This November, UMass Boston Associate Professor of Conflict Resolution, Human Security & Global Governance Courtenay Sprague will travel to Bellagio, Italy to begin her residency as a Rockefeller Foundation Scholarly Resident Fellow. The prestigious month-long program will bring together prominent scholars, practitioners, and experts from across the globe to continue the Foundation’s mission to “promote the well-being of humanity around the world.”

“The Rockefeller Foundation has long been a builder of the field of health equity, which is a core theme of my work,” shares Professor Sprague. “So, there was a match between my global health research and their vision as a Foundation that led me to apply for this award.” “It’s an honor to be selected, and I am grateful for this opportunity. I believe the fellowship will assist in thrusting this entrenched global health and social problem of high HIV risk and prevalence among Black HIV-positive women into the spotlight more readily.”

While in the residency, Professor Sprague will work on a project titled Gender, HIV and Social Justice in South Africa: A New Vision for Women’s Health. The book captures her research and related work in HIV, gender and women’s health in sub-Saharan Africa spanning ten years. “It frames the problem of sustained high levels of HIV prevalence and incidence in Black South African women as a moral, health equity concern that has been insufficiently addressed by the State. It documents multi-level interventions that, if adopted, would address women’s underlying gendered risk of HIV by engaging with structural factors in society, while building on health system responses—together with enabling laws and
policies—that the research evidence has shown to be protective for women’s health and their capabilities over the long-term.”

Professor Sprague sees this award as a way to “connect with other scholars, artists, policy makers and practitioners, exchanging our ideas on a range of global concerns from climate change to urban poverty, to sustainable development and public sector innovation.” In particular, Professor Sprague says that the residence will allow for “sustained, focused time for research, reflection and writing, which is a real gift.”

“We are very pleased to know that a UMass Boston faculty member has been selected to receive this prestigious fellowship by the Rockefeller Foundation to pursue her scholarly work in Italy,” added Prof. Schuyler Korban, Vice Provost for Global Programs at UMass Boston. “This is a testament to Prof. Sprague’s outstanding work in global health, particularly her focus on HIV and its impact on women’s health, and how health services are responding to meet the social and economic needs of society in sub-Saharan Africa.”

Carlos Velazquez
Office of Global Programs