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Baker announces \$4 million state grant to UMass Lowell

Includes \$4m state tech grant

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JOHN BLANDING/GLOBE STAFF

Governor Charlie Baker showed off his University of Massachusetts Lowell hockey jersey from coach Norm Bazin (left) and player A.J. White. The school also revealed a \$4 million donation from Robert Manning, and his wife, Donna.

By **Matt Rocheleau**

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JANUARY 13, 2015

LOWELL — Charlie Baker returned Tuesday to the spot where he started his run for governor more than a year ago: the University of Massachusetts Lowell.

In his second stop at a college campus since he was sworn into office five days ago, Baker helped unveil \$8 million in new funding for programs — including a \$4 million state technology grant — at Massachusetts' second-largest public campus, which has seen marked growth in recent years.



“Part of the reason I came here [during the gubernatorial race] was to make a statement about what I wanted to talk about and

how I wanted to frame that campaign, but I'm back here today to say that I think it's terrific what you folks are up to," Baker told a room of university, business, and political leaders at the campus' Mark and Elisia Saab Emerging Technologies and Innovation Center on Tuesday afternoon.

Baker and university officials said the campus has received a four-year \$4 million grant from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, a public agency that promotes the use of technology and innovation to fuel economic growth in the state. The funding will be used to support the campus's development of a center focused on researching and creating products for the emerging, growing, multibillion-dollar industry of printed and flexible electronics.

Officials also announced a \$4 million donation for the university's business school. The gift came from the school's namesake, investment management executive and former UMass trustee Robert Manning, and his wife, Donna, an oncology nurse. The Mannings earned degrees from UMass Lowell in the 1980s and previously donated \$6 million to their alma mater. "We have wonderful education institutions across this Commonwealth doing amazing things," Baker said. "And we should always spend the time thinking real hard about how they can become a part of the larger story about how we can become great not just educationally, but economically, from one end of this state to the other."

The technology grant will help UMass Lowell outfit laboratories and research space at the Saab Center and will be matched by \$12 million in industry support. Companies have signed on to work with the university's Printed Electronics Research Collaborative, including: Raytheon Co.; MicroChem of Westborough; Rogers Corp. of Burlington; SI2 Technologies of Billerica; and Triton Systems of Chelmsford, said UMass Lowell vice provost for research Julie Chen.

Over the past several years, UMass Lowell has seen significant gains in key areas, including in federal research funding, private donations, enrollment, and SAT scores. "The strength of this university has, in large part, a lot do with collaboration," said UMass Lowell chancellor Martin Meehan, a former congressman who served on Baker's transition team.

Robert Manning said he hopes the university will do more to partner with outside companies and agencies. "As we look out into the future and we think about what can happen on this campus by the collaboration with business and industry, there is so much more that can be done," he said.

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Correction: An earlier version of this story misstated Governor Charlie Baker's visits to college campuses.

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