"Our students are the soul of the college."

That’s Ray Sharick speaking. As the College of Education’s graduate program director, he spends his time thinking about the college’s 600-plus students, assessing their needs and advocating for them. In the process, Sharick has developed a keen sense of who they are.

“I think of their spirit as the energy that fuels our institution,” he says. “They’re forward-looking critical thinkers. They’re on a lifelong educational journey. All of these things and more come to mind when I think about them.

“I’m impressed with the quality of their academic and scholarly abilities and interests,” Sharick continues. “I read their research, and the depth of their understanding of critical educational issues is astonishing. But more than that, I am impressed with them as human beings. They are overwhelmingly kind, creative, thoughtful, and generous. They do good for people and their communities, and they thoroughly enjoy what they’re doing.”

As a college, we like to shine a light on all of our students. In the coming year, we’ll post on our website short pieces about students who’d like to talk about their lives, their studies, their thoughts, their aspirations, and what they “thoroughly enjoy” doing.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

ORIGINS: “I’m one of few College of Education grad students originally from Amherst or the surrounding area. My father graduated from Amherst High School. My grandfather, Robert McClung, was a naturalist and children’s book author; my grandmother was the editor for Mount Holyoke College’s alumni magazine. My mother works at Mount Holyoke College’s alumni magazine. My mother works at Fort River Elementary School. My sister is a film-and-media-studies teacher at the Pioneer Valley School of Performing Arts and a local independent filmmaker. I was lucky to grow up in a place that values education as much as western Mass does.

TURNING POINT: In high school, I thought of participating in an extra year of high school in France and living with a host family there, in between my junior and senior years. To my surprise and delight, all of my teachers and guidance counselors and my parents thought this was a great idea and encouraged me to go. I was not only made it one in piece, but it turned out to be a great experience. At first it was inconceivable to me that life could exist just as happily but in a different way from what I knew. That year abroad really opened my eyes to a world of other languages and cultures and seeing the U.S. as just one part of a vibrant world community. Now I’ve been to more than 20 countries and speak four languages.

RECREATION: When I went back to Europe after college, I thought it would be a good moment to get back into playing chess. I played in a club in Rennes, France, and then for several years in the Hamburg city league in Germany. I’ve also kept up the cross-country running I learned in high school, and play guitar and bass. These hobbies allow me to connect and have a good time with other people wherever I go.

WHY EDUCATION: “I’m really looking forward to teaching history at the high-school level. It will be a great way to become a positive part of the community and will be an engaging career for me. Because current affairs are part of the curriculum, it will be interesting to incorporate them into my teaching.”

THE FUTURE: “I’m looking forward to staying in the area to teach, coach cross country, and run a chess club at the school where I work. After so much time abroad, I want to give back to the community I’m from—although “to be an active part of the community” is perhaps a better way to put it, since I get a lot from being here as well. I think many people choose to come back to western Mass, which says a lot about the high quality of the area.

GREG McCLUNG

is a master’s-degree student in the College of Education’s two-year Secondary Teacher Education Program (STEP). He grew up in Pelham, Massachusetts, and attended Amherst Regional High School. He received a bachelor’s degree in Latin American studies with a Latin-literature and Spanish-language focus from Union College in upstate New York.

After college, McClung spent two years in Rennes, France, teaching English at a university there. Then he was off to Hamburg, Germany, where for seven years he lived and worked in a multilingual environment—which, as a fluent speaker of French, Spanish, and English, was a perfect fit for him.

“I loved being in a place where there were so many linguistic and natural differences,” he says. “I felt like a citizen of the world.”

In the summer of 2015, McClung returned to western Massachusetts. “It was a big thing to come back,” he recalls. “I loved being in Europe, but to become a teacher in Germany takes four years, and then what many people don’t realize is that you’re required to work in a school of the government’s choice for two or three years after that. Here I can get a degree and then choose to go exactly where I want to, and for me that’s in western Massachusetts, where I’m a third-generation McClung.”
IN HER OWN WORDS

ORIGINS: I have a very multicultural and democratic perspective on life. My family and friendship groups reflect the diversity of our global community. I attended schools in Britain where the heritages of the students were representative of the countries the British had colonized. I loved sharing stories of our mutual trials, tribulations, and triumphs. I believe these early experiences have shaped who I am today. I also saw the disparity among those who had and those who had very little, but people helped each other in the community. For instance, my parents went out of their way to offer lodgings in our house to anyone, regardless of provenance, including Italians, Nigerians, Jamaicans, and Barbadians. TURNING POINT: My teaching career has shaped my life considerably. I currently have a class of students whose family origins reflect every continent except Antarctica, and who collectively speak 10 languages. It is so wonderful, because the children come to school with experiences and knowledge that enhance our learning experience. It is not wonderful that because of this diverse multicultural situation, these children in their daily discourses will have opportunities to inform the construction and reconstruction of ideas! This all occurs in an atmosphere of understanding and empathy. RECREATION: First of all, I love reading. My mother, who recently passed, had green thumbs; I remember her grew copious amounts of potatoes (we ate a lot of chips!) and beautiful roses, hollyhocks, and gladioli. I have been recreating her gardens to feel her near me. I write stories and plays for children and, when inspired, I create poetry. I had a play I wrote performed here at the living-learning conference two years ago. WHY EDUCATION?: My academic pursuits in language, literacy, and culture are inspired by the desire to see an acceptance and acknowledgment of the value of critically engaging students with multicultural literature. The possibilities of interconnectedness and critical engagement are for all children and are about all children, regardless of assessed reading level or decoding skill. All children have the potential to be “thoroughly literate,” to be emotionally engaged with text, and to express their understanding through a variety of modalities, including drama. Multicultural literature should not just be a classroom adornment; it should be an integral part of a child’s day in school. The future: Naturally, I want to impact teacher education and preparation in some way, to demonstrate how best to facilitate literacy development through critical multicultural practices. I also want to write more children’s literature reflecting our diversity and global interconnectedness.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

ORIGINS: The science education I received amounted to “listen, take notes, do homework, take tests.” I had very little lab experience. What lab work I did get to do was mostly verification; the teachers were nervous and tough, and ordered us to do exactly what they said. Also, we never had opportunities to learn the nature of science and scientific inquiry. I began wanting to change all this. TURNING POINTS: At Beijing Normal University, I learned about the nature of education and the nature of science for the first time in my life. At UMass Amherst, I’ve greatly deepened and expanded my understanding of the nature of learning, learners, teaching, teachers, and teacher professional development, as well as the nature of science and engineering. RECREATION: I love science fiction (J. R. R. Tolkien) and Chinese and Western music. I also enjoy nature very much. WHY EDUCATION?: I strongly want to change the way science education is practiced in China, and believe that getting a PhD in science education from a good U.S. university will help me with this. I got to know my advisor, Martina Nieszwandt, and my dissertation committee member Betty McEnaney through taking courses with them when I was a graduate student at a university in Chicago. When I learned that they had an NSF-funded project on student small-group work in scientific inquiry and engineer- ing design with heavy attention to the affective aspect of science learning, I thought I must come to UMass to study with them. My dissertation has an out of project. THE FUTURE: I want to find a faculty position in a Chinese university where I can set up a STEM education center, not just a science education center. I then want to try to get UMass professors involved in helping to reform science education in China and establishing integrated STEM education in China.
VICTORIA MALANEY, a second-year doctoral student in higher education, is from Port St. Lucie, Florida. She received a BA from Skidmore College, where she majored in English and Spanish, and a master’s degree in higher education from the College of Education.

Malaney came to UMass Amherst in 2013, interested in a social-justice curriculum and focus. “I connected with faculty when I came to visit,” she says, “and so applied to the higher-ed program because it had a social-justice approach well suited to my long-term goals.”

Malaney’s empathy toward students who do not navigate the university experience easily served her well in her graduate assistantship in the campus’s Office of the Dean of Students. “I had one-on-one conversations with undergrads to help them understand their challenges and strengths,” she says. “Then I set up action plans and made resource referrals to ensure that they had holistic support. I care a lot about the student experience, particularly that of students from underserved backgrounds.”

Her research focus is on multiracial college students and how they navigate predominately white institutions relative to racism and discrimination. “I feel that my research, as well as my personal lens through which I view the world, matters in the context of U.S. higher education,” she explains. “My lens looks at racial inequality and inequity. I feel that there is not enough research on this topic. Our nation’s view of race is one of singular, discreet, mono-racial categories, and those who fall outside of those boxes are not often considered in education policy, practice, or research.”

As a college student, I was able to understand different opportunities, from study abroad to being involved in cultural organizations. That, along with the jobs I held postcollege in New York, and working in a diversity program office at Skidmore, made me want to get my master’s degree in higher education. After graduating from the master’s program, I stayed on at UMass Amherst to get my PhD because I wanted to learn how to conduct research, learn more about racial inequality, and work with our dedicated, passionate faculty. At the end of the day, what drives me to learn more about higher education is the student and institutional environment’s ability to constantly change, and the challenges that change poses in finding how best to support student success. The future I plan to complete my PhD and then work in a college or university in the New York metro area, while infusing social-justice research and practices into my everyday work. I can see myself in any of three jobs: as a professor, teaching and researching in a higher-education graduate program; as an academic dean in academic affairs; or as a student affairs administrator or chief diversity officer. I would like to broaden my skill sets in both research and practice in order to best serve the changing climates of higher-education institutions.

IALEXA DAVIDS is from Woodmere, New York. A student in UMass Amherst’s bachelor’s-degree program in English, she is minoring in education and plans to get a master’s degree in education. After that, she’d like to teach high school somewhere in New York.

Davids says she “never wanted to do anything except teach,” and her high school’s Senior Experience Program gave her that opportunity. She “interned” with her Spanish teacher, assisting with teaching middle-school Spanish. She loved it. “The kids liked seeing someone close to their age in their classroom, understanding and teaching a foreign language,” she says. “I think it made them more willing to learn. It built up my confidence, and I loved seeing how my help directly impacted students.” Davids calls herself a “glorified camp counselor” who enjoys being with children, in her career, she “definitely wants to be with kids.”

This spring, Davids is taking part in a study abroad program at Tel Aviv University, traveling, learning Hebrew, and exploring the culture. She’ll return to UMass Amherst in September to begin her senior year.

IN HER OWN WORDS

ORIGINS: I grew up a fraternal twin, one of four children in an intercultural family. I was always encouraged as a child to be creative. My parents really fostered my pre-school education by being involved parents, and they inspired my love for learning and provided me with the opportunity to develop discipline and an outlet to be expressive by dancing classical ballet. Growing up in an intercultural family strongly influenced the way I viewed my peers and educational experiences, particularly because I was able to understand and navigate two cultures: my mother’s Indo-Caribbean family from Trinidad and Tobago and my father’s Irish family from Hull, Massachusetts. Turning Points: I was significantly changed by attending Skidmore. It was the first time that I was on my own, about 1,400 miles away from my family. There I learned more about myself, cultivated my interest in social justice, and explored and questioned my multiracial identity. One of my most rewarding experiences was being a trained intergroup-dialogue peer facilitator. That enabled me to view the world in a more critical way through the lens of understanding oppression and, more specifically, systemic racism. It allowed me to reflect about my worldview, because for the first time I was able to situate myself as a proud first-generation, multiracial American woman of color, drawn to working in higher education.

RECREATION: I like to attend yoga classes and go to music concerts and dance performances. I was a classical ballet dancer from early youth through college, where I minor ed in dance. I also love to travel, spend time when I can with my family in Florida, and visit with my fiancé, a ballet dancer, in New York City.

WHY EDUCATION: I chose to study higher education because I was fascinated by the college-student process. As a graduate student, I was able to understand different opportunities, from study abroad to being involved in cultural organizations. That, along with the jobs I held postcollege in New York, and working in a diversity program office at Skidmore, made me want to get my master’s degree in higher education. After graduating from the master’s program, I stayed on at UMass Amherst to get my PhD because I wanted to learn how to conduct research, learn more about racial inequality, and work with our dedicated, passionate faculty. At the end of the day, what drives me to learn more about higher education is the student and institutional environment’s ability to constantly change, and the challenges that change poses in finding how best to support student success.

THE FUTURE: I plan to complete my PhD and then work in a college or university in the New York metro area, while infusing social-justice research and practices into my everyday work. I can see myself in any of three jobs: as a professor, teaching and researching in a higher-education graduate program; as an academic dean in academic affairs; or as a student affairs administrator or chief diversity officer. I would like to broaden my skill sets in both research and practice in order to best serve the changing climates of higher-education institutions.

IN HER OWN WORDS

ORIGINS: Living in close proximity to my extended family was a big childhood influence. Being extremely close to my aunt, uncle, and grandparents, I never once felt as though I didn’t belong. Seeing firsthand how fulfilling and meaningful relationships are, I knew what to look for when meeting new people at college. I already understood the importance of family and friendship. Turning Points: When I was 12, my father was diagnosed with glioblastoma multiforme, one of the deadliest cancers. At that age, we didn’t often think about the value of life. Seeing my mother morph into being the sole breadwinner and nurse, seeing my sister turn from a carefree 16-year-old into a mother, tutor, and cook, changed my perspective and outlook. With my mother at work and sister at college, my dad and I spent a lot of quality time together, and I have gotten to know him in a way I would never otherwise have had. This disease has given me the greatest gift I could ask for—the gift of life experience, the ability at an early age to understand that all that really matters is health and love.

RECREATION: I chose the area of English because I believe it is both a tool and a subject used everywhere. Even at a young age, I had a love for books and memoirs. The idea that you can become so consumed in reading someone else’s thoughts and ideas and get influenced me. Writing soon became an outlet of expression for me. The future: As I complete my degree, I hope to become a teacher. I love being around kids, and when I think back to who changed my outlook on English, I think of my teacher in middle school. The thought that I could make such a lasting impression on another student motivates me to further my education and pursue my dreams.
always been told that I should learn things in order to be an education approach to everything I had studied. I had and, finally, English—at which point he had a revelation. Around" with a variety of majors, including neuroscience, Woodbury, Connecticut (“a sleepy New England town,” he says, “with arguably too many antique stores”), and now lives in Amherst. He works full time as a teacher’s aide at the Smith College Campus School in two second-grade classes where he helps with “everything,” particularly in assisting teachers integrate iPads into the curriculum. He also teaches a sixth-grade after-school program in which he shows students how to use multimedia tools and write publishable materials so they can create a school-wide news blog.

Horrocks attended a small Catholic school in Waterbury, Connecticut, but knew that he wanted “the exact opposite of that in college. I wanted a large student body, I wanted diversity, I wanted a place that would support my exploration of what I wanted to study.”

Entering UMass as a psychology major, Horrocks “danced around” with a variety of majors, including neuroscience, natural resources conservation, sustainable food and farming, and, finally, English—at which point he had a revelation. “I learned,” he says, “that what I most wanted was to take an education approach to everything I had studied. I had always been told that I should learn things in order to be something. But I realized that I wasn’t so much interested in being something as in doing something. I realized that sharing knowledge was more precious to me than acquiring subject knowledge. That’s something the College of Education has taught me; that’s why I love my job. The things I’m learning and the topics that my coursework and research encourage me to think about are being put into the context of elementary school. It’s been the most profound experience I’ve had.”

BRIAN J. HORROCKS is a master’s student in the College of Education’s media, learning, and technology concentration. He minored in education and psychology and received a bachelor’s degree in English from UMass Amherst. He is from Woodbury, Connecticut (“a sleepy New England town,” he says, “with arguably too many antique stores”), and now lives in Amherst. He works full time as a teacher’s aide at the Smith College Campus School in two second-grade classes where he helps with “everything,” particularly in assisting teachers integrate iPads into the curriculum. He also teaches a sixth-grade after-school program in which he shows students how to use multimedia tools and write publishable materials so they can create a school-wide news blog.

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IN MY OWN WORDS

ORIGINS - Growing up in a quiet, middle-class Connecticut town while having a mother who was a child-welfare law specialist working in a nearby urban, impoverished area was extremely influential not only in my upbringing but in my interest in education. Having these contrasting contexts interacting so near at hand left me with a curiosity about social justice and cultural contexts that has evolved into a passion in my life. It encouraged me to explore and understand others outside of my immediate peripheral.

TURNING POINTS - During the summer between my sophomore and junior years, I studied abroad at the University of Oxford. It had a dramatic impact on my perspectives. I faced an academic challenge and an intellectual standard that both scares and inspires me to this day. RECREATION - Being an educator allows me to work with children, always a passion of mine. Reading, enjoying the beautiful outdoors,western Massachusetts has to offer, and travel are all ways I love to spend my free time. And, as with any student, I would be lying if I didn’t list sleep as a personal interest.

WHY EDUCATION - During my undergraduate career at UMass, I took Assistant Professor Joseph Torrey Trust’s “Internet Tools for Education.” There I learned a great deal about this domain of education, in which I did not have much background knowledge. I found it congruent with my interests in education and, in some cases, a potential remedy to educational issues that interest me. After taking another course with her and conducting multiple research projects together, my fascination with educational technology transcended my other interests and made me realize that continuing to study EdTech would be the perfect postgraduate endeavor.

WHY I CHOSE THE FUTURE - Within EdTech, I have so many interests that it’s hard to say exactly what I want to do. The Community of Practice interest group for IT professionals and the research I have published are both on which I’d like to continue. Applications and media tools that support the emotional health of students, or those that create more equity in the wide range of schooling contexts, are without doubt topics I’d like to explore further. I think my next step is to teach elementary school, design hands-on experience while fulfilling my enthusiasm for children and education. From there on, we’ll see!

IN MY OWN WORDS

ORIGINS - I was the youngest kid and the only female among my siblings and cousins back home. Growing up with them was fun. Playing sports was all that mattered. I learned good sportsmanship and how to hold my own. I also grew up in a family of caring women with strong convictions. Their dedication and compassion for family, friends, and the people they worked with set a great example of the type of person I strive to become.

TURNING POINTS - I’ve gone through many periods that changed me and my circumstances. My time in grad school is one of these. On the one hand, I barely believe this is my fourth year in the program, but I’ve done so much since my first year. At the end of each semester, I never feel quite like the person I was at the beginning. Reflecting on my journey before UMass makes me realize how much I do nowadays that used to feel out of reach. RECREATION - I’m a great consumer of comedy.

WHY EDUCATION? - I became interested in the promotion of mental health in schools. Schools are powerful community agencies, and educators can positively influence students and foster well-being and success, in and out of school. School psychologists play a pivotal role in the development of collaborative relationships, systems, and practices. They can truly become advocates for change in their school communities. What drives me to learn more about the promotion of mental health is discerning those gaps between research and school-based practices. THE FUTURE - Ultimately, I want to return home, get involved in the public school system, and work in academia. I would love to bring back what I’ve learned and contribute even in the slightest to the development of school psychologists as a field through research, practice, and policy. Most of the professionals now working in the field are clinical psychologists in training. School psychologists are rarely housed in schools. A lot of our work is lost because of system fragmentation. Our training at UMass Amherst is strong in prevention, systems consultation, and supporting sustainable practices. This is where I hope my work comes into play.

MARIA REINA SANTIAGO-ROSARIO is a doctoral student in school psychology. She received her bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of Puerto Rico and her MEd from the College of Education. She grew up in Carolina, Puerto Rico, and attended a Catholic school she remembers as having been fun, in part because it was next to the beach in San Juan. As the school principal’s daughter, she was “always in the school and getting behind-the-scenes looks at how schools operate.” This influenced her thinking about school systems. She saw how her mother listened to teachers and managed their problems and how teams learned to work together.

Even though Santiago-Rosario was attracted to a career in education, she entered college as a journalism major and soon discovered that the field was not for her. Eventually, she decided to study psychology and worked in the University’s Institute in Psychological Research’s community outreach program. She applied for and won an undergraduate research scholarship, which started her on a path doing research in school settings.

“At that time,” Santiago-Rosario says, “health had been removed from the curriculum in most schools in Puerto Rico. I saw how the primary investigator, my mentor, had to figure out how to get it back into the schools. I was interested in doing that. That’s how I learned that there was such a thing as a school psychologist; that’s when I made my decision. My university didn’t have a program in school psychology, and I always wanted to do graduate work in the U.S. My professors told me, ‘You go out there and learn what you can, and bring it back home and put it in place.’ That’s what I want to do. I don’t think it will be easy, but I think I will be able to do it.”

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IN HER OWN WORDS

ORIGINS> I grew up on 50 acres of farmland in what my parents referred to as “the middle of nowhere.” I’ll forever value peace and quiet and open spaces. I grew up in a very small town and had a strong sense of belonging in the community, especially my school, but I was very fortunate to have lots of opportunities to travel. That helped me realize there was a lot more out there that I wanted to learn about.

TURNING POINTS> Six years ago, I became a parent to my son, Wes; two years ago, my younger son, Ezra, was born. Each stage of parenthood brings new surprises and challenges and continues to change me. I have certainly been challenged to balance the needs of my family with my program of study. Beyond that, watching my own children’s development has given me a new perspective on educating the children of others.

RECREATION> I enjoy spending lots of time outdoors with my family, gardening, cooking, hiking, and traveling. Why education? As a teacher, I learned how to meet the needs of most, but not all, of my students. It was those students who continued to puzzle me that led me to pursue a degree in school psychology. In the three years since I started the program, my understanding of the ways that a school psychologist can support not only students, but their families, teachers, and school systems as a whole has grown dramatically. I’m looking forward to further building this knowledge and these skills.

THE FUTURE> I plan to go on to practice school psychology in an elementary school. Now that my family has put down roots in Amherst, I don’t see us moving very far away.

AMADEE MEYER grew up in Charlemont, Massachusetts, and now lives in Amherst. A doctoral student in school psychology, she received an MEd from the College of Education after earning a bachelor’s degree from Cornell University.

Having attended public schools and having had “great teachers,” Meyer has wanted to be a teacher for as long as she can remember. She loved her school experience in rural Charlemont but admits “it was not very diverse.” College gave her “a new perspective on what was out there.”

At Cornell, Meyer studied history and Asian history. “I had been studying the Indonesian language,” she says, “because I have a connection: my father grew up there, and my grandfather worked at an oil company there. I was slated to go to Indonesia in the fall of 2001 in a study abroad program, but then there was a security warning in August.” Meyer chose instead to go to Vietnam, where, she says, “I had a lot of firsts: my first immersion experience, first time living in a city, first time being away from family, and first time in another culture.”

Meyer returned to Cornell, got a travel grant, and headed back to Asia to teach English in a school for street children. After graduation, she decided she wanted to be an English teacher. At the same time, her parents adopted a baby from China. Meyer returned to Massachusetts to be closer to them, so it made sense for her to enter UMass Amherst.

After graduating, Meyer taught K–8 English-language learners in Maynard, Massachusetts. She had an eye-opening experience when the school brought in consultants on how to teach reading. “They were school psychologists,” Meyer says, “they planted a seed.” She moved back to Hadley, taught at a Chinese-immersion school for five years, worked as a literacy interventionist, and then decided to go back to school. In 2012, Meyer entered the College of Education’s PhD program in school psychology.

Furcolo Hall
officially reopens
after its renovation

THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION officially celebrated the reopening of the renovated Furcolo Hall on Friday, April 29, 2016, with a daylong schedule of events. They included a panel discussion about the college’s deeply rooted commitment to social justice, an acknowledgement of the accomplishments and contributions of retired faculty of color who served the college over the past 50 years; a research poster showcase; an art exhibit; and building tours.

A festive reception held in The Hub area of the building began with remarks by Massachusetts Senate President Stanley C. Rosenberg, UMass Board of Trustees Chair Victor Woolridge, UMass Amherst Chancellor Kumble R. Subbaswamy, Provost Katherine S. Newman, and College of Education Interim Dean Robert S. Feldman. The official cutting of the symbolic ribbon followed. Among the guests attending were members of the Furcolo family, who traveled from near and far to be a part of the celebration, and teachers from the former Mark’s Meadow Elementary School, which now houses the college’s Department of Educational Policy, Research, and Administration, and Department of Student Development.
UNDER THE TENT:

Our 2016 college orientation

by Marina Donnelly

ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31, the College of Education held a daylong Graduate Student Orientation, bringing together more than 120 new and returning graduate students along with college staff and faculty members. The event provided students with the information and resources needed to ensure a successful acclimation to university life, introduce members of the college with whom students might interface, enjoy one another’s company, and foster a sense of community, partnership, and collaboration.

The program began outdoors in the field behind Furcolo Hall, and the attendees could not have asked for better weather. Ray Sharick, graduate program director and the event’s coordinator, opened the day with a welcome and information session, then introduced deans and associate deans, including John McCarthy, dean of the Graduate School, and other administrative personnel. Sharick then talked about the organizational structure of the college and briefly addressed many important first-semester and back-to-school items, including parking, course registration, and deadlines.

Representatives from the university’s Graduate Employee Organization delivered a short presentation on student rights. It was followed by an engaging community-building activity focused on relevant issues of social justice and diversity in education. This session allowed for productive conversations and reflections among students, faculty, and staff from across the college in a supportive, collaborative environment.

The day continued with a series of rotating Learning Resource Center sessions for graduate students, in which faculty from across the departments, as well as invited guests from across campus, delivered short, information-packed presentations on the research process and Institutional Review Board, licensure, graduate student life, and self-care. The whole college came together again for an outdoor barbecue lunch. Students, faculty, and staff enjoyed their lunch under the shade of the tent, meeting new people or catching up with classmates and colleagues after the long summer break. During lunch, professors Stephen G. Sireci and Florence Sullivan and returning graduate student Weiyang Liu put together an outstanding and highly praised live musical performance.

In the afternoon, graduate students gathered by their academic concentrations for in-depth orientation sessions. Some programs used this time very creatively. For example, students and faculty from the mathematics, science, and learning technologies concentration organized a photo scavenger hunt, which many cited as a great success.

Overall, students reported benefiting from the information they learned and from meeting other students, staff, and faculty. According to responses in a post-event survey, the majority of the attendees appreciated the day’s welcoming and enjoyable atmosphere.

This event would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of the planning committee led by Ray Sharick, the tech support team, and all of the undergraduate- and graduate-student, faculty, and staff event volunteers. Thanks to all of you!

Marina Donnelly, a second-year doctoral student in the school psychology program, led the planning team for the College of Education's 2016 orientation. Her research focuses on family support and engagement. In her free time, she enjoys nature and bonding with her family, and she longs for the days when she could read just for fun.
Jeanne L. Brunner has joined the Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Science as assistant professor in cognitive/STEM middle-school and childhood education. She received BA degrees in biology and in music education from Northwestern University in 2004, an MEd in curriculum and instruction from National Louis University in 2007, and a PhD in music education from Northwestern University, Seoul, South Korea, in 2014. Specializing in school psychology at the University of Florida’s College of Education and a preeminent scholar in the field, in 1995, Hambleton was awarded a grant through the Fulbright Specialist Program to work with faculty at Christ University, Bengaluru, India, in the fall of 2016. He assisted in developing the capacity of the university’s counseling program to incorporate an evidence-based practice component into the training of counselors and future counseling faculty. Carey also worked with faculty to explore new models for school-based counseling practice, a developing specialization in India. He was awarded a Fulbright Specialist grant for a project at Korea University, Seoul, South Korea, in 2014.

Benita J. Barnes, education policy, research, and administration, has been selected as the College of Education’s new director of diversity advancement. She will focus on continuing the development of policies to increase diversity in the recruitment, hiring, and retention of faculty, staff, and graduate students; initiating practices that support continuous improvement of a climate that embraces and supports diversity throughout the college; and facilitating community outreach activities that enhance the college’s commitment to diversity.

John C. Carey, director of the Ronald H. Fredrickson Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation, was awarded a grant through the Fulbright Specialist Program to work with faculty at Christ University, Bengaluru, India, in the fall of 2016. He assisted in developing the capacity of the university’s counseling program to incorporate an evidence-based practice component into the training of counselors and future counseling faculty. Carey also worked with faculty to explore new models for school-based counseling practice, a developing specialization in India. He was awarded a Fulbright Specialist grant for a project at Korea University, Seoul, South Korea, in 2014.

Ronald K. Hambleton, distinguished university professor and executive director of the College of Education’s Center for Educational Assessment, received the inaugural Tom Oakland Award for Distinguished Contributions to Testing and Assessment from the International Test Commission (ITC). An association of national psychological associations, test commissions, publishers, and other organizations, ITC is committed to promoting effective testing and assessment policies and to the proper development, evaluation, and uses of educational and psychological instruments. The award honors the late Thomas Oakland, professor of school psychology at the University of Florida’s College of Education and a preeminent scholar in the field. In 1995, Hambleton coedited a book with Oakland, *International Perspectives on Academic Assessment*.

Kate Hudson, educational policy, research, and administration, has been appointed the College of Education’s inaugural director of program development. She provides support to the development and advancement of continuing and professional education programs and courses throughout the college.

Korina Jocson, teacher education and curriculum studies, is participating in the 2016–17 Canada-U.S. Fulbright Program as visiting research chair of human rights and social justice at the University of Ottawa. The research chair is housed in the Human Rights Research and Education Centre, which strives to bring together educators, researchers, and students from various disciplines based on the need to approach issues regarding human rights from a multidisciplinary perspective, including the arts, law, political science, and sociology. Jocson’s project, “Youth Media Making, Learning Opportunities, and Social Justice in the Arts,” extends a decade-long examination of youth cultural production at the intersection of media technology, participatory politics, and the arts.

Ezekiel Kimball, educational policy, research, and administration, was named a 2016–17 Family Research Scholar by UMass Amherst’s Center for Research on Families (CRF). The center noted that Kimball’s proposed research project, “Academic Self-Concept and Parental Involvement in the Postsecondary Outcomes of Students with Disabilities,” is “tremendously important and relevant” to its mission. The CRF scholars program aims to create a strong community of colleagues from multiple disciplines who study issues of
Six College of Education faculty members were selected through a highly competitive campuswide process to participate in UMass Amherst's Innovate@ symposia: Catherine Dimmitt, student development, and Torrey Trust, Claire Hamilton, Sally Galman, Sandy Madden, and YsaaAxelrod, all of teacher education and curriculum studies. The symposia provided faculty with hands-on training in instructional technologies while building a community of scholars who will contribute to a campus innovation think tank.

Catherine Dimmitt Claire Hamilton Sally Galman Sandy Madden YsaaAxelrod

Kathryn A. McDermott, educational policy, research, and administration, coedited a 50-year retrospective on the impact of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. She was joined by David A. Gamson of Pennsylvania State University and Douglas S. Reed of Georgetown University in editing the current issue of RSEF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences, and in writing its lead article, “The Elementary and Secondary Education Act at Fifty: Aspirations, Effects, and Limitations.” ESEA, a key component of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s War on Poverty, was designed to aid low-income students and combat racial segregation in schools.

Kathryn A. McDermott

Elizabeth McInerney, teacher education and curriculum studies, was named an Outstanding Reviewer for 2015 by the Journal Publications Committee of the American Educational Research Association.

Elizabeth McInerney

Sonia Nieto, professor emerita, ranked 33rd in the 2016 RHSU Edu-Scholar Public Influence Rankings, which honor the 200 university-based education scholars judged to have had the greatest influence on public discourse during the previous year. Conducted by Frederick M. Hess, resident scholar and director of education policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, the rankings recognize university-based education scholars of any discipline for their “contributions to the public square.” Ranking criteria include numbers of widely cited articles, papers, or books authored; books authored, coauthored, or edited; and mentions in mainstream media and the Congressional Record. Nieto held 32nd place in the 2015 rankings.

Sonia Nieto

Ryan Wells, educational policy, research, and administration, was named one of seven 2016–17 Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) Scholars. ISSR promotes excellence in social science research. One of its goals, served by the scholars program, is to strengthen existing social science infrastructure on campus in order to stimulate high-quality scholarship and interdisciplinary collaboration. Wells’s research focuses on college access and success for underrepresented students. As an ISSR scholar, he will develop a proposal for funding that examines how space and geography influence individuals’ opportunities, choices, and decisions to access and complete subbaccalaureate education at community colleges.

Ryan Wells

Kysa Nygreen, teacher education and curriculum studies, received a 2016–17 Teaching for Inclusiveness, Diversity, and Equity Ambassadors Fellowship from the Institute for Teaching Excellence and Faculty Development. The competitive award program, now in its inaugural year, recognizes the vital role faculty fulfill in creating an inclusive, equitable college experience for all students. The ambassadors build a yearlong community of practice and serve as catalysts for change by designing a diversity-focused workshop or program to share with colleagues at the department, school/college, or campus levels.

Kysa Nygreen

Torrey Trust, teacher education and curriculum studies, was named 2016–17 president of ISTE Teacher Education Network. An internationally recognized education technology organization, ISTE seeks to “empower learners to flourish in a connected world by cultivating a passionate professional learning community, linking educators and partners, leveraging knowledge and expertise, advocating for strategic policies, and continually improving learning and teaching.” The Teacher Education Network, ISTE’s largest special-interest group, includes more than 4,000 professional educators who instruct and support in-service and pre-service teachers in the effective use of technology.
David R. Evans, professor, education policy, research, and administration, retired in December 2016 after having served the College of Education for 48 years. He was the founding director of the college’s Center for International Education (CIE), which he built into a leader in international education, developing collaborative relationships with agencies such as the World Bank, UNESCO, USAID, and the Peace Corps to bring innovative, highly effective education initiatives to developing countries. Evans has had significant impact on students. More than 250 doctoral students and 230 master’s students have graduated from the College of Education with degrees in international education, the college’s academic program closely associated with CIE. Many of them have gone on to serve in positions of leadership in the United States and elsewhere. Evans’s honors and awards are many. Most recently, he was named an honorary fellow of the Comparative and International Education Society in recognition of his outstanding contributions to comparative and international education. “As the founding director of the Center for International Education, David Evans has had a remarkable career that has made an impact here in the College of Education and beyond,” said Joseph B. Berger, professor and current CIE director. “He is a one-of-a-kind leader who has made his presence felt in a myriad of ways that have influenced students and colleagues alike.”

FACULTY RETIREMENT

DURING THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF, the College of Education’s Office of Research and Engagement (ORE) went through major changes. For one thing, ORE grew. Three grants and contracts administrators, one part-time administrative assistant, and three graduate student assistants, all with specific responsibilities and duties, now support faculty in their research and scholarly work.

ORE also moved into Room 130 on the newly renovated Furtado Hall. The new space has lots of sunlight and a meeting room to work with faculty on their grant proposals, on exploring new funding opportunities, or on managing their existing grants.

During FY2016, faculty in the College of Education were highly productive in generating sponsored research. Faculty submitted a total of 46 proposals to federal and private funders. Fifteen grants and contracts were awarded, resulting in a total of 42 active grants during the year, with 26 faculty members serving as principle investigators.

Kathryn A. McDermott received a 2016–17 Spencer Foundation Midcareer Grant to conduct research on how implicit bias influences school practices and school-level effects of education policy. The Spencer Foundation, one of the leading not-for-profit foundations in education, is committed to supporting high-quality educational research through various fellowships, training programs, and other research grants.

Sally Campbell Galman received a one-year award from the Spencer Foundation for a research project exploring how transgendered and gender-nonconforming children navigate the multiple contexts of early and middle childhood.

Rebecca Woodland, in collaboration with colleagues from computer science (Rick Adrion), sociology (Enobong Hannah Branch), and psychology (Nilanjana Dasgupta) received a grant from the National Science Foundation to begin a planning process for creating effective and transferable “Computer Science for All” models in two school districts in western Massachusetts. Both districts serve significantly diverse student populations, large numbers of economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English-language learners.

The expertise of our College of Education faculty on evaluation research grants is evident in the ongoing and new funding that the following colleagues received during FY2016:

Stephen G. Sireci was awarded a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for developing and validating assessments for adult basic-education learners and received further funding from the Educational Testing Service for improving educational assessment through psychometric research.

Scott Monroe received a grant from West Coast Analytics to assist it with methodological support (study design and implementation, test development) on a project investigating the relationship between students’ participation in an advanced-placement program and their higher-education achievements.

April Zenisky received funding from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing to assist the council with methodological support (study design and implementation, test development) on a project studying the nature of validity evidence necessary when an agency makes high-stakes decisions using technology-enhanced tests.

Sharon Rallis received an award from the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association focused on evaluating the efficiency and quality of Massachusetts charter schools to serve students with disabilities and English-language learners.

The Massachusetts Office of Public Safety awarded Michael Krezmien an evaluation research grant to conduct community risk assessments and to develop and monitor program activities of the Senator Charles E. Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative in Holyoke and Chicopee, Massachusetts, an initiative supporting high-risk and proven-risk youth involved in gangs or youth violence.

College of Education faculty work in helping to increase the capacity of Pakistan’s education and higher education administration continues with two grants.

Shane Hammond was awarded a grant from the Institute for Training and Development to resume work with community college administrators on exit survey development in Pakistan. Rebecca Woodland received funding from the Donahue Institute for an Instructional Leadership Institute for Pakistani Educators.

The Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation funded Maria José Botelho’s “Doors to the World: Building on Young Children’s Literacy in Holyoke and Springfield,” which supports a teacher/family collaboration in literacy development, targeting pre-K–3 children in Holyoke and Springfield classrooms and their families.
After four decades, the Center for International Education returns to Montague House

IN THE SUMMER OF 2016, the College of Education’s Center for International Education (CIE) moved from Hills House South, where it had been located for more than 40 years, to the newly renovated Montague House, adjacent to Furcolo Hall and the site of CIE’s beginnings in the early 1970s. The renovation of the old farmhouse, made possible by the generosity of private donors with support from the university, gives CIE the physical space it needs to remain the active, engaged learning community it has always been. It also completes the college’s transition from two buildings at opposite ends of the campus to a bright, welcoming complex that for the first times houses all three college departments.

On a hot summer day, some visitors with a special interest in Montague House toured CIE’s new home. Entering the front door and stepping into the hallway, Stephen Montague pointed into a room set up as an office and recalled how his family congregated there years ago when it was their dining room. “Sunday dinners were a big thing. We’d all come in here. The kids sat at a table over there,” he said, gesturing to a corner of the room.

From left: Rita Montague, Stephen Montague and Kim Montague.

Stephen and his four brothers grew up in Montague House, then known as “Dreamsmont,” the dairy farm operated by Millicent and Enos Montague, his mother and father.

Stephen, his wife, Rita, and Kim Montague, Stephen’s cousin and UMass Amherst’s associate director of undergraduate admissions, continued their tour of the building and told stories about the family and the house’s history. “I remember when this was my house and my playground,” Stephen said, waving his arms in a wide circle. “The university was where I would ride my bicycle or slide on a sled on Eastman Lane. This area was not developed, as it is now; there were farms and open land. My dad had cows, chickens, and turkeys right there where you see Furcolo Hall.”

The three Montagues patched together their recollections in a timeline. “It’s a complicated story,” said Rita. “Enos Montague graduated from UMass,
which was then Mass Aggie, in 1915. He ran the dairy farm on campus.”

Stephen filled in some details. “At first he was herdsman, then farm manager. Then he bought this house. Dad packed eggs in the basement. We had about 300 chickens. We had a little bit of everything.”

Stephen’s older brothers Richard and Alfred served in World War II. When they returned from service, all four brothers worked the farm together. But times were changing. “We had an auction and sold off cows,” Stephen said. “We kept a few for milk, and we kept some chickens. Dad got a job as a milk inspector for an ice cream company in Springfield.”

He added that when his mother sold the property a bit later, the family kept a piece of the land, on which they built her a house. It still stands, just north of Furcolo Hall and visible from the front lawn of Montague House.

Descending a back stairway to the first floor, where his parent’s bedroom had been, Stephen said he “felt okay” about the changes made to his family home. “They did a nice job renovating it,” he said. “But it’s strange to see it like this and imagine where everything used to be, like the brick oven in the old kitchen. But I feel good about how the house is now, especially since we thought we were going to lose it.”

Rita agreed. “Sometimes,” she said, “we were afraid to drive by, because we thought it would be gone.”

In fact, there had been a time when the university considered demolishing the house, which was built in the 1840s and over the years was occupied by several farm families, including the Montagues. In a 2015 article in the Daily Hampshire Gazette, Joseph S. Larson, professor emeritus of environmental conservation and a member of the private organization Preserve UMass, wrote that the university planned to demolish the building and had so informed the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Preserve UMass, a private group organized in 2007 to promote the professional treatment of historic buildings and landscapes as required by state law, became interested in the building, as did local historian Ruth Owen Jones of Amherst Area Publications. Jones updated the university’s files on the acquisition of the land and building and provided the data on its historic relationship to Amherst’s famous Dickinson family. Important information was drawn from Jones’s book Harvesting History: Amherst, Massachusetts Farms, 1700–2010,cowritten with Sheila Rainford, and her history of the university’s Renaissance Center land and building.

In the Gazette article, Larson recalled that the house “was built in 1844 by Walter Dickinson and appears on the 1873 Beers map as being then occupied by Marcus (or Marquis) Dickinson of Mark’s Meadow Farm. At that time, the farm extended from North Pleasant Street to East Pleasant Street. Marcus is recorded as having hauled granite from the old Mass Aggie Quarry in Pelham for construction of the oldest buildings at UMass. The farmhouse was occupied by Dickinsons until the death of the last resident family member in 1937. The Montague family bought the farm and farmhouse. In 1948, the Montagues sold the 30 acres fronting on East Pleasant Street to Winthrop and Janet Dakin. On this portion of the original Mark’s Meadow Farm the Dakins built their home (which Janet eventually willed to UMass). In 1954, the Dakins purchased the remaining western section of Mark’s Meadow farmland fronting on North Pleasant Street and the farmhouse, and then sold them to UMass for construction of the College of Education/Mark’s Meadow School complex.”

A little more than 60 years later, CIE moved back into a beautifully renovated Montague House, weaving together threads of Amherst’s history and its own, and positing it for a long, bright future as a renowned center for research in international education.

Tuesday, November 29, 2016. Outside it was gray and rainy, but under the tent staked in front of Montague House more than a hundred celebrants marked the occasion of the Center for International Education’s return to its roots in a joyous official ribbon-cutting ceremony that belied the November gloom.

Joseph B. Berger, the event’s emcee and CIE’s current director, made welcoming remarks, which included introducing members of the Montague family in attendance. UMass Amherst Chancellor Kumble R. Subbaswamy then stepped to the podium to thank the donors who helped make the renovation of Montague House possible.

Other speakers included College of Education Interim Dean Robert S. Feldman (who described CIE as a “beacon of light to the international community”); Nigel Brissett ’11EdD, assistant professor of international development and social change at Clark University; and Valerie Haugen ’97EdD, an educational development consultant. They shared their experiences and attested to CIE’s impact on their professional careers.

David R. Evans was honored by the speakers for his leadership and his significant contributions to the growth of the institution that he founded. After a group officially cut the blue ribbon symbolizing the opening of the renovated Montague House, attendees were invited to tour the site.

An alumna’s thanks

On behalf of Center of International Education members, past, present, and future, I offer our sincere gratitude to the College of Education and University of Massachusetts leadership, who recognized and who continue to recognize the force for good in the world that is the center and who understand the positive multiplier effect that one committed graduate can create in order to realize the vision of every learner globally having a good quality education.

And I offer our sincere gratitude to the center faculty and staff, past and present, who have nurtured the center through thick and thin, and who have always been the heartbeat of the center.

Finally, I offer my gratitude to all of my fellow center members for continuing the good work of the center in all the corners of the world. I’m looking forward to connecting, unexpectedly, in one of those corners in the near or distant future.

—Valerie Haugen ’97EdD

holding the ribbons: (from left) Ash Hartwell, David R. Evans, UMass Amherst Chancellor Subbaswamy, Stephen Montague, Interim Dean Feldman, Joe B. Berger, Bjorn Nordwall, Gretchen Rosman, and Barbara Gravin-Wilbur.
Our 2016 scholarship celebration

A RECORD-SETTING NUMBER OF GUESTS—including faculty, staff, students, scholarship donors, and friends of the College of Education—attended the college’s annual event celebrating the accomplishments of the year’s scholarship and fellowship recipients, acknowledging the generosity of our scholarship donors, and enabling recipients and donors to meet.

“You are the future of education policy, research, administration, and instruction in the commonwealth and beyond, and the college is lucky to have you,” said Dean Robert S. Feldman at the 2016 Scholarship Celebration, held in the Campus Center’s Amherst Room on October 5, 2016.

Dean Feldman introduced and thanked all of our scholarship donors, including Phil Katz, Marc Spigel, Esther Schneiderman, and Esta Nickinson, who along with Gregg Katz created the Betty Katz Memorial Scholarship in Early Childhood Education, and Tim Farmer, one of the founders of the Anne Farmer Momot Scholarship.

“Tonight’s reception is not only a celebration of the outstanding students in our college right now,” Feldman said, “but an acknowledgement of the college’s history and the thousands of alumni who have come before us.”

Feldman said that one of his primary goals is to ensure that our students have positive experiences at the college, in part because he looks forward to students graduating and becoming dedicated alumni. “I want to make sure,” he said, “that we rigorously prepare you for a successful career in the broad field of education, that we take time to celebrate and honor your accomplishments and expertise, and that we create positive memories of your time at UMass. I encourage you to remember the benefit of this scholarship accomplishments and expertise, and that we create positive memories of your.

Six of this year’s scholarship recipients shared their personal and academic journeys and how the scholarships they received positively impacted their academic progress. One such testimonial is presented on the next page.

If you would like to support our students with a donation to a scholarship fund, please go to the How to Give page on the college’s web site http://www.umass.edu/education/alumni/how-to-give or email dms@educ.umass.edu for information and details. Thank you.

A new school, a floppy hat, and a hard lesson in educational inequity

by Nyaradzai Changamire, PhD student in international education and recipient of the Joseph W. Keilty Memorial Scholarship

“How long have you been in education?”

I get that question a lot. Many times, I think about what my response should be. To me, it’s like being asked, “So how long have you been alive?” I have been in education all my life, since my birth. My role has evolved, as an educator, as a learner, and at other times playing both these roles at the same time.

I have also often been asked about my choice of academic study: “So, Nyazi, why education?” I am very much invested in education because it has shaped who I am today and has the potential to change lives, both negatively and positively. Today I will share with you a bit about my education experiences, just one of many other education stories of my life.

We have all experienced first days in a new place; it could be a new school, a new church, a new job. When I was in third grade, my family and I moved from a small city to a big city in Zimbabwe. I was excited about going to a new public school. In Zimbabwe, schools in good neighborhoods are classified as “A” schools, and those in the densely populated, low-income neighborhoods are known as “B” schools. I was transferring from a “B” school to an “A” school in a fairly good suburb.

The most exciting thing about my first day at school was my uniform. It was blue and white, topped off with a blue floppy hat. When the teacher came into the classroom, she looked directly at me and said “Take off your hat!” I did not take it off, not because I was defying her instruction, but because I did not know what she was saying. She must have said it again another two or three times in a very irritated manner.

The kid who was sitting next to me then said, “Hanzvi breva hat yako,” translating the teacher’s instruction to my native language, Shona. I sheepishly took off my hat while the whole class burst out in laughter. It didn’t take too long for me to realize that everybody was laughing at me because I could not speak or understand English. Needless to say, my first day at the new school was spoiled.

This incident has stuck with me for years. English is the official language in Zimbabwe, even though it is not the native language of the majority of the population. If one is not competent in English, one is disadvantaged in many ways. It is the main medium of instruction throughout the education system, a measure of educational achievement, and an important qualification for higher education and employment. English competency also varies, depending on what school one goes to. Schools in Zimbabwe receive different resources depending on their location, including whether they are in a rural or urban setting. Reflecting on my take-off-your-hat incident several years later, I realized that the only reason why everybody in that class except me could speak and understand English was because our education foundation had been in different schools in different neighborhoods and cities. And so, over the years, I have constantly battled with this question: if education is an international human right, shouldn’t all children have access to the same uncompromising quality education, regardless of the neighborhood, suburb, or zip code they live in?

My belief in equality of access to education informed my work with young girls and women in rural communities. For many years, my colleagues and I facilitated that access through nonformal education. I came to realize that there are still many challenges in the field. I decided to apply for graduate school in the U.S., to engage and share knowledge on education’s equity challenges with other scholars from all over the world. In the fall of 2014, I flew over 7,000 miles from Zimbabwe to begin my graduate studies in international education here at UMass Amherst. Although I was excited to begin a new chapter in my life, I was particularly anxious about the cost of living as a student in a new environment.

Today, I am privileged and honored to have been awarded the Joseph W. Keilty Memorial Scholarship. It will help to cover some of my academic and living expenses and other associated costs of pursuing graduate studies as an international student and mother. Because of that financial support, I have the time and freedom to interact with my peers and be an active student in my department.

Although I am miles away from home and family, I have found many reasons to assure me that I made the right decision and choice to study in the College of Education. Indeed, I am more hopeful than ever that I can contribute to better education systems for my son and other children in the world. So again, I end with that career question that I always get, “Why education?” And I say the real question is, “Why not!”
Convocation 2016

It was standing room only as more than 250 students, faculty, and staff members from across campus, members of the general public, educators from area schools, and nearly a hundred students from Amherst Regional High School filled the Events Hall in Commonwealth Honors College for the College of Education’s 2016 Convocation.

The event featured a stirring speech by Spelman College’s president emerita, Beverly Daniel Tatum. An authority on the psychology of racism, Tatum presented an hour-long conversation about race in America. She commented on questions raised by her recent book, “Why Are All the Black Kids Still Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?”

180 Days in Springfield celebrates its 20th year

In June 2016, the UMass Center in Springfield was filled with friends of “180 Days in Springfield,” the College of Education’s longstanding pathway to a master’s degree and initial teacher licensure. They gathered to celebrate the program’s 20 years of partnership with Springfield’s public schools.

The celebration featured stories by former “180 Days” students now teaching at participating schools, congratulatory messages from educators and civic leaders, and music provided by students at Springfield’s Central High School. It was followed by a graduation ceremony for current “180 Days” participants.
Fran Parker ’66 visited Furcolo Hall during 2016 Alumni Weekend and her 50th reunion. “I stopped by to say ‘Thank you,’ because I felt well prepared by the college,” she said. “As a new teacher, my first assignment as a permanent sub was to set up a first-grade class, and I just did it! From the beginning, my career was a testament to having the skills I needed. I had a skill set I could take with me throughout life.” Parker began her teaching career in the Albany, New York, area, enjoyed teaching in Illinois and Las Vegas, and retired after 10 years of teaching in San Diego, California.

Phyllis Levine Levenson ’68 visited with friends to see the “new” Furcolo Hall. Levenson taught fourth grade and was a guidance counselor at Westfield High School for many years. She resides in Longmeadow, Massachusetts.

Thomas Armstrong ’75 has written a new book, The Power of the Adolescent Brain: Strategies for Teaching Middle and High Schools Students, linking neuroscience research about the adolescent brain to specific interventions that can be implemented in classrooms.

Endang Sumantri Nawawi ’80MEd, ’88EdD is professor emeritus at the Indonesia University of Education (UPI, formerly IKIP Bandung), where he served as senate chairman from 2006 to 2011. Visiting UMass Amherst with his family in October 2016, Sumantri was happy to be back on campus after so many years. He and his family met with interim Dean Feldman and Center for International Education Director Joe Berger, toured the renovated College of Education, and reunited with David R. Evans, who chaired Sumantri’s dissertation committee.

Intellectual abundance, critical thinking, collaborative fun

Kicking off the semester with our first All-College Orientation on August 31 and continuing well into the wintry weeks of January, the number of activities, events, lectures, and workshops held in or sponsored by the College of Education reached an all-time high. Open to all and attended by faculty, students, and staff, many events captured the richness and texture of our scholarship and provided opportunity for critical thinking, others, such as kickball games, yoga sessions, and scavenger hunts, attested to our skills in life balance and fun.

Endang Sumantri Nawawi and his family.
Two College of Education alumni and doctoral students were named recipients of the 2016 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching by President Barack Obama: John Heffeman '15EdD, a pre-K–6 technology teacher at the Anne T. Dunphy School for the past 12 years, and Keith Wright '07MEd who after 10 years at the Springfield (Massachusetts) Renaissance School has joined the chemistry faculty of Hampshire Regional High School in Westhampton, Massachusetts. The Presidential Award is the highest recognition that a K–12 mathematics or science (including computer science) teacher can receive for outstanding teaching in the United States.

Richard Sobel '82EdD tells us that his latest book, Citizenship as Foundation of Rights, was published by Cambridge University Press in October 2016. It explores the nature and meaning of American citizenship and the rights flowing from citizenship in the context of current debates around politics, including immigration.


Gayle E. Hutchinson '79, '90EdD has been appointed president of California State University, Chico, the first woman to serve in that role in the institution’s 129-year history. Hutchinson was provost and vice president for academic affairs at CSU Channel Islands, and a dean and faculty member of Chico State. Prior to her service at CSU, she served as principal investigator and codirector of the Northern California Physical Education/Subject Matter Project and project director for the Pacific Wellness Center. She also developed curricula and taught physical education in elementary schools.

Jeff Pluta ’08, ’10Med, in acknowledgment of his contribution to the educational system in Nicaragua, was named a recipient of the 2016 UMass Amherst Distinguished Alumni Service Award, the most prestigious award given by the university to alumni, faculty, and friends. Pluta is the founder and executive director of Amped for Education, an international nonprofit that creates learning opportunities for students in developing countries. In rural Nicaragua, he and his team founded educational centers and a high school that currently serve more than 250 students daily.

Laurie Francis ’89 emailed us with some thoughts about the college’s renovation: The new building is beautiful! I have to admit, though, I’m a little sad at the loss of the elementary school. I look at that part of the building and I see my childhood: the school buses, the playground where I learned to play kickball, my wonderful teachers. The new building is beautiful! I have to admit, though, I’m a little sad at the loss of the elementary school. I look at that part of the building and I see my childhood: the school buses, the playground where I learned to play kickball, my wonderful teachers.

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Gayle E. Hutchinson

Neil Glickman

Richard Sobel

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IN MEMORIAM

Mary Lynn Bourque ‘79EdD passed away in March 2016. She attended Emmanuel College, graduating in 1958, received an MEd from Boston College in 1964, and was a secondary school science and math teacher in the Boston area until 1972. The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) in May passed a resolution recognizing her contributions to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) between 1989 and 2000. Bourque “was the board’s chief advisor on the technical soundness and design of [NAEP]; led the conceptualization and development of achievement levels, which have become widely referenced standards of academic performance; and played a key role in the long-term redesign of the National Assessment, in addition to other accomplishments.”

Bourque was the director of Mid-Atlantic Psychometric Services and a past member of the board of directors of the National Council on Measurement in Education.

Robert (Bobby Don) Colbert died August 12, 2016. He was an associate professor in the UMass Amherst College of Education from 1994 till 2001. He earned a bachelor’s degree in education and a master’s in school counseling from the University of Tehran, Iran. Following his retirement from UMass Amherst in 2001, he moved to the University of Connecticut-Storrs, where he was tenured and served as coordinator of the school counseling program. During which time he wrote the “Wellman Document,” defining university governance. He was a visiting professor at the universities of Washington, Illinois, and Wisconsin, and received a Fulbright to the University of Tehran, Iran. Following his retirement, he began to work with K–12 teachers in western Massachusetts schools.

Colbert is survived by his wife, Marjorie Lyn Magouirk Colbert, the assistant dean for educator preparation in the College of Education, and their daughters and extended family.

Atron Adrian Gentry Sr. passed away peacefully on Friday, January 6, 2017, at Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton., Massachusetts. Atron was a faculty member in the College of Education’s Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies. He served as coeditor of the college’s journal, Equity and Excellence in Education. He retired in 2000 after more than 30 years of service to the college. The author of Learning to Survive: Black Youth Look for Education and Hope, Atron was born in El Centro, California, told great stories, and had an infectious laugh.

Professor Emeritus Robert Wellman passed away on May 8, 2016. He was a member of the college faculty for more than 30 years before retiring in 1993. He earned a bachelor’s degree in zoology at Dartmouth College and intended to become a zookeeper. Drafted into the army during the Korean Conflict, Wellman developed a lifelong interest in philosophy, which inspired him to pursue a master’s degree in science teaching from the University of London. He returned to the United States and entered Ohio State University, earning a doctorate in 1962. Soon after, he became a faculty member at what was then the School of Education.

Wellman served as university ombudsman, director of the Adult and Higher Educational Leadership Program, and secretary of the Faculty Senate, during which time he wrote the “Wellman Document,” defining university governance. He was a visiting professor at the universities of Washington, Illinois, and Wisconsin, and received a Fulbright to the University of Tehran, Iran. Following his retirement from UMass Amherst, he began to work with K–12 teachers in western Massachusetts schools.

One million seven hundred thousand staff members work at postsecondary institutions in the United States (Inside Higher Ed, October 18, 2016.) More than 4,000 work at UMass Amherst. Here in the College of Education, approximately 30 staff members keep the college rolling.

Although their individual jobs, responsibilities, and interests range widely, the staff share a commitment to students and faculty alike by anticipating needs, providing essential services, and taking care of countless details essential to the academic success of students and to the fulfillment of the college’s mission to provide excellence and equity in education to all students who enter Furcolo Hall. And, as faculty and students will tell you, staff are essential to the vitality of the entire college community, 12 months of the year. They get the job done.

Here’s just a small sample of what staff do:

- Process contracts, “everything from hiring to retiring paperwork”
- Reconcile budgets
- Plan and set up events
- Ensure compliance with university data-security policy
- Advise students
- Schedule courses
- Reserve rooms
- Manage licensure across campus
- Schedule building repairs
- Manage research grants and contracts
- Get keys made
- Write press releases
- Make social-media posts
- Manage compensation paperwork
- Write job descriptions
- Coordinate job searches
- Manage paperwork for assistantships
- Troubleshoot
- Establish user IDs
- Purchase supplies
- Move equipment and furniture
- Photograph activities and events
- Maintain communications with alumni and donors
- Write processes and procedures
- Serve on committees
- Increase skills through professional development
- Welcome visitors
- Direct people to classrooms and offices
- Update web content
- Make coffee
- Buy food
- Install computers, printers, and copiers
Dear friends,

It is my pleasure to share this year’s newsletter with you, particularly because it presents so clearly the heart of our mission as a college: our goals, accomplishments, and hopes, and the dreams of our students.

The College has a long history of educating students who are bright, talented, diverse, and dedicated. Our current students, along with the generations of outstanding students we proudly call alumni, not only benefit from the exceptional teaching and learning here at the College of Education but are key contributors to the production of cutting-edge knowledge that is the hallmark of our collective work. And, as you read in this issue’s student profiles, not only do our students do outstanding work, but they are humane and thoughtful individuals who contribute to the world in exceptional ways.

I am proud of the many other accomplishments of the members of our college community that were captured in this newsletter. I hope that you felt a strong sense of pride reading about them.

As the college continues to move forward, I am excited to let you know about the appointment of our new permanent dean, Cynthia I. Gerstl-Pepin. Cindy is currently associate dean of the College of Education and Social Services at the University of Vermont. She will begin her new role as our dean on July 1, 2017. We are thrilled to welcome Cindy, an accomplished teacher and scholar, to UMass Amherst.

And finally, I speak on behalf of the entire college when I extend my sincere thanks for your continued interest in and support of the College. We truly believe that the wonderful things that characterize the College happen because of people who care about education—people like you!

This is a strong and amazing College of Education, and we understand how fortunate we are that you are a part of it. Thank you so much.

Best wishes,
Robert S. Feldman
Interim Dean
Be a part of the fifth annual #UMass Gives, coming April 27 – 28