Academic Costume and Regalia

The academic regalia worn by faculty at this convocation represents traditions which come down from the Middle Ages, when European universities were institutions of the church. At that time, robes were a common form of dress, particularly for officials of church and state. The cut of the robe, its adornment, and the colors used comprised a specialized heraldry that conveyed the rank and station of the wearer. At the universities, both faculty and students were considered to be part of the church hierarchy and were expected to wear the prescribed gowns. As society moved toward more modern forms of dress, only royalty, clergy, judges, and academics retained the traditional regalia, reserving it only for ceremonial use.

Modern academic regalia retains some of the symbols of the earlier forms of ceremonial dress. The gown tends to be fullest, longest, and heaviest for the doctoral degree. The sleeves for the bachelor’s and master’s gowns are typically open at the wrist. Cuffs are more common on the doctoral gown, and its sleeves are adorned by three velvet stripes, symbolic of the degree. The mantle worn about the shoulders, called the hood, is the remnant of functional headgear worn for warmth in the unheated classrooms of medieval universities.

The usual color for academic gowns in the United States is black. However, almost three dozen universities in this country and many others throughout the world have adopted more colorful robes. In general, this practice has been limited to schools more than one hundred years old. Among the schools represented by colorful robes at commencement ceremonies are Boston College, Brown, City University of New York, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Duke, Harvard, New York, Oxford, Princeton, Rutgers, Stanford, Tufts, and Yale Universities and the Universities of California, Kansas, and Rhode Island.
Academic Procession
National Anthem
Greetings of the University
Welcome
Presentation of Departmental Distinctions
Presentation of Senior Honors
Recognition of John F. Kennedy Award Nominees
Presentation of Awards

Program

Grace Bybell, *Department of Performing Arts, Music*

Emily McDermott, *Interim Provost*

David Terkla, *Dean College of Liberal Arts*

David Terkla

David Terkla

Lauren Harcarik, *Philosophy*

Madison LaCure, *Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies*

*Africana Studies*

Professor Keith Jones

*American Studies*

Professor Jeffrey Melnick

*Anthropology*

Professor Stephen Silliman

*Applied Linguistics*

Professor Avery Cahill Poza

*Art*

Professor Zachary Horn

*Asian Studies*

Professor Terry Kawashima

*Classics and Religious Studies*

Professor Ken Rothwell

Professor Peter Barrios Lech

*Communication*

Professor Jennifer Gregg

*Economics*

Professor Adugna Lemi

Professor Randy Albelda

*English & Creative Writing*

Professor Eve Sorum

Professor Matthew Brown

*History*

Professor Maria John

Professor Elizabeth McCahill

*Human Services*

Professor Carroy Ferguson

*Latin American and Iberian Studies*

Professor Susan Gauss

*Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures*

Professor Pratima Prasad

*Performing Arts*

Professor Rafael Jaen
Philosophy
Professor Nelson Lande

Political Science
Professor Leila Farsakh

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Professor Lizabeth Roemer
Professor Sarah Hayes-Skelton

Sociology
Professor Paul Benson
Professor Andrea Leverentz

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Professor Elora Chowdhury
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### Students Nominated for the John F. Kennedy Award

- Lauren Harcarik, Philosophy
- Madison LaCure, Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies
Undergraduate Awards
The Clinton M. Jean Book Prize in Africana Studies was established in honor of Professor Clinton Jean (1936–1993), former Professor of Black Studies. Born in Trinidad, Professor Jean came to UMass Boston after completing his studies at Columbia University and his PhD in sociology at Brandeis University. A dedicated teacher and scholar, Professor Jean published a number of articles and an acclaimed book, Behind the Eurocentric Veil: The Search for African Realities. His book, published by the University of Massachusetts Press, has been a pioneering work in the area of Afrocentrism, which critiques Eurocentric traditions of social and historical analysis. His death was a major loss to his family, friends, and the field of Africana studies.

The Clinton M. Jean Prize is given each year to a graduating senior who has the highest grade point average in the Department of Africana Studies.

Shantia Gary

Ms. Shantia Gary, a woman very proud of her Black heritage, lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she has spent the last ten years focused on raising her children. Afterwards, she decided to return to school and pursue her bachelor’s degree in Africana studies, where she not only successfully performed in the major but also holds a very high grade point average at the university. Upon graduation, Gray plans to continue her studies in a graduate program to focus more closely on issues in both the wider Black Diasporic community and the local Black Boston community. In addition to her academic interests, Gary also has a passion for the cultural arts, where she enjoys creative art that depicts and reflects the historical struggles and triumphs of people of Black descent.
Harriet Tubman Prize
(Africana Studies Department)

The Harriet Tubman Essay Prize has been established in the Department of Africana Studies to stimulate student research on issues of Black freedom and resistance. The prize has been named after the great nineteenth-century freedom fighter Harriet Tubman, who escaped from slavery but returned to the South to rescue at least two hundred Blacks from slavery. She has been called “the greatest heroine of the age,” a freedom fighter who put her own freedom in jeopardy in order to secure freedom for others. The prize is given every year to the student who best exemplifies courage and determination to succeed academically against all odds.

Shakina Coplin

Ms. Shakina Coplin hails from Dorchester, Massachusetts, and proudly embraces her African American culture and the legacy of the African Diaspora. She is a double major in Africana studies and psychology and has successfully maintained a very high GPA at the university, making the Dean’s List three times. Coplin plans to pursue a graduate degree in social work and public health. Her goal is to serve as a community leader and advocate for economically disadvantaged families of color in Boston and fight for better public education; more low income housing; and an increase in their health and wellness awareness. Through her UMass Boston education, she found her voice for this mission to give back to her Dorchester community—a community of which she is proud to be a resident. Learning of African American contributions through her Africana studies major, she wants to become a part of this ancestral legacy, to share in the journey of giving back to and making a difference in her community. She particularly wants to focus on inner city youth to encourage them to follow their dreams no matter their economic limitations. She wants them to know that with hard work and dedication, they, too, like her, can always make a way out of no way.
David Walker Prize
(Africana Studies Department)

The David Walker Prize has been established in the Department of Africana Studies to recognize achievement in both scholarship and community service. The prize was established in honor of David Walker, a nineteenth-century black abolitionist who published “Walker’s Appeal” in 1829. A scholarship is given annually to a graduating Africana Studies major who shows evidence of involvement in Boston community-development projects and superior academic achievement.

Xavier Hill

Mr. Xavier Hill, a resident of Boston, Massachusetts, and the son of immigrant parents from Jamaica, was encouraged by his family to grow in all aspects of his life. Upon graduating this May, he will have a Bachelor of Arts in two majors, Africana studies and criminology and criminal justice, and will be graduating cum laude. While at UMass Boston, Mr. Hill has been a star student-athlete on the track & field team. He is currently an officer candidate for the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department and has future ambitions to attend graduate school in public administration. He has a passion for motivating at-risk youth and is deeply involved in youth ministry at his home church. Mr. Hill has recently been invited to speak at various public events, and he hopes to become an author in the near future. He is very grateful to all of the UMass Boston faculty and students who have helped him grow intellectually and personally during his undergraduate studies.
American Studies Founder’s Award
(American Studies Department)

The American Studies Founder’s Award is given to a graduating senior in American Studies who has done outstanding work in his or her major and has demonstrated excellence in writing in at least two of the four modes of analysis that form the conceptual basis of our program of study: historical, literary, ethnographic, and media. The prize was made possible by the generosity of the late Emeritus Professor Seymour Katz, who founded the American Studies Program in 1977, and his wife Phyllis Katz.

Sean MacRae

The Department of American Studies is pleased to present its Founder’s Award to Sean MacRae. During his time as an American Studies major at UMass Boston, MacRae impressed faculty with his scholarly rigor, commitment to interdisciplinary scholarship, creative intellect, and enthusiasm for American studies and the community at our university. He has demonstrated a remarkable facility for thinking through the big questions in the field, embarked on impressive individual research, and brought an inspiring zeal to his academic pursuits. His professors remark consistently on the positive contributions he makes in his classes, both as a truly original thinker who pushes conversations in important new directions and as an energetic presence who shows tremendous respect for others. His research on The Sopranos for his capstone received particular notice. His intellectual interests show great breadth, particularly through a remarkable ability to think rigorously about cultural production and consumption in a historical context. He has demonstrated great promise as a scholar and a colleague, and he has contributed vastly to the intellectual life in the Department of American Studies.
Sally Goss Memorial Prize
(Anthropology Department)

Since 1984, the Department of Anthropology has awarded an annual prize in honor of the late Sally Goss. Sally transferred to UMass Boston from Middlesex Community College and completed a bachelor’s degree in anthropology. She was accepted into our master’s program in historical archaeology and worked toward her degree for one and a half years, until her death from cancer in 1982. She was the mother of two sons, and throughout her student career she balanced the conflicting demands of home, school, and work, as well as her illness. Sally was a valued member of our community, and her family and the Anthropology Department are proud to honor her memory with this prize.

The Sally Goss Prize is awarded to an anthropology major who is a returning female student, who has demonstrated academic excellence, and whose education in anthropology has been especially meaningful to her because of the obstacles she has had to overcome to obtain it.

Dawn DeRossette

Dawn brought a wonderful presence to the Anthropology Department and impressed us all with her determination, organization, intelligence, analytical skills, helpfulness, and empathy for her fellow students. She did all of this while also double-majoring in leadership and organizational change in the College of Management. However, Dawn had to overcome many obstacles in her life to reach us, from a childhood in unsettled and economically disadvantaged circumstances, to teenage years riddled with family drama and mental health crises, to a decade starting in her late 20s that involved two combat tours with the U.S. Army and ten surgeries. She began her journey at UMass Boston with support from Veterans Affairs to complete a long-awaited undergraduate degree.

Dawn not only found an intellectual home in anthropology, she has also been able to use it to frame the structural, economic, environmental, and habitual processes at work in her own, and in others’ lives. She plans to use it to be an agent of change with an attentive eye to others who need advocacy and support, especially for her fellow disabled veterans. We are grateful that she chose us a second major, and our classes and lives have been better because of it.
The Ruth Butler Scholarship  
(Art Department)

The Ruth Butler Scholarship was established in honor of Ruth Butler, Professor Emerita of Art at UMass Boston and a distinguished scholar in the history of sculpture. While a student, Professor Butler won a Fulbright Fellowship that allowed her to pursue research in France. Recognizing that her trip abroad was a life-changing event, she would like art majors at UMass Boston to have a similar opportunity. The award provides an outstanding art major with funds for travel outside the United States for the purpose of studying and making art. Preference is given to projects that promote the student’s understanding of a culture other than the student’s own.

Rixy Fernandez

Rixy Fernandez is an art major with a studio art concentration. Born in Roxbury and raised in Las Vegas, she is a Latinx artist with a distinctive style that draws from graffiti culture, video games, and contemporary painting. She makes psychological portraits, often of women, that explore their secret thoughts through how they outwardly project themselves. Rixy is involved with the Dorchester Arts Project, a local gallery and event space focusing on innovative emerging artists. She has already made ambitious mural projects, some through DAP. In some ways, her work at UMass Boston is a studio-based extension of her already professionalized practice. In 2017 Rixy received the Arts/Learning Award for Student Arts Advocacy. With this award, she created a series of collaborative drawings with school age students that subvert the traditional relationship between artwork and authorship. As the recipient of the Ruth Butler Travel Fellowship, Rixy will be exploring Mexico City, the world epicenter of public murals. There she will produce a wall painting at El Central de Muros and a series of drawings to exhibit here in Boston upon her return.

Christopher McDonald

Chris McDonald is a double major in art and Asian studies, which has allowed him to concentrate on Japanese art history. A Massachusetts native, Chris became interested in Japan as a child. In high school, Chris registered for studio art classes. UMass Boston brought these two strands together. While broadly interested in Japanese art over the course of its long history, he has come to focus on the early twentieth century and the country’s growing imperialism. Chris is interested in the roots of Japanese colonial expansion, its development as the Japanese empire grew, and its expressions in art. In this, he seeks to understand domestic images made in support of its international ventures as well as images made in its colonial possessions. The Ruth Butler Travel Scholarship will support Chris’s current research on Taiwanese Japanese-style painting in the 1930s. The award will send him to Tokyo, where he can study the foundations of the style, called “nihonga,” and meet Dr. Noriko Murai, a leading scholar in this field. He will then go to Hawaii to study specific works in the Honolulu Museum of Art as well as meet Dr. John Szostak, a leading American scholar in this field and possible professor in future graduate studies.
Sam Walker Scholarship
(Art Department)

The Sam Walker Scholarship Fund was created in 1999 by the family of Sam Walker, Associate Professor of print-making and drawing at UMass Boston from 1993 until 1999. Professor Walker was especially inspired by the way his students managed work, family, and study. As a teacher, he often told his students to find what they loved and “figure out how to get someone to pay you to do it.” The award supports majors in the Art Department who demonstrate overall academic achievement and clear potential in their pursuit of visual art or art history. In addition to tuition and fees, the award may be used for funding an ambitious project, mounting an exhibition, or traveling to conduct research.

Bonnie Yee

Bonnie Yee is an art major with a studio art concentration. A native of Quincy, Massachusetts, she came to UMass Boston to pursue her dream to study art. As a child, Bonnie drew in all the notebooks she could find and loved watching her art improve. In high school, she developed an understanding that her art could stir emotions and promote conversation. Today, as sophomore, Bonnie is currently enrolled in the art history course on the arts of China with Prof. Victoria Weston. In this class, she is learning to analyze works of art from ancient cultures that represent her own ethnicity. As she recently shared, “I am very interested in the study of people and how and why they act and how that is reflected in their lives; the study of communication, psychology, and sociology, often in relation to art.” With a keen interest in photography and digital art, Bonnie has been influenced by the artist and activist Shepard Fairy, the designer of the Obama “Hope” poster. Bonnie says she may decide to pursue a career in the graphic arts. But whatever she ends up doing, she wants her art to have a purpose and provoke discussion. In her own words, “I want people to enjoy what I create.”
Michael Lafargue Award for Excellence in Asian Studies
(Asian Studies Department)

This award, named after the first director of Asian studies, is given to an exceptional graduating major for outstanding academic achievement in the field of Asian studies and great promise in his or her future pursuits, whether academic, nonprofit, public sector, or entrepreneurial.

Tina Marash

Tina Marash is this year’s recipient of the Michael Lafargue Award for Excellence in Asian studies, is a double major in Asian studies and early education, as well as a member of the Honors College. She has impressed department faculty with her particularly incisive analytical and critical thinking skills across a variety of disciplines in the major. When she begins her career in early childhood education upon graduation, her accrued knowledge about Asia no doubt will be crucial in planning a curriculum attentive to issues of cross-cultural understanding, diversity, and empathy.
The Outstanding Achievement in Classical Studies award is given each year to honor a graduating student for exceptional and distinguished performance in the study of the ancient Greek and Roman classics. The award recognizes academic excellence respectively in classical language and philology and in broad-based interdisciplinary study of classical literature, history, and culture.

Paul Mahoney

Paul Mahoney was the department’s immediate and unanimous choice for Outstanding Achievement in Classical Studies. Paul has racked up impressive grades and written papers that were easily the best in his classes; one faculty member remarked that Paul has been the best undergraduate that he has taught in nearly twenty years at UMass Boston. In class he balances a quiet modesty with an articulate authority.

What all faculty have stressed, however, is something else: Paul’s generosity. This became clear in his unstinting willingness to tutor Latin students and in his time as a mentor for a First Year Seminar. He has been especially effective with students who have learning disabilities and social problems attending class.

We are delighted that he found classics at UMass Boston and that he is planning to stay to pursue a master’s degree.
Robert Risse Prize in Communication Studies
(Communication Department)

The Robert Risse Prize honors a graduating senior for superior performance in communication in the College of Liberal Arts. The award commemorates Professor Robert Risse, one of the founders of UMass Boston’s original Communication Studies Program. Professor Risse conceived and designed courses; developed and taught curricula in television fundamentals and production; and, early on, employed computer technology to enhance the study of imagery and sound. He directed the program for most of its first fifteen years, prior to establishment of the Communication Department in 2013. He personally advised hundreds of students about their options in the field of communication.

Zachary Horine

Zach is an exemplary student worthy of the highest award granted by the Communication Department. According to one faculty member, “Zach is extremely hardworking, prepared, willing to participate, respectful, and full of positive energy.” Another commented, “He is an outstanding student who is serious about his academic work.”

Zach transferred to UMass Boston in spring 2017 from Boise State University, following time away from school to serve in the US Navy. After completing a course in Intercultural Communication, Zach became interested in studying how international students search for jobs following graduation. He was particularly interested in the unique challenges and potential biases international students face, and approached Professor Lin Zhu to serve as a mentor for an independent research project during his senior year. Professor Zhu commented that Zach is very motivated to learn, and has been dedicated to the research through every phase of the project.

Outside of the classroom, Zach is a reseller specialist for Apple, and an avid runner. He completed his first marathon in April. He will graduate in May and will start his master’s degree in public policy at Northeastern University in the fall. He is particularly interested in public policy related to health.
Leonard J. Kirsch Memorial Prize  
(*Economics Department*)

Leonard J. Kirsch was a member of the Department of Economics at UMass Boston from its first years until his early death in 1977. He held a PhD in economics from Harvard University and was the author of *Soviet Wages: Changes in Structure and Administration since 1956* and the editor of the English-language edition of *The Developing Countries: Employment and Capital Investment*, by S. A. Kuzmin. Lenny’s devotion to his students, his brilliant classroom performances, and his distinguished contributions to the field of labor economics made him a fine representative of the university’s mission. During good times and hard times, as the university grew and as it had its share of troubles, Lenny always found a way to keep us moving forward—and he kept us laughing along the way. Upon his death, the department decided to give its annual prize in his name, both to honor his memory and to honor the students who receive the award.

Ming Lin

Ming Lin is an international student from China. He started his undergraduate study at UMass Boston majoring in Management. But after taking a few economics courses, he was deeply impressed by the methods and mechanism of this subject and decided to add economics as another major in his sophomore year. His interest in economics is mainly in the field of environmental economics, particularly in renewable energy. He also sees the need to study this topic given the finite quantity of non-renewable energy sources and the negative environmental impacts of using them, and the need to transition to renewable energy sources.

Instead of being a bystander of this historical energy transition, he decided to be part of the force that pushes this transition forward. As part of his Senior Honor Thesis, he is currently working (with Professor David Timmons) on a 100% renewable energy system on the Island of Rodrigues, Mauritius. His future plan is also shaped by his commitment to be an active player in this transition. After graduation, he will continue with the study of economics at the graduate school of the University of Hong Kong to enhance his skills and academic background to achieve his long-term goals.

Martin Mitrevski

Martin Mitrevski transferred to UMass Boston from Goce Delchev University in the Republic of North Macedonia where he obtained his bachelor’s degree in financial management. Despite working full-time and commuting to campus twice a week from Cape Cod, he managed to keep a perfect GPA. But for him, his biggest achievement is earning his BA degree in economics from UMass Boston without accumulating any student loan debt or use of financial aid. He gives credit to the skills he learned in his economics courses that enhanced his knowledge to use resources efficiently.

These skills also encouraged him to pursue an entrepreneurial career and—some day—start his own business, incorporating his economics education with his professional experience in the hospitality industry. The idea of running his own business excites him much more than being a part of a corporate organization. His short-term plan is to say in the hospitality industry for a while (he has just been promoted as a manager of a restaurant) to have time to weigh his long-term options; staying in the hospitality business and pursuing graduate studies are two of the options he’s considering.
Joann P. Stewart Prize
(Economics Department)

Professor Emerita Joann P. Stewart retired from UMass Boston in 1993, after spending most of her academic career at Boston State College. In 1969, she earned the first PhD awarded to a woman by the Economics Department of Boston University. Her scholarly interests have focused on the roles of women in economics and of unions in public life. In recognition of her contributions to the university and her encouragement of students, this prize is awarded each year to an outstanding female economics major.

Mariana Ronchini

Mariana Ronchini is graduating from the BA/MA program in applied economics. She is originally from Brazil; she discovered her passion for economics when taking an introductory course in macroeconomics. Mariana is particularly interested in political economy and feminist economics, which stems from her upbringing in a single-mother household. She is currently channeling these interests into her master’s research project about the motherhood wage penalty in the US, and its relationship with proximity to family and work. The findings of her study indicate that access to high quality subsidized child care benefits low-income mothers in the labor force. After graduation, Mariana hopes to combine her interests and expertise in applied economics to contribute to advancing gender equality in the workplace. She also plans to eventually return to academia to pursue a PhD in economics or public policy.

Hira Zahir

Hira Zahir started her undergraduate studies in economics as a transfer student in 2017. Before coming to UMass Boston, she did her first undergraduate work in gender studies in Pakistan in 2008. After coming to UMass Boston, she found herself more interested in continuing a career in the field of economics. Specifically, she has a keen interest in public policy and the role of economics in policy making. As part of a capstone project, she is doing an internship at the State House with Representative Daniel J. Hunt, where her task is to analyze the affordable housing project and its impact on Boston and Dorchester in the light of the affordable housing bill and housing market trends. Currently, she works at the Quincy Public School system as a substitute teacher. Her future plan is to do a PhD in economics to pursue a career as a lecturer.
Alice E. Trost Memorial Prize
(Economics Department)

Each year the department chooses an outstanding economics graduate to receive this prize, established in honor and in memory of our colleague Alice E. Trost, who died in 2001. In Professor Trost’s short time at UMass Boston, she made an indelible impression on all who worked with her. She was a wonderful teacher and was particularly successful in engaging students with her wit and intelligence. Confronted with terminal cancer from the time she arrived here, Professor Trost never let that diminish her teaching and scholarly efforts. Her courage and dignity in the face of a tragic disease were a lesson to all who knew her. Significant factors in awarding the prize are the student’s GPA in economics and overall GPA.

Benjamin Bressette

Benjamin Bressette began at UMass Boston in September 2017, where he quickly became interested in how public policies shape cities and the built environment. He has spent the past three years taking courses in a range of disciplines, using economics as his foundation to understand the forces that shape and transform urban life across the globe. For the topic of his Senior Honors Thesis, he combined his interests by looking at the relationship between residential displacement and federally funded infrastructure projects. After graduation, Ben will work as an economist for the U.S. Department of Transportation, with a long-term plan of going to graduate school for urban planning and public policy.

Arthur Pellenq

Arthur Pellenq’s interest in economics started when he was taking an AP course in economics in high school. His passion for economics grew exponentially since then, with a particular interest in how the economics discipline affects policies ranging from interest rates to government spending to business interactions in the world. When he arrived at UMass Boston as a freshman in 2015, he knew that he wanted to major in economics. Issues of inequality and economic insecurity piqued his interest even more as he learned some of the advanced concepts in economics. During his time at UMass Boston, he also became interested in the process of policy making, and how countries interact with each other on the international stage. As a result, he decided to add political science as a minor. Furthermore, volunteering for the Boston Tax Help organization gave him another perspective on the impact that public policy can have in people’s lives. In the near future, he plans to go to graduate school to add to his economics skills. He is incredibly grateful for the academic support of some of the professors at UMass Boston.
Eleanor Marie Fay and James William Fay Memorial Prize
(English Department)

In memory of an avid reader, a perfectionist whose love and study of architecture were motivated by his lifelong appreciation of style and design balanced by the creative spirit, this prize will be awarded for the best capstone essay in English and Anglophone literature. Faculty nominate essays that demonstrate the breadth and imagination of the project, intellectual facility in blending abstract concepts with research, graceful articulation, and an appreciation of artistic achievement.

Agata Caluj

In recognition of her intellectually daring and nuanced thesis, “The Queering of Class and the Role of “Sport” in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Love’s Labours Lost*,” the English department awards Agata Caluj the Fay Essay Prize. Caluj begins with a commonplace assumption about how comedy works in Shakespeare: “The telos of comedy,” she writes, summarizing decades, if not centuries, of criticism in a single sentence, “resides in the resolution of disorder through marriage and children.” But, before long, Caluj upends this assumption and, in the process, invites her readers to rethink the canonical Shakespearean comedy, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, as well as one of its lesser-known counterpart, *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. Remarkably, Caluj is the first to consider the non-procreative “rude mechanicals” as the site of queer resistance to the aforementioned telos of comedy, heterosexual marriage, and children. Drawing on Lee Edelman’s definition of queer, Caluj makes a compelling case for the intersectionality of class and sexuality in both plays and, by translating Edelman’s ideas into Elizabethan diction, also shows how the word “sport” functions as a kind of Lacanian “jouissance” in Shakespearean comedy. We commend Caluj’s original, provocative, and lucidly written thesis.
Alfred R. Ferguson Award for Distinguished Work in American Literature
(English Department)

This award honors Alfred R. Ferguson, who taught at UMass Boston from 1966 until his death in 1972. Professor Ferguson was a distinguished scholar who edited fourteen volumes of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s writing, and was involved in the editing of Emerson’s journals at the time of his death. He also authored books on Emerson and Edward Rowland Sill, and wrote on other American poets, including Robert Frost. Coming to UMass Boston from Ohio Wesleyan University in UMass Boston’s second year, Professor Ferguson was the first Chair of the Humanities Division, and was instrumental in the development of both the English Department and the University. The award is presented to the junior or senior English major who has written the best paper on any subject in American literature.

Michael Pena-Tejada

For his compelling exploration of the complexities of Latinx writings and identity in his English Honor thesis, “Reflections of Reality in Latinx Writing,” the English Department awards Michael Pena-Tejada the Ferguson essay prize. Pena-Tejada examines two works in his thesis, Christina Henriquez’s The Book of Unknown Americans and Jennine Capo Crucet’s Make Your Home Among Strangers, and his analysis never stops insisting on the ironies, ambiguities and paradoxes inherent to both US citizenship and Latinx identity. The paper shows that there is “no universal story” that describes Latinx experience; rather, these two complimentary novels illustrate the range and complexities of that term and of this cultural category. Pena-Tejada’s analysis presents an enlightening and informative inquiry into the evolving Latinx experience in this nation and into its fictional representations.
Francis Russell Hart Prize
(English Department)

The Francis Russell Hart Prize honors a scholar of English and Scottish literature who set a standard for committed teaching and effective learning in his department, his university, and his profession at large. As co-founder of UMass Boston’s Center for the Improvement of Teaching and author of Beyond the Books: Reflections on Learning and Teaching, Russ Hart devoted much of his career to enhancing the quality of the work done by many individual teachers and to enriching the teaching culture of the campus. He taught in the English Department from 1971 until his retirement in 1991 and he died in 2001.

The recipient of the Francis Russell Hart Prize is a senior English major who has demonstrated excellence in English studies and made significant contributions to the university community. The English Department recognizes with gratitude the support of its alumni whose contributions underwrite this award.

Kyle Melucci

For his stellar work in the English Department as a student, a peer tutor, and an assistant in the main office, the English Department is thrilled to award Kyle Melucci the Hart Prize, which recognizes not only excellence in the English major, but also outstanding work mentoring other students. As an Undergraduate Peer Tutor in the English Department Writing Nook, Kyle has embraced the mission of peer tutoring to be a coach and a facilitator, and the response of students to his mentorship reveals his talent, patience, and dedication. Students note that he is a “great, encouraging tutor” who “gets me to think for myself.” Multiple students wish that sessions with him were longer because he supports their writing so skillfully and compassionately. Kyle helps students engage with writing in ways that enable their learning and lead to their future success in classes across the university. With his exemplary mentoring of students and his general success in English, the department believes that Kyle is an ideal recipient of the Hart Prize.
Marcia Keach Memorial Poetry Prize  
(English Department, Creative Writing)

This prize is given by her family in honor of Marcia Keach, an English major in the creative writing program who died in 1988, in the spring semester of her senior year. People who knew her spoke of the energy, determination, indomitable good cheer, and unsentimental sense of reality with which she handled her life, her work, her three children, and her education. Many of those qualities are evident in her poems, some of which have been published in small literary magazines. In presenting this award recognizing the best poem by a graduating senior, Marcia’s family hopes to share with other students her interest in poetry.

Sabina Lindsey

Lindsey, a graduating senior who is joining the MFA Program in the fall, is our choice for the Keach award. Already a confident and ambitious writer, Sabina confronts difficult material with formal grace and precise lyrical power. In poems that take on a wide variety of traditions and forms, Sabina considers age-old challenges—not enough money, not enough love—with open eyes, empathy, tenderness for the self, and tender attention to the world we live in. With roots in work like Lucille Clifton’s moving “the lost baby poem,” Sabina’s poems reveal a complex emotional landscape that resists the black and white of easy yes-or-no answers, creating a rich place with room for both, and room for all of us.
Chet Frederick Fiction Prize  
(English Department, Creative Writing)

The Chet Frederick Fiction Prize is awarded annually by the Creative Writing faculty in recognition of the best work of fiction written by a graduating senior. Professor Kenneth “Chet” Frederick taught in the English Department at UMass Boston from 1968 until his retirement in 2001. He is the author of numerous short stories and novels; his novel Inland (2006) won the PEN/L.L. Winship Award for Fiction. The oldest of eight children growing up in Detroit, Michigan, Professor Frederick was the first in his family to attend college. The Creative Writing Program honors Professor Frederick and thanks him for funding this award.

McKenzie Hurder

We are pleased to award the Chet Frederick Fiction Prize to McKenzie Hurder for “We Met Once,” her comic, painful, and always surprising story of a young woman studying abroad and falling deeply into an erotic attachment with a German student, Franzisca. McKenzie’s skill as a fiction writer is on display in this piece, in which she gets the reader to laugh and nod along with this narrator, understanding and feeling with her the excitement of new love. But the reader also sees, as the narrator does not, that her new lover may just be experimenting, trying something out; as Franzisca mentions in passing the morning after, “It almost feels like this didn’t really happen.” But it most definitely did happen for the narrator. In the humorous, complex conversation that follows, Hurder captures what it means to need, want, and obsess over someone who has forgotten you.
Paul F. Boller Prize  
(History Department)

The Paul F. Boller Prize is named for a distinguished former member of UMass Boston’s history faculty who taught here from 1966 to 1976 before leaving to take an endowed teaching position in Texas. Professor Boller’s specialty was the history of ideas in American history. In the last 20 years he has published a number of books on American politics; the most successful is Presidential Anecdotes. It was largely money from the sale of his popular histories that provided the fund that forms the endowment of the Boller Prize.

Paul Boller loved teaching and scholarship equally because he loved to teach the things that he learned. He wanted above all to recognize excellence. The prize named in his honor is given each year for the best history essay written by a graduating senior.

Joel Hitchens

Joel is a brilliant scholar who is hard working, determined, insightful, and takes delight in learning. He has served as a peer mentor in the undergraduate program, won a research award, attended and presented at environmental history research conferences and completed an honors thesis. He has taken each of these opportunities to forge new intellectual connections and to distinguish himself in new ways.

He loves history, it is plain to see, but in addition Joel is able to see beyond content to the assumptions that guide and shape the structure of content and teaching. The excitement and inspiration he finds in intellectual conversations and through research are palpable and contagious. His archival and written skills are superlative, and he also demonstrates all the hallmarks of professionalism in his interactions with scholars in the field, his professors at the university, and his colleagues, eliciting the respect and regard of those who have the good fortune to work with him.
Outstanding Achievement in History
(History Department)

The award for Outstanding Achievement in History is given each year to a graduating history major for exceptional and distinguished performance in history courses. The Department of History established this fund in 1999 in order to recognize the hard work and discipline that are the key ingredients in the achievement of academic excellence.

Elizabeth West

One afternoon, Elizabeth West got off the Red Line at the JFK/UMass stop, decided to enroll at UMass Boston, and never looked back. Since that day, she has brought intellectual rigor and a rare joy for learning to every class. She is capable of synthesizing vast amounts of material, making key connections, and critically analyzing complex secondary and primary source texts to produce fine, keenly argued essays for each of her courses, whether African, indigenous, or revolutionary American history.

For everything that Liz is taking away with her from UMass Boston, she has contributed in equal measure. Her passion for her subject is contagious, she is the life of the class, extremely well liked by her peers, respectful and conscientious in her critiques, consistently present, and engaged. “She is an absolute star!” one professor writes. Liz is preparing to go to law school where she will continue to shine.
Human Services Award for Academic Excellence
(Human Services)

This excellence award is given each year to the undergraduate student who has achieved exceptional performance in human services courses and has earned the highest overall grade point average of all graduating human services majors.

John Cesar

This book award is being presented to John Cesar in recognition of his dedication and commitment to the field of human services, and his extraordinary potential for continued growth in the field. He has demonstrated this dedication and commitment, not only in terms of the thoughtfulness he gives to his academic work, but also to the thoughtfulness that he has demonstrated in regard to his internship experiences. In classes, he was very engaged with his classmates and provided helpful ideas, insights, and perspectives during discussions. He also demonstrated that he has the capacity to work independently, as well as the capacity to work quite well collaboratively with others. In the field, based on his internship journal entries, it was evident that there was tremendous exponential growth and development as he embraced the challenge of working with those dealing with substance abuse and addictions. He gained the respect of his colleagues at the agency so much so that he has been or may be offered a job at the agency. The Human Services faculty, therefore, wanted to reward John with this book award for his consistent, hard work. We think he will do extremely well in the field.
Clara Estow Award
(Latin American and Iberian Studies Department)

A renowned scholar in Castilian Medieval history, Professor Clara Estow dedicated four decades of her life to UMass Boston and the Department of Hispanic Studies (1968–2008). During that time, Professor Estow gathered accolades for her inspiring teaching, her generous mentoring of junior faculty, her scholarly rigor, and her dedication to improving public education in Massachusetts. Her teaching effectiveness and her capacity for mentorship were proverbial. She inspired many students to become teachers and scholars. She showed an extraordinary teaching range and flexibility. Her accomplishments in scholarship were equally outstanding. Professor Estow authored several widely respected books in her field as well as dozens of articles and essays on a number of topics. Professor Estow was repeatedly selected by her peers to represent them on the campus’ most significant committees and governance structures. She was UMass Boston’s first Hispanic to lead the University Faculty Council.

In gratitude for Professor Estow’s tireless, generous, and inspiring academic work on behalf of UMass Boston, her colleagues, upon her retirement, established an award in her honor. The Clara Estow Award is awarded to a junior or a graduating senior who has shown excellence, determination, and inspiration in his or her academic work in Hispanic studies.

Jonathan Riemer

When Jon, a lifelong language learner, first transferred to UMass Boston, he planned to continue exploring language as the center of our human experience. He writes: “I’ve always loved language, its study and its application. I’ve discovered beauty in the clean geometry of its inflection; I’ve found delight in the yields of its artful manipulation.” He saw the study of translation as a way to pursue these interests while furthering his professional possibilities. Jon has been awarded the Clara Estow prize both for earning the highest GPA in the major and his stellar performance. Jon plans to use his major to work in freelance interpretation and translation while pursuing additional creative and professional ends, including musical composition, performance and education; fiction-writing; journalism; perhaps even law. This comes as no surprise, because Jon always brought a high level of creative and intellectual flair to his coursework, such as his research into the challenging topic of translation of popular music, or his choices to translate classic literary works. We know Jon will continue engaging with language as a means to open the world, and we look forward to reading his work in the future, in any language.
Ann S. Blum Memorial Fund Award  
*(Latin American and Iberian Studies Department)*

This award, funded by the generous donations of family, colleagues, students, and friends, honors the extraordinary legacy of Professor Ann S. Blum (1950-2015), a historian of Mexico and a professor of Latin American Studies. She was an exemplary colleague, generous with her time and ideas, and a model of supportive and critical engagement with the work of peers, students, and administrators. At UMass Boston she was widely known and respected as a firm defender of faculty governance, and of students’ and workers’ rights. One of her major contributions was the reconceptualization of what today is the Department of Latin American and Iberian Studies.

Daniel Flaherty

Daniel Flaherty is an Honors College student who joined the Latin American and Iberian Studies Department when he began his undergraduate career at UMass Boston in 2015. He soon decided he wanted to explore translation-related topics through the translation studies track. Throughout his undergraduate career, he expressed his commitment to language learning, history, and Spanish literature in smart and well-crafted projects. These came to fruition in his honors thesis, in which he completed an intralingual translation of Miguel de Cervantes’s *El retablo de las maravillas* (*The Marvelous Puppet Show*) in order to bring classic Spanish literature into foreign language classrooms.

While at UMass Boston, he served for three years as the President of the Honors Student Union, where he focused on bringing together on-campus engagement and community service to help Boston-area communities. He plans to carry over this work in student engagement in the future, as he works towards a career in education. After graduation, he hopes to return to UMass Boston to complete an MA in applied linguistics with a focus on foreign language pedagogy, with the intention of passing on his passion for language learning by teaching Spanish to future generations.

Amy Zunino

Amy Zunino is a graduating senior majoring in Latin American and Iberian studies with a minor in Latinx Studies. Amy exemplifies academic excellence and a deep commitment to Latin America. She has studied abroad in Ecuador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala, and has volunteered abroad in Brazil and Puerto Rico. On campus, Amy has worked as a peer mentor, has tutored other students, and worked her way up to Facility Student Supervisor in Campus Recreation. During her senior year, she conducted two independent research projects, the first on the U.S.-Mexico border, which examined the impact of U.S. militarization of the border on the human rights of migrants. She also researched Latinx perspectives.

After graduating, Amy will start graduate study in student development, where she hopes to use her own academic commitment and experience as a student and community leader to help other students convert the opportunities offered by college into fulfillment of their lifelong goals. Amy’s unwavering hard work, intellectual curiosity, and commitment to mentoring others will undoubtedly help many students achieve their dreams.
The Susan Schneider Prize  
(Latin American and Iberian Studies Department)

Susan Schneider was a tenured member of the History Department who helped to establish the Latin American Studies Program at UMass Boston and served as its director for nearly a decade. Committed to both Latin America and social justice, she was instrumental in expanding educational opportunities for students both in Central America and at UMass Boston. This award honors her remarkable legacy by recognizing a student in Latin American Studies who combines academic excellence and social conscience.

Clarita Prudencio

Clarita Prudencio (Boston, 1996) was a volleyball star in high school, and in college she became an academic star. She came to UMass Boston in 2014 from East Boston High School and brought with her a wealth of enthusiasm, curiosity, determination, and inspiration. These qualities, along with hard work, served her well. She excelled in her classes, and impressed professors with her ability to engage, learn, understand, and go beyond what was expected. She developed and presented her translation research at professional meetings, and she gathered hands-on experience through teaching internships. By any measure, she excelled at UMass Boston: she graduates with a double major in Latin American and Iberian studies (translation track) and early childhood education (inclusive care). But it is UMass Boston and the community at large who really scored big with Clarita, for she intends to pursue a career in teaching and attend graduate school in the field of special education to give back one thousand times what she got at UMass Boston.
The Outstanding Achievement Award in Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures is given each year to honor a graduating student for exceptional performance in the study of one or multiple languages, literatures, and cultures offered by the MLLC department. The award recognizes excellence in languages as well as in the broad interdisciplinary study of global literatures, cinema, and/or cultures.

Rachel Peterson

Rachel Peterson has demonstrated determination and acumen throughout her studies in the Department of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures (MLLC). She has worked indefatigably towards her major in French, setting an exemplary model for her peers through her always insightful and sharp academic contributions; her intellectual curiosity in the classroom, and enthusiastic and conscientious thought outside its walls—particularly on a study abroad program in France.

Rachel’s dedication to language and culture, and her genuine attentiveness to the crucial importance of both, place her at the forefront of our graduating students. Her work in literary analysis, theory of translation, and critical thinking repeatedly reflect the value she places in humanistic inquiry, never ceasing to ask questions, and never settling for easy answers. She represents what the department as a whole encourages in its students; thorough inquiry, careful articulation, and attention to cultural heterogeneity.
John J. Conlon Prize in Theatre Arts
(Performing Arts Department)

The John J. Conlon Prize recognizes outstanding service to the Theatre Arts Program in honor of Professor John Conlon, distinguished scholar, theatrical director/performer, and dedicated educator of UMass Boston theatre arts students. Throughout his long career at UMass Boston, Professor Conlon inspired and mentored both faculty and students alike while always encouraging active participation in the lively arts and setting an inspirational example with his tireless service to the department, university, and community. The John J. Conlon Prize recognizes a graduating senior who best exemplifies this spirit of dedication and service to the theatre arts, fellow students, and the community.

Sabina Lindsey

Sabina exhibits a spirit of dedication to Theatre Arts equal to her pursuit of excellence in her artistic and academic endeavors. In her classes, Sabina impressed her professors with her talent, intelligence, and work ethic. She performed on campus in numerous departmental productions such as *The Comedy of Errors*, *Bat Boy: The Musical*, *Polaroid Stories*, and *You Can’t Take It With You*. Sabina won the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Classical Acting Award Scholarship in 2017 and twice was a finalist for the Region I Irene Ryan Acting Award. She is an actor and singer of depth and expression, skilled at creating bold, variegated characters onstage. She worked as a highly skilled member of the Performing Arts office student staff, and interned as costume assistant on *Sweeney Todd* at the Lyric Stage Company of Boston. Beyond the stage, Sabina has additionally distinguished herself with her creative writing and earned a 2018 Audience Choice Award for her multimedia digital showcase *Brothers*. A dependable and trusted ensemble member, she has elicited praise and respect from those who have worked with her at UMass Boston and beyond.
The Louis E. Roberts Prize is named for the founder and mainstay of the Theatre Arts Program, who is presently professor emeritus of theatre arts. An accomplished actor, a versatile director, a prolific playwright, and, above all, an inspirational teacher, Lou Roberts led the Theatre Program for three decades and made it a place where the lively art of theatre in all of its aspects thrives.

In recognizing the Louis E. Roberts Prize recipient, the theatre arts faculty honors and celebrates the graduating senior who has best combined academic excellence with artistic excellence in theatre.

Quentin Bell

Quentin exemplifies academic and artistic excellence in theatre arts. An outstanding student, he demonstrated intelligence and dedication in the classroom as well as creative depth and leadership in the theatre, particularly in the area of costume design and construction. He is a multiple award winner at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival receiving the USITT 2017 Meritorious Award in Design and Technology for costume design for Romeo and Juliet, a KCACTF 2019 Honorable Mention for costume design for Nothing is the End of the World and a 2019 paid internship at Stagecraft Institute Las Vegas. Quentin has designed, assisted, and stage managed over 16 shows for the department, such as: By The Way, Meet Vera Stark; Student Body; Nothing is the End of the World; The Importance of Being Earnest; Comedy of Errors; Bat Boy, The Musical and Annual Dance Concerts. He additionally interned as costume assistant at the Lyric Stage Company of Boston and BeauJest Moving Theatre. Quentin’s tireless work ethic and self-discipline coupled with his academic and artistic accomplishments have earned him the respect of students and faculty alike.
Martin Andic Prize for Distinction in Philosophy
(Philosophy Department)

This prize is given in memory of Professor Martin Andic, a member of the Philosophy Department between 1971 and 2001. Much loved as a classroom teacher, Professor Andic was renowned for the range and breadth of his courses. He taught ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophy, in addition to nineteenth-century philosophy, the philosophy of mind, the philosophy of religion, metaphysics, and the philosophy of science. His interest in literature allowed him to include thinkers such as Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Iris Murdoch on his syllabi. Professor Andic’s research was equally far-ranging. He published on Greek philosophy, medieval philosophy, moral psychology, and religion as well as on particular thinkers such as Kierkegaard and the twentieth-century French philosopher Simone Weil.

Lauren Harcarik

Lauren Harcarik is not only an outstanding philosopher but also an exemplary citizen. She finished her UMass Boston career having taken 15 philosophy courses (with only 10 required for the major) and earning a high GPA. More important than statistics, Lauren has consistently displayed intellectual curiosity, originality of thought, and a deep passion for philosophy in all her classes. Furthermore, her engagement within and outside of class is enthusiastically social and cooperative—she always draws students, professors, and bystanders into sustained reflection on manifold topics.

Lauren volunteered to tutor philosophy students in several of her classes, as well as to mentor new UMass Boston students. She was a mainstay of the Philosophy Club’s Friday afternoon discussions. More astonishingly, she took on the responsibility of reviving and running the Philosophy Outreach Program that brings volunteer UMass Boston undergraduates at the Dorchester Boys and Girls Club to engage local middle and high school students in vibrant philosophical discussions. Bringing her own U.S. Navy service and experience to bear, she also volunteers at a Veterans Affairs treatment program for women veterans suffering from PTSD and substance abuse. She exemplifies the Socratic ideal of philosophy as an intellectual and civic way of life.
The Richard J. Landry Award for Distinction in Political Theory
(Political Science Department)

The Richard J. Landry Award is given to the graduating senior whose work in the field of political theory exemplifies the scholarly standards and humane ideals of Richard Landry, who taught political theory in the Political Science Department until his death in 1973. Professor Landry, who received his education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the University of Chicago, and Cornell University, was a brilliant scholar and teacher, familiar with both Western and Chinese political theory. In the memorial for Professor Landry, Professor Glenn Tinder of the Political Science Department wrote, "In the classroom he brought together two qualities that do not always readily go together: thorough scholarly rectitude and great popular appeal. His demands on his classes were as uncompromising as his demands as a scholar on himself, yet his courses were always filled with admiring and appreciative students." The recipient of the Landry Award must be a student whose work is distinguished by high intellectual quality and breadth. It is not necessarily awarded each year.

Altan Atamer

Altan Atamer embodies the spirit of a liberal arts education and the critical imprint of a strong formation in political theory. These qualities are well represented in his Honor’s Thesis, which interrogates the ways in which questions of representation and recognizability become inescapably political. Altan is always open to new modes of learning, thirsty for knowledge, and motivated to confront exclusion and inequality with critical thinking. We are confident that will continue to make our communities proud.

Kinga Karlowska

Kinga Karlowska is co-winner of the Landry Award, given to a distinguished graduate in political science for excellence in political theory. Kinga’s intense, thoughtful, rigorous, and insightful engagement with questions of feminist and racial justice distinguish her as a student of political theory. She demonstrates not just a clear mastery of texts and ideas, but also a keen sense of their political meaning, stakes, and implications. She is an unflinching thinker and reader and does not hesitate to put radical ideas and interrogations into practice in the classroom as well as in the larger world. She is a model political theorist.
Through creation of the Winston Langley Book Award for Distinction in the International Relations Major, the Department of Political Science and International Relations pays tribute to former Provost Winston Langley, who was also a long-standing faculty member of the Political Science Department and, before then, a professor at Boston State College. Both a lawyer and a scholar by training, he published widely at the intersection of international relations, international organizations, and human rights law. He was not only a prolific scholar, but also an exemplary and sought-after teacher, advisor, and mentor. As Provost, Professor Langley undertook countless initiatives to “internationalize” the UMass Boston campus. Central to this effort were the establishment of an undergraduate Political Science major, a strengthening of the Master’s Program in International Relations, the creation of the 4+1 B.A.-to-M.A. in International Relations, and the proliferation of graduate programs in global studies across the campus. Possessed of a love for poetry and classical music, Professor Langley was as much a passionate humanist as he was a rigorous social scientist and legal scholar.

Esther Tamara

Esther Tamara is one of the brightest students in her graduating class of international relations majors. She has demonstrated a keen interest in the complex dynamics of world politics. Remarkably diligent and curious, she continued to grow in each subsequent class she took. Indeed, her written assignments have been impressive in their level of analytical incisiveness and their critical engagements with the readings. Ms. Tamara has also been a consistently active, articulate, and insightful contributor to class discussions. Intellectually, she is clearly a star.

Ms. Tamara’s excellence, however, does not end in the classroom. She is also a person of unusual energy, maturity, and interpersonal skills. She is the founder and president of the Indonesian Student Association and the co-founder and vice president of the Model United Nations Club at UMass Boston. She also plays a leading role in various other student organizations and programs. Ms. Tamara has tackled these responsibilities with spirit and sophistication, interacting with both students and faculty in an effective and professionally polished manner. We look forward to hearing all about her future accomplishments.
Roger Feinstein Award for Distinction in Public Policy
(Political Science Department)

This award honors the memory of Roger Feinstein, a political science faculty member at UMass Boston (and, before then, at Boston State College) who inspired deep affection and respect among his many students and colleagues. With the help of Roger’s family and friends, the Political Science Department established the award in 2005 to recognize a graduating senior who has demonstrated particular academic excellence in the field of state and local government and exemplified the personal qualities that made Roger so beloved a human being. His voluminous knowledge of public administration and state and local government was based not only on book smarts but also on his depth of experience working in civic and town associations that focused on environmental and international justice. Roger extended the classroom experience to the civic realm by taking his students to the meetings and events of myriad nonprofit and governmental groups—literally opening students’ eyes to the fruits and frustrations of engaged citizenship. Accordingly, the Feinstein Award salutes a graduating senior whose activities inside and outside the classroom have reflected the same unwavering commitment to fostering a more empathic, respectful, and humane society that Roger’s life’s work did.

Jamie E. West

Jamie E. West embodies the academic excellence and applied policy commitments of the Roger Feinstein Award. She earns her public policy minor with a near perfect GPA. Within the classroom, she is an intellectual leader who naturally draws connections across fields broadly relevant to public policy—always with an eye toward meaningful policy solutions for the marginalized. She raises the standards of knowledge and discourse of any classroom she enters. Preparedness, analytic excellence, and meaningful engagement are her hallmarks.

Ms. West’s policy acumen is further realized in applied settings. She is an education coordinator for U-Access at UMass Boston, where her roles include raising awareness among her colleagues about the services U-Access provides to food and housing-insecure students. She also volunteers with Boston’s Rosie’s Place, providing assistance in women’s educational development.

In short, Ms. West’s lives at the interaction between public policy, on the ground policy coordination and assistance, and academic excellence aimed at improving the lives of the most vulnerable. The field of public policy is a far better place with Jamie E. West in it.
Maurizio Vannicelli Award
(Political Science Department)

In 1992, the Political Science Department established this award, to be given to the graduating senior who best exemplifies the spirit of Maurizio Vannicelli, one of the finest students ever to graduate from the department. Like many other UMass Boston students, Maurizio came to this campus at age 26 with an uncertain sense of himself. Helped by many dedicated teachers here, he soon found a creative and stimulating channel for his energies. He went on to graduate training at Harvard University on a full fellowship and became a dedicated teacher and scholar himself, touching hundreds of students in his decade of energetic work as a teacher. Maurizio's career exemplifies what is best at UMass Boston. In memorializing his name with this book award, we hope that his passionate dedication to learning, to teaching, and to social justice will continue to inspire others for years to come.

Russell Bracchi

Russell Bracchi is a political science major and a student in the Honors College. He has excelled in classes such as international relations theory, foreign policy analysis, terrorism, and immigration politics, revealing a deep understanding of world politics and international relations. Russell has also written his Honors College senior thesis on the topic of democratic backsliding in Turkey, where he explored how democratically elected governments can protect citizens' rights—or use the authority of democracy and law to deny citizens' basic freedoms. Russell is a bright, curious, and gracious student who has also a strong interest in the rights to a free press and free speech. We have no doubt he will succeed in whatever goals he sets for himself.
Adrian Jill Barnett Memorial Prize for Academic Excellence
(Psychology Department)

Through the generosity of the Barnett family, each year the Department of Psychology awards the Adrian Jill Barnett Memorial Prize in honor of Adrian Jill Barnett, a psychology major, who was killed while riding her bicycle in Cambridge shortly after graduating with distinction from UMass Boston in 1977. Adrian was a research assistant in the Psychology Department and intended to carry her studies on to graduate school. The Barnett Prize is awarded to a psychology major each year on the basis of academic excellence as represented by the quality of a paper submitted for this competition. Interested students must be nominated by a faculty member in the Department of Psychology and submit a 10- to 30-page paper to the prize committee for evaluation. The paper may be a theoretical paper, a literature review, or a research study. Papers are judged with regard to organization, thoroughness, clarity, and originality. In addition to the award, the prize includes the inscription of the winner’s name on a plaque displayed permanently in the department office.

Julia Kelly

Julia Kelly is pursuing a BS in psychology and a minor in cognitive science. She is winning the Barnett Prize for her paper titled “The Impact of Parenting and Cultural Values on Anxiety Development and Treatment Within Those Identifying as Hispanic and/or Latinx.” This paper grew out of her longstanding interests in child development and the cultural factors influencing parenting. At UMass Boston Julia has been an essential member of two research teams. She began in the lab of Dr. Hayes-Skelton, where she worked on studies investigating social anxiety. She then added a cognitive neuroscience lens to her work and joined Dr. Ciaramitaro’s lab, where she participated in projects at UMass Boston as well as at the Museum of Science. Julia presented her work at the UMass Amherst conference in April and the Association for Psychological Science (APS) in May. Outside of UMass Boston, Julia works with children as a playroom supervisor at the YMCA. We are excited to see Julia’s next steps as she pursues her honor’s project under the supervision of Dr. Ciaramitaro.
Ina Samuels Memorial Prize  
(Psychology Department)

The Ina Samuels Memorial Prize is in memory of Professor Ina Samuels, who was a member of the Psychology Department for over twenty-five years until she passed away in 1998. This award is made possible by an endowment established through Dr. Samuels’s estate and faculty, student, and alumni contributions. Professor Samuels taught a broad range of courses, specializing in physiological psychology and neuropsychology. She was an extraordinarily effective and inspiring teacher and a superb research mentor dedicated to fostering the personal and professional development of her students.

This award honors a student whose research proposal or research report is judged to be of such high quality as to have met Ina’s criteria of scholarly evidence.

Elicia Kelley

Elicia Kelley is this year’s Psychology Department winner of the Samuels prize for writing. She won with her paper titled “The Nonselective Visual Pathway of Scene Recognition and its Development,” which she wrote as a reflection on the work that she did for her research apprenticeship in the UMass Boston Baby Lab. She has been working in the Baby Lab since January 2018, under the supervision of Dr. Zsuzsa Kaldy. Elicia is graduating with a BS, in psychology and a minor in biology. She will continue at UMass Boston in the fall, as she begins her graduate work in the school counseling program. When she is not at UMass Boston working in the lab or going to class, she is a teacher’s assistant at a daycare in Braintree. In any free time that remains she enjoys creating artwork or reading.
T. Scott Miyakawa Memorial Prize  
(Sociology Department) 

The T. Scott Miyakawa Memorial Prize provides recognition for the lifetime work and career of Scott Miyakawa, a distinguished scholar and leader. During his time at UMass Boston, Professor Miyakawa served as chair of the Sociology Department for six years. He also served countless students as teacher and mentor. Although he was taken from us too early, he is remembered most often as simply a wonderful person. The Miyakawa Memorial Prize is presented annually to a student who embodies the ideals of Professor Miyakawa—excellence in academics and social service.

Esi Coro

Esi Coro volunteered for six years at Extended Stay America (ESA), a shelter serving homeless people. Listening to the guests' life stories, observing their daily routine, and the work of the social workers inspired Esi to pursue her education and major in Sociology to learn more about the institutional forces that shape the life trajectories of the homeless. After her shift at the shelter, Esi began volunteering with another organization, Lifebrige, that addresses not only issues of homelessness such as affordable housing and poverty, but also community breakdown. There Esi helps fill out housing applications, tutors young children who have fallen behind in school, and delivers food. Finally, she also volunteers at the thrift store by sorting out donations and helping homeless workers complete work tasks. Esi’s family immigrated to the United States from Albania when she was 14-years-old. When her family first arrived, they felt alone and did not know where to ask for help. The homeless Esi works with shared their experiences of loneliness with her, and this connection helped her recognize she could create positive social change.
Founders’ Award for Excellence in Women’s Studies and Social Activism
(Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department)

This award is given annually to a women’s, gender, and sexuality studies graduate who has achieved academic excellence in all course work and contributed to the improvement of the status of women at UMass Boston or in the wider community. Initiated in 1990 by Mary Anne Ferguson, professor emerita of English and women’s studies, the Founders’ Award fund is supported by contributions from faculty, alumnae, and friends of women’s studies.

Madison LaCure

Madison LaCure is an Honors student, and Chancellor’s Scholarship recipient. Madison wears several hats in her involvement in various campus and community services including interning at the Mayor’s Office in Boston, as assistant policy & communications manager in women’s advancement. While there, she focused on pay equity and child care, working tirelessly to organize donation drives with high school youth groups to create comfort cases for children entering the foster care system, and increasing awareness of children in care in Massachusetts and beyond. This builds on her impressive work as an intern in the Governor’s Council, where she addressed issues of sexual assault and domestic violence (SA/DV). As part of her responsibilities, she created a guide to all support services in Massachusetts available to those affected by SA/DV, and this has served her well as peer mentor for the First Year Seminar in Sexual Ethics, and as a resident assistant with the Housing and Residence Life. After graduation, Madison plans to continue in the accelerated master’s in public administration, in gender leadership and public policy, and at the completion of her program, will focus on policy work in the area of women’s empowerment, public health, and sexual violence prevention.
Graduate Awards
Shannon Cardinal has earned The American Studies Book Prize for her outstanding academic performance in the American Studies Masters Program. In addition to having a high GPA, she has produced a fine piece of original scholarship that examines the cultures of sex and remarriage in the United States between 1780 and 1820. She has scoured collections of early American writings, personal correspondence, newspapers, and legal documents to gain a better understanding of how Americans of the Early Republic perceived and negotiated the institution of second marriage. She examined the prevailing social expectations around remarriage as dictated by religious and cultural authorities and then showed how men and women across the spectrum of race and class identities at times reinforced, outwardly resisted, or adapted these marital scripts to meet their specific needs. Her findings reveal that anxieties over adultery and sexual appetite suffused the discourse on remarriage just as much as concerns over financial well-being and estate planning. Her project successfully contributes to our historical understanding of sex, gender, race, and class during the Early Republic. The American Studies Department congratulates Cardinal for her high level of achievement in the program and for producing a final project of the highest quality.
The Department of Anthropology is pleased to present Anna M. Greco the 2019 Barbara E. Leudtke Award for academic excellence in Historical Archaeology. Annie came to UMass Boston from Boston College with a BA in Psychology and a minor in Latin American studies. She also studied at University College Dublin, where she earned a Higher Diploma in Archaeology.

In addition to excelling academically, Annie contributed to multiple on-going research projects as a graduate student. Annie played an especially important role in the NEH-funded research in Plymouth, Massachusetts, serving as a teaching assistant for two summer fieldschools, a research assistant for the laboratory analysis, and a contributor to the project’s annual reports.

Annie’s MA thesis, “Set in Stone: Recontextualizing the Lithic Assemblage of a Seventeenth-Century Storage Cellar in Charlestown, Massachusetts,” reinterprets the artifacts from a three-decade old excavation using current theoretical perspectives. Annie successfully demonstrated that the artifacts from the site reflect not just the English settlers of Charlestown, but also the activities of Native people in the historic landscape. For her outstanding thesis and many other accomplishments in our program we are pleased to recognize Annie Greco for academic excellence.
Sean Mannion is a graduating student in the Master of Applied Economics program at UMass Boston. Sean’s studies at UMass have brought together his multiple interests in the fine arts, education, and economics. Sean completed his bachelor’s degree in music theory at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. He has continued to play and compose music in a variety of groups and settings. Sean is currently director of finance for the Newton Public Schools, where he has worked for almost 18 years. In this role, Sean carries out a wide range of analysis and financial oversight for a school district of over 12,000 students. His master’s research project examined the impacts of fine arts education on student outcomes. Sean thanks his wife Celeste and twin sons Scott and Cole for their support throughout his studies.
Mariana Ronchini is graduating from the accelerated BA/MA program in applied economics at UMass Boston. She worked six years as an underwriter before returning to college. Originally from Brazil, she discovered her passion for studying economics when taking an introductory macroeconomics course. Mariana is particularly interested in political economy and feminist economics, which stems from her upbringing in a single-mother household. She is currently channeling these interests into a master’s research project that explores mothers’ wage penalty relative to women who are not mothers in the United States, and its relationship with proximity to family and work. She finds evidence that low-income mothers who live in close proximity to their parents tend to pay a smaller wage penalty due to greater access to grandparent-provided childcare. Her results suggest that high quality subsidized child care would reduce the wage gap for low-income mothers in the labor force. After graduation, Mariana hopes to combine her interests and expertise in applied economics to contribute to advancing gender equality in the workplace. She also plans to eventually pursue a PhD in economics or public policy.
Katharine Ward received a BA in comparative literature from the University of California-Irvine and certification in American Sign Language (ASL)-English interpreting from Colombia College in Chicago. Her work as an interpreter for d/Deaf students in ESL classrooms spurred her to begin graduate study in the Applied Linguistics Department at UMass Boston. Observing the frustration of d/Deaf students in ESL classrooms that were not designed to meet their needs, Katharine realized that she wanted to learn more about language acquisition and ESL pedagogy to effectively advocate for d/Deaf students and interpreters. Katharine stood out during her time in the program because of her engaged scholarship. In her coursework, she critically appropriated a range of theories and perspectives to better understand and deconstruct the connections between ESL and d/Deaf literacy. Her professors universally noted her dedication, acuity, and leadership in the Apling community. Katharine’s thesis, entitled “Language Learning and the Americans with Disabilities Act: An Observation of Deaf Adults and their interpreters in ESL Classrooms” examines the role of interpreters as de facto ESL teachers from the perspectives of policy and practice. She drew on a rigorous review of literature, substantial fieldwork, and classroom discourse analysis to develop her inquiry. Katharine’s research highlights widespread misunderstandings of the needs and strengths of d/Deaf students and ASL-English interpreters. Upon completing her MA in applied linguistics, Katharine is interested in developing a d/Deaf English literacy program in Chicago and continuing her research and advocacy for this overlooked and underserved group.
Kathryn Bell joined the department in 2017 as a graduate of Bridgewater State University. Kathryn is completing her master’s research on interracial differences in the nature and extent of volunteer activities. She was inspired to do this work after reading critiques about “voluntourism,” in which affluent white Americans volunteer in developing nations in ways that reflect colonialism. She is exploring whether African Americans are more likely than whites to volunteer in their own communities, and if different types of social networks and opportunities explain differential patterns. In addition to her master’s in applied sociology, she is completing a certificate in survey methodology. Because of the quality of her work in class, she was recruited by the Center for Survey Research to work as an intern. Kathryn also has excelled as a teaching assistant in multiple classes. In that role, she is respectful of students’ needs and provides them support and feedback. In all of her roles, Kathryn is diligent, resourceful, reliable, and creative. She is unassuming, asks questions, and incorporates feedback well. Kathryn has been an excellent student in her time at UMass Boston, and these traits reflect someone who is guaranteed to future professional success.

Joseph Silcox has been an enthusiastic and driven member of the department since he arrived on campus in 2017. Joe came to UMass Boston as a graduate of Saint Anselm College, with interests in addiction and treatment, social psychology, and qualitative research. He has developed research on shifts in identity as people move through a recovery process. This work began with research in a class his first semester and is continuing through his master’s research project. Joe is intellectually curious, with growing interests related to unconventional responses to addiction by law enforcement and related areas. In addition, Joe sought out other research experiences, first researching equity, diversity, and inclusion at MassArt and now as a program assistant with the Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative (PAARI). Joe has taught several courses at UMass Boston, served as a teaching assistant, and has been an active member of the Graduate Sociology Student Association. Joe’s work has been uniformly excellent, and he brings a passion not only for sociology but also for building community within the department. We are pleased that Joe will be continuing his education at UMass Boston, as he joins the PhD program this fall.

Presenter:
Professor Andrea Leverentz
Isaac joined the sociology PhD program in 2017, after graduating from Howard University. In a very short amount of time, Isaac integrated himself into Boston area networks, on campus and off. Isaac has been involved in an evaluation of a juvenile diversion program and has been working on the Boston HUB project. In both, he quickly established himself as a trusted and valuable colleague. In his application to UMass Boston, Isaac described himself as a “hometown kid” dedicated to researching and giving back to Boston-area communities. He presented findings from his work with Mass Housing, where he helped to “equip [law enforcement] with concrete, practical solutions to prevent overdose deaths and provide lasting help to those suffering from substance use disorders.” The James E. Blackwell Prize honors graduate students whose work embodies community-engaged scholarship and focuses on issues of minority group relations. Isaac’s academic accomplishments and his research and community building goals and skills embody the spirit of the Blackwell Prize. Isaac brings the same diligence, curiosity, and support to his engagement with his fellow students and the department. We are pleased to support Isaac’s growth as he continues work on his PhD.
Chris Pappavaselio is a superb teacher and Latinist. A high school teacher at Wakefield High, Chris is known for his incredibly dynamic teaching style, willingness to experiment with cutting-edge pedagogy, and wicked sense of humor. We recognize Chris' excellence as a graduate student in our program, as a teacher, and as a Latinist, with The Award for Academic Excellence in Latin and Classical Humanities.
Recipients of the Dean’s Book Prize embody the ethos of UMass Boston: they are smart, industrious, and dedicated members of the community—all qualities that Patricia Case has demonstrated during her time in the English MA Program. As a graduate student, Tricia was engaging and inspiring, bringing her unique point of view to bear on key issues in contemporary literature and culture and shedding new light on them for her classmates and her professors. Faculty members who had Tricia in class offer glowing reports that speak enthusiastically of her original and penetrating contributions to discussion and the positive energy she brings to the classroom. Tricia’s originality of insight and focused dedication to her studies is evident in her final project, “Jacqueline Frances’s Striptastic and New Media Possibilities for Women’s Comics.” Tricia’s project was a wholly unprecedented take on women’s comics; focusing on Instagram comics about sex work, it was an innovative and mature contribution to the history of women’s comics as well as a compelling intervention into DIY publishing and digital comics production. As a teaching assistant Tricia was no less impressive. She was a superb TA in the lecture course “Cinema, Sex, and Censorship,” creating a productive but relaxed learning environment that engaged even the most reticent students. Indeed, faculty in the English Department and other MA students in the program have commented on her resourcefulness as a teacher and her willingness to help and support those less experienced. Tricia has evinced the same aptitude and energy when teaching her own classes, exposing her students to new novels and new ideas and fostering in them the same enthusiasm and critical thinking skills that made her such a pleasure to work with. We are all elated that Tricia is receiving this award and excited to see what’s next for her; we are sure it will be, as she has proved herself to be, ambitious, surprising, and highly successful.
Jessica Eldridge's MA final project, “The Beat Poetics of Lenore Kandel: Sexual-Spiritual Awakening and Collective Liberation from Postwar Consumer Culture,” not only excavates the work of a neglected woman writer of the beat movement, but also challenges the critical frameworks that continue to center male writers in accounts of the beats. Eldridge convincingly argues that Kandel’s sexual-spiritual poetics—enacting a collective erotics of feminist resistance to post-war consumer culture—re-orient the political significance of the beat movement and link it to the later politics of the hippie and feminist movements of the 1960s. The project’s careful exegesis of this neglected poet’s work is already prize-worthy; but Eldridge goes beyond the task of recovery, placing this writer’s work in relationship to ongoing critical conversations and demonstrating how the inclusion of Kandel’s poetry in these debates necessarily reshapes the larger literary history of post-war American poetics.
Halla Khalil’s MA final project “Skepticism in Cymbeline, or, All is False” begins with an utterly original question: “If Posthumus [in Cymbeline] has already doubted, tested, and successfully achieved certainty of Imogen’s commitment to their relationship, what is the point of repeating this test? Why go through it again?” Perhaps the reason this question has never been asked, let alone answered, is that it depends on taking seriously some seemingly throwaway lines spoken by an anonymous character (the Frenchman), who only appears in one scene, about an event that happened a year prior to the action of the play. Halla is every bit as inventive and ingenious in answering this question as she is in asking it. Only she would think to connect Posthumus’s repeated testing of his beloved Imogen to “the problem of inferential knowledge,” to Baconian skepticism, and to Karl Popper’s attempt to address the problems of inferential knowledge and skepticism with his 20th-century theory of “falsification.” This unique approach turns out to be the key to answering the biggest question about Cymbeline (one that has puzzled scholars for centuries): why does this play, which ends happily (war averted, young lovers reunited, old grievances and grudges laid aside), appear as the last of the Tragedies, and thus the last of all the plays, in Shakespeare’s First Folio? Her answer to that question is the conclusion to her MA thesis but only the beginning of her career as a Shakespeare scholar.
This year’s Robert T Crossley Award in Pedagogy goes to Molly Booth’s six-credit MA thesis, “Performance Pedagogy & Skeletal Scripts: Shakespeare in the College English Classroom,” which brings together Molly’s love for Shakespeare with her passion for active teaching and learning. Molly argues that integrating performance into the college classroom allows instructors to make visible to students the intellectual work that bridges the gap between text and interpretation. Seeing performance as a first interpretive step, Molly shows how performance activities in the classroom can lead to better reading and writing about literary texts, especially Shakespeare’s plays, whose language and canonized status can distance the text from its readers. A hybrid text that includes a series of carefully constructed classroom exercises, Molly’s thesis represents the culmination of her MA coursework in the Department of English and the integration of two of her passions: Shakespeare and pedagogy. In its spirited, carefully researched argument and its brilliantly conceived exercises, Molly’s thesis exemplifies the creative and boundary-pushing scholarship that the Crossley prize aims to honor.

Adam Mooney is the recipient of the Robert T Crossley Award. In his compelling MA final project, “Homosocial Revolution and Caribbean Neo-Slave Narrative in Marlon James’s The Book of Night Women,” Adam insightfully explores how the Caribbean neo-slave narrative differs from that of U.S.-based neo-slave narratives. To that end, Adam argues that the former focuses on revolution and queerness while the latter emphasizes movement and migration. Building on queer theory and archipelagic American studies, Adam contributes to cutting-edge work in the field. Through a careful understanding of the historical circumstances surrounding Jamaica’s relationship with revolution, Adam theorizes the failed revolution of the night women as part of the text’s emphasis on circularity and repetition. To break free from such circularity, Adam argues, revolution must be figured outside of the terms of return and must, instead, embrace the utopian possibilities suggested in the night women’s cave, where feminine and homosocial relationships form the foundation for revolution. In this way, Adam considers what it would mean to foreground queerness as part of neo-slave narrative tradition and, in doing so, illuminates the revolutionary potential such analysis suggests.
Madison Vlass
Recipient of the Award for Academic Excellence in History

Presenter:
Professor Elizabeth McCahill

Madison’s work has been strong throughout her graduate career, growing from very good in her first semester, to consistently excellent by her second year. Madison has superior research and writing skills, she is analytical and imaginative, and she is a quiet leader among her peers. In addition, Madison eagerly seeks out new challenges and opportunities to add areas of expertise and skills, undeterred by lack of experience. Thoughtful and reliable, Madison never grumbles, even when the going gets rough. She manages to be both a model student and sincerely humble, in spite of her many talents. Madison has been an invaluable member of the HGSA and of the department more generally.

In her capstone project, Madison draws upon multiple disciplinary lenses and methodologies—social history, ethnography, oral history, and public history—which she is using to research and plan a walking tour of Salem’s Little Italy neighborhood. Her scholarship and collaboration with community members will bring into the light one immigrant community that defined the city in the 20th century. She is thus expanding on and complicating the traditional narrative of Salem’s past, which has been limited to the “witch” trials and maritime trade.
History Department

David Babaian
Recipient of the History Program Book Award for Best Final Project

Throughout his time at UMass Boston, David has been a remarkable student. Extraordinarily well-prepared, insightful, and hard working, he went far beyond the requirements for all his classes. David’s thesis, a fitting culmination to a great career, is nothing short of superb. It examines the life and works of ʿUmar ibn Sayyid, an Arabic-literate Senegambian enslaved in the United States from 1807 until his death in 1863. Babaian argues that Ibn Sayyid’s integration into Christian communities was predicated on sensitivity to commonalities between Muslim and Christian doctrine. The research for this thesis was imaginative and impressive, involving Arabic-language manuscripts in far-flung archives and demonstrating a deft mastery of this dense source material. One of David’s readers emphasizes the maturity and professionalism of the thesis; another notes that his findings are as highly consequential in the field of Islamic studies as in the study of American slavery. In short, David’s work represents the very best of the historical research. Eschewing simple explanations, he demonstrates that piety has served as a “bridge” between Christianity and Islam, even in the most unfavorable of circumstances.

Presenter:
Professor Elizabeth McCahill
Kathleen is receiving the Clinical Psychology Book Award for her outstanding master's thesis titled “Healing from Heterosexism through Expressive Writing.” In this mixed-methods project Kathleen tested an online expressive writing intervention to reduce distress in LGBTQ+ adults who have experienced heterosexism. This project resulted in an innovative, four-stage model of the process through which LGBTQ+ people heal from heterosexism through expressive writing. This project has strong implications for clinical treatment. Kathleen is currently a third year PhD student in UMass Boston's clinical psychology program. She previously earned a BA in liberal arts from Sarah Lawrence College and an MA in mental health & substance abuse counseling from the New School for Social Research. In addition to training as a psychotherapist for adolescents and adults, Kathleen conducts research in Dr. Heidi Levitt's lab. Kathleen's research interests include LGBTQ mental health and psychotherapy process work through the use of mixed methodology. She has presented her work at various conferences, including annual meetings of the Society for Psychotherapy Research, the Association for Women in Psychology, and the American Psychological Association.
Devon is receiving the Maxwell J. Schleifer Memorial Prize for her master’s thesis titled “Reciprocal Associations between Language Ability and Social Functioning Development over a Two-Year Period in Young Pre-verbal Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.” In this project, Devon found that for young children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder language ability and social functioning influence one another at a given point in time, but also longitudinally. These findings point to the importance of targeting both language and social functioning simultaneously. Devon is currently a PhD student in UMass Boston’s clinical psychology program. She previously earned a BA from the University of Michigan and as worked as a research fellow at the Yale Center for Translational Developmental Neuroscience. In addition to her research with Dr. Alice Carter’s lab, Devon is also a therapist in training at Brookline Community Mental Health Center where she provides individual and group therapy to children. As part of this work, Devon has helped design an innovative group therapy focused on fostering social relationships among neurodiverse young children.