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The Daily Collegian

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FRIDAY — Partly Cloudy, 70's
SATURDAY — Showers likely, 60's
HIGH TIDE — Possible Brain Damage
FULL REPORT — Who Cares?

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Day-care demands

Officials, students agree after sit-in



Some of the 35 children and parents, who occupied Chancellor Bromery's office to protest proposed cuts in day care facilities, wait for Bromery to arrive. (Staff Photo by Chris Bourne)

By Bill Densmore
Collegian Staff

UMass administrators and a group of up to thirty-five students reached agreement late yesterday afternoon after the students and their children staged a six-and-one-half hour sit-in in the office of Chancellor Randolph W. Bromery.

The students, with their pre-school aged children, had issued four "demands" protesting what they said were proposed cutbacks in University-sponsored day-care services for their children.

Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs Robert W. Gage, administrator of the five day-care centers run by UMass, announced agreement on the demands that ended the sit-in.

Earlier in the day, UMass police had sealed portions of the Whitmore Administration Building to outsiders and refused food and diapers to the group.

"We reached an accord," Gage told reporters after a three-hour meeting between administrators and the Day Care Task Force broke up about five-thirty. "More than anything we reached an agreement on how we could communicate in the future."

Anne Ferguson, a philosophy professor and member of the day care group, told reporters alongside Gage: "We have made a victory...Chancellor Bromery has agreed to some of our demands and he has made commitments."

In their demands, the Task Force called for a promise that two of five University operated day care centers for pre-school children would not be closed. They asked for a full-time

administrator to oversee the centers, which now cost the University \$55,000 a year.

The centers serve about 160 children and allow parents attending classes to leave their children under supervision. They also are used to train students in special education. Tuition for a child at one is about \$360 per year, according to Gage.

Gage said the two centers in question would be retained and he promised to announce a new location for them "within ten days." He said he will seek an administrator for them, and will ask for a new state-funded position if necessary.

He also said the administration would meet two other demands — finding out how many children are eligible for the centers and get more student and part-time help to supervise them.

The sit-in began about 10 yesterday morning and by 11:30 Chancellor Bromery ordered campus police to guard locked entry ways.

The group peaked at about thirty-five but had dwindled to 17 adults and ten children by 2 p.m., according to UMass-Amherst spokesman Peter Gluckler.

The Task Force group wandered through several offices within an area closed off by police. Children played freely on carpets and police allowed them to come and go. Staff in the area were sent home early.

"They're just sitting, they're just eating sandwiches," UMass spokesman Peter Gluckler said early in the day. "In some regard they are obstructing the work because they are limiting the flow of people."