MERRIMACK COLLEGE

PROVOST BRIEFING
March 13, 2017
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Here are some of this week's top stories, and a look ahead.

- Dialogue on LS Core
- CETL Faculty Funding Opportunity: 20th Annual International Best Teachers Institute
- Teaching and Learning With Mobile Workshops, March 22 & 23
- Writer in Residence: Jill McCorkle, March 23
- Relive Merrimack History
- CETL: Course Design Tip
- Open Office Hours with the Provost, every Wednesday
- Open Office Hours with the Melissa Siegel, every Friday
- Migration of Blackboard environment to a SaaS solution

Dialogue on LS Core
March 21st
3:30 - 5:00 PM
Cascia Hall
As a result of the recent evaluation of the Liberal Studies Core, the Office of the Provost and the General Education Committee of the Faculty Senate invite all faculty to attend the first in a series of dialogues regarding the LS Core. The General Education Committee is organizing the

dialogues to include discussion of next steps, such as institutional learning outcomes, other program models, possible common readings, and other suggestions from faculty. Please RSVP by clicking on the link to the Google doc below if you plan to attend on March 21 or if you would like to attend future dialogues: **https://goo.gl/forms/pwtKauCAg5jNR6dw2**.

We hope to have as many faculty as possible participate in these dialogues, so even if you can't make it at 3:30, come when you can.

CETL Faculty Funding Opportunity:
Attend the 20th Annual International Best Teachers Institute

The CETL is pleased to offer sponsorship for five faculty members to attend the upcoming Best Teachers Summer Institute: Summit for Concerned Faculty from Around the World: 20th Annual International Best Teachers Institute, June 20-22, 2017. For more information, please contact nielsenk@merrimack.edu.

Application deadline: March 21.

CETL Workshops: Teaching & Learning with Mobile

March 22 and 23
Sue Burch from Apple will be at Merrimack working with faculty and departments to enhance teaching and learning through increased engagement, communication, iBook creation and more. Contact **nielsenk@merrimack.edu** for more information or to schedule an individual or department session.

Writer in Residence: Jill McCorkle

March 23

4:00 PM
Writer's House

Jill McCorkle, the acclaimed author of Life After Life, Going Away Shoes, and eight other novels and story collections, will be our spring Writer-in-Residence. 4 pm. This programming made possible through generous support from the Andrea '79 and Ken Robertson Writers House Innovation Fund.

Relive Merrimack History

McQuade librarian Michaela Keating has recently completed a project to digitally preserve Merrimack history. Through a partnership with the Digital Commonwealth and the Boston Public Library, the complete run of printed Merrimack yearbooks (1951-2012) have been scanned and preserved. The files can now be viewed in their entirety on Merrimack ScholarWorks, as well as on the Internet Archive.

CETL: Course Design Tip

Publish and Share ePub Files
Create and share ePub files for engaging meaningful reading experiences. You and your

students can use Pages to create mini custom materials (eBooks, Study Guides, Lab Manuals, Critiques, Reflections, etc.)! Write, draw, and take photos. Once complete, tap "Send a Copy", and choose ePub. Use Airdrop to share. Open the shared file by choosing "Copy to iBooks". In iBooks you can personalize the copy by adding bookmarks, highlights and notes.
Provided by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and Information Technology.

Other Events this Week

March 15th (and every Wednesday*)
Open Office Hours with the Provost
8:30 - 10:00 AM
Provost's Suite, Austin Hall
The Provost will have open office hours for faculty to drop in every Wednesday from 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM. Whether you have a specific topic or just want to say "hello," all faculty are welcome to visit.

*Special note: next week Open Office Hours with the Provost will be Tuesday, March, 21st.

March 17th (and every Friday)
Open Office Hours with the Melissa Siegel
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Provost's Suite, Austin Hall
Melissa Siegel, Director of Sponsored Programs, will hold hours in the Office of the Provost every Friday from 9:00 AM-4:00 PM. This is your opportunity to stop by with any and all questions about sponsored activities, programs, or grants. Please e-mail siegelm@merrimack.edu to set up an appointment or just plan on swinging by to say "hello." Melissa is excited to learn more about you and your teaching, scholarship and research interests.

Future Events

Migration of Blackboard environment to a SaaS solution
The Academic Technology Team is migrating our current Blackboard environment to a SaaS solution. The migration process will require 3 days of downtime, followed by testing. In looking at the academic calendar we have scheduled this project to take place on the following dates:

Bb Migration to SaaS (downtime)	Monday 5/15 - Wed 5/17
Test Environment (downtime)	Thurs. 5/18 - Sunday 5/21
Go Live with start of summer session	Monday 5/22

For our users, Bb Learn in the SaaS environment will look the same as our current Bb Learn 9.1 user environment with a few new enhancements.

Important Notes for the Upgrade:
- We are asking faculty to complete grading and download the grade center to a spreadsheet by Sunday, May 14th. Grades and student submissions will not be available in Blackboard from 5/15 - 5/21.

- **Faculty teaching summer courses will not have access to Blackboard for course set up from 5/15 - 5/21.**
- **Requests for course copies and course merges for summer session courses should be submitted to AskIT no later than Thursday, May 11th.**
- Students will not have access to their summer session courses until Monday, May 22nd.
- Users trying to access Blackboard between 5/15 and 5/21 will be presented with an informative Splash page to hopefully minimize questions and concerns.

Some of the advantages of this migration are:
- No impact to our faculty and students during system maintenance updates.
- The SaaS model allows for fixes, enhancements and new features on the production environment to happen faster.
- The cloud platform easily scales during periods of high usage.
- Availability to Blackboard's new Ultra experience. See https://en-us.help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Getting_Started/What_Is_Ultra

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