



Learning with Purpose

# School of Health and Environment News

March 2012



## From the Dean

## In This Issue



Dear Alumni, Faculty and Staff,

Seeing the construction of a new building on campus is special and very exciting. I think of it as a new beginning, a fresh start.

The energy on campus was abuzz when we celebrated the "topping off" of the final beam of the new Health & Social Sciences Building in December. The new four-story building will house three programs - nursing, criminal justice and psychology. I was thrilled that we were one step closer to providing state-of-art labs for our nursing students and faculty. See some photos below from the "topping off" celebration with a link to a more detailed story.

I'm sure you'll be inspired by many of the stories in this issue of the newsletter. Our alumni are getting good jobs, our faculty are winning awards and being asked to serve on important health committees and our students are gaining real-world experience by conducting research in our local community.

We try to offer a variety of ways for you to stay in touch with us. We issue this newsletter about four times a year, so some of the items may have happened more than three months ago. To stay in current contact, I encourage you to use our social media tools to keep up to date and interact with us.

[New South Campus Building Hits Milestone](#)

[Undergrad Research Helps Local Groups Improve Health](#)

[Student Nursing Experience 'Exceeds Expectations'](#)

[Seeing is Believing: Picturing Heart Disease](#)

[Meet Nursing's Diversity Scholar](#)

[Chemical Safety Board Chair Speaks on Campus](#)

[Alumni News](#)

[News Briefs: Faculty, Staff and Students](#)

[American Journal of Nursing Recognizes Two Faculty-Authored Books](#)

[UN Turns to TURI and Lowell Center to Guide International Chemical Policy](#)

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## Facebook & Twitter



Keep up to date by 'liking' us on [Facebook](#).

If you have a Twitter account, please follow me on Twitter, [@HealthDeanUML](https://twitter.com/HealthDeanUML), so that I can also follow you. If you don't have a Twitter account, perhaps this is a good time to try it and we can learn together. Also ["like" the School of Health and Environment page on Facebook](#) to get short news updates, job notices and health tips.

Have you seen our new website? Take a look at the beautiful design on the [SHE home page](#) and on all of our department pages. Notice the "UMass Lowell Edge" section that includes profiles of our students, alums, faculty and staff. For our alumni, please send your news items to [Karen Angelo](#). We want to hear from you more often and feature your news.

Enjoy the spring season.

Best,

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



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## New South Campus Building Hits Milestone

The topping off ceremony of the new Health and Social Science Building (HSSB) on South Campus in December celebrated the near-completion of the building, which is a \$40 million, 69,000-square-foot classroom facility that will provide academic space to the University's most popular programs: criminal justice, nursing and psychology. [Read more.](#)



*Chancellor Marty Meehan, Dean Shortie McKinney and Provost Ahmed Abdelal.*



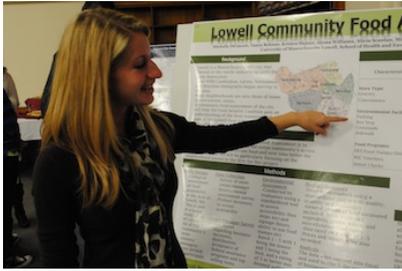
*Assoc. Dean Susan Houde and Assoc. Prof. Lisa Abdallah.*



*Prof. Gene Rogers and Kay Doyle.*

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## Undergrad Research Helps Local Groups Improve Health



*Michelle DiCiaccio researched the availability of healthy food for people who live in the Acre section of Lowell.*

Senior students have helped community organizations make data-driven decisions on health issues such as, tobacco use, youth violence, access to healthy food and more.

Forty-eight senior students from several majors, including community health, nutritional science and clinical laboratory science, conducted eight projects with local community organizations during the fall semester. The service-learning projects were a requirement for the course Introduction to Epidemiology - the study of patterns of disease and injury in human populations. [Read the full story.](#)

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## Student Nursing Experience 'Exceeds Expectations'



*Junior nursing students Nadine Daou and Nick d'Hemecourt begin their rotation at D'Youville in Lowell, with Kerry Foley, staff nurse.*

A new clinical-care education model is impacting the way students, faculty and staff learn and teach about gerontological nursing care.

Nursing faculty, in partnership with D'Youville Life and Wellness Community, developed the new education model to incorporate the best practices of treating physical and mental health problems in older adults. They are sharing the model nationwide to tackle the issue of caring for a growing, aging population with multiple chronic illnesses.

The nursing department was awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education to develop the "Transitional Care Dedicated Education Unit" with D'Youville. The unique model allows students to do rotations, with long-term care nurses serving as clinical teachers under UMass Lowell faculty direction. [Read the full story.](#)

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## Seeing Is Believing: Picturing Heart Disease

New research on heart disease shows that for many women, damage to blood vessels manifests differently than in men, which may be the cause of varying symptoms. In fact, many women don't experience the most common sign of a heart attack - chest pain.



*Prof. Kay Doyle points out plaque build up and ruptures in a model that shows the inside of a blood vessel.*

damage blood vessels in women and men.

Prof. Kay Doyle of clinical laboratory and nutritional sciences presented "Women's Cardiovascular Health - Risk Factors and Pathophysiology: Understanding How Disease Develops and Progresses" during Lowell Women's Week in March. She demonstrated through pictures and diagrams how risk factors such as smoking, diabetes, obesity and lack of exercise build up plaque and reduce muscle within blood vessels.

An expert in laboratory medicine and a past fellow at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital in pathology, Doyle [answers questions](#) about how risk factors

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## Meet Nursing's Diversity Scholar



During Jo-Anna Rorie's impressive career, she has delivered babies as a certified midwife, taught and developed midwifery programs at the university level and treated patients at a Boston urban health center. And along the way she graduated from Harvard University School of Public Health.

Now she joins UMass Lowell's doctor of nursing practice program (DNP) as its diversity scholar. In this spring-semester position, Rorie is providing input to strengthen the cultural-competent curriculum of the DNP program and preparing students to work with underserved populations. Through seminars with faculty, students and community partners, she is providing guidance on recruiting a diverse workplace and delivering culturally competent care for high-risk populations.

*The diversity scholar position is funded through the HRSA Advanced Education in Nursing grant, "DNPs Caring for the Underserved Grant," under Profs. Susan Houde and Angela Nannini.*

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## Chemical Safety Board Chair Speaks on Campus



When Emeritus Prof. Rafael Moure-Eraso began his post as chair of the U.S. Chemical Safety Board (CSB) in June 2010, one of his first tasks was to release findings at a public meeting about the Kleen Energy natural gas explosion that killed six workers in Middletown, Conn.

He was back on campus in January for The New England Consortium's advisory board meeting, reporting on how CSB's investigations into the root causes of industrial accidents are leading to improvements that will protect workers and the public. The board does not issue fines or citations, but does make recommendations to plants, regulatory agencies, industry organizations and labor groups. The Kleen Energy investigation is one of many examples that have led to specific actions to protect the public. [Read the full story.](#)

## Alumni News



*(NBA Photos) Tim DiFrancesco works on an L.A. Lakers player before a game.*

**Alum Tim DiFrancesco '06 scored his dream job with the L.A. Lakers.** When he received the news from the Los Angeles Lakers that he was on the radar for the head strength and conditioning coach for one of the most dominant franchises in sports history, he was stunned.

"It was absolutely surreal," says DiFrancesco, who earned his doctor of physical therapy degree in 2006. "Just getting a chance to work in the NBA period is a huge honor, but the Lakers are different. When your team is expected to compete and win a title every year, it is a really fun environment to be in." [Read the full story.](#)

**Paul Glynn founded a continuing education company called PT in Collaboration,** a hybrid-based model of online and classroom learning. He published the only current textbook on Clinical Prediction Rules entitled "Clinical Prediction Rules: A Physical Therapy Reference Manual" that has recently been made into a iPhone/Pad and Android application. He also won the Chattanooga Research Award from the APTA that recognizes the best published research study in the PT Journal.

**Mohamed Omar '011, work environment graduate** and former environmental management engineer at Harvard University, recently joined the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia as a Manager of Environmental Protection. Located on a beautiful campus on the Red Sea, the university has one of the largest certified green/LEED platinum projects in the world. [Read about Omar's project](#) when he was a student at UMass Lowell.

**Grace Sembajwe '07, a work environment graduate,** recently joined the City University of New York School of Public Health at Hunter College as associate professor in the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Program. She is co-principal investigator on a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant for biomarkers of pain and cardiovascular disease. She is also principal investigator for a project examining employee biological monitoring for exposures to antineoplastic drugs, funded by the Massachusetts General Hospital Council for Technology Adoption and Innovative Process.

We want to hear from you. Send your news to [Karen Angelo](#).

## News Briefs: Students, Faculty and Staff



**Senior community health students Christopher Mugford and Sergio Pernice** recently took The New England Consortium's (TNEC) 40-hour Hazardous Waste Worker Health and Safety training course and are conducting their practicum internships with TNEC. Working with Bridget McGuinness, Worker Health Educator, the students are developing the competence to present a training module for the 40-hour Health and Safety course and are helping to revise and update the training curriculum. Once they graduate in May, Pernice plans to attend graduate school at Mass Maritime and Mugford hopes to attend graduate school at UMass Lowell's Work Environment Department.

**Second-year master's nursing student Djwan Scott** was selected by Brigham & Women's Department of Nursing and Patient Care Services as a 2012 Ujima Award Recipient. Ujima is one of the seven principles of Kwanza, which celebrates family, community and culture. At BWH, the annual Ujima Award and celebration recognizes the contributions of multicultural members of the Nursing and Patient Care Services community. Scott also works at UMass Lowell as the coordinator of diversity support services with the Bring Diversity to Nursing Grant.



**Asst. Prof. Heidi Collins Fantasia** was named "Nurse of the Year" by the Massachusetts chapter of the March of Dimes. She was honored in the category of education for her work in maternal and child health.

**Prof. Emeritus David Wegman** has been named to two new National Academies committees: Offshore Wind Farm Worker Safety; and Mine Safety: Essential Components of Self Escape.

**Prof. Kay Doyle** was recently elected the chairperson of the Certification Maintenance Program Committee for the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) Board of Certification. The committee is responsible for oversight of documentation and verification of approved continuing education activities in medical laboratory sciences. Certification Maintenance demonstrates that medical laboratory professionals certified by ASCP are staying current with the practice of laboratory medicine.

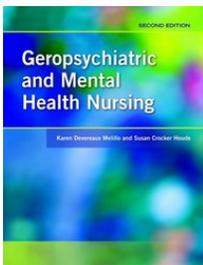
**Profs. Laura Punnett and David Wegman** have been selected for the new Mass. Department of Public Health Hospital Ergonomics Task Force that's charged with developing

recommendations for the surveillance and prevention of musculoskeletal disorders among Massachusetts hospital workers. In collaboration with Mass. Department of Public Health staff, they will review current data and literature, conduct a needs assessment, report their findings, and develop recommendations.

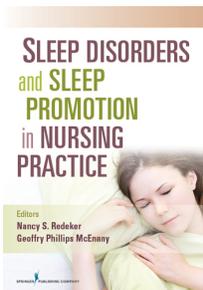
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## American Journal of Nursing Recognizes Two Faculty-Authored Books

The American Journal of Nursing (AJN) recognized two books written by UMass Lowell nursing faculty with the distinction of the "2011 Book of the Year." The AJN book awards are regarded by nurses and authors as the most important designation of excellence in health care book publishing. The award-winning books and authors are:



[Geropsychiatric and Mental Health Nursing](#) - co-authored and edited by Chair of the Nursing Department Karen Devereaux Melillo and Assoc. Dean of the School of Health and Environment Susan Crocker Houde. The textbook combines the study of aging with psychiatric mental health to teach nursing students and professionals the best ways to identify and care for the growing number of older adults with mental health issues.



[Sleep Disorders and Sleep Promotion in Nursing Practice](#) - Co-authored by Prof. Geoffry Phillips McEnany of Nursing, the book presents the latest scientific evidence on health promotion, prevention, and treatment for sleep and sleep disorders. This graduate textbook and reference guide provides strategies for promoting normal sleep, caring for disordered sleep and supporting sleep in health-care settings.

The American Journal of Nursing has been announcing its annual list since 1969. The Book of the Year program is a prestigious competition that garners the attention of more than 100,000 subscribers and half a million others who read AJN online. [AJN Complete List](#)

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## United Nations Turns to TURI and Lowell Center to Guide International Chemical Policy

The production and use of chemicals in developing countries is skyrocketing, resulting in significant harm to human health, especially for children living in poverty, says a new report compiled by staff and faculty of the Toxics Use Reduction Institute and the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production.



*Prof. Ken Geiser, left, front, with Rachel Massey, third from the right, worked with members of a steering committee at the headquarters of the UN Environment Programme in Geneva to develop a chemicals report that will be released at a major global environmental meeting in June.*

The Global Chemicals Outlook report, commissioned by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), will be a major source of reference at an international meeting, the RIO +20 U.N. Conference on Sustainable Development. The June conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, will attract more than 200 heads of state and government officials who will set goals for worldwide sustainable development. [Read the full story.](#)

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