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WHY MASS. LOST ITS MOJO — AND HOW WE GET IT BACK

Economic stalwart faces uncertain times

‘Working man’s sector’ of higher ed is bearing brunt of cutbacks by schools

Fourth in a series.

By Diti Kohli
GLOBE STAFF

Before Douglas Cowell took a job at Boston University, he spent his days as a casting director for movies, making a living one gig at a time.

Working at a college, by contrast, seemed predictable: Classes start in September and end in May. Students apply, arrive, and eventually graduate (most of them, at least). The staff and faculty are the ones who stick around for years, or even decades.

“I was looking for something consistent,” said Cowell, 44. “Something that would allow me to be present for my family.”

He took a job as a media technician at BU in 2023. The pay was enough to make do and support his two kids in an expensive city. And as someone who grew up in a family of teachers, Cowell felt called to a student-centric job.

Then in June, after three years, BU laid him off. The university said it eliminated his position as part of a broad campaign to cut costs.

“The stability,” Cowell said, “was an illusion.”

This realization — that job security in higher education is not what it used to be — is bubbling up at universities across New England. Amid growing financial pressures, schools have transformed what were once career jobs into de facto temporary positions they can cycle in and out as the budget demands. That takes a toll on the 128,000 people who work at Massachusetts universities — a number nearly as large as the local biotech industry — and on the broader economy.

Higher education employment accounts for a larger share of total wages in the Commonwealth than in any state but Rhode Island, feder-

HIGHER EDUCATION, Page A14

‘I looked to my left and there’s this bear less than eight feet away.’

LOUIS MAY, *who woke up to a bear in his home in Stowe, Vt.*

PHOTOS BY VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

Above: A bear walked on trash containers in Stowe, Vt., in 2024. Below: The results of bear incursions in a home and restaurant.

DUMPSTER FIRE

Residents of Vt. ski towns fighting over response to surge in bear sightings

By Paul Heintz
GLOBE STAFF

STOWE, Vt. — When he first heard the noise, Louis May thought there was a burglar in the house. Realizing that was unlikely at 6:30 a.m. in June in this rural resort town, he closed his eyes and tried to go back to sleep. A few minutes later, he opened them again.

“I looked to my left and there’s this bear less than eight feet away,” said May, a 75-year-old gastroenterologist from New York City. “He’s looking at me, and I’m looking at him, and I scream, ‘Holy [expletive]!’”

May’s wife, Suzanne Szermer, sat up in bed, called 9-1-1, grabbed her bathrobe, and bolted out of the house, leaving May

fumbling around for clothing.

“He yelled, ‘Why didn’t you wait for me?’” she recalled. “I said, ‘Every man for himself, pal.’”

By the time two Stowe Police Department SUVs showed up, the juvenile bear was gone. “Yogi,” as May calls him, had climbed back out the window through which he’d entered. He hasn’t been seen since.

Such encounters are increasingly common in Vermont, where the black bear population has surged over the past eight years, according to the state Department of Fish & Wildlife. In 2025, the last year for which figures are available, an estimated 7,500 to 8,900 of the creatures roamed Vermont — roughly double the target population the depart-

BEARS, Page A15

Clancy case shows gaps in patient oversight

Lapse in coordination is a familiar failing to some

By Sarah Rahal
GLOBE STAFF

When a patient screens positive for postpartum depression in Massachusetts, the law provides a course of action for clinicians: discuss treatment, prescribe medication, and refer the patient to a mental health expert.

Then what?

What happens once a patient is referred to the mental health system has taken on new urgency during the trial of Lindsay Clancy, the Duxbury mother who killed her three young children in January 2023.

Her defense attorney, Kevin Reddington, has argued the mental health system failed Clancy, that she put her postpartum struggles in the hands of a half-dozen specialists, but they failed to coordinate with each other while showering her with some 30 prescriptions over four months.

During their testimony, Reddington repeatedly asked the clinicians why they did not follow up with each other or even seek access to Clancy’s full medical records as she entered hospitals or sought other psychiatric treatment.

The testimony underscored what some experts said is a clear failing with the medical system.

“I wish I could say there was one person responsible for coordinating that kind of care. …

MENTAL HEALTH, Page A14

Health care debate is more than semantics

Senate candidates differ over extending coverage

By Samantha J. Gross
GLOBE STAFF

US Senator Ed Markey has repeatedly touted his support for Medicare for All — and his endorsement from its champion, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders — saying his backing of a national single-payer system bolsters his progressive credentials.

His Democratic primary opponent, US Representative Seth Moulton, says he, too, believes the country needs to rethink the cost of health care, but that it should instead embrace “universal health care.”

You may be thinking: What’s the difference?

Moulton’s pitch would cover the uninsured, but also allow for people to buy their own private insurance or enroll in an employer-sponsored plan. Markey’s ideal “Medicare for All” would eliminate private insurance in place of a single-payer system.

But to hear it all differently, the two Democrats also are speaking from a somewhat similar script: Health care, as currently constructed, isn’t working. Premiums are rising, federal subsidies have been slashed, and it’s become increasingly difficult to access care.

HEALTH CARE, Page A7

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The humid factor

Sunday: Cloudy, damp. High: 71-76. Low: 65-70.

Monday: Sunny, warmer. High: 80-85. Low: 60-65.

Sunrise: 6:00 Sunset: 7:33

Complete report, **A22.**

Deaths, **A16-21.**

Musicians with the Boston Symphony Orchestra voted unanimously to authorize a strike, calling it the first in the orchestra’s history. **B1.**

The United States and Canada fell deeper into a trade war marked by angry recriminations and new tariffs that are expected to raise prices for products in both countries. **A2.**

It is almost fall — the time when all the big new books come out. Here are 40 titles to dig into. **Books, N9.**