

2026 JFK AWARD NOMINEES FROM CLA

ISHAIAH ALVARENGA

Ishaiah Alvarenga is a Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies major, with double minors in Spanish and Queer and Trans Studies. In their personal statement for the JFL nomination they wrote, "At UMB, Professors engaged my ideas seriously, challenged me without diminishing me, and exposed me to the idea that knowledge within the classroom didn't flow unilaterally but instead that there was a mutual exchange. They asserted that lived experiences brought forms of expertise no textbook could give us."

Ishaiah has been active on campus, working as a Beacon Ambassador, a Peer Academic Advisor, and a Ross Center Student Assistant. They are especially attentive to first-generation students, neurodivergent students, and students of color unsure of themselves while navigating unfamiliar

terrain. Emphasizing the importance of peer-to-peer support, Ishaiah founded the Sexuality Education Collective to push conversations on campus about sexuality, reproductive justice, and bodily autonomy, while materially supporting students in being able to make more informed decisions and have access to a greater number of choices for themselves and their families. Ishaiah will be starting a position as an advocate with The Network/La Red, an organization directly supporting LGBTQ+ survivors of partner abuse from overlooked communities. Long term, they intend to pursue a Master of Public Health in Social and Behavioral Sciences.

We congratulate Ishaiah on their nomination for the JFK award.

NICOLE CARMONA MARTINEZ

Nicole Carmona Martinez is a double major in Sociology and Environmental Science with minors in Public Policy and Human Rights. In her personal statement for the JFK nomination, she wrote, "good citizenship, to me, has meant an unequivocal commitment to social justice." She takes an interdisciplinary approach to addressing injustice in her community.

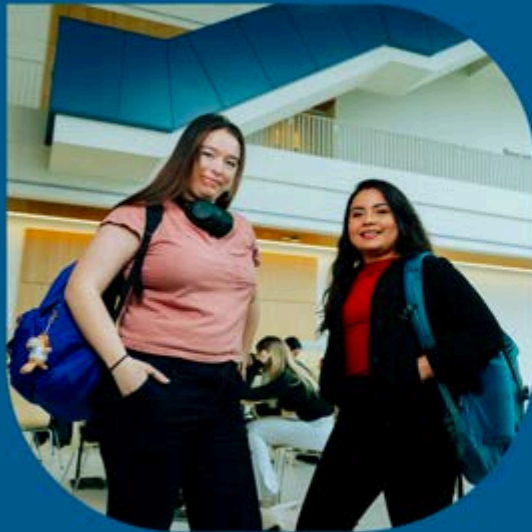
Nicole has been engaged in community service through her work with Sociedad Latina, where she designed and implemented an environmental justice curriculum for Black and Latinx high school students. She also worked with the Mauricio Gastón Institute to address problem

gambling and addictive behaviors among young people. Finally, she has been an undergraduate research fellow with the Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center, studying health disparities in marginalized communities.

In a letter of support for her nomination, a faculty member wrote, "What sets Nicole apart, however, is her embodiment of good citizenship as an active commitment to social justice. Like the legacy of John F. Kennedy, she views public service as an integral part of social life. Her research and community engagement in Boston demonstrates a deep investment in uplifting marginalized communities through collaborative and community-centered action."

We congratulate Nicole on her nomination for the JFK award.





Are you a first-year student or senior?

Take the National Survey of Student Engagement to help UMass Boston improve your educational experience.

Check your email starting Monday, April 6 for a link to the survey.



IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

APRIL 6, 2026

FALL REGISTRATION BEGINS

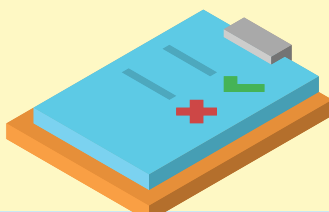
BE SURE TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR ADVISOR!



APRIL 20, 2026
PATRIOTS DAY-NO CLASSES

APRIL 23, 2026

PASS/FAIL/WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE



UPCOMING EVENT

APRIL 8, 2026

THE CENTER for
HUMANITIES,
CULTURE, &
SOCIETY
presents



BEHIND OUR BACKS

feminized poetry and capitalist abstraction

Amy De'Ath

assistant professor of english, tufts university

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15 • 4:00 PM
CAMPUS CENTER, RM. 3540



co-sponsored by the departments of american studies, english, gender, women's, & sexuality studies, and political science.

* Access requiring disability-related accommodations in order to fully participate in this event should go to www.umass.edu/ada and complete the request form.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

To see more of what our alumni are up to, visit www.umb.edu/beaconmagazine



CLA HOSTS PRE-LAW ALUMNI PANEL IN MARCH



Event: Pathways to Law: Alumni Insights Panel & Q&A

Date: Wednesday, March 11

Presented by: College of Liberal Arts (CLA), Honors College, and University Advancement

Student Attendance: 70

Format: Moderated panel, audience Q&A, informal networking, refreshments

The College of Liberal Arts hosted a highly successful Pathways to Law: Alumni Insights Panel & Q&A, part of the college's signature event series. In partnership with the Honors College and University Advancement, the event brought together nine UMass Boston alumni representing diverse legal backgrounds—from disability law and intellectual property to general practice, contract law, judicial clerkships, and public service. Many of the alumni graduated from CLA majors such as History, Political Science, Psychology, and Criminal Justice, demonstrating the wide range of academic pathways in the liberal arts that can lead to careers in law.

With approximately 70 student registrants, we had a very robust turnout.

The Dean moderated the panel, guiding a structured and thoughtful conversation around key stages of the journey to a legal career—from deciding whether law school is the right next step to navigating financial planning, selecting a school, building experience, and developing a specialization. After the formal discussion concluded, the alumni panelists stayed to mingle with students, offering personalized advice, professional networking, and informal mentoring.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN CLA

**You See Things We Don't:
Let's Build a More Welcoming Campus Together**
An Accessibility Awareness Workshop

McCormack Racial Equity Taskforce (M-RET)
Student Advocacy and Support Workgroup

All are welcome!

Wednesday, April 8, 2026
Integrated Sciences Center 3300 | 3 PM-5 PM

The workshop will start with small-group conversations designed to share one's experiences, followed by keynote remarks from **Jessica Chaikof**, a PhD candidate at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University.

Ms. Chaikof's research interests center in medical sociology with a special focus on chronic illness, disability, and accessibility in higher education. Her experiences of living with a disability not only motivate her research but also are a strength that shapes and guides it.

Refreshments will be served.

For more information, email Michael Johnson and Laurie Nsiah-Jefferson mgs.ret@umb.edu

Anyone requiring disability related accommodations, including dietary accommodations, should go to www.ada.umb.edu or contact mgs.ret@umb.edu



Please register by March 26
<https://forms.gle/K96LZ6PrJYKPrm9AA>





This event has received funding from the Restorative Justice Commission



McCormack Racial Equity Taskforce

The Frisone Center for Italian Cultural Studies and the History Department Present
A Lecture by Brian Maxson, Professor of History, ETSU

"Helen and 'Belle': Italy and the Italian past through American Eyes"

APRIL 8
2:00-3:30
CAMPUS CENTER
03-3540

APRIL 14, 2026 // 4PM-5:30PM
Alumni Lounge, Campus Center, 2nd Floor, Room 2551

POLITICAL SCIENCE FORUM ON SCHOLASTICIDE

A discussion on the deliberate mass destruction of educational infrastructure

Featuring: Professors Sandy Grande (University of Connecticut), Abdel Razzaq Takriti (University of Houston), and Chandni Desai (University of Toronto)

Sponsored by the Political Science department in collaboration with Psychology, Africana Studies, Applied Linguistics, English, Labor Resource Center, Latino Studies, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Questions? Contact Andrés Henao-Castro at Andres.HenaoCastro@umb.edu

Anyone requiring disability-related accommodations, including dietary accommodations, should go to www.ada.umb.edu or contact Andrés Henao-Castro at Andres.HenaoCastro@umb.edu

Presented by UMass Boston's chapter of Faculty & Staff for Justice in Palestine

AFRICANA STUDIES AND LATINO STUDIES INVITE STUDENTS TO JOIN US FOR

CONTESTED SPACES: BOSTON MURAL TOUR

SATURDAY, APRIL 25TH
10 AM - 3PM

Only 25 spots
Children welcome



BRILLA by Silvia López Chavez

TELL US WHY YOU SHOULD GET A SPOT ON THE TOUR!



SCAN OR GO TO LINK IN BIO TO SEND A 1-MINUTE VIDEO BY 4/15



SOLEDAD by Marka27



SPOTLIGHT ON CLA STAFF: CHARLOTTE NNAMBI

A Defining Presence: Leadership, Integrity, and Service

In every academic community, there are individuals whose impact extends far beyond their formal roles, people who quietly but consistently shape culture, elevate standards, and inspire others through both action and character. Charlotte Nnambi is one of those individuals.

I began my work in MGS as an administrator and then college scheduling and event administrator, a role that later transitioned into CLA following the merging of the two colleges. I now serve as an administrator in the Philosophy Department. Throughout these roles, my work has not simply been about meeting expectations, but about redefining them. Whether collaborating with colleagues, supporting students, or contributing to institutional initiatives, I bring a level of integrity and professionalism that sets me apart.

What truly distinguishes me, however, is my service to the University. Service, in its highest form, is not about recognition but about impact. Through my efforts, I have strengthened the institution's mission and enriched the experiences of those around me. I lead not by title, but by example, through consistency, accountability, and a genuine commitment to doing what is right.

As a Fall 2025 recipient of the Transformative Equity Grant (TEG) through the Restorative Justice Commission, I was awarded \$14,000 to develop and host the Parenting Justice: A Restorative Equity Initiative Conference for UMass Boston student parents. Held on March 27th, 2026, the Parenting Justice Conference brought together voices, experiences, and ideas that left a lasting mark on all who attended. It was a memorable and deeply impactful event. One that not only highlighted the challenges faced by student parents but also illuminated a path forward. My involvement in this conference reflects my ongoing commitment to advocacy, inclusion, and meaningful institutional change.

The Parenting Justice Conference now serves as a catalyst. The next steps are both strategic and transformative:

First, advancing self-identification opportunities within admissions processes and systems like WISER represents a critical move toward visibility. When student parents can identify themselves, the University gains the ability to better understand, support, and advocate for this population with intention and accuracy.

Second, increasing internal awareness of departments and services that support student parents is essential. While many resources already exist, awareness remains a barrier. A coordinated effort to highlight these services, through orientation, advising, and campus-wide communications can significantly improve access and utilization.

Third, identifying and securing funding to create dedicated spaces for student parents is a vital investment in equity. These spaces can serve as hubs for community, study, and support, reinforcing the message that student parents belong and are valued members of the University community.

Finally, expanding the availability of lactation rooms, particularly in central and high-traffic areas such as the Campus Center, is a tangible and necessary step. This action not only meets a practical need but also signals institutional respect and care for parenting students.

My leadership in this moment is both timely and essential. By continuing to advance these initiatives, I am helping to shape a more inclusive, responsive, and just University one that reflects the highest standards of service and a deep commitment to its community.

REMEMBERING PROFESSOR LAUREN SULLIVAN



Lauren first came to UMass Boston in 1998 and was a member of the Anthropology Department for twenty-eight years. In that time, she molded the undergraduate experience at UMass Boston in indelible ways. In addition to classes in Mesoamerican archaeology, Lauren’s teaching spanned multiple branches of anthropology, encompassing culture, behavior, fantasy, and biology. Lauren’s pedagogy went well beyond the classroom. Beginning in 2001, Lauren directed the University’s Field School in Prehistoric Archaeology in Belize, introducing students to field archaeology and setting some on the path to become professional archaeologists. Her students regularly reported on the pleasure of attending the field school under her caring, personal, and positive mentoring.

UPCOMING EVENT APRIL 22, 2026

Sovereign Bodies, Sovereign Spaces:
a book engagement and discussion of
urban Indigenous health

April 22
4:30 pm

**Campus Center,
Alumni Lounge/Room 2551**

MARIA JOHN
Urban Indigenous
Health Activist in the
United States and Australia

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| Cheryl Crosswell (Mass.gov Wampanoag) Tribal and Indigenous Health Equity Strategist for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. | Nichol Brewer-Lewis (Lumbee Tribe of NC) Site Director, Native American Lifelines of Boston | Kerry Hawk Leonard Executive Director, Native American Lifelines of Boston | Maria John Associate Professor, History Director, Native American and Indigenous Studies Program, UMass Boston |
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Event co-sponsored by: Institute for New England Native American
Studies, and the History Department.

Anyone requiring disability related accommodations, including dietary
accommodations, should contact Rachel Wilkins
(Rachel.Wilkins@umb.edu)

Light refreshments will be served!

UPCOMING EVENT APRIL 29, 2026

**CLA Undergraduate Research
Showcase**

The College of Liberal Arts Undergraduate Research Showcase is an opportunity for students across all disciplines within CLA to showcase research they have worked on during the academic year. Students are invited to design posters with the help of a faculty mentor to present their research at the event. The CLA Dean’s office covers the cost to print the posters. The Research Showcase takes place every spring semester in the 1st floor Campus Center Terrace.

Wednesday, April 29th
11:00 am - 1:00pm

Prizes awarded for the top 3 posters!

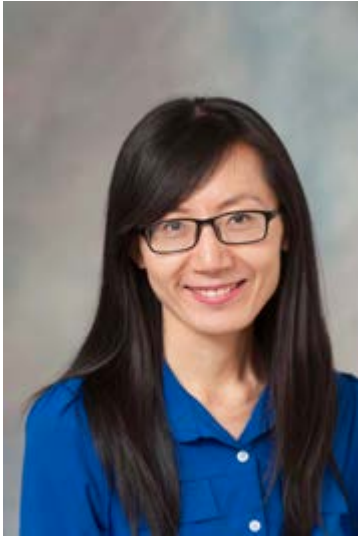
Lunch provided to all participants

ALL ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE

CLA FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Professor Liang (Lindsay) Ma, Communication

By Keira Mulcahy, Communication (BA)/Psychology (Minor)



Dr. Liang (Lindsay) MA

Dr. Liang (Lindsay) Ma is a valued member of the Communication Department who embraces the diverse research areas, vibrant community, and the multicultural background of the student population here at UMass Boston. She earned her PhD at the University of Maryland, College Park, which led her to multiple years of teaching Strategic Communication at Texas Christian University.

Dr. Ma focuses on hands-on, experiential learning, and encourages her students to use real-world applications. She wants her students to be involved and excited about their academics, and to learn that effective communication is a science. Her goal is to equip them with “the analytical tools and knowledge necessary to solve complex communication problems in today’s fast-paced and often unpredictable digital landscape.” She teaches decision-making skills that can lead to empathy, transparency, and social responsibility within their own communities, outside of the classroom.

Dr. Ma’s research focuses on how different organizations can navigate challenging times and communicate more effectively with their stakeholders. Her research involves crisis and risk communication and how stakeholders’ social identities and their identity within an organization influence their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses to a crisis. Response strategies are a key aspect of her research and explore how companies can use corporate social responsibility (CSR) while also being skeptical of CSR on social media for effective response strategies. She is an active researcher and is working on how AI-generated misinformation can spread to the public following natural disasters. Her research is aligned with the UMass Boston urban mission to advance knowledge that strengthens the social and economic resilience of the communities we serve. She believes that due to the diverse student population and complex organizational landscape of Boston, her research is relevant to UMass Boston by exploring how social identities and cultural backgrounds shape the way people process and react to information.

Dr. Ma’s path as a scholar and mentor is deeply informed by her experience as the first in her family to attend college and the first to earn a PhD. As a first-generation scholar, she understands the immense grit and dedication required to balance academics with personal life demands that many students at UMass Boston experience. Her experiences have resulted in her becoming inspired by her students who strive for higher education and put tremendous effort in the classroom, and she wants them to feel just as empowered through her support. She is eager to continue her endeavors here at UMass Boston and reunite with her family.

