University Reporter - Volume 12, Number 08 - April 2008
Health, Community Activists Honored at Community Breakfast

By Will Kilburn

The link between a community’s health and the physical health of the people who live in that community was celebrated at the annual Community Breakfast, held at the Campus Center on March 20.

William Walczak, founder of the Codman Square Health Center, and Frederica Williams, CEO of Whittier Street Health Center, were each honored with the Robert H. Quinn Award for Community Service. Also honored was Leah P. Bailey, Executive Director of Community Affairs at the Boston Globe Foundation, who was recognized for the Foundation’s work, particularly its work with local youth.

Chancellor Keith Motley served as the master of ceremonies for the event, first noting the reminder of importance of work done by the university. “We also want to honor you,” said Motley. Explained, are given not only in recognition of the work done by people and institutions outside of UMass Boston, but also as a reminder of importance of work done by the university.

“Community outreach and partnerships are crucial to our mission,” said Motley. “By hosting this breakfast, we want to continue to work with our community to continue to work together. Together, the potential mark in the community: The Boston Globe Foundation, he said, was the single largest financial aid donor to UMass Boston; Walczak, who closed his remarks by encouraging the university and the community to continue to work together. Together, the potential

Hunger Activists Gather to Share Ideas, Resources

By Danielle Dreilinger

When you see a canned goods donation box, it usually means a group is holding a local food drive. But in the campus center on March 27, a small donation box signaled a big vision: the state’s first-ever anti-hunger summit.

The groundbreaking event, led by keynote speaker Governor Deval Patrick, brought together scholars, administrators, and activists. Attendees included staff from the McCormack School’s Center for Social Policy, Department of Transitional Assistance Commissioner Julia Kelho, State Representative Cory Atkins, and staff from the offices of state legislators Marie St. Fleur and Patricia Jehlen.

“This summit is so important, because hunger is a growing problem,” Boston mayor Tom Menino told the full room. According to Project Bread, in November 2005, 450,000 Massachusetts residents went hungry—one-third of them children.

As the cost of food prices is only making the situation worse: Since last November, Menino said, the cost of milk rose 80 cents. A loaf of bread costs 25% more, imperiling small bakeries as well as those who are eligible aren’t getting food stamps. Boston saw riots here in Boston “over food” in 1972. Menino said.

“The mood in the room was serious but optimistic. McGovern said, to applause, “Hunger is a political condition. We have the resources to end it.”

Inspiration and ideas came from a variety of perspectives. The first priority for many speakers was signing families up for food stamps. Boston saw an 82% increase in food stamp enrollment from 2002 to 2007, according to the Washington, D.C.-based Food Research and Action Center. Still, “millions and millions of dollars are left on the table every year,” Menino said.

The Center for Social Policy found last October that “about two-thirds of the households who are eligible aren’t getting food stamps,” said center director Donna Haig Friedman. A March 2007 report by the center found additional barriers among Boston’s Latinos.

McGovern advocated reaching out to grocers, who “receive over $500 million every year” in food stamp and WIC purchases; serving school breakfast at the beginning of the day, to eliminate the stigma of coming early to eat; educating health care providers; and starting anti-hunger groups in schools.

Ellen Vollinger of the Food Research and Action Center emphasized the need for collaboration. In Massachusetts, sports radio WEEI ran public service announcements during Celtics games, she said. The Iowa Farm Bureau gave EBT food stamp, processing machines to farmers markets. Supermarkets can set up information tables in stores and give campaigns free space in their circulars.

In fact, just getting more stores into low-income areas matters. The Pennsylvania-based Food Trust had given funds to over 30 grocery stores to help them do this, executive director Yael Lehmann said. Attendees whistled when she said the group’s farmers-in-the-school programs reduced obesity rates by 50%. Other improvements focused on listening to clients: Chicago hosts community quality councils, Vollinger said, and a DC agency held cultural sensitivity training for caseworkers.

“Low-income people are not just hunger statistics,” said Daniel Ross of Hyloloke-based Nuestra Raices. “[They] can and should be actors and forces for change.... Solutions exist within the knowledge and culture of our people.”

In Holyoke, Puerto Rican immigrants are reclaiming crime-plagued vacant lots for community gardens. So far the initiative has created about 30 small food and agriculture businesses such as bakeries, Ross said.

Attendees’ fire for the cause clearly burned in their bellies.

“I just think of the guy crying at my desk the other day; fifty-two and in tears because he’s got nothing to eat and no money,” said attendee Thomas Foster, a DTA caseworker union organizer.

“Nearly 300 years ago there were riots here in Boston” over the cost of bread, Menino said.

“I urge you not to riot ... but to be revolutionary.”

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Community Breakfast, Quinn Awards (cont.)

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is endless.”

Williams, a native of Sierra Leone who emigrated to England before coming to the U.S., noted that her education played a key role in her ability to help others.

“I’m able to be an example to my patients, but I’m also able to creatively and strategically position the organization so we can be a permanent legacy in the community,” she said. Whitter and the university, she continued, “have a shared mission of addressing urban issues and urban empower-ment, and this is definitely a wonderful honor for me.”

Morley closed the event by reminding attendees that the Community Breakfast shouldn’t be the only time of the year they come to the campus.

“I encourage all of you to stay in touch with this university, and don’t be a stranger,” he said. “This is your public university, you’re welcome here, we are honored by your presence, and we look forward to working with you in the future.”

Scenes from the Community Breakfast. Clockwise from top left: Robert H. Quinn and Chancellor Mosley share a light moment; William Walczak; Frederica Williams; Leah Bailey. (Photos by Harry Brett)
By Anne-Marie Kent

A demonstration turns ugly. Equipment is vandalized. An explosion sends a campus community into chaos.

You're a college administrator. What decisions do you make? What plans must you activate? How will your staff work with public safety responders as an emergency unfolds?

During two three-day classes in February and March, the eleventh floor of the Healey Library became a training ground for administrators, staff, law enforcement, and others from UMass Boston and other universities across the country to learn critical incident management.

Presented by the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, (IACLEA), the Critical Incident Management Training Course represents a multi-disciplinary, all-hazards approach to incident management, following the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS).

“The safety of our campus is a top priority for us all, and proper training is critical for our staff, so that our response to any campus emergency is appropriate and effective,” said Chancellor Keith Moltry.

IACLEA, in conjunction with the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, has trained over 1,400 college and university personnel in NIMS Unified Incident Command Structure and its implementation in a campus environment.

“During the training exercises, a model city was used to help participants plan their response to emergencies. (Photo by Harry Brett)“

“The course covers the stages of the incident life cycle: prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation, with exercises in a ‘model city’ environment,” explained UMass Boston Public Safety Program Manager Richard Lee, who is also a certified IACLEA instructor.

During the March course, Lee coached Patrol Officer Din Jenkins, who played the role of a responding officer during the final day’s interactive model city exercise.

Something unexpected happened. Chaos began to unfold.

Lee pointed to Jenkins, “You’re on scene. What do you do now?” Jenkins made a decisive move to contain the incident, reported key information back to the Incident Commander, and overall demonstrated his ability to enact the lessons of Critical Incident Management.

Law enforcement officers, however, were not alone on this training mission.

More than half of the 30 UMass Boston employees trained were those whose daily lives do not typically involve guns and sirens.

Assistant Dean of Students Joyea Morgan, for one, ably shouldered the unwieldy role of a university administrator facing an escalating crisis during her class in February. She decided when to cancel classes, where to shelter displaced students, and what to communicate to the campus community.

“It was a great experience that changed how I think about possible campus incidents and events,” said Morgan. “Having a good framework and system for responding can make the ability to respond so much more quick and efficient.”

Stephanie Michel-Moore, financial administrator for Academic Affairs, had questions of cost and reimbursement to handle during her training session. Because universities may be eligible to receive federal reimbursements, recordkeeping is a critical behind-the-scenes aspect of incident management.

“It was clear that during the period of crisis response, there is no thought to costs involved,” she said. “For example, at some point and time the city or state will for- ward a bill for all the police officers that were provided and for dam- age to the officers’ equipment.”

Director of Personnel Services Clare Poirier headed up the March group tasked with meeting logistical needs.

“The training made me appreciate the importance of planning for an emergency,” said Poirier. “Preparation and communication is the key to having a response team in place.”

Deputy Director of Facilities, Utilities, and Energy Management Michael McGerigle was part of the February logistics group.

“What struck me was not so much the varied technical backgrounds of the participants, but their management styles. You had public safety officials who are used to more straight-line command, working right alongside those of us who might question and deliberate a bit more. In the end, everyone cooperated and worked through their individual situations with the common goal in mind,” said McGerigle.

“Critical Incident Management training sessions are only one of a number of safety-related efforts currently under way. In addition to the UMB Alert System (alert.umb.edu) and safety web site (safety.umb.edu), a protocol has been developed to help guide UMass Boston faculty/staff in training faculty and staff on the protocol. A Distressed and Distressing Faculty and Staff Committee, chaired by Clare Poirier, is also meeting to establish protocols for dealing with distressed and distressing faculty and staff.

MODR Dialogue Series Takes on the Big Issues

By Lisa Harris

The sign outside room 3545 in the Campus Center read “Racial and Ethnic Tensions: What Should We Do?” It was a big agenda for one afternoon.

Inside, Shrewsbury resident Edward Hall was defending the merits of affirmative action. “Sometimes you have to throw one sense of fairness out the window to get another sense of fairness,” he said. “You might have to employ someone who isn’t as qualified just to get them in the door.”

Moderator Matt Thompson pressed him to question his beliefs.

“Let me play a little devil’s advocate with that,” he said. “What happens to the person who was more qualified?”

Immediately, several women chimed in. “That just plays into the idea, ‘If you’re black and you have a job, you must have gotten it because you’re black,’” one said.

On Thursday, March 27, about a dozen people—young and not-so-young, city-dwellers and suburbanites, of different races and backgrounds—gathered for a frank conversation about race in America. The forum was one in a series of National Issues Forums dialogues being held on the UMass Boston campus by the Massachusetts Office of Dispute Resolution (MODR).

Founded in 1981, the National Issues Forums Institute hosts forums in universities, town halls, civic centers, and private homes across the country, bringing people together on a wide variety of public policy issues. Trained moderators lead the discussions and collect participants’ views, which the NIFI uses to publish in-depth reports on how people are wrestling with these issues across the nation.

One of the main goals of the forums is to gather public opinion on issues facing the community and give it to local elected officials, said Lorraine Della Porta, deputy director of MODR.

“The hope is that they’ll use that information to inform policy,” she said.

Like most NIF discussions, the forum began with a short film to get people talking. As they grew more comfortable, participants gradually began to talk about their own experiences with race and racism.

Han Tran, a graduate student in biology who grew up in Vietnam, worried that the casual bigotry found on anonymous Internet forums revealed Americans’ real feelings about race. Master’s student Janet Hunkel talked about the racial pressures of both the black church she volunteered for in Roxbury and her mostly-white yacht club. Darrell Moore, a Dorchester resident who works for the Boston Public Health Commission, moved the group with a story about being a black teenager, living away from home for the first time, and sharing an apartment with a co-worker who had recently immigrated from Vietnam.

Moore said that his friend gave him a few lessons in maturity and perseverance, and, more importantly, taught him how to cook for himself.

“Like iron sharpens iron, one person sharpens another. He helped me learn to be indepen-“

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Taking on the Big Issues (cont.)

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dem,” he said.

Coincidentally, just prior to the forum, presidential candidate Barack Obama had given his landmark speech on race in America, and the issue was clearly fresh in everyone’s minds.

“I have been waiting for this throughout the campaign,” one participant said. “Everybody wanted to talk about race, but nobody wanted to start it.”

Martha Ashe, a mediator who had traveled from Worcester to attend the forum, agreed. “It’s really hard to talk about it. It’s really painful for some reason,” she said.

Matt Thompson, one of the moderators, said afterward that he was pleased with the forum’s outcome.

“The group was willing to speak up, they were willing to be a little provocative,” he said. “People came with open minds.”

Moore said he planned on attending future NIF conversations on campus. “I do believe just having dialogue about this subject enhances people’s perspective,” he said.

Getting people to take the time to participate in forums like these is a challenge, especially on a commuter campus, said Della Porta.

“How do we get people to engage? It’s tough,” she said.

But although NIF groups are usually small, Della Porta says, the intimacy of the forum helps bring people together. At a recent similar series at MIT, she said, the intense dialogues created new friendships and connections among the participants, some of whom exchanged emails and phone numbers so they could keep the conversation going after the forums ended.

“There was activism that came out of putting twenty kids in a room that had never met,” she said.

Upcoming forums: “The Energy Problem: Choices for an Uncertain Future,” Thursday, April 17, 4 p.m. – 6 p.m., room 3540, Campus Center.

“Examining Health Care: What’s the Public’s Prescription?” Thursday, May 1, 4-6 p.m., room 3545, Campus Center.

“Democracy’s Challenge: Reclaiming the Public’s Role.” Thursday, May 8, Noon – 2 p.m., room 3545, Campus Center.

By Geoff Kula

On March 6, UMass Boston was honored to host Nobel Prize-winning physicist Dr. Carl Wieman, who presented a synopsis of his educational research, titled “Science Education in the 21st Century: Using Scientific Tools to Teach Science,” to a capacity crowd in the Campus Center’s Alumni Room.

The event was sponsored by the Center of Science and Mathematics in COSMIC (COSMIC: “COSMIC ensures students receive the best education possible,” said Chancellor Keith Motley in his opening remarks. Through COSMIC, he continued, “we train teachers and continue their development throughout their career path.”

UMass President Jack Wilson, who followed Motley at the podium, called Wieman “one of the most brilliant physicists in the world” and further commended him for “living a life as a beacon guiding our way: our responsibility to our students and to our profession.”

In 2001, Wieman, along with two other physicists, won the Nobel in Physics for research leading to the creation of the Bose-Einstein condensate. Wieman also won the National Science Foundation’s Distinguished Teaching Scholar Award in 2001, the Carnegie Foundation’s U.S. University Professor of the Year Award in 2004, and the American Association of Physics Teachers’ Oersted Medal in 2007. He is Chairman of the Academy Board on Science Education and currently teaches at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. In his introduction, physics professor Arthur Eisenkraft, a friend of Wieman’s who had helped arrange the visit, noted Wieman’s interesting career change.

“Since winning the Nobel, Carl has shifted his focus away from exploring science to exploring ways to improve science education at the college level,” he said. Eisenkraft compared Wieman to Nobel laureate Linus Pauling and Nobel nominee Bono of the band U2, remarking that Wieman realized “there’s something more important than advancing science; advancing science education across the country. It’s exciting to have someone of Carl’s renown realize the importance of the issue and [at] one he should devote time and bring thought to.”

Wieman’s latest research aims to raise student achievement in science by making science education more effective. He covered three main topics: Why science education is important; what research can teach us about teaching and the way people learn; and institutional change.

Before launching into his presentation, however, Wieman was quick to point out that those assembled “shouldn’t believe this because of my Nobel Prize, but because it’s all backed up by research data from all over the world,” adding, “Nobody noticed my research before I won the Nobel.”

The need to improve science education first came to Wieman’s attention when he realized, through a poll of his students, that his lectures left them baffled. It was “a frustrating puzzle” trying to figure out how to help them learn, but the breakthrough came, he said, when he noticed a pattern among his graduate students: Even with 17 years of coursework under their belts, they were still “clueless” about physics, but after a few years in the lab, they became experts about the subject. This realization made him want to research how people learn.

Wieman targeted three areas of improvement as benchmarks: retention of information from a lecture, conceptual understanding, and beliefs about physics and problem-solving.

He discovered that, after a ten-minute break following a lecture, only 10% of the students could retain any “significant information,” while the majority were only able to recall vague generalities about what had just been discussed.

Furthermore, he learned that the average student finishes a semester of lectures with an understanding of less than 30% of the concepts they did not already know. But perhaps his most remarkable discovery was that research showed that students who had finished an introductory physics class saw less of a real-world connection to physics than before studying it.

His assessment was brief but pointed: “The traditional lecture is ineffective.” Citing cognitive psychology studies, Wieman noted that brain development is similar to muscular development: It requires strenuous use over time. Along those lines, watching someone do something—such as giving a lecture or lifting weights—does not convey benefits to the observer.

They become neither smarter nor stronger. Because people learn by doing, he theorized, students must be prompted to do the work themselves. To this end, teachers must engage students, monitor their progress, and guide their thinking.

To do this in a lecture setting with up to 500 students, Wieman said, technology is essential. In his classes, Wieman uses a personal response system—a “clicker”—that allows students to answer questions he has posed; a computer collects and stores a history of each student’s answers.

He warns, however, that while implementation of such a system is easy, it is not automatically useful. “Students may be leery of this technology if they think of it as nothing more than an attendance-taker,” he said. “Then they will resent it [and] the clicker becomes [self-defeating]: it’s necessary to create engagement and collect/provide timely feedback.”

He suggests accomplishing this by asking challenging questions, fostering student-to-student discussions in which they analyze each other’s responses, and providing follow-up discussion about their thinking.

“The classroom alone isn’t enough,” he said. “It’s just a starting point.”

Data support the effectiveness of this methodology: Retention of information following a 15-minute, post-lecture break increases by 90% after two days; conceptual understanding soared from about 25% to between 50-70%; and students’ beliefs about physics’ real-world applicability rose slightly, although Wieman noted research in this final area has just begun. Nonetheless, he said, the results are promising.

To better serve the next generation of scientists, Wieman called for educators to turn the microscope on themselves. “There is a need to change the educational culture … [these initiatives] need to be implemented at the departmental level and be internally driven and supported,” he said in closing.

During the question-and-answer session that followed his hour-long presentation, Wieman noted: “Research says lectures are not totally ineffective, which is the only way I can stand up here and present this information with a clear conscience,” which drew appreciative laughter from the crowd.

“Ask as much as you’d like to think you are, you’re just not conveying that much information through lectures,” he added.

He also pointed out that the key to helping students develop a coherent understanding of so many topic areas is organizational thinking. “This is critical,” he said.

“You have to keep coming back and explaining the context of the material and how it links together … how things are different and similar.”

To make students care about physics, he said, it was essential for them to see the direct relevance of physics to them. “Explain to them: You can use this in another course or in your career.”

Explain how the microwave oven in their homes works, and address their curiosity.

Graduate College of Education Dean Carol Colbeck called Wieman’s approach to experiential learning “a good educational practice with solid research to back it up. It’s a great foundation. When you engage in real-world problems, it makes the concepts come alive.”

In his lecture, Wieman stressed that lectures alone are not enough. (Photo by Harry Brett)
Inventive Professor Helps Other Scientists Take a Closer Look

By Julia Reischel

“In an office tucked away in the Science Building, physics professor D.V.G.L.N. Rao and his protégé post-doc Chandra S. Yelleswarapu finish each other’s sentences as they explain the workings of their invention, the Fourier Phase Contrast Microscope, which images minute organisms more realistically and in greater detail than the microscopes widely used by biologists around the world.

This year, in a rare honor for a UMass Boston faculty member, Rao is being recognized, along with seven others throughout the UMass system, with a $30,000 award from the University of Massachusetts Office of Commercial Ventures and Intellectual Property (CVIP) that will help them develop the microscope commercially.

The award is part of the CVIP’s annual set of grants that reward innovative research at UMass with funds aimed at developing commercial applications for promising technologies. This year, in the awards’ fifth cycle, the grants total $240,000 and support a broad array of technologies in many fields of research, including medical devices, HIV drug effectiveness, and biomass fuel production.

Dr. Rao’s microscope is the only UMass Boston technology to receive the award.

As Rao and Yelleswarapu explain the complicated physics that underpin their work, William布拉h looked proudly on. As the executive director of the UMass Boston Venture Development Center, which manages the CVIP program on campus and acts as the incubator and promoter of university research, they played a crucial role in procuring funding for Dr. Rao’s work.

“We regard Dr. Rao as an innovator way ahead of his time,” Brah says. “Society is demanding innovation, and it is appropriate for the university to discover his work as it wakes up to the call for innovation. Dr. Rao has an active lab, active teaching, and active publications—the whole package.”

Rao and Yelleswarapu’s microscope is based on a dramatic improvement upon standard phase contrast microscopes, which work by exploiting a property of light, its “phase,” which shifts when light travels through transparent or semi-transparent materials. Human eyes can’t detect phase shifts, but through the use of a device called a “phase plate,” the phase shifts are converted into variations in the light’s brightness, allowing scientists to get a more detailed view of the inner workings of biological specimens.

When phase contrast microscopes were first introduced in the 1930’s, they eventually won their inventor a Nobel Prize, but they had their drawbacks: Cells appear surrounded by a white “halo.”

Rao and Yelleswarapu’s update uses lasers, liquid crystals, and a lens that performs a “Fourier transform” on the light waves, which create brighter, clearer, three-dimensional images. Additionally, the team’s design is also more rugged, mechanically simpler, and simpler to operate than the models used in laboratories today.

“It uses no moving parts, and it is a lot more user-friendly,” Rao says.

Rao and Yelleswarapu plan to use the $30,000 from the grant to create a working prototype that will help them convince a manufacturer to sell their microscope.

Rao is delighted to have the extra resources because they will not only help him introduce his invention to the world, but it will allow him to focus on what he does best: teaching and researching.

“I know what I’m good at, and I know what I cannot do,” he says. “I’m not a development guy.”

Rao has been a Professor of Physics at UMass Boston for forty years, and has been producing original research for the same amount of time. In 1973, the year of the first graduating UMass Boston class, he published a research paper that was recognized by the American Physical Society.

Since then, he has published over 100 papers and procured five patents.

First and foremost, however, Rao sees himself as a teacher. He teaches two classes and has served as the Graduate Program Director for the past ten years. He has shepherded his students to their own careers, and has given all of them, even undergraduates, opportunities to conduct original research in his laboratory, producing new insights into optics and lasers.

“I’m a teacher and a basic researcher,” Rao says. “Luckily, what I do for my basic research has real-world applications.”

The microscope is just one of those real-world applications. There’s also mammogram technology that can detect “micro-calculations,” a laser eye-protection project, optical holographic storage, and photonic applications for nano materials.

It’s a testament to Rao’s relationship with his students that some have stayed with him even after getting their doctorates. One of these is Yelleswarapu, who says that talking with Rao is always an education. “Not just about science, but about everything,” he says.

As if to illustrate that point, Rao digresses from his lecture on optics to mention that the simple principles that underlie his research have sparked his interest in spirituality. For example, he says, phase and intensity are excellent metaphors for the religious principles of the soul and the body.

“Intensity is like the body, and phase is like the soul,” he says. “The soul has all the characteristics of a person, while the body is the part that you see.”

“You cannot see the phase, just like you cannot see the soul,” Yelleswarapu adds, nodding. “But it carries some of the most important information of all.”

As he watches his former student, Rao’s smile deepens. Clearly, the $30,000 grant is a prize, but hearing Yelleswarapu explain the implications that their invention has for the spirit is priceless.

CM Student Team Named B-School Beanpot Finalists

By Amy Mei and Mary Ann Machanic

In just their first appearance at the event this year, a team of College of Management undergrads had an impressive showing in the B-School Beanpot Case Analysis Competition, held in late February at Boston University.

Modeled on the annual hockey tournament, the B-School Beanpot pits local colleges against one another in a two-round format. Unlike its four-school athletic counterpart, nine schools each send two teams to the B-School Beanpot. Along with Beanpot regulars Boston College, Boston University, Northeastern, Suffolk, Babson, and Bentley, the field this year also included teams from newcomers Bryant College, Merrimack, and UMass Boston.

In the first round, teams assume the role of consultants and develop their proposals for this year’s case. A panel of twelve corporate executives then review the proposals and decide which four teams to advance to the final round. The four finalists then give a presentation to the judges, with the winner taking home the B-School Beanpot trophy.

CM’s two entries consisted of Glenn Natali, Sandy Kiriazikidis, Elena Aisllani, Linda Chu, and Saida Abdalla on one team, and Jeff Masse, Davia Tremoularis, Yelena Bryant, Hassan Bammì, and Jemin Patel on the other. While the second group didn’t advance past the preliminaries, the first team made B-School Beanpot history by making the cut for the final round, eventually placing fourth overall and sharing a $250 prize—the first time any school had made it into the finals in their first year. The College of Management is very proud of both teams, and also of faculty coach and assistant professor Theodora Welch and Amy Mei, CM undergraduate program director, who worked with the students to prepare for the competition.

CM teams were selected just prior to fall final exams, with the bulk of the practices held during the early weeks of the spring semester. The College of Management is already looking ahead to next year’s B-School Beanpot. Visit bschoolbeanpot.com for more information.
College of Public and Community Service. He also coauthored “Quantitative Form and Instructional Technology,” presented at the 2008 Northeast Regional Computing Program (NER-COMP) Conference in Providence, Rhode Island, on March 12. Her co-protagonist was Mark Schlesinger, Associate Vice President for Academic Technology at the University of Massachusetts President’s Office.

Daryl Ford, Director of Communication and Infrastructure Services, and Jamie Soule, Team Lead, IT Operations, presented “Data Center Reliability and Infrastructure Commissioning” at the 2008 Northeast Regional Computing Program (NER-COMP) Conference in Providence, Rhode Island, on March 12.

Philosophy professor Lawrence Blum presented a critique of David Wong’s National Morals at a “Second Tier” conference at the Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Association, and a comment on Nel Noddings’s Care and Empathy at the Moral Development of the Social and Interna- tional Group at the American Educational Research Association.

On March 11, Donna Haig Fried- man, Director of the Center for Social Policy, and doctoral student Jennifer Haas highlighted her dissertation findings from their participatory action research project at a University of Haifa-hosted conference, titled “New Family Relations & the Third Sector: Knowledge, Power, and Partnerships.”

From March 16 to 21, Center for Social Policy Research Director Francine Carré attended meetings on the informal economy in Accra (Ghana) and Delhi, India, and participated in a policy dialogue at India’s National Council for Applied Economic Research on March 20.

Institute for Community Inclusion staff assistant Rachel Nemeth Coch gave a presentation titled “Demystifying MCAS Al” at the Rehlinking Severly Disabilities: Current Trends in Practice conference, held March 28 at Lesley University in Cambridge. Her talk focused on the topic of transitioning teens to adulthood at an Educational Surrogate Parent program, to be held in April in Marlborough, Mass-achusetts.

Jeff Coburn, the Institute for Community Inclusion’s senior web special- ist, gave a presentation titled “Universal Design Solutions in Technology and Accessible Media” at the AmeriCorps Northwest Net- work Conference in Portland University in Oregon, Portland.


Assistant Professor of English Scott Masano was an invited speaker at a plenary session of the Shakespeare Association of America, held March 22 to 25 in Dallas. His presentation was entitled “Prospero’s Monster: The Masculine Birth of Science Fiction in The Tempest.”

Director of Academic Support Pro- grams Mark Pavlak will be a panelist for the PEN New England Freedom to Write Committee annual forum, sponsored by Cambridge Forum on April 10 at First Parish Church Harvard Square. This year’s topic is “The American Bicentennial: Risky Writing and the Forces Keeping It Silent.”

Robert Wiener, Graduate Program Director of International Relations at the McCormick Graduate School of Policy Studies, participated in the annual meeting of the Interna- tional Studies Association, held in San Francisco from March 26 to 30. Wiener was a discussant in the panel “Quasi-States: The Politics of the Exo States,” participated in a mock trial on “The Responsibility of States to Take Armed Action to Stop Genocide,” participated in an ISA Compendium Project Panel on Diplomatic Studies, and participated in an ISA Compendium Project Panel on “Ongoing Debates in Interna- tional Law.”

Sylvia Mignon, Director of the MS in Human Services Program at the College of Public and Community Service, presented a paper titled “Substance Abuse and Other Health Concerns of Native Americans in the Greater Boston Area” at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in William M. Holmes, at the annual meeting of the Eastern Sociological Society in New York City on Febru- ary 22.

Associate Professor Pepi Leistyna of Applied Linguistics Graduate Studies was invited by the Gates Founda- tion to give a speech on “Global Economics and National Trends in Education: Why This Should Mat- ter” at the 2008 National Conference on the plenary session for the Youth Organizing Convening: Strengthen- ing Youth Organizing for Education Reform convention, held in New Orleans on March 8.

Professors Rona Flippo and Janna Agen were invited to present the plenary session for “Education and Innovation: The Third Sector: Knowledge, Power, and Partnerships.”

Professor Rona Flippo of the Cur- riculum and Instruction Department and Professor Tara Parker of the Higher Education Program, all in the Graduate College of Education and Human Development, presented their research in two different paper presentations at the Massachusetts Reading Association (MRA) Annual Conference, held in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, in early April.

In May, Professor Rona Flippo of the Curriculum and Instruction Depart- ment in the Graduate College of Edu- cation will give the keynote address for the 10th Annual Conference of Teachers, an Educational Association, an International Reading Association SIG, at the annual Inter- national Reading Association (IRA) Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. Also at the convention, Flippo’s work with her Literacy Diagnosis and Instruc- tion classes at UMass Boston will be presented at the IRA Pre-Convention Institute on Early Literacy.

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CAMPUS NOTES

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