The Gerontology Department Welcomes New Doctoral Students!

From left to right: Deepak Kafle, Bon Kim, Brittany Gaines, Elizabeth Chen, Joo Suk (Sebastian) Chae, and Vasant Nilkund

Bon Kim: This is Bon Kim's first time in Boston and – so far – she likes it! She earned her BA in Psychology at Liberty University in Virginia where she was also introduced to gerontology through an elective course. Having always had a passion for elders, she volunteered at a nursing home for a year, but the elective course at Liberty inspired her to think about ways that she could impact the lives of older adults more deeply with academic knowledge rather than helping them with their daily needs as she did at the nursing home. Academically, Bon completed an internship with a neuropsychologist and helped him on a book chapter regarding dark chocolate and neuropsychological functioning. Bon is very excited to begin this program, and to learn more about the population she most respects and loves.
New Doctoral Students

Deepak Raj Kafle, MS: Deepak was born and raised in eastern Nepal and has been living in New York City for the past nine years. He earned his Master's degree in Population Studies from Tribhuvan University in Nepal.

Observing his father’s exceptional aging sparked Deepak's interest in the field of gerontology. Deepak's father is now 85 years old (Nepalese life expectancy is currently 70 years) and does not take any medications. At the time of his father's birth, the average Nepalese life expectancy was less than 40 years. Deepak began asking himself: Why is my father living so much longer and healthier than his relatives and friends? This question resulted in Deepak's decision to pursue a career in aging.

After moving to New York City, Deepak earned a Certificate in Aging from Hunter College, City University of New York, and a Master’s degree in Gerontology from Hofstra University. Deepak then worked as a research assistant in the Nassau County Department of Health's Epidemiology Department where he prepared reports concerning fall injuries and epidemiology of older populations. He was also a research assistant at Parker Jewish Institute, a leader in the innovative use of technology in long-term care, where he studied the prevalence of delirium vs. dementia among newly admitted residents.

Deepak hopes his doctoral studies here will help answer many of his questions concerning longevity in human life. His current interests are: (1) the demographics of aging: migration, mortality, gender, race, ethnicity, trend and pattern, regional distribution, and interplay of socio-economic and socio-cultural factors in human life; and, (2) the epidemiology of Aging: life expectancy, projection, fall injuries, Alzheimer’s and Cardiovascular diseases.

Outside of academic endeavors, Deepak enjoys participating in family and community gatherings, organizing social events, meeting new people, and travelling to new places. He also loves playing Nepali music with the guitar, flute, and harmonium.

Elizabeth Chen, MBA, MPH, FAAO. Elizabeth Chen is interested in research that rests at the intersection of seniors, health policy, and public policy. She is currently a co-investigator of a project studying end-of-life care at Partners HealthCare. Having worked in the pharmaceutical and biotech industries for nearly twenty years, she looks forward to this program's opportunity for immersion in the issues of concern for our older populations. Elizabeth is excited to study with students and faculty who share her interests in aging but come from a wide variety of disciplines.

Elizabeth grew up in the Boston area and now resides in Lexington with her daughter Grace, husband Richard, and 3-month old puppy Missy. She holds a BA in Organizational Behavior, an MBA in International Management, and an MPH in Health Policy. In her spare time, Elizabeth enjoys cooking, gardening, and – in order to continue enjoying her favorite foods – swimming, walking, swishing on the elliptical, skiing, and ice-skating. Elizabeth treasures time spent with her parents who, in their late eighties, are healthy and active. Watching her parents aging has greatly inspired and expanded the research questions she hopes to answer in her doctoral studies here.

This has been a big year for Elizabeth, who not only started the PhD program but published her first peer-reviewed article: Chen, E. (2012). Comparing proportional estimates of U.S. optometrists by race and ethnicity with population census data. Optometric Education, 37(3), 107-114.
New Doctoral Students

Brittany Gaines. Brittany has joined the department of gerontology as a full-time student in the PhD program. Brittany came to the University of Massachusetts, Boston, from Bostwick, Georgia. She received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology this past May from Georgia College and State University.

Brittany discovered her interest in gerontology while working as a volunteer with VistaCare Hospice. As a volunteer, she was able to work directly with older adults and their families. It was here that Brittany developed a passion for understanding the factors that affect the ability of individuals to die with dignity and with as high a quality of life as possible.

Though end of life care is her driving passion in gerontology, Brittany looks forward to exploring new aspects within the field. She is very excited to begin her doctoral work in gerontology and start a new life in Boston!

Joosuk (Sebastian) Chae. Sebastian is a full-time, first year student in the gerontology department. He came to Boston from Seoul, Korea. Sebastian earned his BA at Myonji University and an MA in International Economics and Finance at Brandeis University.

In 2006 and 2011, he devoted 25-30 hours a week volunteering with the Actors' Theatre Workshop in New York, where he supported management, development, and production activities. Joo Suk also participated in training sessions for the creative process and theatre principles. This experience taught him the importance of contributing to society and, perhaps even more importantly, that there are a diverse number of ways to approach and tackle any task.

In his spare time, Sebastian is a vocalist in a jazz band and an avid photographer. He looks forward to exploring Boston through his camera lens.

Vasant NIlkund: Vasant has been a resident of Boston since 2010. He has joined the department of gerontology as a full-time PhD student.

The son of a Navy officer in India, Vasant was enrolled in six different schools and thus learned how to adapt to different environments from a very young age. This childhood experience cemented his love of travel and travelers. After finishing high school, Vasant studied hotel management at the Institute of Hotel Management, Bangalore. He spent the next two years fulfilling his love of travel by working as a flight attendant for Qatar Airways.

Vasant moved to the United States and earned an MA in social gerontology at the University of Central Missouri in 2012. While studying, he realized that he needed to further develop his learning in order to make a truly significant impact in the lives of older adults. For two semesters, Vasant interned at a veteran's home, shadowing the chief administrator and assisting other operational departments as needed.

While working toward his PhD in gerontology at UMass Boston, Vasant hopes to learn more about minority communities in the United States and their inter-generational relationships, as well as the marketing of services and products to older adults.
Welcome Back!  
Updates of Returning Students

Being a PhD student is not all books, STATA, and regression analysis. The second and third year returning students had fun this summer—working and relaxing!

“Wendy”  
Shuangshuang Wang. This was Wendy’s first summer staying in the U.S. She worked on an independent study with Dr. Elizabeth Dugan that focused on cognition and driving. She also worked 10 hours per week with Dr. Maximiliane Szinovacz on a research project.

Wendy’s parents visited her for a month so she had a busy summer—much busier than before. Despite the chaos of visitors, Wendy was grateful for the time she still had to enjoy herself, review what she learned last academic year, wrap up what was left over, and focus on some much needed relaxation.

Patricia Huffman-Oh. Patricia worked with the town of Bowdoinham, ME, to complete a needs assessment of aging services. The summer internship was a great way to put some of what she learned to use in the “real world” and to see how research could help a town make policy decisions.

Andrea Lindemer. This past summer, Andrea had the privilege of interning at the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS) in the Disability and Community Services department. When seeking an internship, she wanted something that would allow her to see what it would be like doing work related to health care policy. Her experience at UMMS not only vastly added to her knowledge-base for academic work, but also reinforced her intention to pursue a career in policy research. Andrea’s advice for future internship seekers would be to use the opportunity to test the waters, so to speak, in something of your interest. An internship chosen in this way offers first-hand information as to whether that type of work really is something you’d like to pursue and, just as importantly, interpersonal connections that could be critical resources and support now or in the future.

Hayley Gravette. This summer Hayley interned with The Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging (CMAA) in West Boylston, MA. She was able to learn first-hand about the aging network and how funding for aging services is administered at the national, state and local levels. The CMAA staff allowed Hayley to participate in all aspects of the organization. One highlight of her experience was participating in the 2nd year cycle funding meeting, which introduced her to the process of allocating state funds to local organizations providing direct service to older adults. Hayley’s primary role was developing the content for a new website in the Information and Referral Services department, which was geared towards caregivers for older adults.

Emily Gadbois. Through Emily’s research assistantship with Professor Miller, she was given the opportunity to work in the Research Department of the Providence Veterans Affairs Medical Center. During the twelve weeks of her summer contract, she worked on a number of projects, focusing primarily on health care delivery, long-term care utilization, the re-
Welcome Back (continued)

ferral system and choices people make about care, and how the organization of staff in nursing homes affects quality of care. Emily worked under the supervision of extremely knowledgeable professionals to help them develop new research concepts, analyze data, create new survey instruments to be used nationwide, evaluate programs, and write the documents for dissemination. As a result of her summer contract, Emily was invited to continue working at the VA. All in all, Emily’s summer work was a valuable experience!

Ping Xu. This summer, Ping enjoyed having the time to explore Boston and relax with friends. She also continued the work she started during her graduate assistantship, working with Professor Jeff Burr on a paper linking early SES with later-life IADL and ADL limitations. Ping also got her first taste of reviewing journals as a co-reviewer with Professor Burr.

Kristina Turk completed a full-time, paid summer internship at Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly at their Chicago Chapter. Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly is a national network of non-profit volunteer-based organizations committed to relieving isolation and loneliness among the elderly. All events, outings, and elder vacations are free of charge. This summer Kristina worked with a network of twenty isolated elders in severe need of companionship. Members of Kristina’s "elder family" and she participated in outings to lunch and dinner, shopping, summer celebrations, friendly home visits, and much more. Additionally, Kristina helped supervise several other interns with less experience with older adults that her own. Kristina also assisted the Director of Programs with elder recruitment, using her contacts from previous job positions in Chicago to find new ways to recruit qualified elders.

Mai See Yang spent her summer here in Boston. She taught two classes: “Southeast Asians in the United States” for UMass Boston’s Asian American Studies Program and “Youth Cultural and Health Practices” for the Health Careers Opportunity Program, a program that introduces inner-city youth to the possibility of pursuing a health career. Mai See also collaborated with Patricia Huffman-Oh on an independent study investigating the experience of delayed medical care by Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese middle-aged and older Californians.

Ning Xie interned in the Activity Department at Billerica Crossing and Chelmsford Crossing. She enjoyed getting direct experience working with older adults. Ning is also celebrating the acceptance of two of her posters for the upcoming GSA conference. Join her at GSA to see her research on “The Impact of Marital Stress on Foreign-born Women’s Economic Well-Being in Their Later Life” and “The Impact of Geographic Proximity of Children on Life Satisfaction among Aging Parents.”

Emma Quach divided her time this summer between her two boys, a home garden, and working to publish her second year paper.
Recent Accomplishments and Publications of Current Students

Awards and Honors

Frances Devine was awarded second and third place honors at the Massachusetts Gerontology Association’s annual conference this year! The title of her paper was “Marital status and retirement satisfaction: Does gender matter?” It examined the effects of gender and marital status on retirement satisfaction.

Kristen Porter was asked to be an Abstract reviewer for both the 65th Annual Scientific Meeting of The Gerontological Society of America and the 2013 Aging in American Conference, American Society on Aging.

Publications and Reports


Recent Accomplishments and Publications of Current Students (Continued)

tia. *Archives of Internal Medicine, jamanetwork.net.*

**Haimowitz, B.** & Dugan, E. The Association of Socioeconomic Status and Loneliness among Older Adults. (under review).


**Porter K.,** & Krinsky L. Do LGBT Aging Trainings Effectuate Positive Change in Mainstream Elder Service Providers? *Journal of Homosexuality* [forthcoming].


**Presentations and Workshops**


Other Accomplishments

The annual meeting of the Gerontological Society of America (GSA) is just around the corner! A record number of student presentations have been accepted this year. We will be highlighting them in the next GeroNews, but here are a few to give you a glimmer of the topics our students have covered.

Oral

- Porter, C & Oala, C. “Religious Affiliation & Successful Aging among Transgender Older Adults” (11/15/12, 1.30-3 pm).

Posters

- Barton, K.N. & Dugan, E. “Meso- and Macro-level Social Predictors of Driving Behavior among Older Adults.”
- Devine, M.F. & Dugan, E. “Depressive Symptoms, Alcohol Intake, and Driving: Findings from the HRS.”
- Haimowitz, B. & Dugan, E. “The Association of Socioeconomic Status and Loneliness among Older Adults.”
- Huffman-Oh, P., Lee, C.M., Quach, L., Xie, N., & Dugan, E. “Uninsured Older Adults: Predictors of Elevated Rates in 50 States and DC.”
- Lee, C.M. & Dugan, E. “Fatal Accidents Described by Age, Gender, and Physical Environments in California, 2010.”
- Lee, H.J., Yang, M.S., & Dugan, E. “Mental Health Service Needs & Use Among Depressed Older Adults: The Role of Acculturation.”
- Porter, C. “LGBT Aging Trainings Effectuate Positive Change in Knowledge & Attitudes of Elder Service Providers” (11/14/12, 6-9 pm).
Activities and Announcements

The Gerontology Department offers congratulations to:

Jamie Ryan, who gave birth to a baby daughter on Sunday, July 22nd. The baby’s name is Ryan Elizabeth and she weighed 8 lbs., 1 oz and was 19 in. long.

PhD student Jane Tavares-Recht on her marriage 9/15/12.

and PhD student Corina (Oala) Ronneberg on her marriage 9/15/12.

~ Upcoming Conferences ~

GSA National Conference
Charting New Frontiers in Aging
November 14-18, 2012
San Diego, CA

AGHE’s Annual Meeting
AGHE’s 39th Annual Meeting and Educational Leadership Conference
“Waves of Change: Charting the Course for Gerontology Education”
February 28– March 03, 2013
Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront
St. Petersburg, FL

American Society on Aging
Annual Conference of the American Society on Aging
Hyatt Regency Chicago
March 12-16, 2013
Chicago, IL
Alumni Corner

Publications and Reports

Natalie Leland (‘09), PhD, OTR/L, BCG


Dena Shulman-Green (‘02), PhD, MS, EdM

Ellman, M.S., **Schulman-Green, D.,** Blatt, L., Asher, S., Viveiros, D., Clark, J. & Bia, M. A Blended Educational Module to Teach Spiritual, Cultural and Inter-professional Aspects of Palliative Care to Medical, Nursing and Chaplain Students. *Journal of Palliative Medicine*. (in press)


R. Turner Goins (‘97), PhD


Wu, Bei (‘00), PhD


Gerst, Kerstin (‘08), PhD

Faculty: Recent Accomplishments

Faculty Awards and Service

**Ellen Bruce, JD**

The Gerontology Institute has been awarded a third year of funding from U.S. Administration of Aging ($199,035) for the New England Pension Assistance Project, which provides free counseling and representation to people of New England trying to find and claim their pension benefits. The Project is in its 18th year and has recovered over $41 million for retirees.

The Gerontology Institute also received a grant from The Retirement Research Foundation for $103,754 to start a pension counseling project in Illinois. Illinois is one of the largest states without a pension counseling project. We have hired a part-time attorney, Mia Midenjak, a part-time outreach coordinator, Louise Cataldo, and two volunteer counselors, Mary Kinsell and Teresa Ryan to work on the project.

**Elizabeth Dugan, PhD**

The Tufts Health Plan Foundation has awarded a grant to a team lead by Professor Elizabeth Dugan to accomplish three aims:

- To report indicators of healthy aging of older adults in Massachusetts
- To conduct an environmental survey of healthy aging programs in the state.
- To lead a healthy aging coalition


**Edward Alan Miller, PhD**

- Awarded tenure from the University of Massachusetts Boston, June 2012.
- Named a Fellow by the Gerontological Society of America, May 2012.
- Became the Social Media Editor of the *Journal of Health Politics, Policy & Law*, September 2012.
- Served as Chair of the “Mobile & Tablet Health Applications” (Panel), 5th World Conference on Social Media, Mobile Apps, and Internet/Web 2.0, Boston, Massachusetts, September 15-16, 2012.
- Served as Co-chair of the “Ethical & Legal Issues, Confidentiality, and Privacy” (Panel), 5th World Conference on Social Media, Mobile Apps, and Internet/Web 2.0, Boston, Massachusetts, September 15-16, 2012.
- Served as Chair of the “Service Commissioning and Regulation” (Panel) at the International Conference on Evidence-based Policy in Long-Term Care, London, United Kingdom, September 5-8, 2012.
- Served as Roundtable Participant in the “Innovation Roundtable, Global Health Policy Forum, Imperial College, London” at the British Consulate-General, Boston, Cambridge, Massachusetts, March 27.

**Nina Silverstein, PhD**

Professor Nina Silverstein was on sabbatical 2011-2012 as a Visiting Scholar, AARP Office of Academic Affairs, Washington, DC.

Faculty Publications and Reports

Faculty Publications and Reports (continued)


Miller, E.A., Tyler, D., and Mor, V. National Newspaper Portrayal of Nursing Homes: Tone of Coverage and Its Correlates. *Medical Care*. [In Press].


**Faculty Publications and Reports (continued)**


**Presentations and Workshops**

**Miller, E.A.** *Developing a Virtual Community of Scholars and Practitioners at a Leading Health Policy Journal.* Medicine 2.0 World Congress, Boston, Massachusetts, September 15-16, 2012 [Oral].


**Miller, E.A., Tyler, D., and Mor, V.** *Newspaper Portrayals of Nursing Homes: Tone of Coverage and Its Correlates, 1999-2008.* Annual Meeting of AcademyHealth, Orlando, Florida, June 24-26, 2012 [Poster].


On Monday, September 17th, the faculty, staff, students and friends of the Department of Gerontology welcomed Dr Alan Jette as the inaugural speaker in this year’s Gerontology Speaker Series, hosted by Sigma Phi Omega and the Gerontology Institute. Those who came had the great pleasure of listening to Dr. Jette’s talk entitled, “Future Directions in Preventing Late-Life Disability.” Dr. Jette currently serves as Professor of Health Policy & Management at Boston University’s School of Public Health and directs Boston University’s Health & Disability Research Institute. He directs the Boston Rehabilitation Outcome Measurement Center, serves on the Executive Committee of the Boston Claude Pepper Older Americans Independence Center, and is Director of the New England Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center.

Dr. Jette’s most recent work focuses on the development and dissemination of contemporary outcome measurement instruments to evaluate the quality of health care. He chaired the Institute of Medicine’s 2007 study and report, The Future of Disability in America, which highlights disability priorities for the nation. Approximately 40-50 million adults living with disability and their families and friends are affected by disability. However, current health care debates have not focused on disability. Disability is a complex phenomenon that remains stigmatized. Despite evidence that late-life disability is preventable, the current medical system focuses on treatment rather than on prevention. Dr. Jette pointed out that it will take a paradigm shift to focus attention on prevention. The number one prevention habit that people can adopt to forestall disability is exercise at all ages—from the 20-somethings to the 100-somethings. It is particularly important to change the way we view old age—not a time for rocking chairs but a time for treadmills and swimming.
Alzheimer’s Walk 2012: A Walk to Remember

On September 23, 2012, a team of 17 walkers from UMass Boston Gerontology PhD students, family and friends joined community members in the Greater Boston Walk. UMass Boston’s “Team Gerontology,” led by Team Captain Kristina Turk, raised a record-breaking $4,780 for dementia research and to help those battling Alzheimer’s Disease or a related dementia and their care partners. Thanks to all who walked and/or raised money!

These feet walked to end Alzheimer’s and support those with dementia. We had fun and supported an important cause. Will you join us next year?

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 patricia.oh001@umb.edu
Recent Activities

New Student Welcome!

On September 5th, the Gamma Epsilon Chapter of Sigma Phi Omega (SPO), Department Chair, Dr. Jeffrey Burr; Graduate Program Director, Dr. Jan Mutchler; and current students in the department joined together to welcome new students in the department of Gerontology. Incoming and current students, faculty, staff, family and friends joined together for a great time at the Kama Lounge in Quincy. Between enjoying the delicious tapas buffet, new connections were made and old acquaintances updated. The ever-diligent SPO also used the time to sign up several more members for the 2012 Alzheimer’s Walk! A great time was had by all and money was raised for a good cause. Thank you SPO, and thanks to Dr Burr and Dr Mutchler for hosting!

Congratulations to a NEW PhD!!!

Congratulations to Kim Johnson on the successful defense of her dissertation on August 23, 2012!!!!

Title: "Volunteering among Surviving Spouses: The Impact of Volunteer Activity on the Health of the Recently Widowed."

Kim's committee included:

Dr. Jeff Burr
Namkee Choi (University of Texas Austin)
Dr. Jan Mutchler (Chair)
Academic Calendar

Spring Semester 2013

January 28       Classes Begin
February 04      Add/Drop Ends
February 18      Presidents Day (Holiday)
March 17-24      Spring Break
March 25         Classes Resume
April 8          Fall ’13 Registration Begins
April 11         Pass/Fail Deadline
April 11         Course Withdraw Deadline
April 15         Patriots Day (Holiday)
May 15           Classes End
May 16-19        Study Period
May 20-24        Final Exam Period
May 27           Memorial Day (Holiday)
June 1           Commencement