Campus Notes

Prof. Charles Shively of the American Studies Program has won a Fulbright 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 Quill'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. Rosiley 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 Quixote by Tejada, a classic medieval Spain children's story. Miguel Picker, former composition student of Professor David Patterson, Chief 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 Ouimet.

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.

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 to the university's 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 employees who have an impairment of 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 James Roland Martin, Prof. 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.

Camera Technology Tracks Speed and Motion

Biology Professor Robert Stevenson has received a two-year, $14,900 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 wind tunnels, 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 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 a 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.

Endurance while typing and entering data is affected by this disability. Whether or not an employee is provided with a modified workstation depends on the condition of the employee 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. "We have a group of human resources 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 on what constitutes an accommodation under 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 Horriblitudes, 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.

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 flight 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 installation 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.

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. Gutierrez, Friedman, Mangano, and other advocacy representatives approached Culhane about using his software to develop the data tracking system in Massachusetts.

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John Jessee of the Center for Communications Media has opened 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."