



# Report to the Board of Trustees

from the University of Massachusetts Boston

September 2020

## To the Board:

I am pleased to present to you my first report to the Board of Trustees as chancellor of the great University of Massachusetts Boston.

These past months have been especially trying for all of us in higher education including at UMass Boston. But I am grateful that our university struck out on a course of action sharply focused on mitigating against the malignant effects of COVID 19, providing the highest degree of safety to our campus community and their families, while delivering an engaging, high-quality educational experience. I am happy to report that we are staying the course!

Despite the challenges of a global pandemic, I'm proud to report that UMass Boston continues to make steady progress towards our goal of taking our university to the next level of excellence and relevance in the city, the Commonwealth and country.

- Our fundraising efforts are bearing fruit. During fiscal year 2020, UMass Boston received more than \$19.1 million in gifts, a 61 percent increase over FY19. (Page 6)
- Our researchers continue to inform and shape public policy. The Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy released "COVID-19 and Latinos in Massachusetts," a report to better understand the social determinants of health that are shaping the distribution of COVID-19.
- Our students continue to impress, in class and out. Two men's hockey players made the most of their time during the COVID-19 pandemic by rollerblading to Michigan (875 miles) to raise \$30,000 for cancer research and treatment. (Page 2)
- Our administration continues to adapt to the changing recruitment landscape. Among other new initiatives, the Division of Enrollment Management has introduced evening appointments and Zoom programs to address families' concerns and questions for the fall, attracting over 600 students and families each session. (Page 4)

I hope you will find this report about the progress at UMass Boston as inspiring as I do. I look forward to discussing with you our endeavors to position our campus as the university "of the city and for the city and of the times and for the times." We are redoubling our efforts to take on the challenges of carrying out our urban public research university mission helping to identify and find solutions to the greatest challenges facing our times.

Sincerely,  
Marcelo Suárez-Orozco



*Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco*

## Renewed Focuses on Coronavirus and Black Lives Matter Student Supports

Stepping into his new role amid a global pandemic and a national reckoning around systemic racism, Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco was clear on what his first acts leading UMass Boston would be.

Suárez-Orozco began by redoubling efforts to offer the best academic experience to all UMass Boston students this fall while in a remote modality. Then, along with his wife, Carola, he established an endowed George Floyd Honorary Scholarship Fund to provide financial support to talented students who otherwise may find it difficult or impossible to pay for a college education.

Seeded by a \$50,000 pledge from Suárez-Orozco and his wife, the fund has already exceeded \$100,000 in commitments.

"UMass Boston's students of color—like their peers across the nation—face economic and social barriers to their education exacerbated by COVID-19's malignancy, placing too many of our students at an educational disadvantage," he said. "I firmly believe that equitable access to quality education is a foundational step we must take to see systemic racism dismantled in our country."

Suárez-Orozco also announced his intention to appoint a faculty member as special advisor to the chancellor for Black Life at UMass Boston. The special advisor will offer guidance to him on matters of importance to Black faculty, students, and staff. The advisor will work with the leadership team to create new structures and develop new codified and customary practices designed to put UMass Boston at the forefront of excellence, engagement, and relevance on racial justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

"As scholars in education dedicated to the practice of democratic citizenship and committed to social justice, we must reflect on our privileges and act in all that we do against the systemic racism that impacts our community and the children and families and communities who we serve," he said.

## POSITION UNIVERSITY IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION MARKETPLACE



*Student-athletes Jake Adkins and Andy Walker hug after reaching the end of their 875-mile journey.*

### Men's Hockey Players Raise \$30K Rollerblading across Country for Charity

UMass Boston men's hockey players Jake Adkins and Andy Walker have been making the most of their time during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pair, who have dubbed themselves the "Men In Blades," undertook a massive trip to raise money for the American Cancer Society.

Starting July 13, the Men In Blades rollerbladed from their on-campus apartment at UMass Boston all the way to Walker's hometown in Mason,

Michigan— approximately 875 miles. They reached Michigan in 10 days, raising \$30,000 for cancer research and treatment along the way. Their journey was reported on by dozens of media outlets across the country, including *CNN*, *People Magazine*, and *ESPN*.



*Joseph Farah was named a finalist for the LeRoy Apker Award.*

### Physics Student Named Finalist for Prestigious National Academic Award

UMass Boston senior Joseph Farah was named one of seven finalists for the American Physical Society's LeRoy Apker Award, regarded as the highest honor awarded to undergraduate physics students in the United States. Farah has been a rising star in the Physics Department. Last fall the physics major and Honors College student shared in a \$3 million Breakthrough Prize for being part of the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT) Collaboration, which took the first image of a black hole. Farah was the only undergraduate on the 347-member team. Earlier last year, the Medford native received a Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, the preeminent award for undergraduates in the sciences, engineering, and mathematics.

### National Association of Division III Athletic Administrators Gives Charlie Titus Lifetime Achievement Award

The National Association of Division III Athletic Administrators named Charlie Titus, the newly retired vice chancellor of athletics and recreation, special projects and programs, the recipient of the 2020 Richard A.



*Charlie Titus*

Rasmussen Lifetime Achievement Award. The award is presented to someone who has had a significant impact on Division III during the course of his/her career.

The founding father of the Athletics Department at UMass Boston, Titus retired from the university June 30 after a career that spanned four decades. Throughout Titus's tenure, the Beacons have hoisted a combined six national championships, six NCAA regional titles, and more than 30 conference championships. Student-athletes have earned All-America status more than 50 times. Most recently, three Beacons have earned National Player/Athlete of the Year honors.



*Mascot Bobby Beacon demonstrates how to social distance on campus.*

### University Launches COVID-19 Safety Social Media Campaign

The Division of Marketing and Engagement has taken to social media to remind the community to be safe during the pandemic, by wearing masks, social distancing, wiping down equipment, hand washing, and using technology to connect. The posts on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter have grabbed the public's attention thanks to their use of UMass Boston "maskot" Bobby Beacon.

## STRENGTHEN THE UNIVERSITY'S RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ENTERPRISE



Associate Professor of Physics Alioscia Hamma is studying quantum open systems.

### Physics Professor Receives \$360K Grant to Study Transitions in Quantum Complexity

If the United States is at the forefront of the quantum information revolution, it will benefit the U.S. economy as a whole and create new employment. That's one of the reasons why the National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded Associate Professor of Physics Alioscia Hamma a three-year \$360,000 grant to study the transitions in quantum complexity. Hamma, who started his fifth year at UMass Boston this fall, says his dream is to understand black holes and build a quantum computer.

### Professor Leads Study Shedding Light on Readability and Importance of Doctor's Visit Notes

What the doctor is writing on your medical chart is no longer a mystery. Thanks to health information technology you're able to go online and see the doctor's notes about your visit. Professor of Nursing Suzanne Leveille is the lead author of a new national study that asked patients in three different health systems about their understanding of these notes. Of the 21,664 survey respondents who had read at least one note over a 12-month period, 96 percent reported understanding all or nearly all of a note they recalled reading. Study results were published this summer in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. Grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Peterson Center on Healthcare, and Cambia Health Foundation supported the work.

### Researcher Part of Study Analyzing Fall Prevention Intervention

Falls are the leading cause of injury-related death among older Americans and lead to three million emergency department visits every year. Associate Professor of Nursing and Graduate Program Director Priscilla Gazarian served as the nursing program director for the STRIDE (Strategies to Reduce Injuries and Develop Confidence in Elders) Study. The study evaluated the effectiveness of a nurse-delivered, fall-injury prevention strategy delivered through primary care. More than 100 people were involved in the study, which published findings this summer in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

### COVID Means Tobacco Use Among Sexual and Gender Minority Populations Needs to Be Addressed, Researchers Say

Two professors at UMass Boston's College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS) and graduate students from CNHS and the McCormack Graduate School are making the case for why tobacco-related health disparities among sexual and gender minority populations need to be addressed in the age of COVID-19. They have written about their findings and suggestions in a new post on *Tobacco Control*, a leading international peer-review journal addressing all aspects of tobacco use worldwide.

According to a 2011 Institute of Medicine report, 20.6 percent of lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults and 35.5 percent of transgender adults smoke cigarettes, compared to 14.9 percent of cisgender adults. Suha Ballout, an assistant professor of nursing, is the co-principal investigator of the U54-funded project. Ballout says that the research team is very concerned by what they have learned so far from checking in with study participants. Results indicate that psychological distress associated with the economic fallout arising from COVID-19 may increase risks of anxiety and depression and trigger increased use of substances like tobacco.

## MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESS

### Housing and Residential Life Prepares for a Limited Return of Students

The Housing and Residential Life team have planned for a limited number of residents returning to the campus's residence halls this fall. They prioritized housing applications for students whose families live too far away for commuting to be feasible, those few students who are enrolled in courses that cannot be effectively delivered remotely and will therefore have an on-campus component, and those who lack secure housing.

The team conducted a top-to-bottom review of its entire program to prepare to receive residents. Housing staff created a virtual community development model that features home-grown community building programs and outreach conversations with residents to talk about adjustment to college life. They are partnering with Campus Activities, Recreation, and other offices to promote virtual connections and engagement for residents to start the semester.

Additionally, the staff have created a number of Black Lives Matter action steps, including educational artwork, a Black Lives Matter Day, relationship building with the campus police department, a Black Community Engagement Series, new resident-assistant training and policies, a critical review of student conduct case response and management, and initial steps for a housing diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plan for the residential community.

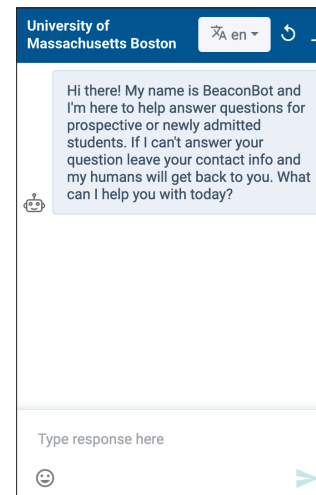
### UMass Boston Receives First-gen Forward Designation

The Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA), recently designated UMass Boston as a First-gen Forward Institution. The designation recognizes institutions of higher education who have demonstrated a commitment to improving experiences and advancing outcomes of first-generation college students. Selected institutions receive professional development, community-building experiences, and a first look at the center's research and resources.

UMass Boston intends to promote first-generation student success in a number of ways, which include providing resources and support for first-generation students and their families during orientation, identifying and creating new opportunities for mentoring and academic support, and developing of a first-year Living Learning Community accessible to students living on and off campus.

### Managing Enrollment Does Not Stop at 5 p.m.

The Division of Enrollment Management has introduced evening appointments and coordinated a series of Zoom programs to address families' concerns and keep them updated on the decisions UMass Boston has been making for the fall. Large-scale Zoom programs kicked off with a series of Parent and Family Happy Hours to help families understand how we were handling COVID-19 and to support their decision to select UMass Boston. Representatives from Housing, Health Services, the Bursar's Office, Dean of Students Office, and even the interim chancellor helped share information and answer questions. Each offering has attracted over 600 students and families.



*The "BeaconBot" widget, available on all admissions-related umb.edu webpages*

### UMass Boston Engaging Students 24/7

UMass Boston received grant funding to introduce AdmitHub, a texting/chatbot platform aimed at supporting student success. The Division of Enrollment Management piloted the tool in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid Services to bolster accepted student enrollment and help students arrive more prepared in the fall. With the AdmitHub tool, which has been branded BeaconBot, a widget is available on umb.edu webpages and visitors can pose questions to the bot 24 hours a day. The platform also provides a texting feature.

Since going live in May, Enrollment Management has seen a high level of engagement with over 30 percent of students choosing to interact with the BeaconBot. Currently a collaborative team representing a wide variety of offices and services on campus is working to roll out AdmitHub to continuing students. Students will receive texts alerting them to important deadlines, highlighting resources, and encouraging participation in campus

## IMPROVE DELIVERY OF ADMINISTRATION AND IT SERVICES

### University Health Services Plans for More Community Members on Campus

In close collaboration with numerous university departments and public health guidance and officials, University Health Services has worked this summer to plan and execute modifications in its services to serve the expected addition of a limited number of students, residents, faculty, and staff on campus this fall.

To do so, the UHS General Medicine Clinic will offer all aspects of the existing scope of care except for Upper Respiratory Illness (URI) and COVID-19 services. The clinic will be available by appointment only. Patients seeking services will be assessed by phone and then scheduled for Telemedicine or in-person visits as appropriate. Telemedicine medical and counseling services are available for all students, 24/7. Those presenting URI and Covid-19 symptoms will be diverted to a newly developed temporary facility — separate from the UHS General Medicine Clinic — which will provide all testing and care related to URI and COVID-19.

### University Names Interim Director of Athletics



Darlene Gordon was appointed as interim director of athletics, effective July 1, upon the retirement of longtime Vice Chancellor for the Division of Athletics and Recreation, Special Projects and Programs Charlie Titus.

Gordon has worked closely with Titus for the past two years. In her new interim role, she will oversee a department that sponsors 18 intercollegiate varsity programs with over 300 student-athletes; partners with Boston College High School and the Reggie Lewis Center to provide access to lacrosse, soccer, tennis, and track facilities; and oversees recreational programming for the campus community.

*Darlene Gordon*

### ScheduleOnce Makes Connecting to UMass Boston Convenient

The Division of Enrollment Management is offering students the opportunity to self-schedule appointments with a counselor in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions using new software. In June, the department implemented ScheduleOnce by OnceHub, which is embedded on the admission webpages so that students and families can easily schedule appointments with an admissions counselor. Admissions also offers Banter with a Beacon appointments in which prospective students can chat with a current student. In the first nine weeks of using the new software, 633 total meetings were scheduled. Undergraduate Admissions has also taken advantage of the opportunity to integrate the appointments with Zoom, for virtual face-to-face interactions, and with Salesforce for data collection.

This tool is also being used by other UMass campuses. In the interest of shared services, UMass Boston is working with central procurement on a system-wide license to realize a cost savings.

## DEVELOP FIRST-RATE INFRASTRUCTURE

### Prep Work Begins on SDQD Project

Construction and demolition work for the Substructure Demolition and Quad Development Project has started. This project forms part of the 25-Year Campus Master Plan, which will transform the heart of the UMass Boston campus.

Over the next year the Science Center, swimming pool, areas of the plaza, and part of the substructure will be demolished. This will allow construction of a new quadrangle, which will form the center of the campus.

Contractors have already started “soft stripping” the Science Center, the pool building, and the plaza. Preparation work included removal of the trees on the plaza; as part of the new quadrangle, there will be replacement trees planted to transform the area into a beautiful and functional centerpiece of the campus.



*Work has begun to remove the plaza.*

## INCREASE ENDOWMENT

### UMass Boston Raises More Than \$19.1M in Gifts

During fiscal year 2020, UMass Boston received over \$19.1 million in gifts, a 61 percent increase over FY19's total of \$11.8 million. A total of \$19.8 million in new pledges was raised, 10.3 percent ahead of last year's record-breaking \$17.6 million and shattering our historical annual average by a factor of four.

The principal and leadership gifts team helped secure 28 new pledges in the \$25,000–\$500,000 range. University Advancement also garnered five commitments at the seven-figure-plus level, all from generous alumni and friends of UMass Boston rather than pledges from corporations or foundations. The Alumni Engagement team has deftly adjusted to a remote modality of attracting our alumni community to virtual events, with over 900 attendees participating in a dozen gatherings hosted during the last few months of the fiscal year.

### Robert and Diane Hildreth Donate \$500K in Name of Former Vice Chancellor

Robert and Diane Hildreth have established the Gina M. Cappello Endowed Legacy Scholarship in honor of the former vice chancellor for university advancement who passed away in a tragic car accident in June 2016. As a member of the Chancellor's Board of Visitors, Bob Hildreth had built a close working relationship with Cappello during her decade on campus. He felt this was a wonderful way to honor the impact that Cappello made on so many of UMass Boston's donors, alumni, and students. The Hildreth endowment will support financial aid for motivated, high-achieving students who cannot otherwise afford to pursue higher education.

### Alumna Establishes \$100K Endowment to Support Fellow Nursing Students

Audrey Jasey, a two-time alumna with more than 20 years of experience in acute-care nursing, recently established the Audrey Jasey Endowed Scholarship to Promote Health Equity in Nursing and Health Sciences Fund. The fund will provide scholarships to full-time College of Nursing and Health Sciences juniors and seniors from New England whose focus of study is to reduce health disparities in medically underserved areas. Jasey is also on track to earn her third degree from UMass Boston, studying nursing health policy and nursing research in the CNHS doctoral program.



*Katherine Newman*

### Katherine Newman Fund Will Provide Emergency Student Aid

UMass Boston alumni and friends have established the Katherine S. Newman Beacon Student Fund, an endowment that will support emergency student aid and recognize the former interim chancellor for her service. The effort, led by alumnus Art Mabbett and Board of Visitors Chair Charlie Desmond, raised more than \$125,000 before it was announced to Newman.

Starting in May, a small group of alumni and friends quietly joined together with the idea of honoring Newman as she prepared to leave UMass Boston. Some senior colleagues at UMass Boston joined in June, and together they helped establish an endowed fund to honor her two years as interim chancellor.

With the new fund established in her name, Newman decided that since the Beacon Student Aid Fund relies on annual donations to operate and there is no guarantee of future donations, she wanted to direct her endowed fund, which operates in perpetuity, to address a similar need.

### Alumna Mary Thistle '83 Supports College of Management with Scholarship

College of Management Advisory Board member Mary Thistle recently established The Mary Thistle '83 and Family Endowed Scholarship Fund to provide scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students in the College of Management. This endowed scholarship will provide financial resources and encouragement through an annual award.

## DEVELOP A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN PUBLIC SERVICE



PhD student Natalie Shellito asks the candidates a question during the August 18 Senate debate.

### UMass Boston Cohosts Democratic Senate Debates

UMass Boston's McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies joined WBUR, *The Boston Globe*, and WCVB-TV in hosting two debates this summer between Senator Edward J. Markey and his challenger, Representative Joseph P. Kennedy III, including their last meeting before the September 1 primary.

Thousands tuned in online and on television to watch as Krystal-Gayle O'Neill, a global governance and human security PhD student, and Natalie Shellito, a PhD student in gerontology, asked the candidates questions about mounting college costs and protections for international students.

The McCormack Grad School has hosted more than 15 debates over the last few years as part of this collaboration with Boston media outlets.

### College of Education and Human Development Supporting Boston Public Schools During Pandemic

The College of Education and Human Development is continuing a collaborative initiative with various higher education partners in the Greater Boston area to explore ways to support Boston Public Schools as we all navigate teaching and learning during COVID-19. The college facilitates weekly sessions with deans and associate deans of various local universities (including Roxbury Community College, Bunker Hill Community College, Boston College, Boston University, Lesley University, and Harvard) and administrators within Boston Public Schools to explore short-term solutions, summer supports, and long-term engagement.

### Gastón Institute Releases Key Research About COVID-19 Impact on Massachusetts Latinos

This summer the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy released "COVID-19 and Latinos in Massachusetts," a research report to better understand the social determinants of health shaping the distribution of COVID-19 related morbidity and mortality in the state.

The race and ethnicity of 35 percent of COVID-19 cases are unknown in Massachusetts. Of the known cases, however, researchers say a racial-ethnic disproportionality is evident. Cases among Blacks account for 14.4 percent of the total cases although they account for 7 percent of the state's population, while Latinos (who make up 12.3 percent of the state's population) account for 30 percent of all COVID-19 cases.

Recommendations for policies and further research include adding more multilingual staff and culturally competent approaches for conducting contact tracing and COVID-19 treatment and prevention; protecting worker's rights, including their health and safety at work and at home; and ensuring access to universal health care, including for undocumented immigrants.

### Pension Action Center Hits Milestone

The Pension Action Center, housed in the McCormack Graduate School's Gerontology Institute, recently served its ten thousandth client and has now recovered over \$62 million in benefits, every penny of which goes to its clients. The Pension Action Center is staffed by experienced pension lawyers and pension counselors who can help people understand their rights under pension law and claim the retirement income benefits that they have earned.

### UMass Boston Helps Advance Administrative Justice in Rwanda

The Center for Peace, Democracy, and Development (CPDD) at the McCormack Graduate School was awarded a \$168,000 extension earlier this year, bringing their total funding to \$1.129 million for the Strengthening Rwandan Administrative Justice initiative. The project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), seeks to strengthen administrative justice in Rwanda. Led by CPDD Fellow Malcolm Russell-Einhorn, the project is heavily engaged in public outreach to citizens regarding their rights and the training of public officials in adherence to legally prescribed procedures in rendering decisions and mediating disputes.

## RENEW THE FACULTY



*Six faculty members participate in a Teach Fall 2020 informational session.*

### Virtual Information Sessions Prepare UMass Boston Faculty for Remote Semester

A series of virtual information sessions are equipping UMass Boston faculty with the tools and resources necessary to engage with students during the remote fall 2020 semester. The live webinar sessions, called Teach Fall 2020, offer faculty the opportunity to hear from colleagues regarding best practices for remote learning and student engagement.

Since its launch earlier this summer, Teach Fall 2020 has brought together faculty members from all departments to discuss various strategies to promote engagement with students in a remote modality. Associate CIO Apurva Mehta said that each session brings between 125 and 140 faculty members. Sessions have also explored methods to remotely support students' overall well-being, especially in light of recent events.

### Assistant Professor of Public Health Receives \$800K EPA Grant

Lorena Estrada-Martínez, an assistant professor of environment and public health in the School for the Environment, recently received an \$800,000 three-year grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to conduct a study called "Community Driven Assessment of Environmental Health Risks in Vieques, Puerto Rico."

This study arose from the EPA's request for a group that would work with the community to study the contamination of the soil, seas, plant, animal and human population of Vieques, due to the 60-plus years of U.S. military occupation and exercises that included gun fire, bombing, artillery testing, and chemical and biological weapons and which potentially left behind materials like lithium, perchlorate, TNT, napalm, and depleted uranium.

### Zuckerberg Leadership Prize Awarded to UMass Boston Researcher

Rebecca Herst, director of the Sustainable Solutions Lab, has been awarded the 2020 Zuckerberg Endowed Leadership Prize for her work in climate adaptation, preparing marginalized communities for the effects of climate change, and developing sustainable and equitable solutions that prioritize their needs. The Zuckerberg Prize recognizes faculty and staff across the UMass system for leadership in helping the university accomplish its goals. The two-year, \$100,000 award provides \$30,000 toward research and service activities and a \$20,000 stipend for a total of \$50,000 each year.

### Counseling and School Psychology Professor Receives Lightner Witmer Award

Assistant Professor of Counseling and School Psychology Lindsay Fallon is one of this year's recipients of the Lightner Witmer Award. Presented by the American Psychological Association's Division 16: Division of School Psychology, this is the biggest award an early career faculty member can receive in the field of school psychology. The winner of the award will be invited to submit a manuscript for the annual awards issue of *The School Psychologist* and to give a presentation the following year at the meeting of the American Psychological Association.

## DEVELOP A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN PUBLIC SERVICE (CONT.)

### ICI Creates New Publications Guide for Day and Employment Services During COVID-19

The Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston has posted a set of publications to help professionals, individuals, and families develop new approaches to providing day and employment services and vocational rehabilitation and to supporting community life engagement during these challenging times. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, public agencies, day and employment service providers, people with disabilities, and family members have had to quickly adjust to changes in how services and supports are provided. The guides can be accessed at [covid19.communityinclusion.org](https://covid19.communityinclusion.org).



## CONTINUE A FOCUS ON DIVERSITY AND POSITIVE CLIMATE



Panelists discuss how UMass Boston can address racial injustice on campus and beyond.

### Trotter Institute Hosts 'How to Be Antiracist at UMass Boston'

As the Black Lives Matter movement continues to gain momentum nationwide, the Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture hosted a Zoom panel this summer discussing how UMass Boston can address racial injustice on campus and beyond.

Panelists discussed employing and promoting Black faculty and staff, supporting the campus's ethnic research institutes, including Black community members in policy conversations and diversity trainings, and making the campus feel more like a home for its students.

Panelists included Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco; Marshall Milner, executive director of science training programs; Associate Professor Tara Parker, chair of the Department of Leadership in Education; Kamiya Parkin, president of the UMass Boston NAACP Chapter; Tracy Beard, a PhD student in global inclusion; and alum Imari Paris Jeffries, executive director of King Boston. Trotter Institute Director Quito Swan moderated the discussion.

### Office of Social Justice Leadership and Service Hosts a Week of Action

The newly minted Office of Social Justice Leadership and Service (comprised of Student Multicultural Affairs, U-ACCESS, Interfaith Campus Ministry, and the Office of Student Leadership and Community Engagement) in the Division of Student Affairs offered a Week of Action for the campus in August. It prompted the UMass Boston campus to double down on dismantling the oppressive systems and structures of racism and white supremacy. OSJL created a website and social media campaign that contained educational resources and connections to advocacy and philanthropic opportunities. During the week, the webpage had over 1,100 interactions and many departments shared their actions through Instagram.

### UMass Boston Puts Social Equity at the Core of COVID-19 Response

Created to ensure a high-quality academic experience for all in the coming academic year, the Academic Continuity Task Force (ACTF) at UMass Boston comprises 25 faculty, students, staff, and administrators across the university colleges and schools. The task force is committed to providing an effective learning environment and academic experience to all students, with particular concern for the most vulnerable. The goal of ACTF has been to respond meaningfully and substantively to two major crises: the new COVID-19 health pandemic and the centuries-old pandemic of systemic racial inequities exposed by COVID-19. These interrelated crises have demanded an integrated response.

Working on five strategic trajectories through sub-committees, the ACTF developed recommendations grounded in the health and wellness of the community. The vision the task force has developed includes UMass Boston's transformation into a leading public anti-racist research university. To this end, the broad-based Restorative Justice Initiative pioneered by the task force seeks to engage the community on campus and beyond into a unifying mission of social justice and equity. Immediate actions the ACTF has advanced involve, among others, the creation of protocols for remote instruction and on-campus instruction where necessary, expansion of Mental Health First Aid training, development of resources for students and faculty to engage more robustly in the remote classroom model, and ensuring physical distance while strengthening social connectivity.

## ENHANCE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE



*Kelsey Edmond was selected to be a Rappaport Public Policy Fellow.*

### **PhD Student to Research Boston's COVID-Related Initiatives Through Rappaport Public Policy Fellowship**

Kelsey Edmond, a PhD student in UMass Boston's McCormack Graduate School, has been selected to be one of this year's Rappaport Public Policy Fellows.

Funded and administered by Harvard's Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston, the fellowship is a paid 10-week summer internship that gives talented graduate students the opportunity to help public leaders address key problems and, in doing so, learn how public policy is created and implemented. The 20 fellows participate in a weekly seminar series and receive a \$7,000 stipend for the summer.

Edmond just finished her second year in UMass Boston's Public Policy PhD program. This summer she worked at the City of Boston's Department of Innovation and Technology, conducting research on the free or low-cost Internet services or devices Boston's Digital Equity Fund is supplying to qualifying low-income residents in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Honors College Pilots Summer Life Sciences Careers Program**

Over the summer, the Honors College piloted the new Honors College Life Sciences Careers Program. More than 30 online events aimed at improving students' skills in scientific research, scientific communication, and career exploration were held. Topics included scientific seminars, discussions on how to read scientific literature, student and alumni spotlights, resources for students to learn how to apply for jobs, and working in different fields. The program also offered one-on-one science mentoring appointments, in which students could meet with Honors College staff scientists to workshop their resumes and personal statements, do mock interviews for graduate programs, and discuss their career plans and goals.



*Ingrid Hastedt researches health disparities in autism.*

### **Clinical Psychology Student Selected as Inaugural Scholar for Advocacy and Mentoring Program for Diversity**

PhD student Ingrid Hastedt, 28, has been selected to be an inaugural scholar in the Society for the Advancement of Psychotherapy's Advocacy and Mentoring Program for Diversity (AMPD). The AMPD is a two-year program designed to provide exposure and mentoring for doctoral students who have an interest in learning about the leadership of the Society for the Advancement of Psychotherapy.

Hastedt, a rising fourth-year student in the Clinical Psychology PhD Program from Guatemala City, Guatemala, has worked alongside UMass Boston professors Abbey Eisenhower and Alice Carter on the ABCD Early Screening Project, working to identify children between 14- and 36-months of age who are at risk for autism spectrum disorder and other behavioral issues.