Profiles of Our Recent Graduates

During the last year the UMass Boston gerontology department has been fortunate in congratulating six individuals for completing the Ph.D. program. In the short time since their graduation, they have already established themselves and continue to make important contribution to the field of aging. We would like to recognize their hard work and recent accomplishments.

Heather Connors is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Sociology Department at The College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, and a faculty member of the Consortium Gerontology Studies Program in Massachusetts. In addition to teaching Intro and Methods courses in Sociology, she’s had the opportunity to teach classes in End of Life and the Sociology of Aging. Her position will be continued for the 2009-2010 Academic Year, and she plans to move forward on publishing from her dissertation entitled: “Autonomy vs. Protection: A Comparison of Doctors, Elder Law Attorneys and Protective Service Case Managers”.

Kerstin Gerst defended her dissertation “Supplemental Security Income use by older immigrants from Latin America: Impact of federal and state policy” in August 2008. She is in her first year of a two-year post-doc at University of Texas Medical Branch, in Galveston Texas. Kerstin is working with Dr. Kyriakos (Kokos) Markides on Hispanic aging research, with a focus on immigration.

Allan Morgan successfully defended his dissertation on March 20, 2009. The title of his dissertation was “Job Transition, Bridge Work & Their Effects on Health”. Allan plans to pursue opportunities to further his research on older workers and the policy implications of an aging workforce.

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Profiles of Our Recent Graduates Continued

Archana Prakash is a NIA post-doctoral research fellow with the Population Studies Center (PSC) of the Institute of Social Research (ISR) at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Her major research interests are public policy and aging, health care, and immigration. She is currently collaborating with Dr. Albert Hermalin and Dr. Mary Beth Ofstedal to investigate the effect of Taiwan’s Universal Health Insurance Policy (UHIP) of 1995 on the physical health of older adults in Taiwan. She successfully defended her dissertation “Property Tax Work-Off Program: A Unique Approach to Balance the Social & Financial Needs of Senior Homeowners & Local Governments of Massachusetts” in June 2008.

Natalie Leland Wiatrowski defended her dissertation, “The Relationship Between Fall Severity, Residential Adjustment, Functional Status, and Future Falls Among Community Living Older Adults” in January 2009. She is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at Brown University where she recently began a two-year postdoc position in the Center for Gerontology and Health Care Research. Her research interests are the risk-factors for falls and the outcome of falls among older adults. Natalie presently serves as the Editor of the Gerontology Special interest Section for the American Occupational Therapy Association and the vice president for the Rhode Island Occupational Therapy Association.

Kathy Wilson defended her dissertation on October 18, 2008 “Newly Hired Certified Nursing Assistants: Assimilation into the Nursing Home Workforce and Organizational Culture” presenting her work on training and workforce integration for nursing assistants newly hired into nursing home organizations. Kathy is currently working with the Arizona Direct Care Worker’s Association, an advocacy group whose mission is to build an empowered and valued direct care workforce, from her new home in Tucson, AZ.

Congratulations Graduates
On Tuesday May 5th, the Massachusetts Gerontology Association held its annual meeting and spring conference at Boston College. Among the attendees were a number of professors and students from the UMass Gerontology Department. The conference focused on the recession and retirement, with the Keynote speaker Gerontology Institute Fellow Christian Weller focusing on retirement income security and the related policies that are currently being discussed. After the presentation, discussants Deborah Banda of AARP Massachusetts and Joseph Quinn, who is the James P. McIntyre economics professor at Boston College, gave their take on the situation before a question and answers portion.

Particularly exciting for the UMass students, Deborah Gray and Andrea Tull won awards in the student paper contest, with Deborah tying for first place and Andrea taking third.

Deborah Gray accepting the award for first place.

Above: Andrea and Deborah pictured from left congratulating the other student.

Left: Lauren Martin and Abigail Butt were among the students presenting posters at the conference.
10th Annual Meeting and Induction Ceremony for Sigma Phi Omega at UMass Boston

Gamma Upsilon, the local UMass Boston chapter of Sigma Phi Omega held its 10th Annual Meeting and Induction Ceremony on Tuesday, April 13th in the Campus Center. Approximately 40 members were in attendance.

Sigma Phi Omega (SPO), the national academic and professional society in gerontology, was established in 1980 to recognize excellence of those who study gerontology and aging and the outstanding service of professionals who work with or on behalf of older persons. Professors Bing Chen and Nina Silverstein served as Masters of Ceremony for the event.

This year’s Keynote Speaker was Edward F. Howard, CEO, Alliance for Health Reform. His presentation was entitled “Health Care Reform and the 111th Congress: What Have We Learned from Previous Efforts?” Mr. Howard has been with the Alliance since its inception in 1991. Previously, he served as general counsel for the U.S. Bipartisan Commission on Comprehensive Health Care (Pepper Commission). Before that, he directed public policy at the Villers Foundation and at the National Council on the Aging, and served as general counsel to the House Select Committee on Aging. He holds a juris doctor degree from Harvard Law School.

From left: Ed Howard accepting his Sigma Phi Omega certificate from Bing Chen
The following individuals were Inducted this year:

**Doctoral Program Students**
- Kelli Barton
- Abigail Butt
- Anjali Chhabra
- Bruce Haimowitz
- Lauren Martin
- Susan Parker
- Jane Tavares
- Jim McDonnell

**Masters Program Students**
- Funmilayo Adedokun
- Una Barrett
- Beth Bentz
- Deborah Cheung
- Rebecca Collins
- Nancy Cronin
- Nancy Krodel
- Jim McDonnell

**Professionals**
- Edward F. Howard

**Manning Certificate Program Alumni**
- Mary E. Davis

**Undergraduate Program Students**
- Marise Belony
- Kristen Chan

Elections for next year’s Officers were also conducted at the meeting. Jerrilyn Quinlan was elected President of SPO; her term will begin September 2009. Jane Tavares was elected Vice President. Deborah Gray will continue on as an officer, serving as Treasurer for 2009-2010.

We would like to thank the following individuals for their generous support of the ceremony:
- Steve Crosby, Dean, McCormack Graduate School
- Jan Mutchler, Gerontology Program Director
- Maxi Szinovacz, Director, Gerontology Institute
Recent Accomplishments by Faculty, Current Students, & Alumni

Publications


Presentations, Invited Lectures, and Workshops

Baker, L.A. “Economic and material hardship in multigenerational households.” Invited lecture at the Southern California Population Research Center, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA.

Baker, L.A. “The formation and dissolution of skipped-generation households in rural China.” Invited lecture at the Population Research Institute, Xi’an Jiaotong University, Xi’an, Shaanxi Province, China.


Caro, F. (April 2009) “Contributions of employment services in improving employment outcomes for mature workers in Massachusetts.” Presentation at the Older Workers Symposium in Boston, MA.


LaCoursiere, S., Ercolano, E., Quinn, T., Schulman-Green, D., McCorkle, R. (April 2009) “Assessing the unmet end-of-life educational needs of health care providers using a web-based survey.” Presented at the Connecticut Coalition to Improve End-of-Life Care Annual Meeting in Cromwell, CT.


Schulman-Green, D. (March 2009) “Experiences of hospice staff using a standardized symptom assessment tool: Can one size fit all?” Presented at the Yale Cancer Center, Cancer Prevention and Control Program in New Haven, CT.


Wiatrowski, N.L. (March 2009) “Home safety assessment and intervention.” Workshop on Promoting Safety of Older Adults across Settings. At the University of Rhode Island Geriatric Education Center in Warwick, RI.


Awards and Scholarships

Abigail Butt was awarded the Gladys A. and Russell M. Birtwistle Award of a $1,500 Scholarship which is given to full-time students who are members of the Vasa for continued education at an accredited institution of higher learning. The Vasa Order of America is a Swedish-American fraternal organization that seeks to promote, preserve, and celebrate Swedish heritage and fellowship in all cultural, educational, and social endeavors.

Andrea Tull has won a third place in the Massachusetts Gerontology Association student paper contest for her paper “Retirement risk analysis of Massachusetts rehabilitation commission employees.”

Deborah Gray has won first place in the Massachusetts Gerontology Association student paper contest for her paper “Labor supply decisions of older men and women: Who works and who retires?”

Kimberly Johnson has been awarded a Hartford Doctoral Fellowship in Geriatric Social Work, funded by the John A. Hartford Foundation and administered through the Gerontological Society of America, for her dissertation entitled “Volunteering among surviving spouses: The impact of volunteer activity on the health of the recently widowed.”

Kimberly Johnson has been awarded a scholarship to attend the RAND Summer Institute (RSI) in Santa Monica, CA. The RSI includes two conferences: the Mini-Medical School for Social Scientists and the Demographic, Economics, and Epidemiology of Aging.
Awards and Scholarships Cont.

Judith Conahan won the Susan Eaton Doctoral Research Fellowship for her thesis entitled “Negotiation experiences of home care workers of chronically ill older adults in agency-directed and consumer-directed care,” The fellowship supports research that has practical applications for improving the workplace environment for front-line healthcare workers.

Samantha Levien is this year’s recipient of the Gerontology Department’s Scholarship Award for her second-year paper, "Computer Use as a Deterrent of Loneliness: A Cross-Sectional Study of Adults Age 70 and Over."

Sue Berger has received the "Whitney Powers Award for Teaching Excellence," an award given yearly to a Boston University, Sargent College Faculty member.

Dissertation Defense

Allan Morgan has successfully defended his dissertation, titled "Job Transition, Bridge Work and Their Effects on Health Outcomes." His committee included Jan Mutchler, Frank Caro, and Peter Doeringer from Boston University.

Other Accomplishments

Deborah Gray has become a member of the AGHE Business and Aging Task Force and Nominations Committee.

Donna Sullivan has been promoted to Associate Professor of Sociology at Marshall University.

Sue Berger has been named to the Roster of Fellows of the American Occupational Therapy Association for "excellence in gerontology through scholarship and mentorship." The Roster "recognizes members of AOTA who with their knowledge and expertise have made a significant contribution to the continuing education and professional development of members of the Association."

Editorials

We welcome contributions to GeroNews and encourage you to submit opinion pieces and letters to the editor in one of the following ways:

1.) Leave typed items in the GeroNews mailbox located in the Gerontology Institute mailbox on the 3rd floor of Wheatley. Please type contributions; handwritten letters will not be accepted.

2.) Opinion pieces and letters may be submitted by email to: martin.laur@gmail.com

*All submissions may be edited for clarity, style, size, and content.
The Gerontology Institute held the Older Workers Symposium focusing on the issues, perspectives, and social policies that international and national experts were working on. The conference had an excellent turn out and began with a welcome from Provost Winston Langley, discussing the universal need for social policies in all societies. Interim Secretary of Elder Affairs Eleanor Shea-Delaney then welcomed the audience with an explanation of the role of the executive office of elder affairs and offering that challenging times bring innovative solutions. The two day conference proceeded with discussions and presentations on economic trends and employment policies, the needed policy changes to provide opportunities, the barriers that exist for older workers, the perspectives and initiatives of employers, and those innovative policies and programs the experts have been developing.

At lunch, students exhibited their posters. Two of the UMass Gerontology Department presenters were Abigail Butt and Hsiao-Yin (Emma) Chung pictured above. (Deborah Gray and Andrea Tull also presented but are not pictured).

Students really enjoyed the conference and articulated this during conversations:

♦ “While the GSA conference is diverse, I really like the focus of the symposium. The topic is in depth and intense.”
♦ “Nice international focus!”
♦ “I am very proud to be part of the UMass Gerontology Program. They were able to put together a great conference.”
♦ “This is my first time at a symposium or conference. I like it and I like meeting a lot of new and interesting people.”
♦ “It’s good to have the international perspective and it’s fun to meet people from everywhere.”
AGHE Program of Merit Designation Awarded to UMass Program

At the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) Annual Meeting in San Antonio, TX, February 26–March 1, 2009, the Undergraduate Certificate in Gerontology (our Frank J. Manning Certificate Program) was awarded the Program of Merit (POM) Designation. The UMass program is one of only 10 gerontology programs in the nation to receive the POM and just the 2nd Undergraduate Certificate Program to be awarded this designation. UMass submitted the application to AGHE in March 2008 and underwent a thorough review by faculty from approximately seven nationwide campuses; the criteria considered included how well our program met the published standards and guidelines for gerontology programs. In a very real sense, we demonstrated our competence. Nina Silverstein, Mary St. Jean, and Marian Spencer prepared and assembled the application, with the help of three volunteers: Robert St. Jean; and two certificate alumni, Carol Courage 2000 and Ann O’Malley 2000. This designation should attract more students to our program, both online—now that our Manning Certificate Program is fully online—and on campus.
UMass Gerontology Students Present at AGHE

Deborah Gray and Judith Griffin, UMass Boston Doctoral students in Gerontology, presented their research at AGHE’s 2009 Annual Conference in San Antonio, TX. Deborah received Honorable Mention from the Sigma Phi Omega Honor Society for the paper she presented at the conference titled *Labor Force Supply Decisions of Older Workers: Who Works and WhoRetires?* Judith (see photo below) presented a poster on the research project she conducted with Nina Silverstein: *Students Explore Livable Communities: Phase 3 Focus Groups.*

Judith Griffin, UMass Doctoral student in Gerontology explains her research project to an AGHE attendee.

UMass faculty, students, and alumnae enjoy a Mexican feast while in San Antonio, TX attending the 2009 AGHE Annual Conference. (Clockwise, beginning at 12) Deborah Gray, Jerrilyn Quinlan, Judith Griffin, Bei Wu, Marian Spencer, Nina Silverstein, and Kelly Fitzgerald.
### Academic Calendar

#### Summer Session 2009
- May 26 to July 8  Summer Session #1
- June 17  Bunker Hill Day (Holiday)
- July 4  Independence Day (Holiday)
- July 13 to Aug 20  Summer Session #2

#### Fall Semester 2009
- September 7  Labor Day (Holiday)
- September 8  Classes Begin
- September 15  Add/Drop Ends
- October 12  Columbus Day (Holiday)
- October 19  Mid-Semester
- November 2  Spring '09 Registration Begins
- November 11  Veterans Day (Holiday)
- November 12  Course Withdraw Deadline
- November 12  Pass/Fail Deadline
- November 26 to 29  Thanksgiving Recess
- November 30  Classes Resume
- December 14  Classes End
- December 15  Study Period
- December 16 to 22  Final Exam Period
- December 23  Snow make-up Day (if needed)