



Report to the Board of Trustees

from the University of Massachusetts Boston

December 2020

To the Board:

It is my pleasure to present to you this report on the activities and accomplishments of the University of Massachusetts Boston this fall.

It has been a trying time for higher education institutions across the country as we face significant challenges arising from the coronavirus pandemic, demographic shifts affecting enrollment recruitment, and the role colleges and universities must assume in the discussions around historic racial disparities. I am proud to report that at UMass Boston, our faculty, students, and staff are rising to the occasion on all fronts.

This fall, for example, our campus community has come together to embrace the goal of making UMass Boston a leading anti-racist and health-promoting public research university. We laid the groundwork for this critical work through a series of actions, discussions, and events, including the appointment of a new special assistant to the chancellor for Black life (right), a Sankofa Conversation Series on Structural Racism, and the establishment of an annual Black Lives Matters Day. (Page 2)

At the same time, our university has made considerable progress on other fronts:

- While higher education institutions across the country experienced an overall 7 percent decline in enrollment, UMass Boston was in a unique position, showing 2 percent growth in undergraduate enrollment and steady graduate enrollment. (Page 9)
- Preparing for a fall semester of remote learning and the side effects of the pandemic, the university ramped up efforts to streamline support services to students to help them focus on their academic success. (Page 9)
- UMass Boston’s School for the Environment—in partnership with the City of Boston, Boston Harbor Now, the National Parks of Boston, and the James M. and Cathleen D. Stone Foundation—launched the Stone Living Lab to research and develop nature-based solutions to address sea-level rise brought on by climate change. (Page 7)

These are just a few of the stories in this report. I hope you find them as compelling as I do.

—Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco



Joseph Cooper is the special assistant to the chancellor for Black life.

Chancellor Appoints First Special Advisor for Black Life at UMass Boston

UMass Boston Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco has appointed Associate Professor Joseph N. Cooper as special assistant to the chancellor for Black life. The newly created position is intended to bring greater focus throughout the campus community to issues of inequality, racism, and social justice.

“UMass Boston must stand for a higher education agenda of excellence animated by an ethic of care and solidarity,” said Suárez-Orozco. “Dr. Cooper brings to this new position a wealth of empirical research, personal experience, and cultural insights into addressing the complexities of engineering and building a path forward for Black equity and justice.”

Cooper was appointed the inaugural J. Keith Motley Endowed Chair for Sport Leadership and Administration at UMass Boston in August 2019. He previously was an assistant professor at the University of Connecticut’s Neag School of Education. His research concentrates on the nexus between sport, education, race, and culture.

“I am honored to serve in this new role and further the university’s mission and commitment to creating an anti-racist campus for all students, faculty, and staff,” he said. “I am a proponent of collective responsibility and excellence, which means the problems we seek to solve require the talents, skills, and contributions of all who are committed to improving our university and society at large.”

The position is one of several new initiatives the chancellor has launched to move UMass Boston toward becoming a leading anti-racist and health-promoting public research university. In July, Suárez-Orozco and his wife, Carola, established the endowed George Floyd Honorary Scholarship Fund, which was seeded by a \$50,000 pledge from Suárez-Orozco and quickly exceeded \$125,000 in commitments.

CONTINUE A POSITIVE FOCUS ON DIVERSITY AND POSITIVE CLIMATE



Students posed with the Black Lives Matter banner throughout the day.

UMass Boston Hosts First Black Lives Matter Day

Hundreds of community members participated in the university's Black Lives Matter (BLM) Day on November 2, attending virtual issues-focused seminars, a BLM ceremony and keynote address, and touring a BLM memorial. The newly unveiled Black Lives Matter mural, located in the East Residence Hall, will be added to every year for BLM Day.

BLM Day at UMass Boston was created to generate awareness of systemic anti-Black racism and injustice as well as promote positive change. Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco has declared that UMass Boston will commemorate Black Lives Matter Day every year on the first Monday of November.

As part of Black Lives Matter Day, the campus community raised \$2,302—more than double their original goal of \$1,000—toward the George Floyd Honorary Scholarship Fund at UMass Boston. The fund has raised \$130,000 to date and has already helped two students in need.

The program was developed by a coalition that included Housing and Residential Life, Student Multicultural Affairs, other units from Student Affairs, and other areas from across campus led by Pilar Nelson, community director in the Office of Housing and Residential Life.

Program Marks Indigenous Peoples' Day

Indigenous Peoples' Day is a time to acknowledge the historic contributions, sacrifices, and resilience of all Indigenous peoples—across the globe, in the United States, and here in New England. Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) and the Institute for New England Native American Studies (INENAS) presented Indigenous Peoples Day 2020 at UMass Boston this fall, a virtual series of educational programs focusing on pressing issues facing Native people. The three events focused on climate change and indigenous resistance; indigenous history, archaeology, and education; and indigenous resilience, survivance, art, and activism.

Chancellor Suárez-Orozco Encourages Campus to Redouble Efforts to Advance Social Justice

Officially launching an “anything but ordinary” academic year with a virtual convocation address, UMass Boston Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco called on the higher education community to “sharpen its focus and redouble our endeavors to forge anew the indispensable tools for social justice.”

He emphasized that acts of intolerance, discrimination, bullying, and overt and covert bias stand in complete opposition to the spirit that animates UMass Boston and our lives as scholars and practitioners.

“I never thought I would have to say this publicly, but in the age when so many continue to peddle the fool's gold of division and hate, I must: If you are an immigrant, documented or undocumented, let me say this loud and clear, in Spanish first: *Mi casa es su casa*,” the chancellor said. “UMass Boston es su casa! If you are a Muslim, UMass Boston is your house. If you are a person of color, it's your house, it's our house; if you are LGBTQ, it's your house, it's our house. If you are a Native person, we know we are in your house!”

The chancellor was one of nine speakers who joined convocation from various locations to officially kick off the 2020–21 academic year through a video released on YouTube, Facebook, and the university website. Danielle Allen, the James Bryant Conant University Professor at Harvard University, gave the keynote address.

University Launches Sankofa Conversation Series on Structural Racism

The Sankofa Conversation Series on Structural Racism has brought hundreds of students, faculty, and staff together this fall to engage with how UMass Boston can become a leading anti-racist and health-promoting public research university.

As a result of the efforts of many across campus, including members of the Restorative Justice Initiative, and with the leadership of Drs. Keith Jones and Tony Van Der Meer, this series of conversations represents an important initial process for making manifest a culture of democratic citizenship, civility, and open mindedness that is a point of departure for UMass Boston to lead on this existential topic of our times.

The series takes its name from a symbol of the Akan people in what is now the West African nation of Ghana. The word “Sankofa” can be translated as “Looking backward to move forward.”

Each conversation has featured a distinguished panel of experts from the UMass Boston community, as well as policy makers and members of our disparate communities.

DEVELOP A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN PUBLIC SERVICE

Pension Action Center Celebrates 25th Anniversary with Virtual Event

The Pension Action Center (PAC) has been fighting for retirement benefits for New England and Illinois residents for 25 years. PAC celebrated this milestone anniversary with a virtual event on October 6. Located in the McCormack Graduate School's Gerontology Institute, PAC provides free pension advice and legal representation to retirees who need help getting the retirement benefits they've earned. PAC has served over 10,000 people and recovered benefits worth more than \$60 million. The event keynote was delivered by Congressman Richard Neal. The event also featured two recent clients helped by PAC, Michael Gordon and Darlene Lamusta.



Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley speaks at the Standing in Our Power: Women of Color Leading Change forum.

Voting and Civic Engagement Top Issues at Women of Color Forum

UMass Boston's Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy teamed up with the Massachusetts Women of Color Coalition to host the virtual forum, Standing in Our Power: Women of Color Leading Change, on two Saturdays in September. More than 150 women attended the conference, which brought together top women leaders of color from around the state to address a range of critical issues like civic engagement, voting, electoral representation, and policy reform.

Speakers included Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, NAACP Boston Chapter President Tanisha Sullivan, MassVOTE Executive Director Cheryl Clyburn Crawford, Boston City Councilors Andrea Campbell and Julia Mejia, State Representative Liz Miranda, and former Representative Charlotte Richie. Students from the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department actively participated in the forum, which was supported by a Barbara Lee Family Foundation Suffrage Centennial Project Grant.

Gerontology Institute Teams with CANALA to Improve Economic Opportunities for Older People of Color

The AARP Foundation has awarded a grant to the Gerontology Institute for a two-year project to increase access to economic opportunities for older people of color in the greater Boston area. The \$288,000 grant will fund the project that builds on the institute's age-friendly work across the state, particularly the Age Friendly Boston Initiative, and its expertise in economic security issues in later life.

The project will be a joint effort by the institute's Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging and CANALA, a research collaboration of UMass Boston's Institute for Asian American Studies, Institute for New England Native American Studies, Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, and William Monroe Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture.

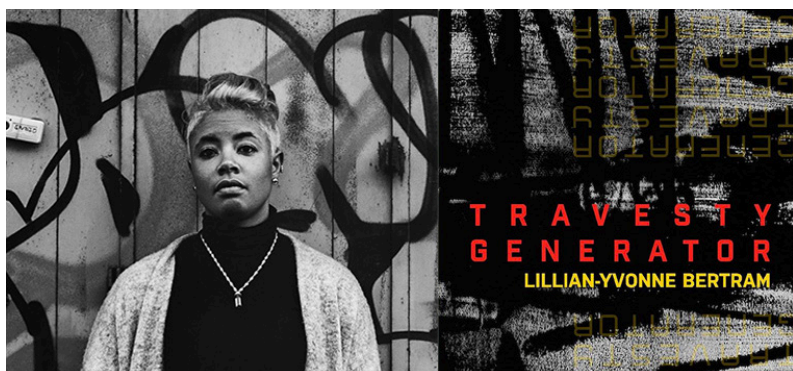
The project team will develop materials and provide training to community organizations in 10 pilot communities, focusing on Boston neighborhoods as well as Saugus, Revere, and Quincy. In all communities, the project's goal is to improve access to existing programs and resources that could reduce costs or generate new income for older people of color.

Asian American Studies Program Shares Stories of Racism During COVID-19

BIPOC, immigrant, bilingual, and low-income families have been particularly hard hit by COVID-19. UMass Boston's Asian American Studies Program has created the "COVID-19 Outbreak Racism Stories Project" to enable students of color to document and share the effects of the coronavirus outbreak in their everyday lives.

Professor of Asian American Studies Shirley Tang's digital stories, co-produced with UMass Boston students, have reached diverse audiences locally and nationally through webinars involving national Asian American Native American Pacific Islander-serving institutions directors and staff, campus leaders and staff from UMass Boston and Bunker Hill Community College, partners in the national network of the Langston University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Research and Capacity Building for Minority Entities, participants in the Native Youth Media Program of the Institute for New England Native American Studies, and ethnic studies-focused teachers in the Boston Public Schools.

POSITION UNIVERSITY IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION MARKETPLACE



Lillian-Yvonne Bertram's *Travesty Generator* was among 10 poetry collections to be considered for a National Book Award.

UMass Boston English Professor Named Semifinalist for National Book Award for Poetry

Lillian-Yvonne Bertram, associate professor of English and director of UMass Boston's MFA in Creative Writing Program, made the long list for the 2020 National Book Award in Poetry with their latest collection, *Travesty Generator*.

Travesty Generator ruminates on the intersections of race and gender. The poems pay homage to lives taken too soon — those of Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, and Emmett Till — pulls heroes like Harriet Tubman into the present, and offers the wisdoms spoken by Black mothers to their children.

Travesty Generator was also a winner of the Noemi Press Poetry Prize and the 2020 Poetry Society of America Anna Rabinowitz Prize for interdisciplinary and venturesome work.

ICI's Think College Receives \$10M Grant on Inclusive Higher Education

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education has awarded Think College at UMass Boston's Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) a five-year, \$10 million cooperative agreement through the Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities to serve as the National Coordinating Center for institutions of higher education (IHE) that offer postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disabilities.

The Coordinating Center will support increased knowledge about the impact and outcomes of postsecondary education for students with intellectual disabilities through collection and analyses of national data on effective and high-quality practices. It will also serve as a national technical assistance entity for IHE faculty and staff, local education agency staff, students, families, and other stakeholders.

A major outcome of the center will be the establishment of a process to implement national program accreditation standards to ensure the quality and accountability of college programs for students with intellectual disability.

Climate Crisis Symposium Highlights Innovative Feminist Pathways to Just and Sustainable Futures

More than 1,000 people from over 30 countries attended the recent Confronting the Climate Crisis: Feminist Pathways to Just and Sustainable Futures virtual symposium, organized by the Consortium on Gender, Security, and Human Rights.

This symposium examined the ways proposed responses to climate change may themselves pose environmental risks, as well as deepening existing gender, racial, and global inequalities. The event highlighted the work being done by diverse feminist thinkers to create the radical solutions that the crisis demands, proposing fundamental shifts in the dominant global economic model. The focus was on intersectional feminist analysis, with an emphasis on global justice and sustainability.



Gonzalo Bacigalupe speaks about Chile's COVID-19 cases on CNN.

Professor Becomes Leading Voice on COVID-19 Crisis in Chile

Professor of Counseling and School Psychology Gonzalo Bacigalupe has become a leading voice on the COVID-19 pandemic in Chile, where he has been quarantining since March. The renowned disaster resilience activist and researcher has appeared on Chilean national radio, television, podcasts, and print and online publications on a daily basis questioning the government's strategy in managing the coronavirus. Chile has one of the highest global death rates, with an estimated 58.28 deaths per 100,000 population.

He is part of an emerging grassroots network of public health professionals, social scientists, and experts mobilizing to change the COVID-19 strategy and prevent further disaster in the South American country. Bacigalupe has also contributed to the recent report from the donor-funded Gastón Institute, "COVID-19 and Latinos in Massachusetts."

INCREASE ENDOWMENT



(From left) College of Liberal Arts faculty and staff Samantha Regan, Eve Sorum, Heike Schotten, and Penelope MacDonald participated in the Virtual Beacon 5K in October.

Virtual Beacon 5K Raises Over \$3,500 for Beacon Student Aid Fund

In October, more than 350 alumni, students, faculty, staff, and their families participated in the university's second-ever Virtual Beacon 5K. Co-hosted by the Office of Alumni Engagement and UMass Boston Recreation, the event served to unite the UMass Boston community from all over the world by encouraging them to either run or walk a 5K and share their progress on social media. Although registration was free, participants were asked to consider making a donation to the Beacon Student Aid Fund, which assists students who have encountered a one-time unanticipated financial hardship that may impact their academic success. More than 43 percent of registrants stepped up to donate, raising a total of \$3,570 for the fund.

Educators' Solidarity Fund Provides Graduate Students with Mentorship Opportunity

Professors and students who are navigating through the somewhat unfamiliar territory of the virtual classroom this semester now have additional support thanks to the Educators' Solidarity Fund. Established in early September, the fund is a faculty-driven initiative that gives graduate students the opportunity to serve as academic success mentors and assist faculty with undergraduate instruction. Since its inception, the fund has secured a \$19,380 commitment from more than 50 donors—faculty, staff, and students who are looking to support their peers through the remote fall semester.

Faculty Invest \$50,000 to Support Undergraduate Students

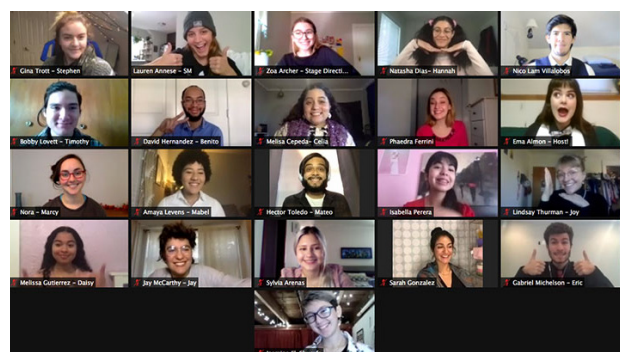
Professors Jonathan Chu P'16 and Maryann Brink '79, G'81, P'16, have established The Beacons Finish Line Endowed Fund to support full-time undergraduate students who are on track to graduate within two semesters and have expressed financial challenges that may prevent them from completing their final year of coursework.

Professor Liam Revell and his wife Emily Chen Lu created The Biology Department International Education and Research Fund, an endowment which advances student participation in international learning or research programs, including, but not limited to, study abroad. These two gifts of \$25,000 each are gratefully received and further emphasize the ethic of care possessed by our UMass Boston faculty members.

Annual Philanthropy Celebration Recognizes Leadership Giving Societies

More than 140 supporters—including members of UMass Boston's Founders Circle, Chancellor's Council, Lampas Society, and UMBelievers giving societies—tuned in to the university's annual philanthropy celebration, Gather in Gratitude, on November 12. The event is held each fall to recognize lifetime, longtime, and annual donors of the university and thank them for their continued investment in UMass Boston's students and faculty. Faculty and students praised donors for stepping up to provide emergency aid during the pandemic, purchasing Chromebooks for remote learning, continuing and increasing scholarship aid to students, and providing unrestricted gifts.

ENHANCE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE



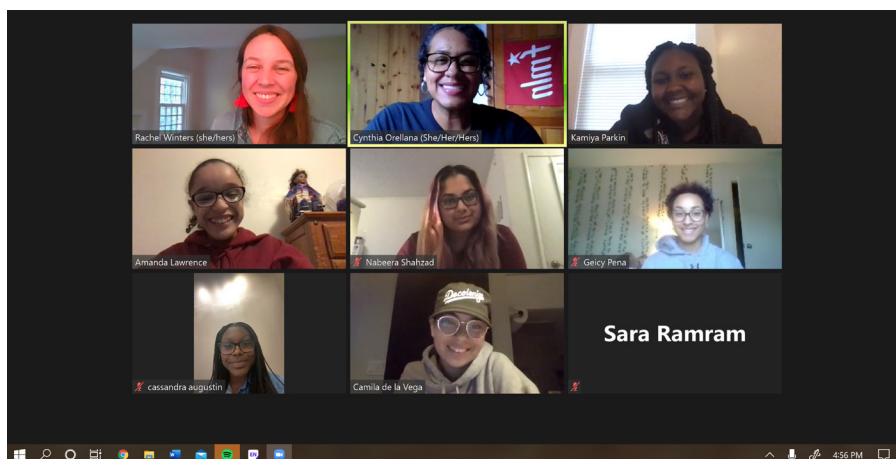
The cast and crew of *New Voices, New Stories* in a socially distant rehearsal.

The Show Goes On—Virtually—for Performing Arts Students

This semester's *New Voices, New Stories: A Celebration of UMass Boston Playwrights* opened for four performances in October to amazing reactions. Although it was a live online performance, the difference in format wasn't a lesser experience for the playwrights or the director. Words originally written in solitude still came to life through a cast of 21. The audience experience was different than gathering in the University Hall Theatre, but the writers felt the Zoom platform brought a different sense of intimacy.

The seven plays were all revised and worked on with counsel from dramaturg and playwriting instructor Ginger Lazarus. Many will submit their plays to the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival and others may consider expansion to full-length plays or submission to short play festivals.

ENHANCE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE (CONT.)



Civic Action Fellows met on October 21 as part of their bi-weekly program session.

University Launches New Civic Action Fellows Program for Students from Marginalized Communities

Seven UMass Boston students have been selected as the inaugural cohort of the Civic Action Fellows Program. The fellows will build their civic agency and skills for collective action through bi-weekly workshops with community-engaged leaders and an internship with a community-based organization.

This new initiative, led in partnership with the Office of Community Partnerships, Student Multicultural Affairs, and Student Leadership and Community Engagement, seeks to engage a diverse cohort of students in local civic life.

Community partners hosting internships include the Hyde Square Task Force, Mayor of Lawrence Dan Rivera, BAGLY Inc., Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project, Boston City Councilor At-Large Julia Mejia, Center for Teen Empowerment, and the City of Boston Mayor's Office of Civic Engagement. To support their internship, fellows in the program will receive a \$500 scholarship per semester.

Faculty, Staff, and Students Create Webinar to Help Latinx Students Excel During Pandemic

A group of academic advisors and faculty have created a three-part webinar to help UMass Boston's Latinx students survive and excel during the pandemic, after beginning to see a troubling increase in these students seeking emergency help and support.

Professor of Latin American and Iberian Studies Reyes Coll-Tellechea, Academic Advisor Albis Mejia, and Director of CLA Advising Ana Frega—with the help of five undergraduate students—share their combined knowledge and experiences at UMass Boston. They offer information, ideas, and strategies that students can use to get through their academic experience during the pandemic— and beyond.

With the help of a mini-grant from the Gastón Institute, the university's Instructional Technology team and staff psychologist Ana Fernández, the team succeeded in producing the webinar in less than three months this summer. The three modules, in Spanish with English translation, are available at UMass Boston's YouTube channel.

IMPROVE DELIVERY OF ADMINISTRATION AND IT SERVICES

Faculty Receive Support for Remote Semester

A series of virtual information sessions continue to equip UMass Boston faculty with the tools and resources necessary to engage with students during remote fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters. The live webinar sessions, called Teach Fall 2020, offer faculty the opportunity to hear from colleagues regarding best practices for remote learning and student engagement.

eLearning and Instructional Design offered virtual office hours daily this fall, so faculty members had a chance to get their questions answered and review pedagogy and technology to support their teaching.

UMBPD Convenes a New Community Advisory Board

As the national conversation continues about how police can better serve the community, particularly communities of color, the UMass Boston Police Department has launched a new Community Advisory Board, which met for the first time in October.

The goal of the board — which includes students, faculty, and staff — is to bridge gaps between the community and the department, promote transparency, surface ideas for safety and security, and serve as a forum to discuss national topics related to law enforcement and implications for campus policing. The board also supports the department's work of educating students about police services offered, responsibilities carried by officers, and expectations citizens should have of law enforcement in their communities.

STRENGTHEN THE UNIVERSITY'S RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ENTERPRISE



UMass Boston is a partner in the new Stone Living Lab.

Stone Living Lab Launches as New Hub for Nature-Based Resilience Solutions

As coastal communities face increasing climate-related threats, a new innovative and collaborative research effort has launched that aims to become a global hub for testing and scaling up nature-based solutions in the environment of the Boston Harbor Islands National and State Park.

The Stone Living Lab is a partnership of the City of Boston, UMass Boston's School for the Environment, Boston Harbor Now, the National Parks of Boston, and the James M. and Cathleen D. Stone Foundation that engages scientists and the community in research, education, and the promotion of equity.

The Stone Living Lab will operate at a collection of outdoor spaces in and around Boston Harbor, beginning with baseline monitoring at Rainsford Island and a pilot project at Fallon Pier at UMass Boston. This will help answer critical questions about using nature-based solutions in volatile weather conditions, addressing issues of climate justice and inequality, and engaging with the regulatory and development community.

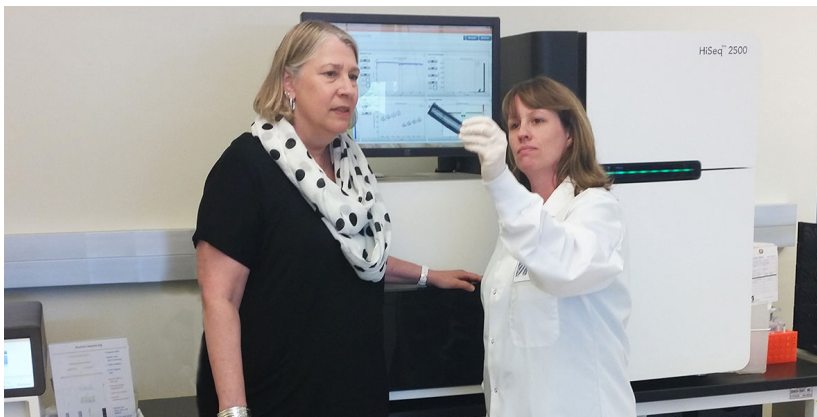
As a living lab, the partnership will also engage the larger community—including students, civic organizations, and advocates—to co-develop solutions to problems alongside scientists, including challenges related to permitting, financing, and community benefits necessary for implementing needed solutions.

Researchers Release Report on Living Wages for Direct Care Workers

The LeadingAge LTSS Center @UMass Boston published a report this fall titled "Making Care Work Pay," which documents the failure to pay a living wage to the vast majority of front-line health care workers. These workers have been called heroes of the pandemic, but their earnings tell a different story.

These 3.5 million direct care workers include nursing assistants, personal care aides, and home health aides who provide life-sustaining care and daily support to older people and those living with disabilities. Yet, they remain so poorly compensated that 1 in 8 lived in poverty and more than half received public benefits in 2018.

The report argues that a living wage for these workers would not only benefit them but would also improve patient care and infuse billions of dollars into the very communities of color that have suffered the most from the pandemic.



Jill Macoska inspects a flow cell held by Amy Avery before it's loaded onto the Illumina HiSeq DNA sequencer system.

Two UMass Boston Researchers Awarded Mass Life Sciences Grants

Two research projects led by UMass Boston faculty were selected to receive awards totaling \$1.1 million during the most recent funding cycle of the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC).

MLSC's Bits to Bytes program, which provides grants for projects that generate and analyze large datasets to answer pressing life science questions, awarded the Oregon-Massachusetts Mammography Database (OMAMA-DB) \$750,000. The project is led by Assistant Professor of Computer Science Daniel Haehn.

MLSC's Open Capital program, which provides grants for state-of-the-art equipment and infrastructure that support the life sciences in Massachusetts, awarded \$388,000 to the project titled "NextGen Sequencing at the Next Level: The University of Massachusetts Boston CPCT Genomics Core." This project, led by Distinguished University Professor of Science and Mathematics Jill Macoska, seeks to fill a critical gap in genomics support services by introducing new sequencing technology and services for leading-edge academic and corporate users.

STRENGTHEN THE UNIVERSITY'S RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ENTERPRISE (CONT.)

Sustainable Solutions Lab Report Focuses on Views on Climate Change Across Racial Groups in Greater Boston

In a report released this fall, the Sustainable Solutions Lab (SSL) at UMass Boston shared public opinion data that includes a large sampling of people of color in the Boston area. By capturing a full range of views on climate change across racial groups, the survey data establish a baseline set of inclusive perspectives from which climate stakeholders can measure change over time.

The data demonstrate that while nearly all Greater Boston residents believe in the threat of climate change and support major policy solutions, residents of color are less prepared for climate shocks. Fewer than half of Asian American and Black respondents report that they would have sufficient essential supplies in the face of a severe weather event.

The report, "Views That Matter: Race and Opinions on Climate Change of Boston Area Residents," was authored by Assistant Professor of Environment and Public Health Lorena Estrada-Martínez, Director of the Institute for Asian American Studies and Professor of Political Science Paul Watanabe, and doctoral student Katsyris Rivera-Kientz.



Haek Lee (far right) poses for a photograph with nurses and researchers at Kamuzu Central Hospital in Malawi.

Nursing Professor to Use Storytelling to Promote Cervical Cancer Testing in Malawi

Malawi has one of the highest rates of cervical cancer in the world, with an estimated 2,979 women dying from the disease every year. UMass Boston Professor of Nursing Haek Lee has received a \$383,191 R21 Award from the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Nursing Research to use Malawi's rich history of storytelling to increase cervical cancer screenings among Malawian women living with HIV infection.

Lee is leading a team of researchers from Deayang University in Malawi, Case Western Reserve University, Cornell University, Arizona State University, and the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at UMass Boston. Together they will develop culturally grounded and human-centered storytelling narrative intervention videos aimed at addressing the sociocultural and individual factors that can influence cervical cancer prevention behaviors, and examine the videos' effectiveness.

The report determined rates of economy security for older people of color using expense data generated by the Elder Index.

Report Finds Far Greater Rates of Economic Insecurity Among Older Adults of Color

The goal of elder economic security – having enough income to live independently and afford a no-frills budget in later life — is dramatically more difficult to achieve for older adults of color across America, according to a report released by the Gerontology Institute this fall.

The report shows rates of economic insecurity among Black, Latino, and Asian older adults far exceeding those of white adults and the overall national average. The report found that, among Black older adults, 64 percent of singles and 34 percent of couples were economically insecure. Among Latino elders, 72 percent of those living alone and 49 percent of couples had income insufficient to meet basic costs where they lived. Among older Asian adults, 59 percent of singles and 36 percent of couples were unable to reach economic security.

MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESS

Fall Enrollment Grows Amid Pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic has taken a toll on higher education, with enrollment declining by seven percent across most Massachusetts public higher education institutions. UMass Boston, however, experienced growth in new and overall enrollment this year.

The total student headcount in fall 2020 grew by 1.7 percent (270 students) to a total of 16,259. Undergraduate enrollment increased by 2.2 percent, with the freshman class alone growing by 5 percent, and graduate enrollment remained consistent. The composition of students is also noteworthy, with 83 percent being full-time, 55 percent being students of color, and 56 percent first-generation students.

The entire campus community came together to support enrollment growth, with two new efforts being considerably effective. A coordinated, collaborative readmit campaign helped welcome back 712 students (a 9 percent increase from last year), and with travel restrictions creating barriers for international students, a new Shorelight ACL initiative brought 400 non-degree students to UMass Boston this fall.

Ramping Up Remote Student Support

In preparation for a remote fall 2020 semester, One Stop staff expanded the outreach and services they provide UMass Boston students. The goal was simple—help ensure continuing students have the support they need and were ready to start the semester.

A working group from the One Stop, Financial Aid Services, the Bursar's Office, and the Registrar's Office collaborated on a communications plan that encouraged students to get organized well before classes began. All communications promoted a newly created web landing that includes a checklist and resources for items like buying books and setting up a payment plan.

The team also leveraged a variety of technologies to make accessing staff support easy. From live chat sessions to one-on-one Zoom appointments, being distant did not mean that students could not get answers or support from staff in a timely manner. The team also created over 30 how-to videos to assist students in navigating online systems.

All told, over 590 Zoom appointments were hosted and nearly 3,000 chats occurred between July 1 and September 30. The proactive initiatives eliminated the last-minute student rush, even with increased enrollment, and ensured students were ready to focus on their coursework.

UMass Boston Celebrates First-Generation Students

To commemorate First-Generation College Celebration Day on November 8, the Division of Student Affairs and campus partners developed a weeklong virtual celebration for the almost 60 percent of undergraduates who are first-generation, meaning that neither parent nor guardian obtained a bachelor's degree. Events included a virtual student panel and a financial wellness workshop. Students were also encouraged to share their stories on www.umb.edu/firstgen.

GRAD Last Mile Helps Students Cross the Finish Line

The City of Boston Mayor's Office continues to increase the funding it provides UMass Boston for the GRAD Last Mile Scholarship, assisting Boston residents or Boston Public High School graduates who are in their final year of study and have experienced a financial setback that may impede degree completion.

In 2018, UMass Boston received \$25,000 and was able to support 24 students with a scholarship. The Mayor's Office expanded the award to \$50,000 in 2019, allowing support of 39 students. An analysis this summer showed that 90 percent of students who received the scholarship reached their goal of graduating, prompting the Mayor's Office to increase funding to \$75,000.

The GRAD Last Mile program is managed by the Merit Scholarship Office in the Division of Enrollment Management. The scholarship program is heavily marketed to students and also benefits from referrals from faculty and staff members. Funding can go toward tuition and fees, rent, childcare, transportation, or technology related costs.

RENEW THE FACULTY

UMass Boston Launches Third Cohort of Faculty-Practitioner Co-Teachers

The Practitioner Scholars Program (PSP) pilot has launched its third cohort this fall, bringing together a new group of distinguished government, business, and community leaders who will co-teach courses with UMass Boston faculty. This year's program has been curated with courses that have a racial equity and social justice focus, with a deep connection to community engagement.

The third cohort includes two public officials, state Representative Liz Miranda and Brockton City Councilor Tina Cardoso, along with distinguished community and business leaders Cara Cogliano, director of Chelsea Community Connections; Charles Smith, senior vice president and SBA program manager at Eastern Bank; and Sam Williams, a faculty member and coach at the School & Main Institute.

The co-taught courses constitute student projects that are meant to benefit the community and the students. The practitioner's network and expertise in work that is impactful for the community is seamlessly integrated with the academic expertise of faculty members in a redesigned course. The learnings from the first pilot year are now published in the *Journal of Higher Education, Outreach and Engagement*.



Tara Parker

Professor Receives 2020 Presidential Medal Honorable Mention

Tara Parker, an associate professor and chair of the Leadership in Education Department, received the 2020 Presidential Medal: Local Change Agent Award Honorable Mention from the Association for the Study of Higher Education.

The award pays tribute to Parker's wide-ranging contributions as a scholar of higher education whose work centers racial justice in all aspects of her leadership, research, teaching, and service.

Professor Wins 2020 ONE Book Award for Scenario Planning for Climate Change

Associate Professor of Management and acclaimed climate change strategist Nardia Haigh was awarded the 2020 Book Award from the Organizations and Natural Environment (ONE) Division of the Academy of Management for her guide on how to adapt to what climate change may bring. Haigh's book, *Scenario Planning for Climate Change*, sets out an engaging step-by-step scenario planning method that executives, board members, managers, and consultants can follow to develop a long-term strategy for climate change tailored for any business.