

Events & Dates to Note



The Annual Colloquium on Research in Mathematics and Science Education will be held on Thursday, April 5, 2007.

For more information contact:
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GSE Comprehensive Exam Schedule 2007:
February 16 - 23, 2007 &
July 13 - 20, 2007

Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) Dates:
March 3, 2007
May 12, 2007
July 14, 2007

For more information, preparation materials, and registration, visit
www.mtel.nesinc.com

IMPORTANT LINKS

Educational Programs Online:
<http://gse.uml.edu/gse>

Continuing Studies:
<http://continuinged.uml.edu>

The Graduate School of Education Scholarships:
<http://gse.uml.edu/gse>
information available in the spring

Message from the Dean

It is a pleasure to extend warm greetings to you, the 402 new and returning students of The Graduate School of Education. You are a select group of highly qualified and very motivated individuals. You bring strong commitment and represent great promise for the future of education. On behalf of the university administration and faculty, we are honored that you have chosen to pursue your graduate education program at UMass Lowell.

The current student composition of our School of Education includes: 115 enrolled in the masters degree in curriculum and instruction for initial teacher preparation, 128 in the masters and C.A.G.S. degree programs for experienced teachers, and 159 in the three doctoral programs.

It is also a pleasure to welcome two new faculty to campus. Dr. Mark Fenster is coming from Valdosta State University in Georgia. He earned a bachelor's degree at State University of New York at Stony Brook and master's and doctoral degrees at Northwestern University. He will teach Data Analysis and Research Methods, two required doctoral courses, this fall. Dr. Jill Lohmeier will join our faculty full time in January after teaching Survey Research Methods here this fall and completing responsibilities at the University of Kansas, Institute for Educational Research and Public Service. She earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Kansas and master's and doctoral degrees at UMass Amherst. The expertise which Professors Fenster and Lohmeier bring to the faculty will strengthen our course offerings and research capabilities in research methods, data analysis, and program evaluation.

The unifying theme of our graduate education programs is "Education for Transformation." I look forward to the opportunities for change--presented by new students, new faculty, and new initiatives--that continually evolve, challenge, and transform our college as we strive for educational excellence. I extend best wishes for a successful and productive school year.

Donald E. Pierson, Dean

Did you know?

The Library subsidizes the purchase of Theses/Dissertations from Proquest for Graduate Students - Three (3) Theses/Dissertations during their student years at no charge. Additional items can be purchased for \$35 (2006 price) each through the InterLibrary Loan Department.

Here's how to obtain a thesis or dissertation from another institution:

- Search ProQuest [Digital Dissertations](#) for any item from 1981 to present. An order number will be included in the record. For dissertations from 1997 to present, retrieve the first 24 pages free.
- Search [WorldCat](#) via [FirstSearch](#) to identify older items
- Fill out an [InterLibrary Loan Request Form](#) (book form) for each item. Please include the ProQuest Digital Dissertation order number in the ILL request.
- Items found on [WorldCat](#) can sometimes be borrowed, but only if UML does not have a copy.
- Order the Thesis/Dissertation from ProQuest. You may choose microfilm, paper, or (after 1997), electronic copy.

Mark Fenster, Ph.D., Knows the Score

By Mari Beth Bennett, Language Arts and Literacy Doctoral Student



Mark Fenster doesn't need his fingers to count on—his mind acts automatically toting up averages, percentiles and rates on an ongoing basis. Numbers are his friends. In this pumpkin and football season, Dr. Fenster enjoys watching the college league games, and this interest led him to a research topic. Wondering whether college athletes' grades are impacted by the amount of time spent on the gridiron and off studies that a winning season creates, Mark quantified the variables and arrived at some surprising results. I won't give away the conclusions; you'll have to catch him yourself for that.

I wondered what had drawn him to the field of Statistics and whether he had been an ace mathematics student early in life. Describing P.S. 209 in the Queens borough of New York City, Mark confessed that fourth grade science taught him (almost) all that he needed to know about research methodology. Some hunch or inductive insight might lead a researcher into hypothesizing that two phenomena are (or are not) related. (Think about the impact of a lengthy football season on athletes' GPA.) The researcher has his notion of an introduction to the topic, conducts investigative research on the topic, then begins to formalize what types of credible evidence reasonable people would accept as proof (or disproof) of a relationship. The research process has not changed.

Give Mark a situation; he will turn it into variables, constants, and rates as handily as Drew Bledsoe can snap a pass. Lowell is a new situation for him, and he likes exploring the many restaurant options available within a short walk from North campus. Can anyone suggest a good jogging path for him to try? Currently, he's running along the river front.



Have you met new faculty member Jill Lohmeier, Ph.D.?

Interview by Cynthia Jacobs, Leadership in Schooling Doctoral Student

It was the doctoral program in Cognitive Psychology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst that drew Dr. Lohmeier east from her hometown of Stilwell, Kansas. Stilwell was a rural community, but Kansas City's urban sprawl has changed that in recent years. Dr. Lohmeier still travels frequently to Kansas to visit family and friends. One recent weekend in October, she didn't need to travel quite so far. She met her mom in Chicago, to run – *with her mom* - the city's 26.2 mile marathon. (As if we weren't impressed enough already when we learned that our survey methods professor had spent a recent weekend running a relay through the hills of New Hampshire.) Dr. Lohmeier has two daughters of her own, and one, at least, likes to run, but, she says, "most five year olds do, so it's a little early to tell" whether there might soon be three generations of women in this family running marathons together. For now, Dr. Lohmeier is enjoying Lowell's historic attractions with her eldest daughter, an 8-year-old with an interest in the mill girls.

Dr. Lohmeier's research interests still lie in cognitive psychology with educational applications. She hopes to soon continue studying how adolescents' understanding of probability might affect their risk-taking. Driving too fast and learning mathematics might seem to be two very different research interests, but Dr. Lohmeier suspects there may be a connection. Could it be that adolescents' understanding of probability is connected to their (mis)understanding of the risks involved in behaviors like substance use?

Asked what she sees as doctoral students' biggest misconception about the research process, Dr. Lohmeier doesn't hesitate: how *long* it takes. Every step of the way – all of what's required prior to collecting data, the data collection process itself, analysis, and writing – each stage seems to require at least twice as much time as students expect.

As she continues to settle in, Dr. Lohmeier welcomes recommendations for restaurants and good places to run on both road and trail. You can reach Dr. Lohmeier at Jill_Lohmeier@uml.edu.



Jo Ann Brewer, Ed.D., Affectionately Known as *The Book Lady*

By Annette Sullivan, Language Arts and Literacy Doctoral Student

Anyone who knows Jo Ann Brewer knows that she *loves* books, especially children's books. Jo Ann's passion for reading began when she was very young. At a time when *differentiated instruction* was not in vogue, Jo Ann's first grade teacher recognized that Jo Ann was gifted and could read all of the classroom books and so provided her with more challenging literature. This was the beginning of a life-long love of literature and language arts for Jo Ann, which continues today.

Jo Ann began her career as a kindergarten teacher in her home state of Texas, where she developed her characteristic Southern drawl. She continued her education at Texas Tech University and earned her master's and doctoral degrees there. Jo Ann has taught at the elementary school and college levels in several western states. In Massachusetts, she has taught college courses in reading methods, children's literature, early childhood education, and language arts. Jo Ann has authored and coauthored several books and journal articles, presented at numerous conferences, and served on many committees related to children's literature and language arts. In addition to all she has contributed to the field of language arts and literacy education, Jo Ann hopes to write and publish a children's picture book during her retirement.

I have had the privilege of being a doctoral student in two of Jo Ann's classes as well as working with her this semester in Language Arts and Children's Literature. I often marvel at the wealth of information Jo Ann has about children's books and authors. She has made a practice of sharing her extensive book collection with students and often reads aloud from one of her favorite books at the beginning of each class. Jo Ann's love of books is contagious. One of her doctoral students stopped by a bookstore after each of her classes with Jo Ann to purchase the book or books that Jo Ann had shared. When this student's husband met Jo Ann, he said, "So you're the book lady!" Jo Ann's legacy at UMASS Lowell will assuredly continue long after her retirement through the students that she has influenced. Jo Ann says that she will miss the classroom and especially her students. Her students will surely miss her.

Jo Ann has other interest and talents. She enjoys spending time with her family, studying different cultures, and traveling with her husband. Jo Ann also bakes a mean cake. Upon retirement next spring, she will hopefully have more time to enjoy her many interests. I know that she will always find time to read. After all, Jo Ann is the ultimate *Book Lady*!

The Road Back to Oregon: An Interview with Dr. William "Bill" Harp

By Annette Sullivan, Language Arts and Literacy Doctoral Student

On a clear, autumn afternoon I had the privilege of interviewing Dr. William Harp. He was sitting in his office with the sun shining brightly on his back through the fifth floor window. It was a fitting picture for a man who has shone at the university for fourteen years, a man who has maintained a bright outlook about the future of education despite today's multitude of challenges.

Dr. Harp received his Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education from Oregon State University and both his master's and doctorate in curriculum and instruction from the University of Oregon. His extensive resume includes teaching elementary school and Head Start through grade 6, directing a "gifted and talented" program, and being an elementary principal. When asked about his work, Dr. Harp said, "Unequivocally, my 14 years here (at UMASS Lowell) have been the best of my career." He considers working exclusively with bright, highly motivated graduate students a thrill. As for any regrets during his tenure at the university, Dr. Harp named the pressure of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and high stakes testing that undermined some of the best staff development work he did in a school system.

I asked Dr. Harp what he would wish if he were granted three wishes for education. His thoughtful response gave me insight into just how much education means to Dr. Harp. He wished that politicians and the press would come to learn what a wonderful job many teachers do and to realize that educators should be in charge of education. The second wish was that all teachers would be career-long learners. Finally, Dr. Harp wished that teachers would teach children *to love* to read and write as well as they teach them *to* read and write.

Dr. Harp will be returning to his educational roots in the state of Oregon, where he will retire from teaching after the spring semester. He plans to work on subsequent editions of his published books and to collaborate with his wife, Dr. Jo Ann Brewer, on a new literacy book for principals. In addition to publishing texts, Dr. Harp hopes to take a cruise through the Greek Isles, revisit Italy, travel to Scandinavia, and enjoy a river cruise in China.

When asked what he would miss the most about working at the university, Dr. Harp replied simply, "The students." We will miss him too.



Leftovers

In the brick house with hardwood floors,
oriental rugs, the tin wind-up clock
ticks black and gold above the fireplace.

Daddy reads about Brer Rabbit
in his Arkansas drawl to Robert and Mark,
stories of slaves to the descendants of the first Exodus.

We cover cornbread stuffing risen out of the turkey,
with gravy boiled from drippings, pooled beside
cloverleaf rolls. Some mornings with Emily,
Mother fries tomatoes with gravy made from bacon grease.

Leftovers go into the homemade freezer
my Daddy and Mr. Hahn riveted together,
its handmade wire baskets rotating inside the drum,
eight inches thick, round like the Monitor
before it sank into the Potomac. *By Jay Simmons*

Talent Among Us

Jay Simmons, Ph.D. is a professor in the Graduate School of Education and an accomplished poet. His poem "Leftovers" seemed fitting for this time of year. Enjoy.

**What Can the Qualitative Research Network Do For You?**

The Qualitative Research Network is a campus-wide group of faculty, staff, and students who share an interest in non-numerical analysis of data. What's *that*? Case studies, interviews, participant observation, ethnography, narrative analysis...these are research approaches that lend themselves better to questions about the *quality* of meaning, understanding, relationship and experience than to the *quantity* of different behaviors or other phenomena.

If you'd like to explore the possibilities further, consider the following:

- Join an NVivo User Group. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis tool, critical to the process of a qualitative dissertation. Drop by one of our monthly meetings to get a low-stress introduction to the software.
- Share your research in progress (or just come and hear about ongoing projects of graduate students and faculty) at the QRN's research sharing day, tentatively scheduled for May 9.
- And of course – Networking! There are many benefits of meeting and talking with researchers immersed in the process.

Email Judith_Davidson@uml.edu or Cynthia_Jacobs@uml.edu to join the QRN's email list or to learn more.

Holiday Raffle

On December 15, 2006 the Graduate Student Organization (GSO) will be drawing the names of two lucky graduate students who will win a Barnes & Noble gift card. If you signed up to be a member of the GSO at the beginning of this semester, you have been automatically entered. If you did not sign up to be a member of the GSO and would like to become a member and enter the raffle, please email Andrea Somoza-Norton at Andrea_SomozaNorton@student.uml.edu by December 14th. Andrea will notify the winners by email. Good luck and happy holidays!

Graduate Student Organization (GSO) 2006 - 2007 Officers:

President - Andrea Somoza-Norton, Doctoral Student, Leadership in Schooling
 Vice President - Annette Sullivan, Doctoral Student Language Arts and Literacy
 Treasurer - Cindi Jacobs, Doctoral Student, Leadership in Schooling
 Secretary - Mari Beth Bennett, Doctoral Student Language Arts and Literacy
 Senator - Kelly King, Doctoral Student Language Arts and Literacy
 Alternate Senator - Gabriela Barra, Doctoral Student Language Arts and Literacy
 Faculty Advisor - Vera Ossen, Assistant Professor and Director, Educational Licensure Programs, Ed.D.