Dear Friends,

The fall semester is in full swing and finally, after decades of having our community in different buildings, the Heller School has been reunited as the renovation of the Heller-Brown Building was completed. The Heller community – students, faculty and staff – is at last all together under one roof. The building connects to the Irving Schneider and Family Building, which opened last year. If you have not yet seen the entire complex in its finished state, I encourage you to contact us and arrange for a tour.

To kick off the celebration and commemorate the opening of the Heller-Brown Building, we were fortunate to have Dr. Paul Farmer as keynote speaker. Dr. Farmer, founding director of Partners in Health and a medical anthropologist and physician, is best known for his work with the poor in Haiti and other nations. His use of his knowledge to advance social justice aligns with the Heller School’s mission. His talk was an inspiration to us all. If you missed his presentation, you can find it on the Heller School website at heller.brandeis.edu. I encourage you to listen from your desktop.

HELLER'S EDUCATIONAL AND RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Heller is growing not only in size but in areas of expertise. Thanks to the generosity of Laura and Robert '69 Sillerman and their Tomorrow Foundation, the Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy has been established at Heller. Led by Professor Andrew Hahn, PhD '78, the Sillerman Center will empower a growing generation of philanthropists to become social entrepreneurs by providing research-supported advice on effective grant-making strategies, developing best practices, and helping successful ventures reach scale. The center will host roundtables with leading members of the donor community and non-profit organizations, offer executive education opportunities, and develop new courses on effective philanthropy. The Sillerman Center is currently in an assessment phase to hone a work plan for the next three to five years.

A gift from the Nancy Lurie Marks Family Foundation has established the Lurie Institute for Disability Policy, which will enable Heller to pioneer in the development of progressive policies for people with autism and other disabilities. There is a search underway for the Nancy Lurie Marks Professor in Disability Policy, who will serve as the leader of the Institute.
While the Heller School has been consistently ranked third among schools of social policy by U.S. News & World Report, in October, The Heller MBA, led by Jody Hoffer Gittell, was listed nineteenth in Beyond Grey Pinstripes’ Global 100 ranking. The survey, conducted under the auspices of the Aspen Institute’s Business and Society Program, spotlights innovative MBA programs that integrate social and environmental issues into curricula and research.

Heller researchers have recently published studies on a variety of important policy issues. Professor Constance Horgan, director of the Institute for Behavioral Health at Heller’s Schneider Institutes for Health Policy, published a study in the Journal of General Internal Medicine that showed that health plans seldom require screening for substance abuse and mental health in primary care, even though such screening can improve the detection of these problems. In a study that was published in the journal Circulation, Heller lecturer Jose Suaya, PhD ’06, along with professor Donald Shepard and senior scientist William Stason, found that few heart attack survivors use life-prolonging cardiac rehabilitation services.

Heller’s Executive Education Program, under the leadership of professors Jon Chilingerian and Sarita Bhalotra, PhD ’99, held its annual Leadership Program in Health Policy and Management. Developed in conjunction with the American College of Surgeons and the Thoracic Surgery Foundation for Research and Education, the program trains senior clinical leaders in health policy and management.

HELLER ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

Professor A.K. Nandakumar and his team have received a grant from the Gates Foundation to support international health financing issues. Some of their activities so far include participating in an assessment of an HIV/AIDS program in Botswana. Professor Nandakumar also co-chaired a conference that looked at how the large population of persons of Indian origin living outside of India can support the development of health policy and health economics in India.

Kelley Ready, Lecturer and Associate Director of the Master of Arts program in Sustainable International Development, participated in a summit in Sri Lanka of the United Nations World Tourism Organization’s celebration of World Tourism Day. Dr. Ready was part of a think tank that explored the issues that women face in the tourism industry in relation to the UN’s Third Millennium Development Goal of promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Professor Maria Green is serving as a consultant to the United Nations Development Programme on integrating human rights into needs assessment models used to implement the Millennium Development Goals.

Senior Scientist Joan Kaufman, in conjunction with Jon Chilingerian and Heller’s Executive Education Program, directed the Brandeis-Harvard China HIV/AIDS Policy Leadership and Management Course at Heller in September. Twenty managers and government professionals, all working on China’s HIV/AIDS policy and program implementation, came from China to participate in the course.
HELLER IN THE MEDIA

Heller faculty made appearances in print and broadcast media and on the web. Michael Doonan, PhD ’02, was quoted in the Boston Globe discussing the healthcare proposals of presidential hopefuls Hillary Clinton and Mitt Romney. Andrew Hahn, PhD ’78, was featured in a PBS documentary, “These Kids Mean Business,” about youth entrepreneurship. Thomas Shapiro took part in a discussion about reducing poverty in the United States that was broadcast on the web.

This fall, Professor Anita Hill has been a guest columnist at the Boston Globe, publishing weekly opinion pieces on such topics as affirmative action, the role of the first lady, discrimination and harassment in the National Basketball Association, and how subprime lending practices affect women.

My recent appearances on National Public Radio included discussions about Wal-Mart’s discount drug plan and Hillary Clinton’s healthcare proposal. I was also delighted to once again be ranked among Modern Healthcare magazine’s “100 Most Powerful People in Healthcare.”

HELLER ALUMNI

Our alumni continue to make an impact at the local, national, and international levels. In Massachusetts, Jean Flatley McGuire, PhD ’96, was named to Governor Deval Patrick’s cabinet as assistant secretary for disability policies and programs, and Barbara Ferrer, PhD ’94, was appointed director of the Boston Public Health Commission. In January 2008, Reginald Avery, PhD ’80, will become president of Coppin State University in Baltimore. Further afield, in Jakarta, Indonesia, Jiway Tung, MA ’05, runs The Learning Farm, a program that helps improve the lives of city youth by teaching them agricultural and other skills.

I am grateful for the opportunity to lead the Heller School and am extremely proud of all that we have accomplished and continue to accomplish. As we begin to plan for Heller’s 50th Anniversary celebration on October 16-18, 2009, your input and ideas are sought. A new leader of the Heller School will soon be appointed, which will signify another leap ahead into the 21st century. I hope that each of you takes pride in what the school has accomplished, but also looks forward with us to the next 50 years of generating knowledge that will advance social justice.

Warm regards,

Stuart H. Altman
Dean