

focus

MLK speaker urges commitment to service

Members of the UMass Medical School and UMass Memorial Medical Center community came together to celebrate the life and legacy of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the 20th Annual Tribute sponsored by the Diversity and Equal Opportunity Office in January. Keynote speaker Joyce McNickles, MEd, assistant professor of human development and human services at Anna Maria College, urged members of the community to honor Dr. King's legacy by renewing or strengthening their commitment to service as a means of exposing and eliminating injustice in all forms. McNickles teaches courses on diversity, social inequality and multi-cultural education and also offers programs to public schools and public agencies about social justice and diversity.

Despite progress in race relations, McNickles noted that racial injustices still exist in all areas of society, including medicine. She cited a 2003 Institute of Medicine study which found that racial minorities were less likely than whites to receive appropriate and life-saving care when faced with heart disease, kidney disease and diabetes. "Acknowledging improved race relations is important, but not if we ignore the institutional racism that continues to exist in the justice system and the racial and economic disparities in accessing health care," McNickles said.

The way to pay tribute to King and bring about social change, McNickles said, is to be concerned about others and to speak up when faced with injustice. She urged those gathered to find ways to make

time in their busy lives to serve others; she quoted King: "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

Dean of the School of Medicine and Executive Deputy Chancellor Terence R. Flotte, MD, professor of pediatrics, also spoke on behalf of UMMS, saying, "We can only serve our public trust as a state university well when we recognize the strength in diversity."

Speaking on behalf of UMass Memorial, Medical Center President and Associate Dean for Clinical and Population Health Research Walter H. Ettinger Jr., MD, MBA, noted that service is deeply rooted in the profession of medicine. "We should not forget how much power we have as an organization,"



Joyce McNickles, MEd, spoke about the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s commitment to service as a means of furthering the cause for justice.

he said. "We have some 12,000 employees between the school and hospital. If we each gave one hour a week to service, that would be the equivalent of 300 full-time jobs." ■

UMMS welcomes Weng as founding Bioinformatics director

One of the most dynamic and central issues in today's biomedical research is the increasing amount of biological information available to scientists. To address this issue, UMass Medical School has established the Program in Bioinformatics and Integrative Biology to process and analyze biological information, which is essential to the success of the comprehensive biomedical research endeavor at UMMS as well as to faculty research and recruitment. Zhiping Weng, PhD, has been appointed director of the program and has also been appointed professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology.

"I am thrilled that Dr. Weng has agreed to join us to direct a new program in bioinformatics and integrative biology," said Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator Michael R. Green, MD, PhD, the *Lambi and Sarah Adams Chair in Genetic Research* and professor of molecular medicine and director of the Program in Gene Function and Expression. "This is a critical step toward our goal of excellence in the most important areas of contemporary biomedical research."

The program in bioinformatics will serve to accelerate the institution's pace of discovery across the range of research endeavors on campus, and will include new approaches for expanding the use of biological data, such as tools and techniques to store, organize, analyze and

visualize the data. Under Dr. Weng's direction, the program will bring together resources and faculty expertise in mathematics, science and engineering to explore and understand biological data through the application and development of computational tools. Weng will also guide efforts to ensure that the information gathered from the sequencing of human DNA is practical and applicable for clinical research, and she will work with Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences leadership to establish a graduate training program.

"We aim to pursue cutting-edge research and educate talented and highly motivated women and men for leadership in the post-genomic era," said Weng. "UMass Medical School is already strong

and continues to grow in many areas of biology and medicine that can benefit tremendously from computational approaches. Our new program will further strengthen these areas and enable new interdisciplinary areas."

Weng joins UMMS from Boston University, where she was associate professor of biomedical engineering and bioinformatics and associate professor of pharmacology and experimental therapeutics at BU School of Medicine. She joined the BU faculty after receiving her PhD there in 1997.

While at BU, Weng was an essential member of its Bioinformatics Program. Her research is focused on molecular interactions, such as those between regulatory proteins and their target DNA and those between two interacting proteins. Using a combination of computational and experimental approaches, her team aims to identify the impact of these interactions on a variety of tissues and organs within the body. ■



Zhiping Weng, PhD

Get in Focus

Have a story idea, a faculty, student or staff achievement, or a campus-wide event for the calendar? Send it to the *Focus* editor at focus@umassmed.edu



UMMS receives \$16 million CMS grant

Funds will help maximize employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has awarded a Massachusetts Medicaid Infrastructure and Comprehensive Employment Opportunities (MI-CEO) grant to Commonwealth Medicine's Center for Health Policy and Research (CHPR), in partnership with the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS). The grant will help the state work toward its goal of maximizing employment opportunities and economic outcomes for individuals with disabilities through applied policy research, advocacy and evidence-based employment supports. Specific grant activities will aim to overcome barriers to employment experienced by people with disabilities through improved access to health care and service coordination, enhanced engagement with employers and by addressing issues such as inadequate transportation and economic disincentives to work.

The current grant is the third round of funding for this partnership between UMMS and the EOHHS. UMMS has been awarded these grants—totaling more than \$25 million over 10 years—based on Massachusetts' commitment to significant programs and prior successes, such as the Common Health program that enables employees with severe disabilities to maintain their Medicaid benefits. "One of the most exciting things about the new grant is that it will allow us to implement statewide what we have learned through previous pilot projects and integrate these programs into the fabric of the state

system," said Jay Himmelstein, MD, MPH, professor of family medicine & community health, chief health policy strategist for Commonwealth Medicine and the grant's principal investigator. Dr. Himmelstein also noted that the momentum created by the Deval Patrick administration presents an unprecedented window of opportunity to implement disability employment strategies.

Grant activities will be guided by a newly formed interdisciplinary, interagency group, the Massachusetts Disability Employment Initiative Executive Team, to ensure that all key stakeholders are at the table. "This



Members of the MI-CEO Massachusetts Disability Employment Initiative Executive Team. Back, from left to right: Cindy Thomas, Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston; Shelly Stark, MI-CEO Senior Project Director; Jean McGuire, EOHHS Assistant Secretary for Disability Policy and Programs; Jay Himmelstein, MI-CEO Principal Investigator; Alexis Henry, MI-CEO Co-principal Investigator. Front, Charles Carr, Commissioner, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

group will help us look at issues both broadly and through the lenses of individual public and private agencies serving particular groups since, for example, the Department of Mental Retardation's clients have different needs than those of the Massachusetts

Commission for the Blind," explained Research Assistant Professor of Psychiatry Alexis D. Henry, ScD, a member of the executive team and co-principal investigator on the grant. "Our focus will be on bringing employers together with the service system." ■



Russian delegate Larissa Aylalrova, PhD, is presented a Certificate of Completion from Open World/National Peace Foundation by Douglas Ziedonis, MD, MPH, at the farewell dinner for the Russian delegates.

Russian delegation meets with UMMS leaders

The Department of Psychiatry at UMass Medical School recently welcomed five leaders from Russia in an exchange of ideas about successful interventions and potential collaborations in the field of trauma and recovery as part of the Open World Program.

Supported by the Library of Congress, the Open World Program is managed by the Open World Leadership Center, which promotes visits for scientific and cultural exchanges, including how American democracy and free enterprise function at the local level. The five Russian delegates shared their extensive experience working with war veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and victims of natural disasters, including children and families. They also visited UMass Memorial Medical Center and the Veterans Administration New England Health Care System, both of which are providing care and conducting research in the areas of trauma and addiction.

"This was a great opportunity for clinicians and researchers from Russia and the United States to learn from one another and to enhance the career, training and research opportunities in trauma and recovery," said

Douglas M. Ziedonis, MD, MPH, professor and chair of psychiatry and the local leader for the Open World Program event.

The delegates also got a taste of American culture and lifestyles by staying with local hosts and participating in activities, including a tour of sites with Preservation Worcester.

The visitors included a consulting psychologist from the Republican Center for Medical, Social and Psychological Assistance, which offers psychological and social rehabilitation for patients in crisis; a consultant psychologist, who provides psychological consultation and conducts psychotherapy groups; a psychologist from the Regional Center for Diagnostics and Consulting, which provides help for students in crisis situations; a chief psychologist who organized a program for training military psychologists on PTSD; and a facilitator.

"We look forward to future opportunities to collaborate with our international counterparts," said Dr. Ziedonis. "By interacting with clinicians and researchers from other countries, we are all exposed to new ideas and practices, and we gain valuable insight from our different perspectives." ■

In Memoriam

As a new year begins, we remember with gratitude for their contributions to the life and mission of the UMMS community the following employees who passed away between December 1, 2006, and December 31, 2007:

- Steven M. Banks**, research associate professor of psychiatry, Center for Mental Health Services Research
- Carlton B. Clarke**, maintenance technician, Massachusetts Biologic Laboratories
- Alberta Fournier**, mental health professional, UMass Correctional Health
- William W. Frost**, resident, Office of Graduate Medical Education
- Jeffrey D. Hollingdale**, mechanical technician, Facilities
- Diane O'Toole**, administrative assistant, Office of the Chancellor
- Sheila J. Porter**, nurse practitioner, UMass Correctional Health
- Todd M. Savarese**, associate professor of cancer biology
- Joanne Steeves**, mental health worker, UMass Correctional Health
- Philip M. Taylor**, administrative coordinator, Center for Health Care Financing, Commonwealth Medicine

GSBS establishes Office for Postdoctoral Scholars

Recognizing the critical roles postdoctoral fellows perform in advancing biomedical research and mentoring graduate students, the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) has established the Office for Postdoctoral Scholars (OPS).

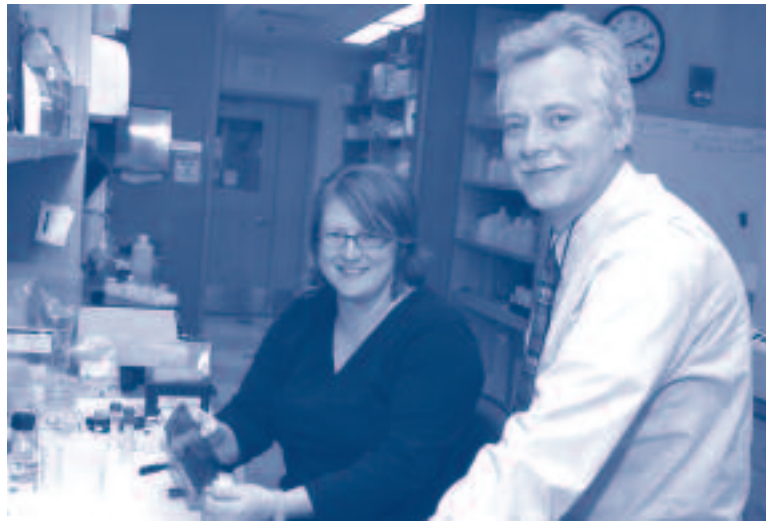
A postdoctoral fellowship is a temporary research position held by scientists who have received their PhDs. The “postdoc” experience is a vital bridge in the journey from student to faculty member and has become a necessary step in establishing a scientific career. Postdocs also serve as a pipeline for a research institution’s faculty recruitment and the growth of an institution’s research enterprise.

“UMass Medical School employs about 400 postdocs in diverse labs—almost as many as medical residents—all internationally recognized experts in their areas of research,” said GSBS Dean Anthony Carruthers, PhD, professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology. “Postdocs face many professional, personal and cultural challenges. I know because I came here as one myself 26 years ago—my head was spinning!” Fortunately for Dr. Carruthers, he enjoyed a positive experience that laid the foundation for his commitment to today’s postdocs. “We want a community of out-

standing postdoctoral scholars who are professionally accomplished and socially developed. Our generation’s legacy must not only be a body of work but a cohort of young scientists to follow us.”

The OPS will enhance the postdoctoral experience by building a broad learning community and by providing and sharing resources across departments and the institution. The office will coordinate efforts at the institutional level to promote an environment in which postdocs can successfully transition into life at UMMS, achieve distinction in research, broaden their research skills and equip themselves for successful careers in their chosen fields. In addition to supporting postdocs, the office will provide a centralized resource for faculty seeking postdocs for their labs and applying for grants to fund their postdocs.

An outstanding faculty is critical to the continuing growth of the UMMS research enterprise; it is expected that the OPS will create a formal retention program to help UMMS postdocs



Julie DeZutter, PhD, (left) is a postdoc in the lab of Anthony Carruthers, PhD (right). A flexible work schedule allows her to advance her research and career while caring for a young family.

attain faculty appointments. Particular emphasis will be placed on keeping women in scientific careers: while more than 50 percent of PhD students and postdocs are women, research institutions often have difficulty recruiting outstanding female faculty. “We are losing brilliant minds,” said Carruthers. “Our hope is that the OPS will provide a vehicle for understanding and creatively addressing this problem.”

The OPS is an extension of a number of efforts by UMMS postdocs to support each other. Hanne Varmark, PhD, a postdoc in the laboratory of William Theurkauf, PhD, professor of

molecular medicine, is one of a group that in 2005 launched a formal UMMS organization to foster scientific and social interactions among postdocs, faculty and students. “By consolidating and expanding upon the grassroots activities we initiated, the OPS will enhance the professional development of postdocs, which will lead to improved research output and better student mentoring,” said Dr. Varmark.

The GSBS is currently recruiting a director for the OPS. “We are seeking someone with a passion for the role,” said Carruthers. “Postdocs are the next generation of scientific leaders. The future of science depends on them.” ■

Tobacco Free Initiative update: frequently asked questions

On May 27, 2008, the University of Massachusetts Medical School and UMass Memorial Medical Center will become tobacco-free facilities. Announcement of the initiative has elicited a widespread positive response as well as a number of questions. Below are answers to those frequently asked by individuals who work and study at UMMS.

Q. Why are the Medical School and the Medical Center becoming tobacco free?

Smoking and use of tobacco, including second-hand smoke, is a leading preventable cause of death and disease in the United States. As a health care leader, we are committed to creating a healthy and safe environment for all who come to our facilities.

Q. Will smoking be permitted in any of the existing smoking shelters?

No, on May 27, all smoking shelters and smoking areas will be closed.

Q. Can I smoke in my personal car parked at work?

No, smoking anywhere in the parking areas will not be allowed.

Q. Isn't smoking a personal right?

No, smoking is a personal choice. The Medical School and hospital have the responsibility to create a tobacco-free environment within their buildings and on their grounds, consistent with both organizations’ goals of creating a safe work environment and supporting good health and wellness.

Q. What resources are available to help me quit?

Employees are strongly encouraged to seek help through the Employee Assistance Program at 800-322-5327. Nicotine replacement therapies, known as NRTs, are supplied at no or low cost through insurance coverage. For more information, call our tobacco-free information line at 508-334-5433. ■



employees infocus

February Employee of Distinction Award

Vitals

Name: Jean Baril
Administrative Assistant
Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care and Society
Year started: 1998
Hometown: Worcester

Professionally Speaking

For nearly two decades, Jean Baril has been a part of the UMMS community in one way or another, and she found her niche nine years ago when she stepped into an administrative assistant role at the Center for Mindfulness (CFM).

Since that time, as the number of CFM participants increased, Baril’s role has expanded. Today, she is responsible for supervising the administrative support staff and managing all CFM fund-raising initiatives and activities. She oversees

the CFM’s business lines, which include the Stress Reduction Program, Oasis and all CFM outreach programs in the public and private sectors. She also handles the logistics and budgetary activities associated with the CFM’s annual scientific conference, which brings more than 400 clinicians, researchers and educators together to discuss the integration of mindfulness-based approaches and intervention in medicine, health care and society.

Points of Pride

CFM Executive Director Saki F. Santorelli, EdD, associate professor of medicine, who nominated Baril, remarked that one of the most crucial elements of the CFM’s work depends on how administrators and staff interact with people. “Jean is vital to the Center as she elevates and protects our patients, program participants and a broad, international constituency with her

demeanor, respectfulness, ease and willingness to serve them readily and warmly,” Dr. Santorelli said.

For Baril, this role has allowed her to contribute to programs that benefit individuals, institutions and society, and connect with people from all walks of life. “I work with many caring and understanding individuals at the CFM, and I’m proud to be part of a team whose work has not only helped our patients locally, but throughout the world,” she said.



Calendar

information infocus

GIC enrollees to receive Form 1099-HC to verify health insurance coverage

All GIC enrollees who reside in Massachusetts should have received a new form, 1099-HC, in the mail by end of January. Employees will need this form as proof of health coverage for themselves and, if applicable, their GIC-covered spouse and dependents. The 1099-HC form will be used to complete the new Schedule HC form with the Massachusetts residential tax form.

Employees who are Massachusetts residents and did not receive their 1099-HC form should contact their health insurance plan provider.

ID exchange update and schedule

The ID badge exchange resumes this month at the following off-site locations: Biotech One, Biotech Two, Biotech Four, Shaw Building, Auburn Campus and Worcester Foundation Campus in Shrewsbury (all buildings).

This exchange is only for people who work and park at these locations. If you missed the date for your exchange, you must go to the University Parking Office on the University Campus to exchange your badge, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. **After June 30, the old ID badges will no longer work.**

■ The latest installment of the Artist in Residence Series will be on display in the Lamar Soutter Library throughout the month of February. The exhibit—A Celebration of Black History Month—features the artwork of UMass Medical School students, local artists and artworks purchased abroad.

■ The Sixth Annual Tara Bean Valentine's Gala will take place on Saturday, Feb. 9, from 6 p.m. to midnight at Mechanics Hall in Worcester. Elegant and fun, the event includes dinner, music and live and silent auctions. Tickets are \$125 per person, with proceeds going to the Tara Bean Foundation, which supports medical research and treatment advancements at UMass Medical School and UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center. For information, send an e-mail to Giving@TaraBeanFoundation.org.

■ Child Passenger Safety Seat Education will be held from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 14, and Thursday, Feb. 28, at the UMass Memorial Health Care EMS Garage at 23 Wells Street in Worcester. Sponsored by the Injury Free Coalition for Kids of Worcester, the program educates parents and caregivers about child

passenger safety. Technicians are available to check car seats and help parents install them. Inspections are open to everyone by appointment. For information or to schedule an appointment, call Carol Carpenter at 508-793-6016.

■ UMass Memorial Medical Center is offering the Asthma Co-Management Program, beginning on Wednesday, March 5. The nine-week course teaches participants the basics about asthma, such as how to identify early warning signs and triggers, and how to prevent life-threatening attacks. A behavioral psychologist, pulmonary nurses and physicians teach the course, which costs \$75. Weekly classes are held Wednesday evenings on the University Campus from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required. For information and to register, call Ginny Babin at x6-1975.

■ Save the date! UMass Night at the Pops 2008, Thursday, May 8, featuring a concert by Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops with special guest Natalie Cole, UMass Amherst '72, '93H. For details and tickets, visit www.massachusetts.edu/pops.



Biotech One Tuesday, Feb. 12
9 to 11 a.m.
First Floor Lobby

Biotech Two Thursday, Feb. 14
9 to 11 a.m.
First Floor Lobby

Biotech Four Tuesday, Feb. 19
9 to 11 a.m.
First Floor Lobby

Shaw Building Thursday, Feb. 21
9 to 11 a.m.
Main Entrance Lobby

Auburn Campus Tuesday, Feb. 26
9 to 11 a.m.
Main Lobby

Worcester Foundation Campus, Shrewsbury (all buildings) Thursday, Feb. 28
9 to 11 a.m.
Hoagland-Pincus Conference Center
Main Lobby

grants infocus

□ **Albert J. Grudzinskas**, JD, clinical associate professor of psychiatry: *Boston Police Study/Boston Police Training Initiative*, Sidney R. Baer, Jr. Foundation, one year, \$200,000; recommended for two more years, \$350,000

□ **Leslie R. Harrold**, MD, MPH, associate professor of medicine: *Assessing and Improving Arthritis Medication Adherence: Gout as a Model*, National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, one year, \$127,850; recommended for four more years, \$512,800

□ **Daniel H. Lasser**, MD, MPH, professor and chair of family medicine & community health: *Academic Administrative Units in Primary Care*, Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, one year, \$245,524; recommended for two more years, \$610,846

□ **Brian Lewis**, PhD, assistant professor of molecular medicine: *Molecular Dissection of Pancreatic Ductal Adenocarcinoma*, National Cancer Institute, one year, \$357,227; recommended for four more years, \$1.5 million

□ **Roger S. Luckmann**, MD, MPH, associate professor of family medicine & community health: *Telephone Counseling to Increase the Use of Screening Mammography in Hispanic, African American and African Immigrant Populations*, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, two years, \$299,998

□ **Mariann M. Manno**, MD, clinical associate professor of pediatrics and emergency medicine and **Michael P. Hirsh**, MD, professor of surgery and pediatrics: *Community-Based Pediatric Residents as Agents of Injury and Violence Prevention*, American Academy of Pediatrics, one year, \$20,000

□ **C. Robert Matthews**, PhD, the *Arthur F. and Helen P. Koskinas Professor* and chair of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology: *Folding Mechanisms of TIM Barrel Proteins*, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, one year, \$119,012

□ **Sean Ryder**, PhD, assistant professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology: *Small Molecule Effectors of Maternal Gene Expression in C. elegans Embryogenesis*, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, one year, \$190,625

□ **Celia A. Schiffer**, PhD, professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology: *Targeting Ensembles of Drug Resistant HIV-Protease*, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, one year, \$1.8 million, recommended for four more years, \$6.8 million

□ **Leslie M. Shaw**, PhD, associate professor of cancer biology: *Insulin Receptor Substrate Function in Breast Cancer*, National Cancer Institute, one year, \$269,084, recommended for four more years, \$1.1 million

□ **Frederick A. Spencer**, MD, associate professor of medicine: *The Natural History of Venous Thromboembolism in the Elderly*, National Institute on Aging, one year, \$532,060; recommended for three more years, \$1.6 million

□ **Heidi A. Tissenbaum**, PhD, associate professor of molecular medicine, and **Marian Walhout**, PhD, assistant professor of molecular medicine: *Dissecting C. elegans Insulin Networks Using a Systems Approach*, The Ellison Medical Foundation, four years, \$975,000

□ **Zuoshang Xu**, MD, PhD, professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology and cell biology: *Modeling Progranulin Hypomorphism for FTD*, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, \$177,734; recommended for one more year, \$213,281

□ **Phillip D. Zamore**, PhD, the *Gretchen Stone Cook Chair in Biomedical Sciences* and professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology: *Understanding microRNA Biogenesis and Function*, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, one year, \$81,250

□ **Jianhua Zhou**, PhD, assistant professor of medicine: *Cell-Based Assays for Compounds that Regulate Tau Exon 10 Splicing*, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, one year, \$162,500; recommended for one more year, \$40,625



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