From the Dean

Dear Alumni, Friends and Colleagues,

I am pleased to announce the new Department of Public Health in the College of Health Sciences. This new department merges two former departments – Community Health and Sustainability and Work Environment – under one umbrella.

By bringing faculty expertise in community health, environmental health, occupational health & safety together, we expect to increase visibility and recognition of our strong public health programs and research. Students will also have more access to interdisciplinary research opportunities.

As we build upon our strengths with more collaboration and joint research in the new department, our students will be armed with the skills, confidence and experience they need to become leaders in the field of public health.

Wishing you a happy and healthy holiday season,

Shortie McKinney
Dean of the College of Health Sciences
University of Massachusetts Lowell

Upcoming Events

College of Health Sciences Alumni and Friends Ice Hockey Night
Friday, Jan. 20, 6 p.m. reception, 7:15 p.m. game
UMass Lowell River Hawks vs. Providence. Join College of Health Sciences alumni and friends for a pre-game reception in the Talon Club at the Tsongas Center before cheering on the River Hawks men’s ice hockey team. More info.

Research Center Secures $6.3 Million Worker Health Grant

Mounting scientific evidence shows a link between negative working conditions and health issues such as obesity, cardiovascular disease and depression. To reverse this trend, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health awarded the Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace (CPH-NEW) a five-year $6,357,027 grant. CPH-
NEW, a joint initiative of UMass Lowell and the University of Connecticut, is one of six federal Research Centers of Excellence for Total Worker Health in the country dedicated to advancing, protecting and promoting the health of the nation’s workforce. This third round of CPH-NEW funding brings the total to more than $15 million since 2006. Read more.

## Research Studies Tackle Worker Health Issues

Public health research projects within the college improves the health of workers in healthcare, construction, manufacturing and more. This work is carried out by faculty in our research centers, institutes and departments. On-going research projects are improving the health of:

**Construction Workers:** The National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety awarded a five-year, $1 million grant to Assoc. Prof. Dhimiter Bello and Prof. Susan Woskie to study ways for construction workers to avoid exposures to toxic chemicals and remain safe on the job. Read article.

**Home-bound Patients and Health-care Workers:** Prof. Margaret Quinn, director of the Safe Home Care Project which is part of the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production, is leading a $2.4 million four-year grant to evaluate the health effects of respiratory exposure from cleaning practices and identify safer, and possibly more effective methods of disinfecting patient homes. Read article.

**Farmers in Southeast Asia:** The National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded UMass Lowell and Mahidol University in Thailand a $3 million grant to conduct research that aims to improve agricultural health in Southeast Asia. Lead by Prof. Susan Woskie, the project team is evaluating whether widely used pesticides act as endocrine disrupters, leading to diabetes, stroke and coronary diseases. Read article.

**Workers in Manufacturing, Healthcare:** Prof. David Kriebel received a $1.4 million grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health to evaluate whether preventable factors such as heavy lifting cause retinal detachment, a serious condition that can result in vision loss. Read article.

## Federal Funding Supports Graduate Students

A $2 million, five-year grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health continues a 25-year tradition at UMass Lowell, supporting graduate students in their public health and occupational health and safety studies. Since the funding began in 1990, more than 350 students have graduated from UMass Lowell occupational health and safety programs. Read the article.

## Research Centers & Institutes Promote Health and Well-being

The research centers within the College of Health Sciences promote health and well-being by understanding and preventing diseases, developing safer solutions and programs that
improve health. Learn more about on-going research and projects that make a difference in people's lives.

**Center for Population Health and Health Disparities** -- Director Katherine Tucker
Works with community partners to understand how much disease exists and the causes of these diseases. As we learn together, we support community leaders to design structures and programs to make long-lasting changes that improve quality of life.

**Lowell Center for Sustainable Production** -- Director David Kriebel
Uses rigorous science, collaborative research, and innovative strategies to promote healthy communities, workplaces and products. UMass Lowell faculty, staff and graduate students work collaboratively with citizen groups, workers, businesses, institutions and government agencies to build healthy work environments, thriving communities, and viable businesses that support a more sustainable world.

**Toxics Use Reduction Institute** -- Director Michael Ellenbecker
Provides research, training, technical support, laboratory services and grant programs to help Massachusetts companies and community groups reduce the use of toxic chemicals while enhancing the economic competitiveness.

**The New England Consortium** -- Director Craig Slatin
Provides dynamic hands-on, participatory health and safety training. With simulated work tasks and mock incidents, the training provides students with a better understanding of work-site hazards and how to properly respond in emergencies.

**Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace** -- Director Laura Punnett
Evaluates the feasibility, effectiveness, and economic benefits of integrating occupational health and safety with health promotion interventions to improve employee health.

**Center for Gerontology Research and Partnerships** -- Director Karen Devereaux Melillo
The Center for Gerontology Research and Partnerships fosters collaborative research on campus and within the region to promote healthy aging that enables adults to grow old with dignity.

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**Faculty Expertise Tapped to Fight Lowell's Opioid Epidemic**

In partnership with the university's Center for Community Research and Engagement, public health faculty Nicole Champagne and Leland Ackerson are working with the city of Lowell to fight the opioid epidemic. Faculty will provide technical assistance to aid in data-driven decision-making, including gathering and analyzing data and constructing a database of city-level information such as drug-use patterns of overdose victims and the types and dosages of opioids being prescribed. [Read more in the Lowell Sun.](#)

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**Kids Are Eating Healthier Than In the Past—But There’s a Catch**

**Prof. Katherine Tucker's research results on children's eating habits were recently published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. The article below appeared online in Time Magazine and Real Simple magazine.**
First, the good news: Kids in the United States are eating better today than they were two decades ago. Now, the not-so-great part: They’ve still got a long way to go before their diet, as a whole, can be considered healthy.

These are the findings of a study published last week in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition that compared the eating habits of more than 38,000 U.S. children from 1999 to 2012.

Read the article.

‘Safety Net’ Profession Prevents Epidemics, Diseases

Published in Boston Magazine

Read the news on any given day and you’ll find a public health crisis — the Zika virus, the opioid epidemic, obesity rates. Working behind the scenes, epidemiologists are figuring out ways to control the spread of viruses. Population health specialists are designing policy and education initiatives to curb the opioid abuse epidemic. And nutritionists and dietitians are devising individual and group plans to stop obesity. Read more.

Student Spotlight: Melissa King

After taking a few public health classes and establishing a strong connection with faculty, Melissa King realized that helping people live healthier lives is her passion. “I immediately fell in love with everything I was learning about public health,” says King, who received a bachelor of science degree in public health and now studies health-care management in the master of public health program. “The professors love what they teach and were extremely helpful mentors for me. I have really become passionate about the many different avenues public health entails.” Read more.

New Faculty Research Projects Seek to Improve Health

With the help of seed research funding from the university and the College of Health Sciences, faculty members will conduct studies that could help stroke survivors, children with cerebral palsy, rheumatoid arthritis sufferers, aging adults and college students. Project topics include:
• Perfecting Rehabilitation for Stroke Survivors
• Improving Motor Skills of Children With Cerebral Palsy
• Preventing Rheumatoid Arthritis
• Using New Technology to Investigate Health Behaviors
• Reducing Stress with Yoga
• Improving the Health of UMass Lowell Students

Read more.

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**Become a Registered Dietitian**

The Department of Public Health announced a new option, Dietetics, in the Master of Public Health (MPH) program.

The only MPH Coordinated Program offered in New England, the program combines the academic and supervised practice experience necessary for graduates to become Registered Dietitians.

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**Enthusiastic Recent Graduates Sought for Young Alumni Council**

Your connection to UMass Lowell shouldn’t stop after graduation. What did you love about being a student? Was it the friends? The comradery? Connecting with others with similar interests? Gaining new perspectives? All of this can continue for you, even as an alumnus/a!

If you graduated in the last 10 years, are between the ages of 21 and 40 and are seeking some great leadership and volunteer experience for your resume, the Young Alumni Council may be perfect for you. Likewise, if you know someone who is an enthusiastic alumnus/a, who meets this criteria, please nominate them for a position on this fun and important council.

Young Alumni Council members play a very important role— they understand what experiences will be most valuable to other young alumni. Their expertise is sought to plan and decide ways to engage this important population.

To learn more about these events, check out this power hour gathering in Burlington, Night at the Red Sox and this event where young alumni talked to students about life after graduation.

If you are interested in applying or nominating an alumnus/a, please contact Reja Gamble, assistant director of Alumni Relations at 978-934-2208.