

Transcript – Chancellor Collins Season 7

A new *Voices of UMass Chan* podcast episode

This transcript was created using speech recognition software. While it has been reviewed by the Office of Communications, it may contain errors.

MUSIC

Voice over artist

Thank you for listening to the *Voices of UMass Chan*, featuring the people, ideas and advances of UMass Chan Medical School.

MUSIC

Jennifer Berryman, host, executive vice chancellor of communications

Welcome to season seven of the *Voices of UMass Chan*. As always, we kick off our seasons and the academic year by inviting the Chancellor of UMass Chan, Michael F Collins, for a conversation. Chancellor, welcome. Thanks for making time.

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

Always good to do this. I can't believe this is the seventh year.

Jennifer Berryman host, executive vice chancellor of communications

Seventh year, I know it's unbelievable. And just more recently, so much has happened since we sat down one year ago for this conversation, most recently, just a couple of weeks ago, UMass Chan welcomed its biggest classes ever in each of our three graduate schools, very much on a growth path. I thought maybe we could start by talking about that and why that's important.

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

Well, I think the reality is that the healthcare workforce of tomorrow gets educated today, We know that there are going to be some pretty significant retirements in the next few years in each one of the major categories of nursing, physician workforce and scientists. And we have been on a path now for a number of years to try to educate more professionals who could, in fulfilling our mission, be more present to patients and be more available to the scientific workforce. So in medicine, when we came to the medical school 18 years ago, there were 100 medical students. It was more or less it, I think it's a gentleman's agreement, because it was all men at the time, a gentleman's agreement with the other

three medical schools in Massachusetts that the class size would always stay around 100 just wasn't, yeah, something that needed to happen, and we've been able to increase that now. And this year, we welcomed 235 learners. You know, there isn't a year that's gone by in the medical school where I don't get a letter from either an applicant or a parent who says, 'My son or daughter went to this outstanding college, had a great GPA at a very high MCAT,' and when I read those, I say, 'Boy, you know, if we had more spaces, maybe we could take more student'. So, in nursing, it's the same thing. We know that there are big challenges in the health care workforce in nursing, and our ability to invite a larger class helps us to fill some of the gaps, particularly in the central part of the commonwealth where the medical school is focused. And then in the scientific world, I think there's been a big shift over the number of years we've been here where, in the beginning, graduates of the Morningside Graduate School would have gone on with their PhDs into academic positions. Today, they actually become the workforce of all the scientific entities that we know exist in Kendall Square and in and around Worcester. It's very important that we fulfill our responsibility to educate the workforce of tomorrow. We know the commonwealth and the nation have large health care workforce needs, and so great having larger class sizes, we're fulfilling some of those needs.

Jennifer Berryman, host, executive vice chancellor of communications

One of the components of that growth has been the creation, the establishment and now the launch of the medical school's second regional campus that's in partnership with Beth Israel Lahey Health. It has a focused curriculum for those medical students. Can you talk a little bit about that partnership and why regional campus, particularly with Leahy, makes sense.

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

Well, as we began to think about increasing class size, you know, it's easy to add a row of seats to the integrated teaching learning center. I suppose it's easy for me to say that. But it's possible to do that. What's not possible is to have babies to deliver and earaches to look at and appendices to take out. So, we need additional clinical sites in order to do that. In 2015 we went out to Bay State and created the first regional campus. And as we were thinking then about the next ramp up in medical student class size. We knew we needed an additional site or two, and Leahy went into a process to identify a clinical partner, an academic partner, and we were very fortunate, I think, largely based on the success of the of the base State experience. I'm pretty sure that once the faculty at Lahey heard we were going to go to that we were in the mix to be the academic affiliate. I'm sure there are a lot of phone calls out to Springfield to say, okay, hey, what's this like to be part of even UMass

Chan but I want to tell you the enthusiasm that exists on the Leahy campus amongst our learners. Years amongst the faculty, amongst the philanthropic community, is amazing.

Medical students in the LEAD@Lahey track share where they are from with *Hallie Leo, marketing content coordinator, during the opening of the UMass Chan-Lahey campus.*

Hallie Leo, marketing content coordinator

And where did you all grow up?

Medical student Sophia Rose:

I grew up in Minnesota

Hallie Leo, marketing content coordinator

Minnesota

Medical student Sana Baban

Florida

Hallie Leo, marketing content coordinator

Florida

Medical student Jessica Pan

I grew up in Beijing

Hallie Leo, marketing content coordinator

Beijing

Medical student Ethan Jose Chivi

I grew up in Los Angeles

Hallie Leo, marketing content coordinator

Los Angeles. Wow. Okay, so it really runs the gamut.

Medical student Jessica Pan

It's such a privilege that we're coming to a new program, and we get to set pace for what's coming up for our next years and beyond. I'm excited to see what's next.

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

Each time I'm up there, it's more impressive than the time before. We were expecting 25 matriculants into the program, we got 32, popular right out of the gate.

Jennifer Berryman, host, executive vice chancellor of communications

Right out of the gate!

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

And the faculty are, I mean, I just don't remember, a palpable enthusiasm, like you said. I can't tell you. They just come up to me one after another saying, this is the greatest thing. These students are fantastic. I'm so thrilled to be part of this program. I really appreciate getting my faculty appointment, the leadership of Lahey has been outstanding. Dr. Susan Mofeffatt-Bruce is the president of the institution. The regional executive dean is Dr. Anne Mosenthal, a surgeon, and they have brought together a team to lead this initiative. I've said at each opportunity I've had to speak about this that this would have been a very attractive program for me if I were to be applying to medical school. Now the notion that health system science and leadership in health care is important, the fact that we actually focus on leadership training and some of the challenges that exists in health systems and with data within health system science, those things, this group of learners is very keen on exploring those issues. And it doesn't surprise me at all that we, you know, we made the same number of offers we would have made any other year. We just more people took it because they see this as something that's going to be pretty exciting. And by the way, there is, like, zero concern that they are the first cohort. They are just so excited about it. They're like, wow, we can actually create this together. We can be part of creating what's going to be good. I'm very excited to know that there is this large cadre of students who are thrilled about being leaders and want to make a determined effort with their education to be part of this very special program. It wouldn't have happened without the support of the Beth Israel Lahey Health System executives, particularly Dr. Kevin Tabb.

Kevin Tabb, MD, president and CEO of Beth Israel Lahey Health, *speaking at the opening of the UMass Chan-Lahey regional medical school campus*

It is high time that we train the next generation of caregivers, all of you, for the next generation of medicine. And I think for too long, we have really trained people the way that we used to do things, and then expected to see something different. This is an amazing example of thinking differently, of really thinking forward, thinking, boldly thinking about the future. It's sprung to life right here in a partnership between Lahey and the UMass Chan Medical School. I can't think of a better partnership and a better place to create the kind of transformative educational experience that you all are now a part of.

Robert Goldstein, MD, public health commission of Massachusetts, *speaking at the open of the UMass Chan-Lahey regional medical school campus*

This is becoming a model of modern medical education that aims high in stretching the imagination and expanding everyone's curiosity for the things that you're going to learn and how you're going to grow, how you're going to think and how you're going to thrive here. Sometimes

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

When things are natural and make sense, they just come together like this is.

Jennifer Berryman, executive vice chancellor of communications

Isn't it nice when that works out. Well, that's terrific.

Another big development on this campus is that it doesn't look like a construction site anymore, and instead the campus green is green again. We have this gorgeous new glass, nine-story research and education building that has officially now opened, and the Director General of the World Health Organization came to help you do that.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, PhD, director-general of the World Health Organization, *speaking at the ceremonial ribbon-cutting for UMass Chan's new education and research building on June 7.*

Although the building is new, its twin purposes, education and research are not they have always been central to the mission of this school, just as they have always been central to improvements in health globally and to our work at the World Health Organization.

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

That was quite a day. It was a spectacular, spectacular experience. You know, I got to meet the director general. He's been such an amazing leader for health care all during the covid pandemic. I met him in Geneva. I was offered 15 minutes of his time and ended up staying almost an hour and three quarters with him. He just kept canceling the next meeting, canceling the next meeting, canceling the next meeting.

Jennifer Berryman, executive vice chancellor of communications

What were you two talking about?

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

He was very keen to know about our medical school. Why the Morningside Foundation had made the gift. He was very he, he, you know, I'd done his homework. He knew of the research prowess that exists here and I wanted him to come and interact with us. I thought it would be great if we could do so. And the schedule worked best for him to come and open the building. And what was so impressive about that was that, first of all, he's just a wonderfully engaging person. He told some marvelous stories about his own upbringing and commitment to science. He made some in his talk. He said, You know, I don't blame, I don't complain. I go to work every day, and I realize the privilege I have to help make the world's population healthier. And you know, people were just struck by the elegance of his simplicity, his humility and humble too, just amazing. But then to be in this gleaming, brand-new building, he was just so excited about that. We had an enormous crowd, lots of leaders from all over, from the university and from our local area, many donors came. It was just a really sparkling moment. We had a full auditorium. We had two or three breakout rooms where people were watching it, and then we all went outside on it was an absolutely glorious day as he helped us to cut the ribbon so it now. So, look at we talk about a building, and it's beautiful. It's 350,000-square-feet. It cost \$350 million but what's going to be in that building are going to be 70 principal investigators, these incredible faculty minds who are going to come together and help with their science to change the course of history of disease. And if you think about that collaborative gene that exists here and now, create a new structure where our gene therapy folks, our molecular medicine department and all academic neuroscientists, neurobiologists, neurology, neurosurgery, the Wellstone Center and put all those folks in the building. This brand, new building was designed in a way that is really very special to promote collaboration, extremely energy efficient. We've drilled a number of wells on the campus green to be as we have the most energy efficient use of power and energy resources. And now to see the scientists and the postdocs and folks in the graduate school populating the building. And when I get a chance to walk through, I listen, I just asked, Well, how could you think? And then just like to a person like, oh, we just love it. It's just marvelous. And you're quite right. It's right in the middle of the campus. It's just gleaming with its with its glass structure, and it more or less completes the campus green. It allows us to go from one building to another, all indoors.

Jennifer Berryman, executive vice chancellor of communications

From one side of the campus to the other.

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

And interestingly, if we were to, if we hadn't built the building when we did, starting right away in during the COVID time, I know when I went to the Board of Trustees to say we should do this, a few of them thought I should have my head examined. But if we were to

build that building today, let's say we waited four years for whatever reason, same exact building, same exact building. If we were going to build that exact take those plans and build it today, it would cost more than twice what it cost us to build it. So, we built the building for \$350 million. If I told the folks, take the plan and build the same building right behind it will cost now about between \$725 and \$750 million, more than double.

Jennifer Berryman, executive vice chancellor of communications

Unbelievable.

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

So just think of the great value that we created for the university by having this beautiful, brand new facility, allowing us to recruit really outstanding faculty to come to campus, and to have done it at a time when and we learned lots of lessons about how to build buildings, and actually have had folks from around the country now call us up to say, How did you do this and how did you do that?

Jennifer Berryman, executive vice chancellor of communications

And as you say, it's the work that will be done in that building for the decades to come that will really be the true legacy and impact of it, for sure. And that's what's really so exciting. And that's actually something that Gov. Maura Healey, Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey pointed out she was on campus just, I think, six days before the new building opened, delivering the Commencement address. And what a day that was. She had quite a rousing address,

Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey delivering the Commencement address on June 4 at UMass Chan Medical School

UMass Chan is not like any other medical school. This place is really special. You've made a commitment to heal, to care, to relieve suffering and improve the lives of people and communities around you. <applause> Congratulations to the new physicians, congratulations to our new scientists and researchers. <applause> Congratulations to all our newly minted nurse leaders. <applause> I am so proud of each and every one of you, and so grateful. <applause>

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

Another great day. You know, I'm very impressed by the governor. I'm very impressed by her, her very positive attitude. She clearly had done her homework before she came to campus, and she gave our learners a really spectacular speech. I've invited each of the new governors over my 18 years here to come and give the Commencement address. And hers

was really outstanding. She said in every way she could, we need you. They're talking to our graduates. We need you, you're going to be so important for the Commonwealth in the world. She understands the importance of the medical school. She's thrilled that the medical school is so accomplished within the university system. She's very pro UMass, which is wonderful to have in a governor, and she's just a really nice person, and she gave of herself and her time. She engaged with the students. She was just thrilled to be here, and I was very impressed

Jennifer Berryman, host, executive vice chancellor of communications

She and her administration also have been quite focused on higher education and on the life sciences.

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

Yes, no question about it, they're in the process now of making another big commitment to the life sciences, another roughly a billion-dollar proposal that they've put in place over a number of years. I think we're very fortunate to have a governor who is so committed to public higher education, who now knows lots about the medical school and is very keen to see the success that we have going on here. And I can tell you, the graduates and their parents were thrilled to have the opportunity to hear her that day.

Jennifer Berryman, host, executive vice chancellor of communications

So, it sounds like over the past few months, this has kind of capped off a really significant era, and maybe, maybe begun a new one here, like, what is on your horizon now?

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

Well, I'm going to talk in the Convocation speech about the future. I think it's time for us to think about what comes next. Our current strategic plan is titled Impact 2025 and so a number of people said, what comes next? So, I think there's a number of questions that we need to answer, and we'll spend a good portion of 2025 thinking about that so that we're ready to go in 2026. I will tell you that the title of my talk is, we're not done yet.

Jennifer Berryman, host, executive vice chancellor of communications

Not done yet.

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

We're not done yet. So, I think there's much more to do, and I'm going to encourage our learners, our faculty and our staff to come together, to work together, to plan a most ambitious future for the institution. I think that Commonwealth and the globe, the world

really deserved that, and it's an extremely special place and extremely special time. I'll be presenting four medals for excellence in teaching and research and clinical service and service to the institution that's always a really exciting, a really exciting time. And we're investing a number of new endowed chairs. So, it's again a very exciting time as we begin the academic year. The white coat ceremony, the pinning ceremony for our nursing students, the white coat ceremony for the nursing folks who are in the DNP program, the recognition ceremony for our graduate students. It's just a wonderful week of activities every year as we get the academic year going, just a very, very, very exciting time and very pleasing to see so many young, idealistic learners who have come to make our and have entrusted their education to the stewardship of our faculty.

Jennifer Berryman, host, executive vice chancellor of communications

And your speech is titled, we're not done yet. And this will be your what number convocation?

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

Eighteen years.

Jennifer Berryman, host, executive vice chancellor of communications

Eighteen years. That's extraordinary.

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

Eighteen years. Yeah, pretty sure I'm the longest serving chancellor in the history of the university, and it's only because we have a fantastic place where people really come together and work hard together. The success we've had here is because there is a most collaborative spirit that exists on the campus, the folks, the faculty, the learners, everybody comes together. There's just a seriousness of purpose here, which is extremely special.

Jennifer Berryman, host, executive vice chancellor of communications

There's no confusion. About the mission.

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

I don't think there is any confusion about the mission. It's very clear what it is we're about, and we take education and research, clinical care and community service extremely seriously. And I think just about every one of us recognize the privilege it is to get to come and be here every single day.

Jennifer Berryman, host, executive vice chancellor of communications

Let's end on that note. Chancellor Collins, thank you once again for making time.

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

It's always a privilege to be here.

Jennifer Berryman, host, executive vice chancellor of communications

If you like the *Voices of UMass Chan* podcast, subscribe so you don't miss an episode or email us with an idea at UMassChanCommunications@umassmed.edu. I'm Jennifer Berryman from UMass Chan's Office of Communications. Thank you for listening.

Voice over artist

Follow us at UMass Chan on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. On YouTube, find us at UMass Chan Medical School.

Music

Voices of UMass Chan is produced by the Office of Communications at UMass Chan Medical School. If you have an episode idea, send us an email: UMassChanCommunications@umassmed.edu

Hosted by Jennifer Berryman, vice chancellor of communications

Produced by Sarah Willey, media relations manager

Edited by Bryan Goodchild, director of visual and digital media

Hallie Leo, communications content specialist, contributed to this episode