

CWW Center for Women & Work Perspectives

On the Gendered Conditions of Work

Letter from the Director

Almost everything we do at the Center for Women and Work is about building community. We believe that gender equity at work is founded upon efforts to define common ground and to promote collective goals. Our center strives to contribute to the sense of connection among faculty and staff at our own university in ways that range from discovering and highlighting women's hidden talents to promoting a community garden. We are facilitating the IDEA Communities Initiative for UMass Lowell, modeled on our own Associates Program, in order to provide isolated faculty and researchers with a community of support. Reaching beyond the campus, we are expanding our partnerships with women leaders and organizations in the region. I encourage you to read on to learn more about our center's contributions to building vibrant communities locally, regionally and internationally.

Women's Works' Celebrates Community by Highlighting Hidden Talents

Who knew? Deborah Poodry, executive director of Facilities Management, handcrafts unique jewelry. CWW Senior Associate and Work Environment Prof. Laura Punnett plays the violin. Susan Winning, director of the Labor Extension Program, creates exquisite desserts—to order. Who knew, indeed? Women's Works, a holiday art, craft and performance venue, was developed by the Center for Women & Work to showcase the creativity and talent of women associated with UMass Lowell.

Celebrating the hidden talents of UMass Lowell women helps to build bridges across departments, work roles and colleges—strengthening the sense of community on campus. Learning that Elaine Major is a talented painter may make it easier to consult with her as the director of the IRB about a research project. Knowing that Ginny



In honor of Frances B. Peters —a woman of many talents

Frances B. Peters was a longtime employee of the Research Foundation on campus. And during the Women's Works event, we learned that she was also an accomplished jeweler!

Frank C. Peters heard about the event on the morning radio and arrived with a box of very special memorabilia: hand-crafted jewelry made by his late wife. We are honored by the donation and delighted at the long history of creative women on campus.

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IDEA Communities Promote Scholarly Support

Collaborative research is increasingly valued in many fields, but scholars gain promotion, tenure and broader peer recognition primarily for individual work. How then does one recreate the benefits of teamwork, while respecting the requirements for solo scholarship? One solution is the IDEA Communities Initiative, now in its pilot year of development.

'IDEA' refers to 'interdisciplinary exchange and advancement,' and the communities help to build support for individual scholarship within a community of scholars. The initiative is facilitated by the Center for Women & Work and is based on the CWW Associates Program, in which scholars meet regularly to share work in progress, bounce ideas off each other, share strategies and connect to concrete resources—and, in the process, further their scholarship in significant ways.

The project began with a proposal to the UMass Lowell Council on Research and Scholarship and is funded by the Office of the Provost. Nine interdisciplinary groups of faculty responded to a request for proposals. The project steering committee chose groups based on three themes: American Studies, facilitated by Michael Milner of the English Department; Disabilities facilitated by Ashleigh Hillier of the Psychology Department and Deirdra Murphy of the Physical Therapy Department; and Thinking with Things, facilitated by Alex Ruthmann of the Music Department and Sarah Kuhn of the Regional Economic and Social Development Department.

By design, the groups include both junior and senior faculty and an interdisciplinary mix of department representation. As they

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Diversity in Motion Event Builds Bridges

Building Massachusetts' reputation as a place where diverse people want to live and work will not only help fuel the state's economy, it will enrich communities and workplaces. That was among the key messages of UMass Lowell's second Diversity in Motion: Building Bridges event, held by the Equal Opportunity and Outreach (EOO) Office with collaboration from the Center for Women & Work. Diversity in Motion drew representatives from major employers, community organizations, social service agencies and educational institutions from across the Merrimack Valley to consider how the goals of increasing workforce diversity can be achieved.

The event included information about the Commonwealth Compact—an initiative to help move organizational diversity efforts forward that was launched last year by UMass Boston's McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies with the support of more than 125 businesses, nonprofits and government agencies, including the University of Massachusetts.

EOO Director Oneida Blagg and CWW Director Meg Bond were among those who participated in the 2008 launch of the Commonwealth Compact. Witnessing the energy of this initiative spurred their interest in bringing the Commonwealth Compact to the Merrimack Valley. Blagg, whose office sponsors annual regional events on workforce diversity, said, "We clearly see the need to pool resources to make this area a region of choice for people of color."

Chancellor Marty Meehan spoke about UMass Lowell's ongoing commitment to growing the diversity of its work force and student body, naming it one of his top priorities since becoming chancellor. In addition to the speakers, Bond moderated a panel discussion featuring Commonwealth Compact Deputy Director Colleen Richards Powell; Massachusetts Assistant Secretary for Access and Opportunity Ron Marlow; and Rosa Lee Hunter, independent consultant and owner of RLH Enterprises.

Community Garden Shows Abundance of Spirit

Claire Hall, recruiting programs manager in the Career Services Office, remembers long childhood hours of weeding for her father in the garden that stretches along the side of her family home across from campus. A summer's abundance of all kinds of vegetables rewarded the work.

But, after 50 years in cultivation, the land was sitting idle. When the Voices of Working Women annual luncheon, sponsored by CWW and the Labor Extension Program and held during Lowell Women's Week, touched on the topic of making do and pooling resources in times of scarcity, an idea was born. Hall thought, "Why not give it back to the community, so people can use it?"

The CWW offered to recruit interested gardeners, put out the word and convened the initial meetings at the center. Jane Worthley, assistant director of Career Services, stepped up to coordinate the project. A soil test confirmed good growing conditions. Mahoney's Garden Center in North Chelmsford supported the effort with discounts and advice. The earth was tilled and 10 UMass Lowell gardeners gathered one Saturday morning to lay out individual plots, an herb section and a communal plot for food bank contributions.



Claire Hall



Amy Kirchner, staff assistant in the Bursar's Office, says of the experience, "I learned that weeds grow faster than the vegetables, and woodchucks really like broccoli, cucumbers and pepper plants. But the community garden has given me an opportunity to meet new people from both campuses and I really like them!"

Reflecting on the process, Meg Bond says, "The real magic of the garden is the people working the soil: staff, students and faculty are working together in a wonderfully collaborative and mutually supportive way. The whole project is building community among people who might not have otherwise crossed paths."

Stulken Recognized for Exemplary Work with Students

The 2009 Advisor of the Year award was given to Imogene Stulken, Protestant campus minister and CWW affiliate. She received the award at the 22nd Annual Student Activities Banquet in honor of her exemplary work with the Student Veterans' Organization (SVO). The SVO received their own award for Community Service by a Group for their collection of items for deployed troops. In addition, Stulken was among the faculty nominated for the annual Exceeding Excellence Awards sponsored by the Student Government Association.



Imogene Stulken



New Opportunities for Women: Impact of the ARRA on Education and Training

The Center for Women & Work joined with the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor, UMass Lowell Labor Extension Program, UMass Lowell's Division of Continuing Studies and Corporate Education and Middlesex Community College (MCC), to hold a public event about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and its impact on expanding education and training opportunities for women. The event was held at the UMass Lowell Inn and Conference Center in November, with about 150 participants.

Jacqueline Cooke, regional administrator of the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor, opened the event in conjunction with Jacqueline Moloney, executive vice chancellor of UMass Lowell, and Carole Cowan, president of MCC. Congresswoman Niki Tsongas sent remarks and congratulations via video.

Two panels of speakers, moderated by Molly Sheehy, dean of the Lowell campus of Middlesex Community College, and Meg Bond, director of the CWW, offered a wide range of information about new opportunities under both ARRA and the unemployment modernization act, and ways to finance one's education. Two recent graduates—one from MCC and the other from the UMass Lowell Division of Continuing Studies and Corporate Education—shared unique personal perspectives. Tameika Thomas and Sandy Neth told how they each took advantage of opportunities to further their career goals while working and raising families. After the presentations, breakout groups discussed finding a flexible route to college, accessing training and assistance, and understanding unemployment benefits.

The event was funded by the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor

Bond Honored for Ethnic Minority Mentoring

In recognition of her sustained commitment to supporting diversity, Meg Bond has been awarded the 2009 Ethnic Minority Mentorship Award by the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA). Bond has mentored many talented ethnic minority individuals and has encouraged community psychologists of color to assume leadership positions in the field. As SCRA president, she also introduced an accountability process for the executive committee meetings, inviting an outside observer to comment on the impact of decisions on minority groups.

"Above and beyond her professional experience and contributions with respect to diversity (which are substantial), Meg possesses the 'heart and spirit' of inclusion that can be felt with more impact than any words or publication," wrote Shelly Harrell, professor of psychology at Pepperdine University, in her nomination letter.

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Women's Works' Celebrates Community by Highlighting Hidden Talents

Maki is not only the person to contact to set up a new research account but also a skilled jeweler, highlights that there is a real person on the other end of those emails. It is simply fun to know that, while Charlotte Mandell takes her work as vice provost very seriously, she has a playful and colorful side that is revealed in her knit scarves. In highlighting such talents, CWW not only raised funds to support outreach efforts but also helped to make the university a more welcoming and connected workplace. Who knows, maybe next year your hidden talents can be revealed as well!

Women's Works was held in December at the UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center. The event was co-sponsored by the Jeanne D'Arc Credit Union, the UMass Lowell Office of the Chancellor and Enterprise Bank. Individual sponsors included Paula Alexander, Meg A. Bond, Julie Chen, Kristin Esterberg, Joyce Taylor Gibson and Judith Post.

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IDEA Communities Promote Scholarly Support

get to know each other's work in a non-critical venue, members can share their work in progress for discussion: the concept is one akin to a commons, where people gather in a less formal and structured way so that the discussion can be fairly freewheeling. The mentoring that emerges from this process is mutual, not just senior to junior.

Assoc. Prof. Anthony Szczesiul of the English Department is both a member of the project steering team and of one of the communities, American Studies. He says, "I'm participating because the structure encourages collegiality across ranks and improves research productivity through the opportunity for a collaborative exchange of ideas. When presenting one's own research, it's especially helpful that listeners don't have the same discipline-specific assumptions.

"These discussions may lead to future collaborations and new intersections of research. Also, it's healthy to have colleagues across departments and close working relationships with people one might not otherwise encounter."

A CWW-based team, which includes Jana Sladkova, Amy Stanley and Meg Bond, is documenting the process and the outcomes of the three new communities. In addition, they are providing training for the IDEA facilitators and support for group development.



Meg Bond and Tony Szczesiul



University of Massachusetts Lowell



SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR 12TH ANNUAL GATHERING AT THE WELL

Gray Hairs, Golden Opportunities: Older Women & Work that Matters

Featured speakers:

Margaret Morganroth Gullette, Ph.D.

Women's Studies Research Center,
Brandeis University

&

Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes, Ph.D.

Sloan Center on Aging & Work, Boston College

Thursday, April 8, 2010

8:30 am to 12:30 pm (Lunch follows)

Suffolk Conference Center,
Wannalancit Mills

To register or for more information:

cww@uml.edu or 978-934-4380

Co-sponsored by: CWW, Protestant Campus Ministry at Lowell, and the Center for Family, Work & Community. Funded in part by the Department of Psychology; Division of Social Sciences, Humanities and Fine Arts; Office of Student Activities & Leadership

The Center for Women and Work 2010

Leadership Team:

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Laura Punnett
Paula Rayman

Advisory Board:

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New Members of the CWW Community

Judith Davidson, an associate professor in the Graduate School of Education, joined the CWW Associate's Program in the fall of 2009. Davidson's scholarly interests focus on creativity tools in qualitative research. Her recent co-authored book, *Research Design for Qualitative Software Users* (DiGregorio & Davidson, 2008), presents a meta-theory for understanding these tools in the context of qualitative research projects from across multiple disciplines.



Judith Davidson



Judith Davidson

With the new year, we welcome **Lindsay Casavant** to the CWW as our interim program manager. Lindsay comes to the CWW with several years experience working on research projects in the UMass Lowell Department of Work Environment. We look forward to her expertise as we move forward with another year and are excited to have her on board!

Our community is expanding! CWW has welcomed six new little ones this past year:

Sarah Ann Hajjar born to Lauren Hajjar (8/1/09)
Francesca Cecelia Basto born to Michelle Haynes (10/10/08)
Luka Niko Sladek born to Jana Sladkova (12/27/08)
Jocelyn Clara Vogel born to Sharon Wasco (10/1/09)
Nolan Patrick Casavant born to Lindsay Casavant (11/17/09)
Sidney Boyer Otis born to Darcie Boyer (1/7/10)

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