WELCOME TO THE

THE FUTURE OF WORKPLACE WELLNESS

INNOVATION • PERFORMANCE • LONGEVITY

MERRIMACK COLLEGE

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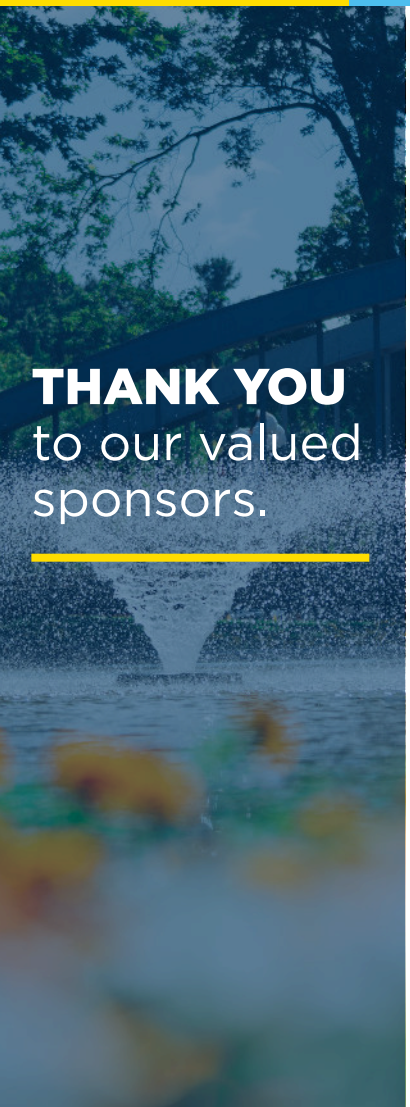

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EVENT OVERVIEW

THE FUTURE OF WORKPLACE WELLNESS

INNOVATION • PERFORMANCE • LONGEVITY

Welcome to The Future of Workplace Wellness Conference

September 17, 2025 • Merrimack College

On behalf of Merrimack College and our partners, we are delighted to welcome you to the Future of Workplace Wellness Conference. Today, we gather leaders, innovators and wellness advocates from across industries to explore fresh ideas, share research and spark meaningful conversations about the future of employee health and performance.

This conference is designed to inspire and equip you with actionable strategies, whether it's rethinking workplace culture, leveraging AI in wellness or addressing the social determinants of health. You will hear from national thought leaders, engage in interactive panels and fireside chats and connect with peers who share your commitment to creating thriving workplaces.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our speakers, sponsors and partners whose expertise and generosity make this day possible. Most of all, thank you for dedicating your time to learning, collaborating and shaping the future of workplace wellbeing with us.

Here's to a day of insight, inspiration and connection.

All Day Long: Innovation Showcase

Head downstairs and discover the Innovation Showcase!

Meet conference sponsors and Merrimack students to learn about wellness recommendations, workplace safety, balanced meals and more!

EVENT SCHEDULE

8 a.m.

Doors Open & Registration
Breakfast sponsored by Sodexo

9 a.m.

Conference Opening and Presidential Welcome
April Bowling, M.A., Sc.D., Vice President of Research and
Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D., President, Merrimack College

9:15 a.m.

Workplace Wellness That Works: Why Wellbeing is the Secret Ingredient to a Thriving Culture
Laura Putnam, International Keynote Speaker on Wellbeing

10:15 a.m.

The Science of Workplace Wellness
This panel explores evidence-based strategies to improve employee well-being through smarter schedules, better workspace design and holistic health support.

Moderator: Zi Yan, Ph.D., M.P.H., FACSM, Academic Dean, Health Sciences and Co-Director of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, Merrimack College

Panelists:
- Debra Wein, M.S., RDN, CEO & Founder, Wellness Workdays
- Dr. Leena Bharath, Associate Professor, Health Sciences and Nutrition, Merrimack College
- Dr. Warren Bodine, Primary Care Sports Medicine Clinician, MGB & Head Team Physician, Merrimack College
- Dr. Melissa St. Hilaire, Assistant Professor, Data Science, Merrimack College and Lecturer on Medicine, Part-time, Division of Sleep Medicine, Harvard Medical School
- Gregory Puig, Partner, Head of Group Benefits, Sentinel Group

11 a.m.

Break & Movement Session
Meghan Kinsley, CEO & Founder, Motivate. Movement Studios

11:15 a.m.

Session #2: Turning Knowledge into Practice
Experts will share practical insights on sleep, nutrition and physical activity for improving workplace wellness and daily life.

Presenters:
- Dr. Michael Corcoran, Associate Professor and Chair, Health Sciences and Nutrition, Merrimack College
- Dr. Nicholas SantaBarbara, Assistant Professor, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, Merrimack College
- Dr. Laura Kurdziel, Associate Professor and Program Director, Neuroscience, Merrimack College

Noon — **Lunch sponsored by Sodexo**

12:30 p.m. — **The Role of AI in Workplace Health and Wellbeing**

Dive into the transformative role of AI in health and wellness, from personalized healthcare and preventive medicine to mental health support and workplace well-being. This session also examines cutting-edge AI-powered digital health innovations, along with the ethical and regulatory considerations shaping the field.

Moderator: Christopher Stuetzle, Ph.D., Academic Dean, Computational Sciences and Co-Director of the School of Engineering and Computational Sciences, Merrimack College

Panelists:

- Dr. Don Roosan, Associate Professor, Data Science, Merrimack College
- Lucas Holden '20, M'21, Research Associate, WHOOP
- Jessica Lee, Senior Product Innovation Manager, Verily

1:15 p.m. — **Fireside Chat: The Future of Workplace Wellness with Val Tivnan and April Bowling, Sc.D.**

Valeria (Val) Tivnan, VP of Population Health Strategy at IMA Financial, advises leaders on building workplace cultures of health and transforming employees into savvy healthcare consumers. With 25+ years in wellness and lifestyle medicine, she focuses on integrating lifestyle medicine and mindfulness into workplaces to improve population health and reduce costs.

2 p.m. — **Break**

2:15 p.m. — **Closing Keynote**

Amy McDonough '97, Managing Director of Strategic Health Solutions, Google Health

3 p.m. — **Close & Wrap-up: April Bowling, M.A., Sc.D.**

3:15 p.m. — **Networking Reception**

3:15 p.m. — **Tour of The SIRF**

Join Merrimack's research faculty for a guided tour of our state-of-the-art Shared Instrumentation and Research Facility (SIRF). You'll get an inside look at students' current research projects and learn how Merrimack is streamlining the pathway from the classroom to career success.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES
in order of appearance

April Bowling, M.A., Sc.D.

Dr. April Bowling is the Vice President of Research and Professor of Nutrition & Health Sciences at Merrimack College. She received her B.A. in Environmental Earth Sciences from Johns Hopkins University, her M.A. in Environmental Policy and Planning from Tufts University, and her Sc.D. in Nutrition with a concentration in Obesity Epidemiology from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Dr. Bowling's research is focused on developing and testing engaging, tech-based exercise, sleep and nutrition interventions that help elicit sustained changes in behavioral and physical health among children with neurodevelopmental and affective diagnoses such as autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and generalized anxiety disorder. In her role as Vice President of Research, Dr. Bowling has overseen the rapid expansion of Merrimack's R&D portfolio as the College pursues Carnegie designation as a high research (R2) institution, including the opening of new life sciences and engineering research facilities, the launch of doctoral programs, and the recruitment and development of outstanding research faculty.

Laura Putnam

Laura Putnam, workplace wellbeing expert, change agent, author of Workplace Wellness that Works, and Chief Learning Officer at Upli (workplace wellbeing provider), offers a new perspective on an old topic: wellness. Through her keynotes, workshops, and licensed content, Laura has energized hundreds of organizations and has activated over 50,000 managers and leaders worldwide. She moves beyond the typical “It starts with you” wellness talk, showing leaders how “It starts with us” - providing a map steeped in evidence and imbued with hope. Laura takes it beyond just motivation to how we actually do the work.

Over the past 17 years, Laura has been rolling up her sleeves, testing out what works — and what doesn’t. The impact of her groundbreaking programs, as measured by third parties, have been published and cited by leading institutions like the Mayo Clinic. It is her real-world experiences, combined with a deep understanding of the research and an ability to translate the research in a relatable and humorous way, that has made her an indispensable guide to companies and their leaders.

Laura has been featured in The New York Times, Forbes, Fast Company, USA Today, FOX, ABC, and MSNBC. Recognized as a 2025 Woman of Impact nominee by the American Heart Association, she also received the American Heart Association’s “2020 Impact” award and the National Wellness Institute’s “Circle of Leadership” award. A graduate of Brown University and Stanford University, Laura lives in San Francisco with her fiancé, and travels around the world building wellness that works.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES
in order of appearance

Dr. Zi Yan

Dr. Zi Yan is a distinguished scholar and academic leader whose interdisciplinary work explores how social, behavioral and environmental factors shape physical activity and health outcomes across different populations. With advanced training in exercise science, psychology and public health, Dr. Yan brings a well-rounded perspective to both her research and academic leadership.

As Academic Dean and Co-Director of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences at Merrimack College, she advances institutional goals through visionary leadership, research mentorship, and active engagement with students and communities.

Debra Wein

Debra Wein, M.S., RDN, CWWPC is the CEO and Founder of Wellness Workdays (2004) and has over 25 years of experience working in the health and wellness industry. Clients include New Balance, Turner Construction, City of Portland, ME, Skanska, Maine Bankers Association, McCarthy Builders, Rockland Trust and Brown University.

Debra holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from Cornell and Columbia Universities and is a nationally recognized expert on employee health and wellness. Focused on education in many formats, Debra has lectured for the US Coast Guard, US Navy Seals, USA Olympic coaches, MIT and Harvard Business School. Debra has spoken about worksite wellness on many major networks and cable stations in NY and Boston, and has written articles for Men's Health, Women's Health, Muscle & Fitness, and many others.

Debra is a member of the President's Council of Cornell Women (PCCW), a group of highly accomplished women including Judge Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Janet Reno, Senator Gabriella Giffords, Mae Jemison, and many others; a member of the Cornell University College of Human Ecology Dean's Advisory Council; and serves on the UMass Amherst School of Public Health and Health Sciences Dean's Advisory Board. Debra has achieved Master Instructor status through the Chapman Institute and Faculty Status through Wellness Council of America. Debra is also the Program Director of the Wellness Workdays Dietetic Internship, one of the largest programs in the country training nutrition students to become Registered Dietitians, including those at the Boston Celtics, Chicago Bulls, Washington Football Team, Minnesota Twins, University of Alabama, Duke University, and Notre Dame.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES
in order of appearance

Dr. Leena Bharath

Dr. Leena Bharath is an Associate Professor in the School of Nursing and Health Sciences at Merrimack College, where she also serves as the Pasini Professor of Health Sciences. Her research centers on the intricate relationship between mitochondrial function and immune cell metabolism, particularly in the context of aging and metabolic diseases such as obesity and diabetes.

She leads the MitoCure Lab, which focuses on "inflammaging"—the chronic inflammation associated with aging—and aims to develop targeted therapies to mitigate its effects.

Greg Puig

With a passion for assisting clients in all things benefits and Health & Welfare, Greg is a key player on Sentinel's leadership team. Having called Sentinel home for 13+ years, he is driven by a desire to help people day in and day out.

Greg brings a unique view of benefits to the table, having curated a diverse background in Health & Welfare, Insurance Consulting, and Retirement. While many companies are stuck in the past with outdated group insurance strategy, he appreciates Sentinel's ability to innovate by bringing everything under one roof.

Greg understands insurance and benefit plans can be incredibly confusing for people. By helping firms create strong education game plans, his expertise enhances the value of their offerings and empowers employees to feel confident in what is offered to them.

Dr. Melissa St. Hilaire

Dr. St. Hilaire brings over 20 years of experience at the intersection of computational and experimental research. She is the Principal Investigator of the BRIGHT Lab (Biological Rhythms and Light Lab), where her team investigates the impacts of insufficient sleep and circadian rhythm disruptions on human health, performance and safety.

Two major areas of her research include: (1) designing sleep and circadian-aligned work schedules to reduce fatigue and improve safety in shift workers, and (2) implementing lighting strategies that support circadian alignment, enhance sleep and promote performance in operational environments.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES
in order of appearance

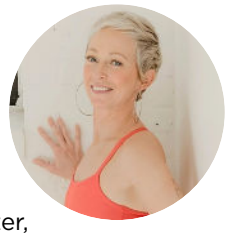
Dr. Warren A. Bodine

Dr. Warren Bodine is a board-certified Osteopathic Primary Care Sports Medicine Physician. He completed his medical degree from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-School of Osteopathic Medicine (UMDNJ) in Stratford, NJ. He trained as a Family Medicine resident at UMDNJ. He also completed a Sports Medicine Fellowship at Christiana Care Health System in Wilmington, DE. His clinical interests include Family Medicine, Sports Medicine, and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine.

He is currently a clinical professor and instructor at several medical schools, including the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine, Tufts University School of Medicine, and Harvard University School of Medicine. Dr. Bodine has received numerous teaching awards and has been an invited speaker on multiple Primary Care and Sports Medicine topics regionally and nationally. He currently serves as Medical Director for Merrimack College Athletics and Team Physician for the Boston Red Sox.

Dr. Bodine is a specialty content editor for industry-leading evidence-based medical platform, DynaMed. Outside work, he enjoys spending time with his family and on the sidelines of his children's sporting events.

Meghan Kinsley



Meghan Kinsey is the founder, owner, and health coach behind Motivate.® Movement, with studios in Amesbury and Rowley, MA, North Hampton, NH, and a thriving global community on Zoom.

Now in her 50s, Meghan draws on a colorful career—classroom teacher, medical sales rep, community organizer, Newburyport City Councilor, childbirth educator, barre instructor, and studio owner—in her role as Joy Coach.

Upon waking each morning, her hair might be wild, her coffee cup never far, but she shows up daily with optimism and a passion for helping others use research-backed tools to feel their best. When she's not parenting three grown sons or reminding her husband that marrying her 25 years ago was his best decision (wink), she's leading a powerhouse team of instructors and cheering on every client who walks through the studio doors or joins her on her international wellness retreats.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES
in order of appearance

Dr. Michael Corcoran

Dr. Michael Corcoran is an Associate Professor and Chair of Health Sciences & Nutrition at Merrimack College, specializing in exercise and nutrition strategies for athletes and older adults. His research focuses on developing tailored interventions to enhance physical function and health outcomes in these populations, with particular expertise in geriatric exercise programming and sports nutrition.

Dr. Corcoran earned his Ph.D. in Cellular and Molecular Nutrition from Tufts University and a B.S. in Biology from Saint Bonaventure University. He spent his postdoctoral fellowship leading two clinical studies examining the impact of a post-exercise nutrition supplement on exercise-mediated gains in physical function for older adults. He has since transitioned to working with athletes of all levels, focusing on personalized nutrition strategies to support both optimal performance and overall health. His work has been published in journals such as ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal, American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, and the Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition. At Merrimack, Dr. Corcoran contributes to the M.S. in Nutrition and Human Performance program, teaching courses focused around sports nutrition and nutrition assessment. He also serves as Chair of the Health Science & Nutrition Department and is involved in interdisciplinary research initiatives like the SCAN Lab, which explores topics such as athlete mental health and performance.

Dr. Nicholas SantaBarbara

Dr. SantaBarbara earned his PhD in Kinesiology from Columbia University, where he focused on using exercise to prevent and manage chronic disease. He continued this work as a postdoctoral fellow at in the Department of Psychiatry at UCLA, expanding his research to include the impact of workplace wellness programs on employee health, absenteeism, presenteeism, and employer healthcare costs. Although these programs offered significant benefits and high engagement among participants, overall enrollment remained low, limiting their broader impact. Recognizing their potential value for both employees and employers, Dr. SantaBarbara conducted a study to identify preferred content and structural features of workplace wellness programs that could boost enthusiasm and long-term participation.

Dr. SantaBarbara has published several papers in this area as both the primary investigator, and senior author helping students pursue their interests in this important and meaningful field.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES
in order of appearance

Dr. Laura Kurdziel

Dr. Laura Kurdziel is a neuroscientist and sleep researcher dedicated to uncovering how quality rest fuels cognitive performance, emotional resilience, and overall health. She holds a Ph.D. in Neuroscience & Behavior from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and currently serves as Program Director of Neuroscience and Associate Professor of Psychology at Merrimack College.

Dr. Kurdziel's award-winning research explores how sleep influences memory, mood regulation, and brain function across the lifespan. In this talk, she will unpack the science of sleep and highlight how healthy sleep habits can enhance workplace productivity, mental clarity, and long-term wellness. Attendees will gain practical, evidence-based strategies for optimizing sleep to perform better, feel better, and live healthier—on and off the job.

Dr. Christopher Stuetzle

Dr. Christopher Stuetzle is the Academic Dean of Computational Sciences and Co-Director of the School of Engineering and Computational Sciences at Merrimack College. He earned his Ph.D. in Computer Science from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and a B.A. in Computer Science and Mathematics from Wheaton College.

A leader in both research and academic innovation, Dr. Stuetzle's work focuses on federated machine learning in healthcare, data-driven approaches to food justice, and the use of genetic algorithms to address urban traffic congestion. He is the founder of the Federated Learning at Merrimack (FLaMe) Research Lab and a founding member of the Food Justice Research & Action Cluster, advancing projects that bridge scholarship and community impact. His research has been recognized through awards such as the Murray Fellowship, and he actively contributes to initiatives exploring generative AI and location-aware technologies in health sciences. In addition to his leadership roles, Dr. Stuetzle serves as Chair of the Computer and Data Sciences Department and as an Associate Professor, where he is known for challenging yet supportive teaching that emphasizes student growth and success.

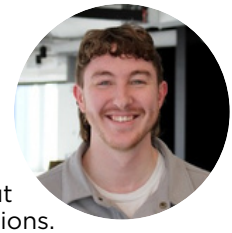
SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES
in order of appearance

Dr. Don Roosan

Dr. Don Roosan, PharmD, PhD, is a visionary scientist-entrepreneur who unites quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and biomedical informatics to revolutionize the way medicines are discovered and delivered. After earning his PharmD from Purdue University and a PhD in Biomedical Informatics from the University of Utah, he has spearheaded landmark initiatives in dementia care, medication adherence, drug-safety surveillance and genomics—often blending AI, gamification, and quantum techniques to achieve results once thought unattainable. By deploying variational quantum eigensolvers alongside large-language-model property predictors, Dr. Roosan's teams can shrink months of molecular-design work into minutes, rapidly generating novel scaffolds for oncology, neurodegeneration, and antimicrobial resistance while flagging toxic liabilities before they reach the bench. Parallel investigations in quantum key distribution, ultralow-latency quantum communication, and post-quantum blockchain provide the cryptographic foundation for next-generation clinical-trial and health-data networks.

Dr. Roosan's breakthroughs have been patented, featured across the Nature Portfolio journals, and highlighted by leading news outlets, while his scholarship includes numerous peer-reviewed book chapters and the widely acclaimed trade book humAIn: How Humans and AI Will Co-Create the Future of Humanity. An accomplished founder, he has launched multiple AI-driven healthcare start-ups, translating laboratory insight into tangible societal benefit. Guided by the conviction that "Artificial Quantum Intelligence" can eliminate disease and extend healthy human life.

Lucas Holden



Lucas Holden is a Research Associate at WHOOP, where he designs and executes health-focused research studies within WHOOP Labs. He earned his Master's in Exercise and Sport Science from Merrimack College in 2021. With hands-on research experience across military, clinical, and consumer settings, Lucas is passionate about translating physiological insights into real-world applications. He has co-authored several peer-reviewed publications and presented his work at national conferences, including the ACSM.

Lucas currently specializes in physiological monitoring, wearable technology validation, and data-driven protocol development for both centralized and decentralized health research.

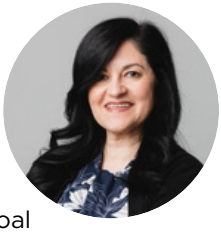
SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES
in order of appearance

Jessica Lee

Jessica is a healthcare strategist focused on applying AI and technology to improve health outcomes and equity. At Verily, she is a Senior Product Innovation Manager, where she oversees early-stage innovation initiatives leveraging conversational AI and multimodal health data.

Previously, Jessica was a management consultant at BCG in the healthcare practice, working with medical device and global public health organizations on strategic efforts spanning diabetes technology, COVID response, diagnostics, and primary care. She also served as a secondee at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation on the Digital Health Innovation team, focused on building tools for community healthcare globally. Jessica received her MBA and MS in Mechanical Engineering at MIT through the Leaders for Global Operations program.

Valeria (Val) Tivnan



Valeria (Val) Tivnan is the Vice-President of Population Health Strategy and Well-being at IMA Financial Corp. In this role she supports IMA clients in their journey to building a culture of health in the workplace while helping leaders transform employees into knowledgeable healthcare consumers. Val's passion is to advise leaders on tactics to bring lifestyle medicine into workplaces with a goal of improving population health and decreasing healthcare costs. She is also passionate about mindfulness training!

Val has 25+ years of experience in the wellness, well-being and lifestyle medicine fields. She is the Chair of the lifestyle medicine in the workplace group from ACLM and is involved in other organizations such as HERO (Health Enhancement Research Organization) where she has contributed to several committees and published papers at prestigious journals such as the Am. J. Health Promotion. Val is also on the board of a lifestyle medicine non-profit organization – PAVING the Path to Wellness and is the Chair of the Worksite Wellness Council of MA. In addition, she is part of Merrimack College's Research Board of Advisors.

Val has a master's in education from Boston University and an MPH from UCLA. She is an Adjunct Professor at Merrimack College and has won EBA's prestigious 'Wellness Director of the Year' award in 2017.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES
in order of appearance

Amy McDonough

Amy is passionate about the power of partnerships to co-create solutions that accelerate innovation and drive health impact at scale. The Strategic Health Solutions team brings industry insight and intelligence into our product roadmaps, ensuring that we are identifying the highest and best use of Google's technology and tools to improve the health for billions around the world. SHS builds on the strong foundation created by the Fitbit Health Solutions team Amy built from the ground up, which partnered with the healthcare ecosystem to improve care and impact outcomes.

Prior to Fitbit, Amy held strategic roles at CNET Networks focused on Strategic Partnerships and Audience & Content Development. Amy has a bachelor's degree from Merrimack College in N. Andover, MA and a Professional Certificate in Integrated Marketing Communications from UC Berkeley.

Innovation Showcase & SIRF Tour

Explore our Innovation Showcase

Throughout the duration of the conference, you'll have the opportunity to enhance your experience by visiting our innovation showcase featuring:

- Merrimack Nursing Students
- Worksite Wellness Council of MA
- PROCON
- sodexo CAMPUS

Located: Student Union (first floor of the Collegiate Church)

Take a Tour of The SIRF!

The Shared Instrumentation and Research Facility (SIRF) is a focal point of the region's research ecosystem and accelerates Merrimack's pursuit of the Carnegie's Classification of Institutions of Higher Education's R2 status.

7,000

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A facility of this capacity gives faculty the infrastructure needed to generate streams of research.

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6

Dedicated Labs

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