

PROVOST BULLETIN

October 25, 2021



Greetings

I recently had the pleasure of attending a presentation from this year's **Zampell Family Faculty Fellows**. Zampell faculty fellowships are funded by **Christine '75 and James Zampell '75**, and I want to thank them for their continued generosity and support for engaged faculty research and scholarship. On Friday, Oct. 8, I witnessed 17 faculty engaged in six different projects. They described their research findings, the impact their research had in their respective fields and how their research has and will shape their approach in the classroom. I was impressed by the creativity, the collaboration and the commitment each of them had to their disciplines, their students and to the broader community.

Criminology and Criminal Justice faculty **Dr. Alicia Girgenti-Malone** and **Dr. Alyssa Yetter** unveiled their work developing an assessment of the College's groundbreaking program combining their master's degree with the College's nascent Police Academy. Civil Engineer **Dr. Sadegh Asgari** related his interdisciplinary research study that incorporates concepts and techniques from mathematical modeling, game theory, and finance to help develop more efficient and accurate planning for construction projects.

Finally, **Dr. Zi Yan**, **Dr. Sarah Benes**, **Dr. Eleanor Shonkoff**, **Dr. Luis Saenz de Viguera Erkiaga** and **Dr. Seungbin Oh** –

Kurdziel – both members of Merrimack's Psychology department – described their longitudinal study exploring the relationship between mild traumatic brain injury, emotional regulation and sleep. Communication and Media faculty **Dr. Melissa Zimdars**, **Dr. Kilhoe Na** and **Dr. Megan Cullinan** discussed their efforts to explore and track how health misinformation, rumors and conspiracies spread on Facebook. Chemistry Department faculty **Dr. Anthony Fernandez** and **Dr. Joseph Chiarelli** explained how they are leveraging mobile technology to improve student engagement in computational Chemistry.

Liberal Arts – reviewed their work building a community-based health coaching program that supports student learning, research and community service.

I am proud of the Zampell faculty's work, and I look forward to announcing in a few weeks the calls for a variety of faculty research support that will be accepting applications this winter. Building our research capacity – including the support that will allow faculty to apply for external grants – is a key component of the College's [Agenda for the Future](#).

- John "Sean" Condon, Ph.D.
Vice President of Academic Affairs
and Provost

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Upcoming Events and Deadlines

Monday, Oct. 25: Undergraduate advising and registration begins with Senior Advisement*

Tuesday, Oct. 26: Full Semester Midterm Grades and 8-week Fall Session I Final Grades Due*

Tuesday, Oct. 26: Faculty Senate Meeting, 4-5 p.m. via Zoom

Monday, Nov. 1: Jail Education Project: Call for Faculty Participation*

Monday, Nov. 1: Adult Mental Health First Aid (ADMHA) Certification for Faculty and Instructors*

Monday, Nov. 1 - Friday, Nov. 5: Open Classrooms Week, Visit Your Colleagues' Classrooms*

Wednesday, Nov. 3: Next at The Writers House: Dr. Melissa Zimdars Nov. 3 at 4 p.m.*

Tuesday, Nov. 9: Faculty Senate Meeting, 4-5 p.m. via Zoom

Tuesday, Nov. 30: Faculty Senate Meeting, 4-5 p.m. via Zoom

Thursday, Dec. 9: Adult Mental Health First Aid (ADMHA) Certification for Faculty and Instructors*

Monday, Dec. 13: Adult Mental Health First Aid (ADMHA) Certification for Faculty and Instructors*

Three-Year Degree Project

Merrimack College was recently nominated by New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) President Larry Schall and invited to participate in a national project to conceptualize and pilot a three-year baccalaureate degree with the goal of reducing costs to students while improving student outcomes and experiences.

The innovative and progressive project led by Robert Zemsky (University of Pennsylvania) and Lori Carrell (University of Minnesota-Rochester) seeks to rethink the standard four-year bachelor's degree. The project seeks to reshape accreditation and federal financial aid policy that has been limiting to student affordability, access and progression towards a degree.

The project involves more than a dozen colleges across the United States, and Merrimack

more affordable, while also creating new pathways that provide both access and opportunity to disadvantaged groups of students as outlined in our [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion \(DEI\) goals](#).

We are currently exploring what such a degree could look like in terms of content, structure, cost and student experience at Merrimack. That work is being done by a working group formed earlier this semester consisting of faculty and senior administrators.

The group includes: John "Sean" Condon, Susan Marine, Mark Allman, Jeff Doggett, Simona Sharoni, Jonathan Lyon, Karen Ryan, Dan Butin-Sarofian, Rickey Caldwell, Emma Duffy-Comparone, Laura Kurdziel, Kate Kurkul, Ellen McWhorter, Raymond Shaw, Ana Silva, Doug White and Zi Yan.

Once the working group explores a potential model and develops a pilot proposal, their findings will be shared with the broader campus community of faculty and staff for feedback on next steps. If you have questions regarding this project or wish to get involved, please contact the Office of the Provost at officeoftheprovoat@merrimack.edu.

Cybersecurity Awareness Month

Cybersecurity issues are on the rise across the world, and October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. Cybersecurity is everyone's responsibility regardless of your job/role on campus. As part of Merrimack College's continued investment in our community's safety and security, here are some quick tips to remember:

- **Passwords should be complex:** Use uppercase letters and lowercase letters, include symbols, and be at least 8 characters long.
- **Passwords should not be reused:** As an example, your banking account should not share a password with your Facebook account.
- **Keep your passwords safe:** Refrain from sharing your passwords, having shared accounts, and emailing passwords to others.
- **Check links before you click:** On most browsers you can do this by hovering over the link with your mouse cursor.

If you have any questions or would like to report an incident, please email cybersecurity@merrimack.edu, or [visit our website](#) for more information.

Recap: The Blessing of the Graduate Center



On Oct. 18, 2021, The Merrimack College Graduate Center, located on the second floor of the McQuade Library, was blessed by Father Raymond Dlugos, O.S.A. The blessing marked the official opening of the center, a space for graduate students to form relationships with their peers and receive academic assistance if needed.

Provost John "Sean" Condon, Ph.D. introduced both Fr. Ray and Dr. Susan Marine, Vice Provost for Graduate Education, who shared her vision for the center and graduate education as a whole. Following those remarks were welcomes by both Catherine Chandler, Director of Graduate Student Academic Success and Lindsey Carbone, Assistant Director and Director of Graduate Student Life, whose offices are located within the center. The Graduate Center will coordinate and centralize resources and services to promote graduate student engagement and success.

Reminder Regarding Dates for Academic Advising and Midterm and Final Grades

Undergraduate academic advising season kicks off today, **Monday, Oct. 25**, with senior advisement for registration for the Spring 2022 semester. The timing of graduate academic advising depends on the individual program and associated start terms, so questions should be directed to the respective program director. Please see the [academic calendar for 2021-22](#) for additional important dates related to advising.

We would also like to remind faculty that midterm grades for full semester courses and final grades for 8-week Fall Session 1 courses are due by midnight on **Tuesday, Oct. 26**. Midterm grades are an important way to help students gauge their performance in their classes, and allows the College to identify and follow-up with students who may be struggling and need extra support.

Faculty and Instructors

Nearly one in five people struggle with a mental health issue. Chances are you, your students, or someone you care about are impacted. The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and the Office of the Provost invite faculty and teaching instructors to achieve Mental Health First Aid training and certification. Facilitated by certified AMHFA trainers, Dr. Sarah Benes and Dr. Christine Shaw, there are **monthly hybrid and in-person options**. [Click Here to Register](#)

Essential first aid training for anyone age 18 and older who wants to learn how to help a person who may be experiencing a mental health related crisis or problem. This course teaches you to recognize signs and symptoms and provides the steps to take to provide help. Participants will come away with the skills and tools to offer help to others and increase their personal knowledge.

What you will learn in this eight-hour course:

- The impact of mental illness in the U.S.
- Risk factors and warning signs for depression, anxiety, trauma, substance use and psychosis
- A five-step action plan to help an individual in crisis connects to professional help
- Local community resources available to offer support

Participants will receive an informational workbook that summarizes the training as well as a list of community resources.

What to expect:

- Audio/video presentation
- Opportunities for group discussion and practice
- A three-year certification

The dates are as follows:

- Monday, Nov. 1
- Thursday, Dec. 9
- Monday, Dec. 13
- Monday, Jan. 10
- Wednesday, Jan. 19

Next at The Writers House: Dr. Melissa Zimdars Nov. 3 at 4 p.m.



the writers
HOUSE

at MERRIMACK
COLLEGE

WEDNESDAY | NOV. 3 | 4 p.m.

faculty write: DR. MELISSA ZIMDARS



Dr. Melissa "Mish" Zimdars, Associate Professor of Communication and Media, will discuss her research on misinformation and disinformation.

THIS EVENT IS IN-PERSON AT THE WRITERS HOUSE

Please join us at The Writers House for the first speaker in our [Faculty Writes Series](#), Dr. Melissa Zimdars, who will discuss her research on misinformation and disinformation. Q&A to follow.

[Melissa \(Mish\) Zimdars](#), associate professor in Communication and Media, is a 2021-2022 research affiliate at the Center for Information, Technology, and Public Life at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. She is the co-editor of *Fake News: Understanding Media and Misinformation in the Digital Age* (MIT Press, 2020), author of *Watching Our Weights: The Contradictions of Televising Fatness in the "Obesity Epidemic"* (Rutgers University Press, 2019), and her work has appeared in *Television and New Media*, *Feminist Media Studies*,

Globe, Washington Post, NPR, CNN, NBC, Wall Street Journal, Deutsche Welle, and BBC.

ENG: Jail Education Project: Call for Faculty Participation

The [Jail Education Project](#) offers Merrimack courses to incarcerated students in our community. We are seeking full-time faculty members interested in teaching courses at the Middlesex County House of Correction in Billerica, MA. We currently have two openings for Spring 2022 and two for Summer 2022.

Details are as follows:

- Preference for general ed or intro courses
- Courses run on an eight-week condensed schedule
- Possible course times are the morning (8:30-10:30 a.m.) or afternoon (12:30-2:30 p.m.)
- Faculty have the option to work with undergraduate or graduate students as TA's to offer additional support in the classroom and in additional study halls or tutorials
- Full-time faculty must teach this course as an overload
- Compensation is at the regular overload/adjunct rate
- Background check and short orientation required

To apply, please email jail-ed@merrimack.edu with your interest and questions.

For questions, please contact duffycompare@merrimack.edu or aiellob@merrimack.edu. The deadline to apply is **Monday, Nov. 1, 2021**.

Open Classrooms Week, Visit Your Colleagues' Classrooms
Nov. 1-5



You're invited! Sign up and visit your colleagues' classrooms during the first week of November, 2021. Observing other teachers is a key part of professional development and helps to improve teaching practices and student performance.

Fall participants include: Dr. Bryan Bannon, Dr. Sarah Benes, Dr. Jimmy Franco, Dr. Katelyn Kurkul, Dr. Mark Lippman, Dr. Jane Parent, Dr. Allison Seitchik, Dr. Raymond Shaw, Dr. Michael Stroud, Dr. Christopher Stuetzle and Dr. Kathryn Welby.

[Click on the registration link](#) for days, times and pedagogical features.

Open Classrooms Week provides the opportunity for Merrimack faculty and instructors across the disciplines to visit classrooms and watch how others approach teaching. Opening our classrooms to one another is designed to promote conversation and reflection about teaching and learning.

Faculty Openings on the Institutional Research Board (IRB)

There are faculty openings for the 2021-22 academic year on Merrimack's Institutional Research Board (IRB). IRB members are appointed by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

An IRB should be composed of individuals with varying backgrounds to promote the complete and adequate review of research activities commonly conducted by the College. As noted in the faculty handbook, the IRB should be sufficiently qualified through the experience and expertise of its members and the diversity of its members, including consideration of race, gender, cultural backgrounds and sensitivity to such issues.

Merrimack's IRB.

If you have any questions about what IRB service will involve, please contact IRB Chair Dr. Jon Lyon at lyonj@merrimack.edu.

Leadership and Professional Development

As part of Merrimack's ongoing efforts to invest in and build the capacity of faculty and staff, the College has purchased a license through [Academic Impressions](#), a platform that provides extensive online leadership and professional development resources specifically for employees at colleges and universities.

This partnership provides faculty and staff with access to:

- Hundreds of hours of online training, both live and on-demand (with new training added weekly)
- All Academic Impressions virtual conferences
- Hundreds of additional tools, resources and articles
- Exclusive member resources for: [current and aspiring women leaders](#), [improving online teaching and student support](#), [the latest DEI resources](#) and [academic leaders](#)
- A series of [focused learning plans](#) to help leaders at all levels sharpen their skills
- Direct access to the Academic Impressions research team to discuss emerging topics

To start accessing these resources, [log in to the Academic Impressions website](#) using your Merrimack College credentials. Member benefits will be granted automatically.

External Funding Opportunities

Merrimack College encourages and supports faculty seeking external funding opportunities. If you have any questions regarding submitting an external grant, please email the Office of Sponsored Programs at research@merrimack.edu. If you are planning to submit an external grant, please fill out Merrimack's [intent to propose form](#).

NIH/NIGMS Maximizing Investigators' Research Award (R35 - Clinical Trial Optional) [PAR-19-367]

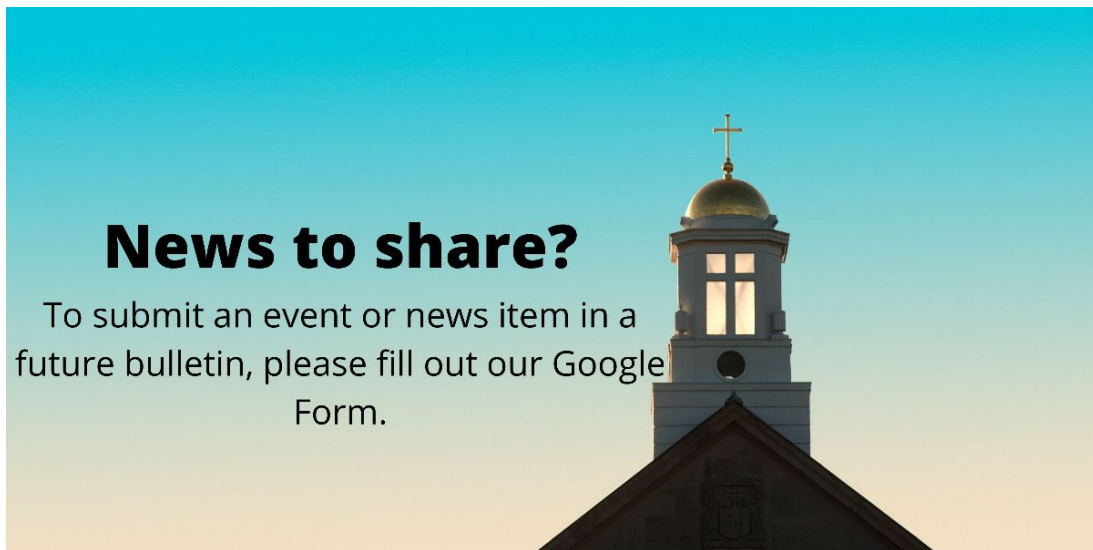
The Maximizing Investigators' Research Award (MIRA) provides support for the program of research in an investigator's laboratory that is within the mission of National Institute of

This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) allows both new applications from eligible NIGMS-funded investigators and renewal applications from current established and early-stage MIRA grantees. Please [visit their website](#), or the Sept. 29th issue of this semester's Provost Bulletin for more information.

Deadline: Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022

Award Details: Maximum of \$750,000 in direct costs per year for five years

Share your News by Wednesday, Nov. 3, at 8 a.m. for inclusion in the next Provost Bulletin, which will be sent during the week of Nov. 8.



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