



## Exploring NEW FRONTIERS

### DR. LAURA KURDZIEL AND DR. ALLISON SEITCHIK

For psychology professors Laura Kurdziel and Allison Seitchik, the *Together for Good* Campaign has been transformative.

“When we started at Merrimack, we had no physical space for research at all,” professor Seitchik said.

“Now we have offices, lab space, a sleep lab and cubicles for class and research purposes. It’s amazing.”

During the past seven years, Merrimack has secured more than \$7 million in research funding, helping fuel new, state-of-the-art spaces and equipment for

conducting studies and research. In these facilities, professors Kurdziel and Seitchik, along with a group of students, are investigating mild traumatic brain injuries (mTBI)—more commonly known as concussions.

“There’s evidence that an mTBI can lead to sleep problems and difficulties controlling emotions,” professor Kurdziel said. “We are interested in finding out whether emotional control issues could be the result, not directly of the concussion, but of the sleep disturbances caused by the concussion.”

Professors Kurdziel and Seitchik believe that those with mTBIs could benefit from a simple intervention: a nap. Their research has been further fueled as recipients of Merrimack’s prestigious Zampell Family Faculty Fellowship, which aims to encourage scientific inquiry, research, artistic creation, clinical expertise and innovative teaching. The fellowship has provided funding for participant recruitment and essential equipment, such as actiwatches, which help measure sleep history. “We literally would not be able to do this study without

the Zampell Family Faculty Fellowship,” professor Seitchik said.

With a growing body of research suggesting that mTBIs can have long-term impact on the brain, professors Kurdziel and Seitchik believe their research could be an important step in recognizing and treating patients. “If we get the results we’re looking for, a scheduled nap in the middle of the day could be an inexpensive and accessible option for anyone with an mTBI,” professor Seitchik said. “And I don’t think we’d get many complaints!” ■

### ABOUT THE ZAMPELL FAMILY FACULTY FELLOWSHIP

In 2017, Christine M. ’75 and James C. Zampell ’75 endowed the Zampell Family Faculty Fellowship program. Zampell Fellows—full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty members selected by the provost—are awarded up to \$20,000 to pursue faculty development initiatives. Donor-funded professorships and grants are invaluable for recruiting and retaining the best and brightest faculty.

### RESEARCH: BY THE NUMBERS

**\$2 MILLION**

raised to endow  
RESEARCH, TEACHING AND  
LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

**500+**

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS at  
the 2019 Research and Creative  
Achievement Conference

**\$500,000**

will be distributed in 2019–2020 to  
approximately 100 faculty members for  
FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOLARSHIPS