill was created to support recycling efforts and to promote a cleaner environment for all of us to live in, and now MassPIRG seeks to update it with a ballot referendum this November. Should they succeed it would expand the Bottle Bill's coverage to include such things as water bottles and sports drinks, but it will be a tough fight as they face strong corporate interests.

Another of their current priority projects is a non-partisan, state-wide, get out the vote initiative. They bravely man tables and stop passersby, all in a never-ending effort to register college students to vote. Although technically registering to vote doesn't guarantee someone actually will vote come Election Day that doesn't stop MassPIRG. According to Tess Geyer as recently as September 18th, the organization registered 100 students on campus to vote, with their goal being to register at least 1000 students on campus. They have a long way to go though, especially if the organization is to surpass the over 11,000 students it was able to register across Massachusetts to vote in 2012.

Some of their other big past accomplishments include helping to form a Consumer Protection Agency, which forced major credit card companies to pay back around 1.5 billion in unfair fees to the consumers, and they also helped save college students an extra \$1000 by stopping student loan interest rates from doubling. Other projects they've been involved in

include advocating for textbook affordability via their Higher Education Bill, H.R. 4137, and currently one of their aims is to bring the costs of textbooks down even further, fighting hunger and homelessness by raising funds to help address these basic needs, and helping to improve public transportation statewide.



Funded in part by a small fee included in college tuition statewide, as well as various donations and grants, this non-profit organization boasts many ways for interested individuals to get involved.

Funded in part by a small fee included in college tuition statewide, as well as various donations and grants, this non-profit organization boasts many ways for interested individuals to get involved. There are internships available, as well as work-study positions, some paid positions and of course volunteerism. It's a rewarding way to get credit, or earn money, all while advocating for deserving causes.

MassPIRG and its counterparts in other states are a perfect example of how our voices can make a difference when we combine them into an echoing chorus. In a world that is ruled by big powerful interests, whose only goal is to make money at

our expense, the only way to combat them is to join together and make our positions known. If you aren't already a part of MassPIRG I highly recommend taking a few minutes to find out what they're about, and then decide if you want to be a part of their organization. Just remember, that even if it isn't something they're currently pursuing, someday MassPIRG might be fighting for something you have a personal stake in, and every little bit of help counts. Even if you lose the battle, at least you fought.

You can find out more about the MassPIRG organization at their website: <http://www.masspirg.org/>

Opinion: Analysis of Massachusetts' gubernatorial candidates



by Max Cohen

The following is an objective analysis of the candidates running to become Massachusetts' next governor this November. Using the information from the candidates' sites and other sources on the web I will explain Martha Coakley's views on several important issues, and where possible will compare her to the Republican candidate Charlie Baker and vice-versa. I feel though that before I can begin I must advocate that anyone reading this should do more research in addition to reading this article, especially before casting a vote.

Charlie Baker is a former CEO, and Secretary of Administration and Finance under former Governors Weld and Cellucci. Meanwhile, Martha Coakley is the Attorney General for the state of Massachusetts following a successful career as both a prosecutor and District Attorney. With a little of our candidates qualifications in mind let's review a few of the issues in question.

The Economy and Jobs

There are few if any issues more important than this, in fact according to Gallup.com it's the most important issue to Americans followed by general dissatisfaction with the government at a close second. These days, people feel that the federal government is just not doing enough for them to improve their lives, and this creates an opportunity for state governments to come in and take the lead by example.

Martha Coakley aims to use transportation revenues and reinvest them in local projects focusing on repairing an "out-of-date" public infrastructure. Additionally she hopes that in part by advancing clean energy efforts and incentivizing certain company policies she can attract more companies to Massachusetts and grow those already here. Another important part of her economic policy involves expanding rights for workers, such as by closing the gender pay gap and affirming the right of workers to unionize freely, and by assuring that earned sick time is guaranteed for all workers.

Charlie Baker supports tax credits to offset the costs of implementing minimum wage increases, as well as changing or getting rid of some current tax laws including the corporate interest tax, which under his administration would allow any business earning a net income of \$500,000 or less to be exempt from the tax. Additionally he believes that phasing out the state inventory tax as well as repealing the automatic gas tax increases will attract more business to the state and ultimately help owners of small and big businesses. Like Coakley, Baker intends to increase funding for local infrastructure projects and he also wants to create "Opportunity Zones" and "tax-free zones" in Gateway Cities to spur economic investment in these areas.

What these candidates say on their sites says a lot about them and their thoughts on policy; however what's even more telling is what has been left out. For example, in the section dedicated to her economic policy Coakley doesn't mention phasing out the state inventory tax, so can it be assumed that she would be against such a thing? Furthermore, Baker doesn't mention closing the gender pay gap, which means we can only assume that, at the least, he may not have thought it an important part of the economic plan he's running on. Again though, the information I'm basing this on comes from their campaign websites and so my understanding may be incomplete, but still that doesn't change the fact that in his economic plan Charlie Baker saw fit to mention the dismissal of several corporate tax laws and that Martha Coakley saw fit to mention the gender pay gap. What these candidates mentioned and what they didn't in a paper meant for public consumption says a lot about them and their campaigns.

Of course a big part of these candidates economic plans are their ideas about education, and as expected they both wasn't to continue improving access to education and the quality of education being given. One interesting difference is that Mr. Baker's plan focuses more on connecting colleges, vocational

schools, and high schools with potential future employers who can help provide needed experience, while a major part of Martha Coakley's plan focuses on increasing access to Pre-K early education as well as an expanded school day and special counselors in schools whose purpose would be identifying children in need and helping them to acquire any assistance they might need.

Another extremely important issue is healthcare, and judging by their campaign websites the two candidates have entirely different concerns facing the issue. Charlie Baker for example, wishes to procure a waiver from the Affordable Care Act and also wishes to get a waiver from Medicare in order to raise rates paid to primary care physicians. In theory, his administration expects this strategy to result in a boom of the number of primary care physicians causing them to be able to improve their care teams and thereby making healthcare more efficient and affordable.

Meanwhile, Martha Coakley's policies are focused more on improving the availability and quality of behavioral health care. One of the suggestions she proposes is to integrate behavioral health care with primary care and other services, possibly alongside exchanging the current fee-for-services model with payment methods that would incentivize this integration. Another of her proposals is the establishment of peer support programs and to increase awareness and understanding of these diseases by furthering behavioral health education. In theory, her administration expects these strategies to help reduce some of the crime and homelessness in our state as well as the prevention of needless suicides.

In the end there is a limit to how much of these candidates and their policies I can capture in an article. So once again, I highly recommend any readers to do additional research, because regardless of what we may have come to believe it does matter. Our vote matters. The purpose of this article has not been to endorse either candidate, but to inform and hopefully

inspire perspective readers to continue looking into the matter.

We disagree Rolling Stone: Umass Dartmouth Is Beautiful; Architecture and Design Explained

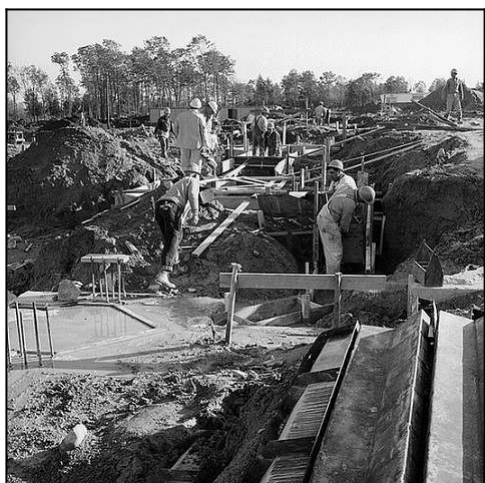


In 1960 the New Bedford Institute of Technology and Bradford Durfee College of Technology merged to form Southeastern Massachusetts Technological Institute (SMTI).

By Max Cohen

“Umass Dartmouth had one distinguishing feature—its utter lack of character,” is how Rolling Stone magazine described our campus in its controversial article on the Boston bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev. Unfortunately, this seems not to be a minority opinion, as Travel+Leisure has placed it on its list of America’s ugliest campuses. However, as a student who not only learns, but lives on campus, I can tell you personally that these descriptions couldn’t be further from the truth.

Before I rebut these claims however, you may find it useful and interesting to note the history of the university. Umass Dartmouth’s roots stem from the seeds that were the New Bedford and Bradford Durfee Textile School, in New Bedford and Fall River respectively. It wasn’t until the early 1960’s however, after an act was approved by the Massachusetts State Legislature that these two schools were united, at least in name, as the Southern Massachusetts Technological Institute (SMTI).



In 1964 construction at the SMTI campus in North Dartmouth. (Spinner Publications)

The act designated the university’s purpose at the time as, “giving instruction in the theory and practical arts of engineering and science, the liberal arts, and other

appropriate curricula which shall be established from time to time to include such scientific, technological, and other studies as may be deemed desirable by the Board of Trustees of said Institute.” It was also around this time that the state reviewed and approved a design plan of the campus by renowned architect Paul Rudolph.

It wasn't until 1964, four years after the law's passage, when the ground was finally broken upon which the university would be built. At the time it was being built, the Brutalist architectural style was considered “revolutionary” in its modernity and departure from the norms of other universities in the region. Two years afterwards the New Bedford Institute and Bradford Durfee College of Technology were fully consolidated into the Southern Massachusetts Technological Institute. Also in 1966 the first academic building, the Liberal Arts building (LARTS), was finally opened.

The university was formed in an effort to promote the economic growth of the region, and meet the educational needs of the current populace. It was designed in a way to challenge the norms, and set a new standard by which others could follow. Since its creation the university has turned out thousands of graduates, including state representatives, artists of some of the highest caliber, and many successful businessmen and women.



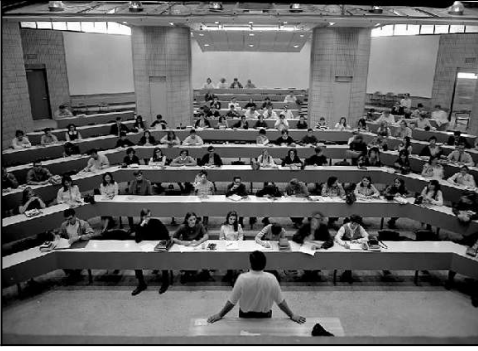
“Umass Dartmouth had one distinguishing feature—its utter lack of character,” says

It is considered by more than a few publications to be one of the best public universities not only in Massachusetts, but in the New England region as a whole, for its incredible programs and teachers. As a student I know the education and experiences I've gone through here have helped me grow both as an intellectual and a person.

To say this university has no character annoys me to no end, as it ignores the effort put into it as well as what it means to those who go here. The character of this university rests in the mind of the architect who envisioned something revolutionary and new, something that was controversial and would provoke in-depth thought for decades to come. This university's character is built on the blood, sweat, and tears of all who worked to see it realized, and those who continue to not only take care of it, but take it beyond its limitations and make it even greater.

The character of this university echoes in the lecture halls and classrooms, a mix of the voices of passionate teachers, who have worked to help their students visualize and achieve greatness. It shines in the smile of every student, and glows on every busy computer screen. If someone cannot see it, then perhaps they should stop, breathe, and look a little closer.

I'll admit, upon seeing the university for the first time, I thought it was odd, but I was also intrigued for I'd never seen something quite like it. The dull gray wasn't the most inspiring color, and as I walked the campus I felt like I lived in an M.C. Escher painting, and not in a good way. Only now however, looking back on how the university was then and how it is now can I comprehend why some things are how they are, and how other things have improved.



*A typically packed class in the 1960s.
(Spinner Publications)*

For example the dull gray of the concrete only creates a sharper contrast against the campus' lush greenery and colorful interiors. And while the construction style makes it odd to move around, I can safely say it's never been boring trying to get to class. There's also the bell tower in the center of campus, which I always felt my eyes drawn to each time I pass it, and even at night when I walked by it I couldn't help but stare up at the little light at the top like it was a part of some malformed Christmas tree that stood all year.

Nowadays the university has added a little flair to it, coloring the gray obelisk with lights of the school's colors, blue and gold. You can't help but look at it, marvel at the colors and feel a surge of school pride.

In the end it was the students this campus was built for. To make sure we would be able to succeed in a competitive world, and to help the region we call home to remain prosperous and innovative. And so it's up to us, whether to like or hate the appearance of what has been built for us. Before you decide though, take a walk around and absorb the essence of it all, and I think you'll find you agree.

Umass Dartmouth is beautiful.

