Dean Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina
Gretchen Gerzina joined the Commonwealth Honors College as dean on July 1, 2015, and was named the Paul Murray Kendall Chair in Biography in April 2016. Gerzina came to UMass Amherst after ten years as a named professor at Dartmouth College where she held the Kathe Tappe Vernon Professorship in Biography, and served as chair of the English department and later as chair of African and African American studies. Previously she spent fourteen years as
a professor of English at Vassar College where her administrative positions included being founding director for
Teaching and Learning, and associate dean of the faculty, followed by two years as a professor and director of
Africana studies at Barnard College, Columbia University. She holds a doctorate from Stanford University, a master’s
from Simmons College, and a bachelor’s degree from Marlboro College.

Her seven books, most of them historically-grounded biographical studies, have been widely reviewed. *Carrington: A
was a *New York Times* “notable book of the year” and was published in America as *Black London*. *Frances Hodgson
Burnett: The unexpected life of the author of The Secret Garden* (2004) was the first biography of Burnett in over
thirty years and drew upon previously unseen caches of family letters and journals.

Her most recent book, *Mr. and Mrs. Prince: How an Extraordinary 18th-Century Family Moved out of Slavery and into
Legend* (2008) recounts the story of two former slaves, Abijah Prince and Lucy Terry Prince, of colonial Massachusetts
and Vermont, who became landowners and public figures, successfully defending themselves in court. She also is the
and *The Annotated Secret Garden* (2007). She has also published numerous articles.

Gerzina appears regularly on radio and television in both Britain and America. From 1997 to 2012 she hosted the
nationally-syndicated public radio program “The Book Show,” and has done commentaries on National Public Radio
and Vermont Public Radio. She recently completed a ten-part BBC Radio 4 series on Britain’s Black Past that will air in
January 2016.

She is the recipient of two grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and has been the Fulbright
Distinguished Scholar to Great Britain. Gerzina was an honorary visiting professor at the University of Exeter in
Devon, England, and in 2009-10 she was the George Eastman Visiting Professor at Oxford, where she was given an
honorary master’s degree by Balliol College. More information about Professor Gerzina can be found on her website:

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