

# MERRIMACK

MAGAZINE | SUMMER 2023





Merrimack College's Class of 2023 showed up and showed out during Commencement Weekend May 19 and May 20. #MackGrad2023

See page 24 for Commencement highlights.





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### FEATURE

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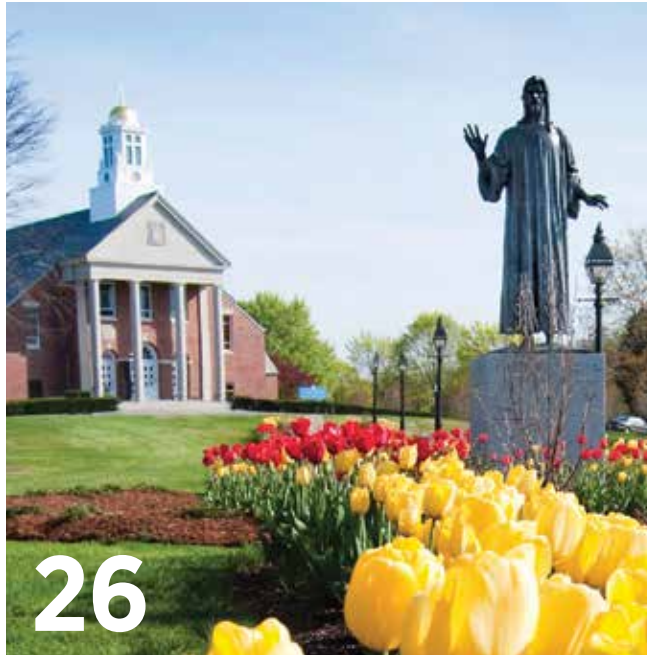


Merrimack College



@merrimackcollege

**On the cover:** There are so many reasons to love MC and this new addition to campus adds another to the list.



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#### *Women's Bowling*

Head Coach Jalen Scott-Jones shares updates on the team's season and new facility



“Graduates of the year 2023, you hold the generosity, empathy and conviction to ensure destinies are fulfilled, weaknesses are sheltered and successes are bountiful.”

– President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D.





# MERRIMACK

A Magazine for Our  
Alumni, Parents and Friends  
Summer 2023

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**Feedback:** We want to hear from you! Please share 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.

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MERRIMACK  
COLLEGE



“ Driven by our resolve to increase access to an affordable, transformative Augustinian education and fueled by the strength of the Merrimack community, we continue to surpass the goals that will help solidify the next chapter of the College’s history.”

## Elevating the Work We Do Across the Merrimack Community and Beyond

Dear Alumni, Parents and Friends,

It has been two and a half years since Merrimack College launched the *Agenda for the Future*, and in that brief time, the College has made significant progress toward realizing its vision for the future. Driven by our resolve to increase access to an affordable, transformative Augustinian education and fueled by the strength of the Merrimack community, we continue to surpass the goals that will help solidify the next chapter of the College’s history.

To reflect the bold, ambitious spirit of the *Agenda for the Future*, we have reimaged the Merrimack Magazine with an updated aesthetic and several new features. While this magazine may appear different from past editions, it still contains exciting news, announcements and updates that span a broad array of subjects, interests and achievements.

In the pages of this edition you will read about impressive faculty research initiatives and partnerships, meet the first graduating class of Merrimack’s Pioneer Scholars program, get an in-depth look at the impact generated by the *Agenda for the Future* and more.

Much like our new approach to this publication, we have also elevated

the work we do across the Merrimack community and beyond, resulting in a number of remarkable achievements. In the past year alone, Merrimack had its highest number of applications in history, a 30% increase over previous years. The College also rejuvenated its alternative spring break program SEND, launched a new master’s degree in applied chemistry and opened a new, modernized location for the O’Brien Center for Career Development, to highlight just a few.

These achievements would not be possible without the tremendous effort and dedication exhibited by members of the Merrimack community. Thank you for helping to ensure that we can continue to pursue the important initiatives outlined in the *Agenda for the Future*. We are fortunate that so many members of the Merrimack community are committed to ensuring the College can expand its mission-driven work in ways never before imagined.

God Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Hopey', written in a cursive style.

Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D.  
President

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok and Twitter

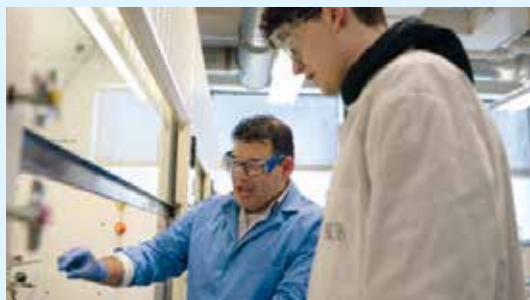
# STUDENT UNION



**OPEN!** The renovated Collegiate Church of Christ the Teacher and new Student Union is an incredible place for all of our Warriors. This space is filled with fun and tradition and will bring our community together for years to come.



LINKEDIN



### New program alert!

In response to a changing landscape, Merrimack has launched a master of science degree in applied chemistry. The program will fuel research and address a need for nondoctoral graduate degrees in the field.

TWITTER



### SEND Trip

Nearly 30 Merrimack students spent their spring break using their education and Augustinian values to help improve the lives of those in need in Honduras, Greece and South Dakota.



Meet Jasmine Gonzalez '23, president of Merrimack's Association of Latinos Moving Ahead (ALMA)! Under Jasmine's leadership, ALMA has become one of the College's most active student groups.



INSTAGRAM



**Left:** One of the final components of the Collegiate Church of Christ the Teacher renovations — a 12-foot-by-30-foot stained glass window. **Right:** Over 100 Merrimack students participated in the largest Professional Development Retreat in the College's history!



The background of the entire page is a vibrant, multi-colored stained glass window. It features various religious and historical figures, including a central figure in green robes holding a staff, a figure in a blue and gold helmet, and several other figures in various poses and colors. The overall aesthetic is that of a traditional church window.

# AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

GROWTH

IMPACT

MISSION



“ I want the end of this plan, the end of this era, to reflect a notion that I’ve always held dear — that you can do anything if you believe. You can do anything if you try. You can do anything if you do it together.”

– President, Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D.

## WRITING MERRIMACK’S NEXT CHAPTER

**Bold. Ambitious. Transformative.** The *Agenda for the Future (AFF)* provides a roadmap for the next chapter of Merrimack College’s history. Launched in 2021, the five-year strategic plan outlines initiatives to propel growth, offer innovative programming, enhance and expand research activities — and become an institution equipped to meet the unique challenges of the 21st century.

“The last decade saw us achieve the goals set out in the *Agenda for Distinction*,” explained Merrimack College President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D. “That was really about defining who we are and what we will be — and the *AFF* is an evolution of that plan. The ultimate goal is to become a leading research-oriented university.”

### Powering progress: growth, impact, mission

The *AFF* incorporates three strategic directions — growth, impact and mission — each with specific plans that will collectively enhance the College’s stature as a hub of excellence in higher education. With one foot firmly grounded in tradition — and the other stepping toward the future — Merrimack has bolstered its successes and is strongly positioned to achieve its vision of greater growth, broader impact and deeper mission.

For President Hopey, the *AFF* represents a resolute commitment to long-term growth and progress. “I’m so proud of what we’ve achieved so far at the halfway point, but the *AFF* is about maintaining momentum,” he noted. “I want the end of this plan, the end of this era, to reflect a notion that I’ve always held dear — that you can do anything if you believe. You can do anything if you try. You can do anything if you do it together.”

### Agenda for the Future accomplishments in fiscal year 2023

Opened the renovated Collegiate Church of Christ the Teacher and new Student Union as well as the Center for Innovation and Research in Engineering and Computational Sciences

Celebrated the College’s 75th Anniversary

Enrolled record number of freshmen

Activated the Strategic Academic Research Trajectory program

Submitted \$2.2 million in research grants

Raised \$13.4 million in fundraising and grants

Welcomed three new deans

Graduated first class of Pioneer scholars and Nursing students

Completed transition to NCAA Division I



# GROWTH

EXPANDING PROGRAMS, ADVANCING RESEARCH, DRIVING ENROLLMENT

**30%**  
increase in undergraduate applications since 2021

**30%**  
increase in undergraduate enrollment since 2015

**62%**  
increase in graduate enrollment since 2018

**Success is rooted in growth.** That’s why expanding graduate programming, enhancing groundbreaking faculty research and increasing enrollment are core components of the *Agenda for the Future* — and part of a long-term strategy to help Merrimack College become a leading research university.

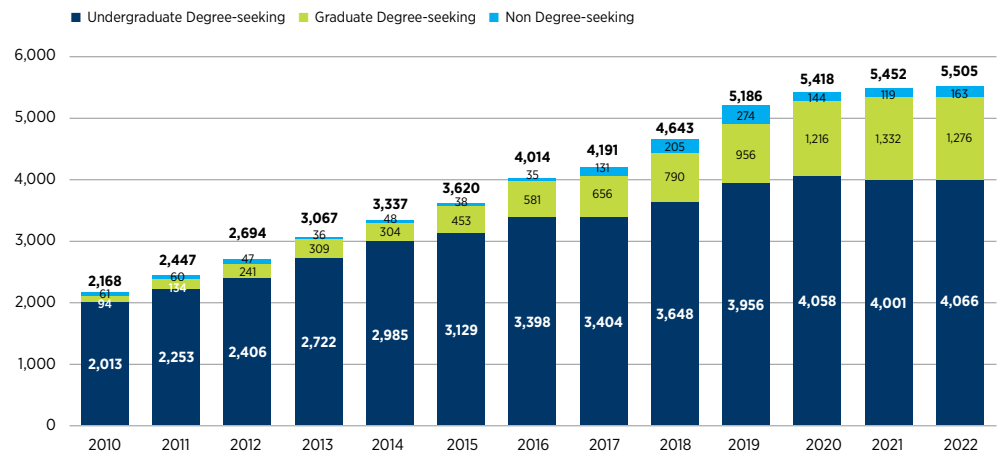
“We have a lot of students who are considering Merrimack for their undergraduate education who are also asking questions about our graduate offerings,” said Sean Condon, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs. “And that’s very exciting because it shows we’re already making an impact.”

## Fueling new opportunities across disciplines

Merrimack launched graduate programs in 2012 and, over the past decade, has expanded from three programs to more than 40 graduate degrees and certificates. Since the launch

of the *AFF*, Merrimack has added graduate programs in fields such as social work, computer science and nutrition — and there are plans to add more in the future. “The Winston School of Education and Social Policy leads the way, with about half of our graduate students enrolled in education programs,” explained Darren Conine, vice president for enrollment and dean of admission. “We’ve also seen significant growth in areas such as clinical mental health counseling and data science.”

Fall Enrollment Headcount History



## Advancing faculty and sponsored research

Expanding graduate programming is about more than increasing enrollment. These new programs also support innovative research. In fact, the College is upping its research investments through hiring new faculty and programs like the Strategic Academic Research Trajectory, which funds pilot studies that could lead to competitive external grants.

And it's clear that these investments in research are paying dividends. The College has attracted accomplished faculty in epidemiology, health disparities and psychology and gained recognition for promoting community-based research.

"Investing in research is a powerful engine for growth because it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy," said April Bowling, associate vice provost of research. "People come because they know they'll be supported in their research — that leads to greater productivity and further investments, which helps us attract more people."

"Our ambition is to meet the requirements for the Carnegie classification of an R2 research institution," said Condon. "There are two main elements that go into that — doctoral education and meeting a certain threshold of annual sponsored research." That annual threshold is \$5 million and includes external funding and funding Merrimack provides to its faculty.

## Supporting enrollment expansion

Since the launch of the *AFF* in 2021, first-year undergraduate applications have increased by 30 percent, and enrollments have also increased substantially.

"Merrimack has evolved from a small liberal arts college to an institution with more than 100 undergraduate majors," said Conine. "Today, many students double major or add a minor, and next fall, we'll be launching 15–20 new interdisciplinary programs, which will empower students to customize their experience by combining different areas of interest." These new programs will help students gain the academic knowledge they need to excel in their careers and build real-world experience through internships, co-ops and on-campus research opportunities.

Beyond traditional undergraduate and graduate enrollment, Merrimack also began the Bachelor's Degree Completion Program to focus on nontraditional students. Since its launch in 2020, the program has grown exponentially. "Many of these students are working professionals, and the program enables them to earn their bachelor's degree online and at their own pace," explained Conine.

## DOUBLE WARRIORS DISCUSS GRADUATE SCHOOL

### A Q&A with Taylor Galusha '20, M'21 and Madeline Cushing '22, M'23

Q&A

The Double Warrior program is an opportunity for Merrimack alumni to earn their graduate degrees while benefiting from a Double Warrior Scholarship and an accelerated application process.

We sat down with Taylor Galusha '20, M'21 and Madeline Cushing '22, M'23 to learn more about their experiences — and how their graduate studies have prepared them for long-term success in their careers.

#### **Q** Why did you decide to continue your academic journey at the College by pursuing your master's degree?

**Taylor:** "I was interested in a career in nonprofit management so I decided to apply for a master's in public affairs and administration. I chose to stay at Merrimack because I loved my undergraduate experience and I knew this was somewhere I could truly thrive. The faculty and staff are so supportive —

they're there to help with anything and everything, and I think that's what makes Merrimack unique."

**Madeline:** "I received my master's in exercise and sports science at Merrimack primarily because of the fellowship opportunity at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital in Boston. Another reason I chose my alma mater is the faculty — the professors have always been so supportive, so I knew this was an environment in which I could excel."

#### **Q** How has your graduate program prepared you for the next step in your career?

**Taylor:** "I serve in local government as assistant to the town manager of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts. I'm applying the knowledge I acquired in my studies to my work every day. The program definitely set me up to succeed."

**Madeline:** "I'll be studying for my doctorate in occupational therapy at the University of Vermont next year. This program has been perfect in preparing me for that next chapter."

#### **Q** What advice would you give to current students who are considering the Double Warrior program?

**Taylor:** "I would encourage students to apply early on. I wish I had applied during my senior year, because Merrimack offers two courses that can count toward your master's studies."

**Madeline:** "The College does an incredible job of setting its students up for long-term success by providing various opportunities, whether internships, fellowships or professional development programs. Say yes to every opportunity that comes your way."

# IMPACT

## TRANSFORMING CAMPUS AND OUR COMMUNITY

**How students learn and collaborate, how faculty teach and conduct research, and how the college experience transforms a community continue to evolve at an increasingly rapid pace.**

Modernized renovations, the reimagining of existing spaces and a focus on impactful programming have transformed the College's campus footprint and enhanced the overall experience at Merrimack. The campus experience has the responsibility, ability and capacity to alter the direction of a person's life through education, exposure and opportunity.

### **A dramatic campus expansion**

Merrimack has made significant progress in investing in campus planning and renovation to make spaces more interactive, tech-empowered and flexible. New and updated academic buildings, research labs and community spaces have expanded the physical campus well beyond the singular building on Merrimack's campus in 1947.

From the Center for Innovation and Research in Engineering and Computational Sciences, to the renovation of the Collegiate Church of Christ the Teacher, to the new Student Union, each upgrade and building renovation is enhancing the overall student experience. Shared spaces for living, working and studying are the future for American colleges and universities because they break down barriers and encourage collaboration between students and faculty across disciplines.

"We plan to make an additional investment of \$50 million over the next five years in a variety of areas that improve the student experience, faculty research and our position and impact in the world," said President Hopye.

### **Success for Merrimack athletics**

Throughout its transition to Division I, Merrimack's growth in athletics has led to success in competitions, a growing portfolio of nationally regarded opponents and the broadening of the College's reputation and brand. Over the past year, Merrimack



won a NEC Conference title, competed in a NCAA tournament, and added men's golf, men's volleyball, women's bowling and dance to its varsity programs.

"In the immediate aftermath of the Northeast Conference tournament win by the men's basketball team, the team was featured in The New York Times, the Washington Post, ESPN and various other media outlets," said Jeremy Gibson, director of athletics. "The success of our athletics program dramatically increases the visibility of Merrimack College to an audience who may not be as familiar with us."



1.6M

square feet of new buildings/renovated spaces since 2010

28

Division I sports

10

Graduates of the first class of Pioneer Scholars

New Athletic Programs:  
Men's golf • Men's volleyball  
Women's bowling • Dance team (club to varsity status)

Beyond embracing Merrimack's reputation, the College's transition to Division I has sparked renewed pride among students, alumni and friends of the College. "The feeling of excitement goes beyond the core of the athletics program," explained Gibson. "Merrimack has attained success faster than many people anticipated, and we have no intention of slowing down."

### Pioneer Scholars Program: advancing opportunity, transforming lives

For the past four years, Merrimack College has partnered with Abbott Lawrence Academy (ALA) — an accelerated honors school within the Lawrence High School campus — to offer the Pioneer Scholars Program. Available to 10 exceptional ALA students each year, Pioneer Scholars receive full tuition, room and board, fees and books at Merrimack. "This program is changing lives," explained ALA Principal Stacey Ciprich H'22. "It's inspiring students within ALA and Lawrence High School to think about college — and Merrimack specifically — and that's wonderful to see."

The Pioneer Scholars Program evolved from the Early College Program (ECP), which enables students from Lawrence High School and ALA to earn college credits on Merrimack's campus. Both initiatives have been instrumental in providing viable, affordable pathways to college for underrepresented students. "These programs are changing perceptions among our students about what they can achieve," noted Ciprich. "They're no longer saying 'I can't do that' or 'I won't be able to afford that.' These programs are helping our students build confidence in their abilities so that when they do arrive at college, they know they've earned that seat at the table."

## OVERCOMING HURDLES, POWERING PROGRESS

A Q&A with Kevin Lucey '89 and Karen Lucey

Q&A

**Q** What do you think the *Agenda for the Future* has done, and will continue to do, for the future of the institution?

**Kevin:** "Merrimack has experienced significant success over the past 13 years. However, I think it's too early for a victory lap. Despite being more than 75 years old, we are still early in our development. The continuous focus on growth and improvement will be important factors in the future of the institution."

**Karen:** "I am confident that the current leadership has us on the right path and I look forward to being part of that success. The future is bright."

**Q** Kevin, as an alumnus, trustee and parent, what have been the biggest impacts of the *Agenda for the Future* to date?

**Kevin:** "We've seen a record number of student applications and one of the largest and most well-rounded incoming first-year classes in our history. Our growing success in attracting prospective students is helping strengthen both our rankings and reputation, which is exciting to see."

# MISSION

HONORING OUR AUGUSTINIAN  
CATHOLIC TRADITION AND VALUES

50+

years Merrimack  
students have  
been going on  
SEND trips

90,000

meals packed  
during Mack Gives  
Back in Nov. 2022

**Students come to Merrimack not only to learn, but to become moral leaders in their communities.**

“The Augustinian tradition is rather counter-cultural,” explains Fr. Raymond Dlugos, O.S.A., vice president for mission and ministry. “We prepare students for lives of vocation, not just careers. That’s because the world is not about competing — it’s about taking care of each other.”

Over the last several months, Fr. Ray has conducted more than 100 pastoral visits to academic departments, athletic teams and other student organizations offering insight into how they contribute to Merrimack’s mission to make a difference in the community and in the world. “It’s been a privilege to tell them how sacred they are to the College,” said Fr. Ray.

**Cultivating a culture of service**

Since the launch of the *Agenda for the Future*, one of the College’s biggest investments has been the development of the Food Recovery Network. Part of a larger national nonprofit, the Food Recovery Network at Merrimack College partners with on-campus dining services to save unserved, usable food and donate it to people in need. In 2020, Joyce Mucci P’07 and her husband, Trustee Paul Mucci P’07, generously provided funding through the Mucci Food Recovery Fund to complement the College’s launch of this program.



Merrimack’s Hands to Help neighborhood resource center also provides a variety of services to the city of Lawrence, Massachusetts, and the surrounding areas. “To help alleviate food insecurity in our community, the College has invested in a kitchen at our Hands to Help center,” said Fr. Ray. “This center also provides a valuable educational opportunity for Merrimack students to learn about the realities of poverty and to do volunteer outreach.”

“Many Merrimack students are interested in food justice,” said Rosana Urbaez M’16, director, Hands to Help. “They want to get involved and do something substantial to make a positive change.”

“We’re all in this together. Our Augustinian values of caring for one another and having the humility to know and accept yourself are shining through.”

– Fr. Raymond Dlugos, O.S.A.

From serving food at homeless shelters to tutoring children at elementary schools, Merrimack students are involved in service learning throughout the Merrimack Valley.

“Our commitment to the community has never wavered. We greatly appreciate our service learning partners and they appreciate us,” said Mary McHugh, executive director of civic and community engagement, Stevens Service Learning Center. “Since the launch of the *AFF*, our service learning partners more fully understand the skills and support that Merrimack students can bring to their organizations.”

### Renewing Merrimack’s sense of community

Like many aspects of life, the pandemic affected Merrimack’s culture because upperclassmen were not able to participate in popular on-campus traditions and activities. However, from daily mass to slam poetry to Division I hockey games, the campus has been awakened with opportunities to build community and foster friendships.

“Our culture is in the process of being rebuilt,” explained Fr. Ray. “We’re all in this together. Our Augustinian values of caring for one another and having the humility to know and accept yourself are shining through.”

## EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH SEND

### A Q&A with Gabby Heroux '23 and Antoni Piascik '24



The SEND Program provides Merrimack students the opportunity to participate in weeklong service experiences. We spoke to two Warriors about their recent SEND trips and how it shaped their views about the importance of service and giving back to those in need.

#### **Q** What motivated you to apply for the SEND program?

**Gabby:** “Service has always been a big part of my life and something that I’m deeply passionate about. I applied to Merrimack because service is a core part of its mission, and that’s how I got involved in the SEND program. I completed my first trip in Camden, New Jersey, last year and loved the experience. It inspired me to serve as a student leader on this year’s trip.”

**Antoni:** “I’ve always been passionate about giving back and using my engineering skills to help make a difference. I lead a Merrimack chapter of the Global Brigades — a service organization focused on improving

health, sanitation and economic development in low-income countries. Through the SEND Program, I secured help with logistics and fundraising to support my chapter’s trip to Honduras. So, it was a merging of two organizations — it was a SEND trip that involved members of the Global Brigades.”

#### **Q** Where did you complete your most recent service mission?

**Gabby:** “We went to South Dakota and worked with Re-Member — a nonprofit that supports members of the Oglala Lakota Nation on the Pine Ridge Reservation. We cut wood and made outhouses and bunk beds for families. Seeing the immediate impact of our work was really gratifying.”

**Antoni:** “I volunteered in southern Honduras, working with a local engineer to improve water systems. We helped design a plan for creating a system that provides clean water to people’s homes — and Global Brigades provided funding to support that project. While we didn’t

actually construct the system, we proposed the plan to local government officials, and they began work on the project shortly after we left. A major objective of the Global Brigades is to provide these communities with the resources they need to be self-sufficient.”

#### **Q** In what ways did the experience change your perspectives about yourself and your responsibility to others?

**Gabby:** “One of the most important things about the SEND trip is learning about diverse communities and populations. South Dakota, for example, is so different from where I’m from. I’ll remember the trip for the rest of my life.”

**Antoni:** “This trip changed my perspective a lot — and reaffirmed my commitment to giving back to those most in need. The project was a big success, and we’re already planning on heading back to Honduras next year.”

# DISCOVERY through INQUIRY



**\$4,619,480\***

in research grants  
awarded in  
FY22 and FY23



More than **50**  
research-funded  
experiences for graduate  
and undergraduate  
students in FY22 and FY23



**181**

peer reviewed  
research publications  
from January 2022  
to June 2023



**\$1,587,698**

for education and  
community service  
programs in FY22 and 23

**Through collaborative partnerships in education, industry and health care both at home and abroad, Merrimack College faculty are elevating the institution's reputation in the research ecosystem.**

The Augustinian tradition of seeking truth through inquiry and dialogue is present in every aspect of Merrimack College, particularly its community of scholars. For the Merrimack of the 21st century, that inquiry takes shape in thriving and growing faculty research endeavors.

Faculty across the institution are conducting rigorous and impactful research that contributes to the wisdom on which society bases its decisions. As laid out in the *Agenda for the Future*, expanding the breadth of faculty research, as well as a commitment to growing

graduate education, is critical to continuing the College's unprecedented success.

And as faculty research continues to flourish across the larger research ecosystem, so too do the organizations, companies and fellow investigators they collaborate with.

Meet just some of the faculty collaborating with colleagues and experts in nutrition, engineering, public safety and health to discover tangible solutions to real-world challenges.



\*Numbers provided by the Office of Sponsored Programs





# THE NUTRITION OF SCHOOL LUNCH

**Juliana Cohen, Sc.D.**

*School of Nursing and Health Sciences*

**Google Alerts led Associate Professor Juliana Cohen to research that would ultimately be funded by the National Institutes of Health.** As a leading researcher in pediatric nutrition and school-based interventions, she has Google Alerts set for any time anything related to school nutrition is published.

One such alert about school lunches in Alaska caught her attention. The Anchorage School District sought to implement a new policy to extend lunchtime at elementary schools by 10 minutes in the hopes of increasing student wellness and decreasing food waste concerns raised by parents.

“I saw a local news story about it and was so interested I reached out to the wellness coordinator there,” explained Cohen. “And it just so happened they were looking for an independent evaluator to help facilitate the rollout of the policy. It has truly been one of the best partnerships I have ever had.”

Very quickly, school administrators and parents saw positive results from extended lunch, including a reduction in food waste, decreased hunger-related visits to school nurses and better sleep at home.

“One of the lowest hanging fruits in improving child nutrition is ensuring kids have enough time to eat,” Cohen added. “And it costs nothing.”

A pilot study resulted in a National Institutes of Health ROI grant to continue the research. Using the grant money, Cohen and the school district not only increased the number of Anchorage

schools participating in the study, but this past January, she traveled to Alaska to present preliminary results to the district to help inform their decision to implement the extended lunch policy citywide.

“Through our wellness partnership with Merrimack College and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, the Anchorage School District has a better understanding of how nutrition and physical activity impact student barriers and successes in the classroom,” said Jharrett Bryantt, Ed.D., Anchorage School District superintendent. “We now have evidence that shows allowing more time for physical activity and increasing the amount of time students have to eat can lead to calmer students with improved focus in the classroom and fewer behavior issues. The evaluation of the partnership will help us develop best practices and inform policy to affect the lifelong wellness of our students.”



**“One of the lowest hanging fruits in improving child nutrition is ensuring kids have enough time to eat. And it costs nothing.”**

*- Juliana Cohen, Sc.D.*



# UNDERSTANDING EARTHQUAKES

## James Kaklamanos, Ph.D.

School of Engineering and Computational Sciences

Zampell Family Faculty Fellow, 2018–2019



**“That is the exciting part of research. We have hypotheses that we will test, but there are uncertainties because you are entering the unknown and trying to find information that will advance the field.”**

*- James Kaklamanos, Ph.D.*

**Associate Professor James Kaklamanos is no stranger to Tufts University, having earned his undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral degrees, known as a “Triple Jumbo,” from the institution just down I-93 from Merrimack College.**

So it should come as no surprise that his alma mater is also one of his longstanding research collaborators in examining earthquake ground motion. For his upcoming work, funded by about \$50,000 in grants from the United States Geological Survey, Kaklamanos is partnering with Laurie Baise, professor and chair of civil and environmental engineering at Tufts.

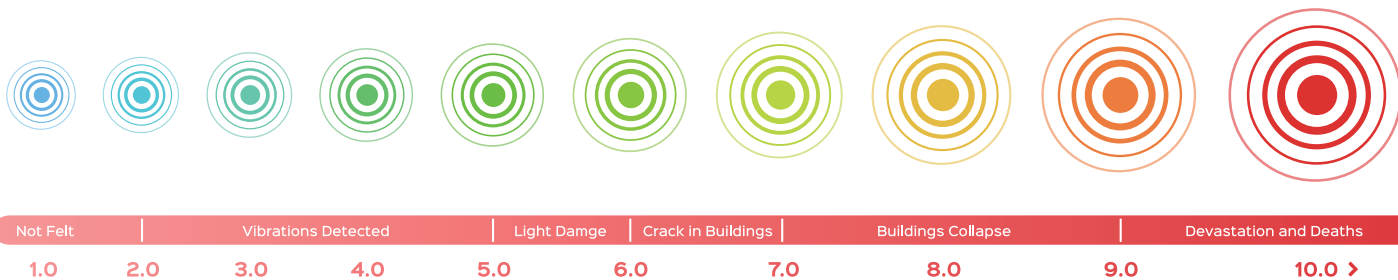
“It is truly a team effort involving faculty and students,” said Kaklamanos.

The collaboration will examine ways to improve how experts estimate earthquake ground motion and better inform engineering design to minimize structural damage.

“Earthquakes can have significantly devastating effects,” Kaklamanos said. “The big goal is making infrastructure more resilient in the face of disasters.”

Kaklamanos and his collaborators at Tufts will examine tens of thousands of records of earthquake ground motions. From there, they will develop models and compose publications that will hopefully help inform the National Seismic Hazard Model, a collection of maps that integrate what scientists have learned about earthquake sources, crustal deformation, active faulting and ground shaking, which is used to reduce the risk from earthquakes and to improve public safety, according to the USGS.

“We want to have our work become part of the literature and try to frame the discussion into how these effects are incorporated into seismic design,” Kaklamanos said. “We are never going to prevent earthquakes from happening; they are forces of nature. But once one occurs, we can better understand the nature of ground motions and how we can design structures to withstand them. And that is the exciting part of research. We have hypotheses that we will test, but there are uncertainties because you are entering the unknown and trying to find information that will advance the field.”





# FURTHERING FITNESS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

**Alyssa Yetter, Ph.D.**

*Winston School of Education and Social Policy*

**Tunde Szivak, Ph.D.**

*School of Nursing and Health Sciences*



**In addition to increasing the pipeline of law enforcement professionals earning their master’s degrees, student officers in the Merrimack College Police Academy (MCPA) are helping to set new health, physical training and recruitment standards for future police officers across Massachusetts.**

Merrimack faculty Alyssa Yetter and Tunde Szivak are examining the entirety of police academy performance, both academically and physically, and specifically how fitness, wellness and mental health impact recruits’ success.

“Because the Merrimack College Police Academy is a unique program we wanted to collect data and make a research assessment out of it,” said Yetter, an assistant professor of criminology and criminal justice. “Once we started collecting data, we wanted to expand the scope and look at the other academies the state operates in order to build a more robust research collaboration.”

After piloting the program at MCPA, Merrimack is applying for a grant from the National Institute of Justice to expand its partnership with the Massachusetts Municipal Police Training

Committee (MPTC) and implement the study at 18 police academies across Massachusetts. This has the potential to yield data from up to 1,250 cadets.

“Eventually we hope this will impact everyone and bring lifelong wellness to the law enforcement community and their personal lives,” said Andrea Nardone, chief of training with the MPTC. “This is a unique partnership and it has been wonderful.”

Initial physical performance data collected suggests body mass or weight is not necessarily an indicator of physical fitness, Szivak noted, and cadets with higher body mass can and do perform well on anaerobic tests.

“It is a very physically demanding career, so the fitness piece plays a role in the mental wellness and resilience aspect,” said Szivak, an associate professor of exercise and rehabilitation sciences.

The Merrimack and MPTC partnership goes beyond physical fitness research as well, with two graduate students from the Winston School of Education and Social Policy completing their fellowship with the MPTC, in addition to two undergraduate students doing summer internships last year.

**“It is a very physically demanding career, so the fitness piece plays a role in the mental wellness and resilience aspect.”**

*- Tunde Szivak, Ph.D.*

# THE SCIENCE OF BETTER SLEEP

Melissa St. Hilaire, Ph.D.

School of Engineering and Computational Sciences

Brigham and  
Women's Hospital

Brigham and Women's Hospital  
Founding Member, Mass General Brigham



**“That has been a great internal collaboration and opened a new area of research that I wouldn’t be pursuing if I wasn’t at Merrimack.”**

*– Melissa St. Hilaire, Ph.D.*

**From working as an entry-level biomathematical programmer to becoming the principal investigator on two National Institutes of Health grants, Melissa St. Hilaire’s relationship with Brigham and Women’s Hospital has proven fruitful both professionally and in the field of circadian rhythm research.**

Over the past two decades, St. Hilaire has examined the effects that disrupting circadian rhythm has on cognitive capabilities, such as reaction, memory and attention. In one study, she is examining the interaction between menstrual cycles and sleep-wake patterns on neurocognitive function, and in another, she focuses on using predictive analytic and machine learning approaches to assess circadian rhythms in large-scale biomarker data.

The opportunity to teach more brought her to Merrimack College in the fall of 2022 to join the School of Engineering and Computational Sciences faculty as an assistant professor of data science, but she continues her work with Brigham and Women’s in part because of the facilities there.

“There are only a handful of facilities in existence like the one at Brigham and Women’s, where you can do the types of sleep and circadian rhythm studies that are at the core of my research,” St. Hilaire noted. “And part of the uniqueness is the facility is time free. There are no windows or clocks, so participants don’t know what day or time of day it is.”

This allows St. Hilaire and her colleagues the ability to influence and control aspects of the environment and delve deeper into the impacts that circadian rhythms have on health and neurocognitive function.

Her time at Merrimack has not only given her new avenues of teaching, but also opened new opportunities for research work. She recently collaborated with colleagues from the psychology, criminology and exercise and rehabilitation sciences departments to submit new grants to the National Institutes of Health and the National Institutes of Justice. She will also soon start a clinical trial as part of Merrimack College’s Strategic Academic Research Trajectory Package (START) program, investigating relationships between sleep and fertility.

“There have been great internal collaborations and there are new areas of research I wouldn’t be pursuing if I wasn’t at Merrimack,” St. Hilaire said.



# SUPPORT WHAT YOU LOVE

Merrimack's success — and the success of our students — happens because thousands of alumni, families and friends believe in Merrimack. You create remarkable opportunities for our students by supporting scholarships and financial aid, academic and experiential programs, and social and athletic outlets, to name a few.

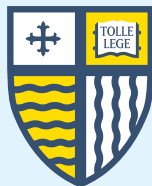
Your gift to **THE MERRIMACK FUND** has a lasting impact on current and future generations of Merrimack scholars.



**JAZLYN MORENO '25**

*"Merrimack College supports my ability to pursue my dream, and I am thankful to alumni, families and friends who make these opportunities possible by giving generously. I hope you will support Merrimack and the programs you love most with a gift this year."*

Mechanical engineering student; member of the National Society of Black Engineers; commuter advisor



The  
Merrimack  
Fund

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## THE 1947 SOCIETY MERRIMACK COLLEGE

For the past 75 years, Merrimack's mission has been to enlighten minds, engage hearts and empower lives through academic excellence, scholarship and service. You can leave a lasting legacy that ensures Merrimack is prepared for the next 75 years through a planned gift. Not only do you have options for how your gift will be used, you also have options on what and how to give.

Paul Dzierzak '63 believed in the immense power education and knowledge could have on people. And now through a legacy gift to the McQuade Library, Merrimack College students — present and future — will have a myriad of resources and services to harness that power.

No matter if it was students or teacher colleagues in the Los Angeles Unified

School District, friends, family or someone he just met, Dzierzak was adamant that everyone should have all the information, resources and support they would need to take on whatever decision or challenge they faced.

Dzierzak passed away on July 31, 2022, in Irvine, California, at 80 years old.

Dzierzak wanted to ensure that Merrimack students of the future would have unlimited access to resources and services to support and enhance their continued education. Through the 1947 Society, Dzierzak made a provision in his estate to establish an endowment at the McQuade Library that will do just that.

His generosity represents the largest gift in the history of the McQuade Library.

Like Dzierzak, 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 [alumnirelations@merrimack.edu](mailto:alumnirelations@merrimack.edu).

## MERRIMACK COLLEGE STUDENTS, FACULTY BREAK BREAD AND DISCUSS DIVERSITY



See what's happening at Merrimack right now — visit [www.merrimack.edu/news](http://www.merrimack.edu/news).



student coordinator who helped organize the event. “The point was to have conversations with people on campus and in our community that we normally wouldn’t talk to ... It depended on the mediator at the table, but for me, I would read the questions for each course and if nobody felt comfortable talking immediately, I would go first and answer. We would go around, bounce off each other — everyone had an answer

The Merrimack College community tackled thought-provoking questions on identity and inclusion over a culturally diverse dinner on Friday, April 14.

The goal of the student-organized Breaking Bread event, held in the Collegiate Church of Christ the Teacher, was to give Merrimack community members an opportunity to reflect on how to make the campus more diverse, equitable and inclusive for students from all walks of life.

Each dinner table was comprised of students, faculty and staff, as well as a mediator to guide guests through discussion prompts such as, “How do we reconcile both our past and present values to enact change in our community?” and “In your relationships, what are your expectations of another person, and what standards do you hold yourself to?”

“What I really liked about it was we did assigned seating on purpose,” said Julissa Bejar ’23, a Unity House

for everything.”

With each round of discussion prompts came a new food course. Each dish aimed to celebrate a different culture, whether it was sweet potato sushi from Japan, ham croquettes from Portugal or oxtail empanadas from Cuba.

“As the courses came out and as the different questions were asked, you could tell they were deeper and intimate questions,” said Jandeliz Hernandez ’25, another Unity House student coordinator who served on the planning board for the event. “We let attendees know that if they felt comfortable enough to go deep they definitely could have, but if they didn’t feel comfortable they didn’t have to. As a mediator, we wanted to set the standard on how we wanted these conversations to go.”

The event was such a success that the College plans to make it an annual occurrence through the Unity House, Office of Intercultural Initiatives and the President’s Advisory Council for DEI.

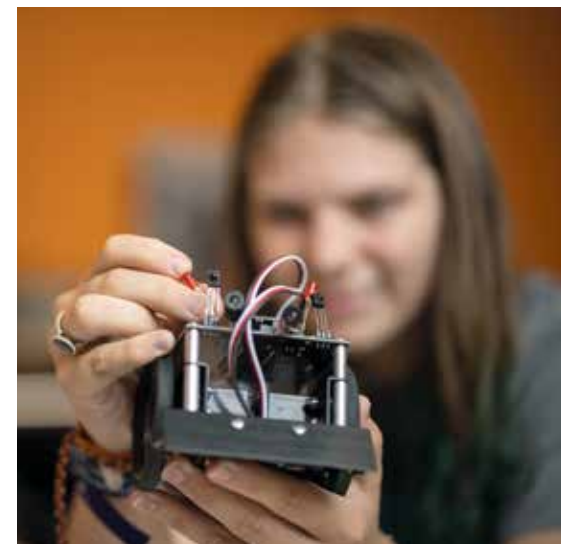


### ANNOUNCING THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES AND THE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND COMPUTATIONAL SCIENCES

Merrimack College will establish two new schools effective July 15: the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering and Computational Sciences.

As Merrimack’s stature and brand as a master’s comprehensive university continues to grow, this strategic direction is guided by the *Agenda for the Future* and aligns with the structure of other peer and aspirant universities.

The formation of these two new schools signals the College’s commitment to growth, innovation and a rich academic experience. It will be a catalyst for a strong foundational structure in the College’s evolution into a research university; new, innovative programs; and the College’s continued support of students and faculty in their pursuit of educational and research programs that respond to pressing societal needs.



## Ready Player One: Merrimack Sets Sights on Expanding Esports Across Campus

Merrimack College's new esports center in the Student Union is on par with some of the premier Division I programs in the country: 17 state-of-the-art PCs and three TVs to play Nintendo Switch, Xbox Series X and Oculus VR.

Now, the College just needs a Division I program. And that is where Robert Skinnion comes in. Skinnion, former head coach of esports at Assumption University, has been tapped to serve as the College's inaugural esports director.

"Part of my investment in esports is creating a pipeline for people that are in that high school phase to get them into college," he said. "I can have an idea of what each group is looking for and how things are playing out in each age range."

Within the first week of Merrimack's esports center opening in January 2023, about 40 students applied to join teams and 168 registered on the center's gaming PCs. Merrimack's esports program will feature teams of different skill levels, Skinnion explained. In addition, he hopes to host casual gaming nights for students looking for less competitive play.

"The interest level has been pretty strong, especially in its first week," said Skinnion.

"[The esports program] will be a hybrid of an athletic program and club."

## STUDENTS' PATH TO CAREER SUCCESS RUNS THROUGH THE O'BRIEN CENTER

With significant changes to the established norms of working, accelerated by technology and the pandemic, a similar shift is required in the ways the next generation of workers are prepared.

Merrimack College's O'Brien Center for Career Development has quickly responded to the evolution of work, refocusing its efforts to ensure students are empowered to enter the workforce after their time at Merrimack.

"Any student now can go online and find countless resume templates they can use," explained Samantha Medina, assistant vice president and director of the O'Brien Center. "The main thing now is differentiating what they are putting on that resume, which is where Merrimack offers customized support."

A key aspect of the O'Brien Center's renewed focus was the establishment in fall 2022 of advising centers in each of the College's five schools, which provide students with more resources to map out their own personalized career paths.

This has allowed the O'Brien Center team to shift its programming to skills development, working to help students better understand post-college life and facilitating connections with corporate partners, explained Medina.

"We work closely with the school-based advising centers on plans that best support students and take into account the different ways academics are run at each school," she added.

Another change students take advantage of is the new physical location of the O'Brien Center on the second floor of the McQuade Library, which held its grand opening at the end of March. The modernized, multipurpose space allows for more workshops, smaller networking events, areas for interviews and more.

"Our new space certainly helps with our shift from being a career services center, where students go for the nuts and bolts, to a place of content creation and career development," Medina said.



**89%**

of the class of 2022 bachelor's degree recipients had secured employment, committed to attending graduate school, or completing alternative post-graduation plans within 9 months of graduation.

**91,000**

jobs and internships posted in Handshake by 6,800 organizations

### TOP HIRING COMPANIES AT GRADUATION\*

- Beverly Hospital
- Fidelity Investments
- Harvey Performance Company
- Lawrence High School
- Massachusetts General Hospital
- Putnam Investments

\*by number of students hired as of May 20, 2023





## First Pioneer Scholars Cohort Graduate Merrimack College



Pioneer Scholars also have access to a network of advisors to help them reach their full potential at Merrimack. So far, 46 scholarships have been awarded.

When he first arrived at Merrimack, Freddy Monroy '23 said he wanted to make the most of his time on campus. He received his undergraduate degree in mathematics and education with a concentration in secondary education and a minor in psychology.

"All the professors I've had I've loved," he said. "The math professors know me by name. They really focus on growth mindset — they normalize how hard math is even for math people. The education department professors are always caring and they make sure to check in with the students."

When Stacey Ciprich H'22, principal of Abbott Lawrence Academy, thinks of her former students who graduated from Merrimack College this May, she gets a bit emotional.

"Sometimes it doesn't feel real," she said. "When I think of them, sometimes I still think of them as those 14-year-olds or from when they last left me as 18-year-olds."

The former students she is referring to are the first cohort of Merrimack's Pioneer Scholars. Founded in 2019, the program awards full scholarships to 10 students at Abbott Lawrence Academy, the accelerated honors high school within Lawrence High School's campus, who completed Merrimack's Early College Program.

► **The 10 inaugural Pioneer Scholars are** Omara Acosta '23, Julissa Bejar '23, Ilaisa Garcia '23, Kyannah Hernandez '23, Patrick Hurley '23, Freddy Monroy '23, Carlos Reyes '23, Samantha Rich '23, Helen Vasquez '23 and Dianelys Difo '22.

**BECOME A**



MERRIMACK COLLEGE

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“I was a dreamer that wanted to excel in school and do my best in every stage in my life. Because where I come from, almost no one completes their education and even fewer make it through college ... I can now say that my dream has come true today.”

- Michael Fernandez '23, Undergraduate Student Speaker

# Congratulations

CLASS OF  
**2023**





“We are so busy as students, but we are not simply defined as students — we are human beings, unique individuals that need care and support and patience and understanding. We deserve kindness, not just from others, but from ourselves.”

- Jessica Almeida M'23, Graduate Student Speaker



➔ To take a look back at commencement weekend, visit [www.merrimack.edu/commencement](http://www.merrimack.edu/commencement).

# Graduates

## There will be much to remember from Merrimack College's 73rd Commencement.

With more than 1,250 graduates recognized, the class of 2023 was the largest in the College's history. The number of graduates and Merrimack's growing stature as a higher education institution is what led to the implementation this year of a Conferral of Degrees ceremony and school-based degree recognition ceremonies.

“As I stand before you all, I see a graduating class shaped by circumstances beyond their control,” Merrimack College President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D., told the graduates. “I see a generation of college students who persevered through a time of great turmoil. I see exceptional Merrimack College students whose tremendous efforts we celebrate this weekend ... To all the graduates here, thank you for being role models for the rest of us.”

## MERRIMACK MOMENTS

### AN UPDATE FROM THE AUGUSTINIAN COMMUNITY

## BROADCASTING OUR CHARISM TO THE WORLD

After seeing how videos have captured the imagination of people worldwide, the Augustinian community is using this engagement to share outreach and service that friars perform in their communities.

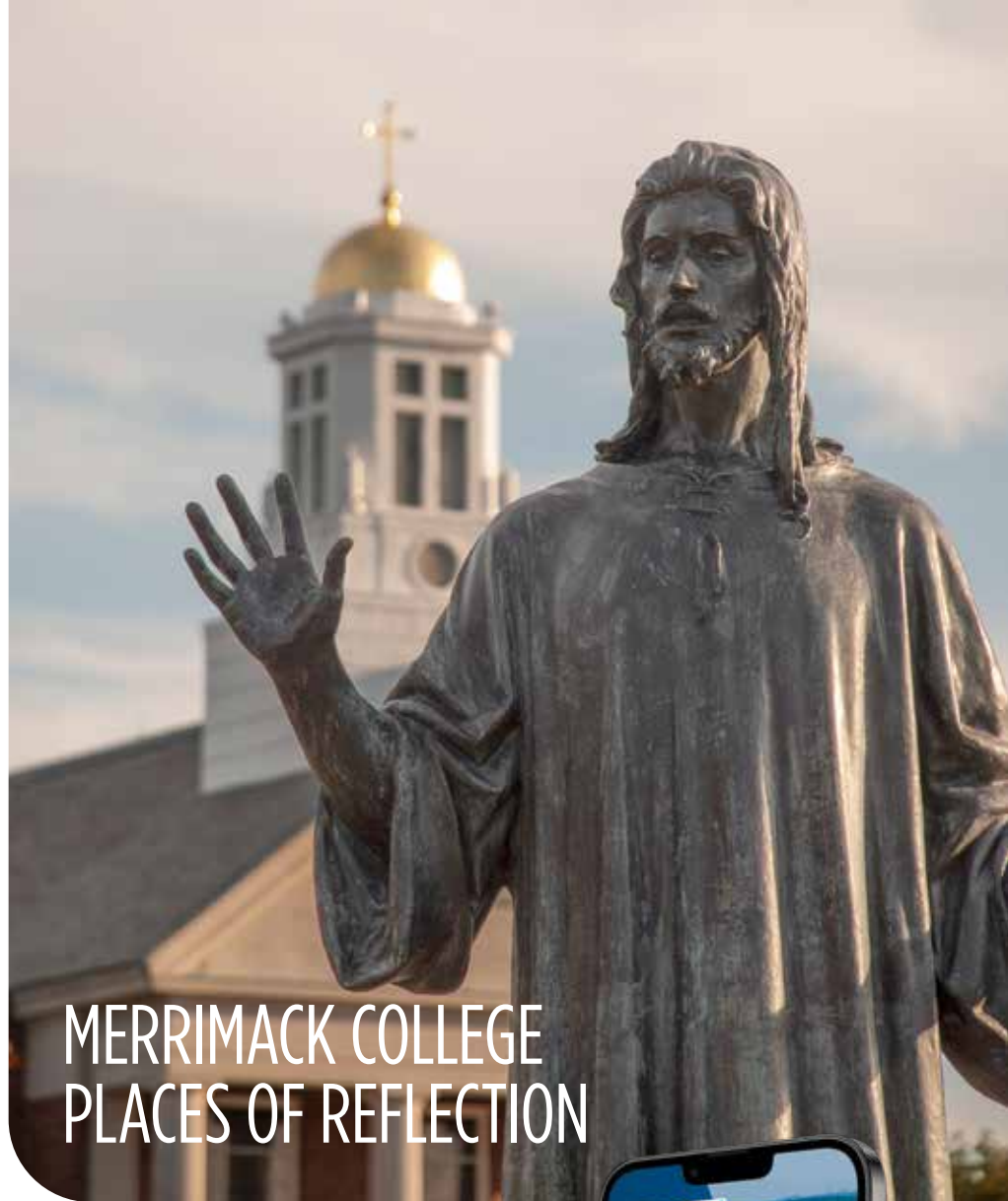
Videos have been created featuring Fr. John Abubakar, O.S.A. — former prior provincial of Nigeria — speaking about Catholicism culture in Africa, a cooking video of a nutritious Filipino recipe featuring Br. Nicholas Stone and Fr. Jeremy Hiers visiting a prison as he engages in prison ministry.



Scan the QR code to view a highlight video that showcases Br. Michael Riggs as he professes his solemn vows in front of his

brothers and family, reminisces with his father about their shared love of music and performs at an open mic alongside a shrine parishioner, Francisco.

► **Fun Fact** The *Emmaus Sculpture*, located next to the Rogers Center for the Arts, is an abstract piece by artist David Raymond, a former professor in Merrimack's Visual and Performing Arts Department. The sculpture includes two spheres separated from a third sphere by a wall. The wall represents the barrier between knowing and not knowing.

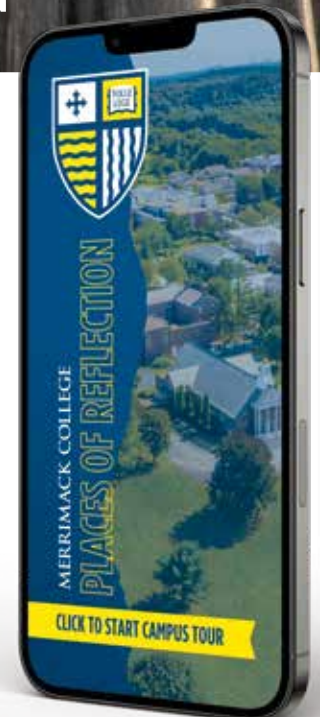


## MERRIMACK COLLEGE PLACES OF REFLECTION

Throughout Merrimack College's 220-acre campus, there are several locations that provide an opportunity to pause and reflect on Merrimack's Catholic, Augustinian roots.

Created by Fr. Raymond Dlugos, O.S.A., vice president for mission and ministry, the Merrimack College Places of Reflection guide directs visitors to these spots around Merrimack's campus and provides suggested prayers and questions to help guide reflection.

Scan the QR code to view the Merrimack College Places of Reflection guide.



“If you don’t get involved, you’re missing out — on good times, good people, good mindshare, good professional opportunities and a great opportunity to give back as a member of the community.”

– Don Martelli P’26

## PARENT PROFILE

# Part of the Merrimack Family

**Don Martelli P’26**, president and partner of the Belfort Group, an integrated digital marketing and PR firm, and his wife, Susie, recently completed their first year as members of Merrimack’s Parents Leadership Council (PLC).

The PLC brings together Merrimack parents who share an interest in strengthening the mission of the College and enhancing the student experience through philanthropic leadership. In addition to attending a variety of events, PLC members meet twice per year on Merrimack’s campus to learn about important College updates and bring forward issues of interest regarding students’ educational experiences.

When his daughter, Kayla, decided to enroll as a nursing student at Merrimack, Don began looking for ways to get involved with the College. When he and his wife were approached with an invitation to join the PLC, they quickly accepted — and haven’t looked back since.

“The experience of joining the PLC has been very welcoming — well above and beyond any expectation I had about what a first-year experience was going to be. The PLC are a very friendly, open, communicative and caring community and being involved provides you with so many resources to call on as a parent,” he shares.

As a member of the PLC, Don has had numerous opportunities to speak with students at networking

and professional development events coordinated by the College. At these events he has assisted with resume reviews, conducted informational interviews and offered career advice.

Don is looking forward to what the next three years — and beyond — will hold for the PLC. He encourages other interested parents to reach out and learn more about how they can get involved with the Merrimack community.

“If you don’t get involved, you’re missing out — on good times, good people, good mindshare, good professional opportunities and a great opportunity to give back as a member of the community.”

➔ **For more information about the PLC contact [alumni@merrimack.edu](mailto:alumni@merrimack.edu)**



## SPORTS INJURY LEADS TO INTERNSHIP FOR MERRIMACK COLLEGE STUDENT



**Grant Jackson '23** didn’t fully realize the benefits of being yourself when searching for a job until he attended Merrimack College’s Professional Development Retreat (PDR).

The two-day event, held twice during the academic year, is designed to prepare students for entering the job market through interactive learning sessions, team-building and public speaking exercises and problem-solving activities.

In addition to his studies, Jackson plays cornerback on the Merrimack College football team. An unfortunate injury inadvertently led him to the PDR.

“I had injured my knee so I wasn’t able to practice,” he explained. “Upon knowing this, (Associate Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students Rebecca Jimenez) reached out to me. She really wanted me to pursue my internships in marketing and my career outside of football.”

At the PDR, Jackson met Nora Whouley '17, a development associate at Rockport Music at the Shalin Liu Performance Center.

“He approached me as a confident, responsible and willing person,” she said. “When he told me what he was currently studying and what he wanted to do, I then realized Rockport Music has a marketing internship opportunity and he would be a good fit.”

A couple weeks later, Whouley helped Jackson secure a summer internship keeping the digital marquees updated, developing weekly promotional posters and preparing social media postings.

“Everyone in our organization enjoyed working with Grant.” Herlitz added.

Jackson said his summer at Rockport Music couldn’t have been better. “Rockport is like a hidden gem in Massachusetts,” he explained. “It gave me a lot of experience.”

## MERRIMACK COLLEGE NAMES DOUGLAS J. PISANO NEW DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCES



Merrimack recently announced the appointment of **Douglas J. Pisano, Ph.D.**,

as the new dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences. He will oversee Merrimack's fastest-growing school, which has become a leader in educating the next generation of health professionals.

Pisano was the founding dean of the Dennis R. DePerro School of Health Professions at St. Bonaventure University in New York. With more than 35 years of higher education experience, Pisano's scholarship, leadership and passion for health sciences education align with the Merrimack College mission. During his career, he established and led schools at two different universities, and built relevant and successful graduate and undergraduate programs. He has extensive experience mentoring faculty, staff and students in leadership and personal growth.

"We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Pisano to Merrimack College, at what is an exciting time for both the College and the School of Nursing and Health Sciences," said Merrimack President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D. "Over his distinguished career, Dr. Pisano has demonstrated an innovative approach to health sciences education, and I look forward to working with him to continue to grow the School of Nursing and Health Sciences' reputation and meet the initiatives laid out in the College's strategic plan, the *Agenda for the Future*."

"I pledge to enhance, increase, and grow the School of Nursing and Health Sciences in an organized and strategic fashion while embracing Merrimack's *Agenda for the Future*, its Augustinian values and traditions and its sense of community and belonging," Pisano said. "I am excited to begin a new chapter in my professional life and in the future of Merrimack College."

Pisano received his doctorate in philosophy from Northeastern University, his master of science degree from the University of Massachusetts Boston and his bachelor's degree in pharmacy from Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

### FIRST COHORT OF NURSING STUDENTS GRADUATES FROM MERRIMACK COLLEGE

For the first time in its history, Merrimack College awarded bachelor of science degrees to the first cohort of nursing students.

Thirty-eight nursing students received their diplomas during the School of Nursing and Health Sciences' Degree Recognition ceremony on Friday, May 20, at Duane Stadium, marking a significant milestone for the College's nursing program, which launched in 2019.

"We are putting out wonderfully prepared nursing students who we hope will either go on to graduate education or the workforce and put our name in the public as a program that develops skilled, empathetic and caring nurses," said Lynne Sheppard, associate clinical professor and undergraduate nursing program director.

Among some of the specialties Merrimack's new nurses will be working in include pediatric home health care, a transplant unit and a burn intensive care unit.

"I'm really proud of us," said Abigail Genev '23, who will work in a renal dialysis unit at Rhode Island Hospital. "We have certainly had our challenges learning through the pandemic. But we came together and it is great to see everyone succeed."

► **Fun Fact** The baccalaureate degree program in nursing has recently received full accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education and has been granted Initial Approval status through the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing.





# Student Snapshot

Photo by  
Rowan Salhi '23



➔ Submit your MC snapshots to [communications@merrimack.edu](mailto:communications@merrimack.edu).



# Quick Chat



Meet Katherine Willard, Ed.S., assistant professor of practice and director of field education for the master of social work program, who joined Merrimack College in the Winston School of Education and Social Policy this past fall.

**Q**

**Why did you decide to become a professor?**

I wanted to have an exponential impact in teaching those who then go on to help others. Throughout my college experience, especially while pursuing a Master of Social Work degree, I had the opportunity to work with some truly amazing professors who have served as my inspiration in this work because of the impact they had on my education and career in social work.

**Q**

**What drew you to Merrimack College?**

I was drawn to the robust offerings the College has to offer. I love being able to work in both the School Counseling program and the Master of Social Work program. I have quickly learned the Merrimack College community is a supportive and innovative one that I am truly grateful to be a part of.

**Q**

**What would you tell a student who's interested in your field of study?**

Go talk to professionals in the field. It is so important to learn more about different roles and opportunities that are available in a field of study, especially in the counseling sphere. It is also incredibly helpful to get involved in the field even at an entry-level position either through volunteer work or a paid position. The experience and insight you can gain are truly invaluable and will help solidify your decision to pursue a master's degree in the field.

# WHAT IS YOUR

## FAVORITE THING ABOUT MERRIMACK?



Being a part of the Office of Student Involvement.  
- Rebecca Needleman '23



The community, the people and the things that students can get involved in.  
- Max Carvajal '25



The Merrimack College figure skating team.  
- Emma Gannon '24



All the new lab spaces in Palmisano.  
- Matthew Dacey '26





The Merrimack Marching Band backs up actress Naomi Ackie in the movie, "I Wanna Dance with Somebody." (Photo credit: Emily Aragones © 2021 CTMG, Inc. All Rights Reserved.)

## Merrimack Marching Band Featured in Whitney Houston Movie

Despite being established just over a year ago, the Merrimack Marching Band already has a film credit to its name.

The band has a brief cameo in the movie about Whitney Houston's life, "I Wanna Dance with Somebody." Forty student musicians, dressed in their Merrimack Marching Band uniforms, acted as Houston's backing band in the scene depicting her iconic National Anthem performance at the 1991 Super Bowl.

"We were involved in two different scenes," said Merrimack Director of Bands Paul Geresy. "The big scene is us on the field being behind Whitney as she sings the National Anthem. The second scene, which was the thing we actually shot first during the first overnight, was a shot of the band making its way to the field, and a wardrobe cart crashes into the band."

## LUCEY, CHAPITAL ELECTED OFFICERS OF MERRIMACK COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Kevin Lucey '89 and Alvin Chapital '86 this past June were elected chair and vice chair, respectively, of the Merrimack College Board of Trustees. Collectively, they boast 15 years of experience

as trustees and bring extensive knowledge to the roles.

Lucey first joined the board in 2015, while Chapital joined in 2017.

Lucey has more than 30 years of experience in financial services and previously served as the chief operating officer and managing director of Hamilton Lane, a private equity investment firm. Thanks to a generous gift from Lucey and his wife Karen as part of the *Together For Good* campaign, the Lucey Center for Business Advising was established in the Girard School of Business.

Chapital is a global marketing and management professional having worked in the health care, professional services and consumer goods industries for Fortune 500 companies. He currently serves as the director of sales enablement at Salesforce, where he leads the development of sales enablement strategies for the organization's financial services business.

Vice Chairs Father David A. Cregan, O.S.A., Ph.D., and Marybeth McInnis, Esq. H'17, as well as Treasurer Karen J. Cambray '88 were also re-elected to their offices.

➔ What question should we ask next? [communications@merrimack.edu](mailto:communications@merrimack.edu)



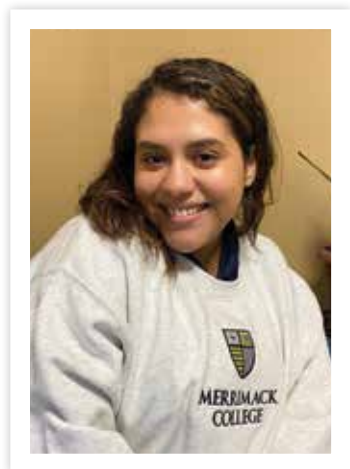
The people. I've made a lot of great friends and we have a great time here!  
- Ollie Piazza '23, M'24



Definitely the community and the school spirit.  
- Goldera Surlles M'23



The new Student Union and the time I get to spend there with my friends.  
- Matt Thomas '26



No matter your major or your interest, everyone has the same chance to succeed.  
- Loraine Rodriguez '24



**JOE GALLO NAMED  
NABC DISTRICT 15  
COACH OF THE YEAR**

Merrimack College head coach Joe Gallo '04 was named the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) District 15 Coach of the Year.

Merrimack finished the season with 18 wins, including 12 in conference play. The Warriors ended the year on an 11-game winning streak.

# MERRIMACK COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL WINS FIRST NEC TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONSHIP

The Warriors, in their first year of Division I postseason eligibility, beat No. 2 Fairleigh Dickinson University in the conference tournament finals.

On the evening of Tuesday, March 7, Joe Gallo, Merrimack College's men's head basketball coach, took a leap.

It wasn't a leap of faith, but rather of celebration. With a basketball net draped around his neck, Gallo jumped off the top of a ladder and into the arms of his players, who moments before won the Northeast Conference tournament championship. The win capped a historic season for the Warriors, culminating in the first Division I tournament title in the program's history.

"If we keep winning, I am going to keep jumping," said Gallo after the game.

In front of a raucous crowd of more than 2,200 at Lawler Arena, the Warriors overcame first-half scoring struggles and strong defense by opponent Fairleigh Dickinson University to win 67-66 in the closing seconds. It was Merrimack's 11th

straight win dating back to the end of January.

As the final buzzer rang throughout Lawler, fans stormed the court to celebrate with the team and stayed to watch the trophy presentation and net-cutting ceremonies.

"That is everyone's dream to play in an environment like that," said senior Jordan Minor '23, who was named to the NEC all-tournament team. "For me, coming in here I always wanted to win championships. I am just so proud of our guys."

For Minor and fellow seniors Jordan McKoy '23 and Ziggy Reid '23, the win bookends their college careers with trophies. As freshmen, they were part of the 2019-20 Merrimack team that won the NEC regular season championship. Gallo noted that the three players came

off the bench for the 2019-20 team and grew to become leaders of the program.

Typically, the winner of the NEC tournament receives an automatic bid into March Madness. But due to NCAA restrictions as part of Merrimack's transition to Division I, the Warriors could not compete in the NCAA or NIT tournament. Opting not to participate in other postseason college basketball tournaments, Merrimack ended its season on top.

"Obviously March Madness is the biggest stage but that's something we can't control," said Minor.

"So I told our guys, focus on what we can control and that is putting our best foot forward each day and win a championship, which we did. This is a big deal for us and this program."



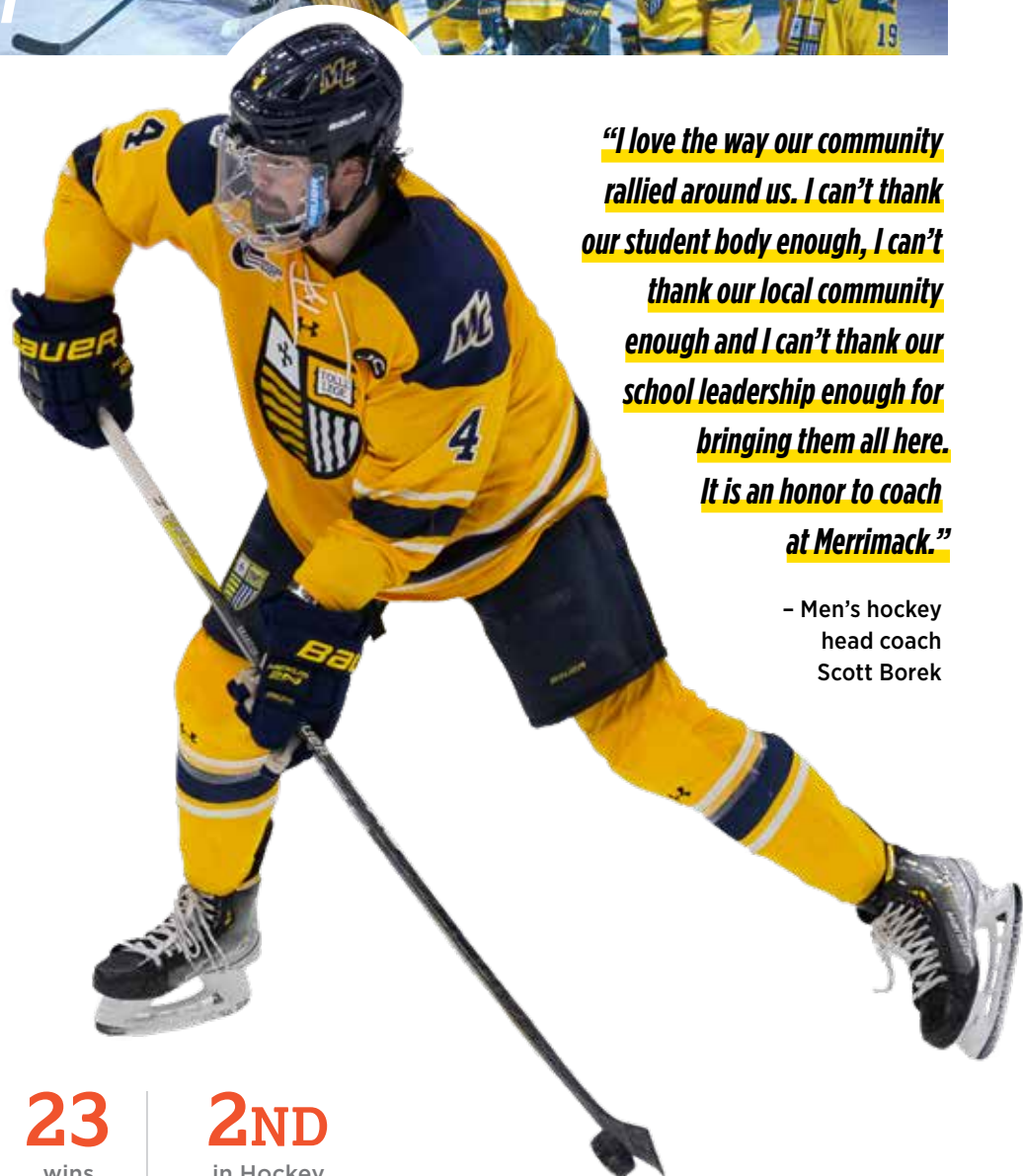
In October 2022, the team and the entire Merrimack community suffered a tragic loss with the sudden passing of men's hockey assistant coach Josh Ciocco. During games this season, the Merrimack players and coaches wore black pins and patches with the initials "JC," and Ciocco remained listed on the coaching staff as "assistant coach in memoriam."

## MEN'S HOCKEY TAKES ON QUINNIPIAC IN NCAA TOURNAMENT

Despite an overtime loss to Boston University in the Hockey East championship on Saturday, March 18, the Merrimack College men's hockey team's season did not end there.

The Warriors, ranked No. 14 in the nation, received an at-large bid to the 2023 NCAA men's hockey tournament. It was Merrimack's third trip ever to the tournament. Merrimack took on Quinnipiac University, the No. 2 team in the country, in the first round on Friday, March 24, in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and lost 5-0. Quinnipiac eventually went on to win the national championship.

The Warriors received an at-large bid into the 16-team tournament based on their performance throughout the season. The team finished second in the Hockey East standings, its highest finish ever, and its 23 wins were the most since the 2010-11 season.



***"I love the way our community rallied around us. I can't thank our student body enough, I can't thank our local community enough and I can't thank our school leadership enough for bringing them all here. It is an honor to coach at Merrimack."***

– Men's hockey head coach Scott Borek

**#14**  
in nation

**3RD**  
trip to the NCAA men's hockey tournament

**23**  
wins

**2ND**  
in Hockey East standings

## WARRIOR RUNDOWN

### MERRIMACK COLLEGE POLE VAULTER REACHES NEW HEIGHTS

During her time at Merrimack, Skyler Bomba '23 became one of the top vaulters in the Northeast Conference, competing against some of the best in the NCAA and solidifying her name in the Merrimack Athletics' record books.

"I absolutely love that feeling of clearing a higher height," said Bomba, a nursing major. "It is so rewarding because you've put in so much work, time and energy at practice, in the lift room, and mentally to be a better vaulter than you were yesterday."

Bomba's accolades include setting the pole vault record at Merrimack College at 13 feet and a quarter inch, winning the 2023 Northeast Conference Indoor Track and Field pole vault championship, earning first-team all-conference honors for the 2022-23 indoor season and finishing third at the prestigious Raleigh Relays this past March.

Bomba got into pole vaulting after 13 years of gymnastics. She started under the tutelage of Brenner Abbott, the pole vaulting coach at Harvard University. Soon after she picked up the sport, Abbott told her she would be a "13-foot jumper," a mark that puts female jumpers in the top echelon of collegiate pole vaulters.

When jumping, Bomba says there are a lot of factors to consider including weather, what type of pole to use, the height you need to clear and getting your approach correct. But she tries to keep her focus on a couple of things at a time.

"You can't think of everything," Bomba noted. "Your body knows how to do it so you should always be thinking about jumping as high as you can."



**HOMETOWN:**  
Hudson, New  
Hampshire

**MAJOR:**  
Nursing

**FUN FACT:**  
Also competes  
in sprint events



# THE WARRIOR FUND

As Merrimack College enters full Division I eligibility for 2023-2024, your support — at every level — makes a difference for our student-athletes and their teams, and we are grateful. **Make a gift today and support the next generation of Warriors!**



***“There is a lot of energy because it is a team sport. Being loud and encouraging your teammates is important because you’re trying to keep everyone on track.”***

– Goldera Surles M’23

## **WOMEN’S BOWLING COACH: ROLLING INTO A NEW SEASON AND NEW FACILITY**

**#25**  
in national rankings



**As the first head coach of the Merrimack College women’s bowling team, Jalen Scott-Jones had two significant responsibilities.**

The first was getting the team ready for its inaugural season, which Scott-Jones said there were high expectations for. And with an early season upset in October against No. 2 Vanderbilt, reaching No. 25 in the national rankings and qualifying for the Northeast Conference tournament, those expectations were exceeded.

“The players who transferred here brought a lot of great experience,” Scott-Jones said.

The second was helping to get the team’s practice facility, and the newest addition to the Merrimack campus experience, up and running.

“The new bowling center certainly sets us apart from other programs in the area,” said Scott-Jones, who officially started his coaching duties in January 2022. “A few other schools in New England are also starting bowling programs this year, but my hope is this new facility will help attract the best bowlers in the region to Merrimack.”

The six-lane bowling center is the centerpiece of the new Student Union. It features touch screens, interactive scoring systems and overhead projectors that create entertaining visual effects.

Scott-Jones explained there are not too many differences between a bowling center used by a Division I team and one used by the general public. Collegiate bowling does require specific oil patterns on lanes that help dictate movement of the ball. And he added that he is very happy the Merrimack bowling center will have free-standing pins, rather than the increasingly popular pins held up by rope. “That is just the type of bowling most of us are used to,” he noted.

“Despite what people might think, collegiate bowling is very loud,” said Goldera Surles M’23, a member of the team. “There is a lot of energy because it is a team sport. Being loud and encouraging your teammates is important because you’re trying to keep everyone on track.”

The team finished their inaugural season with a 51-28 record and finished third in the conference standings. The Warriors were led by Olivia Lampkin ’24, who earned NEC all-conference first team and NEC all-tournament team honors.



► **Fun Fact** Merrimack added four new varsity programs this year: women’s bowling, men’s volleyball, men’s golf and dance.

## ALUMNI NEWS

### 1960s

**DR. LAURENCE M. DEMERS '60, H'11** and **SUSAN R. (BERNARD) DEMERS '62** were recognized for establishing an endowed professorship at the Penn State University College of Medicine in December 2022.

### 1970s

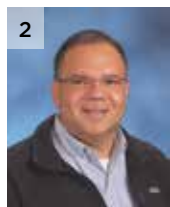
**TERRY MONAHAN '72** recently celebrated a milestone of 50 years as a sports writer.

### 1990s

**MAURA HUGHES '90** recently hosted students from Merrimack College's School of Nursing and Health Sciences at Boston MedFlight's headquarters. The senior nursing students talked with the MedFlight team about careers in emergency, critical care and transportation nursing. (1)



**ANDREA DEFUSCO-SULLIVAN '90** was recently appointed to the newly created position of assistant provost at North Shore Community College.



**MATT KRAUNELIS '91, P'22** was recently appointed assistant town manager for the town of Reading, Massachusetts. Matt has over 25 years of experience in law and government. (2)



### INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF WARRIORS

While studying finance at Merrimack, **Marc Biega '17, M'18** worked closely with Mary Papazian, managing director of the Mucci Capital Markets Lab, to bring a new concept to fruition: the Merrimack Investment Fund, a student organization that provides members the hands-on experience of managing a real, funded portfolio.

Aided by the generous philanthropic support of Paul and Joyce Mucci P'07, the Merrimack Investment Fund officially went live during Biega's senior year.

Now working as a strategic planning analyst for ecommerce company Thrasio, Biega shares, "Having the opportunity to manage real money as a student coupled with the business curriculum made the Merrimack finance program a top-notch education that I use in my career to this day."

And the impact of the Merrimack Investment Fund has only grown since then. Both Pedro Mancini '23 and Paul Papageorgiou '23 found their participation in the Merrimack Investment Fund to be an invaluable experience, helping to develop technical skills in finance as well as core skills applicable across a range of career applications.

Mancini shares, "From discussing the markets to learning technical skills needed in the industry, the Fund was one of the main reasons I chose to work in investment banking after graduating."

Papageorgiou adds, "I had the opportunity to learn new things all while being mentored by industry professionals. Thanks to Merrimack, I have developed a passion for financial markets, and I can hit the ground running after graduation."

Biega concludes that the Merrimack Investment Fund is just one example of how the College offers students new ways to enhance their education, stating, "Merrimack provides its students with endless opportunities to create their own path and utilize its resources to their advantage. My experience taught me that we had all of the tools we needed to succeed — it was just up to us to take advantage of it."



**WAYNE BISHOP JR. '92** presented at a conference in Serbia in September 2022 on "Technology Trends and Transformation of the Electric Power Industry." (3)

**HEATH STONE '97** joined Duston Leddy Real Estate in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in 2022.

Head coach **ALEX GREGSON '99** of the Pilgrim High School's boys lacrosse team won the 2022 Div. 3 Rhode Island state championship. Gregson coached his team to a 16-0 record and was named NFHS/RIIL State Coach of the Year.

## 2000s

**JULIE (HIGGINS) RUANE '04** started a new job as nurse practitioner at Massachusetts General Hospital Sports Medicine in October 2022.

**KRISTIN (ANDERSON) FAIVRE '08** and **NICK FAIVRE '08** welcomed their second child, Vincent Mack Faivre, in summer 2022. (4)



**JOHN MORESCHI '08** was named as first assistant town counsel for the Town of Brookline, Massachusetts.

## 2010s

**SAM COLANGELO '15** and **BRIANNA DECINA '16** were married in August 2022 with many Merrimack alumni as part of their special day. (5)

**LAUREN FOLINO '16** and **LUKE BLAESER '17** were married by Fr. Ray Dlugos, O.S.A., in October 2022 surrounded by many other Merrimack alumni. (6)



# Christmas Celebration



Friday, December 8, 2023  
Park Plaza Hotel, Boston

Join fellow alumni and friends for an evening filled with musical performances, good food and great company as we celebrate the Christmas season.


MERRIMACK COLLEGE



**COLLEEN (MONTGOMERY)**

**LANGILLE '19** was married to **PATRICK LANGILLE '19** on campus in October 2022 by Fr. Ray Dlugos, O.S.A. (7)

**DILLON SALVA '19** signed as a defensive lineman for the Iowa Barnstormers, a minor league team for the Indoor Football League Conference.

**2020s**

**JACKIE IRELAND '20** recently got engaged to fellow Merrimack women's soccer player and alumna **SARAH BOUCHER '18**. (8)

**KATLYN ALVES '20** has started a new position as the learning and development director of City Year San Antonio.

**In Memoriam**

- Richard J. Warren '53
- James A. Sullivan, M.Ed. '57
- James W. Mulvey '61
- Frank D. Deshaies '67
- Grace A. Blake '68
- Kenneth E. Lavoie '68
- Kathleen J. Otway '73
- Kevin W. Salemme '95
- Alyssa R. Richardson '20

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU ...** visit [merrimack.edu/update](http://merrimack.edu/update) to share life changes, employment updates, accomplishments and pictures.

**LESSONS LEARNED IN FINANCE AND FOOTBALL**

Chicago native **Bill Grogan '00** had a lifelong ambition to study and work in business. After receiving an Augustinian Scholarship and an offer to join Merrimack's football team, he enrolled at the College as a finance major.

During his time at Merrimack, Bill remained dedicated to achieving his goals in both academics and athletics, sharing that his experience as a student-athlete taught him self-reliance and how to balance multiple priorities. He explains, "The lessons I learned at Merrimack have resonated with me throughout my career."

After graduation, Bill worked for a variety of companies, including Sears and Walgreens, before accepting an offer to join IDEX Corporation, a publicly traded company that runs manufacturing operations in more than 20 countries. Bill began as a finance leader for the organization and is now entering his seventh year as the company's chief financial officer.

Seeking to give back to the institution that played such an important role in his life, Bill and his wife have philanthropically supported various areas at Merrimack, including the Girard School of Business, the men's football program and, most recently, the Pioneer Scholars Program.



Bill shares, "For me, it's important to help the next generation of students and prepare them for the new wave of challenges that will evolve in the business world."

Bill also serves as a member of the Girard School of Business Advisory Board to provide feedback and direction to the school's leadership from an alumni perspective.

He encourages others to explore how they might be able to support Merrimack through giving and volunteerism.

"It's a rewarding experience to see the impact you can have on the College. It's a chance to give back and share some of the treasures that you've been able to gather post-college and influence students who very well could be the next CEO of your company, the next president of the United States or anything else they might have ambitions to become."



# GET CONNECTED, GIVE BACK AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Your Merrimack experience doesn't end with graduation. Discover ways to stay connected to fellow alumni, parents, friends, today's 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. [mackgivesback@merrimack.edu](mailto: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](http://merrimack.edu/update)



## ATTEND AN EVENT TO SOCIALIZE, NETWORK AND MORE

- ▶ **Football Home Opener and Homecoming**  
Come "back to the Mack" for two of the largest 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.



## 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.**



Merrimack in  
**NYC  
2023**



Alumni, parents and friends gathered in New York City for a reception with President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D. Those in attendance were able to connect with Girard School of Business students and faculty who were in New York for the annual GAME Forum competition hosted by Quinnipiac University.

## GIVING BACK AT MERRIMACK: A FULL CIRCLE ALUMNI EXPERIENCE



**Brianna Roberts '17**, research strategist at State Street Global Advisors, is grateful for the role her Merrimack education and connection to the College community have played in shaping her career.

During her junior year, she was contacted by Tim Coyne '89, who invited her to interview for a position as a strategy and research intern with State Street Global Advisors, the investment management arm of State Street Corporation. She credits this conversation as a turning point in her career path.

Roberts completed the summer internship and was offered a full-time role with the company. She now holds a position as research strategist with expertise in environmental, social and governance.

Eager to “pay it forward” and help other Merrimack students navigate their own finance careers, Roberts reached out to Mary Papazian, managing director of the Mucci Capital Markets Lab and was invited to campus as a guest speaker for one of Papazian’s classes.

Following her positive experience in the classroom, Brianna did not hesitate when Papazian asked for assistance setting up a trip for students to visit the State Street Global Advisors office in New York City.

In March 2023, a group of Papazian’s students visited the New York office to meet with Roberts and several of her colleagues. Roberts shares that everyone involved enjoyed a “really great visit with a lot of spirited dialogue.”

“When the students left the room, my colleagues were so impressed with their conversation and preparedness, and that made me feel really proud.”

Since working as an alumni volunteer, Roberts has found that while she might not have decades of career experience on her resume, her perspective is just as valuable to share with current students as someone who graduated years ahead of her.

She explains, “We need young alumni to put themselves into the students’ field of vision and allow them to see that the path they want to pursue is possible and help encourage a sense of confidence and motivation to go out and achieve their goals.”



## Merrimack in Florida 2023



Thank you to our alumni, parents and friends who joined us for the various events in Florida this year. From the Red Sox game to the St. Patrick’s Day Parade to the alumni reception with President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D., it was great to see so many of our Warriors in Florida.



MERRIMACK COLLEGE

# SAVE THE DATES

## FOOTBALL HOME OPENER WEEKEND

September 8-9, 2023

Join fellow Warriors for a weekend of fun including the football home opener vs. Lehigh, music, food, fireworks and more.

## HOMECOMING WEEKEND

October 6-7, 2023

Return to Merrimack for tailgating, friendship and fireworks as Merrimack football takes on Stonehill College! Reminisce with fellow alumni and friends and enjoy everything there is to love about being a Warrior. For more information, visit [merrimack.edu/homecoming](https://merrimack.edu/homecoming).





# MERRIMACK COLLEGE

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[www.merrimack.edu](http://www.merrimack.edu)

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