Shelter Poverty Study: For Minority Households, Housing Costs Cut Deeper into Budgets Between 1990 and 2000

By Ed Hayward

Nearly 27 percent of all households in Massachusetts were “shelter poor” in 2000, with households headed by Latinos, African Americans, and Asians nearly twice as likely as White households to find housing costs absorbing money needed to pay for their non-housing needs, according to a new UMass Boston report.

The shelter poor are those households that cannot meet their needs for food, clothing, medical care, and transportation at some minimum level of adequacy after paying for housing. The incidence of shelter poverty, UMass Boston Professor Michael Stone found, is 55 percent for Latino households, 42 percent among Black households, and about 39 percent for Asian households.

“While households headed by a person of color accounted for about one of every six Massachusetts households, shelter poor households of color accounted for nearly one out of every four shelter poor households,” said Stone, a professor of community planning and public policy. “We’re talking about 46 percent of households of color living in shelter poverty; that has serious implications for neighborhoods, cities, and towns, and the Commonwealth.”

Of particular relevance to the issue of shelter poverty, households headed by persons of color are larger on the average than those headed by Whites. The median household size among renters is 2.9 for Latino-headed households, 2.3 Asian American, 2.2 Black, and 1.6 White. Among home-owning households, the median size is 3.5 for Latino-headed households, 3.4 Asian American, 2.9 Black, and 2.4 White. Since it costs larger households more to meet their non-shelter basic needs, the squeeze between their incomes and housing costs is more challenging than for smaller households of the same income.

Stone prepared his report for three of UMass Boston’s policy research institutes: the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, the Institute for Asian American Studies, and the William Monroe Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture. They are three of the 38 centers and institutes on campus that provide research, scholarship, and service to Boston and the Commonwealth.

“Home ownership is often touted as an ‘anchor’ that allows a household to weather economic storms,” said Miren Uriarte, director of the Gastón Institute. “But the more we learn about shelter poverty, we see that when a household has insufficient or no savings...” (Continued on page 2)

McCormack Graduate School Survey: Race Relations Remain Challenge for Massachusetts Residents

By Ed Hayward

While Massachusetts voters made the historic decision in November to elect the state’s first African-American governor, the majority of state residents rate the quality of race relations in Massachusetts as “fair” or “poor,” according to a new survey conducted by UMass Boston’s John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies.

The findings of the Boston Diversity Project survey of 749 Massachusetts adults—including statistically significant samples from all major racial groups—show that within an increasingly diverse population in Massachusetts race relations must be improved, immigrant rights garner significant support, and many of the state’s public institutions struggle with low public confidence ratings.

“Boston’s economic future is going to depend on our ability to attract and sustain a racially and ethnically diverse population in order to spur innovation and growth in an increasingly competitive world,” Chancellor Michael Collins said. “The McCormack School’s new research shows we have social challenges to confront to better develop our workforce and improve the civic health of our cities and towns and the neighborhoods that sustain them.”

Among the findings:
- Fifty-six percent of whites, 75 percent of African Americans, 67 percent of Latinos, and 52 percent of Asian respondents rated the quality of race relations today as “fair” or “poor.”
- While 45 percent of Whites and 43 percent of Asians state that conditions have “gotten better” for minority groups, only 16 percent of African Americans and 29.3 percent of Latinos agree.
- A total of 42 percent of African Americans and 49 percent of Latinos said they had experienced discrimination during the past 12 months.
- When provided with information about the matter, 82 percent of African Americans, 80.5 percent of Latinos, 79.9 percent of Asians, and 67.9 percent of Whites favor charging in-state rates at public universities to undocumented immigrants who graduate from high school here.
- All racial groups, except Asians, reported a decline in confidence in state government. Those who have “great confidence” dropped by nearly half or more since 1998.

“Massachusetts has taken the significant step of electing our first African-American governor, but it’s clear that race relations is a standing area of improvement our major institutions need to begin to confront,” said Steve Crosby, dean of the McCormack Graduate School. “As a university with an urban mission, our role is to turn our research into action and not just lead the discussion, but lead change.”

The Boston Diversity Project is being undertaken by the McCormack Graduate School in order to conduct an in-depth, academic-quality study of racial
London,” says Nixon. With an explosion of “cheap print” materials, more and more people had access to literature, were learning how to read, and were thirsting for stories beyond the facts of the day, explains Nixon. “Readers of 300 years ago were fascinated with opinion, gossip, and scandal,” she says. “This was a period of a crucial shift in literary culture, with average people starting to read and demanding popular stories in print.”

A longtime scholar of archival material, Nixon worked closely with the BPL’s Earle Havens, acting keeper of rare books and manuscripts, to create a graduate-level class for students to work hands-on with archival material in the Rare Books Room and to create their own exhibit based on what they found. Students examined more than 150 pieces, which are displayed in four cases in the Chevers Room in BPL’s McKim Building.

“It can be a transformative experience to work with rare books, to get your hands dirty in its raw materials,” said Nixon. The graduate students became their own curators of the project. They explored four themes in selecting their materials: concepts of literacy, the idea of “news,” the lure of crooks and highwaymen, and the rise of the novel. The students involved were Ryan Black, Ian Doreian, Nicholas Fitzgerald, Emmy Gair, Jennifer Giblin, Bridget Hagerty, Ira Halevi, Matthew Kelly, Sara Osborne, Alan Reinstein, Alistair Saltus, Laura Sherriff, and Joseph Spremulli.

Shelter Poverty (cont.)

unstable income, the anchor can become a deadweight. Policy makers and legislators need to understand there is a significant need to bring stability to an increasingly unstable class of renters and homeowners in a high-priced housing market.”

The analysis takes note of the increasingly diverse Massachusetts population. In 1990 there were 207,000 Massachusetts households headed by a person of color. By 2005, this number had doubled to 416,000. In 1990 households headed by a person of color accounted for about one out of every 11 households in the state (9.2 percent); by 2000 this had increased to more than one out of 113.5 percent, and by 2005 to more than one out of 17.0 percent.

According to Stone, the shelter poverty analysis is a “real world” approach to the issue. Conventionally, housing affordability is measured by a simple and universal standard that housing costs of 30 percent or less of a household’s income are “affordable,” housing costs of over 30 percent are “unaffordable,” and housing costs of over 50 percent are “worst-case housing needs.” Comparing the two measurements, Stone found that 46 percent of households of color were shelter poor in 2000, compared to 41 percent paying more than 30 percent of income.

The report recommends: Link strategies for income development with housing support, focused primarily in the cities and neighborhoods with concentrations of very low-income renters of color. Preserve, improve, and expand non-profit and public housing to increase housing affordability, but also as the focal points for educational and social supports for shelter poor single-parent families. Promote models of community- and resident-controlled non-speculative ownership—such as limited-equity cooperatives, community land trusts, and mutual housing associations—which can provide security of tenure and experience in resident control for moderate-income households of color who cannot afford conventional home ownership.

“Create a public program to provide permanent mortgage relief for low-income home owners who are shelter poor and at risk of foreclosure.”

The University Reporter

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Student-Curated Exhibit Takes a New Look at Early Pop Culture
By Leigh DuPuy
A new exhibit of rare books at the Boston Public Library (BPL) highlights one of the earliest rises of pop culture in London with pamphlets, broadsides, and rare books telling stories of criminals, ghosts, shipwrecks, and pirates. UMass Boston faculty and graduate students worked with BPL rare book curators to organize a first-of-its-kind exhibit, “Crooks, Rogues, and Maids Less Than Virtuous,” which opened on December 12 and will show through May 1. The exhibit is the first collaboration for UMass Boston and the Boston Public Library.

“This is a great example of what happens when collaboration flourishes,” said Bernard Margolis, president of the Boston Public Library, at the opening reception for the exhibit.

“We were able to witness firsthand materials directly from the early streets of London’s pop culture—a pop culture built around literacy,” says English professor Cheryl Nixon, project leader.

The exhibit includes articles from the first newspapers and magazines in London, which blur the lines between fact and fiction with stories of Atlantis, miraculous births, and the supernatural. It also includes “true life” stories of famed criminals, highwaymen, and female pickpockets. The materials were gathered from the riches of the Boston Public Library’s Trent Collection of Defoe and Defoeana, Daniel Defoe, writer of Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders, is considered to be one of the inventors of the English novel.

“One of our most popular formats of literature—the novel—was born in the streets of eighteenth-century London,” says Nixon. With an explosion of “cheap print” materials, more and more people had access to literature, were learning how to read, and were thirsting for stories beyond the facts of the day, explains Nixon. “Readers of 300 years ago were fascinated with opinion, gossip, and scandal,” she says. “This was a period of a crucial shift in literary culture, with average people starting to read and demanding popular stories in print.”

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The exhibit was made possible by support from the Boston Public Library, the Boston Public Library Foundation, and the Chancellor’s Office, College of Liberal Arts, and Office of University Advancement.

“We hope to continue to work on projects between these two great urban institutions, both of which are committed to public education,” says Nixon of her collaboration with Havens.

Nixon’s love of archival research comes from her own digging in London’s Court of Chancery records. A specialist in eighteenth-century literature, Nixon has created a comprehensive survey linking the notoriety of orphan and surrogate families with British court cases. She has also brought previous classes to the Massachusetts Archives to research manuscripts in its collection of colonial and early state materials, which include records on witchcraft trials, Indian affairs, sea security, and the archives of Plymouth County.

At the opening of the exhibit, Earle Havens, BPL’s acting keeper of rare books and manuscripts; Cheryl Nixon, English professor; Chancellor Michael Collins; and Bernard Margolis, president of the Boston Public Library. (Photos by Harry Brett)
Employees Spend Community Partnership Day Sprucing Up Victory Programs’ Portis Family House for the Holidays

By Ed Hayward

Chancellor Michael Collins, campus employees, and students teamed up on December 5 for Community Partnership Day to provide volunteer services to the Victory Programs’ Portis Family House in Jamaica Plain.

Trading their business attire for work clothes, Collins and the university’s executive leadership joined faculty and staff volunteers to paint and decorate the common family area at Portis Family House, a short-term shelter and transitional housing program that serves approximately seven families.

“Victory Programs and the Portis Family House make our city a better place by providing housing, support, and services for parents who are willing to work hard to strengthen themselves and their families,” said Chancellor Collins.

“UMass Boston is deeply committed to community engagement, and it is a privilege to volunteer at the Portis Family House, especially during the holiday season, when we all take time to appreciate the importance of family, health, and home.”

Nearly 200 volunteers buzzed themselves painting inside Portis Family House home. New children’s furniture, painted in bright colors by students organized by the university’s Office of Service Learning, was also delivered to brighten up the family space.

“The residents and staff of Portis Family House are grateful for the time and support UMass Boston faculty, staff, and students have provided as we approach the holidays,” said Victory Programs executive director Jonathan D. Scott. “By bringing Community Partnership Day to Portis Family House, the university has recognized the hard work of the families and staff who make up the Victory Programs community.”

Victory Programs, Inc., is a Boston-based multiservice agency that opens doors to recovery, hope, and a better life for individuals and families facing homelessness, addiction, and other chronic illness. For more than 30 years, Victory Programs has been offering men and women the chance to regain their dreams, their hopes, and their dignity.

“The strength of UMass Boston’s community outreach is a willingness to roll up their sleeves and provide targeted help—whether it’s painting the community room at Portis Family House, conducting a needs assessment, forming a method group, or working with local businesses,” said Lee M. Kennedy, chairman of Lee Kennedy Co. and a longtime supporter of Victory Programs. “This is a university that is engaged with the community, and many people benefit from this work.”

Top and bottom right) UMass Boston staffers pitched in to paint and decorate the common family area and to clean and spruce up the yard at the Victory Programs’ Portis House in Jamaica Plain. (Bottom left) Jonathan D. Scott, executive director of the Portis House, worked alongside Chancellor Collins as part of Community Partnership Day, held on December 5. (Photos by Harry Brett)

Hannah Sevian Wins UMass President’s Public Service Award

Hannah Sevian, a professor of chemistry and science education, was recently honored with a President’s Office Public Service Award for her commitment to science education.

This December, UMass Boston’s Hannah Sevian was honored with the University of Massachusetts President’s Public Service Award for her commitment to science education.

Sevian, an assistant professor jointly appointed in science education and chemistry and associate director of the Center of Science and Math in Context (COSMIC), was recognized for her commitment to providing science education of the highest quality to all students, especially underrepresented, overlooked, or underprivileged K-12 students in urban communities.

She is the principal investigator for the Boston Science Partnership, a $12.5 million National Science Foundation-financed project designed to improve science achievement for students in grades six to 12 in the Boston Public Schools and the co-principal investigator on the Watershed Integrated Science Partnership ($3.5 million), that provides graduate students majoring in science with a rich, year-long experience in the city a better place by providing housing, support, and services for parents who are willing to work hard to strengthen themselves and their families,” said Chancellor Collins.

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Race Relations (cont.)

While the political discussion continues, universities are also exploring the issue of access and inclusion by expanding their programs and services. For example, many institutions now offer courses and workshops focused on diversity and inclusion, providing students with the tools and knowledge necessary to navigate a increasingly diverse world.

In addition, universities are partnering with local communities to address issues of racial inequality. By working closely with community leaders and organizations, universities can help to create a sense of community and belonging for all students, regardless of their background.

However, while universities may have the best intentions, they are not always successful in achieving their goals. Some students report feeling isolated and excluded from their institutions, while others may feel pressure to conform to certain standards and expectations.

To address these challenges, universities are implementing new approaches to diversity and inclusion. For example, some institutions are creating inclusive curricula that reflect the experiences and perspectives of all students. Others are implementing programs that provide support and resources for students from underrepresented backgrounds.

Despite these efforts, there is still much work to be done. The challenges of diversity and inclusion are complex and multifaceted, requiring a sustained and concerted effort to achieve meaningful change.

In conclusion, universities play a critical role in shaping the future of society. By promoting diversity and inclusion, universities can help to create a more just and equitable world. While there is much work to be done, universities are taking steps to address these challenges and create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for all students.
New Lux Magazine Highlights Creative and Dynamic Student Work

By Maria Helena Serpa

As the semester came to a close, students, faculty, and staff going about their usual business may have noticed the glossy image of a striking young man with a mohawk adorning the cover of a new publication. Lux, a magazine created by a group of dedicated and talented UMass Boston students, was designed to give a voice and a face to the UMass Boston's varied and dynamic student body.

One look at the sleek cover and readers will see an example of the extraordinary ambition of UMass Boston students. A look inside the magazine will illuminate their tremendous talents and potential. As a representation of the student body, the publication suggests an accomplished and industrious group, and like many of the students themselves, the magazine has not had an easy path to its fruition.

Lux evolved from a UMass Boston Honors Program newsletter, the final project of two honors students, Devin Bramhall and Lucienne Pierre. The newsletter's focus was mainly scholarly, with in-depth articles showcasing student and faculty research. Anna Tsui, Lux's current editor in chief, had a vision for something a bit different.

“I was inspired by the kids in my classes, who are amazingly dynamic,” says Tsui. “I felt there was a lack of communication between colleges and even majors, and I wanted to learn about what they’re doing.”

With this new purpose, Tsui set about changing the face and the content of the magazine so that it would serve as a forum for a variety of students and their concerns and work. To this end, she recruited staff, e-mailed more than 30 faculty for submissions, got the word out to students in her classes to submit, and, importantly, approached the Office of Student Life to make Lux an official student organization, which provided the magazine with something they did not have before—a budget.

However, $7,000 for the year, the standard allowance for student organizations, only goes so far. The magazine cost $4,500 to print, which would make multiple issues a year a challenge. Lux staff hope to produce one issue a semester, with the possibility of a smaller supplemental issue in between.

The greatest challenge for the Lux staff was organizing their busy schedules to collaborate on a project that they had to build from the ground up. Tsui and five other staff members, Jade Goheen, Kate Danckert, Yelena Bryant, Sarah Caccio, and Chris O’Keefe, spoke of the process as daunting. The nature of campus life meant the Lux staff had to work twice as hard to ensure they came together to bring the issue to life. “We had no set space, no computer, no software, no structure for our staff, no training,” says Tsui. “We had to find our own printer, which is all the way out in Washington. And that’s just half the battle—then there’s the distribution.”

The staff’s collaborative effort has resulted in a polished product. This issue, devoted to money and finance, is vibrant and pertinent, with articles ranging in topic from student financial aid and scholarship advice to broader issues, including economic systems and the problem of homelessness. The articles and photographs showcase students and faculty from various majors and departments, holding true to Lux’s purpose to serve as an inclusive, campus-wide forum.

“Lux is not a typical campus, but it’s a great campus,” says Lux editor Sarah Caccio. For Anna Tsui this issue of Lux was about harnessing that greatness. “People are capable of much more than they think,” says Tsui. “This was all about discovering what they’re capable of.”

Winter Wonderland Celebrations Highlight Spirit of Giving and Fun

By Maria Helena Serpa

This year, the spirit of the holiday season took the form of a snowman in a bearet and a colorful scarf as the UMass Boston community received an invitation to “A Winter Wonderland,” Chancellor Collins’ annual university-wide holiday party. The snowman is the work of Toni Jonas Silver of the Colonel Marr Boys and Girls Club, one of many talented young community artists currently on display in the Campus Center. The day promised to be one of good food, good music, and good company, and included the opportunity to both give and receive in celebration of the end of the semester and the anticipation of beginning a new year.

Holiday music and a spirit of fun set a warm and festive tone in the Clark Athletic Center’s ice rink, where the festivities kicked off. Skaters were treated to soft pretzels and hot chocolate to keep them going and help ward off the chill. All were welcome regardless of ability, and skates were provided to encourage everyone to attend.

Following the ice skating, all were invited to the Campus Center, where the festivities kicked off. Skaters were treated to soft pretzels and hot chocolate to keep them going and help ward off the chill. All were welcome regardless of ability, and skates were provided to encourage everyone to attend.

Center Ballroom to enjoy a cornucopia of goodies inspired by the traditional treats of various cultures. From the toasted ravioli to the chicken satay, there was something for everyone to enjoy, including those with a sweet tooth, who indulged in pumpkin cheesecake, Italian cookies, and baklava. Guests munched and mingled as the Troubadours of Truth, a jazz quintet composed of UMass Boston students and alumni, played jazz arrangements of holiday favorites as screenings of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer and Frosty the Snowman provided a holiday visual. The afternoon’s featured entertainment culminated with a performance by Professor Sharon Montello’s hip-hop dance class, who charmed the guests with an energetic and acrobatic display.

In the true spirit of the season, the university community demonstrated their generosity and kindness, donating games and toys to fill the playroom in the Neely House, a bed-and-breakfast-style home away from home for cancer patients and their families. All who donated were entered in a raffle for tickets to the Holiday Pops at Symphony Hall, the lucky winner of which was Julie Sanabria of University Advising.

The day offered the chance to enjoy some great food and music, take a break and have some fun, and spread a little holiday cheer. All who attended or donated a gift to the Neely House helped to set the tone for a festive holiday season and a happy new year to come.
Dick Cluster, associate director of the University Honors Program, is celebrating the publication of The History of Havana, a 500-year social history he wrote with Cuban scholar Rafael Hernández. (Photo by Harry Breet)

The Center for Media and Society Launches New Ethnic Wire Service

By Lisa Gentes

UMass Boston is giving voice to the ethnic and immigrant communities of New England with NEWz, a new ethnic wire service and student internship that’s launching this January.

“It’ll be a website, a portal, which is going to aggregate the best of the ethnic media stories of the week in one place—which is unusual because we’re crossing all these ethnic boundaries,” said Ellen Hume, director of the Center on Media and Society.

Hume, a longtime journalist, current professor, and media commentator, said the New England Ethnic Newswire (“NEWz,” tentatively located at www.gonews.com) will include participation from local ethnic media, community forums, and student interns in her undergraduate class “Local and Ethnic Journalism.”

“Area journals will come in to coach the students throughout the project,” Kenneth Cooper, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist formerly of the Boston Globe and Washington Post, is a fellow at the Center on Media and Society for this academic year and will aid students with their projects and help teach Hume’s class.

“We are delighted to have found Ken in the right place at the right time to work with us on the Ethnic Media Project,” Hume said.

NEWz will include features gleaned each week from the nearly 100 local ethnic media listed in the Center’s database on such issues as culture, tradition, business, and politics. “We’re going to get the voices of these neighborhoods heard on our website,” she said.

The UMass Boston project is “trying to use the Internet as a way to cross ethnic divides, to bring new vitality and information to all of us in New England.”

We want to raise the visibility of the ethnic media and also help the mainstream media who are struggling in many ways to cover all the diverse changes in New England, Hume said.

The Center on Media and Society, part of the McCormack Graduate School, hosts the Ethnic Media Project, which is creating NEWz. The web project was funded in part by a grant from the Ford Foundation and through volunteers who are donating their time.

One of the goals of the project is to highlight important stories that may be overlooked by the mainstream media, she said.

NEWz will also include a reporter’s tool kit and a “wiki” for the public to develop a professional code of ethics for the news media.

Local media that have already agreed to partner with UMass Boston on this project include El Planeta, Sampan, KoreaBoston, the White Eagle, Irish Emigrant, Boston Haitian Reporter, WBUR Radio, Harvard Weekly, and Bay State Banner. Hume said the project expects to partner with others, including some local TV outlets.

Boston.com, the website run by the Boston Globe, said it will highlight and link to some of NEWz’s best stories, Hume said.

For more information, contact her at allen.hume@umb.

Researchers Explore Boston Harbor for U.S.S. Niagara Wreck

By Leigh DuPuy

UMass Boston professor Allen Gontz and student Christopher Maio boarded the R.V. Looney on December 19 in search of the U.S.S. Niagara, which has been lying on the floor of Boston Harbor for more than one hundred years. A steam-run and sail-powered frigate commissioned in 1857, the Niagara was once a Civil War blockade-runner and escort and was used to help build the first transatlantic cable. With the arrival of new, steel-hulled frigates, the Niagara was retired, stripped of most of its armament, and scuttled in 1897 in Boston Harbor. Gontz and Maio are working on a collaborative project with the Massachusetts Bureau of Underwater Archaeological Resources to help preserve the Niagara’s site.

After locating the wreck using geophysical and geological tools, they will compile a geophysical site assessment and work with the state to help get the site listed on the National Register of Historic Places and designate the site as an underwater archaeological preserve.

A coastal geologist and geo-physicist, Gontz is a faculty member in the Environmental, Earth and Ocean Sciences Department. He is an expert in assessment of the seafloor and coastal zone and frequently applies this knowledge to assist in identifying and mapping marine archaeological sites.

The team has been using a variety of high-tech equipment, including side-scan sonar to get an image of the seafloor using sound and a magnetometer, which detects metal in the wreck. The tools allow the researchers to see through the bottom of the seafloor and analyze the different composition sediments, according to Gontz. “These tools are like fish finders on steroids,” says Gontz.

ICME

By Leigh DuPuy

UMass Boston’s Dick Cluster was able to do what few scholars could. He’s been to Cuba a half a dozen times since 1969, collaborated with Cuban professors of English, and, most recently, co-authored a book with Cuban scholar Rafael Hernández, a project Cluster believes to be the first since a U.S. ban on such collaborations was recently lifted. The result is a comprehensive social and cultural history of the country and a capital: The History of Havana.

“The book was unique because it was the first coauthored work by an American and Cuban writer to be commissioned by a U.S. publisher in a long time,” explains Cluster. “This has been illegal only since the end of 2004.”

Cluster is the associate director of the University Honors Program and teaches first-year seminars and upper-level honors classes in history, literature, and economics. Characterizing himself as a generalist, Cluster has built a multifaceted career. He worked for a number of years as a journalist for the economist publication, The History of Havana, a 500-year social history he wrote with Cuban scholar Rafael Hernández. (Photo by Harry Breet)

He and Hernández, the editor of Tomas, a Cuban quarterly in history, culture, economics, and politics, worked together initially when Cluster translated Hernández’s book of essays on Cuban civil society for the University Press of Florida. After the success of this collaboration, Hernández and Cluster decided to try their hands at a more ambitious project.

The History of Havana examines what it was like to live in Havana over a span of 500 years, from 1519 through the 21st century, says Cluster. Cluster and Hernández sifted through archival sources, social histories, memoirs, fiction, and travel narratives, and talked with many Cubans to look at life in Havana throughout very distinct periods before and after Independence, during U.S. occupation (1898-1902), and before and after the 1959 Castro revolution.

“We found an amazing amount of continuity in the city’s histories, despite these momentous changes,” says Cluster. Though Cluster was able to go to Havana twice and Hernández was able to come to the U.S. once, the scholars did much of their work together via e-mail. They divided up chapters, writing in Spanish and English, respectively. Fluent in each other’s languages, they then read each other’s work, gave each other feedback, and finalized the English text.

This technique was crucial to the work’s success, particularly in an examination of Cuba, says Cluster, which is often seen one-dimensionally through an outside perspective. “It’s better to have two sets of eyes,” says Cluster, “those of a Cuban who also knows North American audiences and those of a North American who has lived in Cuba.”

Since its release on November 28, the book has been selected as an upcoming History Book Club selection and Cluster and Hernández have given talks locally at UMass Boston, Porter Square Books, and Harvard Co-op, as well as at a Yale University conference and for readings held at City University of New York and the Center for Cuban Studies.

Cuban History Enthusiast Unveils New Book on Havana

By Leigh DuPuy

UMass Boston’s Dick Cluster was able to do what few scholars could. He’s been to Cuba a half a dozen times since 1969, collaborated with Cuban professors of English, and, most recently, co-authored a book with Cuban scholar Rafael Hernández, a project Cluster believes to be the first since a U.S. ban on such collaborations was recently lifted. The result is a comprehensive social and cultural history of the country and a capital: The History of Havana.

“The book was unique because it was the first coauthored work by an American and Cuban writer to be commissioned by a U.S. publisher in a long time,” explains Cluster. “This has been illegal only since the end of 2004.”

Cluster is the associate director of the University Honors Program and teaches first-year seminars and upper-level honors classes in history, literature, and economics. Characterizing himself as a generalist, Cluster has built a multifaceted career. He worked for a number of years as a journalist for the economist publication, Dollars and Sense, written several detective novels, and is a prodigious translator of literature from Spanish to English.

He and Hernández, the editor of Tomas, a Cuban quarterly in history, culture, economics, and politics, worked together initially when Cluster translated Hernández’s book of essays on Cuban civil society for the University Press of Florida. After the success of this collaboration, Hernández and Cluster decided to try their hands at a more ambitious project.

The History of Havana examines what it was like to live in Havana over a span of 500 years, from 1519 through the 21st century, says Cluster. Cluster and Hernández sifted through archival sources, social histories, memoirs, fiction, and travel narratives, and talked with many Cubans to look at life in Havana throughout very distinct periods before and after Independence, during U.S. occupation (1898-1902), and before and after the 1959 Castro revolution.

“We found an amazing amount of continuity in the city’s histories, despite these momentous changes,” says Cluster. Though Cluster was able to go to Havana twice and Hernández was able to come to the U.S. once, the scholars did much of their work together via e-mail. They divided up chapters, writing in Spanish and English, respectively. Fluent in each other’s languages, they then read each other’s work, gave each other feedback, and finalized the English text.

This technique was crucial to the work’s success, particularly in an examination of Cuba, says Cluster, which is often seen one-dimensionally through an outside perspective. “It’s better to have two sets of eyes,” says Cluster, “those of a Cuban who also knows North American audiences and those of a North American who has lived in Cuba.”

Since its release on November 28, the book has been selected as an upcoming History Book Club selection and Cluster and Hernández have given talks locally at UMass Boston, Porter Square Books, and Harvard Co-op, as well as at a Yale University conference and for readings held at City University of New York and the Center for Cuban Studies.

Dick Cluster, associate director of the University Honors Program, is celebrating the publication of The History of Havana, a 500-year social history he wrote with Cuban scholar Rafael Hernández. (Photo by Harry Breet)
Charles Nduang’a of the Ph.D. in Public Policy Program was invited to facilitate a session for the United Nations Habitat Experts Group Meeting “Mainstreaming Aids into Slums Upgrading projects,” held in Nairobi Kenya in November.

Mark Pawlak of Academic Support Services participated in the panel “The Relationship Between U.S. and American Poetry and American Culture” at the annual conference of the American Historical Association, held in Atlanta on January 5. He also served as a guest reader at the Forest Hills Trust’s “Poetry in the Chapel” reading series, held on January 14.

Professor Jennifer Radden of the Philosophy Department delivered the following papers: “Ulysses Virtuous Huene, and the Moral Psychology of the Good Psychiatrist” at the Royal Institute of Philosophy Workshop, “A Confusion of Pains: the Sensory and Alzheimer’s Pain” at the Journal of Depression, and “Suffering, and Hurt” at the jars Martin Advanced Research Seminar for Philosophy Faculty at Oxford University, and “Epideemic Depression and Buronian Melancholy” for the Maudsley Hospital Philosophical Group in London.

The Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy’s Paige Ransford, associate professor, and Carol Hardy-Fanta, director, presented the new women’s comprehensive representation: a comparison of New England States” at the Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association, held on November 9.

Ellen Stuart-Short, assistant professor in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS), presented “Managemen of Hypertension among the Elderly” at the American Heart Association’s annual conference, held on December 6. She also served as a guest reader at the Forest Hills Trust’s “Poetry in the Chapel” reading series, held on January 14.

Lloyd Schwartz, Troy Professor of English and Creative Writing, participated in a reading of Russian poetry translated by the late Paul Schmidt in an evening celebrating the publication of The Stray Dog Cabaret, held on December 8. Schwartz also served on the literature grants panel of the Somerville Arts Council and participated in the Poetry Calendar reading at the Brookline Booksmith on December 21.

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Grants, Research, and Projects

Biography: A Brief History, written by McCormack Graduate School visiting fellow Nigel Hamilton, was recently reviewed by Publishers Weekly. The book will be published by Harvard University in March 2007.

Arthur Eisenkraft, director of the Center of Fiction and Math, received a $64,000 grant from Toshiba America to assess technological literacy of students in America in conjunction with the National Science Teachers Association.

In December, the Center for Social Policy released the report “Outside the Box: RAFT Plus, A Homeless Youth in Transition” funded by One Family, Inc. The midterm evaluation report examines how family homelessness can be avoided through warming/assessment teams and partnerships.

APPOINTMENTS AND HONORS

Laurie L. Charles, assistant professor of family therapy in the Department of Counseling and School Psychology, received the 2007 Nova South- eastern University Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award for the College of Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences.

Yung-Ping (Bing) Chen, the Frank J. Manzano Professor of Gerontology, has been appointed to the board of advisors for Americans for Generational Equity.

Members of the College of Management’s Delta Sigma Pi, a co-ed professional fraternity organized to foster the study of business in universit,ies, received scholarships and awards: award winner received the Beta Chapter Scholarship; and the 2006-2007 New England Region Collegian of the Year Award, Yelena Zaytseva received the 2007 Xi Phi Collegian of the Year Award; and Carrie Peppels received the Howard B. Johnson, Thomas M. Mocella, Lester H. White and Ben H. Wollenger Graduate Fellowship.

Melissa Howard Graham, a community psychology professor, with 20 years of experience working in public relations, event management, graphic design, and fundraising, was appointed the new host for UMBVU’s Commonwealth Journal.

Felicia Wilczenski, professor of counseling and school psychology, was awarded a Curriculum Innovation Fellowship Grant by the Rhode Island and Massachusetts Campus of the University of Phoenix to develop a graduate-level service-learning course that directly impacts disadvantaged youth in Massachusetts. Wilczenski will implement BostonNET (Network for Educational Transitions), a service-learning partnership between the UMBC School Counseling Program and the Boston Public Schools (BPS) to support BPS students as they progress from high school to postsecondary education.

At a December 7 ceremony at the Boston Globe, El Pamatia recognized the 100 most influential people to impact the Hispanic community of Massachusetts in 2006. Among those honored were Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) alumni Eduardo Tobon, vice president of Sovereign Bank, and Georgianna Melendez, executive director of Casa Myrna Vasquez. Professor Sherry Penney, ELP founding director, was also honored.

The Frank J. Manning Certificate Program in Gerontology was acknowledged by the Kerber Foundation’s Transatlantic Idea Contest for the impact it has made in helping improve the American Culture’s Health and Minority Health, as well as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

College of Management graduate students, faculty, and leaders of IBM’s Academic Initiative group piloted the “Collaboration Jam” project, which will be held in the Rockland statewide policymakers to discuss the impact of these disparities, which will be presented at the Rhode Island’s Health and Minority Health, as well as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

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Yung-Ping (Bing) Chen, the Frank J. Manning Emeritus Scholar’s Chair in Gerontology, was quoted on the financial and medical implications of an increasingly overweight or obese population moving into retirement for a December 13 Market Watch article.

Carol Hardy-Fanta, director of the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy, was quoted in “Report Faults Romney on Hiring Few Minorities for Top Posts,” released by the Associated Press on December 7. A lead editorial on the study appeared in the Boston Globe, with additional coverage by the State House News Service. This story also appeared in the Boston Metro and aired on WBUR. Hardy-Fanta was also interviewed for Unvision, WUNI-TV.


Research on the benefits of walking by Kyle McLean, professor and chair of the Department of Exercise and Health Sciences, was cited in a story on MSNBC.com in December.

A figure released by the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy shows a broken down by level gubernatorial appointments by race has sent a clear message that he intends to find leaders from across the deep and diverse community of executives and community leaders in Massachusetts,” said Paul S. Grogan, president and CEO of the Boston Foundation. “This is a powerful way to send a message that we need a leadership representation, according to the study; 14 African Americans were appointed top positions, 8.5 percent of appointments; their share of the population, according to the 2000 Census, is 6 percent. However, the study also identifies a dramatic disparity in the level of position held by people of color by examining appointments to executive versus legislative positions. The study finds that only five African Americans and two Latinos were appointed out of 82 executive positions filled. No Asians received executive positions. On the boards and commissions, African Americans do a bit better: there are five African Americans among the 81 chairs, vice chairs, or members of the boards/commissions studied, making up 6.1 percent of these positions, somewhat above their share of the population.

Carol Hardy-Fanta, director of the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy, led the study. “Governor-elect Deval Patrick

According to the study, Latinos and those founding directors of top-level appointments. Latino appointments make up 1.8 percent of the total number of posts, far below their 7 percent share of the population. Despite the fact that Asians make up 4 percent of the population, they hold less than 1 percent of total top-level positions. African Americans have achieved the best level of representation, according to the study; 14 African Americans were appointed top positions, 8.5 percent of appointments; their share of the population, according to the 2000 Census, is 6 percent. However, the study also identifies a dramatic disparity in the level of position held by people of color by examining appointments to executive versus legislative positions. The study finds that only five African Americans and two Latinos were appointed out of 82 executive positions filled. No Asians received executive positions. On the boards and commissions, African Americans do a bit better: there are five African Americans among the 81 chairs, vice chairs, or members of the boards/commissions studied, making up 6.1 percent of these positions, somewhat above their share of the population.

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The Calendar of Events is published monthly by the Office of Marketing Communications.

All events are open to the public and free, unless otherwise noted. From off campus, dial (617) 287-5680 and the last five digits listed below each event.

Submit February calendar listings by Wednesday, January 17, to umb.edu/news/calendar.

Saturday 6
UMass Boston Athletics: Women's Basketball vs. Keene State College
1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Clark Athletic Center. Contact: 7-7801 or david.marsters@umb.edu.

UMass Boston Athletics: Men's Ice Hockey vs. Amherst College
3:00 – 5:00 p.m. Clark Athletic Center Rink. Contact: 7-7801 or david.marsters@umb.edu.

Sunday 7
UMass Boston Athletics: Men's Basketball vs. Keene State College
1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Clark Athletic Center. Contact: 7-7801 or david.marsters@umb.edu.

Tuesday 9
UMass Boston Athletics: Women's Basketball vs. Plymouth State College
5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Clark Athletic Center. Contact: 7-7801 or david.marsters@umb.edu.

Kripalu Yoga
2:30 – 3:30 p.m., Tuesdays, McCormack Hall, Reacon Fitness Center Aerobics Room, 1st fl.
Kripalu yoga class open to all. Students: free. Faculty and staff: $5.00. Sponsored by University Health Services. Contact: 7-5680.

Wednesday 10
Kripalu Yoga
1:30 – 2:30 p.m., Wednesdays, McCormack Hall, Recon Fitness Center Aerobics Room, 1st fl., Kripalu yoga class open to all. Students: free. Faculty and staff: $5.00. Sponsored by University Health Services. Contact: 7-5680.

Thursday 18
UMass Boston Athletics: Women's Basketball vs. Bridgewater State College
5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Clark Athletic Center. Contact: 7-7801 or david.marsters@umb.edu.

Wednesday 17
UMass Boston Athletics: Women's Ice Hockey vs. Middlebury College
7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Clark Athletic Center Rink. Contact: 7-7801 or david.marsters@umb.edu.

ITC Course: WebCT – Introductory Series
1:00 – 3:00 p.m., Healey Library, lower level. A 2-day workshop in a half-day session. Also on January 17, 23, and 24 at 8:30 a.m. Contact: www.itc.umb.edu or 7-2990.

Monday 15
Martin Luther King Day
University closed.

Eleventh Annual Amilcar Cabral Conference—Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Program: "Uniting Our Community: Strengthening the Ties That Bind"
11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., McCormack Hall, Ryan Lounge, 3rd fl. Free lunch and admission. Sponsors: African Studies Department and African Students Union. Contact: 7-4790.

Tuesday 16
ITC Course: WebCT – Introductory Series
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Healey Library, lower level, p2. Attend WebCT Vista Orientation and the Introduction to WebCT Parts 1 and 2 workshops in a half-day session. Also on January 17, 23, and 24 at 8:30 a.m. Contact: www.itc.umb.edu or 7-2990.

ITC Course: WebCT – Faculty Presentations
1:00 – 3:00 p.m., Healey Library, lower level, p2. Also on January 23 at 3:00 p.m. Contact: www.itc.umb.edu or 7-2990.

UMass Boston Athletics: Women's Basketball vs. UMass Dartmouth
5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Clark Athletic Center. Contact: 7-7801 or david.marsters@umb.edu.

UMass Boston Athletics: Men's Ice Hockey vs. UMass Dartmouth
7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Clark Athletic Center. Contact: 7-7801 or david.marsters@umb.edu.

UMass Boston Athletics: Men's Basketball vs. UMass Dartmouth
7:30 – 9:30 p.m. Clark Athletic Center Rink. Contact: 7-7801 or david.marsters@umb.edu.

UMass Boston Athletics: Women's Basketball vs. SUNY Cobleskill
5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Clark Athletic Center Rink. Contact: 7-7801 or david.marsters@umb.edu.

Wednesday 24
Boston State College Celebration
6:00 p.m., Campus Center, Ballroom, 3rd fl. For students celebrating Boston State College’s history and traditions. Contact: 7-3550.

Thursday 25
UMass Boston Athletics: Women's Basketball vs. Suffolk University
5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Clark Athletic Center Rink. Contact: 7-7801 or david.marsters@umb.edu.

Friday 26
Center for Improvement of Teaching Conference on Teaching for Transformation Conference
For more information: anna.tsui@umb.edu or 7-6509.

Saturday 27
UMass Boston Athletics: Women's Basketball vs. Western Connecticut State
1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Clark Athletic Center Rink. Contact: 7-7801 or david.marsters@umb.edu.

UMass Boston Athletics: Men's Basketball vs. Western Connecticut State
3:00 – 5:00 p.m. Clark Athletic Center Rink. Contact: 7-7801 or david.marsters@umb.edu.

UMass Boston 25th Alumni Reunion
5:00 – 8:00 p.m., Campus Center, Ballroom, 3rd fl. Reception and dinner for UMass Boston alumni celebrating their 25th reunion.

Monday 29
First Day of Classes

Opening Week Spring 2007 Activities
Beginning 8:00 a.m., Campus Center, McCormack Hall, Science Center, and Wheatshe Hall. Activities throughout, including free food, information tables, and more. Contact: michael.todorsky@umb.edu.

UMass Boston Athletics: Women's Ice Hockey vs. University of Southern Maine
7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Clark Athletic Center Rink. Contact: 7-7801 or david.marsters@umb.edu.

Tuesday 30
Opening Week Spring 2007 Activities
Beginning 8:00 a.m., Campus Center, McCormack Hall, Science Center, and Wheatshe Hall. Activities throughout, including free food, information tables, and more. Contact: michael.todorsky@umb.edu.

UMass Boston Athletics: Women's Ice Hockey vs. Salem State College
5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Clark Athletic Center Rink. Contact: 7-7801 or david.marsters@umb.edu.

Wednesday 31
Opening Week Spring 2007 Activities
Beginning 8:00 a.m., Campus Center, McCormack Hall, Science Center, and Wheatshe Hall. Activities throughout, including free food, information tables, and more. Contact: michael.todorsky@umb.edu.

UMass Boston Athletics: Women's Ice Hockey vs. University of Southern Maine
7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Clark Athletic Center Rink. Contact: 7-7801 or david.marsters@umb.edu.

Miscellaneous
Beacon Fitness Center
McCormack Hall, 1st fl. Open to students, alumni, staff, and faculty. Programs include personal training, aerobics classes, massage therapy, orientations, and fitness assessments. For membership, hours of operation, and schedule, please see www.umb.edu/fitnesscenter or 7-4786.

"Crooks, Rogues, and Maids Less Than Virtuous!": An Exhibit of the Art of 16th Century Book Binding

Instructional Technology Center (ITC)
Interested in expanding your technology horizons? Visit the ITC Web site at www.itc.umb.edu or contact: 7-2990.

UMass Boston Doctoral Dissertation Grant Program

University Club at UMass Boston
11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, Campus Center, 2nd fl. Open to faculty and staff. $6.00 for members and $8.50 for non-members. All-you-can-eat buffet, featuring “Suzlin’s Cuisine” every Thursday. Contact: 7-3144.

WUMB 91.9 FM Commonwealth Journal
Sundays, 7:00 p.m. Interviews with scholars, writers, and public officials examining current issues of interest to people of Massachusetts. Contact: 7-6500.

Monday 28
For more information: anna.tsui@umb.edu or 7-6509.