



University of Massachusetts Boston
Spring Convocation 2024

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Program

National Anthem Instrumental

Violin: Nic Walsh '24, Music
Cello: Nicholas Portillo, Fourth Grade, Paul E. Dever School,
Boston Music Project

Welcome

Pratima Prasad, *Dean*
College of Liberal Arts

Presentation of Departmental Distinctions

Jennifer Gregg, *Associate Dean*

Presentation of Senior Honors

David Pantalone, *Associate Dean*

Recognition of John F. Kennedy Award Nominees

Rafael Jaen, *Associate Dean*
Joanna Y. Lam
Nicholas William Schiavo

Presentation of Awards

Africana Studies Department
Professor Tony Van Der Meer

Anthropology
Professor Patrick Clarkin

Art
Professor Lorenzo Buonanno

Asian Studies
Professor Sana Haroon

Classics and Religious Studies
Professor Jason von Ehrenkrook

Communication
Professor Julie Lin Zhu

Economics
Professor Michael Carr

English & Creative Writing
Professor Hugh O'Connell

History
Professor Nicholas Juravich

Human Services
Professor Carroy Ferguson

Latin American & Iberian Studies
Professor Nayelli Castro-Ramirez

Modern Languages, Literatures & Cultures
Professor Claudia Esposito

Performing Arts
Professor Carrie Ann Quinn

Philosophy
Professor Yumiko Inukai

Political Science
Professor Paul Kowert

Psychology
Professor Laurel Wainwright

Sociology
Professor Reef Youngreen

Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies
Professor Elora Chowdhury

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Departmental Distinctions

Ceide Sarai Alvarado
Psychology (BS)

LaDawn T. Baker
Labor Studies

Joseph Gerard Barrasso
American Studies

Kieran Michael Browne
Psychology (BS)

Rose Marie Burrows
Classics

Lucy Camarata
History

Isabella Rose Carey
Communication

Marianna Sofia Carey
Economics

Brice Carson
Psychology (BA)

Amelie Joy Chernoch
Art

Dulce Maria Cisneros
*Women's, Gender and
Sexuality Studies*

Annalee Rhea Clough
Music

Fiona Erin Conway
Global Affairs

Erin Lindsey Cornelius
English

Mary-Katherine Craffey
*Women's, Gender and
Sexuality Studies*

Alice de Castro
International Relations

Bianca Lourdes Deras
Psychology (BA)

Catherine Jane Dickenson
Anthropology

Abdelmoumene Djellouli
French

Robert Charles Doherty
Criminology & Criminal Justice

Oumou Fall
Philosophy, Law & Ethics

Rehanna Lissette Fernandes
Nunez
English

Isabelle Marie Freda
Philosophy

Elivette Enid Garcia
Social Psychology

Wendy P. Giblin
Human Services

Benjamin Francis Giunta
Psychology (BA)

Alex Gontkovic
Economics

Joanna Y. Lam
Economics

Robert William LeBron
Political Science

Cotey Joseph Martinez
History

Emma Noel McEleney
Psychology (BA)

Eleni Minias
Asian Studies

Georgio Mitri
Criminology & Criminal Justice

Sara Marie Molner
Philosophy & Public Policy

Joseph Morisset
Criminology & Criminal Justice

Joseph Morisset
Psychology (BA)

Caroline Mortell
Criminology & Criminal Justice

Isabella Rita Nadeau
Criminology & Criminal Justice

David-John Pang
Sociology

Ashley Elizabeth Pierce
Political Science

Alexander Joseph Quadros
English

Jude Daniel Registre
Theatre Arts

Jamie Kathryn Roballo
Psychology (BA)

Jacob Howard Robin
Communication

Valentina Prada Romero
Anthropology

Sofya Savchenkova
*Interdisciplinary
Concentration*

Nicholas Schultz
Criminology & Criminal Justice

Hatydzha Muradovna Yelliyeva
Communication

Senior Honors

Sama Abu-Hasan <i>Psychology (BS)</i>	Kerveline Francois <i>Human Services</i>	Rochelle Marie Paquette <i>Human Services</i>
Samantha Petra Alexander <i>Art</i>	Jennifer Friedrich <i>Art</i>	Genesis Carmen Pina Baez <i>Human Services</i>
Michael Leighton Atkins <i>Art</i>	Savannah Louise Furbush <i>Human Services</i>	Isak Justin Ring <i>Art</i>
Valerie Avila Giraldo <i>Political Science</i>	Angie Marie Gomez <i>Human Services</i>	Joseph Raul Rodriguez <i>Music</i>
Marie Dulisca Bourdeau <i>Human Services</i>	Cody James Grassi <i>Human Services</i>	Samantha Ewa Roszczenko <i>Political Science</i>
Madison Faye Brun <i>Art</i>	Chris Gutierrez <i>Art</i>	Karuna Sharma <i>Psychology (BS)</i>
Marianna Sofia Carey <i>History</i>	Rin Hurd <i>Political Science</i>	Leticia Sidney <i>Art</i>
Dulce Maria Cisneros <i>Criminology & Criminal Justice</i>	Zarwah Kanwal <i>Psychology (BS)</i>	Karla Alicia Solito <i>Political Science</i>
Annalee Rhea Clough <i>Music</i>	Joanna Y. Lam <i>Economics</i>	Jillian Steeves <i>English</i>
Cailyn Kelly Davies <i>Creative Writing</i>	Robert William LeBron <i>Political Science</i>	Melody Mutlu Stelmaszek <i>Psychology (BA)</i>
Nalani Briana Depina <i>Creative Writing</i>	Louhelaine Legros <i>Human Services</i>	Percy Truong <i>English</i>
William E. Doncaster <i>Art</i>	Limaira Leon <i>Human Services</i>	Lydia Virginia Uhlar <i>English</i>
Idalina S. Dosouto <i>Human Services</i>	Makenna McBirney <i>Art</i>	Nic Walsh <i>Music</i>
Enrico Farago <i>Human Services</i>	Isabella Rita Nadeau <i>Criminology & Criminal Justice</i>	Kaley Whipkey <i>Criminology & Criminal Justice</i>
Dacey Farrell <i>Human Services</i>	John Patrick Newsham <i>Music</i>	Natalie Wright <i>Human Services</i>
Ryan Michael Fioretti <i>Creative Writing</i>	David-John Pang <i>Sociology</i>	Pedro Youssef <i>Art</i>

Students Nominated for the John F. Kennedy Award

Joanna Y. Lam, *double major in Communication and Economics, minor in Public Policy*
Nicholas William Schiavo, *major in Political Science*

Undergraduate Awards

Clinton M. Jean Prize

(Africana Studies Department)

The Clinton M. Jean Prize in Africana Studies was established in honor of Professor Clinton Jean (1936–1993), former Professor of Black Studies. Born in Trinidad, Professor Jean came to UMass Boston after completing his studies at Columbia University and his PhD in sociology at Brandeis University. A dedicated teacher and scholar, Professor Jean published a number of articles and an acclaimed book, Behind the Eurocentric Veil: The Search for African Realities. His book, published by the University of Massachusetts Press, has been a pioneering work in the area of Afrocentrism, which critiques Eurocentric traditions of social and historical analysis. His death was a major loss to his family, friends, and the field of Africana studies.

The Clinton M. Jean Prize is given each year to a graduating senior who has the highest grade point average in the Department of Africana Studies.

Ummil-Khair Yusuf

A graduating senior with a major in Africana Studies, Ummil-Khair Yusuf will be continuing at UMass Boston to pursue a master's degree in education. Ummil-Khair spent over a decade running culturally-affirmative literacy programs for youth, before moving into the classroom. She

hopes to blend Africana Studies and her expertise in education to create culturally-affirming curricula for use throughout school systems. Ummil-Khair is a mother of six beautiful children and loves connecting children with literature in inspiring ways.

The Harriet Tubman Essay Prize

(Africana Studies Department)

The Harriet Tubman Essay Prize has been established in the Department of Africana Studies to stimulate student research on issues of Black freedom and resistance. The prize has been named after the great nineteenth-century freedom fighter Harriet Tubman, who escaped from slavery but returned to the South to rescue at least two hundred Blacks from slavery. She has been called “the greatest heroine of the age,” a freedom fighter who put her own freedom in jeopardy in order to secure freedom for others.

The prize is given every year to the student who best exemplifies courage and determination to succeed academically against all odds.

Stephanie Claudia Germain

Stephanie came to UMass Boston as a first-year student in 2016. She initially sought a degree in early education, as she had dreamed of being a teacher since she was in preschool herself. In her very first semester, however, she found a home in the Africana Studies Department and soon became a double major. Overcoming many challenges, including the global pandemic, housing changes, loss of financial aid, and CLEP exams, she eventually completed one degree

program in Africana Studies with the support of professors like Dr. Tony Vandermeer and Dr. Keith Jones. She triumphantly walked the stage in May of 2023 and now proudly hangs her degree on the wall. Equipped with the education and community-building skills she developed at UMass Boston, she now puts her passions and commitments into practice working in youth leadership development for the YMCA.

Sally Goss Memorial Prize *(Anthropology Department)*

Since 1984, the Department of Anthropology has awarded an annual prize in honor of the late Sally Goss. Sally transferred to UMass Boston from Middlesex Community College and completed a bachelor's degree in anthropology. She was accepted into our master's program in historical archaeology and worked toward her degree for one and a half years, until her death from cancer in 1982. She was the mother of two sons, and throughout her student career she balanced the conflicting demands of home, school, and work, as well as her illness. Sally was a valued member of our community, and her family and the Anthropology Department are proud to honor her memory with this prize.

The Sally Goss Prize is awarded to an anthropology major who is a returning female student, who has demonstrated academic excellence, and whose education in anthropology has been especially meaningful to her because of the obstacles she has had to overcome to obtain it.

Valentina Prada Romero

Valentina is an anthropology major with a minor in Native and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) who is widely recognized as mature, professional, ambitious, hard-working, empathetic, resilient, and artistically talented. Valentina identifies as multi-ethnic Indigenous Muysca from Colombia, where her family endured paramilitary violence and displacement. After coming to the U.S., Valentina enrolled in community college, but dropped out after finding it disconnected in reality from her experiences. After years of hitchhiking, traveling, and community volunteering in South America, she returned to pursue her degree at UMass Boston. On our campus she thrives with stellar academic performance and as coordinator of the inaugural NAIS student

Research Hub, president of the Native and Indigenous Students' Association, and a research assistant in the Latin American Historical Archaeology Laboratory.

As a female student of non-traditional age who returned to college having flourished after significant life challenges, she is an inspiration to all. She states, "All of these experiences have made me position myself in anthropology as an activist first, seeking to support Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and peasant communities in our resistance against extractivism and settler colonial violence and in building a future that supports the integrity and wellbeing of all living relatives, human and non-human."

The Ruth Butler Scholarship (Art Department)

The Ruth Butler Scholarship was established in honor of Ruth Butler, Professor Emerita of Art at UMass Boston and a distinguished scholar in the history of sculpture. While a student, Professor Butler won a Fulbright Fellowship that allowed her to pursue research in France. Recognizing that her trip abroad was a life-changing event, she would like art majors at UMass Boston to have a similar opportunity. The award provides an outstanding art major with funds for travel outside the United States for the purpose of studying and making art. Preference is given to projects that promote the student's understanding of a culture other than the student's own.

Leticia Sidney

Leticia is one of two winners of this year's Butler scholarship. She is a standout student, and the faculty of the Art and Art History Department have praised her "dedication, creative curiosity, and academic excellence." Time and again, she has proven herself to be "deeply curious, hard-working, attentive, and thoughtful." At UMass Boston, Leticia has dedicated her time to learning multiple art forms, with her moving image art project receiving the Blue Beacon Award, the top prize awarded in Cinema Studies. Leticia

has also developed a passion for printmaking at UMass Boston. For her Butler project, she will study historic and modern printmaking techniques in France, one of the principal centers for avant-garde printmaking from the nineteenth century to the present. While there, she will hone her printmaking abilities as an apprentice to local printmakers. We look forward to seeing how her experience will further shape her own artwork and contribute to her future endeavors.

Logan Anthony Nowicki

Logan is one of two winners of this year's Butler scholarship. In his time at UMass Boston, Logan has developed his talents as a photographer, for which he previously was awarded the Shook Documentary Photography Prize (2023). Logan is fascinated by the fleeting and constantly changing world of fashion and public perception. For this project, Logan will travel to Milan, Italy, to document and research fashion photography. While there, his primary activity will be docu-

menting and learning from the city's fashion week—a central event of the industry. His travel to Europe will also include periods of work in other major fashion centers such as Paris and London. Our faculty have described him as a "dedicated, talented and driven" student who displays "an eagerness to learn." We are excited to support his work in Europe and are confident that it will be an important step in his blossoming career.

The Melissa Shook Documentary Photography Award (Art Department)

The Art & Art History Department at the University of Massachusetts Boston established the Melissa Shook Documentary Photography Award in 2022, honoring the work and legacy of artist, educator, and activist Melissa Shook (1939-2020). She epitomized every aspect of the creative practices in visual arts and amplified our pedagogical mission in the department where Shook taught for thirty-three years. The award provides an annual prize to one or more students or graduating seniors who demonstrate exceptional skill or promise in photography, with a preference for documentary photography skills. The Melissa Shook Documentary Photography Award is made possible with a generous gift by Nancy Lutz '82 and her husband Wendell.

William (Bill) E. Doncaster

Bill is awarded the Melissa Shook Documentary Photography Award for his dedication to photography as an art form. Most recently he has created a series of images focused on ethnic festivals in the Boston metropolitan area. This work is part of an honors project he is completing this spring and will be exhibited under the title *fest! Ethnic Celebrations in America*. Bill's

work captures the diversity of these gatherings with honesty, compassion, and sometimes humor. He says, "My goal is to present a series of images documenting cultural celebrations, and in doing so depict what is in common through our diversity, as well as the joy inherent in the gathering of human beings over music, food, and ethnic pageantry."

Michael Lafargue Award for Excellence in Asian Studies (Asian Studies Department)

This award, named after the first director of Asian studies, is given to an exceptional graduating major for outstanding academic achievement in the field of Asian studies and who shows great promise in his or her future pursuits, whether academic, nonprofit, public sector, or entrepreneurial.

Dong Wang

Dong returned to UMass Boston for a second bachelor's degree in 2023, and has been a model student in and beyond the classroom. He has distinguished himself through his exceptional intellectual curiosity, enthusiastic class participation, and passion for learning about cultures. Faculty also cite his continuous effort to improve. What has perhaps stood out most is his contributions in class.

As one of his professors writes, "When Dong is enrolled, the course is always better. . . . Some of his insights have been so valuable that they affected my approach to teaching parts of my courses." We congratulate Dong, and are delighted that he will remain at UMass Boston to pursue a master's degree in international relations.

Outstanding Achievement in Classical Studies (Classics Department)

The Outstanding Achievement in Classical Studies Award is given each year to honor a graduating student for exceptional and distinguished performance in the study of the ancient Greek and Roman classics. The award recognizes academic excellence respectively in classical language and philology and in the broad-based interdisciplinary study of classical literature, history, and culture.

Rose Marie Burrows

Rose is a creative, intelligent, diligent student with exceptional skills in mastering factual details and grammatical minutiae. But she especially excels as a researcher and writer, exhibiting a sophisticated capacity to analyze a wide range of primary source material while making broader connections across literary and chronological boundaries. A paper on mortuary practices in ancient Rome, for example, probes archaeological and literary sources—ranging from eulogies and medical texts to the evidence for gravediggers and crematoria—to present a convincing discussion of the physical and emotional dimensions of death and dying in the Roman world. Her capstone paper likewise

examines a diverse array of sources and types of evidence, including literature, art, and lawcourt speeches, to explore the intersection of sexuality with ancient Athenian public life. In classroom discussions, Rose consistently raises insightful questions and perceptive observations, bringing her lively and creative mind, combined with her sensitive reading of assigned texts and knowledge gleaned from other coursework, to bear on the topics under consideration. For these reasons, the faculty of the Department of Classics and Religious Studies are pleased to award Rose Burrows with the Outstanding Achievement in Classical Studies Prize.

Robert Risse Prize in Communication Studies

(Communication Department)

The Robert Risse Prize honors a graduating senior for superior performance in communication in the College of Liberal Arts. The award commemorates Professor Robert Risse, one of the founders of UMass Boston's original Communication Studies Program. Professor Risse conceived and designed courses; developed and taught curricula in television fundamentals and production; and, early on, employed computer technology to enhance the study of imagery and sound. He directed the program for most of its first fifteen years, prior to the establishment of the Communication Department in 2013. He personally advised hundreds of students about their options in the field of communication.

Joanna Y. Lam

Joanna has double majored in communication and economics, with a minor in public policy. Her honors thesis advisor has lauded her for “creativity, organization, and tenacity as a student and a researcher.”

Committed to mentorship, community-building, and empowering underrepresented groups, Joanna is the founding president of both the Gym Buddies Club and Amigurumi Ami Club at UMass Boston. She has created inclusive communities that promote health and wellness among students. As an Honors College ambassador and peer mentor for the College of Liberal Arts, she has significantly impacted her peers' academic and personal lives.

Professionally, Joanna's strategic contributions to the University of Massachusetts System President's Office, and Boston City Hall as an intern, further showcase her capacity for impactful public service and civic engagement.

Joanna embodies the qualities that the Robert Risse Prize in Communication seeks to recognize: academic excellence, leadership, community engagement, and a profound impact on her surroundings. Her achievements and contributions reflect her exceptional character, making her a deserving recipient of this award.

Leonard J. Kirsch Memorial Prize

(Economics Department)

Leonard J. Kirsch was a member of the Department of Economics at UMass Boston from its first years until his early death in 1977. He held a PhD in economics from Harvard University, and was the author of Soviet Wages: Changes in Structure and Administration since 1956 and the editor of the English-language edition of The Developing Countries: Employment and Capital Investment, by S. A. Kuz'min. Lenny's devotion to his students, his brilliant classroom performances, and his distinguished contributions to the field of labor economics made him a fine representative of the university's mission. During good times and hard times, as the university grew and as it had its share of troubles, Lenny always found a way to keep us moving forward—and he kept us laughing along the way. Upon his death, the department decided to give its annual prize in his name, both to honor his memory and to honor the students who receive the award.

Alessio Dominick Pressamarita

Alessio Pressamarita is on track to graduate from UMass Boston with degrees in exercise science and economics. Originally passionate about studying physical therapy and life sciences, Alessio's focus shifted in his junior year toward the complexities of financial markets and macroeconomics. This pivotal change led him to step away from the university's baseball team to fully commit to his new career direction. Completing his economics coursework in just two years, Alessio has shown remarkable commitment and adaptability.

Alongside his studies, he works as a personal trainer, utilizing his exercise science background to enhance others' lives, while interning at the

Massachusetts Municipal Association, where he applies economic theories in real-world contexts. Additionally, Alessio actively manages a model portfolio in preparation for a future in finance.

As Alessio approaches a new chapter, he is motivated by the prospects of empowering others through sound money management and maximization of financial returns. His path at UMass Boston, characterized by steadfast resilience and a continuous pursuit of his evolving interests, affirms his conviction that truly everything happens for a reason, and that you have to accept the good just as willingly as the bad.

Joann P. Stewart Prize (Economics Department)

Professor Emerita Joann P. Stewart retired from UMass Boston in 1993, after spending most of her academic career at Boston State College. In 1969, she earned the first PhD awarded to a woman by the Economics Department of Boston University. Her scholarly interests have focused on the roles of women in economics and of unions in public life. In recognition of her contributions to the university and her encouragement of students, this prize is awarded each year to an outstanding female economics major.

Joanna Y. Lam

Joanna is an undergraduate senior who will be graduating this May. She is a double major in communication and economics and has a minor in public policy. She is a peer mentor with CLA First!, an Honors College ambassador, and is currently interning with the UMass President's Office under the Academic Affairs and Analytics Department. In her free time, Joanna enjoys crocheting stuffed animals and going to the gym. She wanted to share her interests with her fellow peers and founded the Amigurumi Ami Club to teach others how to crochet and the Gym Buddies Club.

Joanna is deeply interested in the higher education landscape, in particular, who benefits from higher education and why. Joanna's thesis is titled "*Is your degree worth it?: A cost benefit analysis of college enrollment in Greater Boston*" and serves to analyze the differences in tuition, selectivity, and outcomes across various higher education institutions in the Greater Boston area. Public, private, 4-year, and 2-year institutions within a 50-mile radius of Boston are used in her analysis. Following graduation, Joanna is interested in continuing work in the public sector or higher education.

Alice E. Trost Memorial Prize (Economics Department)

Each year the department chooses an outstanding economics graduate to receive this prize, established in honor and in memory of our colleague Alice E. Trost, who died in 2001. In Professor Trost's short time at UMass Boston, she made an indelible impression on all who worked with her. She was a wonderful teacher and was particularly successful in engaging students with her wit and intelligence. Confronted with terminal cancer from the time she arrived here, Professor Trost never let that diminish her teaching and scholarly efforts. Her courage and dignity in the face of a tragic disease were a lesson to all who knew her. Significant factors in awarding the prize are the student's GPA in economics and overall GPA.

Rheanna Floysha Perrin

Rheanna is here today because of the sacrifices of many people. People who have laid down their lives and selflessly given up everything, just so she could have this very moment. She's here on behalf of her 79-year-old grandfather who did not get the chance to learn how to read and write, and her mother and father who did not get the necessary high school qualifications to move on to college. They dreamed of moments like this long before she was even born and did everything in their power to make it a reality. This signals the end of the cycle of damaged dreams

and long-lasting failure in her family. This moment is a powerful one, for it is a true testament to what can happen when we work to make dreams a possibility for future generations. She also wants to thank all the supportive faculty here at UMass Boston, especially those in the Economics Department, who have guided her throughout this journey. You all are the facilitators of making students' dreams come through and the true champions of education. Thank you all!

The David G. Terkla Memorial Prize (Economics Department)

Professor David Terkla joined the Department of Economics in 1987 as an assistant professor. He served as the chair of the department between 1994 and 2000. He then joined the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) Dean's Office as an associate dean in 2010 and went on to serve the college as a dean from 2014 until his passing in the fall of 2020. The department established this prize in his memory to recognize his contributions not just to the department but also to the college and the university. Each year the department gives this prize to an outstanding economics graduate. Preferably, the prize will be given to a graduate interested in public finance or environmental issues.

Uriel Hopkinson

Uriel has taken a winding road to get to where he is. Since graduating high school in 2012, he dropped out of college, served for six years in the Air Force, divorced and remarried, survived a pandemic, went back to college, and had a baby between semesters. He would not have been able

to continue persevering through the ebbs and flows of his life if it wasn't for his current wife and the mentors he was fortunate enough to meet along the way. He looks forward to attending graduate school in the fall and building off his difficult yet rewarding journey.

The Eleanor Marie Fay and James William Fay Memorial Prize (English Department)

In memory of an avid reader, a perfectionist whose love and study of architecture were motivated by his lifelong appreciation of style and design balanced by the creative spirit, this prize will be awarded for the best capstone essay in English and Anglophone literature. Faculty nominate essays that demonstrate the breadth and imagination of the project, intellectual facility in blending abstract concepts with research, graceful articulation, and an appreciation of artistic achievement.

Lydia Virginia Uhlar

The English Department is delighted to award the Fay Prize for best essay about Anglophone literature to Lydia Uhlar, for her senior honors thesis, "*Epiphany and Boredom: Unraveling in 'The Dead.'*" In Lydia's interesting and insightful analysis of James Joyce's story, "*The Dead*," she argues that we must pay attention to the "necessity of the mundane, the anti-epiphanic, and, most importantly, the boring in Joyce's story." Lydia's attentiveness to the role of repetition and ennui provides fresh insight into Joyce's story and project, and she brings in

pertinent theorists and critics to hone her argument. Lydia compellingly argues that Joyce builds the epiphanic from "the process of becoming bored," and that the famous Joycean epiphanies emerge from "the transition into profound boredom." Boredom thereby functions in the story as "a tool for undoing the narrative." With engaging prose and nuanced close readings, Lydia's thesis illuminates the simultaneous narrative fascination and sense of tedium in the face of the small movements of everyday life.

Francis Russell Hart Prize

(English Department)

*The Francis Russell Hart Prize honors a scholar of English and Scottish literature who set a standard for committed teaching and effective learning in his department, his university, and his profession at large. As co-founder of UMass Boston's Center for the Improvement of Teaching and author of *Beyond the Books: Reflections on Learning and Teaching*, Russ Hart devoted much of his career to enhancing the quality of the work done by many individual teachers and to enriching the teaching culture of the campus. He taught in the English Department from 1971 until his retirement in 1991 and he died in 2001.*

The recipient of the Francis Russell Hart Prize is a senior English major who has demonstrated excellence in English studies and made significant contributions to the university community. The English Department recognizes with gratitude the support of its alumni whose contributions underwrite this award.

Percy Truong

The English Department is delighted to award the Francis Russell Hart Prize to Percy Truong for his outstanding work as an English major and his mentorship as a Writing Center consultant, and prior to that, as a Writing Nook tutor.

Over the years, Percy has helped countless undergraduate and graduate students strengthen their writing and become more confident writers. As the Writing Center has grown, Percy has taken on multiple formal and informal mentorship roles by training new consultants, participating in pre-semester orientations, and supporting consultants by sharing his knowledge as they start their new positions. Recently, he volunteered at the Secondary Schools Writing

Center Association conference, mentoring high school students as they navigated their first conference.

Like his contributions to the Writing Center, Percy's work in his English classes has been extraordinary. One of his professors writes, "Percy is the kind of student we all hope for —capable, hardworking, excited by new ideas and challenging material, and a genuine joy to be around." We thank Percy for his many contributions to our classes, to our department, to the university, and to the broader community. We wish him all the best on what will surely be a marvelous journey.

Marcia Keach Memorial Poetry Prize (English Department, Creative Writing)

This prize is given by her family in honor of Marcia Keach, an English major in the creative writing program who died in 1988, in the spring semester of her senior year. People who knew her spoke of the energy, determination, indomitable good cheer, and unsentimental sense of reality with which she handled her life, her work, her three children, and her education. Many of those qualities are evident in her poems, some of which have been published in small literary magazines. In presenting this award recognizing the best poem by a graduating senior, Marcia's family hopes to share with other students her interest in poetry.

Lydia Virginia Uhlar

Broken Heart Potluck

I was born with an appetite.
Broken, bleeding hearts served to me on fancy, silver plates
still red, pink, and beating.

I feast on grief and devour pain.
I chew on the hard arteries and swallow the tender chambers
while gagging on the words

This is what I deserve.
This is what I deserve.

Lydia's ambitious and wide-ranging poetry is often visceral and surprising, like "Broken Heart Potluck," but also moving, funny, and rich in textural details. Her poems take time to notice small moments: "My name spelled correctly/on my cup of coffee," or consider surprising turns in

the small space of a haiku on a willow tree: "In your bark there are/carvings of couples in love./ How selfish of them." In free verse, sonnets, odes, and other forms, Lydia builds small, kaleidoscopic worlds that allow the reader to take part in her worlds.

Paul F. Boller Prize *(History Department)*

The Paul F. Boller Prize is named for a distinguished former member of UMass Boston's history faculty who taught here from 1966 to 1976 before leaving to take an endowed teaching position in Texas. Professor Boller's specialty was the history of ideas in American history. In the last 20 years he has published a number of books on American politics; the most successful is Presidential Anecdotes. It was largely money from the sale of his popular histories that provided the fund that forms the endowment of the Boller Prize.

Paul Boller loved teaching and scholarship equally because he loved to teach the things that he learned. He wanted above all to recognize excellence. The prize named in his honor is given each year for the best history essay written by a graduating senior.

Marianna Sofia Carey

The History Department is thrilled to award the 2024 Paul Boller Prize for the best student essay in the field of history to Marianna Carey. Marianna's senior honors thesis, "*K-12 Education in the Japanese Internment Camps*," is a deeply researched and compellingly argued study of Japanese American struggles for schooling while incarcerated during World War II. Building on a paper begun in Professor Paul Wantanabe's honors class, Marianna uses published memoirs, state documents, periodical sources, and oral histories to illuminate the tremendous resolve of Japanese American families and communities who demanded, and created, schools for their children in internment camps. She also analyzes

the response of the US War Relocation Authority as it evolved from outright neglect to implementing a system of hastily-built, poorly-resourced schools that were nonetheless tasked with promoting "Americanism" to incarcerated students. Marianna pays close attention to the specifics of teaching and learning in these schools while simultaneously assessing the long-term impact of internment on the educational trajectories and opportunities of Japanese Americans. In full, Marianna's thesis offers an original perspective on this crucial period in US history, and demonstrates the power of undergraduate research to generate new historical scholarship.

Outstanding Achievement in History (History Department)

The award for Outstanding Achievement in History is given each year to a graduating history major for exceptional and distinguished performance in history courses. The Department of History established this fund in 1999 in order to recognize the hard work and discipline that are the key ingredients in the achievement of academic excellence.

Jillian Steeves

With great pleasure and pride, the History Department names Jillian Steeves as the 2024 winner of the Outstanding Achievement in History award. When faculty were asked to recommend students for this year's award, Jillian's name topped every list. In history courses on everything from working-class Boston to visual media, from African food history to public history on Nantucket Island, Jillian demonstrated exceptional thoughtfulness, analytical sophistication, and superior skill at all stages of the research and writing process. Her near-perfect GPA and her excellent performance in her first year of the Accelerated Masters Program support the view of many history faculty that

Jillian is the "best undergraduate I have ever taught." Above all, faculty rave about Jillian's extraordinary writing skills, describing her prose as "beautifully composed and persuasive." According to her American Visual Media instructor, Jillian showed "advanced historical thinking, integrating both primary and secondary sources into her analysis with fluidity." Another praised the "superb" argument Jillian constructed to "challenge mainstream assumptions about gender and the Enlightenment and French Revolution." Jillian truly exemplifies outstanding achievement in history, and we are proud to count her among the most dazzling alumni of the History Department.

Outstanding Academic and Service Achievement in Human Services (Human Services)

This excellence award is given each year to the undergraduate student who has achieved exceptional performance in human services courses and has earned the highest overall grade point average of all graduating human services majors.

Zahra Nora Halili

We are proud to recognize Zahra for her outstanding academic achievement in human services. This award honors Zahra's invaluable leadership and service contributions in the creation of innovative and interactive career exploration and professional development programs based on research, national trends, and feedback from youth. She has an extraordinary academic record, performing at the highest level in all her human services classes. Her very laudable service activities include being a child mentor, content developer, marketer, and

community outreach worker with Maverick Landing Community Services; tutoring and being a team and group leader at the Swift Waters After School program; and having an internship and work as a Career Development Specialist with the Office of Youth Employment and Opportunity (OYEO) for the City of Boston. OYEO's mission is to ensure that Boston's youth are equipped to transition into adulthood through short-term employment, skill development, and career readiness opportunities.

The Clara Estow Award in Latin American and Iberian Studies (*Latin American and Iberian Studies Department*)

A renowned scholar in Castilian Medieval history, Professor Clara Estow dedicated four decades of her life to UMass Boston and the Department of Hispanic Studies (1968–2008). During that time, Professor Estow gathered accolades for her inspiring teaching, her generous mentoring of junior faculty, her scholarly rigor, and her dedication to improving public education in Massachusetts. Her teaching effectiveness and her capacity for mentorship were proverbial. She inspired many students to become teachers and scholars. She showed an extraordinary teaching range and flexibility. Her accomplishments in scholarship were equally outstanding. Professor Estow authored several widely respected books in her field as well as dozens of articles and essays on a number of topics. Professor Estow was repeatedly selected by her peers to represent them on the campus' most significant committees and governance structures. She was the first Hispanic person to lead UMass Boston's Faculty Council.

In gratitude for Professor Estow's tireless, generous, and inspiring academic work on behalf of UMass Boston, her colleagues, upon her retirement, established an award in her honor. The Clara Estow Award is awarded to a junior or a graduating senior who has shown excellence, determination, and inspiration in his or her academic work in Hispanic studies.

Allyson Dean

Allyson Dean, a dual major in Latin American and Iberian studies (LAIS) and international relations, has harmoniously combined her passion for the Spanish language, a profound understanding of Latin American culture, and a keen interest in global politics. Over the years, Allyson, a natural leader, has not only acquired essential intercultural and critical thinking skills but has also emerged as a beacon of leadership and camaraderie, both within the classroom and on the volleyball court. As she completes her tenure at UMass Boston, Allyson is deeply appreciative of the LAIS faculty for their support

and guidance. She feels well prepared for embarking on the next chapter of her educational journey, pursuing a graduate degree in international relations and policy at Syracuse University. We are sure that, with her passion for fostering inclusivity and her ability to inspire those around her, Allyson is poised to make a significant impact by continuing to lead and inspire others. We wish her all the best wishes as she transitions to the next stage of her journey, confident in her ability to thrive and make a difference in the world.

Outstanding Achievement Award in Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (*Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures Department*)

The Outstanding Achievement Award in Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures is given each year to honor a graduating student for exceptional performance in the study of one or multiple languages, literatures, and cultures offered by the MLLC department. The award recognizes excellence in languages as well as in the broad interdisciplinary study of global literatures, cinema, and/or cultures.

Avery Bradshaw

From their very first course, Avery impressed UMass Boston professors with how they used language as a lens through which to question and disrupt social and gendered hierarchies in the French-speaking world. Avery's language abilities were already exceptional when they arrived. They continued to hone those skills not only in class, but at the French conversation table with Professor Gustave, who echoes the sentiments of the entire French program when he describes Avery as "so brilliant and very intellectually mature." In the fall of 2022, Avery was one of a handful of UMass students whose work was

displayed at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston as part of a collaboration for the exhibition "*Frank Bowling's Americas*." In the fall of 2023, Avery undertook the demanding task of writing an honors thesis, meeting weekly with Professor Esposito and conferring with Professor Prasad to discuss their research on Francophone linguistic minorities. They pushed their scholarly skills to yet another level when they became one of the first students to pursue the joint BA/MA program in Applied Linguistics. It is an honor for the French faculty of MLLC to have worked with Avery and to present them with this award.

John J. Conlon Prize in Theatre Arts (*Performing Arts Department*)

The John J. Conlon Prize recognizes outstanding service to the Theatre Arts Program in honor of Professor John Conlon, distinguished scholar, theatrical director/performer, and dedicated educator of UMass Boston theatre arts students. Throughout his long career at UMass Boston, Professor Conlon inspired and mentored both faculty and students alike while always encouraging active participation in the lively arts and setting an inspirational example with his tireless service to the department, university, and community. The John J. Conlon Prize recognizes a graduating senior who best exemplifies this spirit of dedication and service to the theatre arts, fellow students, and the community.

John (Jack) William Rousell

During his time at UMass Boston, Jack demonstrated a spirit of outstanding dedication and excellence across theatre arts. A multi-hyphenate theatre artist, he performed on stage in multiple productions including *Pride & Prejudice*, *Working*, *The Government Inspector*, and *Rhinoceros*. He was a Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Irene Ryan Acting nominee in 2023 and 2024 and was selected to perform in the Region 1 finals both years as an Irene Ryan scene partner. Jack also distinguished himself in technical theatre as the Assistant Technical Director for *Radium Girls* and Stage Manager for the Annual Dance

Concert. For his technical accomplishments, Jack was invited to attend the United States Institute for Theatre Technology national conference, where he represented UMass Boston. Faculty and students alike respect him for his generosity of spirit and positive attitude in classes, research projects, and rehearsals. He is someone greatly respected and looked up to by his peers, and someone they depend on for his presence and leadership. In addition to appreciating Jack's contributions to theatre production, his professors also respect his commitment to work in the classroom, where he displays integrity, intelligence, and creativity.

Louis E. Roberts Prize in Theatre Arts

(Performing Arts Department)

The Louis E. Roberts Prize is named for the founder and mainstay of the Theatre Arts Program, who is presently professor emeritus of theatre arts. An accomplished actor, a versatile director, a prolific playwright, and, above all, an inspirational teacher, Lou Roberts led the Theatre Arts Program for three decades and made it a place where the lively art of theatre in all of its aspects thrives.

In recognizing the Louis E. Roberts Prize recipient, the theatre arts faculty honors and celebrates the graduating senior who has best combined academic excellence with artistic excellence in theatre.

Shelby Jessica Gagne

Shelby has coupled artistic excellence with excellent academic performance in theatre arts at UMass Boston. Her professors admire her work ethic, remarking that she was always prepared for classes and contributed meaningfully to classes across theatre arts, from Theatre Crafts to Lighting Design to Theatre History. Her Directing class final was a standout, displaying a skillful use of stage, actors, and lighting in a clever, humorous, and touching piece, which best exemplified her ability to combine artistry with academic excellence. Shelby acted in *New Voices*, *New Stories*, *The Government Inspector*, and *Radium Girls*. Her work in technical theatre is even more impressive, with a role in numerous

other theatre productions during her tenure. Discovering her passion for lighting design, she programmed lights for multiple music performances in the Recital Hall. Shelby was invited to present research at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in 2024 as both a Scenic and Lighting Designer, and earned 3rd place in the Technical Olympics. For her technical and design accomplishments, she was invited to attend the United States Institute for Theatre Technology national conference representing UMass Boston. Additionally, Shelby received the first-ever 2024 CLA Performing Arts Internship as Lighting Equipment Manager, which she will complete in June.

Martin Andic Prize for Distinction in Philosophy (Philosophy Department)

This prize is given in memory of Professor Martin Andic, a member of the Philosophy Department between 1971 and 2001. Much loved as a classroom teacher, Professor Andic was renowned for the range and breadth of his courses. He taught ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophy, in addition to nineteenth-century philosophy, the philosophy of mind, the philosophy of religion, metaphysics, and the philosophy of science. His interest in literature allowed him to include thinkers such as Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Iris Murdoch on his syllabi. Professor Andic's research was equally far-ranging. He published on Greek philosophy, medieval philosophy, moral psychology, and religion as well as on particular thinkers such as Kierkegaard and the twentieth-century French philosopher Simone Weil.

Sarah Kalkert

Sarah's philosophical journey reflects an unwavering commitment to intellectual exploration and passion for philosophical inquiry that knows no bounds. She has displayed remarkable breadth and depth in her engagement with diverse philosophical topics, from historical figures like Plato, Kant, and Hegel to contemporary inquiries on rights and the nature of the self. Her resolute pursuit of understanding has propelled her to excel in every philosophy course she has taken. What truly sets her apart is not just her academic achievements; she infuses every philosophical discussion with boundless enthusiasm and genuine passion. Sarah's love for philosophy has inspired those around her.

Her honors thesis titled "*Meditations on Mourning and Productivity, A text in four parts*" explores mourning, understood as the "process by which a person reconciles with the occurrence of death" through the lens of labor and mourning rights. It is a sustained philosophical investigation of the paradoxes of mourning and its pathologization that demonstrates Sarah's ability to put philosophical texts such as Freud's *Mourning and Melancholia* or Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* in conversation with current literature on mourning rights. Her writing is sophisticated, eloquent, and clear. Her work exemplifies the highest standards of excellence in undergraduate research and writing.

Roger Feinstein Award for Distinction in Public Policy (Political Science Department)

This award honors the memory of Roger Feinstein, a political science faculty member at UMass Boston (and, before then, at Boston State College) who inspired deep affection and respect among his many students and colleagues. With the help of Roger's family and friends, the Political Science Department established the award in 2005 to recognize a graduating senior who has demonstrated particular academic excellence in the field of state and local government and exemplified the personal qualities that made Roger so beloved a human being. His voluminous knowledge of public administration and state and local government was based not only on book smarts but also on his depth of experience working in civic and town associations that focused on environmental and international justice. Roger extended the classroom experience to the civic realm by taking his students to the meetings and events of myriad nonprofit and governmental groups—literally opening students' eyes to the fruits and frustrations of engaged citizenship. Accordingly, the Feinstein Award salutes a graduating senior whose activities inside and outside the classroom have reflected the same unwavering commitment to fostering a more empathic, respectful, and humane society that Roger's life's work did.

Nicholas William Schiavo

One word captures Nick—perseverance. His path had numerous obstacles and naysayers, but sheer grit and determination brought him to UMass Boston where he found a place to engage and challenge societal norms. Nick immersed himself in his classwork, reading beyond the syllabi. Nick applied his knowledge and life experiences in his internship at the City of

Boston's Office of Civic Organizing, where he recognized service gaps and how the complexity of city government exacerbated this. Nick's early adversities do not define him but drive him to serve. After attending graduate school at Brandeis, Nick plans to develop and implement anti-gang-violence policies.

Rin Hurd

Rin Hurd embodies UMass Boston's mission of uniting scholarly inquiry and social justice. Rin's academic rigor consistently elevated classroom discussion. As a professor's research assistant, Rin gathered crucial data on the disparate impact of the Dobbs ruling on indigent women. Rin's outstanding honors thesis illuminates conservatives' success in securing judicial

appointments and rolling back constitutional rights. As a prized intern, Rin put into practice academic knowledge to advance the missions of the offices of Senator Elizabeth Warren and Senator Sheldon Whitehouse. We envision Rin eventually leading a think tank dedicated to working with communities and formulating policies to uproot structural inequalities.

Maurizio Vannicelli Award for Distinction in International Relations *(Political Science Department, International Relations)*

In 1992, the Political Science Department established this award, to be given to the graduating senior who best exemplifies the spirit of Maurizio Vannicelli, one of the finest students ever to graduate from the department. Like many other UMass Boston students, Maurizio came to this campus at age 26 with an uncertain sense of himself. Helped by many dedicated teachers here, he soon found a creative and stimulating channel for his energies. He went on to graduate training at Harvard University on a full fellowship and became a dedicated teacher and scholar himself, touching hundreds of students in his decade of energetic work as a teacher. Maurizio's career exemplifies what is best at UMass Boston. In memorializing his name with this book award, we hope that his passionate dedication to learning, teaching, and social justice will continue to inspire others for years to come.

Kaitlyn Noel von Ehrenkrook

Kaitlyn's scholarly rigor and interdisciplinary approach—a natural one given that she is a double major in criminology—will give her an impressive foundation for the future. What really stands out, however, is her empathy and earnestness as she explores difficult topics like human trafficking and human rights abuses.

We know that her openness to other people and places, so much on display in her study of Latin America and her study abroad in Mexico, will serve her well. We are proud of Kaitlyn's accomplishments so far and we look forward to her future successes.

Starr Nayleen Guerrero

Starr has truly earned the Vannicelli Award for special distinction in international relations. She contributes so much in the classroom, chiming in with piercing analyses of theoretical readings and illustrative anecdotes that ground her insights in the real world. Starr's written papers stand out for their originality, clarity, and flow.

She makes scholarship look easy, but she does this through hard work and her unceasing dedication to develop her natural talents to the fullest. Starr makes her professors proud, and will surely go on to make UMass Boston proud after graduation.

Award for Outstanding International Relations Major *(Political Science Department, International Relations)*

The Award for Outstanding International Relations Major pays tribute to former long-standing faculty members who were exemplary scholars, teachers, advisors, and mentors. It is given to outstanding students who distinguished themselves in their interests in understanding the challenges facing our global world, in their grasp of the dynamics of international relations, and in their commitment to fostering peace and justice.

Ye Eun Kim

Ye Eun Kim has earned this recognition for special distinction in international relations with scholarship that truly shines. Her papers are a delight to read, demonstrating intellectual sophistication, clarity of thought, and well-honed skills as a writer. She has not shied away from challenging course topics, from international relations theory to world order, and comparative

politics. In all of these, Ye Eun Kim demonstrates that still waters do indeed run deep. Beneath her quiet intensity in the classroom lie profound insights, which she surfaces in excellent written work that portends future success in whatever she chooses to do next. We are so glad to have her representing UMass Boston as a graduate.

The Richard J. Landry Award for Distinction in Political Theory (Political Science Department)

The Richard J. Landry Award is given to the graduating senior whose work in the field of political theory exemplifies the scholarly standards and humane ideals of Richard Landry, who taught political theory in the Political Science Department until his death in 1973. Professor Landry, who received his education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the University of Chicago, and Cornell University, was a brilliant scholar and teacher, familiar with both Western and Chinese political theory. In the memorial for Professor Landry, Professor Glenn Tinder of the Political Science Department wrote, "In the classroom, he brought together two qualities that do not always readily go together: thorough scholarly rectitude and great popular appeal. His demands on his classes were as uncompromising as his demands as a scholar on himself; yet his courses were always filled with admiring and appreciative students." The recipient of the Landry Award must be a student whose work is distinguished by high intellectual quality and breadth. It is not necessarily awarded each year.

Anthony Patrick Walsh

Anthony receives the Landry Award, given to a distinguished student of political science for excellence in political theory. Anthony is a talented student with a flair for placing difficult concepts drawn from Marxist political theory in productive conversation with postcolonial theory and subaltern studies. His work urges us

to reconsider the struggles of power evident in the Black Lives Matter movement and indigenous peoples' protests at Standing Rock against the Dakota Pipeline. Able to redirect discussions toward the most politically relevant issues, Anthony embodies the best qualities of a critical thinker and scholar.

Noah S. Wagner

From introductory to 400-level classes, Noah distinguished himself in political theory as both a worker and a thinker. Dedicated, conscientious, and thorough, he was always prepared for class and excelled easily. Intellectually, he was curious and ever in search of new ideas, whether an additional text, a more difficult text, or a deeper

reading of the same text. Noah's theoretical virtues consist not simply of superior academic performance and enormous intellectual capacity and depth. They also include his innate desire to grow, to rise to the challenge of thinking and living anew—a challenge he routinely and brilliantly meets.

Adrian Jill Barnett Memorial Prize for Academic Excellence (Psychology Department)

Through the generosity of the Barnett family, each year the Department of Psychology awards the Adrian Jill Barnett Memorial Prize in honor of Adrian Jill Barnett, a psychology major, who was killed while riding her bicycle in Cambridge shortly after graduating with distinction from UMass Boston in 1977. Adrian was a research assistant in the Psychology Department and intended to carry her studies on to graduate school. The Barnett Prize is awarded to a psychology major each year on the basis of academic excellence as represented by the quality of a paper submitted for this competition. Interested students must be nominated by a faculty member in the Department of Psychology and submit a 10- to 30-page paper to the prize committee for evaluation. The paper may be a theoretical paper, a literature review, or a research study. Papers are judged with regard to organization, thoroughness, clarity, and originality. In addition to the award, the prize includes the inscription of the winner's name on a plaque displayed permanently in the department office.

Genelle-Marie Stephani Walker

We are proud to announce Genelle-Marie Stephani Walker as this year's Barnett Memorial Prize winner! This prize, which was established in memory of psychology major and honors student Adrian Jill Barnett, is awarded annually to recognize students demonstrating excellence in psychology writing. Genelle is a senior McNair Scholar, who has served in many leadership roles for both the Neuroscience Club and the UMass Boston NAACP on campus. She recently won a travel award from the Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience to present her work investigating mechanisms underlying estrogen modulation of fear extinction memory recall at the 2023 Society for Neuroscience Conference in Washington,

D.C. Genelle was selected for this year's Barnett Prize in recognition of her extensive literature review titled, "*Bidirectional Communication of the Gut Microbiota-Brain Axis in the Regulation of the Immune System in Neuropsychiatric Disorder Symptoms*," written as part of a research apprenticeship completed under the supervision of Dr. Lisa Maeng. In this paper, Genelle synthesizes and critically reviews the published literature on the gut-brain axis and immune signaling pathways in mental illness, while examining treatment options and exposing gaps in the existing research. Genelle plans to pursue a doctoral degree in neuropsychology after graduation. Congratulations, Genelle!

Ina Samuels Memorial Prize *(Psychology Department)*

The Ina Samuels Memorial Prize is in memory of Professor Ina Samuels, who was a member of the Psychology Department for over twenty-five years until she passed away in 1998. This award is made possible by an endowment established through Dr. Samuels's estate and faculty, student, and alumni contributions. Professor Samuels taught a broad range of courses, specializing in physiological psychology and neuropsychology. She was an extraordinarily effective and inspiring teacher and a superb research mentor dedicated to fostering the personal and professional development of her students.

This award honors a student whose research proposal or research report is judged to be of such high quality as to have met Ina's criteria of scholarly evidence.

Zarwah Kanwal

The winner of this year's Samuels Award is Zarwah Kanwal. The Samuels Award is awarded for excellence in writing related to the practice of research in psychology. It was established in memory of Dr. Ina Samuels, a valued and long-time member of the psychology faculty. Zarwah will be graduating with a bachelor of science in psychology and from the Honors

College. This prize is being awarded for her honors thesis, a research project examining the development of children's planning abilities titled, "Plan Chunking During Memory-Guided Planning", under the supervision of Dr. Tashauna Blankenship. Zarwah intends to continue her education by completing a graduate degree focused on child psychology. Congratulations, Zarwah!

T. Scott Miyakawa Memorial Prize *(Sociology Department)*

The T. Scott Miyakawa Memorial Prize provides recognition for the lifetime work and career of Scott Miyakawa, a distinguished scholar and leader. During his time at UMass Boston, Professor Miyakawa served as chair of the Sociology Department for six years. He also served countless students as a teacher and mentor. Although he was taken from us too early, he is remembered most often as simply a wonderful person. The Miyakawa Memorial Prize is presented annually to a student who embodies the ideals of Professor Miyakawa—excellence in academics and social service.

Melina Victoria Sullivan

Melina Sullivan, a sociology major, Spanish minor, and member of the UMass Boston Volleyball team, aspires to work in social services, specifically alongside immigrant families and children. She is passionate about using her Spanish skills to empower students. Melina currently volunteers with 3Point Foundation, a sports-based leadership program that creates opportunities and provides mentorship for low-income students. Melina aims to help students feel comfortable communicating in English while remaining confident in their heritage and culture. She teaches students, many of whom are from the Dominican Republic or Puerto Rico, how to think critically, gain self-confidence, handle big emotions, and feel

connected to the school community. Additionally, during the summer of 2022, Melina worked as a Translation Intern in Costa Rica, teaching English and life skills to first-graders at Fundación Casa de los Niños. She also volunteered with Costa Rica's Special Olympics Program. Melina's professional goal is to provide children with equitable opportunities and culturally relevant mentors. She plans to work in foster care or with at-risk youth, aspiring to become a director of transitional foster care or work in Title IX. Through graduate studies, she will explore how identities like race, gender, and socioeconomic status influence educational experiences and impact inclusive classrooms and communities.

Founders' Award for Excellence in Women's Studies and Social Activism (Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department)

This award is given annually to a women's, gender and sexuality studies graduate who has achieved academic excellence in all coursework and contributed to the improvement of the status of women at UMass Boston or in the wider community. Students are invited to apply for the award by submitting a personal statement or letter of recommendation from someone who has a thorough knowledge of the applicant's record of social activism. Social activism is defined broadly in determining eligibility for the award. Examples of social activism include working with schoolchildren to promote understanding of gender differences or enhance girls' self-esteem, advocacy on behalf of women who are victims of violence, or organizing public educational campaigns in support of women's rights or particular policy reforms that will benefit women and families.

Initiated in 1990 by Mary Anne Ferguson, professor emerita of English and women's studies, the Founders' Award fund is supported by contributions from faculty, alumnae, and friends of women's studies.

Mackenzie Alison Pitittieri

The Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies proudly presents Mack with this award for academic excellence and social activism. Mack's record of community engagement is robust. She has organized events and facilitated workshops for the UMass Boston Office of Student Leadership & Community Engagement, secured not one, but two internships, and while finishing her BA in women's, gender and sexuality studies, she is pursuing a master's degree in global inclusion and social development.

Mack has employed her keen critical thinking skills, emotional intelligence, and feminist lens in her work with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Massachusetts and On the Rise (OTR), a local

agency that supports homeless and formerly homeless women and trans and non-binary individuals. Her internship supervisor remarked, "From the start, Mackenzie jumped head first into the work and immediately started building vibrant relationships with our participants across numerous cultures, languages, and diverse backgrounds. Mackenzie truly emulates OTR's mission of relationship building as the key to lasting and fruitful social change." In addition to her stellar academic work and activism, Mack has demonstrated her many talents as both a research and teaching assistant in WGS. Ever curious, hardworking, and earnest, we commend Mack for her ongoing academic work and investment in social justice.

The Human Rights Award (Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department)

This award is presented upon graduation to one or more student(s) graduating with a minor in human rights, in recognition of honorees' academic excellence and commitment to human rights and social justice. Awardees are typically students who have achieved the highest or second highest GPA, and who have supported human rights causes at an individual level or collectively, in the US or globally, during their time at UMass Boston. The Director of the Human Rights Minor receives nominations from faculty who have taught a potential awardee, following a review of the entire list of students graduating with a human rights minor in a given academic year.

This Award was established in 2018 by the minor's founding director, Professor Elora Chowdhury. It is funded from the minor's annual core budget from the College of Liberal Arts.

Ayah Abdessemed

Ayah Abdessemed is a criminal justice major, with minors in human rights and English. Ayah's commitment to human rights and social justice started at a young age. In high school, she worked on raising awareness about the rights of students with disabilities attending public schools in Massachusetts. As a volunteer for Nashoba Learning Group in Billerica, MA, she also worked with students with autism at all levels and ages. Consequently, she received several leadership awards while in high school.

At UMass Boston, Ayah continued her activism focusing on anti-racism and the impact of conflict on communities in several countries in the Middle East, and served as Treasurer of the Muslim Students Association.

Ayah supported the Black Lives Matter movement, by collecting donations to support BLM advocacy groups in Massachusetts. In 2021, she was part of a fundraising campaign to support the work of Doctors Without Borders and UNRWA in Palestine.

Ayah worked closely with NuDay Syria, to collect in-kind donations for Syrian families affected by war. She also advocated in support of communities affected by war in Yemen, Sudan, and Palestine. Ayah is currently a resettlement volunteer in Dorchester, where she works with Housing Resettlement to support incoming refugees.

