Dean's Welcome

Welcome!
In 2013, our beautiful new Honors Residential Community opened, making a physical statement about UMass Amherst’s commitment to honors education. With its residences, classrooms, offices and gathering spaces, this living/learning community manifests the history of honors on campus and the ongoing commitment to honors education both within the university and across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Though not all Commonwealth
Honors College students live in the residential community, it offers all of our students and faculty a shared educational and social environment that represents a collective commitment to enhanced study and research.

We are now moving toward our twentieth year, and are returning to the original questions that were addressed when the CHC was created as the honors college for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We are asking how best to move forward over the upcoming years, and formulating how to strengthen what we already do so well.

As someone new to UMass Amherst and to the Commonwealth Honors College, I’m delighted to have joined such a vibrant place. It is in many ways a return home for me. Although I was never a student on this campus, I grew up in nearby Springfield and have many ties to the area and have written about its local history. I come most recently from Dartmouth College, where I was a professor of English, chairing at different times its English department and its program in African American Studies. I held an endowed chair in biography and bring an interdisciplinary perspective—as well as a deep commitment—to undergraduate education.

This academic journey promises to be an exciting one for us all.

Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina, PhD
Dean, Commonwealth Honors College

View Dean Gerzina’s bio

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