

Energy (continued from page 1)

But there are energy problems on campus that can't be fixed with software. In underground garages, loading docks, and parking lots, the facilities department is waging a perpetual battle against open doors. In the dead of winter, every door left propped for a furtive smoke or a dash out to the parking garage means heat—and money—disappearing into thin air. The solution, for now, is to take away the chunks of concrete and other miscellaneous objects people are using to keep the doors propped open. But Renaghan is hoping education will help, too.

“Along those lines, we're hiring students,” she said. “We have students who are very enthusiastic about energy savings, and we thought they would be fabulous ambassadors.”

Throughout the month of Jan-

uary—and possibly beyond—students will be conducting surveys on energy use and helping to promote conservation on campus. And if you have any ideas for how to make the campus greener, UMass Boston's newly mobilized conservation corps is hoping to hear from you.

To gather the best of the community's ideas, the customer service department has started a new blog dedicated to energy conservation. Customer service director Linda O'Brien wants to hear from students, faculty, and staff on the blog, at <http://blogs.umb.edu/customerservice>.

“It's an effort to engage the whole community,” said O'Brien. “This is the first time we've used a blog for anything like this at the university. What we're hoping is that people will come back to us with their ideas.”

Defibrillators (continued from page 1)

lor for Student Affairs Kathleen Golden McAndrew, who is also the executive director of Health Services and an assistant clinical professor in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

For over two years, UMass Boston has been equipped with AEDs in athletics areas such as the Beacons Athletics and Clark Center exercise and gathering areas. Additionally, Public Safety and Health Services have their own defibrillators. Now, with the addition of the 19 new units, there are a total 27 defibrillators available on campus.

“For us, having those AEDs available is yet another opportunity for us to provide a safe environment for our athletes, employees, and visitors to our campus,” says Charlie Titus, Vice Chancellor for Athletics, Recreation and Special Programs.



One of the 19 new defibrillators. (Photo by Harry Brett)

“The AEDs analyze the victim's condition and, only if warranted, deliver an electric shock to the heart to reverse sudden cardiac arrest,” explains Golden McAndrew. “The devices are extremely safe, with no risk of inappropriate shock given to individuals who are not in sudden cardiac arrest or to the person operating the AED.”

Although AEDs talk you through the process, Golden McAndrew adds that CPR can be important to know when using an AED. If the AED delivers an electric shock, the device will then prompt you to administer CPR. CPR classes are available through American Red Cross and American Health Association chapters.

University/Community Partnership Addresses Health Disparities

By Emily Sullivan and Jim Mortenson

Led by UMass Boston, a partnership that includes the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) and the Cherishing Our Hearts and Souls Coalition (COHS) of Roxbury is making important progress in reducing socioeconomically-based health disparities.

The effort is based out of the HORIZON Center in Roxbury, a community which is 51% African-American and 23% Hispanic. Funding for this community-based and multidisciplinary project comes courtesy of a \$7.7 million, five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health.

“We have worked successfully to get people on campus who are doing research in health disparities to submit ideas,” explains Celia Moore, professor of psychology and the project's co-principal investigator.

Although the Center is only halfway through its first year of funding, faculty members are already making progress, most notably on the “Heart and Sole” project, which studies the efficacy of a risk-prevention program aimed at African-American adults in Roxbury who are at risk for cardiovascular diseases.

“People think you can't do this kind of work in the community. That really hasn't been our experi-

ence,” says Dr. Eileen Stuart-Shor, associate professor at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences and the study's co-principal investigator. “There's a real sense of companionship among the members.”

Participants attend 12 weekly three-hour sessions that combine education with active engagement in exercise, nutrition and cooking demonstrations, relaxation techniques, and stress reduction that is culturally sensitive and tailored to community issues.

“What's unique about the program is it's not just about exercise or diet but really helps people understand the connection between the two,” explains Stuart-Shor. The aim of the program, she continued, is to help participants understand these connections so that the progress made will extend beyond the end of the study's 12 weeks. Currently, 28 patients are enrolled, but Stuart-Shor expects the number will grow to 64; future plans include involving UMass Boston undergraduate students, who will be called HORIZON Scholars, in the research process, and possibly implementing a similar program in Kenya.

Another study which is also making great strides is a health literacy education project led by Lorna Rivera, an associate professor of sociology and community planning at the College of Public

and Community Service. Together with Dr. Marcia Hohn, director of the Roxbury-based Public Education at The Immigrant Learning Center, they are studying three adult basic education programs funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education.

“Our project focuses on a segment of the population that is quite neglected—adults who can't read or write,” says Rivera. As her study notes, there are about 98 million people in the U.S. who have basic or below-basic literacy skills, mostly concentrated in minority communities. Health literacy is especially low, which is particularly alarming because, as Rivera explains: “We know that there is a very strong correlation between literacy and your health. So such programs have a lot of potential to make a difference.”

By examining which models are most effective, Rivera hopes to help these programs make even more of a difference for participants. Though still in the data-collecting stage, Rivera and her team have already noticed changes happening: “Participants are feeling more empowered by what they are learning.” Regardless of the outcome of her study, it is clear that such programs are making a big difference in the community: “It's very inspiring to see these positive changes taking place.”

Jessica Whiteley, assistant professor of exercise and health sciences at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, recently finished the first phase of a weight-loss program aimed at obese girls aged 11 to 13. Focus groups were conducted with children and their parents from the community where they were asked questions about diet, exercise habits, and television time. Phase two involves participants coming to GoKids Boston, located on the Boston campus, two times a week for three months followed by sessions conducted over the Internet for another three months. “I want to develop a program that has a wider-spread use; one that doesn't have to take place here at GoKids,” explains Whiteley. “Hopefully, the Internet component would lead to that.”

The data collected from these focus groups will help Whiteley create a program that she hopes will be effective in instilling lifelong healthy habits in the participants. “We want to know how we can help these girls stay active at home, after the program is completed.”

About 60 girls are currently enrolled, and already Whiteley is receiving positive feedback: “The parents in the focus groups were so appreciative that this kind of study was being done. A lot of them have just recently become

aware that their children's obesity is a real health issue.”

In addition to funding more research projects like Stuart-Shor's, Rivera's, and Whiteley's, the Center's future goals will focus on promotion. “Our plan is to become more visible,” says Moore, “so we need to develop a website and additional partnerships for funding.”

Now that the Center has achieved sustainability on the Boston campus thanks to the collaborative efforts and expertise of faculty from the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and the College of Public and Community Service, the partnership's focus has shifted to the Roxbury community.

Perhaps the biggest internal change to the Center has been the appointment of a new co-director, HSPH Professor of Human Behavior and Development Felton James Earls, who is also a professor of social medicine at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Earls's health-disparities research complements the Center's goals, which Moore outlines as “providing a place to foster research on health disparities and related research for students and new faculty members.” In line with those goals is the HORIZON Scholars project, which will provide undergraduate students with research experience.

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