The Gerontology Department Welcomes New Doctoral Students!

Back Row: Wendy Wang, Kristina Turk, Andrea Lindemer, Patricia Oh, and Hayley Gravette
Front Row (left): Meg Durlander, Ping Xu and Emily Gadbois

Hayley Gravette: Hayley is a full-time first year student in the Gerontology doctoral program. Hayley received her undergraduate degree from Elon University and her masters in Social Work from The University of Michigan. From 2007 through 2011, she worked for a start-up retirement community in Colorado Springs, Colorado called The Palisades at Broadmoor Park. She started as the Director of the Memory Care Unit and then became the Associate Executive Director. These positions gave Hayley the opportunity to spend time with the residents, interact with their families, and work side-by-side with doctors, nurses, and caregivers. Her academic interest in the field of Gerontology remains in long-term care. Outside of school, she enjoys spending time with her friends and family, as well as traveling and seeing new places! Despite her travels, Hayley has never lived in a city before, so she is really excited to be in Boston.
New Doctoral Students

Kristina Turk: Kristina is a full-time first year student in the Gerontology doctoral program. She has a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Illinois State University with minors in Gerontology and Sociology. She also has her Master's degree in Gerontology with a Graduate certificate in Non Profit Management and Leadership from the University of Missouri-Saint Louis. She has held two professional paying jobs in the field of aging. First she was as an elder care resource specialist for a large well-established EAP company in Chicago called ComPsych, for this position she did geriatric assessments over the phone and sent clients information based on her assessment. Kristina’s second professional job in aging was as a community services director for Home Instead Senior Care in Chicago. She conducted in home assessments for home care and consulted with families about our home care services. Her hobbies outside of Gerontology are working out and watching sports. She is a huge hockey (Chicago Blackhawks), Football (Green Bay Packers) and baseball (St. Louis Cardinals) fan. Her current academic interests in Gerontology include diagnosis of different dementias and why some are seemingly underdiagnosed. She is also interested in family care giving and the experience of dementia. While in Boston she would like to attend a few Bruins games, go whale watching, and go on the Ghost and Gravestones bus tour.

Ping Xu: Ping is a full-time first year student in the Gerontology doctoral program. She obtained her Master's degree in Gerontology at Renmin University of China, Beijing in 2008. She has worked as a project researcher in a top marketing and consulting company in Beijing. Her current academic interests in the field of Gerontology are aging in place, adult children migration and the well-being of the elders. Ping loves travelling and trying all kinds of food. This is her first time in Boston and she is feeling good and comfortable so far. While in Boston, she would like to visit Harvard University and MIT sometime.

Meg Durlach: Meg is currently a part-time student in the Gerontology doctoral program. She has a M.A. in Gerontology and an MBA in Finance and Marketing. Her goals include teaching, doing research and being an advocate for the elderly. Meg has worked in a variety of long-term care settings (skilled nursing homes, assisted living communities, and home care) for the past 17 years and she is currently seeking a part-time position. Meg is passionate about best practices for caring for the elderly. She is pursuing research in questions regarding effects of aging as it relates to Baby Boomers, their plans to retire, ability to retire or plans for other work life activities. She has completed a small pilot in this area with six women and wants to grow her sample to 50 and revisit every other year to qualitatively assess their mindsets and outlook for change. Meg currently commutes from Cheshire, CT with hopes of finding a room in the greater Boston area so she is not doing the drive so much. Meg loves to run and practice yoga. In her next life Meg would love to be a race car driver!

Wendy Wang: Wendy is a full-time student in the Gerontology doctoral program. She earned her master's degree in Psychology from Murray State University in Kentucky. Wendy enjoys playing piano and doing hand-made arts. In the field of Gerontology, she is particularly interested in filial piety and intergenerational relationships. Wendy says she loves this program very much, and she thinks the people she has met here are very nice and helpful. Although she is not yet familiar with Boston, she looks forward to discovering the city!
New Doctoral Students

Patricia Oh, LMSW: Patricia is a full-time, first year student in the Gerontology doctoral program. She received her MA in Sociology from UMass, Amherst in 1988, did fun and exciting things for 20 years, and returned to get her MSW from the University of Southern Maine in 2010. Patricia most recently worked as a case manager serving older and disabled community-dwelling adults at Midcoast Maine Community Action where, in 2010, she received the Employee of the Year award for her work designing and implementing programs to increase the safety and security of older adults. She received the Association for Community Organization and Social Administration (ACOSA) student award for her work as a community organizer in 2008 and was awarded the Governor’s Volunteer Service Award in 2007. Patricia is interested in exploring social inclusion, creativity, and self-determination of adults living with dementia and in looking at the social processes and attitudes that limit the social citizenship of those diagnosed, preventing them from reaching their full potential and remaining actively engaged throughout their lifespan. In her spare time, Patricia enjoys hiking and travelling and looks forward to many new experiences while she is in Boston.

Andrea Lindemer: Andrea is a full-time, first-year student in the Gerontology doctoral program. She grew up in Littleton, Colorado. She obtained her Bachelor's degree in Sociology with a certificate in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Andrea later went on to receive her Master's degree in Applied Gerontology at Towson University in Maryland. Throughout her career, she has worked closely with older adults whether it be in direct contact at an adult day service, assisted living facility, nursing home or hospital or indirect service through the non-profit, Meals-on-Wheels. Andrea's current academic interests in the field of Gerontology are health care policy with a focus on Medicare and Medicaid as well as home-and-community-based services. At Towson University, she was very involved with the local chapter of Sigma Phi Omega and is excited to join UMass Boston's local chapter. She looks forward to all that the UMass Boston Gerontology PhD program has to offer. In particular, she is excited about learning from her fellow students and also from her professors and mentors. Outside of gerontology, Andrea enjoys meeting new people, going to concerts, snowboarding, going dancing and just having a good time. She is already in love with Boston and can't wait to explore the city more.

Emily Gadbois: Emily is a full-time, first year student in the Gerontology doctoral program. She received her Bachelor’s degree in English and in Psychology and her Master’s degree in Research Psychology from UMass Dartmouth. She has previously worked in an agency serving adults with disabilities, and as a teaching and research assistant at UMass Dartmouth. Her gerontological interests currently include psychological issues relating to cognitive decline, but Emily is very excited to learn more about other areas, especially policy, which is very new to her! When she is not in school Emily enjoys reading, board games, ultimate Frisbee, painting, and Twilight Zone marathons. So far her experience at UMass Boston has been very fulfilling, and she looks forward to the rest of her time here!
Recent Accomplishments

Awards:

**Frank Caro** received the Brookline Community Foundation Unsung Hero Award for his work with the Brookline Community Aging Network, a volunteer-driven organization aimed at bettering the lives of seniors who wants to remain independent as they age. Caro’s organization, which was founded earlier this year, has a twofold mission: bringing volunteers together to provide services for seniors who want to remain independent, and trying to make Brookline a better place for seniors to grow old. The organization’s work includes everything from advocating for better sidewalk and meter accessibility to helping seniors get contractors for maintenance work on their homes.

**Kristen Porter** received the Lifetime Service Award from the Boston Dyke March for advocacy on behalf of the LGBT community and her event production company received its fifth Boston Magazine Best of Boston award. She was reappointed to the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine, inducted into the international Network of Researchers in the Public Health of Complementary and Alternative Medicine, and volunteers as a nursing home ombudsman.

Publications and Reports:


Recent Accomplishments (Continued)

Publications and Reports (cont’d):


Recent Accomplishments (Continued)

Publications and Reports (cont’d):


Presentations and Workshops:


Dugan, B. The Driving Dilemma. Standish Village, a senior housing site in Dorchester. May 13, 2011. [Oral]


Dugan, B. Dementia and Driving Fitness in older adults. New England Geriatric Care Manager Association Meeting, Natick, MA, October 26th, 2011. [Keynote Speaker]

Miller, E.A. The Community Living Services and Supports (CLASS) Act: Comprehensive Reform or Just Tinkering Around the Edges? College Conversation, McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies, University of Massachusetts Boston, Massachusetts, April 13, 2011. [Oral]

Recent Accomplishments (Continued)

Presentations and Workshops (cont’d):


Richardson, L.M. Aging in Place for Vulnerable Older Adults: The importance of Transportation. Travel Review Board: International Conference on Emerging Issues in Safe and Sustainable Mobility for Older Persons, Washington, D.C., August 30-September 1, 2011. [Poster]


Other Accomplishments:

Kelly Fitzgerald will be working as a consultant for the WHO's Age-friendly Cities network and will serve as a United Nations NGO Representative for FAWCO (Federation of American Women’s Clubs Overseas). For this position she will attend meetings and events at the UN in Geneva, Switzerland.

Beth Dugan, Kelli Barton, Caitlin Coyle, and Chae Man Lee completed a research project funded by the Borchard Foundation Center for Law and Aging to complete a systematic review of the literature to identify effective state policies to enhance older driver safety. The team also distributed a brief to state legislators who serve on state legislative transportation committees.

Lauren Martin has been appointed by the Gerontological Society of America’s Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization (ESPO) Executive Committee as a Student Representative to the Task Force on Women.
A Newsletter about the Gerontology Graduate Programs
John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies
University of Massachusetts Boston
http://www.mccormack.umb.edu/academic/gerontology/index.php

Beth Dugan participated in a roundtable discussion organized by the White House Office of Public Engagement and AARP Massachusetts with the Honorable David Strickland, Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation. Beth spoke about older driver safety and the need for research funding to expand the evidence base. Boston, MA: September 16, 2011

Edward Alan Miller was asked to serve as the next News & Notes Editor for the Journal of Health Politics, Policy, & Law.

Edward Alan Miller was asked to serve as a member of the Advisory Board for the Center for Long-Term Care Research and Policy, School of health Sciences and Practice, New York Medical College, Valhalla, New York.

Edward Alan Miller served as session chair for the “Health Reform in State and National” panel and discussant for the “Fiscal Federalism: Federal Assistance to U.S. States” panel at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science, Seattle, Washington, September 1-4.

Edward Alan Miller served as Chair and Organizer for “The Affordable Care Act & Long-Term Care: Meaningful Reform or Just Tinkering Around the Edges?” panel, Annual Meeting of AcademyHealth, Seattle, Washington, June 12-14.

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Speaker Series with Dr. Thomas Perls

By Corina R. Oala

On Monday, October 17th, the Gerontology Institute and Department had the great pleasure of hosting the renowned Dr. Tom Perls as part the Gerontology Speaker Series. Dr. Perls is a geriatrician at Boston Medical Center, Associate Professor of Medicine at Boston University School of Medicine, and also a Fellow of the American College of Physicians. Dr. Perls grew up with no grandparents and became interested in older adults through his experience working in a nursing home, where the residents became his grandparents.

In 1995, while training as a geriatrician at Harvard Medical School, Dr. Perls founded the New England Centenarian Study, which has since grown to be the largest study of centenarians in the world. The New England Centenarian Study comprises 1,600 individuals over 100 years old, with the oldest participant being 119 years old! Centenarians tend to be women (80%), and evidence does suggest that centenarians run in families, as is the case in 50% in the study sample. Centenarians could be classified into three typologies: 1) survivors, those who acquire disease before the age of 80, 2) delayers, those whose disease onset is beyond 80 years old, and 3) escapers, those who reach 100 without the onset of disease such as dementia. Dr. Perls pointed out that the older one is at the onset of disease, the more likely he or she is to reach centenarian status. Dr. Perls also dispelled common claims portrayed in the media of persons living to extreme ages, over 115 years old, and through qualitative work has developed a typology of extreme longevity myths.
Speaker Series with Dr. Jane Saczynski

On October 24th, 2011 Dr. Jane Saczynski came to campus for the Gerontology Institute Colloquium Speaker Series. Dr. Saczynski is a neuroepidemiologist and currently works at the University of Massachusetts Medical School examining the role of cognitive impairment in the performance of self-care activities in patients with chronic diseases such as congestive heart failure.

Caitlin Coyle: How did you get interested in aging, particularly cognition and depression?

Dr. Saczynski: Growing up, I lived with my grandmother and she was the most influential person in my life. She was a really shining example of ‘successful aging’ except when she went into the hospital she’d become delirious. It was so interesting (and sad) to watch this completely competent person deteriorate so predictably. This led me to go to grad school in Gerontology and to focus on cognitive aging.

CC: What advice would you give to young scholars in the field of Gerontology?

JS: Try to get at least some experience while still in school where you actually interact with the people you are studying. These days, secondary data analysis is so common - leaving some new PhD’s without having ever come into contact with a participant in the study they’re working on. The best research ideas come from face to face contact with your subjects.

CC: In your opinion, what has been your most interesting finding to date?

JS: While I was a post-doc at NIH I worked on a study from Iceland and was interested in cognitive reserve. We looked at whether the number of languages a person was fluent in (everyone in Iceland is at least bi-lingual - most know 3-5 languages!) was associated with cognitive reserve as measured by the discrepancy between MRI findings and neuropsychological test results. We had relatively strong findings that with each additional language a person knew, the greater their reserve capacity. Needless to say, I went out and tried to learn a new language (to no avail).

Editorials

We welcome contributions to GeroNews and encourage you to submit recent activities, opinion pieces or letters to the editor! Please send all contributions to Caitlin.coyle001@umb.edu
Interview with Assistant Secretary of Aging, Kathy Greenlee

Like many other students in the Department, I had the chance to intern over the summer. I spent my time working in the Office of Policy Analysis and Development at the Administration on Aging in Washington, D.C.. One of the highlights was having the chance to sit down with the Assistant Secretary of Aging, Kathy Greenlee and interview her for this issue of GeroNews!

Caitlin Coyle: How is it that you became interested in working in the field of aging?

Kathy Greenlee: I am a lawyer by training. Early in my legal career I decided I wanted to work on behalf of consumers. In various jobs, seniors kept appearing as a particularly vulnerable group of consumers. I hoped to one day be able to lead a state agency and felt the Department on Aging would be a good fit given the advocacy nature of the job.

CC: Where would you like to see AoA in two years? What do you think are the biggest challenges that AoA will face in achieving that milestone?

KG: I have been clear with Administration on Aging staff that my goal is for us to be experts in the field of aging services program administration. We need to be leaders in our field at every level of the agency. The biggest challenge is that our dreams are bigger than our agency size. We are limited only by the constraints of resources not lack of vision or need. Our success depends on our skills and successful partnerships at every level.

CC: What advice do you have for today's graduate students interested in aging?

KG: In this work I have found the ability to work from my heart and my brain. This work is intellectually challenging and personally rewarding. Service to others is a calling and a reward. As for advice, ageism exists. Don’t be deterred by people who do not quickly grasp the complexity, challenge and opportunity of working with older adults. Aging policy is very broad. Work in as many areas as you can and then find a way to see the connections.

CC: Could you briefly describe AoA’s responsibilities regarding health reform? What are some of the successes AoA has experienced in the implementation process?

KG: The Administration on Aging received funding, modest in federal terms, for support of Aging & Disability Resource Centers. We believe the greatest opportunity for local aging service providers has been through their expanded partnership opportunities with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The challenge is to build systems where local Area Agencies on Aging have the ability, from a business perspective, to bill for services and contract directly with Medicare. We are integrating systems in a way that is new for them. AoA has also been asked to develop the CLASS Act, the purpose of which is to create a long-term care insurance-type program to help people prepare for their own future needs. While there is great need for people to plan for their own long-term care, there are aspects of the legislation that are challenging.

In recent years, the literature on the topic of ethnic and racial issues in Alzheimer's disease and other dementias has increased dramatically. At the same time, the need for cultural competence in all of geriatric care, including dementia care, is increasingly being acknowledged. Researchers and providers are beginning to recognize the impending "ethno geriatric imperative," as the number of elders from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds continues to rise.

Living to 100: Lessons in Living to Your Maximum Potential at Any Age (1999). By Dr. Thomas Perls, Margery Hutter Silver, John F.; Lauerman

If you enjoyed Dr. Perls’ lecture on centenarians, you should check out his book. It discusses the latest findings on aging, medicine, and psychological health, and offers advice on how to enjoy one's extended lifespan. Or you can try out his living to 100 calculator to find out if you can live to 100: www.livingto100.com/


Every day Americans are subjected to a barrage of advertising by the pharmaceutical industry. Mixed in with the pitches for a particular drug. If you’re interested in finding out what goes on behind those advertisements, this is could be a great read for you.
Recent Activities

Alzheimer’s Memory Walk 2011

Each year, the Gamma Upsilon Chapter of Sigma Phi Omega (SPO), the national academic honor and professional society in gerontology, is involved in fundraising efforts for the Alzheimer’s Association. Those efforts culminate in the Memory Walk. This year’s team raised nearly $1,300! The team also had the chance to meet Governor Deval Patrick who was also walking to support the cause. Great job, team gerontology!

Gerontology Students in Action

Mai See Yang, a second year doctoral student in Gerontology and an instructor in the Asian American Studies Program held a screening of a documentary on November 5, 2011. She was responsible for bringing Chris Woon, the director of “Among BBoys” from California to campus for a discussion and screening. The film is a documentary of young Southeast Asian, Hmong, males trying to fit into society and find bridge the gap between tradition and the American culture. Yang’s gerontological interest in the Hmong culture allows her to collaborate with other departments on campus. Students, staff, faculty, and community members were in attendance, including the Gerontology Department’s own, Chae Man Lee and Caitlin Coyle.

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From left: Chae Man Lee, Governor Deval Patrick, Corina Oala, Jiyoung Lyu, Hayley Gravette, Jane Tavares, Andrea Lindemer, Mai See Yang (not pictured) and friends.

From left: Chae Man Lee, Mai See Yang, Chris Woon and Dr. Patricia A. Neilson

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## Academic Calendar

### Winter Session 2012
- **January 3**: Classes Begin
- **January 16**: Martin Luther King Day (Holiday)
- **January 20**: Classes End

### Spring Semester 2012
- **January 23**: Classes Begin
- **January 30**: Add/Drop Ends
- **February 20**: Presidents Day (Holiday)
- **March 11-18**: Spring Break
- **March 19**: Classes Resume
- **March 26**: Mid Semester
- **April 2**: Spring ’11 Registration Begins
- **April 5**: Pass/Fail Deadline
- **April 5**: Course Withdraw Deadline
- **April 16**: Patriots Day (Holiday)
- **May 09**: Classes End
- **May 10-13**: Study Period
- **May 14-18**: Final Exam Period
- **May 28**: Memorial Day (Holiday)
- **June 1**: Commencement
Activities and Announcements

~ Upcoming Conferences ~

GSA National Conference
Lifestyle Lifespan
November 18-22, 2011
Boston, MA

AGHE's Annual Meeting
AGHE's 38th Annual Meeting and Educational Leadership Conference
“Engaging Aging in Higher Education”
February 24-26, 2012
Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel
Arlington, VA

American Society on Aging
Annual Conference of the American Society on Aging
Marriott Wardman Park
March 28-April 1, 2012
Washington, D.C.

Massachusetts Gerontology Association
Heller School for Social Policy & Management @ Brandeis University
May 15, 2012
Waltham, MA

Attention Honor Society Members!
The time has come to renew your SPO memberships.
To do so, please visit: