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For Immediate Release

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UHS staff selected for new Five College initiative

AMHERST, Mass. – Two staff members from University Health Services (UHS) at UMass Amherst have been chosen to participate in a new Five College project aimed at strengthening communication and understanding among diverse groups.

Health educator Tom Schiff, Ed.D., and psychologist Julia Moss, Ph.D., M.S.W., are among 60 faculty and staff from the Five Colleges selected for the program. Schiff and Moss recently completed a three-day intensive training, which focused on learning to facilitate dialogues on topics related to diversity and social justice.

The second phase of the program takes place Oct. 27, when each campus will simultaneously conduct a "Day of Dialogue." At UMass, Schiff and Moss will work together to lead a series of two-hour sessions for faculty and staff, exploring issues including:

- race, ethnicity and culture;
- rank, status and class;
- religion and politics;
- community, respect and diversity;
- sexual orientation and gender expression; and
- gender dynamics in the workplace.

Outcomes from the initiative will be analyzed, with the potential for expanded facilitator trainings and additional dialogues on emerging campus issues. Campus leaders say the initiative will help reach more community members and offer skills needed for living, learning and working in an increasingly diverse 21st century.

As a health educator, Schiff's work focuses on men's health, violence prevention, outreach to international students and those of color, and tobacco education. He is also an adjunct faculty member in the Social Justice Education program. Moss joined UHS' Mental Health Services staff in 2009; her clinical interests include women's mental health, group therapy, behavioral medicine and GLBTQ issues.

UHS, UMass Amherst's fully accredited health center, serves students, faculty and staff. The center offers comprehensive care, referral and education services, with a special focus on the health needs and concerns of students. For more information, visit www.umass.edu/uhs, or call (413) 577-5000.