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THE UMASS BOSTON

Volume 6
Number 3
March 29, 1996

News and information
about and for the
University Community from
the Chancellor's Office

Friday REPORT

Campus Notes

Prof. Charles Shively of the American Studies Program has won a Fulbright grant for 1995-96. He will lecture at two Ecuador campuses, the Catholic University and the University of Azuay.

The 1996 Max Bluestone Memorial Lecture will be held today at 4:00 p.m. in the Chancellor's Conference room. Prof. Brian Vickers of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, and Founder of its Center for Renaissance Studies, will lecture on *Shakespeare and the Nature of Trust (Iago, for Example)*.

Graduate Studies Dean and History Professor Martin Quitt's article, *Trade and the Acculturation at Jamestown, 1607-1609: The Limits of Understanding*, was chosen by the *William and Mary Quarterly* as best article of 1995.

Patricia Powell of the English Department has won the Bruce P. Rossley Literary Award from the City of Boston, recognizing her as a newly established Boston-area writer. She is also a semi-finalist in a competition for best young novelist held by *Granta Magazine*.

On March 6, WGBH's *La Plaza* broadcast a ballet version of *Don Gato en el Tejado*, a classic medieval Spain children's story. Miguel Picker, former composition student of Professor David Patterson, Chair of the Music Department, composed the ballet's music.

John Conlon, Chair of the Theatre Arts Department, and Theatre Arts graduate Janice Tong, Stage Manager at the Merrimack Repertory Theatre (MRT) in Lowell, are planning an internship program for UMass Boston students at the MRT. The structure of this program will be based on a model developed by Theatre Arts Prof. Thomas Ouellette.

Prof. Frederick Gamst of the Anthropology Department has edited a book, *Meanings of Work: Considerations for the Twenty-First Century*, published by the State University of New York Press. It includes an essay by Prof. Emeritus Robert Weiss, Director of the Work and Family Research Unit of the Center for Survey Research.

Marc Prou, a member of the UMass Boston Haitian Studies Project Education Task Force and English Department lecturer, participated in a national conference to create an educational plan for Haiti, January 26-29 in Port-au-Prince. The Haitian Studies Project has worked closely with the Haitian Education Ministry to develop methodology, statistical analysis, and implementation strategies for the plan.

Defending Diversity: Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives on Pluralism and Multiculturalism, co-edited by Lawrence Foster, Chair of the Philosophy Department at UMass Boston, and Patricia Herzog, formerly of UMass Boston and now a fellow at Radcliffe College's Bunting Institute was named an outstanding book on the subject of human rights by the Gustavus Myers Center for The Study of Human Rights in North America. UMass Boston contributors include Prof. Emeritus Jane Roland Martin, Profs. Lawrence Blum, Lawrence Foster, and Janet Farrell Smith, and lecturers Nelson P. Lande, and Mitchell Silver, all of the Philosophy Department.

On Wednesday, April 17, the UMass Department of Public Safety Crime Prevention Unit and Governor Weld's Auto Theft Strike Force are sponsoring an auto glass etching program from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Lower Level garage under the Science Building. All glass panels on vehicles will have a vehicle identification number etched into the surface. Participants will receive a certificate allowing up to a 15% discount on comprehensive insurance. A \$10 fee will be charged and participants must be the registered owner of the vehicle with a valid registration certificate. Call 287-7799 for further information.

Attention Readers:

Send news information to Annette Fernie or Donna Roveto at the Office of Public Information, Second Floor, Quinn Administration Building.

Policy Provides Accommodations for Disabled

UMass Boston has established a Reasonable Accommodation in Employment policy that defines procedures for implementing the Trustees' Statement on Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. These procedures apply to job applicants and current employees, including students. They clarify steps to be taken and reasonable timetables when a request for accommodation has been made by a job applicant or employee, for responses by the university to requests, and appeal procedures if a request for accommodation have been denied.

The procedures are the result of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) self-evaluation conducted by the University in 1992, which looked at the University's programs and facilities with the intention of bringing them into better compliance with Federal ADA guidelines.

Carol DeSouza, UMass Boston's ADA compliance officer, says that the procedures create clear guidelines for responding to an employee's request for disability accommodation. She stresses that each case of disability is evaluated individually, and that by law, all medical documentation is kept confidential. "In each case, I ask: Is there a disability? Is it documented? Can it be accommodated, and is the accommodation reasonable?" says DeSouza. "We have to go through these steps to ensure that what is provided for the employee is in line with the letter and the spirit of the law."

DeSouza notes that the university has had an increase in the number of employees with documented Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS), an impairment of the nerves and muscles of the hands and wrists.

Endurance while typing and entering data is affected by this disability. Whether or not an employee is provided with a modified workstation depends on documentation of the condition and the extent of the functional limitation. "The university needs to both accommodate those with disabilities and be protected against unreasonable demands," says DeSouza.

DeSouza is conducting training sessions on the new procedures. "When an employee is evaluated, faculty and staff need to know how to evaluate the individual and not the disability," she says. The workshops are an effort by the Office of Affirmative Action and Multicultural Relations to educate faculty and staff to the requirements of the ADA and Affirmative Action guidelines. The ADA compliance officer has been a member of the Affirmative Action Office since May, 1995.

"The Reasonable Accommodation policy is a result of the University's statement on Affirmative Action," says Matt Thompson, Director of Affirmative Action and Multicultural Relations. "Persons with disabilities are covered under Affirmative Action guidelines. Each member of our office will be working closely, sharing information and supporting each other's work."

Over the next few months, a series of articles describing aspects of the Reasonable Accommodation in Employment Policy will appear in the *Harborlights*, UMass Boston's Department of Human Resources newsletter. Copies of the policy are available in the Affirmative Action and Multi-cultural Relations Office, located at the third level of the Robert H. Quinn Administration Building.

Camera Technology Tracks Speed and Motion

Biology Professor Robert Stevenson has received a two-year, \$149,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to develop a field-portable, omnidirectional video camera system for recording speed and motion of animals in their natural environments.

"Conventional videos of animal chases in the wild cannot tell a viewer how fast the animals are actually going, or what the magnitude of acceleration might be," explains Stevenson. "We are trying to answer questions about how animals move in their natural settings. There have been many studies of animals in laboratory situations, measurements of movement and speed in windtunnels, cages, tanks and on treadmills. But these tests have not turned out to reflect how animals move in the wild."

The key concept behind the video camera system is "triangulation" between the animal that is being recorded and two video cameras. The cameras, both able to both pan and tilt, are placed at a measured distance from one another, and focused on the same spot. The angles of the cameras are measured with an optical shaft encoder, similar to those used in surveying equipment to measure grade. The angle will be recorded on the video tape, in a bar code format.

The system relies on exact coordination of timing between the two cameras. A device called a "gen lock" ties the timing of the cameras together, and a time code generator displays the time on tape. Each field creates a picture frame every 1/60th of a second. Other special features of the video system include a large screen color viewer, and a zoom lens that will be able to target an object. The location of the animal will be determined from the directional angles of the cameras and position of the animal's image in the camera's field of vision.

A sophisticated software program will be used to decode all the data that the video system tracks, relieving Stevenson and his colleagues from the time consuming task of looking at each picture frame and recording and charting the data by hand.

Stevenson hopes to be able to record the flights of migrating butterflies in Costa Rica this summer. The system's calibration will be tested on the UMass Boston campus, tracking sea gulls, cars, and airplanes as soon as it is completed. "Fifteen scientists from nationwide universities wrote letters to the NSF on behalf of this project," says Stevenson. "I expect that the video system will generate excitement in the field."

McCormack Institute's CSPR to Test New Homeless Software System

The McCormack Institute’s Center for Social Policy Research (CSPR) has been selected by two Massachusetts homeless advocacy organizations, Homes for Families and the Greater Boston Housing and Shelter Alliance (GBHSA) to coordinate testing and analysis of a computerized system designed to profile homeless populations. Massachusetts is one of fifteen states to test the Automated National Client-Specific Homeless Services Recording (ANCHoR) system. In a national pilot program, ANCHoR will be installed in twenty of Massachusetts 200 homeless shelters, which include The Pine Street Inn, Boston’s Project Hope, and Father Bill’s Place in Quincy.

“While addressing the issues of the poor, we need to bring their needs to the attention of the government. This is a critical development for people who are homeless,” says Philip Mangano, Executive Director of GBHSA. He hopes that if homeless individuals are identified as coming from the correctional or substance-abuse system, it will help increase government funding of transitional programs and halfway houses. “We need to direct technology towards the needs of our poorest citizens,” adds Mangano. Previous attempts to profile the homeless population were rendered inaccurate by lack of standardization and safeguards against double-counting.

The software was developed by Dennis Culhane, Social Work Professor at the University of Pennsylvania to improve the delivery and coordination of services to homeless persons. The services include job training, education, and housing research to individuals and families. The software will also assist homeless advocates in understanding the causes of homelessness for the shelters’ clients.

According to John McGah, ANCHoR System Administrator of the CSPR, the ANCHoR software has security features to allow shelters to decide what information to exchange within the network. Shelters will be able to enter information about how they met each homeless client; under what conditions he or she came to the shelter; what region the client came from; and what his or her immediate needs were.

It will allow shelters to avoid double counting by recording clients’ use of individual beds; monitor clients’ activities during authorized stays at shelters; and their success in finding housing. Each shelter will have a modem to forward information to the McCormack Institute’s CSPR. The information that McGah receives from the sites will allow him to produce reports incorporating the data from all of the shelters.

“I think ANCHoR is a tool for policy makers, advocates, and those affected by homelessness to join forces to end it,” says Donna Friedman, a Senior Research Associate of the CSPR, who oversees the statewide data tracking system. Friedman expects that the data collected through the tracking system will be used by local and national government representatives for designing policies concerning housing affordability, welfare, and health care. “There are many myths about people who are homeless and anyone interested in stopping the problem must have the facts available so that public policy is based on accurate information,” explains Friedman.

UMass Boston College of Public and Community Service junior Brenda Farrell, who is also Director of Homes for Families, feels that ANCHoR will help agencies understand which services are most successful in ending homelessness. “While tracking the stability of our families, we can make a self-evaluation of our program and determine what services work better than others,” explains Farrell.

UMass Boston Orientation Video is Completed

UMass Boston’s first student orientation video, *Achieving Against the Odds: UMass Boston Students Work for Their Educations*, has been completed through the efforts of the CAS Dean’s Office, Women Studies Program, and the offices of the Chancellor and Provost. The video focuses on students’ multiple responsibilities, such as courses, jobs, and families and the services available to them. It will be shown to new freshman and transfer students this spring.

The video is based on thirty interviews with faculty, staff, and students on campus. “The film is visually stimulating,” says Professor Jean Humez of the Women’s Studies Program, production coordinator. “The stories that these students tell are realistic and engaging.” Several students discuss the challenges of developing a sense of community at a commuter campus and of balancing personal obligations while taking full course schedules.

Achieving Against the Odds also portrays students succeeding and finding the support services appropriate to their needs. The specific programs highlighted in the video include the English as a Second Language and Directions for Student Potential Programs, the Lillian Semper Ross Disability Services, the Academic Support Service, and the campus’s tutoring centers.

Since last summer, Friedman has been working on a project with Homes For Families called, “Families at Risk.” The project, supported through the Boston Foundation, analyzes the prospect of extending such a computerized system for the homeless population statewide.

UMass Boston Professor Oscar Gutierrez of the Management Science and Information Systems Department and Senior Statistician Anthony Roman of UMass Boston’s Center for Survey Research contributed to system development and data collection. Gutierrez assessed Culhane’s system and decided it would be instrumental for creating a tracking system in the Commonwealth. Guiterrez, Friedman, Mangano, and other advocacy representatives approached Culhane about using his software to develop the data tracking system in Massachusetts.

Lawrence Kaplan, Emeritus Professor of Biology, will address the relationship between botany and archaeology and how it provides answers to a variety of questions about plants and human culture, as part of the Graduate Studies' Distinguished Lecture Series. His lecture, "Plants and Human Cultures: Notes from Underground," will be held in the Chancellor's Conference Room on April 10 from 4:00 - 5:30 pm.

John Jessoe of the Center for Communications Media has open captioned the film. “This makes a statement because it shows that we all must be aware of the invisible differences among us,” explains Humez. “Hearing students seeing the captions will recognize this. Students have various obstacles and this video addresses many different problems.”

On February 26 the orientation video was premiered for the University Community. According to Humez, viewers suggested using the video for student recruitment and fundraising, and showing it during department meetings to remind faculty of the support services available for students.

Humez is working on a sequel to the orientation video. Tentatively titled, *Thinking About Teaching at An Urban University*, the sequel will examine new teaching styles. The sequel uses interview material not shown in its predecessor. Humez hopes to complete the video in May and distribute it not only at UMass Boston but at other urban universities and community colleges.

Copies of *Achieving Against the Odds*, the first UMass Boston student orientation video, are available for campus use. For further information, please call the Center for the Institute of Teaching at 287-6767.

University of Massachusetts Boston
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125-3393

UMass Boston

The long struggle toward the vision of a "university" began in the late 19th century. The concept of a university was not a new one, but it was a new one in the United States. The first university in the United States was founded in 1636, and it was called Harvard. It was a small school, but it was the first of its kind. It was a place where students could come to learn and to grow. It was a place where they could find the answers to their questions. It was a place where they could find the truth. It was a place where they could find the light.