Commonwealth Honors College Celebrates 1,025 Graduates
Commonwealth Honors College celebrated the honors distinction of 1,025 members of the University of Massachusetts Amherst class of 2018 during the Celebration of Excellence on Friday, May 11. The ceremony, held in the Mullins Center, included recognition from university dignitaries, such as UMass Amherst Chancellor Kumble Subbaswamy and Provost John McCarthy.

Commonwealth Honors College Dean Gretchen Gerzina offered remarks, congratulating graduates for their hard work and perseverance in their intellectual journey as members of the Honors College. “This journey has helped you develop the skills to understand the complex problems of this world and to respond to society’s changing needs,” said Dean Gerzina. “You have engaged in critical thinking, you have conducted advanced research, you have assumed leadership positions, you have volunteered in communities ... and now you are well positioned to positively affect our society.”

The deans of the schools and colleges and directors of special academic programs, along with CHC staff and administrators, helped to wish graduates well and present each with a gold stole. The stole, a silky gold-colored cloth with “Commonwealth Honors College” across the front, is worn over the shoulders, signifying students’ participation in Commonwealth Honors College. Most wear the stole during the university commencement exercises.

Shuaib Balogun, a chemical engineering major from Lagos, Nigeria, was selected as the event’s student speaker. His remarks underscored the power of knowledge as he urged his fellow graduates to utilize their knowledge in order to help mold a better world. Balogun credited Commonwealth Honors College for inspiring him to combine his academic goals and his aspiration to be an active participant in social justice issues in Nigeria, stating “The Honors College gave me the desire to want to dig deeper to unmask more issues and look into ways of solving them.”
See event photos on our Facebook page.