

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Received **\$730,555** in gifts and pledges between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009



Rachel '66 and John Morton '66 named Commonwealth Honors College the **beneficiary** of an individual retirement account with a market value of nearly \$500,000



Eugene Isenberg '50 and his wife Ronnie established and awarded **merit scholarships** to provide funding of up to \$20,000 each for five rising juniors who are outstanding members of both Commonwealth Honors College and the Isenberg School of Management

Corporation for
NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE



Commonwealth Honors College, as part of a collaboration among the five UMass campuses, was awarded a federal **Corporation for National and Community Service grant**. The grant aims to engage students in community service as a strategy for helping individuals across Massachusetts respond to the consequences of the economic downturn. The grant will leverage the Honors College's robust set of programs for developing student leadership in community engagement. The grant will infuse \$90,000 per year for three years into the college's Community Engagement Program.

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

21st Century Leaders

Of the thirteen 21st Century Leaders Awards presented at undergraduate commencement, **ten** were presented to Commonwealth Honors College students, recognizing them for their academic accomplishments and for contributing to the university through exceptional achievements or enhancing the reputation of the campus

Scholarships

Awarded **78** students **\$180,035** in scholarships and awards from the endowment and other sources

Percentage of honors students receiving financial aid: 34.7%

Having attended the University's graduation ceremony before arriving for his first year on campus, Ivan Bercovich '09 was impressed by that year's recipients of the 21st Century Leaders Awards. Setting his sights on this top honor for seniors, he earned entry into the Honors College and went on to conduct research on investment strategies. Ivan ultimately graduated with two degrees and highest honors—and he was named a 21st Century Leader. "Commonwealth Honors College presented many different experiences and opportunities that changed my world view," he says. "I was encouraged to explore different academic disciplines and ended up with a double degree in electrical engineering and financial mathematics—and a degree with a lot of credibility behind it."



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**COMMONWEALTH
HONORS COLLEGE**

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UMassAmherst

COMMONWEALTH HONORS COLLEGE

Annual Report 2008-2009



UMassAmherst



STUDENTS

In 2008-09, **3,773 (19.5%)** of UMass undergraduate students were members of Commonwealth Honors College

Profile of students entering Fall 2008

- 609 students
- Average high school GPA: **4.09**
- Average high school rank: **Top 5%**
- Average combined SAT critical reading and math scores: **1320**
- Percentage that self-identified as ALANA: **19.5%**
- Percentage that resides out-of-state: **14.4%**
- Percentage of honors students in UMass Amherst's entering class: **14.6%**
- Number of additional students admitted to the Honors College based on their performance at UMass Amherst: **196**



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

- Expended **\$36,580** to organize the 15th annual Massachusetts Statewide Conference on Undergraduate Research at which **551** students from **18** of the state's public higher education campuses presented their research
- Awarded **141** students in **30** academic departments **\$102,722** in research grants and fellowships
- Archived **617** honors manuscripts

"In a lab," says Cornelius Taabazuing '09, "you actually get to implement scientific research techniques, not just read about them. And you're creating new knowledge." With the support of a Commonwealth Honors College research grant, Cornelius completed a Capstone Experience thesis on generating biological processes to hinder the development of drug-resistant bacteria. "You need to be given an opportunity in order to realize what you can achieve," he says. "If I didn't have the opportunity to do research I would never have known that I can excel at it." Upon graduation Cornelius received a summer research internship with Nobel Laureate Tom Cech and is now pursuing graduate studies at UMass Amherst.

INSTRUCTION

Courses

- Provided **266** honors course sections, including capstone courses, for **4,037** student enrollments
- Contracted with other campus departments to offer **197** honors course sections, including capstone courses, for **3,466** student enrollments
- Offered **35** Community Service Learning honors course sections for **359** student enrollments, which involved students in community life as a source for their learning

Honors Seminar Series

- Through **176** course sections for **2,586** student enrollments, the series introduced honors students to the value of interdisciplinary study and honed their skills in conducting research and communicating findings



Established in 2002 by the FleetBoston Financial Foundation in honor of its chairman, the Terrence Murray Commonwealth Honors College Professorship supports innovative academic offerings in the honors college. Anthropology professor Arthur Keene was named the first Murray Professor. From 2003-2009, he used the support to develop and launch "The Ethnography of Us," a capstone course in which students conduct ethnographic research among their peers, asking the question, how does the Millennial Generation learn? The research helps students and instructors better understand each other and consequently contribute to a more effective teaching/learning environment. In 2009, biology professor Patricia Wadsworth was named to this rotating professorship, which she will apply to developing and refining a capstone course on bio-imaging.



In collaboration with the Commonwealth Honors Council and the UMass Boston Honors Program, Commonwealth Honors College offered a 3-credit interdisciplinary summer course that used the city of Boston as its focus. Through weekend field trips, readings, reflection assignments, and a final project, honors students from seven of the state's public campuses were introduced to various ways to learn about a locale. Students developed an understanding of the significance of the city's geological setting, buildings, histories and peoples by exploring Boston's literary history, libraries, harbor and Native American histories and cultures.

OUR SPECIALIZED STUDENT PROGRAMS

Bachelor's Degree with Individual Concentration (BDIC)

Through BDIC, **250** students made progress toward self-designed **interdisciplinary majors** including "Performing Arts Management" and "Aviation and Foreign Policy"

Residential Academic Programs

Offered **15** small, interest-based residential communities for **358** first-year students, including **IMPACT!** which engaged **18** students in regular community service

International Scholars Program

Integrated **11** students' coursework in international studies with experience living and learning outside the U.S.

Citizen Scholars Program

Supported **34** students in developing the knowledge, skills, and vision to build community, be effective citizens, and advocate for social justice

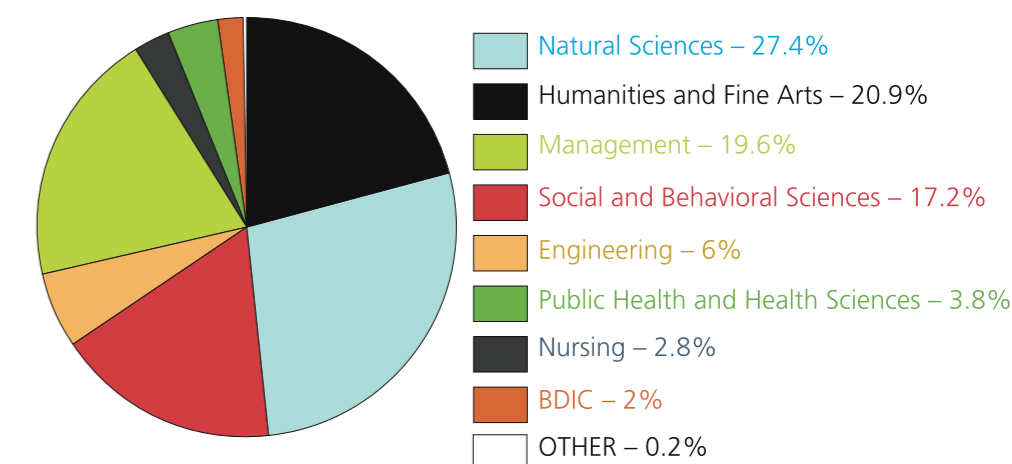
As a Citizen Scholar, Nicholas Druar '09 collaborated with local health-focused organizations to engage students in outreach around health issues. He also conducted research that resulted in a state policy recommendation on the use of a drug that can prevent fatality from heroin overdose. "The Citizen Scholars Program," he says, "prepares you to make change in the world for the better. It provides a space where a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can come together and learn, laugh, and experience the potential of change."

ADVISING & STUDENT PROGRAMS

- Provided guidance and information to assist students with academic planning and decisions related to the honors curriculum
- Oriented **805** admitted students during Welcome Weekend Orientation and later in the year
- Guided the approval of **1,088** honors independent studies, theses and projects
- Offered **20 weekly workshops** to increase students' knowledge and enhance skills, covering topics such as applying to graduate school, building study skills, and studying abroad
- Hosted **20 Pizza & Prof** events, bringing students and faculty together in a casual setting

DEGREES AWARDED

13.1% of the University's graduating class of academic year 2009 were members of Commonwealth Honors College



OUR OFFICES

Bachelor's Degree with Individual Concentration

Introduced the **Entrepreneurship Initiative** through which a series of courses helps innovative students turn ideas into commercial ventures

Community Engagement Program

Since the Honors College's inception, it has housed the University's Office of Community Service Learning (OCSL) to engage students in course-related community service and to support campus faculty in building community service learning courses. OCSL relocated to the Provost's Office and continued its campus-wide efforts; the Honors College created the Community Engagement Program to continue its **support for service learning** within the Honors College.

Office of National Scholarship Advisement (ONSA)

ONSA assisted eligible students in preparing competitive applications for prestigious national scholarships, helping the campus claim: **4 Fulbright** Scholarships, **1 Goldwater** Scholarship, **1 Goldwater** honorable mention, and **1 Truman** Scholarship



Gregory Su '10 earned a prestigious Goldwater Scholarship through his academic record and his research on the ability of nanoparticles to improve adhesion between interfaces. One of only 278 students nationwide to receive the highly coveted honor awarded to academically talented students who intend to pursue careers in science, mathematics, or engineering, Greg credits ONSA with helping him prepare a successful application. "ONSA was instrumental," he says. "They reviewed my research proposal and application and provided advice that allowed me to create a competitive application."