

MERRIMACK

MAGAZINE | WINTER 2024

PURSUIT OF A UNIVERSITY

Merrimack's plan to
become a leading Catholic
research institution





Rice and Beans

MACK GIVES BACK

MACK GIVES BACK

Rice and Beans



Thanks to the kindness of the Merrimack community, more than 145,000 meals were packed during Mack Gives Back Days to be distributed to those in the Merrimack Valley experiencing food insecurity.



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Feedback: We want to hear from you! Please share your thoughts, insights, recollections and photos. Include your name, graduation year, address and daytime phone number. Due to volume, we regret that we cannot respond to every message.

Email: communications@merrimack.edu

Mail: Merrimack Magazine, Box A-20, Merrimack College,
315 Turnpike St., North Andover, MA 01845

On the cover: Erin Lincoln '24, a research assistant working on a National Science Foundation grant project in Dr. Azam Noori's lab.





“As president, I am exceptionally proud and thankful for all our community has given to get Merrimack where it is today. Our transformation is iconic. Our transformation is evolving. Our transformation is special. And our transformation is not done.”

- President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D.



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MERRIMACK

A Magazine for Our
Alumni, Parents and Friends
Winter 2024

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MERRIMACK
COLLEGE



“ We have made great strides in expanding financial and administrative support focused on research, as well as building state-of-the-art facilities that are critical to increasing sponsored research.”

Moving Our Agenda Forward

Dear Alumni, Parents and Friends,

I hope you had a joyous and restful holiday season and that the new year provides tremendous opportunities to you for happiness, peace and growth.

Growth is a particular area of focus for Merrimack College not just for this year but for many years to come. As one of the three strategic directions of the *Agenda for the Future*, along with impact and mission, Merrimack's ability to grow our reputation and evolve our core activities is imperative to our trajectory of becoming a leading Catholic research university. We as an institution are continuously identifying the challenges that could hinder that growth and are adapting to ensure we are best positioned to solidify our future.

In this edition of the Merrimack Magazine, you can read about the individuals, departments and campus groups already laying the foundation upon which our future is being built, including our investment in research, our commitment to greater access to higher education and our dedication to service.

A key element to Merrimack's future is an R2 classification from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, which you will read more about in this issue. This endeavor will have far-reaching and transformative results across our College community and beyond. Attaining that classification will be spurred by a robust and

impactful research infrastructure and graduate education culture that is being cultivated by our faculty. We have made great strides in expanding financial and administrative support focused on research, as well as building state-of-the-art facilities that are critical to increasing sponsored research.

However, it is excellence across the totality of Merrimack College's mission that will lead to the bright future we have set for ourselves. We will continue to enhance academics, support groundbreaking research, expand community engagement, achieve success in athletics and nurture a diverse campus community. All of this, rooted in our Augustinian values and traditions, will have lasting effects on Merrimack's mission to enlighten minds, engage hearts and empower lives.

There will be changes, challenges and chances taken. But in the end, there will be new levels of success, impact and growth for Merrimack College because of the hard work of this community, one that I am incredibly proud to be a part of.

God Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Hopey'.

Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D.
President

MOVE-IN DAY!



Official move-in crew appreciation post! Moving in the class of 2027 and welcoming back our returning Warriors would not have been possible without the hard work of our amazing volunteers. Thank you all for bringing so much energy and excitement and having fun along the way!



FACEBOOK



To kick off Hispanic Heritage Month, Merrimack's Association of Latinos Moving Ahead and the Unity House invited students to share and celebrate their heritage by taking photos with the flag that represents them!



LINKEDIN



Meet our music program director, Andrew Cote, who has been nominated for the Grammys' 2024 Music Educator Award! Over the past three years, he has worked to expand Merrimack's music program and band while creating a more inclusive learning environment. Under his leadership, more student musicians are enrolled than ever!

Learn more and watch the full video: merrimack.me/Cote2023



INSTAGRAM



Left: On the first day of classes, the Merrimack community attended the traditional Mass of the Holy Spirit, the first event of a week long celebration to begin the new academic year.

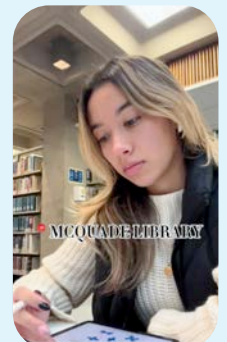


Right: Warriors are getting involved! New and returning students had the opportunity to meet more than 90 MC organizations, clubs and offices at the annual Involvement Fair.



TIKTOK

Join Lyanne Murphy '24 for a typical day as a pre-dental student majoring in biology at MC.



 The Pursuit of a

UNIVERSITY

Since the launch of the *Agenda for the Future*, Merrimack College has invested, promoted and encouraged the expansion of sponsored faculty research and graduate programs with the ultimate goal of becoming a leading Catholic research university.



To picture the Merrimack College of the next decade is to picture an anchor of the region's research ecosystem.

Leading faculty with expansive research portfolios will make consequential and lasting discoveries in state-of-the-art labs and out in the field. Students will flock to campus to learn from and be mentored by those faculty, and be positioned to make their own contributions to society. Industry partners, nonprofit organizations and government agencies will call upon Merrimack's research infrastructure to find answers to the most challenging questions.

Those are the qualities of a national research university. And that is Merrimack College's next transformative ambition, the plan for which is already underway.

"Merrimack College has achieved tremendous success," said President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D. "Integrating graduate education with research across the institution is critical to Merrimack's continued transformational growth. And the next step forward is to leverage our academic portfolio, reputation, brand and enhanced research capacity to join an aspirant group of institutions."

R2 CLASSIFICATION

That aspirant group of institutions comprises 133 universities across the United States that are designated R2 high research activity by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

Since 1973, the Carnegie Classification has recognized institutional diversity in U.S. higher education across a myriad of areas, including research, graduate and undergraduate education, and special focuses. The classifications are updated every several years.

An institution must meet two criteria to receive R2 designation, according to the Carnegie Classification:

- Award at least 20 research/ scholarship doctoral degrees in an academic year
- Have at least \$5 million in total annual research expenditures

By becoming an R2 institution, Merrimack will join an elite group.

“Merrimack’s unique dedication to mission, community engagement and scholarship means we can play

a pivotal role in accelerating the translation of research into meaningful impact,” says Vice President of Research April Bowling.

As the research conducted at Merrimack continues its upward trajectory, so too does the development of the doctorate degrees students will earn in conjunction with that research.

“Research doctorates are aimed at just that ... producing new knowledge and scholarship either in academia or industry,” said Bowling. “That’s why Merrimack is working to build a cadre of faculty and programming that is indisputably capable of bringing Ph.D. students through.”

On average, it takes about five years to complete a doctoral program and defend a dissertation, Bowling said, during which time the doctoral candidate learns to act as the investigator on a unique research project that is generally adjacent to research their faculty advisor is conducting.

“Our faculty are getting the Merrimack name out on the national stage, associated with research excellence, and we are being included in conversations around research that we weren’t before.”

– April Bowling,
Vice President of Research



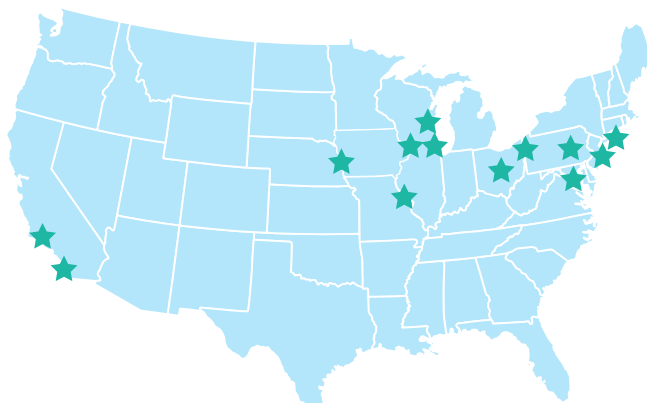
JOINING NEW RANKS AS AN R2 INSTITUTION

Catholic R2 Institutions and Their Current U.S. News Ranking

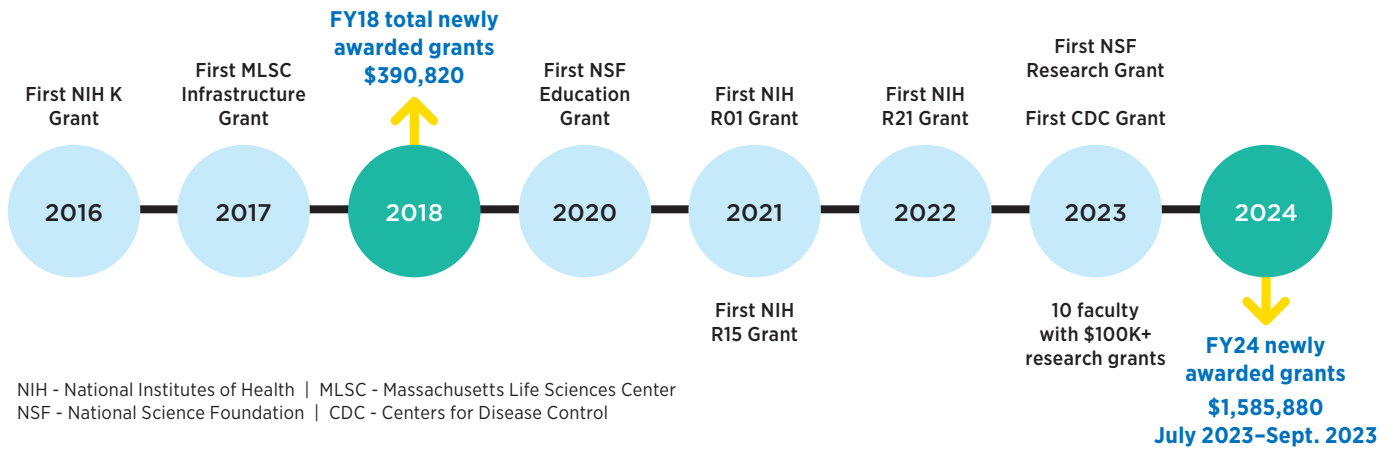
- Creighton University (124)
- DePaul University (151*)
- Duquesne University (151*)
- Fordham University (89)
- Loyola Marymount University (93)
- Loyola University Chicago (142)
- Marquette University (86)
- Saint Louis University (105)
- Seton Hall University (151*)
- The Catholic University of America (178)
- University of Dayton (133)
- University of San Diego (98)
- Villanova University (67)

* tie ranking

Of the 133, there are 13 Catholic R2 universities in the U.S. There are none in New England.



MERRIMACK'S SPONSORED RESEARCH HISTORY



THE FACULTY



“The faculty are the core of our R2 aspirations — there is no way around that,” said Bowling. “You could have all the investments and top equipment in the world, but if you don’t have the human beings with the ideas and work ethic to drive it and build and make discoveries, then you have nothing. Without them, we can’t do it.”

As Merrimack College’s highest funded researcher, with millions of dollars in grants from organizations such as the National Institutes of Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Juliana Cohen, professor in the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, has witnessed Merrimack’s research transformation firsthand.

Her research on the impact of effective school nutrition policies and initiatives on diet-related disparities, obesity risks and academic outcomes has significantly expanded thanks in part to the establishment of the College’s first research center, the Center for Health Inclusion, Research and Practice (CHIRP) in 2021.

Now, as director of CHIRP, Dr. Cohen is paying research opportunities forward and fostering an ecosystem for other research faculty to thrive. Just this past fall, she supported and mentored three new research-funded faculty affiliated with CHIRP.

“I am so grateful to President Hopey for creating an environment at Merrimack College that is so supportive

of research, which has been an essential part of my success as a researcher,” said Cohen. “I am very excited for our shared vision of further expanding sponsored research at Merrimack and to be a part of this next phase of growth at the College.”

Bowling noted that Merrimack College has a rich history of receiving successful scholarship grants. In 2020, Mechanical Engineering Chair and Associate Professor Rickey Caldwell received a nearly \$1 million award from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to help high-achieving, low-income students with unmet financial needs obtain the education and skills necessary to launch a fulfilling career in STEM.

And now the College is doubling down on receiving research grants from external sources, also known as sponsored research, for endeavors that not only help acquire knowledge to meet specific needs but also apply knowledge toward the production or improvement of a product, service or process.

The 2023–24 academic year has proven to be one of the most prolific in Merrimack College’s history when it comes to sponsored research. In the first few months alone, Merrimack College received newly awarded grants totaling more than \$1.5 million. By comparison, for all of 2017–2018, the College received just over \$390,000.

This past fall, Merrimack received its first major sponsored research award



“ I am very excited for our shared vision of further expanding sponsored research at Merrimack and to be a part of this next phase of growth at the College.”

– Juliana Cohen, professor in the School of Nursing and Health Science

from not one but two of the world’s leading research organizations: the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the NSF.

Dr. Azam Noori, associate professor of biology in the School of Arts and Sciences, was awarded nearly \$400,000 from the NSF to explore how microscopic materials impact the cells and essential nutrients of selected plant species. Dr. Eleanor Shonkoff, assistant professor of nutrition and public health, will support the city of Lawrence on a five-year collaborative agreement with the CDC to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities, a project that could total more than \$3.5 million.

“Our faculty are getting the Merrimack name out on the national stage, associated with research excellence, and we are being included in conversations around research that we weren’t before,” Bowling said.

THE FACILITIES

On the northeast side of campus sits Palmisano Hall, the new hub of Merrimack’s renewed commitment to life sciences education and research. Named in 2019 for the significant contributions of alumnus Laurence “Larry” Palmisano ’57, H’19, P’82, ’85, ’87, ’87, ’90, GP’16 and his late wife, Roberta “Bobbi” Palmisano. Palmisano Hall is undergoing a transformation that will ultimately turn Merrimack into a destination for students, faculty, researchers and industry partners interested in fields such as cell biology and analytical chemistry.

On the main floor of Palmisano Hall sits a new 7,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art Shared Instrumentation and Research Facility (SIRF). This designated incubator space for research and collaboration provides faculty and students the space and equipment to conduct tests, experiments and projects to help answer some of the most significant questions posed in the life sciences.

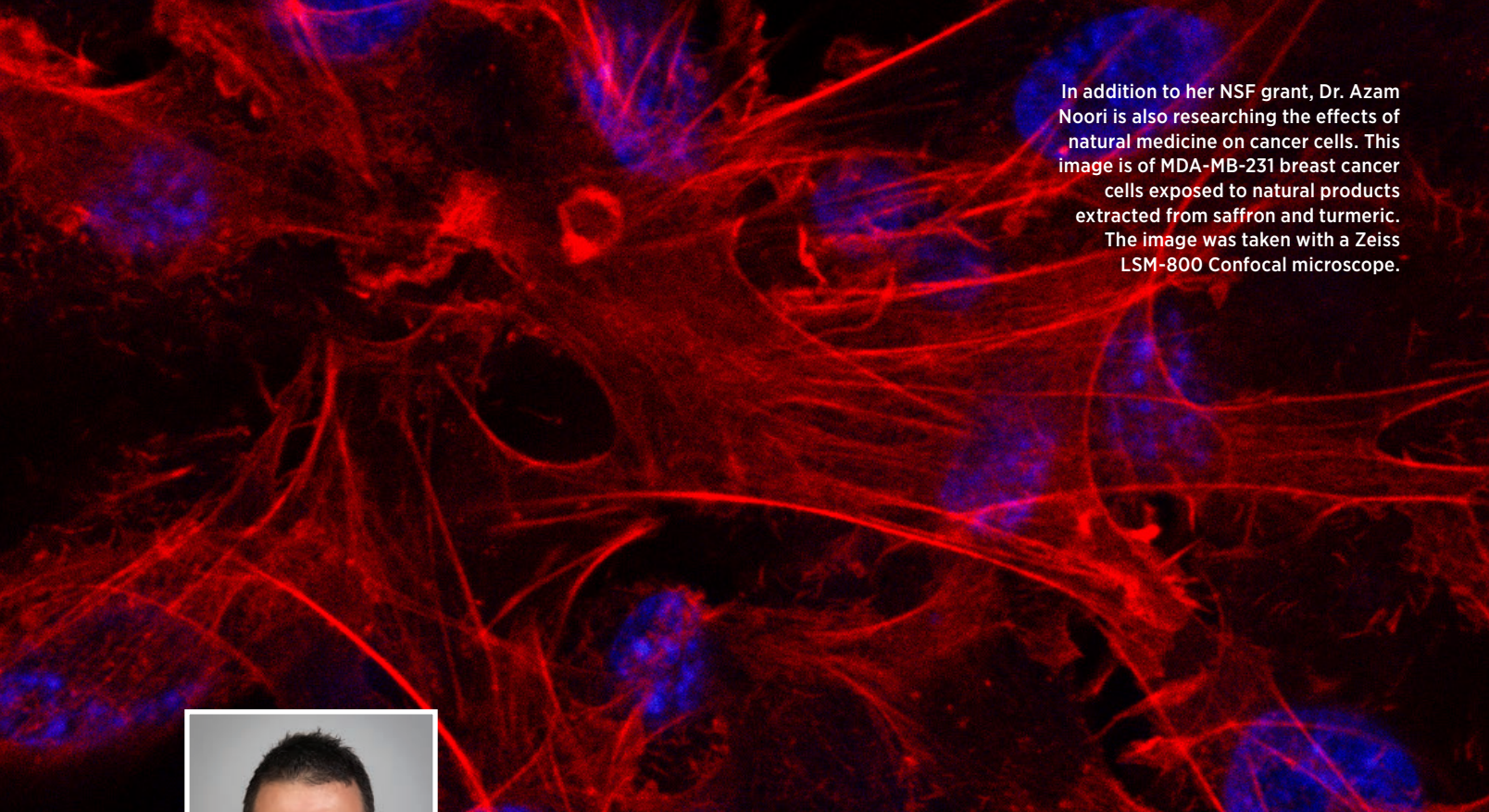
“This is a research space with high-caliber instrumentation that will be the focal point of the region’s research ecosystem,” said Jimmy Franco, associate dean in the School of Arts and Sciences. “It significantly enhances

the capacity for research at Merrimack, and we are going to be a place where students, faculty, outside researchers and industry partners will want to come collaborate and discover. It is just the point of the spear.”

Among the features of the space is its physical flexibility to support research across different disciplines, rather than tying the College to one specific area. “A facility of this size and capacity will give faculty in the life sciences the infrastructure they need to generate a steady stream of productive research and grant proposals that will get us to the R2 level,” said Bowling. “And from there, the future is wide open.”

Just a couple of floors above the SIRF is the new springboard for undergraduate students’ foray into life sciences research. Through a \$750,000 grant from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC), Merrimack College built a new training facility where students will learn on the same top-of-the-line instruments as the SIRF’s, using an industry-based curriculum. This training will give students the skills and confidence to go on and support Merrimack faculty research in the SIRF.





In addition to her NSF grant, Dr. Azam Noori is also researching the effects of natural medicine on cancer cells. This image is of MDA-MB-231 breast cancer cells exposed to natural products extracted from saffron and turmeric. The image was taken with a Zeiss LSM-800 Confocal microscope.



“ This is a research space with high-caliber instrumentation that will be the focal point of the region’s research ecosystem.”

- Jimmy Franco, associate dean in the School of Arts and Sciences, speaking about the SIRF

The instruments the College purchased using the grant money include a nuclear magnetic resonance instrument, which is used to identify the molecular structure of a compound, and a high-pressure liquid chromatography instrument, which separates and identifies the compounds that make up a sample. Additionally, the grant will help increase the pipeline of students entering life science careers by further developing industry-based curricula at Merrimack in programs that feed into the life sciences.

“We now have an undergraduate research experience that will rival just about anybody if not surpass them,” Franco said.

The SIRF represents the pinnacle of Merrimack’s new scaffolded life sciences research structure, while the new MLSC-funded instructional facility is the foundation. Undergraduate students will get a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn on advanced training instrumentation and those skills will have real value add for Merrimack faculty conducting research in the SIRF.

“What Merrimack can offer prospective students that is unique is our faculty are amazing educators and instructors, as well as innovative researchers,” said Bowling. “And we will put students in a lab with cutting-edge instrumentation that makes science much more accessible and exciting. And we are starting them with faculty who will teach them how to have a role in research.”

7,000

square-foot state-of-the-art Shared Instrumentation and Research Facility (SIRF) sits on the main floor of Palmisano Hall

\$750,000

grant received from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center

\$1.5M

received July 2023–September 2023 for the 2023–2024 academic year

\$4M

institutional investment in the SIRF



THE SUPPORT

While faculty and students are conducting the research, Merrimack’s Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) works to ensure the administrative support is in place to bring a grant application from submission to award.

“Research administration is everything you don’t see, but that determines if research is ultimately sustainable and successful,” said Bowling.

Under the direction of Erin Mathis, senior associate vice president of research administration and foundation relations, the OSP oversees a myriad of facets related to research work, including safety compliances, intellectual property protections and grant financing.

That support has motivated Merrimack faculty to apply for major external grants they may have initially considered out of reach.

Melissa “Mish” Zimdars, associate professor of communication and media, has conducted extensive research on the dissemination of misinformation online. Her current work examines posts and information shared by alternate health leaders and groups on social media platforms such as Facebook.

“I have always found research to be an important part of my academic identity because I believe it makes me a better teacher,” said Zimdars. “I’ve always seen research and teaching as symbiotic rather than in competition.”



“ I have always found research to be an important part of my academic identity because I believe it makes me a better teacher. I’ve always seen research and teaching as symbiotic rather than in competition.”

– Melissa “Mish” Zimdars, associate professor of communication and media

THE SWEET SPOT

And while she already has published two books and received initial funding from a Zampell Family Faculty Fellowship that resulted in a published article in a top communication research journal, Zimdars took the leap in 2022, thanks to support from OSP, to submit an application to the NSF.

“I would not have been motivated to try without Erin Mathis and the Office of Sponsored Programs,” Zimdars said. “They have really built out the infrastructure to support all the things faculty may not anticipate when applying for large-scale external funding.”

That application, to further fund Zimdars’ research on alternate health groups, was ultimately not accepted, but the review process and feedback she and her colleagues received were invaluable in building out the proposal, she said. They currently have two related journal articles under review and built the foundation to have a stronger proposal this winter.

“Mish dovetailed her interest and scholarship with the College’s new external funding infrastructure and capitalized on it,” Bowling noted. “That is what happens when you give amazing faculty even greater resources, and you are going to see it more and more at Merrimack.”

Merrimack College sees the R2 classification as the sweet spot for balancing the pursuit of sustainable research funding and infrastructure while maintaining teaching and academic excellence at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

“The goal of being R2 is to get even better at what we are already doing,” said Jonathan Lyon, executive vice provost. “All of this will be spurred by the ongoing culture shift from having primarily teaching-oriented faculty to faculty who are really focused on research. Everything we are doing in research actually adds to our capacity for excellence in teaching and learning.”



“Everything we are doing in research actually adds to our capacity for excellence in teaching and learning.”

– Jonathan Lyon,
executive vice provost



A young woman with dark hair tied back, wearing black safety glasses and a light blue lab coat, is shown in profile, looking down at her work. She is in a laboratory setting with other people and equipment visible in the background.

Merrimack's Early College Program

***OPENS
DOORS,
TRANSFORMS
LIVES***

Early College Program students showcase their work to state and local officials in a Merrimack biology lab.



Since 2017, the Early College Program has exposed highly motivated high school students in Lawrence, Massachusetts, to the college experience as well as the opportunity to earn college credits at no cost.

To her family and loved ones, Yameily Villaronga '25 is an inspiration. She first came to Merrimack College through the Early College Program, and her successes as a political science major have motivated others to follow in her footsteps.

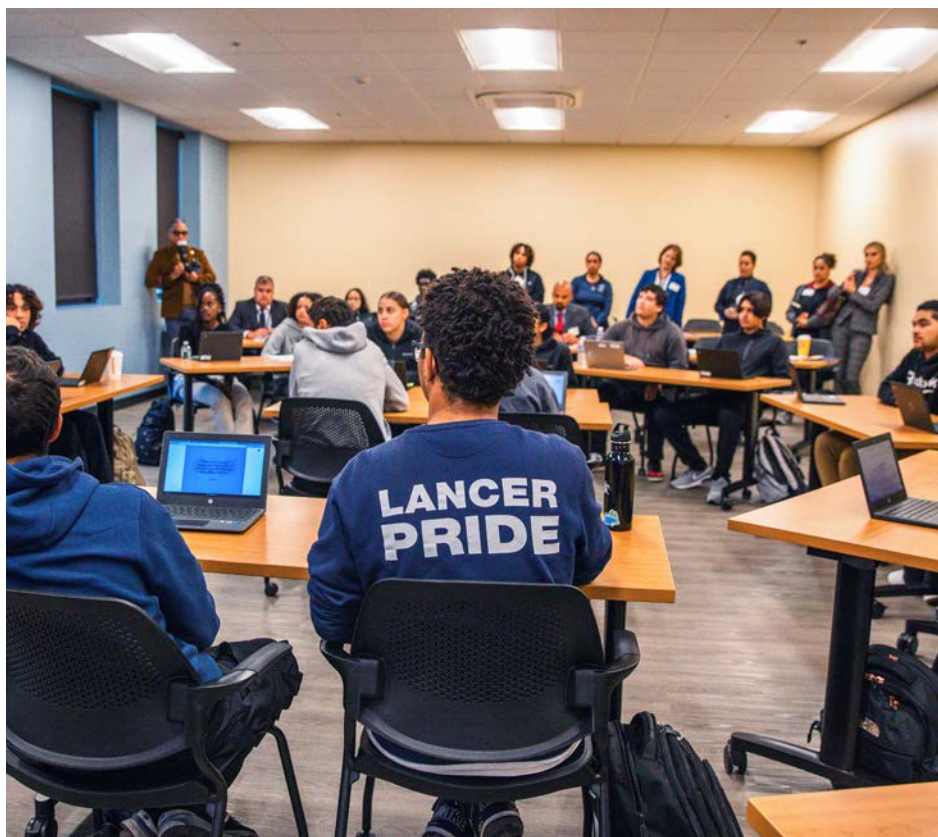
“When I went home and I talked about pursuing my master’s degree and my career choices, it inspired my family,” said Villaronga. “My mom went back to school, and now she’s finishing her associate’s degree, and my younger sister said she’s concentrating on going to school too. They thought if I could do it, they could do it.”

Along with current and former students, Villaronga shared her experiences with the Early College Program during an event on Merrimack College’s campus this past October with local and state officials. Now in its seventh year, the program has helped more than 350 students from Lawrence not only earn college credits while still in high school but also show them that higher education is a viable path.

“We want them to see themselves here as college students,” explained Meredith Fitzsimmons, assistant director of the Early College Program. “We want them to see how successful they can be on a college campus and work directly with professors ... to sit in a class with Merrimack College students and see just how strong and ready they are, no matter which college they ultimately decide to attend.”

“ We want to see students who are coming from low-income backgrounds, where college is not easily accessible, step into careers that empower them, bring them great life satisfaction and build up their community.”

– Kirstie Dobbs, director of Early College and faculty community engagement strategy



Top: Lawrence Mayor Brian De Peña and State Sen. Pavel Payano spoke with Early College students as they attended classes in a biology lab.

Bottom: Early College students from Lawrence High School and Abbott Lawrence Academy share what they have been learning in an Introduction to Psychology class at Merrimack.

100%

high school graduation rate for Lawrence High School students enrolled in Early College

99%

of 2023 Early College graduates are enrolled in college at least half time

93%

are enrolled at a four-year college, up from 76% in 2021

The program is open to high-achieving and highly motivated juniors and seniors from Lawrence High School's Upper School Academy and Abbott Lawrence Academy, an accelerated honors high school within Lawrence High's campus. Merrimack was one of 17 Early College Programs that received the initial Massachusetts Early College Designation back in 2017, and it was the first private institution in the commonwealth to receive the designation.

In the first year of the program, students take one course a semester with one another: Introduction to Biological Science with Michael Piatelli, associate instructional professor, and Politics of the United States with Kirstie Dobbs, director of Early College and faculty community engagement strategy. In the students' second year, they not only have more courses to choose from, including Foundations of Data Science, Anatomy and Physiology and Introduction to Human Development, but they are taking those courses with current Merrimack College students.

"One goal of the Early College Program is to expose these students to the content, but a portion of what we are charged with is facilitating their first, complete immersion into the college experience," said Dobbs, who was hired in 2019 as a lecturer for the program. "We are asking them to get into situations that push them to grow academically and socially in a supportive environment."

There are 131 high school students enrolled in the program for the 2023-24 academic year, and the cohort is on track to collectively earn 1,220 college credits. Fitzsimmons noted that an Early College Program student has the potential to earn up to 36 college credits if they also take advantage of the program's summer and winter course offerings. And that does not include credits from advanced placement courses that many of the students earn in high school.

“ [I come] from a family where nobody went to college. ... [As a Pioneer Scholar], I feel that there's a support system behind me, and it feels nice to know that I'm not the only one rooting for me.”

- Sabrina Marte '25

"There are a lot of kids who start our program who are going to go to Harvard or Stanford, and they breeze right through and that is amazing," said Fitzsimmons. "But there are other students who we are trying to teach how to do college. And no matter where they ultimately go to college, they are bringing with them the tools that we hope start them from a place of strength from the credits they earned, the confidence they gained and the familiarity they now have with a whole new type of institution."

Early College students interested in attending Merrimack College can apply for one of 10 Pioneer Scholars Scholarships, which provide full tuition to Merrimack for all four years of undergraduate study. Launched in 2019 by Merrimack College President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D., the program has awarded 49 scholarships to date. Merrimack celebrated the first cohort of graduating Pioneer Scholars in spring 2023.

"When I started the Early College Program, I was intimidated because I didn't know how much support I was going to have," said Sabrina Marte '25, a Pioneer Scholar who also works for the Massachusetts Alliance for Early College. "[I come] from a family where nobody went to college. ... [As a Pioneer Scholar], I feel that there's a support system behind me, and it feels nice to know that I'm not the only one rooting for me."

Dobbs, an expert in youth voter participation and civic engagement, noted that the Early College Program does not just benefit the students but also their families and the Lawrence community as well: “Long term, we want to see students who are coming from low-income backgrounds where college is not easily accessible step into careers that empower them, bring them great life satisfaction and build up their community.”

The politicians who met with the Early College students and visited their classes echoed Dobbs’ sentiment.

“My goal is to try to make sure the opportunities that I didn’t have you guys get,” State Sen. Pavel Payano, D-Lawrence, told students. “And that our school systems improve so people like you and people who come after you have easier access to pursue the American dream.”

Carlos Reyes ’23, an Early College Program alumnus, graduated from Merrimack College last year as a Pioneer Scholar. He said if it was not for the program, he would not have made the connections he needed to get to where he is today.

“I feel like the Early College Program has shaped my entire life,” he said. “If it wasn’t for the Early College Program, I probably wouldn’t have gone to college, and it’s not because I didn’t want to go — it was for financial reasons. It would be almost impossible to [attend].”

As Merrimack College expands its commitment to research, the Early College Program is also working to increase the number of research opportunities available to students during summer sessions. Merrimack is one of first Early College

“ If it wasn’t for the Early College Program, I probably wouldn’t have gone to college, and it’s not because I didn’t want to go — it was for financial reasons. It would be almost impossible to [attend].”

– Carlos Reyes ’23

Programs to specifically offer research-intensive courses where high school students conduct research right alongside Merrimack students.

“When these students feel like they have ownership and agency over their education, that is a huge sign of success for us,” said Dobbs. “They are growing and finding their voice and connecting their career goals to serving their communities, which is a critical part of Merrimack’s educational mission.”

► **Fun Fact**

Many Early College students go on to study at elite institutions such as Brown, Harvard, Stanford and Yale.



Introduction to Biology is one of the classes that Early College students take during their time at Merrimack.

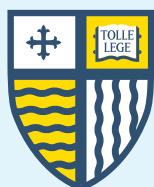


SUPPORT WHAT YOU LOVE

Whether you wish to help a student fulfill their dream of attending Merrimack, enhance a program that transforms the student experience or simply say thank you for the many ways Merrimack has influenced your life, you can make a gift that supports our mission and is meaningful to you.

Your gift to **THE MERRIMACK FUND** makes a lasting impact on current and future generations of Merrimack students.

VISIT [MERRIMACK.EDU/GIFT](https://merrimack.edu/gift) TO MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY!



The
Merrimack
Fund





THE 1947 SOCIETY MERRIMACK COLLEGE



Do you ever dream about how to give back to Merrimack? Through a planned gift, you can leave a lasting legacy that ensures Merrimack is prepared for the future. Not only do you have options for

how your gift will be used, but you also have options on what and how to give.

Liz Kemp Wiza '85 has long been inspired by Merrimack's deep connection to the Lawrence community. During her time as a psychology student at the College, Liz volunteered for Big Brothers Big Sisters of America in Lawrence. After graduation, she worked for the Greater Lawrence Mental Health Center as a mental health counselor.

These experiences had a profound impact on Liz, and she credits her Merrimack education and the mentorship of the College's faculty members with helping her develop the skills she needed to succeed in these roles.

Over the years, Liz supported Merrimack by giving to its area of greatest need. However, when she learned about the College's Pioneer Scholars Program — an Early College initiative that annually offers up to 10 high school students from Lawrence a full scholarship to Merrimack College — she knew she had found an area of support that spoke to her heart.

Through a planned gift from her estate, as well as an annual donation to Pioneer Scholars, Liz helps ensure the Pioneer Scholars program can transform lives through scholarship for many years to come.



Like Liz, your gift can help build a foundation for future generations of Merrimack College students. To discover which planned gift is right for you, contact the Office of Development and Alumni Relations at giving@merrimack.edu.

➔ See what's happening at Merrimack right now — visit www.merrimack.edu/news.

President Hopey, Wife Cheryl Lucas Affiliated to the Order of Saint Augustine



Merrimack College President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D. and his wife, Cheryl Lucas, on Nov. 30 were affiliated to the Order of Saint Augustine for their dedication to championing Augustinian values and mission.

An Order of Saint Augustine Affiliate is the highest honor the Order can bestow on a layperson. Those who are made Affiliates become official members of the Augustinian family and share in all the spiritual benefits of the Order.

“This affiliation is an incredible honor and blessing for Cheryl and I,” said President Hopey. “We are very touched

and humbled by it. It truly means everything to us. Merrimack College isn't just a place; it is truly a way of being, and the Augustinians and their values are our North Star. They make all the difference at this College.”

The Affiliation was officially presented to Hopey and Lucas during a special Mass celebrated

by Fr. Raymond Dlugos, O.S.A., Merrimack's vice president for mission and ministry, at St. Augustine's Parish in Andover, Massachusetts. After the Mass, a celebratory dinner was held at Merrimack's Collegiate Church of Christ the Teacher.

“We don't take Affiliation lightly,” said Fr. Robert Hagan, O.S.A., prior provincial of the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova. “It honors and recognizes those who in a very significant and extraordinary way collaborate with us on our mission that amplifies our charism. And Chris and Cheryl have done just that.”

President Hopey and Ms. Lucas were nominated by Fr. Raymond Dlugos, O.S.A., Fr. Bryan Kerns, O.S.A., vice president and chief of staff, and Fr. Dan Madden, O.S.A., director of Merrimack's Austin Scholars Formation, who comprise the Community of St. Ambrose Friary.

In their nomination letter, Fr. Ray, Fr. Bryan and Fr. Dan extolled President Hopey's reinvigoration of the Catholic and Augustinian mission in Merrimack's identity as a higher education institution. They also celebrated Lucas' dedication to the College's efforts to support its students, faculty, staff and neighboring communities.

“We've been extremely blessed to have Chris and Cheryl be part of our community,” said Merrimack College Board of Trustees Chairman Kevin Lucey. “Under Chris' leadership, the College has thrived and continues to make its mark. But I would be remiss not to thank Cheryl for all her hard work, dedication and sacrifice on behalf of the College. She is Chris' rock.”



Merrimack has partnered with Newburyport-based Riverwalk Brewery Company on a limited edition Merrimack-branded American Light Lager. Mack Attack, a name selected following a student contest, is available on campus at athletic events — the perfect beer for cheering on the Warriors.





MERRIMACK COLLEGE'S HANDS TO HELP KITCHEN OPEN FOR SERVICE

Just a few weeks after the official opening of Hands to Help's brand new community kitchen this past fall, Merrimack students had already prepared hundreds of meals for those in need in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Kyla Stern '24, Haleigh Teixeira '24, Wil Hingston '24 and Jillian Corrdiori '24 have spent time at the kitchen as part of a community nutrition course taught by Eleanor Shonkoff, associate professor in the School of Nursing and Health Sciences.

The students have prepared traditional Dominican meals such as Mangu, a mashed plantain dish, and Morir Soñando, a beverage made of milk and freshly squeezed lemon juice.

“Providing culturally appropriate food is great because the community recognizes it and it builds better connections with us when they see that we’re willing to go to that extent,” explained Hands to Help Executive Director Rosana Urbaez M’16. “Sometimes the food is even new to the students, and we always like to challenge them.”

The kitchen is an enhancement of Merrimack and Hands to Help's Food Recovery Network chapter, a partnership that began during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Food Recovery Network student volunteers are tasked with collecting unused nonperishable food for those in need around Lawrence and on Merrimack's campus. Sources include Sodexo, the company that oversees dining on campus, and the Merrimack Valley Food Bank.

Volunteers use the food to create meals and hand-deliver them to local community organizations such as Si, Se Puede, Lawrence Community Fridge and Top-Notch Scholars. Meals are also provided to Merrimack students in need at various locations around campus.

In addition to helping the people of Lawrence, Urbaez believes the Food Recovery Network is a vital service for the students.

“It works in both ways,” she said. “I think our students are learning so much about different walks of life. In turn, the community is getting services that they’ve shared with us that they needed.”

► **Fun Fact** More than 1,000 meals were cooked in the Hands to Help kitchen during the fall 2023 semester.

► **Fun Fact**

In 2022, Fr. Raymond Dlugos, O.S.A., was the Saint Augustine Medal award winner.

40 YEARS A PRIEST



Since he was about 5 or 6 years old, Fr. Raymond Dlugos, O.S.A., says the Catholic Church has always felt like home to him.

“When I was a very young child, I was just fascinated by the Church,” said Fr. Ray, who grew up in the Philadelphia area. “I liked going to church with my parents, and I became an altar server before I received my First Holy Communion.”

That fascination and affection never waned and ultimately led Fr. Ray to his life's vocation. In November, he marked 40 years as a priest in the Order of Saint Augustine.

Since his ordination in 1983, Fr. Ray has served as a parish priest, a high school teacher, the vocation director for the Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova and CEO of a psychological treatment center for religious life. Fr. Ray has spent almost half of his priesthood at Merrimack, arriving in 2008. As he reflected on his time as a priest, Fr. Ray said one thing he has learned from the totality of his experiences and mission is to have a deep appreciation of the sacredness of being a human being.

“One of the themes of my preaching is we are called to be human as Jesus was human. We are not called to be gods as Jesus was God,” he noted. “Being human is hard, but it's filled with invitations. What gives me hope, especially when it comes to our students, is when they are their honest and true selves, they are fabulous.”

Mack Gives Back Days Embodies Mission to Serve

Just two days out from the 2023 Mack Gives Back Days, event organizer and Hands to Help Executive Director Rosana Urbaez M'16 had a bit of a dilemma.

In August, she ordered food and ingredients to make about 120,000 non perishable meals for Merrimack College's annual service event. But with more than 700 volunteers signed up, Urbaez felt they would finish work well before the two-day event was done.

Acting quickly, she ordered additional food and when Mack Gives Back Days concluded on Nov. 11, more than 145,000 meals had been prepared, packaged and delivered.

"It's nice when there are events like these where you have so many students willing and wanting to participate," Urbaez said. "We don't have to advertise too much because we have students who are emailing me saying they want to participate in the event."

Mack Gives Back was started in 2012 by Fr. Raymond Dlugos, O.S.A., vice president for mission and ministry, as a day of service to commemorate both Veterans Day and Saint Augustine's birthday. Originally, volunteers were sent out to various local nonprofit organizations to help out with whatever was needed. To keep the event alive during the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus shifted to food packaging and distribution.

"I think the awesome part is actually giving away the meals and working with more food pantries than years prior because we just have more food in general," said Urbaez.

Among the 17 partner organizations this year, Leaving the Streets Ministry of Haverhill received 80 boxes and the Merrimack Valley Food Bank received 100. There are 36 meal bags per box and each meal bag contains six servings.



MERRIMACK COLLEGE

BECOME A

DOUBLE WARRIOR

Merrimack alumni can earn a graduate degree with Double Warrior benefits*

- Save 33% on graduate program tuition
- Enjoy a streamlined graduate application process
- Choose from over 40 career-boosting programs

Learn more: merrimack.edu/double-warrior

**Not all benefits apply to all programs. Please visit the website for full details.*



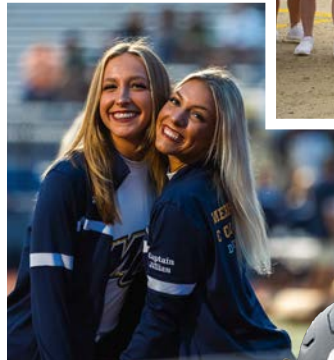
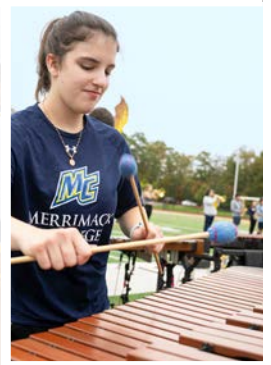
Homecoming 2023

Over 10,000 current students, parents, families and alumni all came together to celebrate what it means to be a Warrior – a dedication to community, a commitment to excellence and a shared love of Merrimack. From the fun and festivities of Macktoberfest on Friday night to dual Warrior wins on Saturday and Sunday for men's football and women's soccer, it was a weekend all will remember fondly.



The newest Merrimack varsity sport, the dance team, gets the crowd excited for the game.

Mack leads the Warriors on the field, debuting a new look.



Junior Tynon Edmonds Jr. scored two touchdowns for a 45-34 Merrimack win over Stonehill.



The Warrior's No. 1 supporter, **MACK**, has a new look. And while Merrimack's beloved mascot may look a little different, Mack's Warrior spirit remains strong as ever.



Merri, Merrimack College's certified comfort dog and full-time working member of the Merrimack College Police Department can often be found with her friend, Mack.



MERRIMACK AWARDS ANNUAL SAINT AUGUSTINE MEDAL

At the Evening of Gratitude in September, the Merrimack College Saint Augustine Medal was awarded to Joseph Kelley, professor of religious and theological studies. Kelley has worked at Merrimack since 1974 and has had a myriad of roles and responsibilities across campus ministry, academics, student life and development.

A scholar of Saint Augustine, Kelley was recognized for his commitment to generations of students, his colleagues and Merrimack.

"You make the spirit of Saint Augustine come to life on our campus through your work, your scholarship, your friendship and your love," President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D., said to Kelley.

The Merrimack College Saint Augustine Medal is presented annually to a member of the Merrimack community who best embodies the values, teachings and mission of Saint Augustine.

Also honored during the event were trustees, donors and friends of the College who have generously supported several facets of the Merrimack mission, including academics, scholarships, research, student life and athletics.



Student Snapshot

Photo by
Lauren Hearn '27

Where great begins and the fun never ends.



To be featured, submit
your MC snapshots to
communications@merrimack.edu.

Quick Chat



MOBLEY PLANS TO LEAVE NO VOICE ON CAMPUS UNHEARD

Michael Mobley, associate professor of clinical mental health counseling, brings more than 25 years of experience advocating for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives to his new role as special assistant to the president for diversity, equity and inclusion at Merrimack College.

As a pillar of the *Agenda for the Future* and rooted in Catholic Augustinian mission and values, Merrimack is steadfastly committed to fostering a culture that values and nurtures diversity, inclusion and a sense of belonging for all, across racial, cultural, political and other identities.

WHAT IS YOUR

ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE MERRIMACK?



Passionate
- Cailin McNeil '26



Home
- Jackson Fortune-O'Brien '24



Community
- Skye Tucker '26



Supportive
- Logan Green '24

Q

What is this new role you're taking on?

The new role [was created] to help lead the campus on how we address diversity, equity and inclusion — how do we understand the different needs of individuals, including students, faculty, staff and administrators, in terms of helping them to feel a sense of inclusion, belonging and connectedness in terms of who they are.

Q

Why do you feel that this role is important for Merrimack?

I feel it is important for us as a community because more and more in our society, individuals may not feel like their perspective or worldview is appreciated or valued, particularly if they come from different cultural backgrounds. As our community here at Merrimack becomes increasingly diverse, I think it's important that we have a clear message of how we value individuals coming from diverse backgrounds.

Q

How do you believe that your work supports the College's *Agenda for the Future*?

Within the *Agenda for the Future*, there is a specific goal around diversity, equity and inclusion. It's really looking at how we support professional development and training, how we increase the representation of different student populations on campus and recognizing that our community is becoming ever more diverse.

Q

What are your plans as special assistant to the president for diversity?

The primary goal and priorities for this year is looking at faculty and staff professional development, looking at curriculum issues and also looking at our hiring practices as it relates to DEI. I'm also supporting Unity and Diversity Days and increasing student programming to raise awareness around DEI.

STUDENTS AND STAFF PARTICIPATE IN WORLD YOUTH DAY



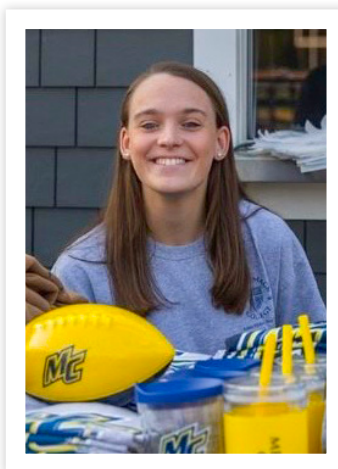
Nine Merrimack College students marked the end of their summer by joining more than 1 million people at the world's largest gathering of Catholic young people.

World Youth Day was launched by Pope Saint John Paul II in 1985 and brings together young people from around the globe to deepen their faith and connection with like-minded peers. It is held every three to four years in a different host city. Last year, World Youth Day was in Lisbon, Portugal.

Among the trip's highlights was a visit to the Sanctuary of Fátima, which commemorates the Virgin Mary's appearance to three small children in Fátima, Portugal, in 1917.



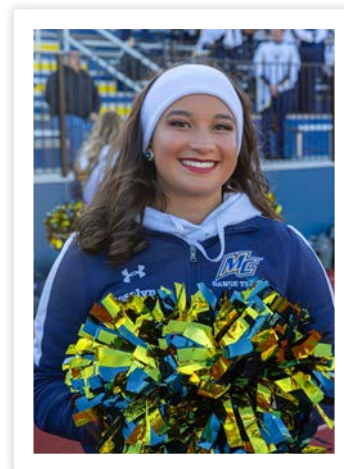
What question should we ask next? communications@merrimack.edu



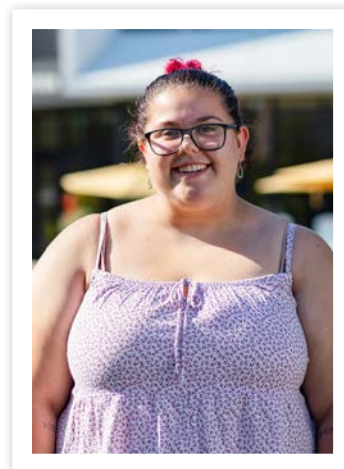
Inspirational
– Molly Kueter '24



Inclusive
– Tucker Goldberg '25



Proud
– Josalyn Melendez '25



Strong
– Theresa Cabral '26

► **Fun Fact** The Newman Civic Fellowship is presented annually by Campus Compact, a national coalition of over 1,000 colleges and universities.

Merrimack College Student Receives Newman Civic Fellowship



When Yarielis Perez-Castillo '24 thinks of the community in Lawrence, Massachusetts, she thinks of her mother, Yahaira Castillo. A Dominican immigrant, Perez-Castillo's mother arrived in the city with very little knowledge of the English language.

"A lot of people in Lawrence are minorities that speak Spanish," she said. "They can't speak for themselves. I want to make it easier for them because I love my community."

Since attending Lawrence High School, Perez-Castillo has been a fierce advocate for her hometown in many different ways. That advocacy earned her a 2023 Newman Civic Fellowship from Campus Compact, the nation's oldest higher education association dedicated to higher education civic and community engagement.

Perez-Castillo's advocacy work began in the wake of the Parkland School shooting in 2018. As a high school student, she worked to have Methuen High implement student IDs as an increased safety measure.

As a freshman at Merrimack, she was part of a research team that organized a youth civic engagement program for middle school students in Lawrence.

"To me, it was important to combat gaps in young people's academic, emotional and social learning exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic because youth are the change that we need," she said. "I understood that many of these youth

had similar experiences as me, and I wanted to be able to provide resources that could allow them to grow and learn."

The Newman Civic Fellowship offers select college students from across the U.S. and Mexico a year of learning and networking opportunities that emphasize personal, professional and civic growth.

"One of the best parts of the Newman Civic Fellowships is the richness of students' perspectives, experiences and backgrounds," said Campus Compact President Bobbie Laur. "These students will be the catalysts for change on many levels, and we are privileged to help empower them to create that change."

"To me, it was important to combat gaps in young people's academic, emotional and social learning exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic."

- Yarielis Perez-Castillo '24

 **FALL THEATER:**
A Wrinkle In Time



The College's fall theater production of "A Wrinkle in Time" brought audience members of all ages on a fantastical journey based on the classic young adult novel. The performance featured both current students and Merrimack alumni.



President Christopher E. Hohey, Ph.D., pictured with the class of 2023 inductees along with Vice-President and Director of Athletics Jeremy Gibson.

Ron Anderson
Men's Ice Hockey
Coach 1983-1989

Kerri Bergquist '13
Field Hockey

Richard Pion '89
Men's Ice Hockey

Isaiah Voegeli '13
Football

HALL OF FAME ENSHRINES FOUR WARRIORS

The Merrimack Athletics Department inducted four Warriors into the Hall of Fame Class of 2023: a pioneering men's hockey coach and three former student-athletes who made their marks on the campus, Merrimack's legacy and its athletic lore.

"These four remarkable inductees embody what it means to be a Warrior. Their enshrinement here today honors the best of Merrimack," said President Christopher E. Hohey, Ph.D.

"The members of the Hall of Fame Class of 2023 are accomplished, successful and memorable and are taking their rightful place in the pantheon of Merrimack athletics," commented Vice President and Director of Athletics Jeremy Gibson. "This wall represents the very best of the College's history."

MERRIMACK STUDENTS DISCUSS DIVERSE LIFE EXPERIENCES THROUGH 'CONVERSATIONS WITH WARRIORS'

Andrea Wamboldt, director of Merrimack's First Year Experience program, strives to give freshmen a chance to fully understand and embrace the Merrimack community as they become part of it.

As such, all first-year students are required to participate in Conversations with Warriors, a weeklong series that sees Merrimack community members from all walks of life discuss their personal stories of overcoming adversity. The goal is to challenge perceptions and stereotypes in a space designed for open dialogue without judgment.

Previously, Conversations with Warriors was presented as a panel discussion. This year, students chose which speakers they wanted to connect with in small-group, 15-minute rotating sessions. Also for the first time, Conversations with Warriors was included as part of Unity in Diversity Days.

"We wanted there to be more interaction," Wamboldt said. "Our panelists are now storytellers, so they're still sharing their stories and answering questions, but it's in a smaller, intimate setting. It's more of having a conversation and an informal learning opportunity than taking part in a large lecture program."

During one session, Cristina Fernández, assistant director of career advising at the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, discussed her adult autism diagnosis. A self-described "weird kid," it was not until Fernández was in her 20s when she finally received clarity on some of her perceived eccentricities.

"I had to struggle without any kind of accommodations until I could get my own diagnosis," she explained. "Then everything clicked for me. My take-home message to students is that they should feel confident to be radically authentic."

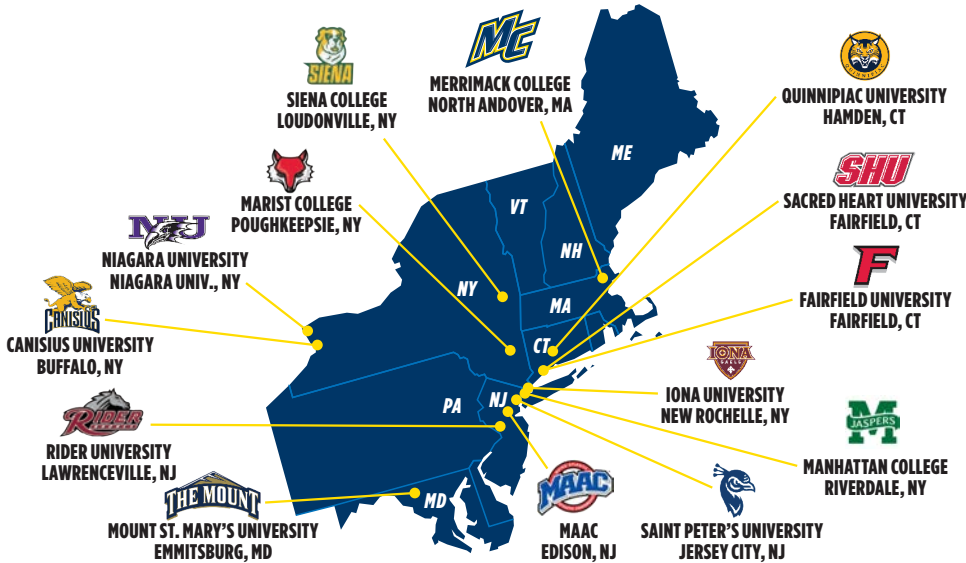


"What I learned is just to be yourself," added Michael Rebmann '27, who is currently pursuing an undergraduate marketing degree. "Don't let anyone talk you down for being who you are and who you want to be. Do your own thing."

➔ **Based on its success, the Conversations with Warriors program is being expanded to faculty and staff for the spring 2024 semester.**

MERRIMACK COLLEGE ACCEPTS INVITATION TO JOIN METRO ATLANTIC ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

➔ For more information about the MAAC, visit www.maacsports.com



Ph.D. “We are pleased that our record of achievement and growth has resulted in this invitation to compete in the MAAC and partner with its outstanding member institutions, whose values of academic integrity, athletic achievement, inclusive excellence and community engagement align with our Catholic Augustinian mission. I want to thank the MAAC Council of Presidents for its support and confidence in Merrimack.”

Merrimack College Vice President and Director of Athletics Jeremy Gibson also expressed his excitement.

“The entire Merrimack community is thrilled for the opportunity to join the MAAC,” Gibson stated. “We are privileged to be joining a group of outstanding colleges and universities that share Merrimack’s commitment to aligning student-athlete welfare with academic and athletic success.”

The move to the MAAC will allow for greater national exposure, enhanced regional recognition and expanded recruiting opportunities, furthering the College’s ability to compete at the highest level of the NCAA. The MAAC will give the over 700 Merrimack student-athletes and coaches the opportunity to compete with some of the finest colleges and universities in the Northeast. This move will help enhance Merrimack’s future, not just on the athletic stage but as a nationally recognized Catholic research university.

Merrimack currently sponsors a robust athletic program with 28 varsity sports, fielding 12 men’s and 16 women’s sports teams.

Merrimack College has accepted an invitation to join the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC). This move provides the opportunity for Merrimack student-athletes to continue pursuing excellence at the highest levels nationally, both in the classroom and in competition, which is a core priority for the College.

Merrimack will join the MAAC beginning with the 2024-25 season. Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, joined Merrimack in accepting an invitation from the MAAC.

“This is a significant and exciting day for the MAAC as we welcome two outstanding institutions to our conference,” said MAAC Commissioner Travis Tellitocci. “The addition of both schools extends our presence in major

metropolitan areas, elevates our brand and enriches our conference. We are proud to welcome the Merrimack and Sacred Heart student-athletes, coaches, administrators, alumni and fans to the MAAC.”

“Merrimack College’s strategic plan, the *Agenda for the Future*, guides our institution’s ambition as a nationally recognized Catholic research university and calls for excellence in academics, research and athletics,” said President Christopher E. Hopey,

MAAC BY THE NUMBERS

<p>Holds top</p> <p>20</p> <p>national rank for academic excellence</p>	<p>Spans</p> <p>5</p> <p>states across the Northeast</p>	<p>Comprised of</p> <p>13</p> <p>institutions</p>	<p>Sponsors</p> <p>23</p> <p>sports and championships</p>
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MERRIMACK COLLEGE CELEBRATES OPENING OF GALLANT PAVILION

Merrimack College Vice President and Director of Athletics Jeremy Gibson regularly describes Merrimack Athletics as the front porch of the College.

At an opening celebration on Oct. 19 at Lawler Arena, the Merrimack community came together to check out the newest renovations to Merrimack Athletics' house. More than 200 people gathered in the new Gallant Pavilion, which will greatly enhance the experience for athletes, fans, performers and audiences alike and makes Lawler Arena a premier venue for the College and the region.

"Athletics is a catalyst," Gibson said. "We are positioned to be a catalyst for change at this institution. And this facility is a representation of that."

The new premium seating area along with an updated Champions Club, formerly the Blue Line Club, and a new media row were made possible thanks

to a transformative gift from Richard H'15 and Susanna Gallant, longtime supporters of Merrimack Athletics and youth hockey in the Merrimack Valley.

"I'm just so proud to be here and to be part of this Merrimack family," Gallant said. "For nearly 13 years, I've watched this College grow, from the buildings to the culture to the vision."

Among the updates are the 3,700-square-foot pavilion that features an open viewing area and new premium seating behind the net on the north side of the rink. Walls separating the Champions Club from the rink were removed, bringing fans closer to the action. Media members will now sit behind the visitors' bench, and the Merrimack College Marching Band will perform during hockey games on the south side of the rink.

"This project represents what this College is capable of being," said

"We are positioned to be a catalyst for change at this institution. And this facility is a representation of that."

**- Jeremy Gibson,
vice president and
director of athletics**

President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D. "It is an enormous opportunity for us. It is getting to a level of excellence and sustaining it. This will be on national television a lot. It is going to show the world that Merrimack belongs."

Before the men's game on Oct. 20, the Gallants took part in a ceremonial puck drop. Additionally, Fr. Raymond Dlugos, O.S.A., vice president of mission and ministry, offered a blessing for the new space.

In addition to hockey, Lawler hosts several Merrimack College men's and women's basketball games, campus events such as Relay for Life and the Spring Concert, as well as events for organizations and youth sports from across the Merrimack Valley.



WARRIOR RUNDOWN

MAHONEY CAPTURES INDIVIDUAL NEC CROSS-COUNTRY CROWN

For the trademark shades she wears during races, Ava Mahoney '24 is anecdotally known around the Northeast Conference running community as “the girl from Merrimack who wears sunglasses.”

But from now on, she will be known as “the girl from Merrimack who wears sunglasses and won the 2023 Northeast Conference championship.”

The nursing major on Oct. 28 captured Merrimack’s first Division I cross-country title, beating 80 other runners by seven seconds over a 3.1-mile course. In addition to the victory, Mahoney earned All-Conference honors and the NEC Outstanding Performer award.

“There was a lot of joy and emotions,” said Mahoney of her feelings crossing the finish line. “All those hard workouts and the daily double runs, all while being a nursing student, it was all worth it in that moment.”

After finishing in the top 30 in the previous three conference cross-country championship meets, Mahoney said she didn’t think she would get to the level of being able to win this year. But after strategizing with coaches Chris Cameron and Cayla Pellegrini and seeing how other teams were performing throughout the season, it became more of a possibility.

Mahoney was the top performer for the Warriors at the NCAA Northeast Regionals, with a time of 21:11, shattering the former Merrimack school record by over one minute.



HOMETOWN:
Marblehead, MA

MAJOR:
Nursing

FUN FACT:
Won the MIAA All State Cross-Country Championship her senior year of high school.



THE WARRIOR FUND

As Merrimack Athletics begins the next phase of our Warrior story, accepting an invitation to join the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC), your support — at every level — expands opportunities for Merrimack student-athletes to pursue excellence at the highest level, both in the classroom and in competition.

Make a gift to The Warrior Fund today!



CHEER ON THE WARRIORS

Our community's continued support for all of our varsity programs has been a big part of Merrimack's success at the Division I level. Cheer on the Warriors at an upcoming home or away game.

For the complete schedule of events, visit WWW.MERRIMACKATHLETICS.COM.

WOMEN'S SOCCER FINDS SUCCESS IN DIVISION I



Hanging on the walls of Gabe Mejail's office is the history of women's soccer at Merrimack College. He is the only head coach the program has ever had, and a team photo of each of the 40 teams he has coached are proudly on display. And with a glance, he recalls team memories instantly.

For his first team in 1984, Mejail's main recruitment strategy was hanging flyers around the residence halls. Just two years later, the 1986 team won the program's first conference championship.

The 2023 team made history clinching its first Division I regular season championship in the Northeast Conference. The Warriors were the top seed in the NEC tournament and lost in penalty kicks to Wagner in the semifinals.

"It is a great group of women," Mejail said of his team. "They are such a delight to coach. They don't put on airs. They are about taking care of business, and I have to give a lot of credit to the leaders on the team."

The team also took home several end-of-the-season awards, including six All-Conference selections, Rookie of the Year for freshman forward Isabella Keogh '27 and Coach of the Year for Mejail, his second time earning the honor in as many years.

Since 2011, the Warrior's have played home matches on Martone-Mejail Field, named for Mejail and Merrimack men's soccer coach Tony Martone in honor of their combined 80-plus years of coaching and dedication to Merrimack.

It is that same dedication and love of coaching that has grown an extensive Merrimack women's soccer network. Mejail's associate head coach for more than 20 years, Paul Athanasiadis, started coaching the team after his wife, former women's soccer player and assistant coach Danielle Athanasiadis '97, retired. And more and more, Mejail is recruiting players whose mothers and aunts previously played for him.

"I always say it is easy to recruit because I truly believe in the product I am selling," said Mejail. "And I think the recruits and their families see that too. I just love coaching. It's fun and we have a great culture."



NEC COACH OF THE YEAR

For the second consecutive year, Gabe Mejail was named Coach of the Year by the Northeast Conference. Mejail, who completed his 40th season as the only coach in program history, guided his team to a 10-4-3 and a mark of 8-1-1 record against the conference en route to winning the team's first regular season championship.

ALUMNI NEWS

1950s

JAMES SMERCZYNSKI '59 was inducted into Saint Mary's High School's Hall of Fame for baseball.

1960s

FRANK SAMBUCETI, ED.D. '66 retired as the principal of Walpole High School and continues his education career working for Merrimack as a supervisor of teacher licensure programs for the College's Winston School of Education and Social Policy.

STEPHEN UHRING '68 was elected the mayor of Malibu, California.

FRANCES COULTER '69 retired after 40 years working in civil service as a mainframe computer programmer and English instructor at the Naval Academy Preparatory School in Newport, Rhode Island.

1970s

MATT D'AGOSTINO '71 restarted his sports cards memorabilia business after a 25-year hiatus.

1980s

Former Londonderry Police Chief **WILLIAM HART '81** was named New Hampshire's next U.S. Marshal.

STEPHANIE MESSINA '81 was honored by The Psychological Center at its 5th Annual Overcoming Obstacles Gala in October.

KATHLEEN HUNTLEY '82 was named principal at Lincoln Elementary School in the Lowell Public School District.

TIM WOODARD '83 retired from the Parish Ministry after 29 years. (1)

MOLLY BRESNAHAN '89 was named director of development, Division of Institutional Advancement, at the College of Charleston.



1990s

ELLEN SNOW '93 was named the new senior vice president, chief financial officer and treasurer of Akebia Therapeutics.

MERRIMACK PRIDE RUNS IN THE FAMILY

For **Gerry '87 and Carol Beland '87, P'24**, Merrimack College has played a special role in their lives in countless ways.

The two chemistry majors first met in a Merrimack lab and graduated together, with Carol earning the title of class valedictorian. Several years after graduation, they were married on campus at the Collegiate Church of Christ the Teacher.

When it came time for their children, twins Max '24 and Sophia '24, to select where they would attend college, Gerry and Carol were pleasantly surprised to learn that both decided to enroll at Merrimack.

Gerry recalls, "We were incredibly supportive of their decision and immediately knew they had made the right call."

Max and Sophia, now seniors, have enjoyed the opportunity to pursue their individual interests at Merrimack. Sophia is a member of the honors program and runs on the track and cross-country teams. Max is in the Austin Scholars program and is president of the Student Government Association.

Amid balancing accomplished careers—Carol is manager of global customer service and sales channels for Cambridge Isotope Labs, and Gerry is vice president of sales and strategy for Veolia North America — the Belands have prioritized finding ways to stay connected to the College that is so meaningful to their family.

In addition to attending various alumni events, they are generous philanthropic supporters of chemistry scholarships and both



currently serve on Merrimack's Parents Leadership Council (PLC), an organization that brings together parents who share an interest in strengthening the mission of the College and enhancing the student experience through service and philanthropic partnership.

Carol and Gerry agree that becoming more deeply involved with Merrimack has enhanced their experience as alumni and parents.

Carol shares, "You clearly want your child to go to this institution and you supported their decision to attend. Why not get involved in ways to make the College better, to make your child's experience better and to help others have a better experience, too?"



For more information about the PLC, contact alumnirelations@merrimack.edu.

JOHN MCLAUGHLIN, ED.D. '99

completed his doctoral studies in Higher Education Administration: Educational Leadership from Liberty University in June 2023. Dr. McLaughlin now serves as vice president for enrollment at Anna Maria College.

2000s

ROBERTO GERMÁN '03 published his debut poetry collection, "Blue Ink Tears," which was featured on the Amazon Books billboard. In addition, the book was a featured title in its Amplify Black Stories and Storytellers list on the Read Black Authors landing page.

CHRIS COLE '04 was honored by the Boston Society of Civil Engineers Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers as its 2023 BSCES Government Civil Engineer of the Year.

LAURA L'ABBE '05 was recently elected to the board of directors for the Animal Rescue League of Boston.

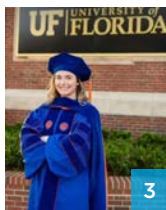
2010s

ANDREW REBELLO '10 received the prestigious national Milken Educator Award.

KRYSTEN MOORE '12 became a travel advisor with Key to the World Travel.

AMANDA CREMONE-CAIRA, PH.D. '12 is a new assistant professor of psychology at Merrimack College.

NICHOLAS M. CARROZZA, ESQ., '13 was recently promoted to managing partner of Carrozza Law P.C., practicing law alongside his father, Peter J. Carrozza, Esq., '74. (2)



STEPHANIE LAPIERRE-NGUYEN '15

received her Ph.D. in health and human performance from the University of Florida in August 2023. She has accepted a post doctoral

fellowship position at the University of Florida to continue her research. (3)

ASHLEY (KELLY) GRAY '15, M'16 and **JONATHAN GRAY '15** were married in May 2022 surrounded by lots of Merrimack friends. (4)



KAITLIN CAPONE '16 and **NICO J. CAPONE '16** were married in May 2023.

JAMES WEGMAN '17 and Ellen Wegman were married in September 2023. (5)



MICHAEL BABCOCK III '19 became the skills coach of the NHL's St. Louis Blues.

THEODORA COWDEN M'19 accepted a new job as a grade-two teacher at Jacobs Elementary School.

SAVE THE DATES FOR UPCOMING ALUMNI AND FRIENDS EVENTS

NAPLES, FLORIDA ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

Saturday, March 16, 2024

Show off your Irish pride and represent Merrimack College through the streets of Naples, Florida, with fellow alumni, parents and friends!

NAPLES, FLORIDA ALUMNI AND FRIENDS RECEPTION

Thursday, April 4, 2024
6:30 p.m. | Naples Grande Beach Resort | Naples, FL

Join President Hopey and members of the Board of Trustees for an opportunity to celebrate all that is special to Merrimack College.

NEW YORK CITY ALUMNI AND FRIENDS RECEPTION

Tuesday, March 19, 2024
6-9 p.m.

The Penn Club, New York City

Join fellow alumni, parents and friends for a networking reception in New York City. Enjoy great food and drinks, meet current Girard School of Business students and faculty, and hear remarks by President Hopey.

HOMECOMING WEEKEND

Friday, Sept. 27-Saturday, Sept. 28

Come back to Merrimack for one of the most exciting weekends on campus.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

Friday, Dec. 13
Hilton Park Plaza Hotel, Boston

Join the Merrimack community to celebrate the Christmas season.



2020s

JUVARIS HAYES '20 was named the assistant men's basketball coach at Merrimack College.

JOSHUA RIZZO '20, M'21 and **HALEY (MALLETT) RIZZO '20** were married over the summer. (6)

DOMINIC ROCA '20 and Catherine Bernal were married in July 2023 in Garfield, New Jersey. (7)

CHASE GRESOCK '21 has taken a new job as a professional hockey player for the Toledo Walleye.



CHRISTIAN CARL THOMAS '21, M'22

started a new job at Harvard University as the director of lacrosse operations.

TYLER ROBERTS '22 was named a tight end for the XFL's Arlington Renegades.

PAIGE MCCORMICK M'22 named assistant women's basketball coach at Merrimack College.

JOHN MORRIS M'23 joined Burlington Police Department as a law enforcement officer.

In Memoriam

- James Maloney '52
- Janet Goodrow '57, P'83, '86, GP'11
- Helen Sellers '61
- Helen Melanson '66
- Donald Martineau '66
- William Smith '73
- Patricia Laverriere '77
- Charles McLellan '78
- Mark Krom Jr. '93
- Erin Capotosto '00
- Jennifer Jacobs '03



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU ...

visit merrimack.edu/update to share life changes, employment updates, accomplishments and pictures.



DONORS' GIFT SPARKS NEW STUDENT-FACULTY RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Stephen Campbell '75 credits his Merrimack experience with playing a key role in his career success — and now looks to encourage opportunities for faculty and undergraduates to work together on research initiatives, much like he did as a student.

During his time as a Merrimack psychology major, Steve was invited by Professor Brian Morgan to collaborate on a research project. "That project exposed me to research methods and analysis of complex data that I've drawn upon my entire career," he said. Most importantly, it was a vote of confidence for a young student."

Post graduation, Steve worked in the mental health field before pivoting to establish a successful career in business. Now retired, he spends much of his time working with his wife, Mona, on their family-owned and operated farm in Camano Island, Washington.

GET CONNECTED, GIVE BACK AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Your Merrimack experience does not end with graduation. Discover ways to stay connected to fellow alumni, parents, friends, current students and the College. Once a Warrior, always a Warrior!



CONNECT WITH AND BUILD YOUR MERRIMACK NETWORK

- ▶ **Follow Us on Social Media**
@MerrimackAlumni
- ▶ **Participate in Mack Gives Back**
Volunteer to support local organizations and community members in need.
Email mackgivesback@merrimack.edu
- ▶ **Submit a Class Note**
Share your news about personal and professional growth and keep your contact information up to date by visiting merrimack.edu/update



ATTEND AN EVENT TO SOCIALIZE, NETWORK AND MORE

- ▶ **Football Home Opener and Homecoming**
Come “back to the Mack” for two exciting weekends on campus.
- ▶ **Reunion Weekend**
Celebrate milestone years and reminisce about your time at Merrimack.
- ▶ **Local and Regional Gatherings**
Be on the lookout for gatherings in your area.
- ▶ **Warriors Athletic Games**
Cheer on your Warriors.

Visit our website for more information about upcoming events.



CONNECT WITH CURRENT STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF

- ▶ **Volunteer at Networking Events**
Serve as an alumni panelist at events.
- ▶ **Work with Merrimack’s Admissions Team**
Connect with prospective students about attending Merrimack.
- ▶ **Offer Opportunities at Your Company**
Share opportunities with students to work or intern at your company.

Email alumnirelations@merrimack.edu



GIVE BACK AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Make a donation to support generations of Merrimack Warriors to come.

- ▶ **The Merrimack Fund**
Support what you love.
- ▶ **The Warrior Fund**
Support your favorite athletic team.
- ▶ **Reunion Giving**
Make a donation in honor of your class year.

Make a gift online. Your gift — combined with the generosity of others — has a powerful impact on the College.



Inspired by his experience working with Morgan, Steve and Mona established the Campbell Research Fellowship to fund research opportunities for Merrimack faculty and undergraduate students, for projects within the Winston School of Education and Social Policy and the School of Arts and Sciences.

Lisa O’Brien, assistant professor of education, is the current recipient of the Campbell Research Fellowship. Her research seeks to find ways to promote educational equity by helping teacher education students develop racial literacy.

Thanks to the fellowship funding, O’Brien recruited a Merrimack senior to help complete key components of the research process.

She shared, “I couldn’t do this work without the support of the fellowship. I need student collaboration not only to assist with the work but for the unique perspective they bring to the project.”

O’Brien added, “Steve and Mona’s support also helped lay the groundwork that allowed me to apply for a substantial grant from the Institute of Education Sciences.”

Research, like O’Brien’s, is a key component of Merrimack’s *Agenda for the Future*.

“As the College continues to make progress toward our institutional goal of achieving R2 status, support for research initiatives will ensure that faculty and students have plentiful opportunities to contribute to fields of knowledge and inquiry,” said Dr. John “Sean” Condon, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs.

Reflecting on his decision to donate to research, Steve said, “Through this fellowship, I wanted to support Merrimack and its growth plans. I think an even greater focus on research will raise the bar in a very significant way for Merrimack College.”



CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

More than 1,000 alumni, parents, faculty, staff and friends kicked off the Christmas season at the annual Merrimack Christmas Celebration at the Hilton Boston Park Plaza. Student performers entertained guests throughout the festive evening.



ENGINEERING A NEW CAREER PATH

Melissa (Daley) Hibbard '96 has never been one to back down from a challenge — and believes that embracing new experiences played a key role in her career development.

While studying marketing and management at Merrimack, Hibbard continuously sought out new learning opportunities.

She fondly recalls a life-changing trip to Brazil she took as part of a course on the country's flora and fauna. After initially being denied admittance to the class as a non-science major, Hibbard persisted and showed up week after week, acing the mid term exam and earning a spot on the trip.

This sense of determination and eagerness to learn continued after graduation.

After several years of success working in marketing and sales, she was approached by Kiva Systems, a start-up manufacturer of robotic fulfillment systems, to manage the company's professional services operations. Although she was unfamiliar with the robotics industry, Hibbard viewed the role as an incredible learning opportunity.

During her time with Kiva Systems, she thrived in both operations management and customer success. When the company was acquired by Amazon Robotics, Hibbard voiced her interest in pivoting to a role in the safety field. She was initially told she did not have the background necessary.

For years she remained persistent and sought opportunities to showcase her skills. In 2020, she was promoted to her dream position of robotic safety engineering manager. Hibbard now leads a global team responsible for developing the safety business strategy that supports the company's robotic systems.

Inspired by this career change, Hibbard decided to enroll in Merrimack's master of science in product management program with a concentration in complex technological problem-solving. She looks forward to being able to call herself a Double Warrior. Hibbard currently serves on the Board of Advisors for the School of Engineering and Computational Sciences and is a mentor for the Let's Innovate Club's first annual design competition.

When reflecting on how far she has come in her career, Hibbard is grateful for the solid foundation that Merrimack provided.

She said, "If someone were to ask 'Would you pick Merrimack College all over again?' my response is yes, I would, I did and here I am today."





MERRIMACK COLLEGE

REUNION WEEKEND 2024

JUNE
7-9



Join us June 7-9, 2024, to celebrate Reunion milestones for Merrimack College classes 1954, 1959, 1964, 1969, 1974, 1979, 1984, 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019.

Alumni and guests, come back on campus to reminisce and create more memories with friends old and new.

[MERRIMACK.EDU/ALUMNI_FRIENDS/REUNION](https://merrimack.edu/alumni_friends/reunion)



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