The Center for Research on Families has over a forty year history at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Begun in the 1970s as the Center for the Family, a generous endowment by Dorothy Dunklee Gavin ('43) and Joseph Gavin in 1996 ensured a strong and sustainable future for the Center. In 2003, the original Center for the Family expanded into today’s Center for Research on Families (CRF).

CRF is a joint center of the College of Natural Sciences (CNS) and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS). Its programs are supported by CNS, SBS, the Edna Skinner and Tay Gavin Erickson endowments, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement, grants, and alumni and corporate gifts. CRF’s unique model of collaboration speaks to its primary mission of supporting interdisciplinary and translational research activities on campus.

The VISION for the Center for Research on Families (CRF) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst is to be a nationally-renowned research center addressing the challenges and resilience of families. CRF supports interdisciplinary, scientific collaborations aimed at understanding the diversity, health and well-being of families while discovering solutions to the challenges families face.
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*This report describes CRF activities undertaken from July 2014 through June 2015.*

**DESIGN:** Carla Williamson, Center for Research on Families.

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Pablo Robles, Media Compass Photography and Carla Williamson, Center for Research on Families.
MY VISION IS THAT CRF IS THE PREMIER FAMILY RESEARCH CENTER, SUPPORTING INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIONS THAT PROMOTE TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH FOCUSED ON DISCOVERING SOLUTIONS TO HUMAN AND FAMILY PROBLEMS.
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I can’t believe I have completed my second year as the director of the Center for Research on Families. It has been an exciting year that included research success of both our faculty and student scholars, new methodology collaborations and the launching of several new initiatives.

Even in the challenging funding climate, CRF scholars have continued to have success securing NIH, NSF and foundation funding, a tribute to their hard work and the support of their colleagues in the Family Scholars Program. In addition, I have been so impressed and excited about the research endeavors of both our graduate and undergraduate scholars. These young researchers bring passion, commitment and creative thinking to endeavors as diverse as studying the effects of paid leave legislation in California to the biological predictors of schizophrenia. Our team of methodological consultants, under the direction of Aline Sayer, have been busy providing expertise in an array of areas including evaluating parenting programs, examining the efficacy of therapeutic approaches in mental health problems, and exploring predictors of obesity in children.

Two new initiatives have been spearheaded this year. CRF has been involved with a new Public Engagement Pilot program in collaboration with the Center for Public Policy and Administration, the Institute for Social Science Research, and The Psychology of Peace and Violence Program. We have just completed a highly successful pilot program that resulted in faculty, including three former CRF scholars, honing their message for the public, meeting with legislators on Capitol Hill, and learning how to use social media to publicize their research. In addition, CRF is taking a leadership role in a new outreach effort in Springfield, Massachusetts in collaboration with UMass Extension. We have a vision of increasing faculty and student involvement in research and engagement efforts around issues of nutrition, parent and child health, and economic vitality in nearby communities. Stay tuned!

Finally, a number of changes will be occurring next year at CRF. First, I have received a year-long fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University where I will be writing a book on my 12 years of research on the transition to parenthood for low-income families. Dr. Lynnette Sievert, Professor of Anthropology and a long-time CRF Steering Committee member, will be Acting Director during my leave. In addition, Dr. Lisa Harvey, Professor of Psychology, will be leading the Family Research Scholars Program. As a stellar team, Lynnette and Lisa will keep all the wonderful CRF programs thriving. In addition, Carla Williamson, our amazing Events Manager and Communication Director, is heading off to new adventures in Seattle. Anyone who has walked in the doors of CRF has been met with her ready smile and willingness to help. She will be sorely missed.

Perhaps the biggest change, however, will be the departure of our beloved associate director, Wendy Varner. Wendy has accepted a new position, Director of Faculty Development Programs in the UMass College of Natural Sciences. Wendy’s incredible leadership has been a guiding force in propelling CRF into a center with a national reputation as well as “a gem” on the UMass campus. Wendy has the tremendous ability to make every person who walks into the center feel valued, welcomed and special. We will have to work hard to continue to build on her vision for CRF.

Next year will be one full of change and excitement. Our commitment to supporting interdisciplinary research that serves the health and well-being of families will remain our core mission, and we look forward to working with past, present and future family scholars to achieve our goals!

Sincerely,

Maurine Perifian
Families in Context

Research & Methods

Methodology
Consulting
AddHealth Working Group
Workshops & Seminars

Research Dissemination
Website & Blogs
Public Lectures

Faculty
Scholars Program
Research Interest Groups

Teaching & Mentoring

Center for Research on Families
CRF’s mission is to:

- Promote, conduct and translate high quality, substantive research on key issues affecting family life;
- Teach, mentor and support family researchers throughout their careers -- students to professors; and
- Engage with the community to improve family functioning and inform social policy.

Innovative solutions to the central challenges facing families will come from advances in both the social and natural sciences. CRF is among only a handful of family research centers in the country aimed at bridging the social, behavioral and natural sciences; thus, we are uniquely poised to initiate and support interdisciplinary collaborations aimed at addressing societal and family challenges.

CRF serves as an intellectual hub for research that addresses family issues from multiple perspectives and epitomizes the land grant mission of UMass that is to provide and translate research to benefit the families of the Commonwealth and nation.
Highlights from CRF’s Annual Research Dinner.

(1) Student Awards
(2) Samantha Bernecker
(3) Maureeen Perry-Jenkins & Melinda Novack
(4) Lindiwe Sibeko & Sara Whitcomb
(5) Laurel Smith-Doerr
HOW DOES CRF ACCOMPLISH ITS MISSION?

CRF increases funding for research on campus by operating successful and highly popular faculty mentoring programs:

- Six faculty from across disciplines received intensive mentoring and technical support to submit major grants proposals as participants in The Family Research Scholars Program.
- 13 scholars submitted 13 research grants to NSF, NIH, and Foundations totaling $10,113,026.00 dollars.
- CRF has 14 active grants from NSF, NIH, U.S. Army and Foundations from 11 scholars totaling $13,205,735.00 dollars.

CRF fosters collaboration among multidisciplinary researchers who are studying issues of relevance to families:

- CRF collaborated with many UMass centers, departments, and programs to address a broad range of family-related issues including early education, women's health, diversity, and much more.
- For the 8th year, an interdisciplinary group of faculty and researchers met regularly at CRF to discuss and examine the biological, behavioral and social indices and outcomes of stress.
- CRF developed a new collaboration with the Systems and Psychosocial Advances Research Center (SPARC) at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.
- CRF is working collaboratively with UMass Extension to better connect family researchers.

CRF provides training and consultation in cutting-edge methodological and statistical techniques to scholars in family research:

- CRF’s methodological seminar series, advanced statistical and methodological consultation, and training workshops continued in full force this year with participation from UMass faculty and students and researchers from 41 other institutions, 18 states and 3 countries.
- CRF became a repository for the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent and Adult Health (Add Health) data set allowing CRF scholars access to one the largest studies of adolescence ever undertaken.

CRF translates and disseminates valuable research findings widely:

- CRF worked collaboratively with campus media outlets (Research Next, Alumni Magazine, UMass webpage, News Office, etc.) to disseminate UMass family researchers' findings to a broad audience.
- CRF continued to play a key role in administering the Public Engagement Project (PEP), a faculty-driven collaborative initiative whose mission is to train faculty to effectively present their research outside of the academia. This year, PEP piloted an innovative training program for faculty fellows that met with tremendous success!

CRF enhances the University’s national reputation by connecting faculty and students with internationally prominent family researchers:

- CRF invited 27 renowned experts to visit campus to consult with faculty and present their research through the Tay Gavin Erickson Lecture Series, the Rudd Adoption Conference, the Methodology Workshops and Seminars, and other collaborative forums.
- CRF’s conference, trainings and lectures attracted over 800 participants from UMass and other institutions.
FOSTERING RESEARCH ON FAMILIES

FAMILY RESEARCH SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Since 2003, CRF has provided selected faculty with time, technical expertise, peer mentorship, and national expert consultation to prepare large grant proposals for intensive family research. The program has supported and facilitated interdisciplinary family research in a variety of disciplines like biology, psychology, anthropology, nursing, economics, sociology, education, environmental health, political science, biology, and neuroscience. The program has significantly increased federal research support for family research at UMass.

Family Research Scholars participate in a year-long interdisciplinary seminar that includes:

- Presentations and discussions of the Scholars’ developing proposals,
- Concrete instruction in grant writing and understanding of funding agencies,
- Strategies for successful proposal submission,
- Assistance accessing the resources of the university,
- Individualized methodology consultation,
- Facilitated peer review throughout the formulation and writing process,
- Staff support at all stages of grant submission, and
- The time and accountability for reaching writing goals.

Additionally, as part of our Tay Gavin Erickson Lecture Series, each year national experts are chosen and invited to campus to provide individual consultation to each of the scholars on their specific projects and to present a public research lecture that is widely attended by UMass students and faculty. This successful program model has been replicated on campus and nationally.

Facilitators: CRF Director and Professor of Psychology, Maureen Perry-Jenkins, Associate Director, Wendy Varner, and Associate Professor of Psychology and Director of Methodology Programs, Aline Sayer.
TO TRULY UNDERSTAND THE COMPLEXITY OF FAMILY PROCESSES THE STUDY OF FAMILIES MUST INCLUDE ALL LEVELS OF ANALYSIS. THIS PERSPECTIVE REQUIRES THAT SCHOLARS ACROSS DISCIPLINES COLLABORATE & SHARE KNOWLEDGE.
THIS WAS A REALLY GREAT PROGRAM AND I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE A PART OF IT. I LIKED THAT THE EXPERTISE WAS SO DIVERSE AND ENJOYED LEARNING ABOUT EVERYONE'S PROJECTS

- ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, PUBLIC HEALTH

FAMILY RESEARCH SCHOLARS 2014-2015

(Photographed above left to right)

MARSHA KLINE PRUETT
School of Social Work at Smith College
Project: "Supporting Father Involvement Dissemination: Two Tests of New Applications"

KATHERINE REEVES
Public Health, School of Public Health and Health Sciences
Project: "The Effect of BPA Exposure on Serum Estrogenic Activity in Healthy Women"

TATISHE NTETA
Political Science, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

LISA SANDERS
Psychological and Brain Sciences, College of Natural Sciences
Project: "Improving Preschooler’s Ability to Predict and Comprehend Speech"

DAVID ARNOLD
Psychological and Brain Sciences, College of Natural Sciences
Project: "Fostering STEM Success in Underrepresented Groups with Educational Apps"

GERALD DOWNES
Biology, College of Natural Sciences
Project: "Using Zebrafish to Better Understand and Treat Epilepsies"

Seven faculty members were selected to participate in the 13th cohort of the Family Research Scholars Program 2015-16: Sylvia Brandt of Resource Economics, Lindiwe Sibeko of Nutrition, Rick Pilsner and Laura Vandenberg of Environmental Health Sciences, and Linda Isbell, Paula Pietromonaco and Lisa Sanders of Psychological and Brain Sciences.
**RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS RESULTING FROM CRF GRANTS**

*CRF faculty; +CRF student

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IN 2014-15
CRF SUPPORTED
OVER 100
FAMILY-RELATED
PUBLICATIONS


Dr. Kathleen Arcaro (FRS '12-13), professor of environmental toxicity, received a Fulbright Scholarship to journey to Turkey in spring 2016 for five months. Dr. Arcaro’s research focuses on how breast cancer develops and whether epigenetic markers can enhance the reliability of advanced screening. Breast milk is an “ideal human fluid for studying the relationship between exposure to pollutants” and negative health outcomes such as DNA damage resulting in cancer. She plans to use her Fulbright to study why Turkish young women have a higher incidence of breast cancer and how her research can help reduce this risk.

Nilanjana ‘Buju’ Dasgupta (FRS 06-07 & 12-13) led a National Science Foundation funded research team which looked at 120 engineering students. They found that women, particularly first-year students, participate more actively and feel less anxious when they are able to work in small groups or “microenvironments” that are mostly female or that have equal numbers of men and women compared to mostly male groups. The results of this study appeared in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in June.

Dr. Gerald Downes (FRS ’14-15) appeared at the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in southeastern Massachusetts. Dr. Downes, associate professor of biology, presented a lecture entitled “Genetic Analysis of Seizure Disorders in Zebrafish: The Sweet Smell of New Disease Models” that details his current research on the development and function of spinal cord networks. His use of the zebrafish embryo as a model system is relevant for mammalian spinal cords, such as those in humans, because they exhibit several similar characteristics including robust movement behaviors.

Dr. Marsha Pruett (FRS ’14-15) was honored by The American Bar Association (ABA) with the John W. Cooley “Lawyer as Problem Solver” Award. Dr. Pruett, professor of social work at Smith College, is the co-designer and co-principle investigator of an innovative family law center called the Resource Center for Separating and Divorcing Families. The annual award, which “recognizes individuals and organizations that use their problem-solving skills to forge creative solutions,” is being given to the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System for 2015.

Dr. Sally Powers (CRF Director ’03-13) was the recipient of the UMass Amherst Alumni Association’s Distinguished Faculty Award. Dr. Powers, a professor of psychology and neuroscience at UMass Amherst since 1988 and Associate Dean of the College of Natural Sciences, is a world-renowned scholar whose research has shown how depression and anxiety are influenced by social, behavioral and biological risk factors. Dr. Powers served as faculty director of the Center for Research on Families from 2003 to 2013, where she worked tirelessly to raise the profile of CRF through federal funding while bringing in more than $200,000 in student research fellowships.

Dr. Jonathan Rosa (FRS ’13-14), assistant professor of anthropology, recently received the prestigious Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship for his work in Latina/o studies. Rosa will spend the 2015-16 academic year in residence at Northwestern University, where he will complete his book entitled Looking like a Language, Sounding like a Race: Exclusion and Ingenuity in the Learning of Latina/o Identities. His scholarly work at UMass Amherst, as in this new publication, focuses on the interplay between race, language and education in urban public schools and their surrounding communities. The Ford Foundation’s mission is to increase the diversity of the nation’s college and university faculties, maximize the educational benefits of diversity and increase the number of professors who can and will use diversity as a resource for enriching the education of all students.

Dr. Lisa Sanders (FRS ’14-15) was honored to become Associate Editor of the academic journal Attention, Perception and Psychophysics. Published by the Springer group, the journal solicits manuscripts from a broad array of cognitive psychology disciplines. In this capacity Dr. Sanders, an associate professor in psychological and brain sciences, will select reviewers for and make decisions about submissions that are relevant to the specific content areas in her program of research—auditory perception, auditory selective attention and speech perception, as well as music perception and other aspects of language processing that affect language learning, development and category acquisition.
WE ARE ALL EXPOSED TO BPA EVERY DAY; THE TIME TO LEARN WHETHER BPA INCREASES BREAST CANCER RISK IS NOW.
An aim of public health research is to uncover ways that our environment can impact human life, both positively and negatively, and this is the broad goal of Dr Katherine Reeve’s research program. Strong, evidence-based research findings can inform policymakers and the general public about environmental toxins, that seemed harmless when they were first introduced, but that contribute to negative health outcomes in humans.

For Dr. Katherine Reeves, a CRF Family Research Scholar in 2014-15, the recent public outcry over BPA, bisphenol A, misses a major part of the epidemiological story. “BPA has been taken out of baby bottles, children’s toys, children’s feeding products. For whatever reason, there hasn’t been that sort of advocacy surrounding adult products,” says Reeves. To address this knowledge gap, Dr. Reeve’s research focuses on the potentially harmful effects that long-term BPA exposure might yield in adults.

BPA appears in a wide range of consumer products—including food and beverage cans, water bottles, and the interior lining of potable water supply pipes. Reeves has reason to believe that chronic, low-dose BPA exposure represents a significant risk of promoting cancer development in women. The long-term accumulation of BPA is problematic because it has been shown to disrupt the body’s normal hormone function. Additionally, the chemical structure of BPA is similar to diethylstilbestrol (DES), a drug that was routinely given to pregnant women in the 1960s and 1970s to prevent miscarriage, though it is no longer used. DES was later linked to a disproportionate number of vaginal cancers in children born to these mothers. As these women with in utero DES exposure age, there is evidence that they may also be at increased risk of breast cancer. According to Reeves, “We know that DES acts as a synthetic hormone, and we’ve seen that in BPA, too. We have data showing that it [BPA] interacts with an estrogen receptor. Estrogens, and estrogen signaling, are really well known for their importance in driving cancer and causing breast carcinogenesis.”

As a result of these preliminary findings, “In the next ten to fifteen years, we think we’ll see a lot more breast cancer associated with DES. And we’re worried that the same will occur with BPA.”

Although BPA has a short half-life of only six hours, research shows that prolonged exposure to low amounts—such as one might encounter in a daily can of soup—can spike BPA levels to almost 1,000% of the normal amount found in the urine. Epidemiologists like Reeves are concerned that such an acute level of BPA might lead to similar physiological effects as those that occurred with DES. “The difficult thing about BPA is that it’s leaching from these products into our diet. If you’re eating a can of soup every day, you never get down to zero,” she cautions.

While the scientific community has expressed some uncertainty about the problems associated with low-grade BPA exposure, and the FDA recently upheld its continued usage in a variety of consumer goods. Reeves explains that several peer-reviewed studies have linked BPA to increased cancer risk. “There are a lot of laboratory studies showing that BPA can make breast cancer cells grow. There are animal studies showing that BPA can cause mammary tumors or can cause changes in mammary glands.” These are the type of physiological changes that generally lead to an increased risk of breast cancer in humans.

If BPA is proven to increase estrogenic activity, Reeves will advocate for responsible policy reform. “BPA is a case where policy has gotten ahead of the science. There is a lot of industry pushback. One of the things they say is ‘Well, this chemical is everywhere. If you’re measuring BPA levels, how can you be sure the samples are not contaminated?’” Investigative research holds the key: “We can measure BPA in its metabolized form, which is a chemical change that can only happen when BPA passes through the body.”

To help bridge the knowledge gap about BPA’s potential link to breast cancer, she has undertaken a pilot study of ten women to test the feasibility of her project. If the pilot goes well, Reeves will submit a grant to the NIH later this fall. “Within the next three to four years, we may have some understanding about whether this level of BPA exposure can cause a change in estrogenic activity,” she says.

While her study may not prove that BPA directly causes breast cancer, “It provides support for a mechanism by which it could, which will in turn justify future study of breast cancer.”
Professor Nteta’s (2014-2015 CRF Faculty Scholar) primary field of research, political socialization, focuses on the intersections of family, national politics, and race. Barack Obama’s recent ascendance to the White House inspired Professor Nteta (and his colleague Jill Greenlee from Brandeis University) to examine how the current generation of young white adults’ perceptions of race differ from the racial attitudes of previous generations of whites. He documents his findings in “A Change is Gonna Come: Generational Membership and White Racial Attitudes in the 21st Century”, written for the journal Political Psychology.

Previous research shows that views on race are in part defined by major life cycle events that occur in young adulthood; events such as the Civil Rights Movement (1954-68) have been shown to have a positive effect on white racial attitudes. Professor Nteta’s research explores if the presidency of Obama has similarly influenced the racial views of the nation’s youngest generation of white Americans. “While much media attention has been devoted to how Obama’s election is evidence of the nation’s increasingly liberal views on race, our research explores whether the election of the nation’s first African-American president has been an engine of change in the nature of white racial attitudes.”

Relying on the predictions of the impressionable years hypothesis, Nteta suggests that for those between the ages of 18 and 25, major national events will have a profound influence on their racial attitudes. According to this theory, the development of one’s political and social beliefs solidify during this age period because, for many, it is the first time they are physically and socially separated from key agents of socialization, such as one’s parents, teachers, and church leaders. For most Americans, 18 years of age is when separation from those early socialization agents first occurs, either through college or entry into the workforce and during this crucial time period views on race and politics are highly malleable.

Professor Nteta’s research found that there are marked differences in the racial attitudes of whites who came of age during Obama’s presidency, a generation he dubs the “Obama Generation, and the racial views of older generations of whites. Members of the Obama Generation are more likely to hold racially liberal views when compared to older generations. “Our results suggest that the ascendance and eventual election of Obama may have led to the formation of a new generational grouping, and that this generation’s racial attitudes represent the culmination of the nation’s steady march toward racial reconciliation and equality.”

Families are key socialization agents that shape our political viewpoints

As a current CRF Family Research Scholar, Professor Nteta will be examining how the experience of fatherhood affects men’s political and gender viewpoints. There is a large body of scholarly research that explores if and how fatherhood changes a man’s political and gender opinions, and increasingly this literature has examined if the experience of having a daughter has a unique impact on a man’s political and gender opinions. Interestingly, some of this research has found that fatherhood engenders more liberal political and gender viewpoints and behaviors, while other research suggests it generates more conservative attitudes and activities.

In order to address these discrepant findings, Nteta argues that more rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods are needed to uncover the role that fatherhood may play in the development and change in men’s political and gender views. Professor Nteta plans to develop a longitudinal survey of men’s political and social attitudes and behaviors that seeks to uncover if life cycle events, such as the experience of having a daughter, do engender changes in men’s political and gender attitudes and behaviors.

Professor Nteta’s latest research will provide new insight into the dynamic process of political socialization that will assist scholars interested in further exploring the intersection of politics and family. The Center for Research on Families is excited to have him on our team and looks forward to supporting this significant program of research.
MY RESEARCH SEEKS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW DAUGHTERS AFFECT THE POLITICAL OPINIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF MEN IN THE U.S.
RESEARCH ACTIVITY
2014-2015

GRANTS SUBMITTED

13 grants submitted, totaling $10,113,026 and 14 active grants, totaling $13,205,735

SCHOLAR & AFFILIATED FACULTY GRANTS SUBMITTED

David Arnold (Psychological and Brain Sciences)
National Science Foundation - $449,660
“Fostering Emergent Math Skills & Interest in Low-SES Preschoolers Using Educational Apps”

Nilanjana Dasgupta (Psychological and Brain Sciences)
National Science Foundation, supplemental request to existing award- $539,822
“Peer influences on adolescents’ self-concept, achievement, and future aspirations”

Katherine Dixon-Gordon (Psychological and Brain Sciences)
National Institute of Health - $875,159
“Brain and Behavioral Measures of Learning in Borderline Personality Disorder and its Treatment”

Gerald Downes (Biology)
National Science Foundation – $757,757
“Collaborative Research: GABA A Receptor Hyperactivity of Developing Zebra Fish”

Elizabeth Harvey (Psychological and Brain Sciences)
National Institutes of Health - $3,538,058
“Longitudinal Study of Emotion Dysregulation in Children Diagnosed w/ADHD”

Elizabeth L. Krause (Anthropology)
National Science Foundation, undergraduate supplement- $5,000
“Chinese Immigration and Family Encounters in Italy”

Agnes Lacreuse (Psychological and Brain Sciences)
National Institutes of Health - $449,660
“Sleep, Hot Flashes and Cognition: the Establishment of a Nonhuman Primate Model”
Joya Misra (Sociology)
National Science Foundation - $136,361
“Motherhood Penalties, Fatherhood Bonuses, and The Changing Shape of Earnings Inequality”

Heather Richardson (Psychological and Brain Sciences)
National Institute of Health - $1,968,843
“Adolescent Binge Drinking and Effects on Adult Brain and Behavior: The Importance of Sex Differences”

Jonathan Rosa (Anthropology)
National Science Foundation – Resubmission - Cultural Anthropology Scholar Award - $49,373
“Remapping Linguistic Diversity”

Gwyneth Rost (Communication Disorders)
National Science Foundation - $719,304
“Communication in the Juvenile Justice System”

Lisa Sanders (Psychological and Brain Sciences)
National Institutes of Health - $426,307
“Temporally Selective Attention Facilitates Language Processing in Young Children”

Lisa Troy (Nutrition)
American Heart Association - $197,733
“Comparative-effectiveness of Exercise Plus Vitamin D Supplementation on Endothelial Function in Postmenopausal Women”

ACTIVE RESEARCH GRANTS

Lorraine Cordiero (Nutrition)
UMass Extension and Stockbridge School of Agriculture Lowell Project - $110,000
“Food Security, Health Outcomes, and Nutrition Education among Cambodian Women in Massachusetts”

Nilanjana Dasgupta (Psychological and Brain Sciences)
National Science Foundation - $1,499,993
“Peer Influences on Adolescents’ Self-Concept, Achievement, and Future Aspirations”

Nilanjana Dasgupta (Psychological and Brain Sciences)
National Science Foundation - $524,580
“Peer Matters: When and how do peers influence young women’s participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics”

Gerald Downes (Biology)
National Science Foundation – $757,746
“Collaborative Research: GABA A Receptor Hyperactivity of Developing Zebra Fish”

Heather Richardson (Psychological and Brain Sciences)
National Institutes of Health - $1,970,403
“Effect of Adolescent Binge Drinking on Myelination of the Forceps Minor in Rats”

Elizabeth L. Krause (Anthropology)
National Science Foundation- $5,000
“REU supplement: Chinese Immigration and Family Encounters in Italy”

Jaci Kurland (Communications Disorders)
National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders - $1,757,185
“Overcoming Learned Non-Use in Chronic Aphasia: Behavioral, fMRI, and QoL Outcomes”

Agnes Lacreuse (Psychological and Brain Sciences)
National Institutes of Health - $1,545,557
“Sex Differences in Cognitive and Brain Aging: A Primate Model”

Jonathan Rosa (Anthropology)
Ford Foundation, Postdoctoral Fellowship - $45,000
In residence at Northwestern University’s Latina/o Studies program for the 2015-16 academic year

Jonathan Rosa (Anthropology)
National Science Foundation – Resubmission - Cultural Anthropology Scholar Award - $49,373
“Remapping Linguistic Diversity”

Lisa Scott (Psychological and Brain Sciences)
U.S. Army Research Institute for Behavioral and Social Sciences - $2,327,073
“Exploring the Use of Visual Features and Recognition Strategies in Perceptual Expertise”

Lisa Scott (Psychological and Brain Sciences)
National Science Foundation: Career Award- $670,191
“Perceptual Narrowing and Cortical Development in Infancy”

Rebecca Spencer (Psychological and Brain Sciences)
National Institutes of Health - $2,017,722
“The Benefit of Naps on Cognitive, Emotional and Motor Learning in Preschoolers”

Rebecca Spencer (Psychological and Brain Sciences)
National Institutes of Health - $1,904,791
“Sleep-Dependent Memory Processing in Older Adults”

SPONSORED RESEARCH RESULTS 2014-15
13 Scholar proposals submitted from six departments and three colleges across campus, totaling $10,113,026
14 active grants and fellowships totaling $13,205,735 from 11 scholars across six departments and three colleges
CRF DIRECTORS’ CONSULTING AND RELATED PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

MAUREEN PERRY-JENKINS, CRF Director

- Consulted with National Women’s Law Center on issues facing low-income families
- Consulted on Massachusetts Pregnancy Discrimination Legislation
- Invited presentation at the Future of Work and The Workforce, Washington DC
- Invited speaker at Penn State University, UMass Medical Center, and National Council on Family Relations
- Developed National Coalition of Family Research Centers
- Awarded fellowship at Stanford Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences 2015-16

ALINE SAYER, CRF Methodology Program Director

- Served as methodological consultant on 8 NIH and NSF research grants.
- Inter-University Consortium for Social and Political Research, Summer Program in Quantitative Methods Advisory Board
- Technical Education Research Center, Developing Mathematical Ideas Evaluation, Advisory Board
- Institute of Education Sciences, Scientific Review Panel, Early Intervention and Early Childhood Education.
- Numerous national presentations on family research methodology
SUPPORTING FAMILY RESEARCHERS

PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF FACULTY SCHOLARS

The Family Research Scholars Program has become increasingly competitive over the years and many young scholars (usually new, assistant professors), are in need of guidance around applying for such programs. Thus, CRF collaborates with the Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) to hold a workshop for new assistant professors which focuses on applying for initial start-up funds for fellowships that will prepare them for larger grants.

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL - CONSULTATION AND MENTORING

CRF provides ongoing individual grant development consultation to former Family Research Scholars as well as other faculty eager to tap CRF’s expertise. Faculty regularly request to consult about the proposal submission process, review a grant draft, assist in budget development, or discuss an emerging proposal idea. CRF also provides infrastructure and ongoing support to administer large research grants of affiliated faculty. Proposal development services are provided by CRF faculty and staff.

EXTENDING THE FAMILY RESEARCH SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The Scholars Program has been incredibly successful in its goal of assisting faculty in obtaining external funding. In order to enhance this program further, two new additions have been added. Last year, we began our “early prep” meetings to help Scholars form and share their ideas before the next academic year. They were encouraged to start working on their project over the summer to then be ready to jump in at the first session in September. We will be continuing the summer meetings with a group of highly enthusiastic researchers.

THE “I AM A NEW PI: NOW WHAT?” PROGRAM

CRF continued its New PI Program, which was developed in direct response to faculty who were successful in getting a large grant and then became overwhelmed with the new set of tasks and responsibilities as a principal investigator. Faculty are able to refer to the New PI workbook and prepare for potentially unanticipated issues that may occur when running a large project. CRF also offers workshops and smaller group sessions for PIs to share their ideas and concerns around topics like hiring post docs, managing a lab, keeping track of the budget, and maintaining research productivity.

STUDENT RESEARCH PEER-MENTORING GROUPS

Student facilitated Peer Mentoring Research Groups have been created as a result of CRF’s Student Research Awards Program. Run by a member of the CRF graduate student team, past and current student award recipients may attend these working-group sessions throughout the year. They share the progress of their projects with an interdisciplinary group of advanced undergraduate and graduate students. The group meetings encourage students to discuss and problem solve methods and approaches to their research.
Researchers often work in isolation, so CRF provides access to the resources for analysis & sharing results.
PROVIDING METHODOLOGY TRAINING AND CONSULTATION

METHODOLOGY PROGRAM

Since 2005, CRF’s Methodology Program has been a resource for consultation and training in advanced statistical and methodological techniques that are relevant to family research. CRF’s Methodology Program has particular expertise in quantitative methods for analyzing non-experimental data that arise in studies of families and dyads, with an emphasis on multilevel modeling, structural equation modeling and analysis of nested and longitudinal data. CRF’s methodological training programs, workshops and consulting services focus on instruction in cutting edge methods for the analysis of family data. This has translated into publications and grants on research relevant to improving the lives of families and children.

ALINE SAYER, PH.D.
Director, Methodology Program
Center for Research on Families
Associate Professor, Psychology
University of Massachusetts Amherst
METHODOLOGY CONSULTATION

CRF’s Methodology Consulting Services (MCS) provides study design and statistical analysis to an array of faculty and students from colleges, universities and organizations.

In 2014-2015 CRF’s Methodology Consultation Services provided individual research and data consultation on topics including but not limited to data visualization, hierarchical linear models for public health data, adjustment of children with lesbian parents, propensity score analysis of political science data, training in ANOVA models for food science projects, scale development for therapeutic measures, cognitive aging in primate models, the effects of exercise on aspects of working memory, adolescent individuation in adoptive families, psychosocial development of adopted young adults, psychological wellbeing of working low-wage women during the transition to parenthood, benefits of naps on cognitive development of preschool children, evaluation for two types of therapy for depression, effects of a school-based intervention to enhance the social and emotional development of elementary school children, and peer mentoring to foster participation of women in STEM fields.

MCS has also expanded to partnerships with other areas of the campus research community, providing services to departments such as Psychological & Brain Sciences, Kinesiology, Nursing, Nutrition, and the School of Education. MCS has also engaged in collaborative work with the research community external to UMASS, including providing consultation assessing effects of a fathering intervention for Smith College. MCS has also provided statistical consulting to the editor of the journal Human Biology, through a contract from Wiley Publications.

CONSULTING EXPERTISE

Consulting services are provided by a team of faculty, led by our nationally recognized director, Dr. Aline Sayer, and include CRF staff, and advanced graduate students. They offer consulting in all stages of research, including: issues in study design, measurement and sampling; power analysis; data analysis, training in the use of software packages; and writing and editing methodology sections of manuscripts and grant proposals.

CONSULTING STAFF AND STUDENTS

TINA CHEN
Tina Chen is a Graduate Methodology Consultant and fourth year doctoral student in the cognitive division in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at UMass. As a Graduate Methodology Consultant, Tina works one-on-one to guide and train graduate students and faculty from diverse departments in research design and statistical analysis such as ANOVA, regression, hierarchical linear modeling, structural equation modeling, and propensity score matching using a variety of statistical packages.

LISA FIORENZO
Lisa joined the Center for Research on Families in Fall 2014 as a staff Methodology Consultant and has worked on a number of projects for faculty members and graduate students from various campus departments. She has statistical training in ANOVA, regression, Bayesian methods, hierarchical linear (multilevel) modeling, and structural equation modeling, and she also brings to CRF a good working knowledge of multiple statistical packages, such as R, SPSS, HLM, and LISREL. As a consultant, she helps clients elucidate their plans for analysis, provides data management expertise, assists in carrying out analyses, and helps translate findings into coherent products. She has also given seminars on the basics of ANOVA and R programming. In the future, Lisa plans to become more skilled in niche methodologies, such as survival analysis.

ADD HEALTH

CRF launched a new initiative to host several large nationally representative datasets for use by UMass faculty and students. Data collection for individual research projects can be time-consuming, expensive, and may result in sample sizes that are both too small for rigorous statistical analysis and raise issues around generalizability. Established large nationally representative datasets can solve many of these problems but are often underutilized due to lack of awareness. The first dataset to be housed at CRF is Add Health, a data goldmine that explores the contextual effects of peer, school, neighborhood and family on health and health-related behaviors and outcomes. In October, CRF gave a presentation on how to utilize Add Health’s data set to faculty and students in the social sciences, communications, public health, and education. Currently, CRF is contracting with the Carolina Population Center for the Add Health data set and reviewing potential sites for on campus storage of these data.
I APPRECIATE THAT SO MUCH CODE WAS PROVIDED. HAVING THE CODE IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS LEARNING THE CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF ANALYSIS. —WORKSHOP ATTENDEE

METHODOLOGICAL WORKSHOPS AND TRAININGS

For ten years, CRF’s methodology trainings in advanced statistical and methodological techniques have attracted national and international family researchers to the summer methodology workshops held on campus. Researchers have come to depend on CRF’s consistent menu of relevant and intensive trainings. CRF is a satellite campus for the prestigious Summer Institute in Quantitative Methods organized by the University of Michigan’s Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). CRF offers four weeks of intensive training on a variety of topics at the Amherst campus. These forums receive high praise from participants, ensuring the continued demand for these offerings.

CRF 2014 SUMMER METHODOLOGY WORKSHOPS:

“Analyzing Developmental Trajectories” | June 2-4, 2014
Dr. Daniel Nagin, Ph.D., Carnegie-Mellon University & Dr. Thomas Loughran, University of Maryland

“Hierarchical Linear Models I” | June 9-13, 2014
Dr. Aline Sayer, University of Massachusetts Amherst & Dr. Holly Laws, Yale University

“Models for Categorical Outcomes using Stata: Specification, Estimation and Interpretation”
June 16 - 20, 2014
Dr. Scott Long, Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Statistics, Indiana University

“Analyzing Intensive Longitudinal Data” | June 24-27, 2014
Dr. Jean-Philippe Laurenceau, Ph.D., University of Delaware & Dr. Niall Bolger, Ph.D., Columbia University

Our 2014 Summer Workshops served over 68 researchers from 44 institutions & 3 countries. To learn more about our attendees affiliations please go to page 50.
MENTORING FUTURE FAMILY RESEARCHERS

Dr. Aline Sayer has been selecting the most talented graduate students in methodological techniques to be a part of her consulting team for over twenty years. Sharing her knowledge, time and expertise has allowed these students to develop and flourish. Under her guidance, graduate student team members gain experience in the principles of design, collection, processing, and analysis. Aline recently reached out to some of CRF’s former student staff and researchers to hear what they have done since graduating and how we guided their career paths. The responses were inspiring.

LINDSAY DEMERS

Lindsay is currently is a project leader in the STEM Education Evaluation Center at the Technical Education Research Center in Cambridge, MA. She is currently co-principle investigator on a large-scale efficacy study funded by IES examining the impact of an early algebra intervention on student learning. Lindsay’s response to our conversations reveal how influential the student methodology program is to future family researchers:

“Working as a student methodology consultant for UMass’ Center for Research on Families gave me invaluable experience, both in terms of technical statistics knowledge as well as in learning how to collaborate with clients of various needs and of differing backgrounds. These skills, along with professional connections made while working through the CRF, are what lead to me to my current position at TERC. In addition to helping me secure a full-time position after graduation, my work through the CRF with Aline Sayer has led to numerous consulting projects, many of which have resulted in scholarly publications. The CRF Methodology Consulting program affords graduate students a unique opportunity that not many programs can offer, and I feel incredibly fortunate to have been a part of it!”

HEATHER LAVIGNE

Heather is currently a Research Associate in the Research, Evaluation & Policy Unit of the Learning & Teaching Division at the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC). She is the lead researcher for REL-NEI’s Northeast Rural Districts Research Alliance, and she is the principal investigator of a study using growth mixture modeling to investigate student engagement trajectories in online courses for REL Midwest’s Virtual Education Research Alliance. Heather commented that her previous experience as a methodology consultant for the Center for Research on Families (CRF) prepared her for her current position at EDC in the following ways:

“During my time at CRF, Aline taught me how to be a competent, patient, and encouraging consultant. I learned the subtle art of asking insightful questions to get clients to focus their often ambitious interests into testable hypotheses. I also learned how to describe the recommended analytic approach in a non-technical and approachable manner, which is a skill I draw upon frequently in my collaborative REL work. In addition to learning about the consultation process, working as a CRF consultant allowed me to learn new methodological skills as our clients requested increasingly complex analyses. I consulted on numerous manuscripts and grant applications for faculty and graduate students from a variety of fields. These skills have helped me excel during the first two years of my post-graduate career as a research associate. I am confident that this experience made me a valuable prospective employee and helped me obtain my current position.”

ANGELA PAZZAGLIA

Angela is currently a Research Associate in the Research, Evaluation & Policy Unit of the Learning & Teaching Division at the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC). At EDC, Angela designs and conducts research studies for the Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast and Islands (REL-NEI) and REL Midwest. She is the lead researcher for REL-NEI’s Northeast Rural Districts Research Alliance, and she is the principal investigator of a study using growth mixture modeling to investigate student engagement trajectories in online courses for REL Midwest’s Virtual Education Research Alliance. Angela commented that her previous experience as a methodology consultant for the Center for Research on Families (CRF) prepared her for her current position at EDC in the following ways:

“I’m so incredibly grateful for the mentoring experiences I gathered as a Methodology Consultant for the Center for Research on Families. Not only was I able to apply my methodological training to a diverse set of fascinating projects, I also had the chance to work closely with clients from the social and behavioral sciences, education, and beyond. As a consultant, it was often my job to sit down with a researcher, learn about the theory that drives their work, and identify the analytic strategies that would help them answer their questions. Under Aline’s supervision, I learned how important it is to meet researchers where they are in their understanding of analytical techniques.”
WORKING AS A METHODOLOGY CONSULTANT FOR CRF WAS AN INVALUABLE EXPERIENCE THAT PREPARED ME FOR A CAREER AS AN EDUCATION RESEARCHER

- ANGELA PAZZAGLIA

PICTURE:
CRF Methodology Director Aline Sayer with consultant Lisa Forenzo
RESEARCH EXPERIENCES HONE THE CURIOSITY AND SKILLS OF YOUNG SCHOLARS - THE NEXT GENERATION OF FAMILY RESEARCHERS.
STUDENT RESEARCH GRANTS AND AWARDS PROGRAM

In its sixth year, the CRF Student Research Grants and Awards Program has continued to support student research, training, and conference travel. This year, nearly $50,000 in funding was awarded to exceptional undergraduate and graduate students with a commitment and interest in researching issues related to the family. The program provides opportunities for students to work with UMass faculty on research projects and acknowledges outstanding student research on family issues. Awardees engage with the Center by attending two roundtable events to present their research, attending CRF events, and receiving mentorship.

Fifteen students were selected to receive one of six grants or awards in Family Research:

FAMILY RESEARCH TRAVEL GRANT
FALL 2014

Seda Saluk, Ph.D., candidate, Anthropology
“Harmonizing Reproduction: Pro-Natalism, European Union Accession, and Medico-Bureaucratic Surveillance in Turkey”
American Anthropological Association Conference, Washington DC
Mentor: Jacqueline Urla (Anthropology)

Kimberly Doughty, Ph.D., candidate, Nutrition
“Low breastfeeding intensity is associated with rapid weight gain among infants in the U.S.”
International Society for Research in Human Milk & Lactation Conference, Kiawah Island, SC
Mentor: Lindiwe Sibeko (Nutrition)
SPRING 2015

Samantha Bernecker, Ph.D., candidate, Clinical Psychology
“Crowdsourcing Mental Health”
The Association for Psychological Sciences conference in New York.
Mentor: Michael Constantino (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

Joycelyn Faraj, Ph.D., candidate, Nutrition
“Vitamin B6 Status is Associated with Depression among Women with Inflammation”
Experimental Biology conference, Boston MA.
Mentor: Alayne Ronnenberg (Nutrition)

Alice Fiddian-Green, Ph.D., candidate, Health Promotion and Policy
“Puerto Rican Latina Youth Coming Out to Talk about Alternative Sexual Health”
The International Communication Association’s Communication Across the Life Span conference in San Juan.
Mentor: Aline Gubrium (Public Health)

Amanda Cremone, Ph.D., candidate, Neuroscience and Behavior
“Influence of a Mid-Day Nap on Response Inhibition in Preschool-Aged Children”
Mentor: Rebecca Spencer (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

Ellen Correa, Ph.D., candidate, Communication
“Employing Intimate Ethnography, Performance, and Dialogue to Craft a Reckoning of the Past for Lessons about the Future”
The International Communication Association conference in San Juan.
Mentor: Leda Cooks (Communication)

FAMILY RESEARCH GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWSHIP
$10,000 to each student for one year:

Shayl F. Griffith, Ph.D. candidate, Clinical Psychology
“Parent-child Interactions around Mobile Technology and Implications for Children’s Outcomes”
David Arnold (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

Cassandra Rodriguez, Ph.D. candidate, Sociology
“Unique Challenges of Mixed Status Families”
Mentor: Joya Misra (Sociology & Public Policy)

Mary Catherine Catanese, Ph.D. candidate, Neuroscience and Behavior
“The Effects of Exogenous Estrogens on Maternal Behavior and the Brain in Mice”
Mentor: Laura Vandenberg (Environmental Health Sciences)

FAMILY RESEARCH UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT HONORS THESIS AWARD
$500 to each graduating student (class of 2015):

Avery Hennigar, Psychological and Brain Sciences & Public Health
“The Relationship Between Breastfeeding and Depressive Symptoms in Low-Income Mothers Who Returned to Employment Soon After Their Child’s Birth”
Mentor: Maureen Perry-Jenkins (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

Arya Mohanka, Individual Concentration in Demography & Population Studies
“Pronatalist Influence on Reality Television Programming in South Korea”
Mentor: C.N. Le (Sociology)

Kelsie Mitchell, Public Health
“Policies Surrounding Education For Young English Language Learners in Massachusetts”
Mentors: Gloria DiFulvio (Public Health)

FAMILY RESEARCH UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP
$3000 to each student for one year:

Meghann Zapcic, (class of 2016) Psychology & Neuroscience
“Zebrafish Model of Autism with Epilepsy”
Mentor: Gerald Downes (Biology)

Yelena Ravvina, (class of 2016) Psychology & Public Health
“The Issues Surrounding Open Adoption Dynamics in Families with Mixed Sexual Orientations”
Mentors: Harold Grotevant and Rachel Farr (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

Angela Essa, (class of 2016) Biology
“The Effect of a Diet Intervention on Inflammation and Methylation Markers in the Breast”
Mentor: Kathleen Arcaro (Veterinary and Animal Sciences)

Emily Reilly, (class of 2016) Psychological and Brain Sciences & Nutrition
“The Relationships Between Maternal Stress and Adaptive Child Cognitive Outcomes”
Mentor: Jennifer McDermott (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

Since the Student Research Grants and Awards Program began in 2010, 76 students have received more than $265,000 to conduct research and present findings alongside the Center’s affiliated faculty.
STUDENT RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

This past year, the CRF Awardees met together at roundtable forums to discuss their research with their peers, faculty and staff. Students talked about their research projects, faculty mentors’ advice, and the importance of this experience at UMass. Here are their research highlights:

Kimberly Doughty is a Ph.D. candidate in public health and received a CRF travel award to present her research at the International Society for Research in Human Milk and Lactation’s annual conference in South Carolina. Kimberly’s research examined connections between the intensity of early breastfeeding and early life weight gain. This is important family research because rapid postnatal weight gain has been linked to increased risk of obesity, insulin resistance, and high blood pressure in later life.

Sean Higgins is an undergraduate researcher majoring in political science and legal studies. The CRF assistantship has enabled Sean to work as a research assistant for Professor Bushouse in political science. Sean’s research examines the effects of the economic recession on state budget appropriations for prekindergarten funding. He is reviewing case studies, interviewing representatives from interest groups and the state, and collecting budget data in order to gain an understanding of the policies affecting prekindergarten funding. Sean has gained new knowledge regarding the policy process while having a positive impact on family and education policy.

Matthew LaClair is a second year Ph.D. student in the Neuroscience and Behavior Program. He is using the CRF grant to complete a project examining the relationships between schizophrenia, the affected neurotransmitters, and the associated emotional and cognitive symptoms. Matthew examines these relationships by manipulating the levels of the neurotransmitters dopamine and estradiol, which have been shown to be key neurotransmitters involved in schizophrenia, and monitoring cognitive effects.

Sarah Miller is a Ph.D. candidate in Sociology. As a CRF researcher, Sarah is investigating bullying in schools and examining the roles of families, schools and community as they influence youth conflict. Sarah is investigating these dynamics through ethnographic research in a small-town northeastern school. Sarah uses multiple sources of data including monitoring student interactions in the school and on social media, analyzing school documents and procedures, and interviewing students, teachers, parents, and administrators.

Seda Saluk is a Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology who received a travel award from CRF to present her research at the prestigious American Anthropological Association’s annual conference in Washington DC. Seda’s research explores the dynamics of women’s reproductive rights in Turkey and how they are being affected by the European Union governance and Turkey’s convergence towards standardization of healthcare, and feminist activism.

Samantha Schenck is a Ph.D. student in Economics. Samantha’s research with her mentor, Dr. Lee Badgett, professor of economics, has focused on the effects of anti-discrimination laws on the LGBTQ community. As a CRF researcher, Samantha is examining the effects of California’s recently instituted Paid Family Leave Act, which expands the federal Family Medical Leave Act to include mandatory paid sick leave on families and employer profits and productivity.
CRF HELPED ME TO LEARN HOW TO PRESENT MY RESEARCH AND SEE THAT WHAT I WAS WORKING ON WAS PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER.

- ASHLEY SILVIA

PICTURE
Ashley Silvia graduating with her Masters in Forensic Science at Penn State
We recently reconnected with some of the former CRF Student award recipients to learn about how their CRF funded research experience influenced their career ambitions after graduation.

As a UMass Amherst junior studying Speech Pathology, Cheryl Feinstein received the 2010 CRF undergraduate research award and spent a year working with Professor Jacquie Kurland, Associate Professor in Communication Disorders and an expert in aphasia in older adults. Cheryl examined communication issues within the elderly community. After graduating, Cheryl earned a M.A. in Speech Pathology and is now a certified speech pathologist working with children with communication challenges resulting from a variety of disorders like autism, articulation deficits, or genetic syndromes. Cheryl's research experience with Dr. Kurland had an immense impact on her work with children. "Throughout my graduate and professional work I have always carried the importance of ‘family centered’ practice," which she attributes to her experience as a CRF research student.

Chantal Newkirk received the CRF undergraduate research award in 2013 during her senior year as a Sociology and Women and Gender Studies student. Chantal worked with Michelle Budig, Professor of Sociology, renowned for her research on working families. Chantal’s research analyzed how women’s family responsibilities affect, and are affected by, paid work and entrepreneurship. Chantal is currently employed as a case manager at Hampshire County Jail, working with inmates on issues such as anger management, domestic abuse, and victim impact. "While working with inmates I am able to observe that one’s family history has a huge impact on their future." Chantal plans to further her education examining how families are affected when a father becomes incarcerated. “The opportunity to work with Dr. Budig would not have been possible without funding from the Center. The research experience not only influenced my current work but also what I am thinking about for my future career.”

Morgana Flaherty’s research experience at UMass, under the mentorship of Dr. Harold Grotevant, was nothing short of “an opportunity of a lifetime.” In 2011, Morgana was selected to receive the CRF undergraduate research award. Her senior year thesis focused on the factors that influence a mother to place a child up for adoption. The CRF award provided much needed financial assistance and the opportunity to conduct research under the guidance of Dr. Grotevant, endowed Professor of Psychology, director of the Rudd Adoption Research Program, and chair of the department. Morgana had the opportunity to work collaboratively with graduate and undergraduate students in his lab and met some of the finest adoption researchers and clinicians in the country. “Not only is Dr. Grotevant an outstanding, internationally known, researcher and writer, he is also a talented mentor ….He brings life to learning, like lighting a fire.” Morgana presented her senior thesis at an international conference alongside world renowned adoption scholars. After graduating, Morgana pursued a M.A. in mental health counseling and works as a counselor providing individual and group therapy to children and young adults. “I was so prepared for graduate study that I am able to work fulltime in the community while earning my masters.”

In 2010, Anastasia Wilson was awarded the CRF undergraduate research award to work with Dr. Nancy Folbre, economics professor and former MacArthur Fellow, famous for her groundbreaking research on the care sector. Anastasia had the privilege of working closely with Dr. Folbre and contributed to the research for her book For the Love of Money. After graduating, Anastasia began graduate school in economics at Umass. She states that her CRF award “shaped her decision to apply to Ph.D. programs in economics” and engendered a passion for heterodox economics (economics outside the mainstream). Her dissertation focuses on the interaction between inequality, higher education, and student debt.

In 2012, as a bio-chemistry and pre-med major, Ashley Silva was selected by CRF to conduct research with Dr. Kathleen Arcaro, professor of environmental toxicology, on the effects of broccoli on breast milk. Ashley examined how the sulforaphane compound in broccoli can affect the DNA patterns of breast milk. Today, Ashley is a student at Penn State working towards a Master’s degree in Forensic Science. She believes that the research assistantship provided by CRF was instrumental in her graduate success. “The award I received from CRF helped me gain experience in research and allowed me to be better prepared for graduate school.” She also appreciated the opportunities she had to present her research while a CRF research assistant and attributes getting her current assistantship to her experience with Dr. Arcaro.
One of the biggest challenges facing American parents and families today is striking a balance between the demands of work and the responsibilities and joys of raising a family. Too often, parents have little control over their work schedules and demands nor the inevitable unexpected family emergencies that accompany raising children. The challenges of holding down a full-time job and raising a child often creates an environment in which ordinary, but sometimes spontaneous, life events, like catching a cold or losing your child care can turn into life crises. Instead of having time to celebrate major life events, such as the birth of a baby, new parents often find themselves consumed with stressful decisions about returning to work very soon after a child’s birth due to financial necessity. Such financial and emotional decisions can be devastating for the individuals and the family. Work-family challenges are particularly pronounced for low-income and single-parent families where employers often offer few workplace supports, like paid sick time or paid parental leave, and the families don’t have the financial flexibility or time to meet life’s demands.

Recognizing this problem, and its crippling effects on families, almost all industrialized countries in the world have created laws requiring paid parental leave and paid sick leave for workers. U.S. federal law, as noted by President Obama in his recent State of the Union Address, lags far behind its world counterparts on this issue, offering no paid parental leave for new parents.

Samantha Schenk received the 2014 Center for Research on Families Student Fellowship to research labor and leave policies in the United States, specifically to study a “natural experiment” underway in the U.S. where California has become the first state to offer paid leave. Samantha, in addition to pursuing a PhD, is a part time university instructor and mother of two young children; thus, she is hyper-aware of the struggles facing young families participating in the workforce. Inspired by her personal experience, encouraged by her advisor, and funded by the Center for Research on Families, Samantha is researching California’s labor policies, something she says would be nearly impossible without CRF funding.

In 2002, the state of California passed the California Paid Family Leave Act which includes provisions to provide 6 weeks of paid leave to workers whose families are experiencing a pregnancy or illness in the state of California. The Act has been heralded as America’s first steps towards catching up with its global counterparts, and was eluded to as a model for the nation by President Obama during his State of the Union Address, but its opponents have argued that a paid leave policy will decrease worker productivity and increase unemployment. As Schenck notes, although proponents and opponents of the act have debated and disagreed along the typical economic lines of theoretical dogma, market failure, productivity, rationality, and supply and demand, neither side has been able to offer data that directly tests how the act has actually affected California’s labor market. Samantha is attempting to inform the debate on labor policy by offering an objective answer to the question using empirical economic research techniques.

To examine what effects, if any, there are on California’s labor market, Samantha will apply the powerful “difference-in-difference” regression method to data from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to address this question. The difference-in-difference method compares the changes in employment trends in California relative to employment changes in the rest of the United States. The data ranges from 2000, three years before the policy was fully implemented, to 2009, before any major changes to the policy occurred. Samantha’s methods will be able to isolate the policy’s effects from aggregate and state-specific economic trends.

Samantha hopes to answer four central research questions, all of which are relevant to both the family and the field of economics. Specifically, her primary questions are: (1) Has there been an overall change in employment attributable to the paid leave policy? (2) How did the policy, if at all, affect female employment? (3) Did the effects on employment vary based on whether the employer was a federal contractor? and (4) Did the effects of the policy change depending on firm size, industry, or occupation? The extra time the CRF Fellowship provides has allowed her, between raising her children and teaching courses, to focus on the intense data collection and analysis.

The Center for Research on Families Student Awards program recognizes outstanding student family researchers like Samantha Schenck. Samantha’s interdisciplinary research is highly relevant to families and has the potential to shape future labor and maternity leave policy.
Almost all industrialized countries in the world have created laws requiring paid parental leave and paid sick leave for workers. U. S. federal law lags far behind.
FINDINGS INFORM OUR KNOWLEDGE BASE, PROGRAMS AND POLICIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE WELL-BEING OF FAMILIES.
BOOK DISCUSSION: A CRF SALON

CRF’s Salon and Book Reading was held in November to showcase the influential book “Unequal Time: Gender, Class, and Family in Employment Schedules,” recently published by former CRF scholars and professors of sociology, Naomi Gerstel and Dan Clawson. The book documents the challenging interplay of gender and social class as they shape how workers in health care professions manage personal, family and work time and schedules. It is the result of the research that Gerstel and Clawson conducted as CRF Family Research Scholars.

During the evening, the authors read excerpts from the book and answered questions raised by attendees. The Salon and Book Reading was widely attended by UMass faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, UMass staff, and residents of the Amherst region and led to a dynamic discussion.

In Unequal Time, Gerstel and Clawson explore the ways in which social inequalities permeate the workplace, reverberating through a web of time in which the schedules of one person shape the schedules of others in ways that exemplify and often exacerbate differences between men and women, the privileged and disadvantaged. They argue that workers’ control over their time is a crucial labor issue that deserves more attention. “Most of the conversation about inequality is about wages—and that’s a really important discussion,” says Gerstel. “But time is a key way to talk about inequality.” Gerstel and Clawson studied four professions within the medical-health sector: doctors, nurses, emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and certified nursing assistants (CNAs). Their research emphasizes how class and gender impact who has the most control over their regular work schedules and time off.

The event was a great success and a timely and joyful celebration of Gerstel and Clawson’s work. CRF plans to continue to showcase CRF’s faculty research in similar forums in future years.
The Tay Gavin Erickson Lecture Series brings nationally recognized speakers with expertise in family research to campus each year. The scholars are invited to both consult with our faculty, and engage with the community through widely attended public lectures. The lecture series is centered on translating research to the public, emphasizing its implications on public policy and family behavior.

THE FOLLOWING EXPERTS VISITED CRF IN 2014-2015:

**ANTONIA CALAFAT, PH.D.**  
Chief, Personal Care Products Laboratory, Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
Lecture: “Biomonitoring, Chemical Exposures, and Human Health”  
Consulted with Dr. Katherine Reeves

**MARK FEINBERG, PH.D.**  
Research Professor, Human Development and Family Studies, Pennsylvania State University  
Lecture: “Couple-Focused Prevention at the Transition to Parenthood”  
Consulted with Dr. Marsha Kline Pruett

**Diane Hughes, Ph.D.**  
Professor, Psychology & Co-Director, Center for Research on Culture, Development & Education NYU  
Lecture: “Racial Socialization Processes Among Ethnically Diverse Urban Youth: Development & Education”  
Consulted with Dr. Maureen Perry Jenkins

**Laura Stoker, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor, Political Science, University of California, Berkeley  
Lecture: “Family and the Reproduction of Political Inequality”  
Consulted with Dr. Tatishe Nteta

The Tay Gavin Erickson lecture series allows CRF to simultaneously foster family research and engage in public conversations and lectures. The lecture series brings internationally recognized speakers with expertise in family research to campus each year. The lecture series began in 1999 through an endowment established in memory of Tay Gavin Erickson.
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

CRF’s faculty are from many disciplines and study issues that affect families from multiple perspectives. Their challenge is to get their research findings out to the public in an engaging manner that inspires on-the-ground change. CRF provides multi-disciplinary and translational support to faculty members whose research has the potential to transform the lives of families. As a key collaborator in the UMass Amherst Public Engagement Project (PEP), CRF participated in offering a mentoring and training fellowship program to selected faculty this year.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT (PEP)

“The Public Engagement Project is a faculty-driven initiative that builds on collaboration between the Institute for Social Science Research, the Center for Public Policy and Administration, and the Psychology of Peace and Violence Program and the Center for Research on Families,” says PEP Director Amy Schalet. The College of Natural Sciences, the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the Office of the Provost and University Relations also support the initiative.

PEP is a tool to assist the University in expanding its ability to translate research for the community. Each center, institute and program contributes ideas and supports mentorship opportunities for faculty to learn new skills and techniques to disseminate their research publicly and engage with community members and leaders as well as policy makers. PEP accomplishes this by hosting workshops, facilitating engagement with journalists and the media, and assisting in disseminating research.
BRINGING TOGETHER FACULTY, SCHOLARS, STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO SHARE IDEAS AND LEARN FROM EACH OTHER, ENABLES THE TRANSLATION OF RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE & POLICY
CRF is committed to creating opportunities for research collaboration and the formation of intellectual communities that bring students and researchers together across traditional boundaries. The Center is interested in galvanizing family research activities by collaborating with other centers, departments, schools and colleges and bringing awareness to multidisciplinary projects. Faculty from many colleges within UMass Amherst, as well as with in the Five Colleges and other UMass campuses, engage with CRF, which has led to innovative projects and an extended network of research opportunities.
INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIONS

CRF is committed to creating opportunities for research collaborations and the formation of intellectual communities that bring students and researchers together across disciplinary boundaries. The Center is committed to galvanizing family research activities by collaborating with other centers, departments, schools and colleges to support and develop interdisciplinary projects. Faculty from many colleges within UMass Amherst, as well as within the Five Colleges and other UMass campuses engage with CRF. These collaborations have led to innovative projects and an extended network of research opportunities. Some of the activities include:

**Supporting Faculty “Think Tanks”:**
Bringing together interdisciplinary teams of faculty with shared interests in issues and topics of importance to families such as stress, work and family, early child development and adolescence.

**Co-sponsoring Public Events and Lectures on Key Family Issues:**
Collaborating with departments across campus to highlight interdisciplinary efforts to examine important family related topics. This year CRF co-sponsored a colloquium series with the Psychology department on “Diversity Issues in Clinical and Applied Psychology.”

**Public Engagement Program (PEP)**
The Public Engagement Project supports and trains faculty members from all disciplines to use their research to contribute to social change, inform public policy, and enrich public debate. CRF in collaboration with ISSR, CPPA and the Psychology of Peace and Violence Program spearheaded this program which has resulted in national exposure for faculty in public media outlets such as the PBS, the New York Times, the Boston Globe, and Huffington Post to name a few.

**Building a National Web of Family Research Centers**
Maureen Perry-Jenkins spearheaded the first meeting of Center directors around the country at annual meeting of the National Council on Family Relations to coordinate research efforts at a national level and to develop a process to inform policy makers and funding agencies about key priorities in family research.

**CRF in Springfield, MA**
CRF is collaborating with UMass Extension to spearhead research and outreach activities in Springfield related to maternal health and well-being, child and youth development and family well-being.

**Family Research Methods**
Scholars from business, sciences and the social sciences have all been actively involved in CRF workshops and consultation programs which brings unique expertise to the challenges and unique aspects of family research.
The Rudd Adoption Research Program and the Center for Research on Families are closely linked through their synergistic missions and strategies. CRF provides administrative support to the Rudd program, and their close proximity and shared research strengths have resulted in efficiencies to each program. The Rudd Adoption Research Program is a leader in producing and disseminating state-of-the-art research on the psychology of adoption through conferences, workshops, graduate and postdoctoral training opportunities, and stimulation of research activities. Dr. Harold Grotevant is The Rudd Family Foundation Endowed Chair in the Department of Psychology, and leads the Rudd Adoption Research Program.

This year, the Rudd Adoption Research Program in collaboration with the Center for Research on Families, held its annual “New Worlds of Adoption” spring conference on “Launching into Adulthood.” Dr. Ann Masten, from the University of Minnesota provided the keynote address which highlighted research on resilience in development with a focus on transitions to adulthood. Panel presentations by international scholars followed, and the forum was once again attended by over 200 professionals in the human services fields, families, students, social science researchers, and community members.

"The partnership the Rudd Adoption Research Program has with CRF allows us to work that much more effectively within the university system and to extend our reach in the community. We are so very grateful for this collaborative relationship!"
The Early Childhood Research Group is an interdisciplinary working-group that consists of faculty from a variety of disciplines who share a mutual interest in early childhood education and care. The faculty members meet regularly with the goal of supporting each other’s research and developing collaborations. The faculty’s discussion and meetings inspires childhood research that is more than simply the sum of each faculty’s own research.

**FACULTY IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH GROUP**

**Sofiya Alhassan**, Kinesiology  
Research interests: Community family-based physical activity interventions.

**Brenda Bushouse**, Political Science and Public Policy  
Research interests: Impacts of recession on early childhood education funding.

**Erik Cheries**, Psychological & Brain Sciences  
Research interests: Infant’s understanding of objects and people and the nature of cognitive processes.

**Claire Hamilton**, Teacher Education & Curriculum Studies  
Research interests: Social and policy contexts of early learning.

**Elizabeth Harvey**, Psychological & Brain Sciences  
Research interests: Early development of ADHD and disruptive behavior disorders.

**Jennifer McDermott**, Psychological & Brain Sciences  
Research interests: Role of response monitoring in children’s learning and socio-emotional outcomes.

**Lisa Scott**, Psychological & Brain Sciences  
Research interests: Perceptual categorization and learning over time.

**Rebecca Spencer**, Psychological & Brain Sciences  
Research interests: Role of sleep in learning in preschools and preschool-age children.

**Sara Whitcomb**, Student Development  
Research interests: Mental health promotion and positive behavioral support systems in schools.
Stress is a pervasive theme in the modern family. Symptoms associated with stress in one individual can quickly cause stress throughout the entire family, making stress an important issue to research. The physiology of stress affects both hormone and immune function; if unchecked over time, symptoms associated with stress can contribute to disease.

The interdisciplinary Stress Group consists of about 25 researchers who have been meeting since 2008 to better understand the causes of stress, the effects of stress, and methods of stress measurement. The Stress Group works across disciplines to integrate techniques and perspectives to examine: (a) how stress manifests in the body throughout life, (b) how the manifestation of stress influences relationships and mental health, and (c) how we can address the negative effects of stress to improve health. The group applies a lifespan approach to study and measure stress from gestation and infancy, through adolescence and young adulthood, to menopause and beyond.

The interdisciplinary group meets bi-weekly to discuss their stress and family related research and to stimulate cross-disciplinary analysis and assist each member with their research. Family relationships, animal bonding, developmental phases, and neuroscience are important aspects of this research area. Members have co-authored articles, submitted grant proposals together, and supported each other in productivity and creativity of thought.

**DIRECTORS**

Jeffrey Blaustein, Psychological & Brain Sciences, and Neuroscience and Behavior Program

Lynnette Leidy Sievert, Anthropology

**FACULTY IN THE STRESS RESEARCH GROUP**

Annaliese Beery, Psychology, Smith College

Joseph Bergan, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Elizabeth Bertone-Johnson, Public Health

Matt Davidson, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Kristina Deligiannidis, UMass Memorial Medical Center

Andrew Farrar, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Susan Hankinson, Public Health

Mary Harrington, Psychology, Smith College

Karen Kalmakis, Nursing

Agnès Lacreuse, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Jerrold Meyer, Psychological and Brain Sciences

Jennifer Martin McDermott, Psychological & Brain Sciences

David Moorman, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Melinda Novak, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Mariana Pereira, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Maureen Perry-Jenkins, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Paula Pietromonaco, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Sally Powers, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Rebecca Ready, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Luke Remage-Healey, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Heather Richardson, Psychological & Brain Sciences

Lisa Troy, Nutrition

Brian Whitcomb, Public Health
CRF FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS

STEERING COMMITTEE
DAVID ARNOLD, Psychological & Brain Sciences
BRENDA BUSHOUSE, Political Science
NAOMI GERSTEL, Sociology
HAROLD GROTEVANT, Psychological & Brain Sciences
CLAIRE HAMILTON, Education
MARSHA KLINE PRUETT, Smith College School of Social Work
MAUREEN PERRY-JENKINS, CRF Director, Psychological & Brain Sciences
PAULA PIETROMONACO, Psychological & Brain Sciences
SALLY POWERS, CNS, Associate Dean
ELIZABETH HARVEY, Psychological & Brain Sciences
LINDIWE SIBEKO, Nutrition
LYNETTE LEIDY SIEVERT, Anthropology

STUDENTS
OLIVIA ANNESE, Undergraduate Assistant
(Isenbg School of Management – Hospitality & Tourism Management)
DREW THEIMAN, Graduate Assistant
(School of Social and Behavioral Science, Center for Public Policy & Administration)
MICHAEL HAVLIN, Graduate Assistant
(School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Center for Public Policy & Administration, and Department of Land Scape Architecture & Regional Planning)
TINA CHEN, Methodology Program
(College of Natural Sciences, Ph.D. candidate; Psychological & Brain Sciences)
SOPHIA LOVE, Undergraduate Assistant
(Isenbg School of Management – Hospitality & Tourism Management)
RACHEL HERMAN, Graduate Assistant to Maureen Perry Jenkins
(College of Natural Sciences, Psychological & Brain Sciences)
KATIE NEWKIRK, Graduate Assistant to Maureen Perry-Jenkins
(College of Natural Sciences, Psychological & Brain Sciences)

FACULTY & STAFF
MAUREEN PERRY-JENKINS – Director
WENDY VARNER – Associate Director
ALINE SAYER – Director of CRF Methodology Program
DOT MORUA-FERNANDES– Grants and Research Manager
STEPHANIE COVELLI – Financial Manager
CARLA WILLIAMSON– Events and Communications Manager
LISA FIORENZO– Methodology Consultant

FACULTY AFFILIATES
DANIEL ANDERSON, Psychological & Brain Sciences
KATHLEEN ARCARO, Veterinary and Animal Science
DAVID ARNOLD, Psychological & Brain Sciences
M. V. LEE BAGGETT, Economics and Center for Public Policy & Administration
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TREMENDOUS GENEROSITY AND THE SUPPORT OF CRF! I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER THIS LAST YEAR AS THE YEAR I FOUND MY “HOME” AT UMASS - CRF SCHOLAR

PICTURE (LEFT TO RIGHT)
COLLABORATORS

The Center for Research on Families has both national and international connections. CRF scholars have been involved in scholarly collaborations to address pressing issues facing families, to engage in public debate on family issues and to inform policy and practice on behalf of families. Below is a list of universities, institutes and centers we have worked with over the past year.

- Amherst College
- Brandeis University
- Brown University
- Case Western Reserve University
- Children’s Services Council – Palm Beach County
- Columbia University
- Connecticut Children’s Medical Center
- Hunter College - CUNY
- Emory University
- George Mason University
- Georgia Southern University
- Graduate Center - CUNY
- Harvard Medical School
- College of the Holy Cross
- John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- Johns Hopkins University
- Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago
- Mount Holyoke College
- National University of Singapore
- Oklahoma State University
- Pennsylvania State University
- Purdue University
- Queens College - CUNY
- Rutgers University
- School of Public Affairs - American University
- University of Manchester, England
- The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania
- Tufts University
- Universidad del Desarrollo
- University of Arizona
- University of Buffalo - SUNY
- University of Connecticut
- University of Massachusetts - Amherst
- University of Massachusetts - Boston
- University of Michigan
- University of Missouri – Saint Louis
- University of Nebraska - Omaha
- University of North Carolina - Greensboro
- University of Southern California
- University of Texas - Austin
- University of Utah
- Vanderbilt University West Virginia University
- Western University Canada
- Yale University