By Kaushik Prakash
Gloria White-Hammond, one of Boston’s—and the world’s—most distinguished humanitarians, will deliver the principal address at the University of Massachusetts Boston’s 40th commencement ceremonies, to be held on Friday, May 30. She will also receive an honorary degree, as well three other eminent guests: Ronald Logue, Sarah Moten, and Dan Rea.

“Championing the cause of providing the best urban education to the most diverse student body in New England, UMass Boston is extremely proud of the fact that more than half of its undergraduates are first-generation college students,” said Chancellor Lor J. Keith Motley. “Reverend White-Hammond’s efforts at finding the humaneness in everyone have earned her a reputation of being one of the country’s most respected civil rights leaders. We are happy to have her address our faculty and student body, who share her commitment to public service and the country’s future.”

In addition to Reverend White-Hammond, the Class of 2008 will be joined by honorary degree recipients who have dedicated their lives to building the financial future of New England, pioneering the cause of international development in the field of education, and spearheading and revolutionizing media outreach in Boston.

The Reverend Gloria E. White-Hammond, M.D., is co-pastor of Bethel AME Church in Boston and a pediatrician at the South End Community Health Center. She will be honored for decades of humanitarian efforts, both local and international, that range from founding the Boston-based “Do the Write Thing” program for high-risk black adolescent females to extensive medical, missionary, and humanitarian work in regions of Africa including Darfur.

Ronald E. Logue, the chairman and CEO of State Street Corporation, will be honored for his extraordinary contributions to Boston’s business and civic life. He has held increasingly responsible positions at State Street since 1990, serving as well on boards of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership, the United Way, the Institute of Contemporary Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts.

Sarah E. Moten, Ed.D., will receive her honorary degree in recognition of long and distinguished international service, on behalf of her country, to people in need. She is currently education division chief for the Africa Bureau of the U.S. Agency for International Development and has previously served as deputy assistant secretary of state for international refugee assistance and as Peace Corps country director in Swaziland, Kenya, and Sierra Leone.

Dan Rea ’70, now the host of “Nightside with Dan Rea” on WBZ Radio, will receive his honorary degree in recognition of his distinguished career in Boston journalism. From 1976 to 2007, he graced the reporting staff of WBZ-TV, focusing on breaking news stories and local and national politics. Among his honors are two Emmy awards and a lifetime achievement award from the New England Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

For Commencement Day information and schedules, go to www.umb.edu/commencement.
MAS Program Wins National Award

By Brian Middleton

UMass Boston’s Management of Aging Services (MAS) program has been named Outstanding Credit Program for 2008 by the University Continuing Education Association (UCEA). Lillian Glickman and Ellen Birtzhandler, the program’s co-directors, were presented with the award on March 28 at the UCEA national conference in New Orleans.

The MAS program, a track of the Master of Science in Gerontology, was selected for its innovation and creativity. In presenting the award, UCEA noted that the aging of the American population is creating a need for expanded services and for workers trained in managing those services. The MAS Program responds to this need by offering mid-career professionals in the aging field as well as those new to the field with an advanced degree that combines both information on aging issues and managerial skills.

The core of the MAS program is to train individuals to assume management positions in agencies that deliver services to elders. The MAS program began in 2003 as a collaboration between the Gerontology Department and the Division of Corporate, Continuing and Distance Education.

The Program offers both online and on-campus courses and has over 31 graduates and 176 annual enrollments.

UMass Hosts Chinese Speech Contest

By William Wright

Local high school students William Dunn and Michael Spence of Belmont Hill School placed first and second, respectively, in the national “Chinese Bridge” Mandarin Chinese speech contest, held on Saturday, April 19, at UMass Boston.

The contest was the finals of the third annual competition, bringing together top American high school students from across the country who have been studying Mandarin Chinese. It is sponsored by the University of Massachusetts Confucius Institute, located at UMass Boston, and CLASS, the Chinese Language Association for Secondary Schools.

“In today’s globally integrated and interdependent world, our students need to understand other cultures and develop foreign language skills to succeed academically and in the careers of tomorrow. On behalf of the university, I congratulate William and Michael and all of the high school students who competed in the Chinese Bridge contest. We are proud that this program is one of the many valuable academic, cultural, and community programs offered by the Confucius Institute at the University of Massachusetts,” said UMass President Jack M. Wilson.

University-wide global engagement is a priority at UMass.

The university’s Confucius Institute offers a wide array of programs and services, including teaching the Chinese language, the training of Chinese teachers, Chinese curriculum development, and Chinese language and cultural events. It also provides learning opportunities for the community, a clearinghouse of Chinese language and cultural materials, and a platform for research into Chinese language and culture. It is one of about 30 institutes of its kind in the United States established by the Hanban, China’s international education office, and it was the first Confucius Institute in New England.

Twenty-four students competed on campus at UMass Boston and 19 in China.

Chancellor Keith Motley with second-place finisher Michael Spence of Randolph; Ai Fanglin, Education Counselor for the Chinese Consulate General in New York City; and winner William Dunn of Weston. (Photo by Kahrim Wade)

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MAS program co-directors Lillian Glickman and Ellen Birtzhandler with an advanced degree that combines both information on aging issues and managerial skills. The concept of the MAS program is to train individuals to assume management positions in agencies that deliver services to elders. The MAS program began in 2003 as a collaboration between the Gerontology Department and the Division of Corporate, Continuing and Distance Education. The Program offers both online and on-campus courses and has over 31 graduates and 176 annual enrollments.

Gerontological Honor Society Hosts Top Federal Official’s Talk on Aging

By Rosemarie B. Barker and Robert Geary

On April 15, the Gerontology Department of the McCormack Graduate School sponsored an annual Induction Ceremony of the Sigma Phi Omega National Gerontological Honor Society. The ceremony was keynoted by Stephen C. Goss, Chief Actuary of the Social Security Administration.

According to Goss, the issues of an aging population, falling birth rates, and the inevitability of rising health costs require solutions that can be generated only through the political process. Goss believes there are solutions that would address the challenges; however, the process must be collaborative and acceptable to the public. He concluded that our only “real” investment in the future is the next generation, who will produce the goods and services to be shared by all. In addition, each new generation will be called upon to participate in the political process and help develop the solutions for maintaining the Social Security and Medicare programs for America’s aging society and future generations.

Goss was inducted into the Honor Society, along with Dr. Elizabeth Clemens, five doctoral students (Rosemarie B. Barker, Kristen Brueck, Deborah Ann Gray, Samantha Levien, Robert Sherman, Andrea Tuill), six management in Aging Services students (Annette Hodes, Kristen Mancile, Camille Sparks, Amanda Speakman, Julie Spencer, and Teresa Stephen), and three undergraduates (Terri Fitzgerald, Susan Lubin, and Donna Pohony). The Chapter officers are Bob Melaugh, Eileen Keane and Kim Sauder. The Chapter advisors are Professors Nina Silverstein and Yung-Ping Chen.

No Rain, Plenty of Smiles on Good Neighbor Day

The weather was better this year as UMass Boston staff, students, and faculty helped out neighbors at projects both on and off campus. Clockwise from top left: Just a few of the 50 holes needed for new rosebushes at St. Christopher’s; Father George Carrigg of St. Christopher’s; Ai Fanglin, Education Counselor for the Chinese Consulate General in New York City; and winner William Dunn of Weston. (Photo by Kahrim Wade)
Dukes Wins Stanford Fellowship for Work on Climate Change

By Lisa Harris

You might think of the Stanford Area Climate Experiment as a sort of million-dollar Petri dish.

Studying the effects of global warming is one of the toughest problems science has to offer. You can’t just turn up the heat outside by a few degrees and see what happens. So assistant biology professor Jeffrey Dukes decided to try something ambitious: In 2006, with ceramic heaters to raise the temperature, and sprinklers over head to control “rainfall,” Dukes began setting up 36 different simulated climates on small plots of land on an old farm in Waltham. His research group is now watching them to see what happens to the plants and other organisms living and growing there.

Dukes’ life would probably be simpler if he’d decided to study something a little less complicated. The subjects of his research—complex ecosystems and how they respond to disturbances like global warming and invasive species—contain some of the most difficult riddles in science to unravel. But Dukes is undeterred by tough problems.

“If I got excited about doing science in areas where there are environmental challenges,” he said. This spring, Dukes was one of nineteen environmental scientists across the nation to receive the prestigious Aldo Leopold Fellowship. The fellowship, a program of the Woods Institute for the Environment at Stanford University, is given annually to a group of the best and brightest in ecology, environmental engineering, and other environmentally focused fields.

For Dukes, the fellowship will be a chance to focus on another kind of research problem: how to increase scientists’ public leadership on environmental issues. Since receiving his PhD from Stanford in 2001, Dukes has often been in the public eye. The BACE has received attention from local and national media, and Dukes’ research on how much plant matter it takes to make a gallon of fossil fuel made international headlines in 2003.

“Asking some branches of science have a particular responsibility to communicate with the public, and I think environmental science is one of those branches,” he said.

Although the public is increasingly savvy about the environmental problems we face as a society, he said, there is still much work to be done to bring scientists and the general public together on these issues.

“It’s been gratifying to see increased awareness in problems associated with invasive species, and particularly the problems that are going to be associated with climate change,” he said. “But there’s still a heck of a lot to be done. Just because we understand it’s a problem doesn’t mean we understand the nature of the problem very well.”

As part of the fellowship, Dukes and his colleagues will be trained in how to talk to politicians and the media about environmental problems, and will then spend a week in Washington, D.C., where they will meet with elected officials and participate in a mock Congressional testimony. The idea is to help scientists communicate with the public and with elected officials about our most important environmental challenges, said Woods Institute managing director Pam Sturman.

“I think that there are so many pressing environmental problems that are extremely complex afoot today. There’s such a need to bring science to bear on that decision making,” she said. “As issues like global warming become more and more pressing, having that information in front of decision makers is incredibly important for the long-term health and sustainability of the planet.”

Alas for UMass Boston, Dukes will be leaving this summer: He’s accepted an assistant professorship at Purdue University, where he will work with fellow climate-change scientists at the Purdue Climate Change Research Center. But Dukes says he’ll keep one foot on the UMass campus, keeping the BACE running, advising graduate students, and continuing to collaborate with his UMass colleagues on the research he’s begun here.

“I don’t want to sever ties with this place at all,” he said. “I will shift the main core of operations to Purdue. But I’ll still keep the BACE going here, I’ll still have students here,” he said.

Biology chairman Michael Shiaris will be sorry to see him go. Dukes is a “rising star” in his field, he said, and he’s glad the Woods Institute thinks so too.

“It’s really a very prestigious thing. We’re really proud of him,” he said.

Ethnic Health Reporting Service (cont.)

(continued from page 1)

Brigham and Women’s and Massachusetts General Hospital, our physicians, and community health centers are committed to ending racial and ethnic disparities in health and health care, and are engaged in a number of efforts to address these disparities through clinical care and improved communication with our patients. We are pleased to fund this important initiative,” said Fishman, vice president for community health at Partners HealthCare.

MetroWest Health Foundation decided to fund the project for similar reasons.

“There is so much happening in health care right now—between health reform, work on racial and ethnic disparities, and disease prevention, it is important that information be widely disseminated, especially in minority communities where English may not be the primary language,” said Marty Cohen, president and CEO of the Framingham-based foundation.

The Boston Foundation, which provided a seed grant in 2004 that led to the creation of the Center’s innovative New England Ethnic Newswire, is now helping to fund this new health reporting fellowship.

“This is the right time to launch this important service,” said Paul S. Grogan, president and CEO of the Boston Foundation. “As we have documented in our recent report with the New England Healthcare Institute, ‘Boston Paradox: Lots of Health Care, Not Enough Health,’ minority communities in the region are increasingly put at risk by a rising tide of chronic preventable disease, and good and timely information is the best antidote.”

The Center on Media and Society’s operations, which are part of the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies, are supported by grants from the University of Massachusetts and the McCormack Tribune Foundation, and by private donations.

About Frank Herron

A career journalist with degrees from Cornell and Syracuse University, Frank Herron is the Chief Editor of the New England Ethnic Newswire and the Director of the Center on Media and Society. Herron spent nearly two decades as a reporter and editor for the Syracuse, New York Post-Standard, and was also an adjunct instructor at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University before joining UMass Boston in the fall of 2007. In addition to his Center on Media and Society duties, Herron also teaches Reading the Newspaper (POLSCI 245G) and Communication Studies 480 and 490.
By Kari Russ
The Center for Social Development and Education showcased its notable contributions to the field of research on children with disabilities at the 10th Annual Children Annual National Conference, held in Boston April 3 through 5.

More than 6,000 teachers, school administrators, and researchers convened at the conference, where CSDE researchers presented on issues of inclusion in and out of the classroom, the benefits of recreational programming for children with disabilities, the challenges of serving children with emotional and behavioral disorders, the relationships between siblings in families with a child, and the effectiveness of violence-prevention programs for youth.

“The CEC conference gave CSDE the opportunity to provide educators with practical methods to improve educational outcomes for children with disabilities in the classroom and the broader community,” said CSDE director Gary N. Siperstein, PhD, who was also recently named one of the 2008 winners of the Chancellor’s Award for Distinguished Scholarship. “The conference also gave our researchers the opportunity to discuss with educators the real-life implications of research upon classroom settings and beyond.”

As a part of the conference for the Division of International Special Education and Services, Siperstein and Co-Director of the Special Olympics Global Collaborating Center Jennifer Norins Bardon presented findings from their major Multinational Youth Attitude Study, which to date involves more than 14,000 youth in the United States, Japan, and China. The presentation demonstrated that youth attitudes toward students with intellectual disabilities are a major barrier to inclusion worldwide, but can be changed if educators focus on highlighting the competence of persons with intellectual disabilities.

Inclusion and acceptance were also themes in “Summer Camp Can Promote Educational Opportunities for Children with Intellectual Disabilities,” a presentation about the successes of UMass Boston’s Camp Shriver. Siperstein and staff members Gary Glick and Dana DeGrosse Bille introduced the concept of Camp Shriver as a fully inclusive recreational experience that promotes social inclusion among children. Chief among the presentation’s findings was the fact that campers with and without intellectual disabilities were found to be equals when it came to making friends with other campers.

In a different session, Paddy Favaaza and Gary Siperstein introduced their audience to another recreational program, the Special Olympics Young Athletes Program, one of the only physical activity programs for young children with developmental disabilities/learning disabilities. CSDE’s evaluation of the Young Athletes Program showed that the program improved these children’s development in language, motor, skills, and social skills.

In “School Context and the Characteristics of Students Identified as Emotionally Disturbed,” Andrew Wiley presented findings from one of CSDE’s projects, comparing the mental health problems of siblings of children with autism and without a diagnosis of developmental, learning, or emotional disabilities.

In his study, Siperstein found that 25% of siblings were diagnosed with ASD, ADHD, or other disability. While siblings with a disability were found to be more disordered than children drawn from the general population, siblings without a disorder were no more maladjusted than their typical peers.

The findings of CSDE’s evaluation of the Teen Empowerment youth violence-prevention program in Boston were also presented in a poster session, led by Melissa Pearrow, assistant professor in the Graduate College of Education. The session focused on the effectiveness of programs that utilize inner-city youth as mentors and advocates in violence-prevention programs for teens.

“As in years past, the work of the Center for Social Development and Education was prominent in the annual meeting of the CEC,” said Rick Brigham, PhD President-Elect of CEC’s Division of Research. “The Center has been very important in supporting the mission of the organization in promoting high-quality research in the field of special education. The increasing prominence of the Division for Research is due in large measure to the involvement of Gary Siperstein and his colleagues at CSDE in the organization.”

National Institutes of Health Awards $1.4 Million for Minority Undergraduate Scientists

By Jim Mortenson

The Massachusetts Institute of Health (NIH) has awarded UMass Boston a $1.4 million, four-year grant to enhance the academic and research experiences of underrepresented students at the undergraduate level, in order to increase the number of students pursuing doctoral study in biomedical fields and attaining doctoral degrees.

“We are becoming a major force for ensuring the diversifica- tion of our future life sciences workforce in Massachusetts,” said Dean Andrew Grossovsky, the College of Science and Mathematics. The project’s official title is the Initiative for Maximizing Undergraduate Diversity and, more popularly, the IMSD, at UMass Boston.

Associate Professors Rachel Skvirsky and Adán Colón-Carmona of the Biology Department are the project’s lead investigators, though many other science faculty will play key roles in the program. A key component of this initiative is the university’s U6 partnership with the Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center (DF/HCC), the main goal of which is to address health disparities in minority populations and to improve research, training, and other opportunities for minority students.

The IMSD program is just one facet of a larger, unified plan for student development in the sciences at UMass Boston. “We are building a portfolio of programs designed to increase the number of students, especially those from underrepresented, low-income, first-generation backgrounds, who successfully pursue science careers,” said Grossovsky. “UMass Boston is at a tipping point in terms of implementing a science-technology, engineering, and mathematics, or STEM, programs that reach out to minorities. We are confident that the IMSD project will be another important initiative that will tip the scales in favor of this goal and, ultimately, lead to permanent institutional change.”

According to Skvirsky and Colón-Carmona, IMSD students will have access to mentored research opportunities both here and at DF/HCC. Scheduled to begin in summer 2008, IMSD will provide year-round structured enrichment activities, including research experience, faculty and peer mentoring, academic development, and preparation for application to PhD programs. The program will emphasize high achievement in courses and the development of independence in research.

Using a proactive recruitment process and underrepresented minority students at the sophomore level who are currently taking science courses will be recruited to apply to become IMSD affiliates. Affiliates who successfully complete at least the first level of the IMSD gateway courses with a grade point average of 3.0 or better and who are within two years (60 credits) of graduation will be encouraged to apply to become IMSD fellows. The pro- gram will develop a community of science learners with a drive to excel academically. Each IMSD affiliate will be coached by an upper-class IMSD fellow and will also be mentored by individual faculty, either at UMass Boston or at DF/HCC, who are researchers in the fellows’ area of concentration as well as by the program’s co-directors.

“We believe students are going to fully embrace the mentoring component of this program,” said Grosovsky. “We will serve as mentors for minority students and provide guidance and support for minority students. The program will emphasize high achievement in courses and the development of independence in research. Other existing programs that will be reinforcing the goals of IMSD include the Boston Science Partnership, which aims to increase student achievement in science for students from grade 6 through college in the Boston Public School system; the Baccalaureate/Master’s program in the College of Engineering; the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, which provides undergraduate research training in all science fields to underrepresented minority students; and the U56 UMass Boston-DF/HCC Comprehensive Cancer Partnership Program.

The “IMSD and similar programs are great models for ensur- ing student success. One of my top priorities for the College of Science and Mathematics—stu- dents, faculty, administrators, and staff—is to institutionalize a culture of student success within the college,” said Grossovsky. “Since my arrival at UMass Bos- ton eight months ago, I have been overwhelmed by the level of com- mitment of our faculty and staff, as individuals, to our students. What I have also observed, in contrast to this incredible human commitment, is that we are, as a university, just beginning to lay the foundation for institutional- izing this commitment. So this is an incredibly exciting time for all of us.”

For additional information about the Initiative for Maxi- mizing Student Diversity at UMass Boston, please contact Associate Professor Rachel Skvirsky or Associate Professor Adán Colón-Carmona.

CSDE Shows Research Work on National Stage

The Center for Social Development and Education showcased its notable contributions to the field of research on children with disabilities at the 10th Annual Children Annual National Conference, held in Boston April 3 through 5.
On April 15, UMass Boston’s Graduate Program in Dispute Resolution hosted the ninth annual Slomoff Lectureship, titled “Health Care Rationing: The Elephant in the Room.”

The forum was moderated by Steve Crosby, Dean of the McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies, who noted in his opening remarks that Americans have “vastly more demand for healthcare, spend more money on healthcare, yet people live longer.”

Crosby continued, “The reason for this is that healthcare costs have risen faster than income.”

The then-ailing merged BIDMC, Levy offered that society should “see benefits 10-15 years [down the road], but the short-term costs of healthcare, our average life expectancy, and that the exhibit’s signage beautifully the natural world,” and that the exhibit’s signage was “helpful in understanding the relationship between the originally composed music and hornucopia.”

By Geoffrey Kula

Slomoff Lecture Examines Health Care “Elephant”

For the second year in a row, UMass Boston has won a silver medal at the New England Spring Flower Show. James Allen, Greenhouse Manager for the Biology Department, and Music Professor David Patterson collaborated to create “Biotechnology and Music; Rhap- house Manager for the Biology Department.

The UMass Boston exhibit consisted of the arrangement of the hybrids with colorful posters on the hermit thrush, a bird which inspired David Patterson’s compositions. Patterson’s music included the pieces, “The Hermit Thrush Orchestra Plays Bill Evans,” in which the bird’s harmonies resemble those of the jazz pianist, and “The Hermit Thrush Orchestra Plays Vivaldi,” which rhapodizes upon bird calls and the sounds of the Baroque master.

By Aimee Blacquiere

Roberts sees three strategies to remedy the situation: Create incentives for people to find good medical care at a lower cost; simply administrative costs by unifying the payment system; and keep people healthy so big costs would only arise when they have acute episodes.

He emphasized there is “a need to radically reorganize the American healthcare system” to intro-duce efficiencies, but admitted it was “not feasible” this would happen. Roberts noted that when hospitals saved money by provid- ing better care at a lower cost, their reimbursements declined more than cost savings, creating a paradox. He closed with this anal- ogy: “Every hospital administra- tor is a truffle-sniffing pig [who] must find the high-margin activity to keep the institution alive.”

In step with Roberts, Savin be-gan with a comparison of his own: “There is a similarity between our society as a whole and a two-year-old who must choose between the lesser of two evils,” he said. “We’re deficient in social readi- ness to take the necessary steps to solve these complex problems.”

However, Savin did outline some decision-making guidelines. Rational policies, he said, must be explicit about what they are and why the decisions were made; the rationale has to include the recognition of the needs of indi- viduals versus the cost to society; and there must be an escape clause. As an example, he cited Aetna Health, whose CEO denied Aetna’s medical directors the right to refuse healthcare to patients in largely public scenarios. He saw the need to find an independent panel because he recognized that few people would trust an insurer company employee saying a treatment wasn’t worth admin- istering.

Families need information about treatments that work and treatments that won’t work and should have the right to hire their own specialists to review this information and data and make their own judgments [about treat- ments],” Savin said, noting that Kaiser Permanente has adopted an independent review panel for “last chance” situations. If you don’t agree with the company’s decision, you can get a second opinion they will follow. “We need to embrace a different style of practice to guide us through the possibilities of treat- ment,” he said. “This will require institutional change which would allow for social learning.”

In the question-and-answer session that followed, Levy postu-lated on a system in which people were kept healthy as opposed to waiting for a specialist to be a sick person’s white knight.

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I believe lightning has struck...
This summer, Assistant Professor of Family Therapy Laurie Lopez Charlés will leave the comfort of her office in Wheately Hall to volunteer with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, or Doctors Without Borders) in Central African Republic, a country that most other aid operations avoid for safety reasons.

“It’s understood that you’re going to a place where there is conflict,” she says, explaining that she and her husband are preparing for her departure by updating their wills. “I’m definitely prepared to go. After last summer, I’m much more aware of my priorities.”

Last summer, Charlés received a diagnosis of a hidden health problem that could have killed her at any time. It was a bolt from the blue, and it transformed her life. “In between classes, I remember working on my cell phone so that someone could reach [my husband] if I died on the T.”

A complicated procedure cured the problem, but the reminder of her own mortality in the midst of her otherwise safe and comfortable life in Boston brought her life goals into sharp, fresh focus. “That experience really clarified what I want to do,” she says. “I had to plan how to program my cell phone so that someone could reach [my husband] if I died on the T.”

As a mental health officer stationed in CAR with a MSF staff in CAR for the next few months, Charlés will work with a team of volunteers distributing free health care to the traumatized population of the city and the surrounding countryside, which has been scarred by years of coups and rebel uprisings. The country’s proximity to higher-profile crisis zones like the Darfur region of Sudan adds to the insecurity, and most aid organizations consider the country too unstable to send their workers there.

This is where MSF comes in—the international humanitarian group’s mission is to provide emergency medical aid in dangerous places, and it currently has over one hundred staff members in CAR. The danger they face is serious: In March, a woman was shot and killed while she was taking care of a patient in an MSF vehicle. Charlés’s role in MSF will be to help build a mental health component of MSF’s CAR mission. She will both conduct therapy sessions with traumatized CAR citizens and teach other volunteers and locals how to do so.

It’s the same work that she does at UMass Boston, where she provides therapy to families displaced by war and violence and trains graduate family therapy students to do the same. The skills she has honed at UMass Boston, as well as her French-language skills (CAR is a Francophone country), are the reasons why she was chosen for the MSF post.

Over the course of her career, Charlés has been no stranger to violence. She spent 18 months in the Peace Corps in Togo, a West African country where, she says, there were “guns everywhere.” For her doctoral dissertation at Nova Southeastern University in Florida, Charlés conducted an exhaustive study of the dynamics of hostage negotiation during a school shooting. She interviewed FBI and police crisis negotiators, listened to numerous audio recordings of live hostage negotiations, and traveled to the FBI Academy in Virginia to conduct training for Understanding Human Rights in Africa” at the Carter Center for Human Rights of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University on April 17.

Peter Kiang, Professor of Education and Director of the Asian American Studies Program, delivered a keynote address in honor of Asian Pacific Islander American Heritage Month at Federated Dorchester Neighborhood House in May. He also conducted a professional development workshop at the Central Massachusetts Chinese Language School in Worcester.

Associate Professor of Economics Janis Kapeler presented a paper, titled “Outsourcing, Fragmentation and Integration: The Pharmaceuticals Industry,” at the Conference on Offshoring and Outsourcing: The Organizational and Geographical Relocation of High-Value Company Functions, sponsored by the SDA Bocconi School of Management, in Milan, Italy, on April 23-24.

The Institute for Community Inclusion’s Heike Boeltzig and Matthew Kominsky presented with colleagues on the subject of “resilience.” They both conduct ethnographic interviews with recipients of aid in Boston on the subject of “resilience.”

What they learn will be used to improve the therapy they give to their clients.

“How do we incorporate them into our research—especially in health? What practices do we use to try to understand their experiences?” Charlés asks. Answering her own question, she says that the key is humility. “It’s a position of curiosity you have to take. You have to let it all go. If you can make yourself an outsider, that’s a conducive way to learn.”

This lesson, which she will teach to her students next fall, she will learn again firsthand in CAR this summer as she struggles to understand and help the mental health problems of refugees and victims of violence living half a world away.

“I really think this is the kind of thing that you can do at UMass,” she says. “My students work with refugee clients; we also have students who are refugees. I am hoping that my experience in CAR will be an important contribution to the department.”

As for the fact that she will be plunging herself into danger overseas, Charlés says that though she is apprehensive, she knows that going to CAR will make her a better family therapist.

“(Travel) is how I get humbled about the very fact that I might know something. And the humility is what makes my work good,” she says. “And why not me? The people who live there have to live there every day.”

This summer won’t be the first time Laurie Lopez, Charlés has worked in dangerous surroundings. (Photo by Harry Brett)

**Professor to Spend Summer Bringing Better Mental Health Care to the Central African Republic**

By Julia Reischel

This summer, Assistant Professor of Family Therapy Laurie Lopez Charlés will leave the comfort of her office in Wheately Hall to volunteer with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, or Doctors Without Borders) in Central African Republic, a country that most other aid operations avoid for safety reasons.

“It’s understood that you’re going to a place where there is conflict,” she says, explaining that she and her husband are preparing for her departure by updating their wills. “I’m definitely prepared to go. After last summer, I’m much more aware of my priorities.”

Last summer, Charlés received a diagnosis of a hidden health problem that could have killed her at any time. It was a bolt from the blue, and it transformed her life. “In between classes, I remember working on my cell phone so that someone could reach [my husband] if I died on the T.”

A complicated procedure cured the problem, but the reminder of her own mortality in the midst of her otherwise safe and comfortable life in Boston brought her life goals into sharp, fresh focus. “That experience really clarified what I want to do,” she says. “I had to plan how to program my cell phone so that someone could reach [my husband] if I died on the T.”

As a mental health officer stationed in CAR with a MSF staff in CAR for the next few months, Charlés will work with a team of volunteers distributing free health care to the traumatized population of the city and the surrounding countryside, which has been scarred by years of coups and rebel uprisings. The country’s proximity to higher-profile crisis zones like the Darfur region of Sudan adds to the insecurity, and most aid organizations consider the country too unstable to send their workers there.

This is where MSF comes in—the international humanitarian group’s mission is to provide emergency medical aid in dangerous places, and it currently has over one hundred staff members in CAR. The danger they face is serious: In March, a woman was shot and killed while she was taking care of a patient in an MSF vehicle. Charlés’s role in MSF will be to help build a mental health component of MSF’s CAR mission. She will both conduct therapy sessions with traumatized CAR citizens and teach other volunteers and locals how to do so.

It’s the same work that she does at UMass Boston, where she provides therapy to families displaced by war and violence and trains graduate family therapy students to do the same. The skills she has honed at UMass Boston, as well as her French-language skills (CAR is a Francophone country), are the reasons why she was chosen for the MSF post.

Over the course of her career, Charlés has been no stranger to violence. She spent 18 months in the Peace Corps in Togo, a West African country where, she says, there were “guns everywhere.” For her doctoral dissertation at Nova Southeastern University in Florida, Charlés conducted an exhaustive study of the dynamics of hostage negotiation during a school shooting. She interviewed FBI and police crisis negotiators, listened to numerous audio recordings of live hostage negotiations, and traveled to the FBI Academy in Virginia to conduct training.

The resulting case study is an intricate account of how to communicate with people in dangerous situations.

What ties all of her work together, she says, is her interest in “how people elicit information in difficult circumstances,” and her desire to put that information to therapeutic use.

Her field strives to do exactly that. Its goal is to “look at people in their context.” The focus is on those who are the least likely to be able to navigate the state aid system on their own—“the people who don’t show up,” as Charlés and her students, referring to refugees, victims of domestic violence, and illegal immigrants.

Charlés came to UMass Boston’s Family Therapy department two years ago because she admired the school’s emphasis on “resilience.” She says. “It was impressive to me that the university talked about it. I needed to be someplace where I want to have tenure.”

At UMass, Charlés and her students study the problems inherent in providing therapy to marginalized groups in Boston. This fall, she and her students will use funds from a Joseph P. Healey Endowment Grant to conduct ethnographic interviews with recipients of aid in Boston on the subject of “resilience.”

What they learn will be used to improve the therapy they give to their clients.

“How do we incorporate them into our research—especially in health? What practices do we use to try to understand their experiences?” Charlés asks. Answering her own question, she says that the key is humility. “It’s a position of curiosity you have to take. You have to let it all go. If you can make yourself an outsider, that’s a conducive way to learn.”

This lesson, which she will teach to her students next fall, she will learn again firsthand in CAR this summer as she struggles to understand and help the mental health problems of refugees and victims of violence living half a world away.

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As for the fact that she will be plunging herself into danger overseas, Charlés says that though she is apprehensive, she knows that going to CAR will make her a better family therapist.

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In April, Patrick Clarkin, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, presented “Socioeconomic and maternal correlates of height and adiposity of Cambodian-American children in Rhode Island” at the annual meeting of the Human Biology Association in Columbus, Ohio. He also presented “Correlations between war-related experiences and health of Hoong in the U.S. and French Guiana” at the International Conference on Hoong Studies in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Susan DeSanto-Madyea, Assistant Professor of Nursing in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, presented a paper at the Eastern Nursing Research Society’s 20th Annual Academic Session, titled “Methodological Issues and Approaches to Research with Ethnically/Racially Diverse Adolescent Children of Mothers with Breast Cancer.”

Patricia Gallagher, a senior research fellow at the Center for Survey Research, is presenting a paper titled “The Validation of Self Identifiers for Persons with Mobility Disadvantage,” at the 63rd Conference of the American Association for Public Opinion Research in May in New Orleans.

Anthropology Department lecturer Lauren Sullivan presented a paper titled “Co-authored Affinities: The Ceramic Complex,” at the Society for American Archaeology’s (SAA) 70th Annual Meetings in Vancouver, Canada, in May.

Assistant Professor of Classics Claudia Carlso spoke at Boston University on April 11 at the 2008 Boston Area Roman Studies Conference, “Hu, Haec, Declining Masculinity and Femininity in Ancient Rome.” Her talk was titled: “Terrorina becomes Plutina: Re-membering Feminine Virtue.”

Professor of History James Green discussed UMass Boston’s new MA program in public history at a workshop on civic engagement at Tufts University on April 18 and at a New England Historical Society conference on April 26.

Roy D. Dee, associate professor in the Department of Leadership in Education, presented the paper “Facilitating paper development as a self-organizing system” at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), held March 24-28 in New York City. At the same meeting, Dee also co-presented with Johann Deputz, a 2007 graduate of the Higher Education Doctoral Program, the paper “Pedagogical change and institutional transformation: The effects of a higher education government reform in community colleges,” and co-presented a third paper, “Social and psychological dimensions of role transition: Faculty transitioning to administrative positions,” with Marguerite McLeann, a 2007 graduate of the Higher Education Doctoral Program.

College of Public and Community Service Associate Professor Andrew Leong presented at the George-town Journal of Critical Global Care Perspectives Symposium: Bridging the Gap Between Scholarship and Activism at the Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C., on April 4. He spoke as a panelist on “How does our scholarship contribute to roles as activists?” and was also a discussant during the roundtable discussion on “How can a journal most effectively embody an activist role?” Professor Leong was also a panelist at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers on April 18 on the panel “Right to the City: Social Justice Activism in Boston.”

Mary Oleksiwicz, Associate Professor of Music, presented the invited paper “Handel, Quantz, and the Instrumentalism in Dresden in Dresden and Berlin” at the 19th Annual Magdeburg Telescope Fund and International Scholarship Conference on March 14.

Associate Professor of Africana Studies Marc Prou was invited by Princeton University to chair a panel on “Words and History: The Renaissance Studies Conference in England,” at the Horn Point Marine Laboratory at the University of Maryland, on April 19.

Associate Professor of Modern Languages Alex Des Forges was a discussant on the panel “Words Changing Hands: Translating and Cultural Circulation in Late Qing and Republican China” at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies on April 5.

Hispanic studies lecturer Patricia Andrade presented her paper “‘The Female Law’ at the annual ACMRS (Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies) conference in February.

Philosophy professor Lawrence Blum presented “Races and Racialized Groups” at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association (APSA) held in New Orleans in August.

In April, Kristin Uiterwyk, a research assistant at MIT, gave a talk at the Jewish Organizing Initiative, titled “History of the Jewish Left,” on April 9, and presented a paper at MIT to the Afdl fellows titled “The Pluralism of World Views.”

College of Public and Community Service Professor Emerita Marie Kenny gave the following lectures: “Lecturing the Voices of Low-income Women,” at the Crossing Borders Conference, held by the University of Michigan Ann Arbor for the Center for Multicultural Research on April 28 in Detroit, Michigan; “Transformative Planning for Community Development,” at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts, on April 1, and again at Umass Amherst on April 3; “Horizontalities—choices and challenges of social movements in Armenia,” at Amherst Interna- tional’s chapter at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Gerontology professor Nina Silverstein of the College of Public and Community Service on a panel on the plenary panel, “Strategic Planning for Older Driver Safety,” organized by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s Office of Behavioral Safety Research and held on April 28 in Bethesda, Maryland.

Professor Meng Zhou of the Department of Environmental, Earth, and Ocean Sciences (ELOS) gave an invited seminar, titled “What we can learn from the ancient spectra of placer in oceans,” at the Horn Point Marine Laboratory at the University of Maryland.

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Thursday 15
The Second Annual Technology Education Conference is being held at MIT, 60 Ames Street, Cambridge. The conference will focus on the integration of technology into the classroom. The day's events will include workshops, presentations, and a keynote address by a leading expert in the field. A networking reception will conclude the day.

Friday 16
College of Public and Community Service Honors Convocation and Reception
4 p.m., Campus Center Point Lounge and Campus Center Ballroom

Saturday 17
Chancellor's Block Party
 Noon – 3 p.m., Fox Point Pavilion and Harbor Walk Lawn. The Chancellor is hosting a block party for everyone who works at UMass Boston. The fun includes Boston's best bands, caricaturists, face painting, kite-making, and more.

Monday 26
Memorial Day University closed.

Tuesday 20
Getting Started in Business Workshop
5 p.m. – 8 p.m., Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network, Boston Regional Office at Ministry Business Center, Copley Square Library, 700 Boylston Street. Register online at www. sbsd.state.ma.us.

Tuesday 27
College of Management Honors Convocation and Reception
5 p.m. – 7 p.m., McCormack Hall, third floor, Ryan Lounge.

Water Logics, a novel by English Department Professor Laurie Marks, has been included on the honors list for the James Tiptree, Jr. Literary Award, which recognizes science fiction that explores and expands gender roles. The book is the third in a four-book series, the first two of which have each won the Gay & Lesbian Spectrum Award for best novel.

The Gerontology Department’s Management of Aging Services Masters Program has won the 2008 Outstanding Credit Program by the National University System Accrediting Education Association (UCEA). The award was presented at the annual conference of the Association on March 28. Congratulations to Ellen Bruce, Gerontology Graduate Program director, and Lillian Glickman and Ellen Burchard, co-directors of the Management of Aging Services Masters Program.

A case presented by College of Management Assistant Professors Marty Callins and Nick Dedek, “Mattel Inc.: Lead-Tainted Toys,” has been selected as one of four finalists (runners-up) in the 2008 Dark Side Case Competition, sponsored by the Critical Management Studies Interest Group and the Management Education Division of the Academy of Management.

In the News
The Institute for Community Inclusion’s State Employment Leadership Network (IELN) conducted a web conference on April 10, titled “State Employment Practices: Funding for Employment Services.” Focused on Florida’s Agency for Persons with Disabilities.

The Institute for Community Inclusion, in partnership with the national organizations TASH and APSE, organized and presented a web conference series titled “A Working Life: Towards a Lifestyle of Employment for All,” between February and March. The web series presented practical information on expanding job opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities, and had 60 participating sites and an estimated several hundred participants.

Thursday 29
Graduate Studies (including Education and Mc Cormick) Honors Convocation and Reception
5 p.m. – 8 p.m., Campus Center Ballroom and Student Dining Room.

Friday 30
Commencement Day
9:30 a.m. – Noon, Campus Center Lawn. The University celebrates its 40th commencement. Individual college ceremonies will begin at 1 p.m. at other locations on campus.

IN THE NEWS
Jornay Proufford, Director of Creative Writing, was quoted in the Boston Globe by columnist Ellen Steinbaum in “What’s in Poets’ Monthly Planner” on April 13.

Christi Weller, an associate professor in the Department of Public Policy and Public Affairs, was quoted in U.S. News & World Report, Boston News, AARP Bulletin, the Palm Beach Post, Builder Magazine, the Wall Street Journal, the Chicago Tribune, and the Lansing State Journal, interviewed on the Boston radio stations WRZ, WBIX, on German public radio, on the Los Angeles station KCRW’s program To The Point, on the podcast Stock Shots, and appeared on television on R.I. TV, CNBC, Bloomberg’s German channel, CNN, and Dan Rather Reports.

Frederick S. Troy Professor of English Lloyd Schwartz was interviewed on NPR’s Fresh Air arts and culture program about Bishop: Poem: Prise, and Letters, a book he edited about poet Elizabeth Bishop.

Political Science Professor Thomas Ferguson was quoted in a Reuters wire service article, “Experts see Depression parallels in U.S. crisis,” on April 18.

The Chinese Bridge Speech Contest, held in Masco Boston on April, was mentioned in the April 24 Bay State Banner.

WUMB’s Mockingbird Fest was mentioned in the NEAs Big Read Blog.

The launch of the New England Ethnic Health’s new reporting service was mentioned in the April 21 edition of the Boston Globe.

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