Bertone-Johnson, colleagues show Vitamin D in foods may reduce risk of depression in older women

Results of a large study among older women suggest that those who ate more of the “sunshine vitamin” were less likely to experience depression symptoms than women who consumed less of the vitamin, according to findings recently published by Elizabeth Bertone-Johnson, associate professor of Epidemiology, with colleagues from several other U.S. academic centers.

Overall, a diverse population of postmenopausal women who consumed 800 international units (IU) per day of the vitamin was 20 percent less likely to have depressive symptoms than those who consumed less than 100 IU daily.

These findings need to be confirmed in clinical trials of vitamin D and depression, say Bertone-Johnson and colleagues at institutions across the nation, but the results are provocative. “Dietary vitamin D intake and supplement use are easy for women to modify and, if shown to be effective in clinical trials, could provide new avenues for the prevention and perhaps the treatment of depression,” she points out.

In addition to sunlight, fat-soluble vitamin D comes largely from eating fatty fish and fortified milk, dairy products and orange juice.

The association observed between dietary vitamin D intake and depressive symptoms was found among nearly 82,000 postmenopausal women (50 to 79 years old) recruited for the Women’s Health Initiative Observational Study, part of a larger study of older women funded by the
National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute at 40 clinical centers throughout the United States from 1993 to 1998.

Their results are in the current issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

Lauri Kalanges, 2004 alumna of the online MPH in PHP program, appears in the *Texas Department of State Health Services Staff News* newsletter. The article features Kalanges, the Section Director for Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention, along with her section, programs, and staff.

**Epidemiology Alumna Named to the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods**

Susan Vaughn Grooters, a 2008 alumna of the MPH in Epidemiology program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, has been appointed to the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF) by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. Currently the Director of Research and Education with STOP Foodborne Illness (formerly Safe Tables Our Priority), Ms. Grooters will serve a two-year term on the NACMCF as a consumer representative and will provide an important consumer viewpoint to the committee’s food safety work.

“Through my work with STOP, I have had the privilege to work with many courageous and brave individuals who have been personally impacted by foodborne illnesses,” Ms. Grooters said. “I am being appointed to represent them, to make sure that their concerns are heard – that we have the safest food supply possible and that preventable illnesses are prevented. I have been to grave sites of those lost to foodborne illness, and had people literally cry on my shoulder when describing their experiences. It is profoundly moving and inspires a lifelong commitment to working on their behalf. I’m immensely proud and honored to be asked to serve on all consumers’ behalf, and to give a voice to those who no longer have one.”

Established in 1988, the NACMCF provides scientific advice on public health issues relative to the safety and wholesomeness of the U.S. food supply. The committee also assists in the development of microbiological criteria and reviews and evaluates epidemiological and risk assessment data as well as methodologies for assessing microbiological hazards.

“Since I’m appointed to the consumer seat, the essential criteria for a successful nomination and ultimate appointment was working at a consumer organization and being able to bring a consumer viewpoint to the table. However, to really understand the complexity of the tasks
assigned to the committee, I believe my appointment was dependent on having two scientific
degrees under my belt,” said Grooters, who also holds a Bachelor’s degree in Nutrition and Food
Sciences from the University of Vermont.

“Prevention of foodborne illness is a complicated goal,” Grooters added. “In part it is
understanding surveillance of illness, and pinpointing likely exposures, as well as what led to
initial contamination. Understanding the epidemiologic significance can help inform prevention
efforts.”

Grooters’ appointment to the committee brings the total membership to 18 individuals from
various fields including academia, industry, and government. More information on the
NACMCF can be found here: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/About_FSIS/NACMCF/index.asp

For more information on STOP, a non-profit organization that relies on individual donations to
operate, please visit: www.STOPfoodborneillness.org

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**Safdar Named President of Pakistan Nutrition and Dietetic Society**

Nilofer Safdar, a doctoral candidate in the Public Health –
Nutrition option program in the School of Public Health and
Health Sciences at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, has
been elected president of the Pakistan Nutrition and Dietetic
Society (PNDS). Ms. Safdar was chosen this past June for a two-
year term extending until 2013.

At present PNDS is Pakistan’s most active professional society
that focuses on the advancement of human nutrition sciences and professions in Pakistan. The
society is comprised of more than 300 regular members including dietitians, nutritionists and
other health care professionals. The emphasis of the society has been on the development of
strategy in all areas of nutrition including public awareness on healthy diets, clinical education
and training of dietitians in accordance with international standards, data collection and research
in the field of nutrition, and the establishment of funds for future needs. PNDS is an active
member of the Asian Federation of Dietetic Association (AFDA) and the International Congress
of Dietetics (ICD). (For more information on the PNDS, visit their website at www.pnds.org.)

“In Pakistan we are working under meager conditions and we receive little support from the
government and health authorities,” Safdar said. “Our society’s mission is to improve the
nutrition status of the population of Pakistan by giving recognition to this important field of
education.”
A founding member of the PNDS, Ms. Safdar has been associated with the society in different capacities since its inception in 2003. She was the Manager of Clinical Nutrition at the Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi, Pakistan and established the first Nutrition and Food Service department in the country at the hospital. In the past she has also worked as a consultant nutritionist at The Kidney Centre, Post Graduate Institute, in Karachi.

Ms. Safdar is currently matriculating to UMass Amherst on an International Fulbright Fellowship.

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**Public Health Student Awarded Gallagher Koster Health Careers Scholarship**

John Park, an undergraduate in the Public Health Sciences program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, has been awarded a 2011 Gallagher Koster Health Careers Scholarship in the amount of $5,000. Mr. Park was one of five recipients chosen for this national scholarship, which is awarded annually by Gallagher Koster, a provider of student health insurance.

The Gallagher Koster Health Careers Scholarship Program was established to provide outstanding, financially-needy undergraduate students with the financial assistance they need to pursue their health-related career. Recipients are selected by the Scholarship Program Board of Directors based on their demonstration of the program standards, which include a strong motivation to pursue a healthcare career, academic excellence, a dedication to community service, and a need for financial support of their education.

This fall, Mr. Park will enter his senior year at UMass Amherst.

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**Dean’s PhD Fellowships Awarded**

The School of Public Health and Health Sciences at the University of Massachusetts Amherst is pleased to announce that Carrie Nobles and Catherine Wickham will receive the Dean’s PhD Fellowship awards. The awards are designed to help support the fellows during their first two years of doctoral studies.

Ms. Nobles will be pursuing her PhD in Epidemiology. Previously, she earned her MPH in Health Policy and Management at UMass Amherst. Her primary area of interest is the investigation of behavioral health interventions and their impact on chronic disease, specifically in how both the application of the intervention and related health outcomes can be most accurately measured.
“Since earning my MPH degree, I have been fortunate to be involved in the application of various research methods from survey design and implementation to querying electronic medical records. I’m excited to further develop my knowledge and skills at UMass Amherst as I work towards a career in public health research,” stated Ms. Nobles.

Ms. Wickham enters the PhD program in Public Health-Nutrition option. She is particularly interested in how social media, computer, and Smartphone technology may be used to engage the public in nutrition education.

“The outstanding reputation of the School of Public Health and Health Sciences at UMass Amherst coupled with the excellent faculty and the broad reaching community programs made my decision to attend very easy,” said Ms. Wickham. “The ability to work and collaborate in this rich multi-disciplinary environment incorporating public health and nutrition issues and resources will make this journey even more dynamic.”

Both fellowship recipients will begin their studies in the School of Public Health and Health Sciences this fall.

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**Umberger presents research in Europe**

Brian Umberger, assistant professor of Kinesiology, recently returned from a two-week trip to England and to Belgium, where he attended a workshop on the Neuromusculoskeletal Physiome Project, and gave presentations at the 13th International Symposium on Computer Simulation in Biomechanics and the 23rd Congress of the International Society of Biomechanics.

In England, he gave a seminar presentation to the Structure and Motion Laboratory at the Royal Veterinary College (University of London), one of the world's premiere comparative biomechanics groups.

At the computer simulation symposium and the biomechanics congress, Umberger reported on recent work on the development of subject-specific computer models of muscle structure and function. At the Structure and Motion Laboratory, he presented a broad overview of his research on the biomechanics and energetics of muscle function in human locomotion.
Elizabeth Bertone-Johnson, associate professor of Epidemiology, is quoted in a new NPR Health Blog examining milk ads suggesting that beleaguered men buy milk for their significant others to "help reduce the symptoms of PMS." Bertone-Johnson comments on the ads and her 2005 research, which is used in part as the scientific basis for the new campaign. Read more....

Hamill to Receive Research Award at the 2011 American Society of Biomechanics Meeting

Joseph Hamill, professor of Kinesiology, will receive the Jim Hay Memorial Award for Research in Sports and Exercise Biomechanics at the American Society of Biomechanics meeting being held August 10-14 in Long Beach, California. The Jim Hay Memorial Award was established in 2004 through the support of the Hay family and additional donors to recognize outstanding career accomplishment and is awarded annually to an investigator who has conducted exemplary research in the area of sports and exercise science biomechanics. The Hay Award selection is based on originality, quality and depth of the research and the relevance of this work to the field of sports and exercise biomechanics. Dr. Hamill will deliver the Jim Hay Memorial lecture at the meeting.

Freyman Awarded NIH Grant to Research Spatial Hearing in Complex Sound Fields

Dr. Richard L. Freyman, Professor in the Department of Communication Disorders at the University of Massachusetts Amherst School of Public Health and Health Sciences, has been awarded a four-year, $1.33 million grant from the NIH National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders. The funding completes a competitive renewal for Freyman’s ongoing research project titled “Spatial Hearing in Complex Sound Fields.” This research is being conducted in collaboration with two co-investigators at the University – Dr. Karen Helfer, also of the Communication Disorders Department, and Dr. Lisa Sanders of the Psychology Department.

In an environment filled with multiple sound sources such as a crowded room, a busy street, or a subway station platform, an individual must distinguish from among numerous auditory signals and competing reflections as sound waves reflect from walls, floors, and other objects. The process can tax any individual’s ability to process sound properly, but can be particularly problematic to people with hearing losses who use assistive hearing technologies such as hearing aids.
The team’s research seeks to understand how listeners combine information from their two ears to process multiple sound sources in complex sound environments. The project’s goals are to characterize the auditory processes and brain physiology that allow individuals to form a single perceptual image from sources and reflections, to discover the auditory mechanisms that determine where a sound image is localized, and to understand how individual, correctly-localized sounds are maintained in the presence of competing sound sources and how this ability is used in conjunction with knowledge of linguistic context to improve listeners’ understanding of speech in complex listening environments.

Findings from this research may aid millions of people with hearing impairment by identifying the auditory mechanisms that allow normal-hearing listeners to succeed in complex sound environments containing multiple sound sources and reflections. Discovery of these mechanisms may ultimately lead to improvements in how hearing aids and cochlear implants process sounds to reduce the difficulties experienced by hearing-impaired individuals.

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**UMass Alum Promoted to Commander in the U.S. Public Health Service**

Dale King, a 2011 alumnus of the MPH in Public Health Practice program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, has been promoted to Commander in the United States Public Health Service (USPHS). Commander King works as an Information Technology Specialist with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), an agency of the Department of Homeland Security.

In his new role, Commander King manages, supports and evaluates mobile device products and services to ensure they meet FEMA’s standards and needs. Mobile devices have become a critical resource for first responders and FEMA field personnel, and help ensure that families and communities impacted by disaster are provided with immediate assistance in the worst of times.

As an active duty uniform officer in the USPHS, Commander King also serves to promote, protect and advance the health and safety of the nation. “I take this oath very seriously,” said Commander King. “And as a senior officer I now have a responsibility to mentor and council junior officers. My educational experience at UMass Amherst made me better prepared and better equipped to contribute to the mission of the Commissioned Corps.”

Commander King has served as a Commissioned Corps Officer in the USPHS for over 6 years. Prior to his position with FEMA, he worked for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) under the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
Freedson Delivers D.B. Dill Historical Lecture at the American College of Sports Medicine’s Annual Meeting

Dr. Patty Freedson, Chair of the Department of Kinesiology, delivered the D.B. Dill Historical Lecture at the American College of Sports Medicine’s 58th Annual Meeting and 2nd World Congress on Exercise is Medicine held in Denver, Colorado, from May 31 - June 4, 2011. Freedson’s lecture, titled “Assessment of Physical Activity and Inactivity Using Wearable Monitors: Past, Present and Future Directions,” detailed the methods and processes of collecting data from wearable activity monitors, providing an overview of their development through potential applications for future research.

In her introduction of Freedson, ACSM president-elect Dr. Barbara Ainsworth remarked, “Dr. Freedson’s work has truly advanced the field of objective assessment of physical activity. She developed one of the first methods to translate body acceleration data into energy expenditure, using treadmill walking and running. Since then, she has conducted many studies to calibrate and validate wearable accelerometer-based monitors in the field. She has drawn numerous students and colleagues to share in the work, through her collaborative nature, sense of humor, and friendly mannerisms. In many ways, her long and productive career exemplifies Dr. Dill’s desire to study human physiology outside of the laboratory, in free-living environments.”

The D.B. Dill Historical Lecture deals with the history of sports medicine and exercise science, and is named after a pioneering scientist who made fundamental contributions to the understanding of the human physiological and metabolic responses to exercise.

“I was honored to be selected to deliver the Dill lecture at the ACSM meeting.” Dr. Freedson commented. “As I prepared this lecture, I was able to step back and reflect on the history of how physical activity behavior has been measured since the time of Vitruvius and Leonardo da Vinci, who developed the first instruments to measure distance and steps walked. I was able to share the research conducted in my laboratory with my graduate students and colleagues and without whom I would never have been able to lead the discovery and new knowledge in this emerging discipline within the field of kinesiology. I am grateful to my students and colleagues for their willingness to share their wisdom, collective vision and creativity, which has had a tremendous impact on the direction of this work.”

Dr. Freedson, also a pioneering scientist in the field of exercise physiology, has made vital contributions to the understanding of how to measure physical activity. Her resume includes over 120 published papers and chapters, broadly focused on the topic of measurement of physical activity and physical fitness. She has been honored by multiple societies, including the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, and the American College of Sports Medicine. She was selected to give the ACSM President’s Lecture in 2001 and the ACSM
Cureton Lecture in 2003, and she received the ACSM Citation Award in 2009. At the University of Massachusetts Amherst, she has been named a distinguished faculty lecturer, and she received an award for outstanding accomplishments in research.

Dr. Freedson’s research has been supported by corporate and foundation groups, the International Life Sciences Institute Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Recently, NIH’s Genes and Environment Initiative funded her, Dr. John Staudenmayer from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics and Dr. Robert Gao from the School of Engineering at the University of Connecticut (and formerly from the School of Engineering at UMass Amherst) to develop a new multi-sensor Integrated Measurement System that uses machine learning techniques to predict energy expenditure and identify activity type. In 2009, she received a prestigious NIH Challenge Grant where her group (including Dr. Staudenmayer, Dr. Barry Braun and PhD students Sarah Kozey-Keadle and Kate Lyden) is seeking to determine if physical activity performed outside of purposeful training explains differences in responsiveness to training.

McCarty Receives Fulbright Administrator Award for Travel to Russia

From left: Dr. Joseph Michael Sopcich; Dr. Donald Staub; Dr. Margaret E. McCarthy; Anthony Kohila, Director Fulbright Program (Moscow Office); Dr. Debra June Tervalta; Dr. Jeffery Allen Thomas

Margaret E. McCarthy, PhD, an adjunct faculty member in Environmental Health Sciences at UMass Amherst, received a Fulbright Administrator Award to travel to Russia in April 2011. The Fulbright Program welcomed Dr. McCarthy, who also serves as the Chair of the Department of Physics at Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) in Springfield, MA, as part of a delegation of senior administrators from five U.S. community colleges.
McCarthy and her fellow community college administrators participated in a joint effort with Russia, which is pursuing collaboration with its U.S. counterparts as part of its reform efforts in both higher and professional education. Initial discussions between American and Russian colleagues in the greater Moscow area focused upon workforce training, relations between educational institutions and future employers, and the benefits of applied bachelor degrees and other professional training programs.

Potential for collaboration spans a variety of fields including public health, nursing, the culinary arts and hospitality sectors, agriculture, engineering and technician training. Distance learning is seen as a first step in pursuing new collaborations, with the possibility of faculty and administrator exchanges, followed by student exchange and a variety of other collaborations.

The Fulbright group also took part, together with representatives from the U.S. consulate in Yekaterinburg, in a roundtable discussion at Ural Federal University in Yekaterinburg. The televised conference focused on topics related to changes in the Russian higher educational system to match the EU standards. The merger of institutes, colleges, and universities closely resembles U.S. changes in the community college system. McCarthy answered questions relating to student feedback into the system and outlined the UMass Amherst alumni organization.

The five Fulbrighters then separated for individual visits to cities in the Ural Mountains region. McCarthy pursued opportunities for collaboration in Kurgan, a city located above Kazakhstan. There she presented a lecture on community colleges in the U.S., and met with local university and college representatives, municipal and regional authorities, and members of private industry, community organizations and the press.

“The people of Kurgan really touched my heart,” McCarthy said. “There is quality in the existing education in Kurgan. The system reminds me of my first years at STCC, an emerging institution. With a bit of fine-tuning and lessons learnt from the community colleges, these amalgamating institutions will too prosper under the re-structuring of higher education in the Russian Federation. I look forward to future collaborations and continuing our relationship with them.”

This is the second year of the Fulbright Community College Administrator Seminar (CCAS) in Russia. Last year’s program has already resulted in a number of cooperative agreements and follow-up visits by Russian hosts to the United States, including one in March 2011, in which the Russian Fulbright director and CCAS hosts met with the U.S. Second Lady, Dr. Jill Biden.

McCarthy has been active in projects interfacing STCC with UMass Amherst and will continue with collaboration efforts with her Russian counterparts. The Fulbright participants plan to meet again for a two-day conference at Miami Dade Community College in February 2012.
McLaughlin Selected to Present at 139th Annual APHA Meeting

Vicki McLaughlin, center, with Dr. Margaret McCarthy, President of the Delta Omega Rho Chapter (left), and Dr. Robert Tuthill, Professor Emeritus of Epidemiology (right), at the Delta Omega Rho Chapter Induction Ceremony

The Delta Omega Honorary Society in Public Health has announced that Vicki McLaughlin, doctoral student in Epidemiology at the UMass Amherst School of Public Health and Health Sciences, has been selected to present at the 139th American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting and Exposition to be held in Washington, DC. Ms. McLaughlin joins the group of 19 students chosen to participate in the 14th Annual Student Poster Session, which will be held from 10:30-11:30 a.m. on Monday, October 31st, in the Washington Convention Center.

Student poster session winners are chosen from a large pool of applicants from local chapters of Delta Omega from CEPH-accredited schools and programs of public health. The poster session is designed to showcase the excellent scholarship and research of students in accredited schools and programs of public health, and is intended to encourage and recognize the public health leaders of tomorrow.

Ms. McLaughlin’s poster is titled “Metabolic Syndrome and Breast Cancer Risk in the Study of Osteoporotic Fractures.” Earlier this spring, her poster entry was chosen as the Delta Omega Rho Chapter winner at UMass Amherst’s School of Public Health and Health Sciences 14th Annual Research Day competition.
Freedson's Lab Presents Findings at International Conference in Scotland

From left: Jeffer Sasaki, John Staudenmayer, Kate Lyden, Dinesh John, Evan Ray, Amanda Libertine, Sarah Kozey-Keadle, Patty Freedson

Patty Freedson, chair of the department of Kinesiology, delivered a keynote address at the 2nd International Conference on Ambulatory Monitoring of Physical Activity and Movement (ICAMPAM) held in Glasgow, Scotland, from May 24-27, 2011. Freedson’s Physical Activity and Health Laboratory group all joined her at the conference, with each member of the team delivering either a poster or oral presentation on topics ranging from novel analytic methods to estimate physical activity to the impact of exercise training and sedentary behavior interventions.

Freedson’s keynote lecture, titled “Using pattern recognition techniques to interpret wearable physical activity monitor output: Laboratory calibration studies,” discussed her lab group’s findings showing that machine learning methods could be used to build models to predict ventilation, energy expenditure and to identify activity type. The presentation described the evolution of these methods and the process used to develop and validate these models in a laboratory setting.

“The use of machine learning methods can have a tremendous impact on the physical activity and health research community,” Freedson commented. “Innovative data processing methods such as these can inform the delivery of evidence-based activity dose recommendations for intervention studies examining the relationship between physical activity exposure and health outcomes.”

In addition to Freedson, the Physical Activity and Health Lab members who delivered presentations at the conference included post-doctoral fellow Dinesh John, doctoral students Jeffer Sasaki, Kate Lyden, and Sarah Kozey-Keadle, master’s student Amanda Libertine, and two members from the Department of Math and Statistics, associate professor John Staudenmayer and graduate student Evan Ray, whose poster, “Novel Analytic Methods to
Estimate Physical Activity from Accelerometer Data: An Opensourced Web-Based Tool” was chosen as a finalist in student poster presentations.

“Having our entire lab group presenting at this meeting was a tremendous opportunity to share our research with investigators from twenty-five countries from around the world,” Freedson said.

The chance to share research findings at the conference had a strong impact on graduate student researchers such as Amanda Libertine. “I am glad I had the opportunity to experience my first international conference in the company of many high caliber researchers from around the world,” said Libertine. “It created a terrific setting for networking and exchanging ideas. After receiving feedback on the data I presented, I am excited to write a manuscript for consideration in a peer-reviewed journal. I am also extremely proud to be a member of the Physical Activity and Health Lab because the other members of our lab group did an excellent job presenting their work on innovative methods to measure physical activity.”

The conference provided an opportunity for those working in ambulatory monitoring of physical activity and movement to gather and share their latest research in the field. Topics included methodological and practical issues, advances in instruments and technology in measuring physical activity, sedentary behavior and energy expenditure, advances in movement analysis outside the laboratory and applications in research and clinical practice.

The full list of presentations can be found in the conference program, available at this link. Specific information on each member of the lab’s presentations, including abstracts, can be found using the following program code listings: Patty Freedson, K3; Dinesh John, 02.3; Kate Lyden, 02.4; Sarah Kozey-Keadle, 06.2; Jeffer Sasaki, P1-02; Amanda Libertine, P1-15, John Staudenmayer, P1-43; and Evan Ray, P2-34.

Foulkes Delivers Keynote Address at UMass Clinical and Translational Science Retreat

Andrea Foulkes, associate professor of Biostatistics, delivered the keynote address at the University of Massachusetts’ 2nd Annual Clinical and Translational Science Research Retreat. The retreat, whose theme was “Creating Science Collaborations across the Commonwealth: Translating the Life Science Moment,” was held on May 20, 2011 at the Hoagland Pincus Conference Center in Shrewsbury, MA.

The conference continued the clinical and translational science movement throughout the University of Massachusetts’ five-campus system. In July 2010, UMass Medical School received a five-year, $20-million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to support the recently established
University of Massachusetts Center for Clinical and Translational Science (UMCCTS), which serves as the University’s home for clinical and translational science and research. The 2nd Annual Clinical and Translational Science Research Retreat highlighted the ongoing work being done by participating institutions and clinical partners to fulfill the Center’s mission of accelerating the process of turning laboratory discoveries into health benefits for individuals and populations, and enhancing the training of a new generation of researchers.

Foulkes delivered her keynote presentation, “Unlocking the Code to Personalized Medicine: Fact, Fiction and Statistics in Genetic Association Studies,” to a crowd of more than 200 university staff and faculty members, including UMass Medical School Chancellor Michael Collins and Michael Malone, Vice Provost for Research and Engagement at UMass Amherst. Her talk, which highlighted the potential of personalized medicine and the importance of trans-disciplinary collaborations in order to make significant strides in translational medicine, resonated with the audience of clinicians and researchers.

Foulkes’ address provided an overview of the state-of-the-science for relating genetic information to clinical outcomes and a demonstration of the challenges faced by both practitioners and scientists. “The task of translating findings involving associations to developing clinically relevant predictive models is a demanding one,” said Foulkes. “The appropriate analytic tools need to be applied to address specific hypotheses. Just as we would not use a stethoscope to look in someone’s ear or an otoscope to listen to someone’s heart, we can only find what our analytic tools are designed to uncover.”

Foulkes also cautioned the audience about the limitations of genome-wide association studies involving a large sample of people. “It is now common to involve as many as 10,000 individuals in a study, which leads to the ‘discovery’ of genetic polymorphisms that have only very small effects on disease, but are nonetheless considered statistically significant.”

Findings can also be skewed in other ways. A high relative risk does not necessarily mean a high absolute risk. Said Foulkes, “Individuals may be twice as likely to get a disease if they have a particular genetic risk factor compared to people who do not have this characteristic, but the actual likelihood of getting the disease may be quite small.”

The presentation set the tone for a day filled with a spirit of scientific inquiry and cooperation. “This honor was especially meaningful to me, as a Biostatistician,” Foulkes said. “It demonstrates the commitment of UMass faculty to be at the forefront of clinical and translational...
sciences by recognizing the centrality of Biostatistics in translational medicine, and the importance of trans-disciplinary collaboration.”

Andrea Foulkes, associate professor of biostatistics, will be the keynote speaker at the UMass Medical School's Clinical & Translational Science Research Retreat. Read more...

Spring 2011 News

Barry Braun, associate professor of kinesiology, has been selected as a UMass Amherst Spotlight Scholar. His profile, "Movement as Medicine," currently appears on the UMass Amherst homepage. Read more...

International Travel Awards Expand Student Research Opportunities

The School of Public Health and Health Sciences International Travel/Research Award is designed to support travel and research costs for international public health and health science research by full time graduate students in the SPHHS. Last year’s recipients received up to $2000 for research and travel conducted between May of 2010 and February of 2011.

SPHHS graduate students Ayush Giri, Rodrigo Gramajo-Rodriguez, Brooke Nichols, and Mairi Thomson received the awards and conducted research on four continents, highlighting the diverse interests and research opportunities available to the School’s graduate students.
Ayush Giri conducted his research project in Kanchanpur, Nepal, serving as a research intern for FHI, formerly known as Family Health International. Giri was actively involved in an integrated bio-behavioral study (IBBS) that attempted to evaluate the prevalence of HIV among wives of migrant workers and behavioral indicators, including migrant-husband's type of job, destination of migration, length of stay, alcohol use, and condom use, among others. He performed Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) duties under the supervision of a fellow officer from FHI, and conducted a secondary analysis of a previous study relating to migrant workers and HIV prevalence. The findings of his M&E trips and secondary analysis were presented to the staff members in FHI, Nepal.

“My time as an intern in FHI Nepal was a great learning experience,” Giri comments. “We as students are normally used to having data sets handed to us. My experience in FHI was a much-needed reminder on how difficult it is to conduct a study (as small as the study may be) as planned on paper. I have a stronger appreciation about the complexities of conducting research in developing countries with extremely inadequate infrastructure and resources. I have similarly realized that it is even more difficult to implement a given public health program in impoverished countries like Nepal, partly due to logistical challenges, acceptance among society, lack of education, social structure and economic disparities.”

Giri notes that FHI staff members were extremely cooperative and willing to accommodate his needs as an intern. “I would recommend FHI as an awesome organization to intern with, especially for those individuals who want to pursue health-related research in an international, resource stricken setting.”

Rodrigo Gramajo-Rodriguez used the award to travel to Guatemala for a project entitled “Chagas Disease and Risk of Cardiac Disease.” The Center for Health Studies (CHS) of the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala (UVG) had previously conducted a cross-sectional study, the primary objective of which was to assess the prevalence of infection of the parasite Trypanosoma cruzi in an endemic rural area of Guatemala. The parasite causes Chagas Disease.

Gramajo-Rodriguez spent the past summer collaborating at the CHS with the Parasitic Research Team to create a dataset and discuss an analytical approach with experts from other institutions such as the Tropical Disease Research (TDR) from the World Health Organization (WHO). He is analyzing this dataset for his Master’s thesis.
After the completion of the analysis and manuscript, Gramajo-Rodriguez plans to discuss the results and recommendations with experts on Chagas Disease at the WHO and present his findings at the Vector Control Program of the Ministry of Health (MOH) in Guatemala. Regional and central disease control coordinators from the MOH will be invited to the presentation to discuss the implications of the study and how these findings can be used by to improve the vector control in Chagas Disease endemic areas.

**Brooke Nichols** used her travel grant partly last summer and again in October in order to perform HIV/AIDS mathematical modeling at the Erasmus Medical Center (MC) in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, as well as to present at the AIDS 2010 conference in Vienna, Austria. At the AIDS 2010 conference, Nichols presented research entitled “Aspects of migrant work status and HIV prevalence in a migrant town in Namibia.” At the Erasmus MC, Nichols worked on a project to model the potential impact of using “test and treat” in combination with pre-exposure prophylaxis -- both are methods that use HIV antiretroviral therapy as prevention. Currently, Nichols is working on this model, and hopes to submit it for publication in the near future.

“It was a great experience to be able to enter into the math modeling field with guidance from the Erasmus MC,” Nichols comments.

A fourth student, **Mairi Thomson**, a recent graduate of the MPH program, conducted her project “Studies of Pediatric Antiretroviral Therapy: Programmatic and Service Delivery Issues” in Cape Town, South Africa. There, she assisted a pediatric infectious disease specialist with recruitment of participants for a cross-sectional study of HIV and infant feeding.

**Kinesiology Students Named Recipients of the American Kinesiology Association Undergraduate Scholar Award**

Trent P. Ainsworth and Shiyi Zan are recipients of the 2011 American Kinesiology Association Undergraduate Scholar Awards. The AKA Scholar Awards recognize, at the national level, the academic and leadership accomplishments of undergraduate students in AKA member departments. This annual award honors a select number of students from member departments, recommended by department faculty,
whose academic and leadership records are distinctive. The award is intended to recognize and promote academic excellence, to further the professional competence and dedication of academically accomplished students and to promote kinesiology and its related fields.

Trent P. Ainsworth, graduating senior, also will be receiving a 21st Century Leaders Award from the University for this year. The award recognizes graduating seniors who have demonstrated exemplary standards of achievement, initiative and social awareness. He is planning to attend medical school next year at the University of New England: College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Shiyi Zan, a recent graduate of the Kinesiology program, is currently working in Boston as a Research Associate in Orthopedic Surgery for Mark Brezinski MD, PhD, and Associate Professor of Harvard Medical School and Director of the Optical Coherence Tomography Lab at Brigham & Women's Hospital. Shiyi is taking a year off and then plans to apply to medical school.

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**Kinesiology doctoral student Ling Xin receives travel grant to attend the Mary Frances Picciano NIH Dietary Supplement Research Practicum**

Kinesiology doctoral student Ling Xin received a travel grant to attend the Mary Frances Picciano NIH Dietary Supplement Research Practicum held at the NIH in June. Practicum participants came from a variety of health-related disciplines such as nutrition, food science, pharmacology and pharmacognosy, kinesiology, medicine, dentistry, nursing, and complementary and alternative medicine.

This practicum provided an intensive examination of dietary supplements used by millions of Americans. It presented a thorough overview and grounding about issues, concepts, unknowns, and controversies about dietary supplements and supplement ingredients. The program also emphasized the importance of scientific investigations to evaluate the efficacy, safety, and value of these products for health promotion, disease prevention and treatment, as well as how to carry out this type of research. Speakers included experts from the NIH, academic institutions, and federal regulatory agencies such as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
Public Health Student Awarded Gilman Scholarship

Jessica He, an undergraduate in the Public Health Sciences program, has been awarded a 2011 Gilman Scholarship. The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship is a congressionally funded program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, which supports non-traditional study abroad. The awards are given based on a student’s financial need and the quality of the essays submitted with the application. The selection committee gives priority to students of diverse backgrounds who choose non-Western study abroad destinations.

Ms. He’s award will support her studies this summer in Chiang Mai, Thailand, where her coursework will include classes in economics and human rights.

“Words cannot describe my excitement when I discovered that I have been chosen to be a 2011 Gilman’s Scholarship recipient,” Ms. He said. “In Thailand, I hope to enjoy the experiences from both the rural and urban perspective. The options and educational opportunities are endless and I’m eager to embark on this journey.”

In the fall, Ms. He will coordinate a number of study abroad information sessions to promote the Gilman Scholarship and encourage international education. She plans on conducting these events in collaboration with the Public Health Club and with the assistance of the International Programs Office, faculty from the Public Health department, and other students who had the pleasure of studying abroad.

Beffa-Negrini Receives Outstanding Online Teacher Award

The School of Public Health and Health Sciences is pleased to announce that Patricia Beffa-Negrini, research associate professor in Nutrition and program coordinator of the online MPH in Nutrition program, has been named the recipient of the SPHHS Outstanding Online Teacher Award for 2010-2011.
KINESIOLOGY DOCTORAL STUDENTS RECEIVE RESEARCH GRANTS

Kate Lyden and Rich Viskochil, doctoral students in the Kinesiology department, have recently been awarded research grants from the American College of Sports Medicine Foundation. Lyden is funded through the ACSM Paffenbarger-Blair Fund for Epidemiologic Research on Physical Activity Initiative for a grant titled “Metabolic response to increased sedentary behavior dose.” Viskochil received his award through the American College of Sports Medicine Foundation Doctoral Student Research Grant Initiative for a grant titled “The effect of exercise serum exposure on pancreatic islet function.”

Lyden’s project will evaluate how sitting time and how we accumulate sitting time (e.g., in prolonged unbroken periods of sitting vs. more sporadic periods of sitting) affect metabolic and cardiovascular risk factors. Sedentary behavior has been shown to be detrimental to health, even for regular exercisers. Lyden expects that findings from this study will shed light into specific ways behavior can be changed to improve health and may help inform future public recommendations on sedentary behavior.

Viskochil’s research examines the production of insulin secretion within the pancreas. In order to properly measure changes in insulin secretion independently of improvements in insulin sensitivity, testing must be done in cell cultures without the presence of muscle tissue. This method has not been developed yet, and Viskochil’s project will test and validate a technique to measure any direct changes on pancreatic cells from exercise. Once that is established, testing can occur to determine the effect exercise training has on insulin secretion by putting the cells in serum taken from people who are exercising. By measuring the effects of insulin secretion in a cell culture, Viskochil hopes to determine whether or not exercise has a direct effect on insulin secretion and identify a new mechanism by which exercise works to prevent diabetes.

Both grant awards recognize the cutting-edge research being carried out by doctoral students within the Kinesiology department.
Sofiya Alhassan, assistant professor in Kinesiology, has been awarded a 4-year, $448,782 K01 grant from the NIH National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. The purpose of the project is to examine the effects of a culturally-appropriate Afro-centric dance program that engages both pre-adolescent African-American girls and their mothers on daughter's physical activity and insulin levels. The study will take place in the greater Springfield area. Findings from this research may provide a viable option for increasing physical activity for African-American girls and their mothers, and thereby help to identify a strategy for reducing obesity and type 2 diabetes mellitus in African-American girls.

Kinesiology Student Receives Gerald F. Scanlon Award

Undergraduate senior Kinesiology major Rebecca Thibault received one of the ten 2010-2011 Gerald F. Scanlon Award for Outstanding Student Employee given by the university. Rebecca has been an invaluable assistant working in the kinesiology department for the past two years.

The Gerald F. Scanlon Award recognizes and honors students who have demonstrated outstanding performance by contributing their time and/or skills to help UMass Amherst achieve its goals and objectives. The award will be presented to her on May 4th in conjunction with the Chancellor's Citation Awards.

Public Health Student Receives Senior Leadership Award

Michael Grant, a senior in the Public Health Sciences program, has been awarded the Senior Leadership Award by the UMass Amherst Alumni Association. The Senior Leadership Award recognizes graduating seniors who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and service to the UMass Amherst community. Award recipients have distinguished themselves through important contributions to student organizations and campus jobs, through academic excellence, and through public and community service.

Grant, who last summer was accepted into the highly competitive Johns Hopkins Basic Science Institute Summer Internship Program and invited to participate in the Bloomberg Diversity Summer Internship Program, will be enrolling in the Harvard School of Public Health this fall. There, he plans to pursue his M.S.
degree in Environmental Health.

The SPHHS is pleased to announce the 14th annual Research Day Award winners: Vicki McLaughlin, Robert Hyldahl, Jennifer Swick, Julianna Eve, A. Tommy Thompson, Amy Meehan and Mary Ann Petti, and Jessica Vickery. Congratulations!

Mellon Mutual Mentoring Grants awarded to SPHHS departments, faculty

The Center for Teaching & Faculty Development (CTFD) has announced the recipients of its 2011-12 Mellon Mutual Mentoring Grants for teams and individuals. The Mutual Mentoring Initiative, funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, encourages faculty to develop robust professional networks that support their growth as researchers, teachers, and leaders in their fields, said Mary Deane Sorcinelli, associate provost for Faculty Development.

“This year's range of faculty-generated mentoring projects is impressive,” said Sorcinelli. “The Mellon grants are meant to support a wide variety of professional networking possibilities, and our faculty has responded with some truly creative, context-specific projects.”

The Mellon Mutual Mentoring Team Grants provide up to $10,000 for one year to support faculty-driven mentoring projects for early-career and/or under-represented faculty based at the departmental, school/college, interdisciplinary, or inter-institutional levels.

This year's Team Grant recipients are:

- Center for Latin American, Caribbean & Latino Studies (CLACLS)
- Department of Chemistry
- Department of Nutrition
- Department of Public Health
- Five Colleges Junior Faculty in History Writing Group
- Fostering & Adoption Science Support Team
- Institute for Computational and Experimental Study of Language
- School of Nursing
- Supporting Faculty of Color through Tenure & Beyond
- Women of Color Faculty Group (Blacklist)
The Mellon Mutual Mentoring Micro Grants provide up to $1,200 for one year to individual pre-tenure faculty. Micro Grants are intended to encourage early-career faculty to identify desirable areas for professional growth, and to develop the necessary mentoring relationships to make such opportunities possible.

This year's Micro Grant recipients are:

• Jim Chambers, Department of Chemistry
• Lorraine Cordeiro (pictured above), Department of Nutrition
• Alexandra Jesse, Department of Psychology
• Barbara Krauthamer, Department of History
• Agnes Lacreuse, Department of Psychology
• Lisa Minter, Department of Veterinary & Animal Sciences
• Eric Poehler, Department of Classics
• Luke Remage-Healey, Department of Psychology
• Senay Solak, Department of Finance & Operations
• Bekki Spencer, Department of Psychology

Since 2006, Mutual Mentoring Grants have encouraged recipients to pursue mentoring as a broad form of professional networking and development. Past grant recipients have used their grant funds to pursue a range of activities, including:

• Connecting with a recognized scholar in their field and bringing him/her to campus for a departmental or interdisciplinary event.
• Visiting a recognized scholar at another campus to learn or discuss a new research or teaching method.
• Hosting on-campus meetings with other faculty on a wide range of subjects, including research, teaching, work-life balance, and tenure preparation.
• Engaging in departmental training to improve scholarly writing, and/or time management skills.

For more information about Mutual Mentoring, please contact the principal investigators of the Mellon grant: Mary Deane Sorcinelli, Associate Provost for Faculty Development; Jung H. Yun, Director of New Faculty Initiatives; or Brian Baldi, Senior Project Manager at 413-545-1225 at the Center for Teaching & Faculty Development.

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**Snook named 2011-2012 Family Research Scholar**

Erin Snook, assistant professor of Kinesiology, was one of six faculty members chosen by The Center for Research on Families to be 2011-12 Family Research Scholars on the basis of their...
promising work in family-related research. Snook’s research includes understanding the antecedents and outcomes of physical activity behavior in populations with neurological diseases, particularly multiple sclerosis (MS). During her CRF Scholar year, Dr. Snook will develop a grant which proposes “Tracking the progression of multiple sclerosis using two novel outcome measures” that are being developed and tested in her current research. Currently available measures of MS symptoms and function have significant limitations; accurate measurement is vital for determining the effectiveness of rehabilitation and treatments and for tracking the progression of MS and needs to be a priority for family research.

The Center for Research on Families’ mission is to increase research on family issues, to build a multidisciplinary community of researchers who are studying issues of relevance to families, to connect national and internationally prominent family researchers with faculty and students, to provide advanced data analytic methods training and consultation, and to disseminate family research findings to scholars, families, practitioners, and policy-makers. Families are a basic unit of human and animal life and research must cross academic disciplines and engage many perspectives to fully understand family functioning.

The Family Research Scholars Program provides selected faculty with the time, technical expertise, peer mentorship, and national expert consultation to prepare a large grant proposal for their research support. CRF is a research center of the College of Natural Sciences and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, and has affiliated faculty from departments across campus.

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**Rogers Receives College Outstanding Teacher Award**

The School of Public Health and Health Sciences is pleased to announce that Christine A. Rogers, assistant professor in Environmental Health Sciences, has been named the recipient of the College Outstanding Teacher Award for 2010-2011.
Kinesiology Graduate Students and Faculty Mentor Receive Travel Awards

Graduate students Jennifer Rivero, Kirsten Granados and faculty mentor Barry Braun from the Kinesiology Department in the School of Public Health and Health Sciences received Travel Awards to attend the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) national meeting from May 31 – June 4, 2011 in Denver, CO. The funding is awarded by The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB)/Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC) Program, which is a component of a federal grant from the MARC Program of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences. In making the award, the FASEB MARC program noted that “The University of Massachusetts was selected on the basis of their programs and record in orienting and assisting superior students toward careers in the fields of biomedical and behavioral research.” Dr. Braun and Ms. Granados will be presenting their research in symposia and free communications at the ACSM conference.

Wiist Examines the Supreme Court's Citizens United Decision

William H. Wiist, clinical professor in the online MPH in Public Health Practice program, has authored “Citizens United, Public Health, and Democracy: The Supreme Court Ruling, Its Implications, and Proposed Action.” The article, which was published online ahead of print on March 18, 2011 in the American Journal of Public Health, examines the ramifications of the Supreme Court’s ruling allowing unlimited contributions to election advocacy advertising and its impact on public health and health policy. The article can be found online at:

http://ajph.aphapublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/AJPH.2010.300043v1

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**SPHHS William F. Field Alumni Scholars for 2011**

The School of Public Health and Health Sciences is pleased to announce the School's recipients of the William F. Field Alumni Scholars for 2011.

Megan Cronin, Communication Disorders  
Elizabeth Lundy, Nutrition  
Kandace Montgomery, Public Health Sciences  
Lindsey O’Regan, Nutrition  
Hannah Stoops, Kinesiology

Congratulations!

For a complete list of recipients of the UMass Amherst Alumni Association's 2011 Scholarships and Awards Recipients, click here.

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**Graduate students in Communication Disorders held their second annual walk to raise money for aphasia awareness and research.**  
[Read more...](#)

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**The outreach activities of the School of Public Health and Health Sciences are spotlighted in the New England Alliance for Public Health Workforce Development's monthly bulletin.**  
[Read more...](#)

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**Pilsner Attends NICHD Vision Workshop on the Environment**

J. Richard Pilsner, assistant professor in Environmental Health Sciences, was recently invited to attend the Scientific Vision Workshop on the Environment for the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child...
Health and Human Development (NICHD). Pilsner was one of only a select few individuals hand-picked to attend this visionary workshop.

Held March 10-11th in Bethesda, MD, the workshop was part of the NICHD’s efforts to develop a scientific vision that sets an ambitious agenda and inspires the Institute, the research community, and its many partners to achieve critical scientific goals and meet pressing public health needs. The NICHD hopes to identify the most promising scientific opportunities of the next decade across the breadth of the Institute’s mission “to ensure that every person is born healthy and wanted, that women suffer no harmful effects from reproductive processes, and that all children have the chance to achieve their full potential for healthy and productive lives, free from disease or disability, and to ensure the health, productivity, independence, and well-being of all people through optimal rehabilitation.”

To create this vision, the NICHD held a series of nine workshops from January through March 2011. Each workshop centered on a different scientific theme, ranging from “Cognition” and “Development” to the “Environment” and “Reproduction,” and involved 40-60 researchers, clinicians, public advocates, and policy experts, representing a range of disciplines.

For Pilsner, the invitation to attend the Vision Workshop on the Environment was a tremendous honor. “It was a remarkable experience to brainstorm future research needs for children’s health with leading investigators representing a broad range of fields, ranging from environmental scientists, economists and public health advocates,” said Pilsner. “It really exemplifies the value of cross-disciplinary research, as every discipline looks at a health issue from a different perspective despite our common goal.”

White papers identifying the key scientific opportunities that emerged from each of the meetings will be written by their respective workshop co-chairs. The synthesis of these opportunities will form the basis of the NICHD Scientific Vision, a document the NICHD plans to publish in a major journal later this year.

The NICHD, established by congress in 1962, conducts and supports research on topics related to the health of children, adults, families, and populations. To learn more about the NICHD Vision process, visit [http://www.nichd.nih.gov/vision/](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/vision/).

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**Debold's Research Highlighted at the Annual Meeting of the Biophysical Society**

Edward Debold, assistant professor in the Department of Kinesiology, presented earlier this month at the Annual Meeting of the Biophysical Society in Baltimore, MD. He presented findings from his research in the Muscle Biophysics Lab at UMass entitled: *Phosphate Enhances Actin Filament Velocity at Low pH in an in*
**vitro motility assay.** These findings have important implications for our understanding of the molecular basis of muscle contraction. They also provide molecular insight into the process of muscular fatigue and the loss of cardiac contractility during a heart attack.

Based on the impact of the findings, Dr. Debold’s presentation was chosen to be highlighted in the prestigious *Motility Subgroup Symposium.* “It was a great honor to be chosen by the Organizing Committee to speak to an assembly of the world’s most preeminent researchers in the areas of muscle biophysics and molecular motors,” said Debold.

The findings will reach an even wider audience as results from this study were recently published in the *American Journal of Physiology.*

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**A new report authored by Nutrition Department Head Nancy Cohen and Nutrition faculty Elena Carbone and Patricia Beffa-Negrini shows that online nutrition courses are as effective as their on-campus counterparts. Read more...**

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**The award-winning SPIN (Strength and Power in Nutrition) program is featured in a new article in *The Boston Globe.* Read more...**

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**Kinesiology Doctoral Program Earns National Top Ranking**

The Kinesiology department has earned a top ranking in two different studies released this fall. The National Research Council (NRC) findings, which provide a range rather than a specific numeric ranking, rated the department as high as first, second, or third in the country. The American Academy of Kinesiology and Physical Education (AAKPE) reaffirmed the Kinesiology department’s place as a top-tier program nationally with a number 5 overall ranking.

The two studies took different approaches in evaluating the programs, but both reached the same conclusion – the Kinesiology program at UMass Amherst is among the best in the nation. The NRC used data collected over a one-year period in 2006 and used two different methodologies to compile its ranked rankings. The AAKPE study, on the other hand, examined data collected over a five-year period from 2005-2009 to determine its overall scores. The new ranking from AAKPE is
consistent with findings from its previous study, conducted using data from 2000-2004, confirming the Kinesiology department’s status as a top-tier program for over a decade.

Patty Freedson, chair of the Department of Kinesiology, attributes the high marks in both studies to several factors, most notably an engaged, research-oriented faculty. “We have a tremendously productive faculty who consistently publish in peer-reviewed journals. The faculty has been very productive in terms of receiving external funds from federal agencies, private foundations and corporations.”

With recent grants from the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the American Heart Association, the American Diabetes Association, the Multiple Sclerosis Consortium, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, it’s clear that the department’s emphasis on grant productivity is paying off. The faculty, Freedson notes, is strong across the board.

“It’s not just one or two faculty members doing this,” says Freedson. “It’s all of them. And that’s what I see as being the major difference between our program and many others.”

The department’s strengths, as noted in both the NRC and AAKPE evaluations, are not limited to research productivity. The program earned strong marks for its student support. “Every single graduate student in our program, from Master’s to PhD students, is funded through either teaching assistantships or research assistantships from grants.”

Marjorie Aelion, dean of the School of Public Health and Health Sciences, notes that the department is strong on levels that cannot be found in the NRC and AAKPE reports. “What the data do not measure are the intangible qualities that make Kinesiology an excellent department. Kinesiology has created an environment of mutual respect and collegiality among its faculty, staff and students. The undergraduate program has grown at a fast rate, and is currently three times larger than any other department in the SPHHS. Kinesiology faculty members are research-active and carry out high-level research and are committed to their undergraduate and graduate students.”

Freedson attributes the growing popularity in the kinesiology major to a number of factors. “It’s an excellent major for students interested in medicine, physical therapy, occupational therapy, or who wish to become chiropractors or physician’s assistants. Anyone interested in a career in the health care fields will benefit. I think another reason, as you see in the media almost every day, is the health benefits of exercise are consistent and evident in every walk of life. There’s a big focus on preventive medicine, of which physical activity and exercise play a large part.”

The Kinesiology department continues to excel nationally despite the rapid growth in the field and subsequent increased investment and development of kinesiology programs across the country. In addition to research and teaching excellence, it also is building partnerships with corporations such as Cybex International. The details are still being finalized, but Freedson
expects that Cybex will provide the department with 22 new pieces of equipment valued at $120,000 in order to upgrade the department’s Body Shop. The Kinesiology department will use this equipment to conduct research and carry out product-testing.

Strong relationships between faculty and alumni helped to forge the deal. “Cybex is a Massachusetts company,” Freedson says, “and Paul Juris (‘86G), the executive director of the Cybex Institute for Exercise Science, which is their research and education arm, is a graduate of our program.”

As Freedson notes, “If we consider that the goal of the department is to improve our ranking, to move from a top-five to a top-three program, then obviously investments in the department need to be made. These evaluations from the NRC and AAKPE show we are one of the top kinesiology programs in the country and that we are extremely competitive with our peer institutions. I’m hopeful that these kinds of objective assessments will result in an increased commitment to our program, not only to help keep us in the upper tier but also to help us continue to rise in the rankings.”

Given the department’s track record and its commitment to research productivity and its students, it’s safe to say that the Department of Kinesiology will remain a top-tier program for a long time to come.

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**Walk a mile for an Oreo? Students from the UMass Amherst Nutrition Association and the Kinesiology Club band together to measure the number of calories burned on popular campus routes. Read more....**

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**New Study Shows Vitamin B Intake Linked to Lower Risk of Premenstrual Syndrome**

A new study conducted by PhD candidate Patricia Chocano-Bedoya and other researchers, including SPHHS faculty members Lisa Chasan-Taber, Alayne Ronnenberg, Carol Bigelow, and Elizabeth Bertone-Johnson, shows that B vitamin intake has been linked to a lower risk of premenstrual syndrome.

The results have been grabbing headlines in Reuters Health and The Globe and Mail.

Andrea Foulkes, associate professor in Biostatistics, has received a five-year, $2 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to develop mathematical and statistical tools to improve prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease and HIV/AIDS. Read more…

MPH Student Awarded Scholarship by Michigan Environmental Health Association

Rebecca Burns, a graduate student enrolled in the online MPH program, was awarded a scholarship by the Michigan Environmental Health Association (MEHA) in March 2011. MEHA is a professional organization focused on promoting environmental health through education. The MEHA Endowment Fund was created in memory of David H. McMullen, Ferris State University professor of Environmental Health. The intent of the Endowment Fund is to broaden the scope of environmental health on a local, state, national, and international level. One of the ways MEHA has chosen to accomplish this goal is to provide educational scholarships to students who are committed to working in the field of Environmental Health.

Ms. Burns serves as the Environmental Health Director for the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency.

SPHHS faculty members to appear at "Women's Health in the 21st Century: What We Need to Know," sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, on Saturday, March 12th. Read more...

Burns Appointed to Journal Editorial Board

Frances A. Burns, assistant professor in the Department of Communication Disorders, has been appointed to the editorial board of the journal Topics in Language Disorders. Topics in Language Disorders is a double-blind peer-reviewed journal that has as its major purposes: (1) bringing together professionals who have a clinical interest in language and its disorders, transcending disciplinary concerns; (2) clarifying the application of theory to practices in the treatment, rehabilitation, and
education of individuals with language disorders; and (3) providing relevant information to practicing professionals dealing with the language disabled.

Previously, Burns co-edited the April/June and July/September, 2010 issues of the journal. Both issues focused on children learning African American English (AAE) as a first language.

A new study by a team of environmental scientists, including Christine Rogers of the School of Public Health and Health Sciences, confirmed that ragweed season lasts longer and ends later than it did just 15 years ago, and the changes are linked to climate change. Read more…

Wiist Co-Authors New Series for the Journal Medical Care

William H. Wiist, clinical professor in the online MPH in Public Health Practice program, has co-authored with Mayer Brezis a series of articles appearing in the current issue of the journal Medical Care. The article “Vulnerability of Health to Market Forces” reviews adverse influences of for-profit enterprises on health care and public health, and examines significance for public policy. Dr. Catarina Kiefe (University of Massachusetts Worcester), the editor of Medical Care – one of the top 10 health administration journals – said that the article by Brezis and Wiist was “so important and so controversial” that she used it to inaugurate a new “Point,” “Counterpoint,” and “Reply” series and web blog in the usually data-driven journal.

Brezis’ and Wiist’s “Vulnerability of Health to Market Forces” “Point” and “Reply” articles are found in Vol. 49 (3): 232-239, & 245-247, in the March 2011 issue of Medical Care. The editor’s introduction of the series and the “Counterpoint” articles are on pp. 231, & 240-244, respectively. The journal can be found online at: http://journals.lww.com/lww-medicalcare/pages/currenttoc.aspx.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) have launched the “Go Viral to Improve Health: IOM-NAE Health Data Collegiate Challenge.” Deadline is April 27. Read more...
Peltier Investigates the Effects of Air Pollutants on Cardiovascular Health

Richard E. Peltier, assistant professor of environmental health sciences, has been awarded nearly $750,000 from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to investigate the effects of air pollutants on cardiovascular health. The funding is part of a Pathway to Independence Award (K99/R00) Peltier received while a postdoctoral fellow at New York University. The second phase, or R00 mechanism, takes effect following Peltier’s acceptance last fall of a tenure track faculty position with the UMass Amherst School of Public Health and Health Sciences.

The objective of the Pathway to Independence initiative is to assist junior investigators in transitioning to a stable independent research position with NIH or other independent research funding. The grant mechanism is highly competitive and the NIH distributes only a limited number of the K99/R00 awards each year.

Peltier, who is trained as an atmospheric chemist, will examine the relative toxicity of different air pollutants and their effects on cardiovascular health. Peltier’s investigation builds on his previous research findings on airborne particulate matter in New York City, which found unusually high concentrations of nickel, a toxic compound known to have deleterious health effects. The results were the first empirical evidence to this problem and eventually helped to lead to a ban in New York City on new residential boilers which use residual fuel oil and lead to high nickel emission levels.

“We regulate based on total amount of particles, or how much total pollution is in a given volume of air,” say Peltier. “But in reality that volume of air can contain different kinds of pollutants, and some are much more toxic than others.”
The relative toxicity of different pollutants, Peltier believes, is caused in part by the aging process. “The atmosphere constantly ages pollution – by the sun and different gases that are in the air – and this changes their chemistry. It changes very quickly. An hour later it’s very different than when it was first emitted. And I think that’s what leads to differences in toxicity.”

No one knows for sure why an aged particle may be more toxic than a “fresh” one. Peltier hypothesizes that it may be due to solubility. “Aged particles are usually more water soluble. When those particles get into our lungs, which are largely a water environment, they react differently than an oily, non-soluble particle. Aged particles – that is to say, water soluble particles – will quickly dissolve in your lungs.”

In order to study this aging effect, Peltier will build a state-of-the-art photochemical aging chamber in the Division of Environmental Health Sciences at UMass. Using a diesel generator, he’ll send exhaust into the aging chamber and change the chemistry of the particles through the use of ultraviolet lamps and the addition of gases commonly found in the atmosphere. His training in applied atmospheric chemistry makes his research approach unique because most investigations do not account for typical environmental processing of airborne contaminants and how this may affect human exposure and subsequent health outcomes.

With a number of promising grant proposals in the pipeline, Peltier plans to continue to expand his lab and build upon his current line of investigation. The results of Peltier’s research could ultimately inform policy decisions and environmental protection regulation that takes into account toxicity, and not just volume, of pollutants.

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**Rogers and students to assist new Springfield community health project**

On January 20, 2011 a coalition of environmental health organizations including the UMass Amherst School of Public Health and Health Sciences announced that Springfield, Massachusetts has been named a Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) community by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The project will use EPA’s 10-step Road Map process as well as community strengths and resources to identify and prioritize local environmental risk data.

The Healthy Environment, Healthy Springfield (HEHS) Coalition is a broad-based partnership of members dedicated to reducing toxic pollutants and environmental risks in their local environment. HEHS lead organizers include Partners for a Healthier Community, the Pioneer Valley Asthma Coalition, Springfield Renaissance School and the Springfield mayor’s office and department of parks, buildings and recreation management, in addition to the School of Public Health and Health Sciences at UMass Amherst.
EPA has granted HEHS nearly $85,000 over two years for gathering information about environmental health risks in the city and identifying which ones are of most concern to residents. In addition to reducing risks of cancer and other serious health problems, broader benefits to the environment and the community can include more green space, reclaiming vacant lots for community gardens, increased recycling and renewable energy use, and greening industry.

Leading the two-part UMass Amherst effort for the CARE grant is Christine Rogers, assistant professor of Environmental Health Sciences. With Michael Muilenberg, a senior research fellow in public health, plus three public health students, she will gather data about a broad array of environmental health risks and contaminants in the Springfield area. These include air pollutants such as sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone and particulates, plus water and soil pollutants such as arsenic. They will also document residential health risks such as lead paint, volatile organic compounds, tobacco smoke and allergens such as mold and cockroaches.

Rogers says, “Working closely with the EPA, we’ll gather data that have already been collected but have not been gathered in one place before, nor presented to the public in an accessible way. We’ll put it in an understandable format and help to present it to the community via neighborhood groups, public health agencies and other community groups. We’ll also be asking members of the Springfield community about their own concerns.”

Rogers and the UMass Amherst public health students also will be mentoring tenth-grade students at the Springfield Renaissance School who are studying environmental health in their biology classes. It’s hoped that mentoring by UMass Amherst public health students will pique the young peoples’ interest in taking leadership roles in environmental health risk assessment and community communication.

“When the community decides where it wants us to focus, that’s where we’ll put our efforts,” Rogers explains. “When it’s clear what priorities the community wants to examine, we’ll assist in applying for another grant to actually take steps to reduce exposure to those environmental health risks and hazards.”
2010-2011 Faculty Research Enhancement Grant Awardees

School of Public Health and Health Sciences
Dean’s Research Enhancement Opportunity 2010

Faculty Research Enhancement Grant Awardees
January 2011
Total funds distributed: $45,497

Breaks from Sitting time to Lower Risk for Cardiometabolic Disease in the Office Workplace
PI: Barry Braun

Innovative rehabilitation program for stroke survivors
PI: Yu-kyong Choe

The effect of weight loss on change in mammographic breast density in postmenopausal women
PI: Katherine Reeves

Culturally responsive behavioral health services focused on resilience and primary prevention
PI: Lisa Wexler

Diabetes, Inflammatory signaling, and Exercise in Endothelial Progenitor Cells
PI: Sarah Witkowski

The next application period for FY11 will be March 15, 2011. All materials should be submitted to the Dean’s office, Room 106 Arnold in hard copy, and by email in one document to Linda Downs-Bembury at downsbem@schoolph.umass.edu with a cc to Dr. Elaine Puleo at epuleo@schoolph.umass.edu.

For more information on the Dean's Research Enhancement Opportunity, click here.

Sofiya Alhassan, assistant professor in the Department of Kinesiology, was recently awarded a two-year $174,972 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation as part of its Active Living Research Program.
UMASS ALUM RECEIVES AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Dr. John Porcari recently received the Award of Excellence from the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation (AACVPR). Dr. Porcari received his Ph.D. in Exercise Science from UMass Amherst in 1989 under the direction of Dr. Patty Freedson, chair of the Department of Kinesiology.

AACVPR is the world’s leading association of health professionals who serve in the field of cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation, and the Award of Excellence is their highest honor. Dr. Porcari was also on the AACVPR Board of Director’s for 9 years, received a Distinguished Service Award in 1995, and was President of the organization in 2003.

In addition to serving at the national level, Dr. Porcari was President of the Wisconsin Society of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation in 1998 and received their Award of Excellence in 2004. He is currently a Professor in the Department of Exercise and Sport Science at the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, where he is the Program Director of the Clinical Exercise Physiology program. Additionally, he is the Executive Director of the La Crosse Exercise and Health Program, the University’s on-campus health and fitness program.

In its year-end roundup of the 10 most popular “active voice” columns published in 2010, the ACSM’s Sports Medicine Bulletin includes three columnists with ties to the Department of Kinesiology: alumnus John Porcari, PhD ’89, associate professor Barry Braun, and postdoctoral fellow Dinesh John. Read more...
Speech-Language Pathologists Provide Teleconferencing Therapy

As the number of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) continues to grow and the shortage of speech-language pathologists and related specialists gets more acute, particularly in rural areas, researchers at the University of Massachusetts Amherst are using live, secure video teleconferencing over the Internet to provide remedial services and help more schools and families connect with professionals.

“The lack of trained specialists is a major obstacle when trying to provide services to individuals with disabilities. Rural areas are the hardest hit,” says Michelle Boisvert, a doctoral candidate in the speech-language pathology concentration at UMass Amherst. With Professor Mary Andrianopoulos, she is now conducting a pilot and feasibility study, bringing speech and language services to a grade-school boy with an Autism Spectrum Disorder by live video link between the UMass Amherst campus and his Sunderland classroom.

Boisvert, with five other doctoral students, is funded by an $800,000 research-to-practice training grant from the U.S. Department of Education to Andrianopoulos and colleagues in UMass Amherst’s Communication Disorders department. Boisvert is a sought-after speaker on telepractice at workshops and task forces for those who wish to learn about using the new tools.

Telepractice, sometimes known as telemedicine, has the potential to significantly improve access to services for children with special needs, including children on the autism spectrum, says Boisvert. In November, 2010, she discussed her review of telepractice studies at the American Speech Hearing Association meeting in Philadelphia. Most of the studies provided services using inexpensive, commonly available technology such as Skype and iChat with a laptop rather than a dedicated studio.

Her review appeared in the journal Developmental Neurorehabilitation. It suggests that telepractice offers a promising approach to helping families obtain professional services while keeping cost and travel time down. One important finding, she says, is that “students achieve comparable progress through telepractice as they do when the session is conducted face-to-face.”
Another of her findings is that therapists must frequently assess progress to make sure that the quality of telepractice is equivalent to that of appropriate face-to-face therapy. “But once the clinician, child and family have established a personal connection, ongoing telepractice therapy sessions allow for more consistent services and evidence-based practice as well as a reduction in travel time for all those involved,” she says.

Parents can also gain from the new tool because many teleconferencing setups allow more than two secure video links per session, allowing them to observe their child’s speech therapy. “This allows parents to be more aware of what is going on in their child's speech and language therapy session,” Boisvert adds.

Telepractice has been used for some time to connect doctors with homebound patients recovering from chronic conditions such as heart disease and stroke, and for consultations. Boisvert says that as high-speed Internet access comes to more rural areas and as new technologies with more efficient delivery models emerge, introducing telepractice into educational settings is a next logical step.

In her recent review, Boisvert looked at eight published studies that reported on delivery of telepractice services to children with ASD. Services included behavioral and diagnostic assessments, educational consulting, behavioral interventions, coaching and training with up to 46 participants. Boisvert’s current research is designed to show that telepractice works when properly administered in a reliable and valid manner.

At present, the speech language pathologist says, the most difficult obstacles to this new approach are related to technical issues such as bandwidth access and firewalls. However, with a strong on-site team that includes IT support, connections are being made. Boisvert notes, “The number of children in the United States diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder has increased and is now reported to be as high as three to six cases per 1,000 children. It’s important that we provide services for all who need them. Early intervention using evidence-based practices is an effective vehicle for improving long-term outcomes for these children.”
Associate Professor of Epidemiology Susan Sturgeon has recently been awarded a two-year, $165,000 grant from the American Institute for Cancer Research to conduct a study investigating the effect of pomegranate juice intake on the blood level of hormones known to be involved in the development of breast cancer. Results of experimental studies have shown that pomegranate juice reduces estrogen synthesis, as well as inhibiting cell proliferation, suggesting that pomegranate juice intake might reduce breast cancer risk. In the study, Sturgeon will work with Alayne Ronnenberg, assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition, and Elaine Puleo, associate dean for research for the School of Public Health and Health Sciences, to evaluate differences in hormone levels in blood before and after a three-week intervention period. Differences in hormone biomarker levels in nipple aspirate fluid will also be explored. The study is important because pomegranate juice has often been touted as having beneficial health effects, despite limited information on such effects in humans.

The funding from American Institute for Cancer Research follows on the heels of two other recent grants Sturgeon has received to investigate links to breast cancer. In August, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded Sturgeon a two-year, nearly $200,000 grant. Sturgeon will collaborate with assistant professor Katherine Reeves and research associate professor Carol Bigelow to examine the possible link between light at night and an increased risk of breast cancer. One theory suggests that the hormone melatonin, which is produced at higher levels during periods of darkness, is somehow involved in the link. Results from a limited number of observational cohort studies that have examined the link between lower urinary levels of melatonin and increased risk of breast cancer have been inconsistent, prompting the need for additional studies. A nested case-control study will be conducted in which the urine of 284 invasive breast cancer cases and 568 control subjects in the Women’s Health Initiative Observational Study will be examined for levels of melatonin. This study is integral in clarifying the role of melatonin with relation to breast cancer, and the development of new strategies to prevent the cancer.

In September, Baystate Rays of Hope – a division of Baystate Health Foundation Inc. – awarded Sturgeon funding to examine levels of patterns of methylation in white blood cell (WBC) DNA and breast epithelial cell DNA taken from the same individual. Methylation is a type of epigenetic change, where a non-sequence modification of DNA is linked to the overall changes in gene expression. There is a likely link between methylation patterns in normal-appearing breast tissue and an increased risk of breast cancer. WBC DNA may carry epigenetic information that can be used to study an individual’s risk of cancer. The study will evaluate the extent of the correlation of methylation patterns in certain genes from these two types of tissues. The study results could be beneficial to the identification of individuals at high-risk of breast cancer, as WBC DNA is more easily accessible.
**Kinesiology Club Helps Soles4Souls**

The Kinesiology Club organized a 5-kilometer race on Oct. 24, 2010, to benefit Soles4Souls, a nonprofit organization that collects any and every kind of shoe and distributes them to people in need around the world. Participants were given the option to walk, run, bike, skateboard, rollerblade, or even ride scooters around the race course.

The race began at noon at Totman Gym, with the racers following a course that wound throughout the campus. Chris Copeland, a UMass sophomore, finished in first place among the men with a time of 20:07, while Raquel Manley, a UMass freshman, finished first among the women with a time of 21:15.

The Kinesiology Club received over 160 pairs of shoes in donations. Sponsors including the Northampton Running Co., Trader Joe's, Cinemark, Arizona Pizza, and the Newman Center Café helped support the club’s effort.

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**Nutrition Faculty Updates Classic Diet Text**

Reed Mangels, lecturer in the Department of Nutrition, along with co-authors Virginia Messina and Mark Messina, have completed a new edition of the classic text *The Dietitian’s Guide to Vegetarian Diets: Issues and Applications, Third Edition*. The *Third Edition*, recently released by Jones and Bartlett Learning, provides the most up-to-date information on vegetarian diets.

Written for dietitians and other health care professionals, the *Third Edition* includes case-studies, sample menus, and counseling points to help readers apply material to the real world. The text addresses diets throughout the lifecycle with chapters devoted to pregnancy and lactation, infants, children, adolescents, and the elderly, and highlights the benefits of using vegetarian diets in the treatment of hyperlipidemia, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.

“Dietitians and other health professionals who work in the area of vegetarian nutrition have to be knowledgeable about many topics. Not only do they need to provide vegetarians or people..."
interested in vegetarian diets with current information about key nutrients, but they also need to know about life-cycle issues, prevention and treatment of chronic diseases, and vegetarian meal planning,” says author Reed Mangels. “We wrote this book in order to give practitioners a comprehensive resource that includes the latest research on vegetarianism as well as practical recommendations.”

Full of vital information on vegetarian nutritional needs and healthier, more satisfying diets, the Third Edition can be used as an aid for counseling vegetarian clients and those interested in becoming vegetarians, or serve as a textbook for students who have completed introductory coursework in nutrition.

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**Neacsm Keynote Lecture Named in Clarkson’s Honor**

The New England Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine (NEACSM) has named one of its keynote lectures in honor of Priscilla Clarkson, Dean of the Commonwealth Honor's College. On Thursday, November 11th, the inaugural Clarkson Keynote Lecture will be given by Dr. Rena Wing, Professor of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, Alpert School of Medicine at Brown University; Director, Weight Control and Diabetes Research Center, The Miriam Hospital, Providence, RI. Her lecture is titled “Strategies to Improve the Long-Term Maintenance of Weight Loss.”

Dean Clarkson has been an active member in the New England Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine, having served as its president and a member of the executive committee. She has delivered several lectures at the annual regional fall meeting and her students are regular presenters at this conference. When she was president of the national American College of Sports Medicine organization she successfully advocated for increased support and visibility for the regional chapter activities.

The School of Public Health and Health Sciences and the Department of Kinesiology are proud sponsors of the Clarkson Keynote Lecture.

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**Kinesiology Student Named to ESPN Academic All-District Team**
Kinesiology student Stuart Amick has been named to the ESPN Academic All-District Second Team as announced by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). A senior midfielder for the UMass men's soccer team, Amick has a 3.78 GPA in kinesiology. He has started 14 games this season, scoring three goals. For his career, he has played in 77 matches with 9 goals and 4 assists.

A native of West Lafayette, Indiana, Amick has been a four-year starter for the Minutemen. In 2009 he was named to the Atlantic 10 Academic All-Conference team. As a freshman in 2007, he was named to the A-10 All-Rookie Team, the Soccer America All-Freshman Second Team and earned a spot on the U.S. Under-20 National Team.

During his career, UMass has won an Atlantic 10 Tournament title, the A-10 regular season title, made two appearances in the NCAA Tournament, and reached the NCAA College Cup.

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**Nutrition Alumna’s Diet Book Offers Treatment Plan for Polycystic Ovary Syndrome**

Hillary Wright ’84, a Nutrition alumna from the School of Public Health and Health Sciences, has written *The PCOS Diet Plan: A Natural Approach to Health for Women with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome*. The book will be released on November 9, 2010, by Ten Speed Press, a division of Random House.

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is, according to the Mayo Clinic, the most common hormonal disorder among women of reproductive age, affecting 5 to 10 percent of all women. One of the leading causes of infertility, PCOS is a hormonal disorder that involves multiple organ systems within the body, and it is believed to be fundamentally caused...
by insensitivity to the hormone insulin. The disorder has been linked to such serious health issues as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and certain forms of cancer.

*The PCOS Diet Plan* delivers a nutrition-based approach that advocates diet and exercise to manage this lifelong disorder. Although there is no cure, proper management can often eliminate most, if not all, symptoms. *The PCOS Diet Plan* offers an easy-to-follow program designed to help women navigate the stressful and sometimes difficult challenges that accompany major lifestyle changes. The book further explores the underlying causes and symptoms of PCOS, and offers an informative guide to managing the disorder.

Ms. Wright, M.Ed, RD, LDN, is a registered and licensed dietitian and a member of the American Dietetic Association. She is the director of nutritional counseling at the Domar Center for Mind/Body Health at Boston IVF, and a nutritionist at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. An accomplished freelance writer, Ms. Wright has contributed to *The Boston Globe*, *Fertility Today Magazine*, *Environmental Nutrition*, and *Bodimojo.com*. *The PCOS Diet Plan* is her first full-length book.

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**Communication Disorders Faculty Featured Speakers at Apraxia of Speech Conference**

Shelley Velleman and Elena Zaretsky of the Department of Communication Disorders were featured speakers at the first annual conference of the Apraxia Resource Center of Connecticut on Friday, October 22nd, in New Haven, CT. Velleman’s keynote address, entitled “Treatment Across the Ages,” highlighted the key features of Childhood Apraxia of Speech and how these features evolve over the course of development from toddlerhood to young adulthood, with treatment suggestions tailored to these changing symptoms and to the communication needs of children of different ages. Zaretsky’s presentation, “Supporting Reading Development in Children with Apraxia of Speech,” focused on the challenges of providing reading tutelage to children with this speech disorder, as well as presenting information about different reading programs that may be appropriate for increased efficacy in reading acquisition.

Some 150 speech-language pathologists and parents were in attendance. Proceeds from the conference will be used to support the Apraxia Resource Center of Connecticut, a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to providing education, support and resources to families affected by Childhood Apraxia of Speech (CAS), as well as to the professionals who treat them. The
proceeds will also help to provide speech-language therapy scholarships for children with CAS and whose insurance does not cover the intensive intervention required for this challenging speech disorder.

**Council Seeks to Integrate Undergraduate Public Health Learning Outcomes**

Dan Gerber, associate dean for academic affairs and director of the undergraduate public health sciences program in the School of Public Health and Health Sciences, recently attended the Undergraduate Public Health Learning Outcomes Development Project (UGPH) Integration Meeting held on October 5-6 in Tampa, FL. The goals of the project are to define what every undergraduate should know and be able to do to promote population health both locally and globally and to outline other essential student attributes and characteristics for improving health and eliminating health disparities in populations around the world.

The group used the Association of American Colleges & University’s Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) framework to guide the development of the project. Three workgroups were assigned to identify and specify learning outcomes for one of three domain areas in undergraduate public health education. Gerber, co-chair of the “Intellectual and Practical Skills” domain, joined the integration council in reviewing learning outcomes for all domains plus a fourth domain, which focuses on methods and the best instructional and learning practices, in order to integrate them into a more complete model.

The first version of the complete UGPH model will be discussed at a Town Hall Meeting held at the ASPH Annual Meeting on Saturday, November 7 from 3:30-5 p.m. In addition, the UGPH project will be presented as part of the Academic Public Health Caucus on Tuesday, November 9 from 12:30-2 p.m.

For more information about the Undergraduate Public Health Learning Outcomes Development Project, contact Ms. Christine Plepys at cplepys@asph.org or visit the project website.

**Calabrese honored for international contributions**

Edward Calabrese, professor of toxicology in the Department of Public Health, is being honored by the International CCN Society during its annual workshop Oct. 20-24 in Newcastle, Northern Ireland.

In recognition of his scientific achievements, Calabrese is being presented the ICCNS-Springer
A member of the faculty since 1976, Calabrese is the foremost expert in the world on a chemical dose-response phenomenon known as hormesis, through which doses of some chemicals are stimulative or promote growth but higher doses are toxic or inhibit growth. His research has led to important discoveries that indicate that the most fundamental dose response in toxicology and pharmacology is the hormetic-biphasic dose response relationship. These observations are leading to a major transformation in improving drug discovery, development and in the efficiency of the clinical trial, as well as the scientific foundations for risk assessment and environmental regulation for radiation and chemicals.

Calabrese has researched extensively in the area of host factors affecting susceptibility to pollutants, and is the author of more than 600 papers in scholarly journals and 10 books, including "Principles of Animal Extrapolation," "Nutrition and Environmental Health," Vols. I and II, "Ecogenetics," "Multiple Chemical Interactions," "Air Toxics and Risk Assessment" and "Biological Effects of Low Level Exposures to Chemicals and Radiation." Along with Mark Mattson, he is a co-editor of the recently published book "Hormesis: A Revolution in Biology, Toxicology and Medicine."

Calabrese has been a member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and NATO Countries Safe Drinking Water committees and served on the Board of Scientific Counselors for the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. He also serves as chairman of the Biological Effects of Low Level Exposures and directs the campus-based Northeast Regional Environmental Public Health Center.

He was awarded the 2009 Marie Curie Prize for his body of work on hormesis.
physical activity behavior in populations with neurological diseases, particularly multiple sclerosis (MS). During her CRF Scholar year, Snook will develop a grant which proposes "Tracking the progression of multiple sclerosis using two novel outcome measures" that are being developed and tested in her current research. Currently available measures of MS symptoms and function have significant limitations; accurate measurement is vital for determining the effectiveness of rehabilitation and treatments and for tracking the progression of MS and needs to be a priority for family research.

Communication Disorders faculty, students present research in Athens

Several faculty and students from the Communication Disorders Department were presenters at the 28th World Congress of the International Association of Logopedics and Phoniatrics held in Athens on August 22-26, 2010.

Faculty members Mary Andrianopoulos, Shelley Velleman and Elena Zaretsky, along with the PhD candidates Marcil Boucher and Alyssa Currier, presented their recent research findings to the association, one of the oldest professional organizations in the field of communication disorders.

Velleman and Currier presented their work on "Phonological profiles and outcomes of Duplication 7q1123 Syndrome."

Velleman was also the presenter for "Early phonology in Williams versus Duplication 7q1123 Syndrome," an honors thesis by undergraduate Kayleigh O'Connor.

Andrianopoulos and Zaretsky presented the new comparative data on narrative skills of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Zaretsky presented the findings from her study on early sensitivity to sublexical structure in children's invented spelling.

Boucher did presentations on acoustical characteristics of speech in children with ASD and rating procedures for judging voice quality of individuals with ASD.

Photo: Marcil Boucher, Elena Zaretsky, Alyssa Currier, Shelley Velleman and Mary Andrianopoulos

Nutrition Faculty Speak at Western Massachusetts Hunger Summit
Lorraine Cordeiro and Alayne Ronnenberg, assistant professors in the Department of Nutrition, spoke at the “Western Massachusetts Hunger Summit 2010: The Safety Net and Beyond” on September 29 in Springfield, MA. They joined Katharine Millonzi, Sustainable Food Program Manager for the Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives at Williams College, as part of a panel entitled “Collaboration with Higher Education Institutions.”

The event provided a venue for networking among an audience that included local farmers, staff from various soup kitchens and shelters, church leaders, UMass students, policy makers, and representatives from campus kitchen initiatives. Dr. Cordeiro's talk focused on the Greater Springfield and UMass Amherst partnership, which builds upon strengths of the local community and engages faculty, staff and students at the university and within the five college consortium.

She spoke about increasing efforts to provide students from low-income families with access to higher education. Dr. Ronnenberg spoke about the importance of biomarker assessment in community settings to highlight the nutritional status of underserved communities. Cordeiro and Ronnenberg also stressed the importance of applied research that had direct benefits to the community. Ms. Millonzi presented on the sustainable food systems approach currently used at Williams College.

The Western Massachusetts Hunger Summit came at the conclusion of “Hunger Action Month,” a national campaign to help end hunger. The Summit supported the work of those already engaged in the fight against hunger and encouraged everyone to take action to end hunger in their communities. The Summit featured workshops on topics ranging from how to run a better nonprofit to how to build strong local food systems for everyone. Panelists for each workshop included local, state, and national experts on hunger and food insecurity. Round table discussions, featuring members of the emergency food network in Western Massachusetts, were also held as part of the Summit.

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**UMass Amherst Kinesiology Club Raises Money for Diabetes**

On Saturday, September 26th, 17 students from the UMASS Amherst Kinesiology Club took part in the "Step Out for Diabetes" event to raise money for the American Diabetes Association at Look Park in Northampton.

The team of students walked as a team called "UMASS Amherst School of Public Health and Health Sciences" and raised over $500 for the event as well as helping with organization. Four of the UMASS Amherst athletic teams were also on hand to lend support and fire up the crowd.
The "Step Out for diabetes" events are held all over the country and are organized around the theme that "Every step you take and every dollar you raise helps the American Diabetes Association provide education programs in our community, protect the rights of people with diabetes and fund critical research for a cure."

Associate Professor Barry Braun PhD, the faculty advisor for the Kinesiology Club, spoke at the event about the direct benefit a 3 year award from the American Diabetes Association had to support his research program focused on optimizing the use of exercise to prevent/manage Type 2 diabetes. Research Professor Stuart Chipkin, MD, was also on hand in his dual roles as faculty member in Kinesiology and Endocrinologist at Valley Medical Center in Amherst.

Congratulations to the Kinesiology Club for their hard work and dedication in helping to make "Step Out for Diabetes" an enormous success.

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**UMass Amherst Alumna Named Section Director in Texas Department of State Health Services**

Lauri Kalanges, MD MPH, a 2004 alumna of the MPH in Public Health Practice program in the School of Public Health and Health Sciences at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, has been selected for the position of Director of the Health Promotions and Chronic Disease Prevention Section (HPCDPS) by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Dr. Kalanges had been serving as the Acting Director for HPCDPS, and will also continue to serve as the interim Medical Director for the Section. Dr. Kalanges has more than twenty years of clinical experience in all levels of preventive healthcare through an initial career in plastic and reconstructive surgery and, for the past eight years, a secondary career in public health.

Her experience ranges from private clinical practice and academics with a broad research background to both the private and public sectors in public health. In addition, she has served in medical executive positions with several health organizations. From 2007 to 2009, she was the Medical Director for the Community Health Services Section at the Texas Department of State Health Services.

The University of Massachusetts Amherst congratulates Dr. Kalanges on her new position.

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**Frances A. Burns co-edits Topics in Language Disorders**
Frances A. Burns, assistant professor in the Department of Communication Disorders, has co-edited the April/June and July/September, 2010 issues of *Topics in Language Disorders*, Vol. 30, Issues 2&3. Both issues focus on children learning African American English (AAE) as a first language.

In the first issue titled *Research with Implications for Assessing the Language of African American English Speakers*, contributing authors suggest new pathways for understanding how young AAE speakers who are suspected of having a language disorder can be assessed with the least amount of linguistic bias.

The articles in the second issue, *Language Intervention and AAE Speaking Children: Issues and Preliminary Data*, address factors that should be taken into consideration when providing speech and language-based treatment for young AAE speakers, and provide some guidelines for choosing appropriate intervention targets, as well as guidelines for reading instruction.

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**MA Dept. of Health Internship Program, Closing Session**

Each year, several Master’s students in the School of Public Health and Health Sciences (SPHHS) apply and are selected to serve as interns in local health departments through the MA Department of Public Health Internship Program. This year, three SPHHS students participated in the closing session held on Aug 11, 2010 at the Hinton State Laboratory Institute in Boston.

Lori Peterson, MS/EPI candidate, provided an oral presentation on "Mold: Intervention, Education, and Accountability, Creating a Public Health Fact Sheet" to an audience of about 50 people including other student interns, local health department personnel and MDPH staff. Lori conducted her practicum at the Greenfield Health Department under the supervision of Michael MacLeod, health inspector. Besides developing the mold materials, she also did a series of presentations at local camp sites and summer lunch programs discussing summer safety issues.

Jessica Crowe, MPH/HPM candidate, completed her practicum at the Barnstable County Department of Health & Environment under the supervision of Susan Rask, Environmental Health Specialist. She developed a poster discussing her project "Targeting Sun Exposure among Adolescents in Cape Cod, MA" which included the design, implementation and evaluation of the project.

Jose Amadeo Ferrolino, MS/EPI candidate, worked with Jeanne Galloway, Director of Public Health at the West Springfield Health Department. Jose also developed a poster describing his analysis of food safety inspections of local food establishments over a 3 year period.
All three students were commended for their exemplary work and presentations, and provided insightful discussions of the value of having hands-on experience with the local health departments. The SPHHS is grateful to the MDPH for providing its students with these practicum opportunities.

Patty Freedson interviewed by Health Radio for their Sports Medicine and Fitness Show. Click here for On Demand and Podcasts of the interview from August 3, 2010