



MERRIMACK COLLEGE



PROVOST BRIEFING

April 24, 2017

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Here are some of this week's top stories, and a look ahead.

- Important Blackboard Update and Outage Reminder
- Open Office Hours with the Provost moved to Thursday
- You're Invited to Honors Convocation
- Faculty Dialogue #4 on the Liberal Studies Core, May 4
- Proposal Writing Institute
- Faculty Senate Assessment Survey
- VPA 2017 Student Art Exhibit, Now through June 30
- Faculty Senate Meeting, April 25
- Together For Good Faculty & Staff Social, April 25
- Zaid Jabri: Music and Discussion, April 26
- Introduction to Plain Language for Health Communication and MedlinePlus
- Open Office Hours with Melissa Siegel, every Friday
- Merrimack College Research and Creative Achievement Conference, May 2
- Planning Ahead for the Fall: Second Tuesday First-Year Student Advising Meetings, September 12

Important Blackboard Migration and Outage Reminder

Blackboard is being upgraded to deliver a better user experience for students and faculty. Working in conjunction with the Office of the Provost and the Registrar, the dates below present the least impact to our students with minimum interruption to their course work. Among other features, the new Blackboard platform will provide a more stable LMS environment campus-wide and will allow for easy scalability during high usage and zero downtime during future updates.

To accomplish this upgrade, **Blackboard will be down beginning midnight, May 15th through midnight, May 22nd**. To minimize any inconvenience, here are some key pre-outage preparation and dates to remember:

- May 8th - Students will be enrolled into Bb SU2017 course shells
- May 11th - Deadline for requests for Bb course copies and merges for SU2017 (Requests after this date will be completed when migration is complete)
- May 14th - Deadline to complete grading and download Grade Center to spreadsheet [Watch the instructional video here.](#)
- For more information about this outage, visit the [Academic Technology Resources site](#).
- May 15 - 17 Bb migration to SaaS. **Blackboard will be unavailable**
- May 18 - 21 Test environment. **Blackboard will be unavailable**
- May 22 - Blackboard returns live

Open Office Hours with the Provost Moved to Thursday - This Week Only

8:30 - 10:00 AM

Provost's Suite, Austin Hall

The Provost will have open office hours for faculty to drop-in **Thursday, April 27**, 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.

You're Invited to Honors Convocation!

Saturday, May 20

Lawler Arena, Merrimack Athletics Complex

Faculty line-up is at 12:30 p.m. in the Innovation Center (formerly the CETL classroom)

Click the link [here](#) to see a list of all students who will be recognized at the Honors Convocation.

These students are designated as Presidential Scholars, with a minimum GPA of 3.50. Please note the academic medals and the Rafferty awards for scholar/athletes will also be awarded at the Honors Convocation this year instead of at Commencement or at the LEAD awards ceremony. For additional details, please visit the [commencement web page](#).

Faculty Dialogue #4 on the Liberal Studies Core

Thursday, May 4

3:30 to 5:00

Mendel 263

The General Education Committee invites faculty to participate in a fourth and final discussion of the LS core for the spring 2017 semester. We will present additional data that helps to answer the question "Who are our students?" as well as discuss the models that were generated from the second LS core discussion. Hopefully the insights gained from the third LS core discussion

of the Mission will help guide this conversation. We will end the discussion by looking ahead to the summer and fall goals for the Gen Ed committee. Please note, to accommodate the Creative Research and Achievement Conference, we will be meeting on Thursday May 4th from 3:30 to 5:00 in Mendel 263. Please RSVP using the link below:

<https://goo.gl/forms/0jkbJ1EHnTyiu5n42>

Proposal Writing Institute

May 10, 2017 internal deadline

May 22, 2017 CUR deadline

The Office of the Provost will reimburse up to three Merrimack faculty to participate in the July 13-17, 2017 Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) [Proposal Writing Institute](#) at Concordia College in Moorhead, MN.

This Institute is designed for faculty who have already identified an external funding opportunity or agency and are currently working on a draft proposal. The four-day institute will consist of one-on-one work with a mentor, writing, small group discussions, and critiquing of proposals. The institute has been developed to assist novice to experienced proposal writers in drafting complete proposals for submission.

By **May 10, 2017**, please send a two-paragraph outline of your proposal and the name of the intended funding agency and/or program to Melissa Siegel, Director of Sponsored Programs, at siegelm@merrimack.edu for internal review.

Faculty Senate Assessment Survey

The Assessment Committee is seeking to better understand how departments across campus use assessment within their programs. A brief, anonymous survey was constructed to help gather this data. We would appreciate if the chairs of each department complete the survey at their earliest convenience. The survey can be accessed [here](#).

VPA 2017 Student Art Exhibit

Now through June 30

McCoy Gallery

The exhibit includes Graphic Design, Photography, Drawing, Sculpture, and Painting. Please spread the word and come celebrate the student's work! A reception will be held April 25, from 5:30 - 7:30 PM.

Other Events this Week

April 25th

CETL *Minds on Fire Book Group* facilitated by Dr. Sally Shockro

April 25, 2017

12:00 - 1:00

Provost Conference Room

Reminder: Our final lunch meeting is this week!

April 25th

Faculty Senate Meeting

4:00 - 5:00 PM

Murray Lounge

The agenda can be found on the Faculty Senate BlackBoard site.

April 25th

Together For Good Faculty & Staff Social

5:00 - 7:00 PM

Sanctuary Coffee House, North Campus Village

Join Together for Good Community Chair, Kyle McInnis P'19 and your colleagues for an evening of fun, Merrimack College trivia, and a brief update on our Campaign.

Refreshments will be served.

[Register Now](#)

April 26th

Zaid Jabri: Music and Discussion

12:30 PM

Rogers Center for Performing Arts (atrium)

Composer Zaid Jabri will play music, including arias from his opera, Cities of Salt, and discuss the relationship between words and music.

A light lunch will be served.

April 26th

Introduction to Plain Language for Health Communication and MedlinePlus

6:00 - 7:00 PM

Alden Classroom 3rd Floor of McQuade Library

Librarian C.J. Wong, M.S., M.S. will lead a workshop on using plain language and culturally sensitive materials to effectively communicate health information to audiences with literacy and language challenges.

April 28th (and every Friday)

Open Office Hours with 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

Merrimack College Research and Creative Achievement Conference

Tuesday, May 2

4:00 - 6:00 PM

Merrimack Athletics Complex

The Office of the Provost and the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning are pleased to invite you to attend the second annual Merrimack College Research and Creative Achievement Conference. This event is a college-wide conference and celebration designed to highlight the academic and creative excellence of undergraduate and graduate work, to foster engagement among faculty members, students, their families, and the community. Hope to see you there!

For any questions, please email Michael Stroud (stroudm@merrimack.edu) and/or Kathryn Nielsen (nielsenk@merrimack.edu)

Planning Ahead for the Fall: Second Tuesday First-Year Student Advising Meetings

September 12th, 2017

4:00 PM

The Academic Success Center is organizing a new experience for first-year students called Second Tuesday First-Year Student Advising Meeting, which will take place on the the second Tuesday of the semester during the free block. The primary goal is to give first-year students an opportunity to meet their primary advisor earlier than they do now. Currently, most first-year students don't meet their advisor until November.

Faculty who have first-year student advisees will meet with a group of their advisees. The meeting will take place in the faculty office - if the group is small enough - or in a classroom. For more information on how this serves as an opportunity for advisors, visit the [Second Tuesday First-Year Student Advising](#) page.

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