College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS)

Nursing Professor Receives $3.1 Million Research Grant

Professor Suzanne Leveille, PhD RN, was recently awarded a $3.1 million R01 grant from the National Institute on Aging, part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), to fund a five-year research study that began this past July. Dr. Leveille, the Principal Investigator, will lead a team of researchers from Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston Veteran’s Administration Medical Center Jamaica Plain, Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, Hebrew SeniorLife, and the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at UMass Boston.

The study, titled “Attentional Demands of Chronic Pain and Risk for Falls in Older Adults,” is part of Dr. Leveille’s ongoing research exploring the role of chronic pain as a cause of falls among seniors living in the community. The new grant will fund a reassessment of the more than 500 participants in the MOBILIZE Boston Study, a longitudinal cohort study of risk factors for falls among older adults in the Boston area that began in 2005. Although the new research is based at UMass Boston, clinical exams for the study will be conducted at Hebrew SeniorLife. Participants aged 75 and older will visit the clinic for an assessment of cognitive and physical functions, and several mobility tests.

“Our research to date in the MOBILIZE Boston Study has found that older adults with chronic joint pain tend to have more falls than persons without chronic pain,” Dr. Leveille states. The goal of the new study is to better understand how chronic pain influences falls in hopes of finding new ways of preventing falls and their disabling consequences.

Throughout her research career, Professor Leveille has explored the problem of disability in the older population, as well as strategies for promoting healthy aging. As an epidemiologist with a background in gerontological nursing, she is currently focused on the epidemiology of chronic pain and its functional consequences among older persons. In collaboration with colleagues in the United States and abroad, she continues to investigate new approaches to disability prevention and self-management of chronic conditions. Professor Leveille is a member of the City of Boston’s Commission for Persons with Disabilities. She earned her MN and PhD from the University of Washington.

From the Dean

Over the summer, while everyone was focused on the national debt crisis, we at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences also moved ahead with plans to increase our national rankings and build on our increased research funding, curricular innovation, and significant community outreach. This issue of Harbor Reflections provides an update on our major global initiatives, which reflect our ongoing commitment to global health.

Our increased attention to global health is consistent with UMass Boston’s new strategic plan. In the first sentence of the university’s new mission statement is the following: “The University of Massachusetts Boston is a public research university with a dynamic culture of teaching and learning, and a special commitment to urban and global engagement.” The 2005 UMass Boston Vision Statement further elaborates on our global research commitment: “We will conduct research that has both local and global reach, that creates knowledge in all major areas of human concern, and that helps our students acquire the refined and complex knowledge, values, and skills of inquiry that the highest levels of research foster and the globalized world requires.”

What makes the CNHS global health initiatives so exciting is that they combine research, student education, and community outreach to thousands of people. We at CNHS truly are making a difference throughout the world.

—Greer Glazer, Dean,
College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Dr. Marion E. Winfrey, EdD RN, was honored as this year’s recipient of the Mary A. Manning Nurse Mentoring Award. This honor was established by the Massachusetts Association of Registered Nurses (MARN) to support and encourage mentoring activities. The award is given annually to nurses who exemplify the ideal image of a mentor and have an established record of consistent outreach to nurses in practice or in the pursuit of advanced education. Ideal candidates possess a record of achievement in offering guidance to and fostering development among nursing professionals over a number of years. The award was presented to Dr. Winfrey during the MARN Awards Dinner and Living Legends Celebration on April 29.

Dr. Winfrey is an associate professor and associate dean at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, where she has taught undergraduate and graduate courses in pathophysiology, pharmacology, medical-surgical nursing, and evidence-based practice.

Dr. Winfrey is the co–project director and undergraduate student advisor of the Clinical Leadership Collaborative for Diversity in Nursing (CLCDN), an academic service partnership with Partners HealthCare. The project is designed to achieve the vision of diversity by providing clinical leadership development opportunities to ethnically diverse, socioeconomically disadvantaged nursing students. Initially, the project was available to undergraduate nursing students in the traditional option; the CLCDN has since expanded its original format to include an advanced workforce-diversity component for graduate students. To date, 65 undergraduate and 7 graduate students have benefited from this project.

Dr. Winfrey has also served as a volunteer member of the City of Salem’s Board of Health for many years. She serves as president of the board of directors at North Shore Community Health Center (NSCHC) as well. With facilities in Salem, Peabody, and Gloucester, NSCHC provides comprehensive primary medical and dental care to North Shore’s community and the medically underserved. Dr. Winfrey attended Vanderbilt University, where she graduated with an EdD in higher education administration.

Dr. JoAnn Mulready-Shick, EdD RN CNE, was honored as this year’s recipient of the Pearl Rosendahl Excellence in Nursing Education Award. The award is presented annually by the Theta Alpha Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau to nurse educators who demonstrate excellence in teaching, influence scholarly development in nursing education, practice, and research, and advance the science of nursing through clarifying, refining, and expanding the knowledge base of nursing.

With more than 25 years of experience in nursing education, practice, and administration, Dr. Mulready-Shick has contributed greatly to scholarly development in nursing education, research, and program development. She recently received a $300,000 Evaluating Innovations in Nursing Education grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to assess dedicated education units, a clinical education innovation, and developed the Nurse Educator Graduate Certificate Program at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

Dr. Mulready-Shick is the undergraduate nursing, traditional option, program director, and clinical assistant professor at CNHS. Her scholarship focuses on nursing education research, with a particular focus on academic success, interpretive pedagogies, precepting novice instructors, and mentoring practicing nurses returning to higher education to address the shortage of nursing faculty and educators from diverse backgrounds. Her clinical practice has included home health and acute adult health nursing.

Dr. Mulready-Shick received her EdD from the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Massachusetts Boston and her MSN from the University of Pennsylvania.
CNHS’s Undergraduate Nursing Program Ranked Ninth Largest in the Nation

The July 4, 2011, issue of Modern Healthcare.com’s “By the Numbers” included a listing titled “Largest Nursing Schools,” ranking nursing programs at American schools by total graduates for the 2009–2010 school year. The rankings were based on the National League for Nursing’s Annual Survey which lists the total number of diploma, associate degree, and baccalaureate degree program graduates for a given school year. Where more than one type of program is offered by an institution, graduation numbers were combined. The ranking recognizes the Department of Nursing at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences as the ninth-largest school of nursing in the country. No other Massachusetts or New England nursing program ranked in the top 20.

CNHS Puts Forth Possible Ideas for Bayside Exposition Property

In planning for the expansion of the UMass Boston campus, Chancellor J. Keith Motley seized the opportunity in 2010 to purchase the Bayside Exposition Center building and its surrounding property in Dorchester, approximately half a mile from the Harbor Campus.

How this parcel of land would interface with the existing campus has since been the frequent subject of speculation, until the architectural and urban planning firm of Stull and Lee was engaged to help the university determine the best use of this property. Toward that end, a series of charrette meetings, or planning sessions where citizens, designers, and others collaborate on a vision for property development, were held. These meetings were held intended to engage the community, Commonwealth, other stakeholders, and the university in exploring ideas regarding use of the site.

However the site will be developed, it has to “further our educational mission, create opportunity, and enrich our neighborhood and region,” a goal outlined in the document produced from these meetings, “Finding Common Ground: Bayside Exposition Site Planning Charrette.” Additionally, the document emphasizes the need for the property to aid the university’s partnership with the community and act as an agent for social change. Given these guidelines, several suggestions directly involving the College of Nursing and Health Sciences were put forward at the various charrette sessions. Among these ideas were facilities that would possibly integrate Geiger-Gibson, the nation’s first community health center, with CNHS, in addition to health promotion and research facilities such as a wellness center.

This preliminary document reveals recognition of the impact that CNHS had on these charrette sessions from campus and community. It is an indicator that CNHS can take the lead in transforming the Bayside property into a campus community where health, wellness, nursing, research, and the community interact and thrive in an energetic and synergistic environment. The final report outlining plans for the Exposition Center property will be completed by this December.

RESEARCH CORNER

The Cambodian-American Health Project Continues to Take Aim at Major Health Disparities

The Cambodian-American Health Project at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, with faculty member Dr. Haeok Lee serving as principal investigator, sharply reflects UMass Boston’s ideals in terms of promoting diversity and collaboration with community members.

The project, funded by a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), is focused on the healthcare needs of Cambodian-American (CA) women with regard to liver and cervical cancer prevention. An estimated 2 million people currently live with chronic hepatitis B virus in the United States, with approximately 50% of those infected being Asian-American and Pacific Islanders, although they make up only 4.8% of the population. However, these cancers can be prevented through proper screening and vaccination; this project aims to understand and address the various barriers related to the identification of those at risk. The focus is on developing a culturally and linguistically sensitive survey instrument that can be used to collect meaningful, relevant data in the local CA communities of Lowell and Lynn, MA.

The Cambodian-American Health Project is interdisciplinary, with key investigators representing various colleges at UMass Boston. One of the study’s unique features is that several key investigators are Asian-Americans themselves, including Dr. Haeok Lee, Dr. Ling Shi, Dr. Peter Kiang.

(Cont’d on page 4)

[The Bayside Exposition Center, purchased by UMass Boston in 2010.]

Cambodian-American Health Project members review and discuss data coding (L-R: Semira Semino-Asaro, Haeok Lee, Kevin Tan).
RESEARCH CORNER
The Cambodian-American Health Project
(Con’t from page 3)

and Dr. Shirley Tang. In addition to these UMass Boston faculty members, Dr. Phala Chea, the first Cambodian-American to earn a doctorate in Massachusetts, provides valuable insight, given her leadership role in the Cambodian-American community.

In addition, the remaining members of the research team are all bicultural and bilingual. Project Coordinator Semina Semino-Asaro, RN MS, is an Iranian-American doctoral student at CNHS. Research assistants include Cambodian-Americans Kevin Tan, an undergraduate at the College of Management, Mia Phal, RN, a graduate of CNHS nursing program, and Phakdey Chea You, a graduate student at UMass Boston. Each Cambodian-American student involved in the project offers a particular strength in terms of fluency in Khmer and/or bicultural perspectives that help meet project goals with regard to translation concerns and cultural sensitivity.

Many interesting questions have emerged throughout the first year of the project, such as the different impacts of various subpopulations of Cambodian-Americans—for example, the refugee population that immigrated years ago versus the second generation of immigrants—on the process of acculturation and how it impacts healthcare decision-making and behavior. In addition, key informants reported that they translated hepatitis B for their CA clients as “liver disease” and cervical cancer as “womb cancer” since there are no Khmer words for these terms; as a result, different participants understood these interview questions differently. Given this, it is not clear how healthcare providers communicate with their CA patients or how researchers collect data from CA participants on these topics.

As the project enters its second year, its members look forward to continuing and expanding their efforts to address significant health disparities in the Cambodian-American population in neighboring communities. In the long term, plans include replicating the study in Cambodia, offering free blood screenings and vaccination in order to address liver and cervical cancer disparities.

Kenya Heart and Sole: The Afya Njema Project Reaches New Heights in 2011

Kenya Heart and Sole: The Afya Njema Project originated five years ago, a product of Dr. Eileen Stuart-Shor’s interest in cardiovascular disease prevention within the African-American community in Boston, and Mercy Kamau’s interest in cardiometabolic disease in Kenya. It is now known that noncommunicable illnesses such as heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, and diabetes are serious threats to health in the developing world, yet there is little understanding of the risk factors that would lead to the high rates observed in these populations. This research project was developed to investigate the etiology of these risk factors and to couple research and screening with medical camps to provide education and care.

This service-learning project offers nursing and nurse practitioner students from UMass Boston an opportunity to partner with nursing students from the Kijabe Hospital School of Nursing, Tumutumu Hospital School of Nursing, and the University of Nairobi to foster learning, understanding, and appreciation. Students work closely together in the community and at local clinics, forming strong friendships through long days, hard work, and spending their downtime together. They maintain these ties throughout the year, generating energy and new ideas for the project.

This year, Mercy Kamau, a CNHS doctoral nursing student from Kenya, had the privilege of meeting Kenyan prime minister Raila Odinga and introducing him to the Afya Njema Project. He then honored the team with a private audience in Nairobi, during which he expressed his commitment to promoting awareness of cardiovascular health and advancing efforts to educate the Kenyan people. The team was not only invited to return but was encouraged to expand its capacity into other communities.

The project itself continues to evolve in scope and breadth, with the number of patients seen rising to 1,000 this year, in contrast to the 250 seen during the project’s initial trip to Kenya five years ago. Although the focus is cardiovascular, this cannot be addressed in isolation. Last year, Dr. Margaret Caudill-Slosberg, a pain specialist, joined the team. Her expertise was a key factor in developing written materials in Kiswahili and in caring for patients with complicated pain. The excitement of the entire team—Boston and Kenyan students, and faculty—for participating in and expanding this project is palpable. The challenge lies in optimizing utilization and resources, in hopes of generating a sustainable program that can begin to address this important health issue in Kenya. The support and recognition of Kenya’s prime minister are invaluable in achieving this goal.
Dr. Lisa Kennedy Sheldon Providing Healthcare in the Aldeas of Honduras

In August, Dr. Lisa Kennedy Sheldon, PhD APRN BC, was part of the International Cancer Corps team that traveled to Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Dr. Sheldon joined two gynecologic oncologists and an oncology clinical nurse specialist to work with Honduran oncology providers. The International Cancer Corps (ICC) was started by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) in partnership with Health Volunteers Overseas, an international medical education organization.

Since 2010, the ICC has worked with healthcare providers, academic institutions, and healthcare institutions to develop cancer programs in low-resource countries. Teams of healthcare providers from the United States have traveled to low- and middle-income countries such as Honduras and Ethiopia, volunteering for one to four weeks to work with oncology care providers to improve cancer care. This year, for the first time, the team returning to Honduras included two oncology nurses, who provided educational programs and explored cancer nursing for future program development. Dr. Sheldon’s work in Honduras is fully supported by the ASCO and the Oncology Nursing Society.

Dr. Sheldon is an assistant professor at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in nursing, with a focus on oncology nursing and cancer care. Dr. Sheldon’s research focuses on patient-provider communication, particularly in oncology care. Using audio recordings from patient-provider communication obtained during actual oncology visits, she is currently working with colleagues at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute to explore provider responses to cues of distress from cancer patients. Dr. Sheldon earned her PhD from the University of Utah.

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Amy Julian Chosen as Columnist for Imprint Magazine

Senior nursing student Amy Julian was recently chosen for the position of national correspondent for the National Student Nurses Association’s (NSNA) nationally published magazine, Imprint. Her new position will find her working alongside the NSNA president, Imprint editor, and the board of directors to report relevant information about nursing programs throughout the country in the publication’s “Happenings” column. Amy was selected from hundreds of applicants not only for her passion for nursing and academic achievement, but for her skill and experience as a writer, which includes working as writer and section editor for UMass Boston’s student newspaper, Mass Media.

An article from Amy reflecting on her clinical experiences at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, “Learning from the Little Things,” was also featured in the most recent issue of Imprint magazine. As a current member of the organization, Amy was also a recipient of NSNA’s Promise of Nursing in Massachusetts Award.

Amy earned her first degree in psychology from UMass Boston, graduating summa cum laude in 2009. She discovered shortly thereafter that nursing provided an appealing balance between her love of learning, scientific inquiry, and compassion for others. An active member of the UMass community, she volunteers as a peer tutor in the Center for Clinical Education and Research; she also works with CNHS professor Dr. Healy-Walsh, organizing and running educational workshops for high school students interested in nursing. Amy is also a member of Sigma Theta Tau.

In addition to these activities, Amy is currently working as a patient care associate at Massachusetts General Hospital on an acute neuroscience unit. She is the youngest of three girls, all of whom attended UMass Boston, and currently lives with her parents in Everett, Massachusetts.

Nursing Student Awarded UMass Boston’s JFK Award

Alicia MacPherson, CNHS graduate and JFK Award winner, told fellow graduates at UMass Boston’s 43rd Commencement in June not to forget where they came from. “Always be grateful for what you have, and do not accept the word ‘No’ when you are fighting for your destiny,” she said.

The Marblehead native knows this message well. After a family illness forced her to leave high school at age 16, she had to put her dreams of a college education on hold. She took on full- and part-time jobs, earned a GED, and cared for her family. It took her 10 years to make it into a college classroom, but once she did, she made every moment count.

The John F. Kennedy Award for Academic Excellence is the highest honor given to a UMass Boston graduate. The award recognizes the graduating senior who best exemplifies academic accomplishment, commitment to service, and good citizenship.

MacPherson began her studies at Yale University’s School of Nursing this fall.

—by the Office of Communications

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Faculty

Dr. Deborah White, Department of Nursing clinical assistant professor, received her PhD from the University of Florida and her post-master’s family nurse practitioner (FNP) certificate from UMass Boston. She is a certified pediatric and family nurse practitioner who has taught graduate and undergraduate courses, and practiced clinically, for more than 18 years in the primary pediatric setting. Dr. White has published and presented lectures and posters at local, regional, national, and international conferences. Her preliminary research includes her project “Enhancing Interactions of Fathers and Their Young Child with ADHD,” which was funded by a National Research Service Award from the National Institute of Nursing Research. In addition, she has collaborated and developed simulation projects using high-fidelity human simulators to train graduate and undergraduate student nurses as well as practicing registered nurses.

Dr. Teri Aronowitz, a Department of Nursing assistant professor, obtained a BSN from Vermont College, an MSN from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, a family nurse practitioner degree from East Carolina University, and a PhD from the University of Rochester. She attended Indiana University for postdoctorate training at the Kinsey Institute. She has served as a nurse practitioner in urban and other settings for more than 25 years. Her clinical and research interests focus on promoting sexual health, and she has authored several publications in this area. She was the recipient of the ENRS Distinguished Contributions to Nursing Research Award in 2007. As she joins the UMass Boston CNHS faculty, she will remain an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine at Boston University School of Medicine and will continue to practice per diem at BU Student Health Services.

Staff

Stephanie Michel-Moore is the assistant dean for administration and finance at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. She oversees the college and its faculty’s financial and human resources matters, program grants, and purchasing, in addition to supervising CNHS administrative staff. Stephanie is also the go-to person regarding the overall management of the CNHS office and staff. As an employee at UMass Boston for 19 years, Stephanie brings to her new position knowledge from her previous roles as assistant controller, associate bursar, and financial administrator for the vice chancellor of academic affairs.

Meghan Feeley joins the College of Nursing and Health Sciences as program coordinator for the GoKids Boston Youth Fitness, Research, and Training Center. Meghan will be working to further develop community outreach, marketing, and communication efforts and will also help to implement fitness and wellness programming. Meghan comes to CNHS from America SCORES Boston, an after-school soccer, creative writing, and service-learning program where she oversaw athletic and health programming at 12 elementary Boston Public Schools. Prior to joining SCORES’s full-time staff, Meghan served as an AmeriCorps MA Promise Fellow with both the Stoughton Youth Commission and America SCORES Boston. Meghan obtained a master’s degree in non-profit management from Northeastern University in 2010. In 2008, she earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology at Fitchburg State College.

Michelle Feliz works as program assistant for the Online Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program under the direction of Dr. Margaret McAllister, PhD RN FNP-C FAANP, and co-director Karen Dick. PhD GNP-BC FAANP, Michelle is an alumnus of Roxbury Community College in Roxbury, Massachusetts, where she obtained her associate’s degree in business management. She is currently working on her bachelor’s degree in human services at UMass Boston’s College of Public and Community Service. Her role involves day-to-day grant activities, assisting with course advisement, registration, and all activities related to student enrollment. Additionally, Michelle organizes recruitment activities and materials, coordinates the applicant review process and orientation activities, works with clinical sites and verifies clinical preceptors, and assists in coordinating the scheduling of courses, on-campus events, and faculty development activities.

Daniel St. John works as the finance and budget manager at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Daniel is an alumnus of the University of Massachusetts Boston, where he received a bachelor’s degree in economics, and is in the process of completing his MBA at Nichols College. In his CNHS role, Daniel works alongside the assistant dean, supporting faculty and staff with financial and human resource-related issues, helping with departmental budget development and management, and serving as the college liaison to the Office of Human Resources, the Provost’s Office, and the Controller’s Office. Daniel, who has worked at the University of Massachusetts Boston for the last four years, hopes to continue his career in the field of finance and accounting.
Above: Chancellor J. Keith Motley and Aliia MacPherson with her JFK Award at UMass Boston’s 2011 commencement ceremony.

Right: CNHS doctoral nursing student Julie Lynch delivers an address at the State House for Nurses’ Day this past May.

Below: Keynote speaker Jonathan Lever, YMCA vice president for health strategies and innovation, delivers his address at the CNHS Annual Research Day.

Above: Shawn Pedicini, recipient of the Exercise and Health Sciences Dean’s Award and the Theresa Corcoran/George Roddy Graduate Scholarship, speaks at the CNHS 2011 Spring Convocation.

Above: Children play at All Abilities Active, a physical activity program for children with disabilities headed by EHS students and Associate Professor Heidi Stanish.

Above: Drs. KwangSoo You, Haeok Lee, ByungHay Kong, and HyungJu Seo (center, L-R), and nursing students with the International Korean Nursing Students Summer Program from Chosun University and ChonBuk University, along with Korean-American students from UMass Boston, pose in front of the Campus Center.

Right: Nursing professor Dr. Mary Aruda during presentations at the Annual Research Day. Dr. Aruda was recently inducted into the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners as a Fellow.
With Kenyan prime minister Raila Odinga (first row, left of center), UMass Boston’s Kenya Heart and Sole project members and collaborators from Tumutumu Hospital, Kijabe Hospital, and the University of Nairobi.

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For more information on CNHS programs, info sessions, events, alumni, accomplishments, and initiatives, go to: cnhs.umb.edu

For general questions about our program, call 617.287.7500.

Want to see your news items and ideas in the next Harbor Reflections? Email them to huan.zhang@umb.edu.
Recent Faculty Publications

This Harbor Reflections supplement lists recent research and scholarly publications from College of Nursing and Health Sciences faculty. Faculty publications reflect the mission and goals of the college and university and demonstrate the synergy between the research and scholarly initiatives of the college’s Department of Exercise and Health Sciences and Department of Nursing.

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