Dear Friends,

Imagine climbing the Great Wall of China on a cold and blustery January day. The weather in much of China is similar to the U.S. Just as visits to our national parks are reduced in winter, fewer visitors were at the Great Wall. We skipped a bit of climbing because we took the cable car up and rode the slider cars down. We had a beautiful sunny day to capture a lifetime memory.

I visited China as part of a UMass Lowell delegation including Deans Carter, Tamarin, Ting and Chair of Computer Science Dr. Jie Wang. We visited universities in Beijing, Shanghai and Xi'an. Our overall goal was to develop formal relationships with leading universities for exchange of students and academic programs and to develop research relationships. I am especially interested in developing a short-term global health experience for our students so that they can have increased international opportunities. This trip helped me make some promising connections. Hopefully, I'll have more to share with you about this over the next year.

We're midway through a busy Spring semester. The use of the term "spring" is a bit misleading. As you know the campus was under a thick blanket of snow for most of the first half of the semester. We're glad to see a bit of green again.

We have started to see work on the new Health and Social Sciences building on campus. The construction crews have moved in and the site is being prepared for major earth moving. Groundbreaking will be on April 21.

Hoping for a warm and sunny spring all the way through Commencement.

All my best,

Dean Shortie McKinney
School of Health and Environment
University of Massachusetts Lowell
Meet the New Faculty

Welcome to two new faculty members in the School - Arlee Dulak and Nancy Duphily.

Arlee Dulak is teaching Basic Clinical Microbiology & Pathology lecture and lab and Anatomy & Physiology in the Department of Clinical Laboratory and Nutritional Sciences. She graduated from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine with a PhD in Cellular and Molecular Pathology. She was then a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Pittsburgh investigating the molecular mechanisms of liver cancer. Although her professional background is primarily in biomedical research, she knew that teaching is what she wanted to do. During her postdoc, she taught Microbiology microbiology at a community college. The Health Sciences Lecturer position at UMass Lowell was exactly what she was looking for when transitioning from research into teaching. She couldn't be happier with her decision to move here and to be a part of such an excellent program.

With more than 25 years experience in both acute and community Maternal Child Health nursing, Nancy Duphily is a Lecturer in the Department of Nursing. She comes to us from Mount Wachusett Community College where she was employed as a nursing educator and most recently as Director of Nursing. Research interests include breastfeeding support and education; faculty mentoring; and the experience of cultural dissonance for nurses in their transition from clinical practice to academia. Nancy’s qualitative study on the experience of novice nurse educators in Associate Degree Nursing education will be published in the July 2011 issue of Teaching and Learning in Nursing. Nancy received both BS and MS degrees in Nursing from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and is a 2010 graduate of the Doctorate of Nursing Practice program at Regis College.

Students Deliver Compassion and Care in Ghana, Africa

The Nursing Students Without Borders group adjusted to the grueling living conditions without complaint. They felt fortunate for a trickle of cold water. They looked forward to crackers for dinner. They dealt with no sewer systems.

They took the discomforts in stride because they knew that for them, the situation was temporary. But their hearts broke for the children and adults of Ghana, the ones they cared for during their 17-day mission trip.
"I find the whole experience teaches us all about our strengths and how to survive," says Asst. Prof. Valerie King who led the group for the third year. "My first year I spoke about how the experience had to break me down a bit before it built me up. I suspect that this is a process that was experienced by the students as well."

Read more of the eNews story.

Read Valerie King’s blog entry "Day Nine: Day Life and Night Life in Kpando"

Read Jason Hebert's blog entry "The Greatest Legacy"

New Video Highlights 20-years of Environmental Accomplishments

A new 7-minute video showcases the environmental accomplishments of Massachusetts companies. The Toxics Use Reduction Institute (TURI) within the School of Health and Environment is one of the agencies that implements the Toxics Use Reduction Act that was passed 20 years ago. TURI trains companies, awards grants and conducts research to help companies and communities find safer alternatives to toxic chemicals.

Prof. Mike Ellenbecker, current director of TURI, and Prof. Ken Geiser, past director of TURI, are featured in the video.

Marjorie Alt who was the executive director of Environment America in the late 1980s (today she is the current director of Environment America) says that one of the reasons that the law was able to pass was because of the water contamination in Woburn and also that "average people were thinking and caring and worrying a lot about exposure to toxic chemicals."

View the video now.

Real-World Projects Give Students and Edge
Students in an epidemiology class put their public health research skills to work by solving real-life issues in the local community.

The students evaluated health services - employee wellness programs, adult education courses and opiate prevention training - and presented the results to Lowell General Hospital, the Lowell Adult Education Center and the Lowell Health Department.

"When students learn by doing, not only do they better absorb what they are learning in the classroom, but their research results can help our community partners gain valuable insight into their programs that they wouldn't have otherwise," says Assistant Prof. Leland Ackerson of the Community Health and Sustainability Department.

Read more of the eNews story.

New Test Predicts Toxicity of Nanoparticles

With little known about the toxicity of nanomaterials, predicting how particles might affect human health and the environment is necessary for the safe development of nano products.

And researchers at UMass Lowell just may be the key.

The team has developed a new screening method that measures the effect of nanoparticles on the body's biological system as part of a health and safety effort of the Center for High Rate Nanomanufacturing.

"The big picture here is to be able to use laboratory-based high throughput screening methods to predict material and chemical toxicity," says Prof. Eugene Rogers, chair of the Department of Clinical Laboratory and Nutritional Sciences.

Read more of the eNews story.

Professors Offer Tips for Healthy Living

Two professors offer tips for staying motivated to exercise and eat right all year long. Assistant Prof. Deidra Murphy of Physical Therapy suggests ways to kick off a walking program. Assistant Prof. Mindy Dopler Nelson of Clinical Laboratory and Nutritional Sciences recommends tips for eating healthy.
When Workers Get Sick on the Job

Despite 40 years of federal regulatory programs, workers are still not as safe as they could be. UMass Lowell's Center for Sustainable Production reports that worker protections have not kept up with technological or scientific advances enacted by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Researchers analyzed successes and failures of this 40-year history and concluded that if toxic chemicals, production processes and technologies were designed with worker health in mind, many work-related injuries and illnesses could be prevented.

"We found that ineffective workplace health and safety protections are the result of conflicts between agencies, lack of worker participation in decision-making processes, the politicization of science and the conflicts between economic and political interests," says Prof. David Kriebel, the report's lead author and chair of the Department of Work Environment.

Read more of the eNews story.