Making Conditions Safer for Home Health Care Workers and Patients

**UMass Lowell Wins $1.8M Federal Grant**

The national demand for home health-care nurses and aides is expected to increase 50 percent by 2018 due to the aging population. And as more people live longer with chronic illnesses, the type of care needed in homes is becoming increasingly complex. These factors put more health-care workers, and patients, at risk for injuries and accidents in the home.

But help is on the way. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) awarded the University a $1.8 million, four-year grant to research issues facing Massachusetts home-care nurses and aides and develop education and training programs.

“Home health-care nurses and aides are dedicated professionals and proud of the work they do. If they come into a home with little space to work and they know that this patient needs assistance, they will not leave until they find a way,” says Margaret Quinn, the study’s principal investigator and a professor in UMass Lowell’s Work Environment Department.

The study builds upon Project SHARRP (Safe Homecare and Risk Reduction for Providers), an earlier UMass Lowell study funded by NIOSH that evaluated the risks to home health-care workers associated with needle-stick injuries and other blood exposures. The results—published in the American Journal of Public Health, the most influential publication in the field—indicated that needle-stick injuries pose a serious risk to home health-care nurses and aides.

But Quinn and her research team found that such workers encountered other serious risks. Typically working alone, these workers often make difficult decisions about patient care and their own safety.

“We were really surprised at the seriousness of the conditions that home-care nurses and aides confront on a daily basis. We uncovered a world where these ‘invisible’ workers face issues such as needles and dressings left on counters, cluttered rooms with no place to work and physical strain of lifting patients without assistive devices,” says Quinn.

“At times, they encounter much more serious issues, including evidence of elder neglect and violence in the home or in the neighborhood. Our work ultimately aims to identify safer practices and to work with home-care agencies, trade associations and unions to implement them. Safe and healthy home-care workers means better patient care.”

UMass Lowell is partnering with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Occupational Health Surveillance Program, home-care agencies, labor unions and government agencies. The research will include a survey, focus groups, one-on-one interviews and the development of training materials.
Delegation From County Donegal Visits Campus

Officials Discuss Collaboration Opportunities

Top-ranking officials from Ireland’s Donegal County visited UMass Lowell in November to discuss potential academic and research partnerships.

The county, located in the northwest region of the Republic of Ireland, has a population of approximately 150,000 and is home to a technical institute.

Because a large percentage of the county’s workforce is 25 years old or younger, Donegal officials want to establish connections abroad to ensure that population is getting the best possible education and training, according to Prof. Frank Talty, co-director of UMass Lowell’s Center for Irish Partnerships.

“Our partnership with Ireland gives our students and faculty a much greater appreciation of the global aspect of business and research,” says Prof. Stephen McCarthy, co-director of the center, which organized the recent archeological dig at St. Patrick’s Church in Lowell that uncovered many relics of the lives of the city’s early settlers.

The visiting delegation was led by Donegal Mayor Cora Harvey and included Dessie Larkin, chairman of the Donegal County Development Board; County Manager Seamus Neely; and Michael Heaney, the Donegal County Council’s director of community, culture and planning and the CEO of the development board.

Field hockey coach Shannon Hlebichuk

River Hawks Field Hockey: Perfect!

Team Captures National Championship with 24-0 Season

One. That was all it took—one goal, plus one Saturday afternoon of stellar defense—for UMass Lowell’s River Hawks field hockey team to capture a national championship.

And they did it all without dropping as much as one game all year. Nailing down the NCAA Division II title in Louisville, Ky., the top-seeded River Hawks lived up to their billing by beating Shippensburg, 1-0, on Dec. 4. Though they’d been to the national title game in each of the three previous years, the River Hawks had won it only once, in 2005.

Turns out everyone lived up to their billing.

The lone goal came in the 22nd minute of the first half, a line drive off the stick of senior midfielder Liz Day of North Andover, NE-10 Player of the Year. Freshman goalie Melanie Hopkins of Harwich, showed why she was NE-10 Goalkeeper of the Year, making six saves.

“Defense was the difference for us today,” said Shannon Hlebichuk, the River Hawks’ head coach. “I know it’s a cliché when they say offense wins games but defense wins championships, but that was certainly the case today.”

And the River Hawks’ defense, often overshadowed by an offense that exploded for more than 100 goals this season, rose to the occasion, turning away Shippensburg time after time.

And that was it. Perfection.

A 24-0 season completed. A National Title in their talons. “To go 24-0 and have a perfect season—it’s just unreal,” said Enaire. “It’s the best feeling in the world.”

Topping off an already flawless day, four River Hawks—Day, Hopkins, Sammy Macy of Tewksbury and Katie Enaire—were named to the NCAA All-Tournament team.

Employers Sign Diversity Pledge

Regional Compact First of its Kind

UMass Lowell hopes to make the Merrimack Valley a place where women and minorities want to live and work.

On Nov. 10, the University signed a pledge—along with 13 other employers—to try to do just that.

The Merrimack Valley Commonwealth Compact is the first regional offshoot of the compact signed in Boston in 2008.

The compact asks employers to work with each other to make the state—and in the regional version, the Merrimack Valley—a location of choice for women and people of color.

In particular, signatories pledge to increase the representation of people of color and women throughout organizations, especially in senior management.

“It’s important that we all, as employers in this region, come together to address how specifically we can tap into the vast talent and cultural richness of the diverse groups that populate our region,” said UMass Lowell Chancellor Marty Meehan.

The breakfast event was hosted and organized by the University’s Office of Equal Opportunity and Outreach.

Partners in the compact include the City of Lowell, Community Teamwork Inc., D’Youville Senior Care, Enterprise Bank, Lawrence General Hospital, Lowell Community Health Center, Lowell General Hospital, Middlesex Community College, North American Indian Center of Boston, Pharmaceutical Strategies, Saints Medical Center, TJX Co. and Trinity EMS.

Shown at Allen House during the delegation’s visit are, from left, Prof. Frank Talty, Prof. Stephen McCarthy, Donegal Mayor Cora Harvey, Chancellor Marty Meehan, Prof. Ann Marie Hurley, Jim O’Brien of the Center for Irish Partnerships Advisory Board, and Victoria Drakoulakos, associate director of the Center for Irish Partnerships.

Chancellor Marty Meehan signs the compact to work with institutional partners in the Merrimack Valley to increase the representation of people of color and women throughout organizations, especially in senior management.

For more information go to: www.uml.edu/news
Chancellor Announces New Veterans Center

Sen. Brown Joins Flag-Raising Ceremony

With 1,270 veterans attending UMass Lowell—a figure that has grown dramatically since the new GI Bill—the need for staff and dedicated space to support them has grown.

At a ceremonial flag-raising in honor of Veterans Day, Chancellor Marty Meehan announced, “We have committed space to create a combined Veterans’ Benefit Office and Drop-in Center, with full-time and part-time staff, so that our student veterans can find the resources they need and the support of other veterans on campus.”

Meehan pledged to work with student veterans to ensure the space is truly responsive to their needs. Meehan said the facility might be ready as early as March, and no later than September. In addition to students, Meehan said he had heard from U.S. Rep. Niki Tsongas about the need for the center.

During the ceremony, U.S. Sen. Scott Brown took the podium along with other elected officials invited by Student Veterans Organization President David Boyd.

“I am honored to be invited by the Student Veterans Organization, which took the initiative to organize this event,” said Brown. “Student veterans offer a unique experience to the campus. They have gone from high school to war to college, and we can benefit from their creativity and ingenuity as student leaders.”

Following the flag-raising, the University held its annual appreciation luncheon for student veterans.

Moloney Earns Fellow Honors From Sloan Consortium

UMass Lowell Executive Vice Chancellor Jacqueline Moloney is at the head of the class in online education.

Moloney was recently inducted as a member of the inaugural class of Sloan-C Fellows, an honor established by the Sloan Consortium to recognize “outstanding and extraordinary qualifications” in online learning, as well as significant experience, a record of distinguished service and extraordinary leadership in the field. No more than 1 percent of the consortium’s international membership receive the honor.

Moloney was selected for being a national leader in “building online programs that provide quality access for students and while advancing strategic institutional goals,” according to the Consortium.

Sloan-C is an institutional and professional leadership organization dedicated to integrating online learning into mainstream higher education.

Moloney distinguished herself internationally by spearheading UMass Lowell’s entry into online education more than 15 years ago, making it one of the first universities to do so.

Under her leadership, UMass Lowell’s online program grew from a few hundred students and a handful of courses to more than 12,000 enrollments and entire degree programs, including an MBA.

The designation as a fellow is the second significant honor Sloan-C has presented Moloney. She was the only American educator to receive the 2009 award for Most Outstanding Achievement in Online Learning by an Individual.

“I am honored to be included in a group of educators who have set the standard for online education. This award also reflects the commitment of UMass Lowell to innovation in the delivery of high-quality, affordable education,” says Moloney, who has served as UMass Lowell’s executive vice chancellor since 2007 and previously headed the Division of Continuing Studies, Corporate and Distance Education.
Students Then and Now

What Renaissance and Modern Students Have in Common

Christopher Carlsmith recently returned from a fellowship at Harvard University’s Villa I Tatti near Florence, Italy—a place the associate professor says is a scholar’s paradise for study of the Italian Renaissance.

Carlsmith and his family lived in a former convent for a year while he conducted research for a book he is writing about student life at the University of Bologna between 1500 and 1800.

NewsLine asked Carlsmith to compare students then and now.

What are the biggest differences—and similarities—between UBologna students in 1500 and UMass Lowell students today?

Much is the same. Correspondence, court cases, statutes, budget records, medical visits and textbook lists tell us that students then and now have a lot in common.

Like UMass Lowell students, the Italian students studied hard in the classroom and at the library, and they played hard in the dormitories and coffeehouses around town. They complained about the cost of textbooks and about dull professors, and they saw their education as a means to improve their career prospects.

On the other hand, they spoke Latin in the classroom, paid no tuition until their graduation exam and sometimes started college at as young as 13 years old.

What students have you found to be especially intriguing?

In January of 1675, a group of Hungarian students clashed with Italian students. Allegedly, an Italian student named Angelo Matteucci tried to cut a Hungarian’s head in half, but wound up cutting only his hand. The matter was reported to the Archbishop, who spent months trying to resolve the matter. While we don’t know what happened to the wounded Hungarian, it’s presumed he recovered.

What would you tell students then—and now?

Before I was chosen for the fellowship, I had applied for something like 30 grants and fellowships over a seven-year period with almost no success. I was tempted to give up, but, in the end, my perseverance paid off. So I’d tell students that even in the face of demoralizing and repeated rejections, you have to believe in yourself and in the quality of your work.

I’d also introduce them to Bernard Berenson.

Who is Bernard Berenson?

Bernard Berenson grew up poor in Boston, the son of Lithuanian immigrants. But he won a scholarship to Boston Latin School, then another to Harvard. He learned a dozen languages and became a pre-eminent historian and critic of late medieval and Renaissance art. He bought Villa I Tatti in 1900, and lived there until his death in 1959. He bequeathed the estate and vast collection of books, art and photos to Harvard University.

Berenson worked hard, and gave back, including to me. His generosity has helped hundreds of scholars pursue the study of history. So thank you, Mr. Berenson.

Describe dinner around the table with the other researchers.

A lecture at UMass Lowell? Not quite. This illustrates a Medieval university classroom, but Assoc. Prof. Christopher Carlsmith found similarities between college students then and now.

A lecture at UMass Lowell? Not quite. This illustrates a Medieval university classroom, but Assoc. Prof. Christopher Carlsmith found similarities between college students then and now.