Sigma Phi Omega (SPO) Hosts Careers in Aging Panel

On April 8th, the Gamma Upsilon Chapter of SPO and the Department of Gerontology hosted a Careers in Aging panel. An outstanding panel shared their advice for students contemplating a career in aging. Speakers were:

- Jane Saczynski, PhD, Assistant Professor of Medicine at UMass Medical School
- Suzanne Leveille, PhD, RN, Director PhD Program in Nursing at UMass Boston
- Andrea Cohen, CEO at HouseWorks
- Emily Shea, Commissioner of the Boston Commission on Affairs of the Elderly

Over a catered lunch, attendees and panelists had networked with others interested in developing careers working with older adults, managing programs designed to serve older adults, or entering the field of age-related research.

U-Mass Boston Researchers Developing Scorecard of Healthy Aging

With support from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation, Dr. Elizabeth Dugan is Principal Investigator leading a research team developing a Scorecard of Healthy Aging. The team includes Dr. Nina Silverstein, Dr. Frank Porell, ChaeMan Lee, Kristina Turk, Sebastian Chae, and Brittany Gaines.

Aspects of healthy aging reflected in the Scorecard include: physical and mental health, nutrition and diet, safety and security, proactive health behaviors, health care utilization and access, social engagement, and meaningful roles. Multiple sources of data were used to calculate rates for each indicator. GIS analyses was used to map indicators of healthy aging to highlight successes/failures across the state. Results of the environmental scan and indicator report are being disseminated to providers in the aging, public health and human services networks, researchers, advocates, government, legislators, older adults, and anyone interested in supporting healthy aging.

This community-engaged research and dissemination approach provides a model for other states to optimize healthy aging.
UMass Boston Gerontology Student Kristen Porter Wins Top Prize at AGHE, 2013

Kristen Porter received the 2013 Graduate Student Paper Award from the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) earlier this month.

In her paper, “Do LGBT Aging Trainings Effectuate Positive Change in Mainstream Elder Service Providers?” Porter concluded that trainings on LGBT aging can improve the knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral intentions of providers serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) older adults. Specific improvements included awareness of LGBT resources, barriers to care and policy disparities, expansion of spousal benefits for same sex couples, and intention to challenge homophobic and transphobic remarks.

This prestigious award recognizes excellence in scholarly work by a student at an AGHE member institution. The winning paper is selected by a committee based on its significance in the field of gerontology, innovation, approach, implications for gerontology and geriatrics education, and writing style.
Each year the American Society on Aging sponsors a conference featuring the work of researchers and practitioners in the field of gerontology. This year’s conference, Aging in America, was held in Chicago between March 12 and March 16.

**Ellen Bruce**, Director of the Gerontology Institute and the Pension Action Center in UMass Boston, and **Rebecca Davis**, Legal Director of the Pension Action Center, presented a 60-minute workshop about the role of pension counseling in increasing the retirement income of older Americans. To date, Pension Counseling projects have recovered over $140 million dollars. Included in their workshop was information about expanding Pension Counseling projects to states that do not currently offer programs.

In addition, several students from UMass Boston’s Gerontology program presented their research. Topics included LGBT aging, Medicaid funding for assisted living, preventing elder abuse, work place policies to support caregivers, and veterans depression.

The following posters and workshops were presented by students in the Gerontology PhD program:

- **Hayley Gravette & Andrea Lindemer.** *Alternative Long-Term Care Options for Low-Income Elders: Medicaid in Assisted Living*, poster.
- **Patricia Huffman-Oh & Ping Xu.** *Community Conversations with Older Adults About Elder Mis-treatment*, poster.
- **Kristen Porter & Corina Ronneberg.** *Religious Affiliation and Successful Aging Among Transgender Older Adults*, 60-minute workshop.
- **Mai See Yang.** *Examining the Relationships among Veteran Characteristics and depression in Later Life*, poster.
Student Accomplishments

Publications and Reports:


Presentations and Workshops:


Focus on Student Research

At the Community-Engaged Partnerships Symposium held on April 10, 2013, Caitlyn Coyle and Hayley Gravette presented their research, co-authored with Dr. Jan Mutchler, on coordinating needs assessments of aging services with communities in Massachusetts. Their presentation, Planning for the Growing Older Population: Conducting Community Needs Assessments, offered practical advice for other researchers wishing to work with communities to support an aging population.

Caitlyn and Hayley illustrated how needs assessments of aging services can offer a cost-effective practical tool to communities preparing for an increasingly larger proportion of older residents. Census data, survey data, in-depth interviews with key informants, and focus groups of interested citizens can inform communities about the strengths and weaknesses of existing aging services. Forming successful community academic partnerships presents unique challenges. However, many towns are working with academic researchers through the Gerontology Institute’s new Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging to identify the physical, financial, environmental, and social supports currently in place to support aging residents and to identify additional resources needed to make the community more aging-friendly.
Announcements

The Gerontology Department offers congratulations to:

ShuangShuang (Wendy) Wang and Qichao (Rock) Shi for a celebration of their marriage, held 2/23/2013

Michele Campbell for 20 years of exceptional service to UMass Boston.

News from Sigma Phi Omega (SPO)

Induction of New Members and Installation of Officers

UMass Boston’s Department of Gerontology recently inducted new members into the Gamma Upsilon Chapter of Sigma Phi Omega, the UMass Boston Chapter of the national honor society in gerontology for students at the undergraduate and graduate level of study, as well as for professionals at all stages in their careers. Students are chosen for outstanding overall scholarship and excellence in the field of gerontology.

Prof. Edward Alan Miller was inducted as a professional member. Inductees from the PhD program included Elizabeth Chen, Brittany Gaines, and Bon Kim. Additionally, 4 undergraduate students and 20 students in the Master’s program were inducted.

Three SPO members have agreed to serve our chapter for the upcoming academic year. Bon Kim was installed as President; Brittany Gaines as Vice-President, and Emily Gadbois as Treasurer. If you have any questions about joining SPO, please see them. They are anxious to meet you and hear your ideas for expanding SPO!

Outgoing Officers Win Community Service Award

In past years, SPO has sponsored programs, activities, and participation in community service projects. This year, lead by Kristen Porter (President), Hayley Gravette (Vice-President), Kristina Turk (Treasurer), and Andrea Lindermer (Secretary), SPO has sponsored a workshop presenting the latest aging research to members of the community, raised funds for the Alzheimer’s Association, expanded membership benefits, and sponsored a host of educational forums for the UMass Boston community.

For their dedication and hard work, the outgoing SPO officers won the Beacon Graduate Student Organization Award, given to a “recognized professional association that best embodies the mission of their organization and the spirit of the community through programs and services……”

Congratulations to Kristen, Hayley, Kristina and Andrea! Thank you for your dedication, vision, and hard work expanding the many good works of SPO—both for members and for the UMass Boston Community.
**Lindsey A. Baker (2006), PhD: Research Associate, University of Kansas Gerontology Center**

**Publications:**


**Celebrations!**

Lindsey announced the birth to her second child—Julian Aaron Sellergren—on March 6th. Here he is pictured being welcomed to the family by his big sister, Ruby.

**Kelly Fitzgerald (2008), PhD: Affiliated Faculty, Senior Scientist, Western Kentucky University; WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Network Facilitator**

**Presentations:**


**Honors and Professional Activities:**

- March, 2013: Chair of AGHE’s Global Aging Committee
- Appointed to the Editorial Board for *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education*
- Member of the International Advisory Committee for the 2nd International Conference on Age-Friendly Cities (September 9-11, 2013 in Quebec City).

**R. Turner Goins (1997), PhD: Associate director: Center for Healthy Aging Research; Associate Professor: Human Development and Family Sciences & Health Policy and Management, Oregon State Univ.**

**Publications**


**Natalie Leland (2009), PhD, OTR/L, BCG, Assistant Professor Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry & Davis School of Gerontology**

**Publications:**

UMB Alumni: Shaping the GeroWorld (cont.)

Dena Shulman-Green (2003), PhD, MS, EdM, Research Scientist in Nursing, American Cancer Society
Mentored Research Scholar

Publications:


Kimberly Stoeckel (2012), PhD: Post-Doctoral Fellow, Israel Gerontological Data Center

Publications:


Jennifer Pilcher Warren (2005), PhD: Executive Director of Geriatric Care Management for Overlook C.A.R.E.

Awards and Professional Activities:
Appointed to the editorial board of *Journal of Geriatric Care Management.*

Bei Wu (2000), PhD: Professor, Director of International Research & Director, Methods Core, ADAPT Center

Publications:

Faculty: Recent Accomplishments

Faculty Awards and Service:

Edward Alan Miller, PhD

♦ Appointed to the editorial board of Research on Aging.
♦ Served as Discussant, Health Care in the States (Panel), Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, Illinois, April 11-14.

Faculty Publications and Reports:


Presentations and Workshops:

Faculty: Recent Accomplishments (cont.)


Faculty Featured in Popular Press: A sampling of faculty sharing information about aging issues

Ellen Bruce: Article in *American Society on Aging Blog* that introduces the national Elder Index. In “Elders Need More Than Social Security”, Ellen Bruce notes: “Of most concern is that nowhere in the country does the average Social Security benefit cover the cost of living modestly in the community”.

Frank Caro (professor emeritus): Guest column in *Wicked Local Brookline* discussing the need to expand housing for older Brookline residents. Frank Caro, in “Options for Housing Brookline’s Growing Senior Population” discusses the challenges and opportunities that an aging population brings to the community of Brookline, specifically around the need to develop housing geared to the needs of older residents.

Elizabeth Dugan: Quoted by *USA Today* in response to Al Neuharth’s column “Most Driver’s Laws Favor Us Old Folks”. Responding to the argument that current driving laws are not restrictive enough of older drivers, Elizabeth Dugan notes, “Older drivers are among the safest on the road. Requiring drivers to renew licenses in person reduces fatalities among the oldest drivers (85+), yet 14 states don’t require it.”

Jan Mutchler: Quoted by John Sakata, a staff writer for the *Berkshire Eagle*. In “Berkshire Seniors Confront the Challenges of Aging”, Jan Mutchler addressed growing concerns by older middle-class residents about meeting basic transportation and housing needs in retirement. Using the National Elder Economic Security Index, a tool developed by researchers at the Gerontology Institute, it is possible to show that the average senior citizen in Massachusetts needs at least $10,000 in annual income to supplement benefits provided by Social Security to meet basic needs.

Edward Miller: *Medical Express* published an article, “In Media Coverage of Nursing Homes, Negative Stories Predominate”, about a study coauthored by Dr. Edward Miller that shows negative news coverage of nursing homes may shape public perceptions and consumer care choices in a time when alternative, home-based options are increasingly seen as cost-effective, quality solutions to the need for care.
On Monday, February 11\textsuperscript{th}, the Department of Gerontology welcomed Dr. Arlene Ash to this year’s Gerontology Speaker Series, hosted by Sigma Phi Omega and the Gerontology Institute. An internationally recognized expert in the development and use of risk-adjustment methodologies, Dr. Ash currently serves as a Professor and Division Chief in Biostatistics and Health Services research, Department of Quantitative Health Sciences at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Among her many accomplishments was the adoption, by Medicare, of her Diagnostic Cost Group models for use in HMO payment.

In her talk, “Caveat Emptor: What You Should Know about the Hospital Rating Systems”, Dr. Ash shared an exciting new payment model for Patient Centered Medical Homes that she has developed. The system provides for risk-adjusted, health-based, partial capitation and performance-based bonus payments. The new system will pay for itself, and with good education of patients, will improve patient outcomes.

Dr. Leveille’s talk, “Tips on Successful Grant Writing and How to Obtain Grant Funding for Dissertations,” emphasized the importance of establishing a relationship with program officers who will oversee the grant being sought. Additional hints included defining a fundable topic that is Feasible, Interesting, Novel, Ethical and Relevant. Following the FINER outline will increase the chance of winning grants.
On Monday, March 25th, Dr. James (Jay) Bulot was the featured guest at the Gerontology Speaker Series. Dr. Bulot is the Director, Division of Aging Services, Georgia Department of Human Services in Atlanta, Georgia. He is also a 2004 PhD graduate of the UMass Boston Gerontology Program.

In “Bridging the Gap Between the Researcher and Public Policy Maker,” Dr. Bulot shared his experience using gerontological research to inform public policy affecting older and disabled adults. By bringing together researchers and policy makers, both groups interested in the broad field of gerontology are able to identify the important changes taking place in the aging arena. Furthermore, bringing researchers and policy makers together provides a venue for learning, sharing ideas, as well as for critical discussion of the issues being faced in an aging America. Solidifying the collaboration and coordination among and between offices, departments, universities, and even policy makers and researchers is becoming increasingly more important as we continue to identify ways in which we can help to keep individuals living at home safely for as long as possible.

On Monday, March 4th, Dr. Reginald Tucker-Seeley shared his research about the economic impact of prostate cancer—from prevention to end of life care—in a talk entitled “Financial Well-Being Across the Cancer Continuum.” Dr. Tucker-Seeley is a Research Associate in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Harvard School of Public Health/Center for Community-Based research, Dana Farber Institute. Dr. Tucker-Seeley emphasized the inter-relationship between self-rated health and socioeconomic status. His current research seeks to develop a measure of economic impact that will reflect varied factors affecting SES and, specifically, the financial impact of prostate cancer on men’s lives.

Dr. Jacquelyn B. James was the guest at the Gerontology Speaker Series on Monday, April 1st. Dr. James is Director of Research, Sloan Center on Aging & Work and Research Professor, Lynch School of Education, Boston College.

Dr. James’ talk, “Beyond the ‘Busy Ethic’: The Meaning and Measurement of Engagement in Later Life,” discussed the Engaged as We Age project. The research team found that being involved is not as important to health and well-being in older years as is engagement. Involvement in paid or volunteer work did not predict an increase in psychological well-being but being highly engaged in either paid or unpaid work did. These findings suggest that it may be better not to be involved in either paid or unpaid work in older years unless one is highly engaged in said work.
## Upcoming Conferences

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<td>GSA National Conference</td>
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<td>Sheraton New Orleans and New Orleans Marriott</td>
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<td>New Orleans, Louisiana</td>
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<td>November 20-24, 2013</td>
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<td>AGHE’s Annual Meeting</td>
<td>AGHE’s 40th Annual Meeting and Educational Leadership Conference</td>
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<td>“Waves of Change: Charting the Course for Gerontology Education”</td>
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<td>February 27– March 02, 2014</td>
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<td>Aging in America</td>
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Hayley Gravette, SPO Vice-President, videotaping speaker series
Andrea Lindemer, SPO Secretary, sending membership reminders