As this most extraordinary year for Commonwealth Honors College comes to a close, we wanted to share with you the latest updates. Best wishes from all of us at CHC for a wonderful summer.

Daniel Gordon, Ph.D.
Interim Dean, Commonwealth Honors College

The Statewide Undergraduate Research Conference Turns 20

2014 marks the 20th annual Massachusetts Statewide Undergraduate Research Conference co-sponsored by Commonwealth Honors College and the Massachusetts System of Public Higher Education.

In 1995, before Commonwealth Honors College had been created, Honors Program Director Linda Nolan aimed to build and support undergraduate student engagement in research. Her vision resulted in a conference for the four University of Massachusetts undergraduate campuses (Amherst, Boston, Dartmouth, and Lowell). Students presented their work and their abstracts were published in an undergraduate journal.

After many years of expansion to Massachusetts community colleges and state colleges, the 2014 conference is the biggest yet. On April 25, students from 22 of the public community colleges and university campuses in Massachusetts reported on their independent work; theses or culminating projects; community service; or study abroad. Some presented creative works in the visual and performing arts. All explained their research, shared their findings and responded to questions, either through 10-minute oral presentations delivered as part of a panel on related topics or by presenting a poster during a 45-minute session. This year's conference integrated new technology, introducing e-poster boards that support multimedia presentations. A total of 740 presentations occurred throughout the day, each supported by a faculty sponsor. Students presented on topics ranging from accounting to kinesiology to women's studies, representing a total of 70 areas of study.
Having the experience of not only conducting research, but also presenting the work in a supportive setting can impact students' trajectory after college. Recently, a Commonwealth Honors College alumna reported that her research experience helped her to secure a spot in a top PhD program in her field. She said, "When talking to a [university] professor, he told me what was impressive about my application was my previous work in my proposed research interest areas (my undergraduate honors thesis and presenting at the Undergraduate Research Conference). I would have never thought that the work I did four years ago would end up playing such a pivotal role in my acceptance to a strong graduate program."

Click here to read more about the conference, and here to view a photo essay.

**Honors Students Recognized for Excellence at Commencement**

At Undergraduate Commencement on Friday, May 9, nine Commonwealth Honors College seniors were recognized for exemplary achievement, initiative, and leadership. Seven out of the ten 21st Century Leaders honored at the ceremony were members of Commonwealth Honors College. Both of the Jack Welch Scholars were members of the College.

The 21st Century Leaders are a group of students who have a strong academic record and further distinguish their intellectual accomplishments and enhance the reputation of the University through student leadership, original research, community service, overcoming personal obstacles, outstanding artistic talent or athleticism. The graduating honors students recognized in this group are David Ke, Jennifer Healy, Jessica Boakye, Kurt Schultz, Lila Grallert, Veronica Ann Pace, and Nicholas Preston Otis.

The two Jack Welch Scholars who were recognized for their leadership and executive ability are Brian Heacox and Melissa Donahue.

To read more about each honoree, click here. To read about Commonwealth Honors College's graduation ceremony, The Celebration of Excellence, click here.

**Putting National Scholarships within Reach**
The Office of National Scholarship Advisement is housed in Commonwealth Honors College. Directed by Professor Susan K. Whitbourne, the office provides advising and assistance to UMass Amherst students and alumni who wish to apply for distinguished nationally competitive scholarships and fellowships such as the Winston Churchill Scholarship, the Fulbright Program, the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, the Harry S. Truman Scholarship, the Marshall Scholarship, and more. Recent statistics from the last several years of application indicate that approximately 50% of the UMass Amherst applicants to the Fulbright program have been awarded the fellowship for foreign study.

We encourage students to start exploring scholarships early in their college career. Preparing for these opportunities requires planning well in advance of submission deadlines. A great place to start for a student wishing to explore national scholarships is to visit the Office of National Scholarship Advisement to talk about their interests and vision for the future. Students will be asked fill out a ONSA Internal Application form online to allow staff to review their qualifications. We also advise students to consult their professors and others on campus for opportunities.

For more information on the services provided by the Office of National Scholarship Advisement, please click here.

**Make a Difference by Supporting Commonwealth Honors College**

Please consider making a gift to the Commonwealth Honors College. There are many ways parents can support the college with their gifts:

- Contributions to the Parents' Student Development Fund support programs for Commonwealth Honors College, such as Pizza & Prof Nights and Weekly Wednesday Workshops, that greatly enhance the Honors experience.

- Gifts to the Commonwealth Honors College Residential Community
will build honors for the future in this unique living/learning community.

- Unrestricted gifts to Commonwealth Honors College allow the College to continue offering scholarships, innovative courses, advising, and more.

Please consider a gift so that we can continue to provide honors students with these special opportunities. Gifts can be made securely online by clicking here, or by phone at 866-450-UMASS (866-450-8627). Thank you!