

## Faculty Profile: **Stephanie Hartwell, Professor of Sociology**

**“Anything that has scared me—I’ve wanted to do it,” says Stephanie Hartwell, professor of sociology, of her academic research path.**

Hartwell, the graduate director of the Master’s Program in Applied Sociology, has dedicated her research to analyzing and interacting with people who are dually diagnosed with mental health conditions and substance abuse.

Committed to social justice work, Hartwell recently completed a research study that worked across multiple state agencies, including the state’s Department of Corrections, Department of Health, and Department of Mental Health.

The longitudinal study involves collecting data on people who transition from prison systems to the community, and it relies heavily on the collaboration and interaction with state agencies. “There’s a lot of legwork to create and maintain these collaborations with the agencies,” Hartwell said. “I need their permission to access those data.”

Although budgetary concerns plague most institutions and agencies in the U.S. right now, Hartwell is quick to point out how “wonderful and ambitious Massachusetts is in helping with rehabilitation and transition.”

Funded by the National Institutes of Health, Hartwell and her team are finishing analysis on this project and the forthcoming article will be published in the journal *Evaluation and Program Planning*. The article is titled, “Harmonizing Databases? Using a Quasi-Experimental Design to Evaluate a Public Mental Health Re-entry Program.”

Like many UMass Boston faculty and staff, Hartwell has her hands on multiple projects that, in her case, are all grant-funded. At the forefront of her projects, all conducted concurrently, are MISSION Direct Vet: Jail Diversion Trauma and Recovery and MISSION-Re-entry and Peer Support.

In its fourth year, the MISSION Direct Vet project follows and analyzes veterans transitioning from their military service to status as civilians. “It’s an interesting project—being able to see the kind of things that veterans struggle with in their transition from combat theater to the community,” she said.

As the co-principal investigator and the lead evaluator of the MISSION-Re-entry and Peer Support program, Hartwell works with the Bureau of Justice, which assists in the transition of medium- and high-risk female offenders who struggle with substance abuse and mental health conditions.

Hartwell spends most of her time building programs, which she funds through program-grant money, but her main objective and

goal she says, is to, “put social justice work ahead of money.” In doing so, she is able to build programs, then offset the cost by applying for larger grants, a delicate maneuvering when budget cuts are becoming all the more commonplace.

And Hartwell’s dedication extends further than her commitment to social justice programs: “I insist that graduate students get paid for the work that they do because the students are fantastic to work with,” she says.

Hartwell worked with 4-7 graduate students personally over the course of the 2011-2012 academic year, although she advises all of them in their progression throughout the program, which “throws our students into the deep end,” she says. “We want to get them out into the social world, get them out of their comfort zones.”

Because of this approach, Hartwell says that the program receives several requests for graduate students to do evaluation work around the city of Boston. The MA program is unique in this regard since it is the only master’s program in applied sociology in the Boston area.

Hartwell only teaches one class a semester due to the many projects she leads, but that didn’t stop the sociology department from nominating her for the annual Chancellor’s Award for Distinguished Teaching. Hartwell was honored, along with three other faculty members, at UMass Boston’s 2012 commencement ceremony. “It was a surprise,” she said. “It was very flattering. I’m very honored by my department but I’m very honored by my students. I really thought I was going to cry. It was such an emotional event. It means a tremendous amount.”

A faculty member since 1997 and working as a full professor since 2010, Hartwell speaks with conviction that UMass Boston is her home. “This is the best place in the world to teach sociology,” she says. “The sociology department is fantastic. I hope it comes through how much I love and appreciate the students. I’m proud to work at a place so committed to public service and social justice. I’m a builder. I like to build stuff.”



**Stephanie Hartwell**

Boston area.

- **Publications (highlights):**
  - 25 peer-reviewed journal articles
  - 10 book chapters
  - 2 edited books
- **Adjunct Associate Research Professor, Department of Psychiatry, UMass Medical School**
- **Research Consultant, Division of Forensic Services, Massachusetts Department of Mental Health**
- **\$1.3M in grant funds**