

To the Board:

The March killings of eight individuals—six of them Asian American woman—in the Atlanta area and the continually escalating violence against this group in our society have brought a renewed focus at UMass Boston on how we can best serve this community. Earlier this year the university received a new \$1.3 million grant to continue our work serving as an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI). The five-year grant further strengthens UMass Boston's capacity as the only AANAPISI-designated research university in New England and one of a handful in the country—a status held by the university since 2008. With 17 percent of our student body in the Asian American community, we are cognizant of the importance of this work. (right)

- UMass Boston, Boston Public Health Commission, and Northeastern University researchers launched Living in Boston During COVID-19, a series of reports analyzing how Boston residents have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic, including examining vaccination hesitation. (page 6)
- Despite facing supply challenges University Health Services conducted two clinics for frontline workers on campus and in the community. Additionally, College of Nursing and Health Sciences students are volunteering at vaccination clinics across the state. (page 8)
- U-ACCESS resumed food pantry services through a curbside pick-up model, with the goal of supporting UMass Boston students who face food and home insecurities. On the first day of curbside pick-up, 36 students submitted orders and an additional eight students requested delivery of goods. (page 7)
- Joseph Berger, former dean of the College of Education and Human Development, has begun his tenure as provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at UMass Boston. Effective February 1, he is the thirteenth permanent provost of the university. (page 4)

I hope you find the following pages of this report compelling information about how UMass Boston continues to move forward, whatever the obstacles.

—Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco



UMass Boston is the only AANAPISI-designated research university in New England.

UMass Boston Earns New \$1.3M Grant to Serve Asian American, Native American, Pacific Islander Students

The university has received a new \$1.3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to advance its work as an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI). The five-year grant further strengthens UMass Boston's capacity as the only AANAPISI-designated research university in New England and one of a handful in the country—a status held by the university since 2008.

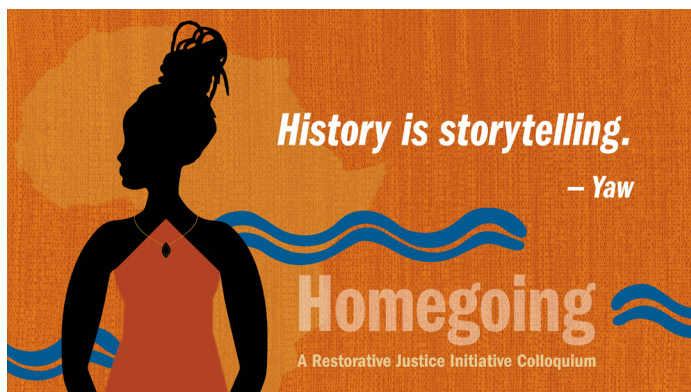
“UMass Boston clearly plays a leadership role among AANAPISIs nationally,” said Paul Watanabe, director of the Institute for Asian American Studies. “This designation is important in recognizing the realities facing our high-need Asian American students, many of whom come from local Vietnamese, Chinese, and Cambodian American communities and other growing immigrant populations throughout metro Boston.”

UMass Boston has now received eight AANAPISI grants totaling nearly \$6.8 million since 2010 to develop, pilot, institutionalize, and disseminate a wide range of activities to increase college access, retention, and graduation for low-income, first-generation Asian American students, who comprise 17 percent of the student body.

UMass Boston was recognized officially as an AANAPISI in 2008, the first year the designation was available. It is the only funded AANAPISI research university in New England, and one of two in the Northeast region, along with Hunter College in New York. Bunker Hill Community College and Middlesex Community College are the only other funded AANAPISIs in Massachusetts and are important collaborators with UMass Boston.

AANAPISI interventions, models, and strategies have contributed to a 28 percent increase in the enrollment of Asian American undergraduate students at UMass Boston since 2010 and a 15 percent increase in the number who annually enter.

CONTINUE A POSITIVE FOCUS ON DIVERSITY AND POSITIVE CLIMATE



University Launches Homegoing: A Restorative Justice Initiative Colloquium

As part of UMass Boston's commitment to becoming a leading anti-racist and health-promoting public institution, this semester all students, faculty, and staff were invited to engage with Yaa Gyasi's novel *Homegoing* — the first campus-wide shared text of the Restorative Justice Initiative — through a series of six webinars and virtual discussions.

A continuation of the Sankofa Conversation Series on Structural Racism last fall, *Homegoing: A Restorative Justice Initiative Colloquium* explored the history of the Black freedom struggle, enabling the campus community to begin to address long and ongoing histories of racism, inequity, and injustice. The six sessions included a conversation with author Yaa Gyasi in March. Senior Lecturer of Africana Studies Tony Van Der Meer, Visiting Assistant Professor of Africana Studies Keith Jones served as facilitators.

BLK@UMB Virtual Conference Focuses on Re-Humanizing Blackness

The second annual student-led Becoming Liberated & Knowledgeable Conference was held virtually on February 27, with over 225 students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members engaging in sessions throughout the day. Political science major and lead conference organizer Kamiya Parkin developed this year's program, *Re-Humanizing Blackness: The Unhealthy Stigma of Extreme Black Perseverance*, examining the concepts of hyper resiliency, trauma, rest, mental health, self-care, and healing in the Black community through a variety of topics.

Tiffany Dena Loftin, the national director of the NAACP Youth & College Division, gave a keynote address. The conference was a collaborative effort by Joseph Cooper, special advisor to the chancellor for Black life; the UMass Boston chapter of NAACP; Student Leadership & Community Engagement; Student Multicultural Affairs; and many other groups.

University Continues Commitment to Diversity in Undergrad Class

The Division of Enrollment Management's commitment to diversity is exemplified in the fall 2020 undergraduate student class, which included 59 percent underrepresented minorities (an increase of 5 percent over the prior year) and 43 percent first-generation students. This increase is in stark contrast to many institutions of higher education that experienced a decline in enrollment of Black and Latino students.

Tasked with rolling out unique and creative virtual programs to support this diverse population, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions introduced two new programs this cycle. The First-Generation College Students event included a panel presentation with staff from Success Boston, the UMass Boston First-Generation working group, and current students. The newest event debuted in March 2021: *Enriching your Experience: Diversity and Inclusion at UMass Boston*. This event included Joseph Cooper, special advisor for Black life, who moderated a panel highlighting the campus's support for first-generation students and featuring members from the Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture, and Asian American Student Success Program.

Chancellor Establishes Restorative Justice Commission

UMass Boston has launched a Restorative Justice Commission, an important step toward the campus's shared goal of becoming a leading anti-racist and health-promoting public research university. The RJC will be co-chaired by Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Black Life Joseph Cooper and Assistant Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Georgianna Meléndez.

The commission is charged with leading the university's efforts in developing an anti-racist university community through the development of specific policies, programming, trainings, curricular interventions, and institutional practices. Immediate efforts will include ongoing evaluation of the racial climate on campus; recommending plans for providing anti-racism education, programming, and training; seeking to identify and engage appropriate shared governance processes for addressing areas for improvements; strengthen anti-racist academic and co-curricular programming; work to develop and support models that value faculty and staff contributions to equity, diversity, and inclusion in teaching, scholarship, and service; and suggest health promoting and anti-racist enhancements to general education requirements.

POSITION UNIVERSITY IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION MARKETPLACE



Maria Ivanova

Professor Appointed to the World Climate Research Programme Joint Scientific Committee

Maria Ivanova, an associate professor of global governance and director of the Center for Governance and Sustainability, has been appointed for a four-year term to the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP) Joint Scientific Committee (JSC). The WCRP facilitates and coordinates international climate science research, and the JSC leads the scientific direction of the program.

This is the first time since WCRP was established in 1980 that it made a membership call specifically for social and economic scientists as part of its new strategic plan. Ivanova, who was nominated by the International Science Council, was selected from over 130 applicants to join the 18-person committee. Ivanova says the ultimate goal of the program is to help tackle climate change, and while natural sciences can tell us what to do, social sciences help us determine how to do it.

Ivanova has also published a new book, *The Untold Story of the World's Leading Environmental Institution: UNEP at 50*.

New England Women's Policy Conference Aims to Transform Systems, Achieve Racial and Gender Justice

Elected officials, executive leaders, advocates, students, and community members from across New England came together at the 4th Biennial New England Women's Policy Conference, which was held virtually from December 2 to 4, to envision and promote new transformative policies aimed at eliminating systemic inequalities.

The Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy (CWPPP) at UMass Boston hosted the conference, themed "The Time Is Now: Gender Justice, Antiracism, and Systemic Change," along with a range of partners from across New England. Massachusetts Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (MA '07) gave the keynote address.

Book Investigates the Pandemic and its Impact on Older Adults

Professor of Gerontology Edward Alan Miller, editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Aging and Social Policy*, has released a special double-issue of the journal that focused on COVID-19 as a book. *Older Adults and COVID-19: Implications for Aging Policy and Practice* provides 28 articles written by leading gerontology researchers. The authors offer perspectives from around the globe on a host of issues surrounding the virus and its impact on older adults, their families, caregivers, and communities.

Originally published in June 2020, this issue's release as a book by Taylor & Francis Publishing indicates that the critical questions raised and the policy changes proposed to protect this vulnerable population moving forward deserve continued attention. Miller says the book is important because nearly everything addressed in the special issue six months ago is still relevant today, which reflects poorly in our response as a nation.



Pilar Nelson

Housing Community Director Awarded Outstanding New Professional Award

The American College Personnel Association (ACPA) has awarded Pilar Nelson, community director in the Office of Housing and Residential Life, with the Outstanding New Professional Award. The Outstanding New Professional Award is awarded to an individual who is in their first five years of post-graduate employment and has demonstrated contributions in their work that are exceptional. Pilar began her role as community director in March 2020, and has proven herself as a valuable member of the UMass Boston community in her work to build a safe and engaging experience for residents on campus during the pandemic. She also helped to lead and organize Black Lives Matter Day in November 2020—a day of education and action for all who attended.

INCREASE ENDOWMENT



The university has distributed 585 masks to students in need.

Alumni and Friends Participate in 'Mask Initiative'

More than 400 alumni and friends have participated in University Advancement's Sponsor a Mask Initiative since it launched in November. Through this program, UMass Boston has raised nearly \$11,000 for Beacon Student Aid and distributed 585 masks to students in need.

The Beacon Student Aid Fund helps students who encounter a one-time unanticipated financial hardship that may impact their academic success at UMass Boston. This fund is designated to offset short-term financial needs, such as emergency medical costs, housing and living expenses, family emergencies, natural disasters, and loss of income.

Graduate Fellowship in School for the Environment Honors the Late James Savicki

Donna Savicki '72 and her husband, Jim, were passionate and generous supporters of UMass Boston and its mission. When Jim tragically died of an aggressive and incurable form of cancer, Donna and their son Charles looked for a fitting way to honor his life. They thought about Jim's affinity for the environment, his interest in social justice, and his love for education. In the end, Donna and Charles elected to endow the James M. Savicki Graduate Fellowship in the School for the Environment—UMass Boston's first graduate fellowship in the School for the Environment—with a gift of \$250,000, as a lasting tribute to a beloved husband and father.

Retired Faculty Member Pledges Support for Graduate Research Experiences

After almost three decades of service as a faculty member and administrator, Professor William Robinson and his wife, Scottie, have established the William E. and Scottie Robinson School for the Environment Research Assistantship Endowed Fund with a planned gift of \$1.5 million. This fund emphasizes the essential role graduate students play in advancing the positive, sustainable solutions that contribute to our planet and people by assisting their faculty, mentoring undergraduates, and advancing their own independent research agendas. The Robinson's legacy gift will enable the Boston campus to prepare the next generation of scientific leaders.

IMPROVE DELIVERY OF ADMINISTRATION AND IT SERVICES

Dean Berger Appointed Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs



Provost Joseph Berger

Joseph Berger, former dean of the College of Education and Human Development, has begun his tenure as provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at UMass Boston. Effective February 1, he is the thirteenth permanent provost of the university.

Berger is a professor of education and was appointed the dean of the College of Education and Human Development in September 2017.

He previously served as the senior associate dean in the College of Education at UMass Amherst, where he was also the director of the Center for International Education. He has nearly 20 years of strategic academic leadership experience in which he has been instrumental in developing innovative academic programs, enhancing faculty development, improving opportunities for inclusive student success, building improved administrative infrastructure, promoting sponsored research, cultivating mission-driven fundraising, engaging community partners, promoting international collaboration, and championing social justice.

Faculty Receive Support for Remote Semesters

A series of virtual information sessions continue to equip UMass Boston faculty with the tools and resources necessary to engage with students during remote spring and summer 2021 semesters. Live webinar sessions, called Teach Spring and Summer 2021, offer faculty the opportunity to hear from colleagues regarding best practices for remote learning and student engagement.

eLearning and Instructional Design offered virtual office hours daily for faculty members to ask and get answers to questions and review pedagogy and technology to support their teaching.

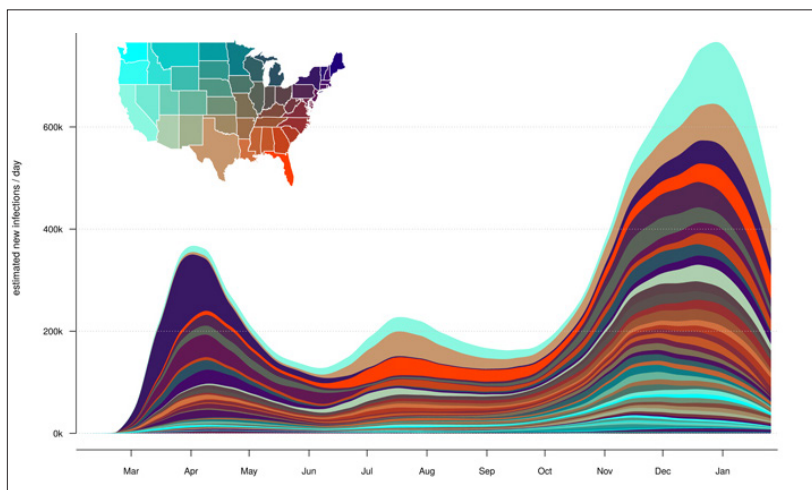
RENEW THE FACULTY

Faculty Receive Climate Justice Research Grants

The Sustainable Solutions Lab at UMass Boston has awarded two research grants to interdisciplinary teams of faculty members that will focus on groups that are often overlooked when evaluating the impacts of climate change.

A grant for \$40,000 was awarded to an interdisciplinary study of traditional ecological knowledge and climate change adaptations among the Indigenous peoples of New England and Quintana Roo, Mexico.

A grant of \$48,000 was awarded to a research project that will characterize the current status and vulnerability of transient populations (homeless citizens and seasonal international visa workers) within the context of climate-related risks, focusing on Boston and Cape Cod, Massachusetts.



This graph shows a model-based estimate of the geographic distribution of new daily infections through time across U.S. states from Revell's site.

Biology Professor Develops Interactive Website Analyzing COVID-19 Data

During the coronavirus pandemic that has forced many people to rethink how they use their forced time at home during social distancing and quarantines, Associate Professor of Biology Liam Revell decided to take on a new project: develop a website that enables users to interact with COVID-19 data over time and visibly see trends with dynamic graphics.

Revel is a computational biologist, but works mostly on evolutionary tools with evolutionary data. Out of his own personal interest, Revell began to pull down some of the publicly available data from the CDC and do some analyses. His multifunctional website project explores COVID-19 infections and deaths through time, among states, and by sex and age. The platform, according to Revell, uses a relatively simple model to estimate the true number of infections (rather than simply observed cases) through time, and the results it yields are highly consistent with estimates from prominent research centers.

Professor Receives 2021 Early Career Award

Assistant Professor of Marketing Matthew Rocklage has been awarded the 2021 Attitudes and Social Influence Early Career Award from the Society for Personality and Social Psychology. This prestigious award honors researchers for outstanding contributions to the study of attitudes, persuasion, and social influence within the first six years of their post-PhD careers.

Rocklage was awarded for his research into the connection between language and opinion. He developed a measure of people's opinions in text to analyze online reviews and predict future marketing outcomes. For example, Rocklage analyzed Yelp reviews for various restaurants to forecast how well they would do in terms of future table reservations. He hopes to continue this research and create a quantitative rating for people's emotions in online reviews.

Professor Wins Top Award for Contributions to the International Advancement of Psychology

Professor and Graduate Program Director of Counseling Psychology Sharon Horne received the 2020 Award for Distinguished Contributions to the International Advancement of Psychology from the American Psychological Association—one of the most prestigious honors given by the national organization. She has devoted her career in psychology to the advancement of international concerns through her scholarship, teaching, and mentoring.

Horne says one of the contributions she's most proud of is chairing the development of a global statement that describes standards for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI+) mental health care and a commitment to advocating for rights. It has now been endorsed by 40 national psychology organizations and translated into 11 languages. This statement sets an international standard for LGBTI+ affirmative mental health care that has furthered advocacy within psychology globally and is represented by organizations in all regions of the world.

STRENGTHEN THE UNIVERSITY'S RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ENTERPRISE



PhD student Carolyn Wheeler holds a baby epaulette shark.

PhD Student Leads Baby Shark Study with New England Aquarium

A new study led by Carolyn Wheeler, a PhD candidate in the School for the Environment, found that as climate change causes the ocean to warm, baby sharks are born smaller, exhausted, undernourished, and into environments that are already difficult for them to survive in.

Wheeler examined the effects of increased temperatures on the growth, development, and physiological performance of epaulette sharks—an egg-laying species found only on the Great Barrier Reef. She studied the sharks as embryos and hatchlings, under the supervision of John Mandelman, vice president and chief scientist of the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium.

Recent CNHS Graduate Wins Student Investigator Award

Nicole Bajdek '20 received the 2020 Student Investigator Masters Award from The New England Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine (NEACSM) for her research comparing blood pressure and autonomic recovery responses in African American and white women following repeated bouts of cycling exercise. Bajdek graduated from UMass Boston's Exercise and Health Sciences master's program last summer and worked as a part-time faculty member and EHS lab coordinator in the fall. Her abstract and presentation, entitled "Racial Differences in Blood Pressure and Autonomic Recovery Following Acute Maximal Anaerobic Exercise in Women," was based on her graduate thesis, which she researched under the mentorship of Assistant Professor of Exercise Sciences Huimin Yan in the Cardiovascular Exercise Physiology Lab.

UMass Boston Researchers Author Living in Boston During COVID-19 Reports



Lee Hargraves
Russell Schutt

UMass Boston, Boston Public Health Commission, and Northeastern University researchers launched *Living in Boston During COVID-19*, a series of reports analyzing a survey conducted last summer by the Center for Survey Research about how Boston residents have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic. UMass Boston Interim Director for the Center for Survey Research Lee Hargraves and Sociology Professor Russell Schutt served as lead authors of several of the reports, which were funded by the National Science Foundation.

Among the reports is *Living in Boston During COVID-19: Vaccination Hesitation*, which found that one in five Bostonians plan to not get vaccinated, nearly half of Black Bostonians say they have little or no interest in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available, and more than a quarter of Hispanics say the same. Researchers surveyed 1,626 Bostonians about their experiences.



From left: Graduate student Mollie Hamilton, staff member Sangya Dhungana, Dr. Zsuzsa Kaldy, and graduate student Yibiao Liang in the Baby Lab

Researchers Receive Grant from NIH to Study Memory in Young Children

Professors of Psychology Zsuzsa Kaldy and Erik Blaser were awarded a three-year, \$457,061 R15 grant from the National Institutes of Health to support their work studying the role of effort in visual working memory in infants and young toddlers.

Kaldy and Blaser have been studying memory in children for over 17 years with the university and its UMass Boston Baby Lab. Their research focuses on understanding how babies' and toddlers' minds develop and how they learn about the world around them. This project will investigate how working memory develops between the ages of 3 and 4 using behavioral and physiological methods, including eye-tracking and pupillometry. Studying babies at this prelinguistic stage of development gives them a unique opportunity to see what our species is like early on and provides insight into how children's memories develop when they start going to school.

MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESS

Enrollment Management Launches Campus Driving Tour

Throughout the 2020–2021 recruitment cycle, the key to staying connected to students and their families during COVID-19 came down to one concept: all things virtual. However, a survey of over 2,000 college-bound high school students conducted in December regarding COVID-19 and the college search found that about 55 percent of students do not plan to make their college decision until after they have visited a campus in person.

In an effort to bring students and their families back to UMass Boston while keeping the campus community safe, the Division of Enrollment Management has implemented a new addition to its visit programming that combines the best of both worlds in UMass Boston's first Campus Driving Tour. Using an innovative combination of mixed media and a physical driving route of campus, families are invited to the Columbia Point Peninsula to see UMass Boston for themselves, while remaining safely inside their vehicles at all times.

Families are guided via audio by current Beacon Ambassadors to six designated stops around campus, including the Integrated Sciences Complex, the Campus Center and University Hall, the Residence Halls, and Clark Athletic Center. A dedicated driving tour webpage, umb.edu/drivingtour, provides visitors with access to a complete map of the campus, along with videos that provide an inside look at campus buildings that they are encouraged to view during each stop. Each audio element provides factual and anecdotal information about the campus, as told in our Beacons' own voices.



Stocked shelves at the U-ACCESS food pantry

Campus Food Pantry Begins Curbside Pick-up for Students in Need

In early March, U-ACCESS resumed food pantry services through a curbside pick-up model, with the goal of supporting UMass Boston students who face food and home insecurities. A small team of student volunteers and U-ACCESS staff worked diligently to prepare the necessary safety plans and refresh the space that had sat idle since last March. They have begun to regrow their inventory through campus and community donors who have already contributed more than 400 pounds of goods and toiletries.

On the first day of curbside pick-up, 36 students submitted orders and an additional eight students requested delivery of goods. The reopening of the pantry comes at an important time given the yearlong struggle for students balancing family responsibilities, college, and finances during a global pandemic that has disproportionately affected low-income households and communities of color. To help U-ACCESS restock, visit [its website](#).

Beacon Retention Grant Has Positive Impact

In the spring of 2020, the Division of Enrollment Management was granted \$420,000 to pilot a Beacon Retention Grants program, designed to remove financial barriers to progression by clearing students' past-due balances, connecting them to campus resources, and allowing them to enroll for the upcoming semester. After two semesters, the results are noteworthy.

In the summer of 2020, UMass Boston awarded 77 students a total of \$193,000 to clear past-due balances. There was a 32 percentage point increase in enrollment for the fall 2020 semester among the Beacon Retention Grant recipients, from 38 to 71 percent.

At the end of the fall 2020 semester, UMass Boston made an additional 85 awards to students to clear their fall 2020 balances and allow them to register for the spring 2021 semester. Although the figures are still being studied and could fluctuate, early indicators show a 9 percent increase in retention, from 72 to 81 percent.

The Beacon Retention Grants had a positive impact this academic year and is a worthwhile endeavor in helping students who are struggling with past-due balances, boosting retention and enrollment. In addition to enrolling at a higher rate, the students who received funding for the fall also registered for and completed a greater number of credits. This is just one of many initiatives aimed at retaining students and helping them with timely progression to degree.

DEVELOP A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN PUBLIC SERVICE



(Clockwise from upper right) Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, then-Boston City Council President Kim Janey, and GBH News' Kenneth Cooper participate in the Communiversity discussion.

Leaders Discuss How the University Can Best 'Stand with the City'

Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco pledged to expand the role UMass Boston plays in the city during a conversation last month with Boston City Council President Kim Janey, who on March 23 became acting mayor, the first woman and person of color to hold that position.

"We need to be the go-to place for madam president when she becomes our mayor, for city government, for NGOs, for communities," he said.

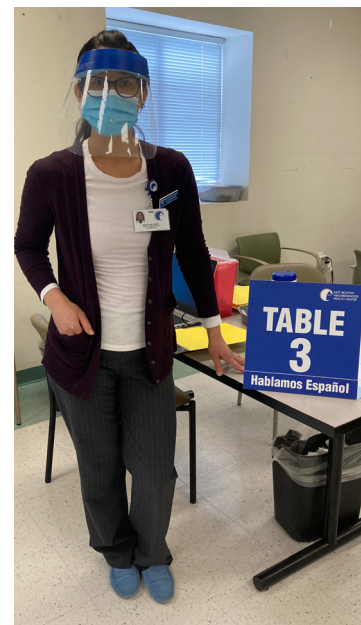
The conversation between the two leaders was part of "Communiversity: Standing with the City, Standing Up to the Times," which was hosted by UMass Boston's Office of Community Partnerships, and facilitated by Kenneth Cooper, senior editor for GBH News. More than 100 people gathered virtually for the event to hear UMass Boston faculty and organizational leaders across Boston deepen the dialogue around how the university can best live up to its founders' charge to "stand with the city" and contribute toward solutions important to the city of Boston and urban communities more broadly.

New Report Identifies Disparities in Aging Equity among Boston Residents

The number of Boston residents aged 60 and older has increased by more than one-third in the past eight years, and more than half of older residents are persons of color. The experience of challenges to older residents ability to thrive differ substantially depending on race, ethnicity, and gender.

A new report released by UMass Boston researchers, "Aging Strong for All: Examining Aging Equity in the City of Boston," documents disparities across three dimensions that impact quality of life — economic security, health, and social engagement — and identifies opportunities for stakeholders to ensure an environment in which "aging strong" is possible for all Boston residents.

Six institutes — Center for Demographic Research on Aging, Institute for Asian American Studies, Institute for New England Native American Studies, Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture, and Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy — contributed to the report using data from the Boston Public Health Commission, the U.S. Census Bureau, and other sources.

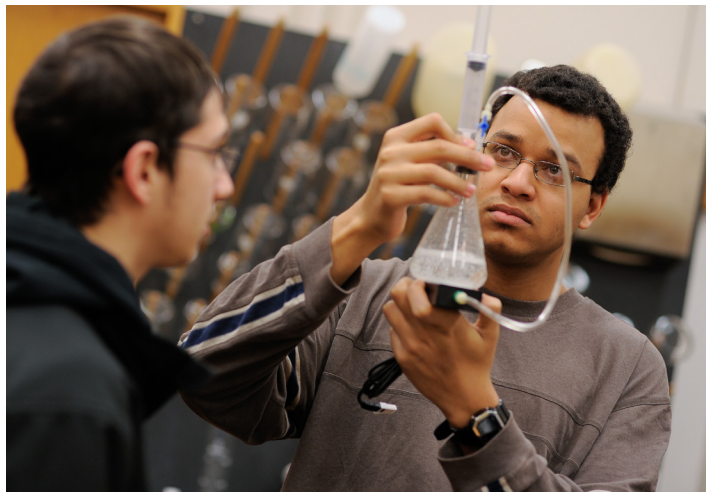


Nursing student Mirna Flores Raudez has vaccinated more than 100 people while volunteering at the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center.

University Offers COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic for Frontline Workers

Despite facing supply challenges that many medical facilities are experiencing, University Health Services conducted two clinics for frontline workers on campus and in the community. A team from University Health Services, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS), and other campus departments ensured the vaccine clinic ran efficiently, helping to further contribute to stopping the spread of coronavirus. Additionally, many of the CNHS students are volunteering at vaccination clinics, like the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, vaccinating hundreds of people across the state.

ENHANCE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE



Researchers are looking to understand how at-risk students at a diverse university can better succeed in general chemistry.

\$300K NSF Grant Funds Research on Improving Success, Equity in Chemistry Education

The Chemistry Department and Division of Student Affairs have been awarded a \$300,000 National Science Foundation grant for developing and investigating an asset-based supplemental course to increase student success in undergraduate general chemistry.

The project, led by Chemistry Professor Hannah Sevia and Dean of Students and Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs John Silveria, aims “to develop and study a novel asset-based supplemental course that leverages the students’ many strengths to help them succeed in general chemistry,” according to the award abstract.

The research focuses on tracking the success of students who enroll in a one-credit supplemental course, CHEM 105, that runs alongside the General Chemistry I course. CHEM 105 is offered to students who are at risk of failing the general chemistry course. The goal is to reduce failure rates in General Chemistry I and contribute to understanding how at-risk students at a diverse university can succeed in general chemistry. Previous studies have shown that remediation and deficit-based approaches do not provide significant long-term benefits to students.

The pilot is showing early success. Half of the 253 students who took CHEM 115 in spring 2020 were eligible to take CHEM 105 based on their performance during the first week of that semester on a diagnostic test that the American Chemical Society has developed for colleges to use for this purpose. Of this group, 41 elected to take CHEM 105. These students performed as well on average in final course grade as students in CHEM 115 who were not invited to take CHEM 105.

New UTeach Boston Initiative Partners Students with Classrooms in Malaysia

While the COVID-19 pandemic forced teachers across the country to adapt to remote learning environments, the UTeach Boston STEM teacher education program at UMass Boston has been preparing future educators to teach virtually with an international twist.

A new initiative started by UTeach Boston Master Teacher WanSin Lim connected the program with classrooms in Malaysia this past fall, giving UMass Boston students a new global perspective. They hope to continue their virtual partnership with the teachers from Malaysia and potentially open up other virtual opportunities, even after schools return to in-person learning.

Experts Take an Early Look at Biden-Harris Administration

The McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies hosted three virtual panels this winter discussing what we can expect from the new Biden-Harris Administration, and how it is poised to address the challenges facing the United States.

Pulling from experts across the university, the sessions focused on domestic and international policy, and the four priorities of the Biden-Harris Administration: economic recovery, COVID response, racial equity, and climate change. Dean David Cash and Associate Dean Rita Kiki Edozie served as moderators.

University Launches Women Beacons in Business Program

University Advancement and the College of Management recently launched the Women Beacons in Business Program, offering career and personal development opportunities to students and educating both men and women about the importance of equality in the workplace.

The program’s most notable offering is the virtual Lean In for Graduates book club, which hosts a new group of 30 alumni and students each semester and is currently hosting its third session. Approximately 35 alumni have participated, including Meredith Guerriero '03, head of U.S. Partnerships at Pinterest; Erica Wagner '03, vice president of PepsiCo Global Real Estate; Mary Thistle '93, special advisor for the Bill & Melinda Gates Medical Research Institute; and Maureen Bunney '89, chief product officer and founder of Mighty Play. The program is also piloting a one-on-one mentor program this semester, which pairs undergraduates with an alumna in the industry in which the student plans to work.

DEVELOP FIRST-RATE INFRASTRUCTURE

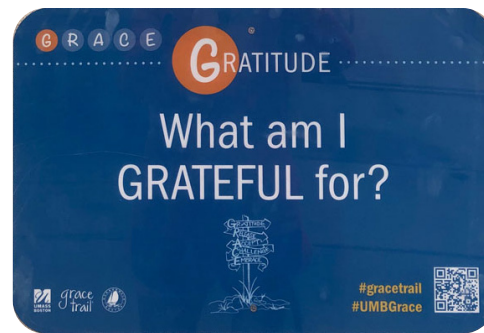


The demolition of the old Science Center is nearing completion.

Construction on New Central Quad Progresses

Construction on the Substructure, Science Center Demolition, and Quadrangle Development project (SDQD) is showing remarkable progress. The demolition of the Science Center is well underway with the bulk of the building scheduled to be demolished in April and the remaining garage levels under the building by the end of May. Those areas of the plaza that are not being repaired are nearly all demolished.

Pilings to support the new quad will commence in the spring, which will allow the contractor to start the most exciting part of the project – construction of the new quad. The substructure reinforcement work below Wheatley and McCormack halls are at an advanced stage, with completion expected this summer. The entire project is expected to be completed in 2022.



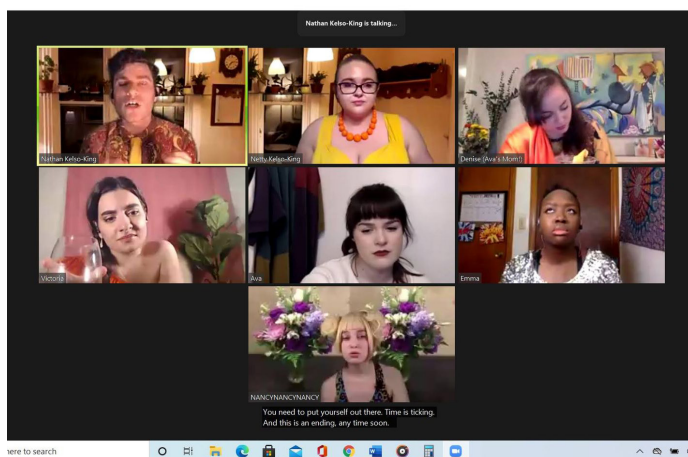
Each Grace Trail sign has a QR code that participants can scan to listen to a self-guided audio tour.

College of Nursing and Health Sciences Faculty Install a Grace Trail® on the HarborWalk

Associate Professor of Exercise and Health Sciences Sarah M. Camhi and Senior Lecturer in Nursing Linda Chiofar have transformed UMass Boston's stretch of the HarborWalk into a meditative Grace Trail®. The self-guided, one-mile walk from the Fox Point dock to Harbor Point housing is meant to promote physical activity and mindfulness and add a stress management tool for students to support their academic success.

The Grace Trail includes five letters — G-R-A-C-E— which invite the following questions to explore while you walk: What am I *grateful* for? What can I *release* to move on? What do I need to *accept* right now? How can I bring *courage* to my next challenge? What can I *embrace* as possible? The trail includes maps, information about this process, and reflective questions. Each sign has a QR code that participants can scan with a smartphone to listen to a self-guided audio Grace Trail® tour.

ENHANCE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE (CONT.)



Students held four live performances of The Party Hop over Zoom.

Students Perform The Party Hop Live over Zoom

UMass Boston students held four live performances in March of Natalie Margolin's *The Party Hop*, a show written specifically to be performed over Zoom. Associate Professor of Theatre Arts Carrie Ann Quinn directed the show.

The Party Hop is a comedy, taking place three years into quarantine with college-age adults spending their Saturday nights hopping between virtual get togethers. One of them hasn't yet had her first kiss, and her friends have decided that needs to be taken care of — tonight. Quinn said she wanted audiences to laugh, maybe dance during the dance party scenes, and feel the strong and uplifting connection that people can still make when reaching out to others—even on Zoom. The cast of 14 were in rehearsal for weeks, each working remotely, but connecting to each other, and the play, online.