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Merrimack College Record

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### Merrimack College Record

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Father Raymond Dlugos, O.S.A., leads an Ash Wednesday service March 1 in Our Mother of Good Counsel Chapel in Austin Hall.

## Three Journalists Awarded 2017 Goldziher Prize

Three prominent journalists have been named winners of Merrimack's coveted Goldziher Prize for their coverage of the lives and struggles of American Muslims.

Filmmaker Joshua Seftel and print journalists Samuel Freedman and Robin Wright will share the \$25,000 prize, given by Merrimack's Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations in collaboration with the William and Mary Greve Foundation. The three will be honored at an awards ceremony May 3 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

"The Goldziher Prize recognizes and supports interfaith scholarship and activism," said Joseph Kelley, director of the Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations. "It has become ever-more important to celebrate journalists who cover the contributions of and challenges facing American Muslims."

Seftel, an award-winning filmmaker and director whose productions have covered such issues as Romanian orphans and the rights of senior citizens, was honored for "The Secret Lives of American

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## Lenten Season Filled With Activities

The Merrimack community and Christians around the globe have begun observing the Season of Lent, a 40-day period for penance suggested by Christ's 40 days in the desert.

The primary theme of this year's campus celebration, "From Broken to Whole," was chosen to reflect on the world's brokenness and its need for healing and restoration to wholeness, officials said.

"This is a time for each Christian to

renew and deepen his or her commitment in faith, to allow God's grace to transform them into the likeness of Christ," said Father Raymond Dlugos, Merrimack's vice president for mission and student affairs. "We do this through the action of repentance, or turning around, so we can allow God's love and mercy to challenge us, change us and so save us from all that keeps us from fully giving ourselves away

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## Cohen Honored for Her Work in Fighting Obesity in Children

Assistant Professor of Health Sciences Juliana Cohen has been named a fellow at the Obesity Society, the leading scientific organization dedicated to the study of obesity.

The appointment, which recognizes exemplary contributions to the field of obesity research, treatment and prevention, is one of the highest honors awarded by the society.

Cohen was cited for her ongoing research and publications on child nutrition, especially in economically vulnerable populations.

"It is truly rewarding to know that my research is making a difference in people's lives, and that experts

in the field are taking note of my contributions," said Cohen, a member of the society since 2012.

Cohen's contributions will be highlighted on the organization's website (obesity.org) and through its weekly e-newsletter.

Cohen is a graduate of Emory University and holds a Master of Science in society, human development and health, and a Doctor of Science in nutrition, both from Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Her teaching and research interests include community-based interventions; nutrition; health promotion; child/adolescent health and development; and health disparities.



Juliana Cohen

# Employees Asked to Volunteer Time at Commencement

Each year, hundreds of Merrimack students proudly join the ranks of college alumni when they receive their degrees in front of family and friends during commencement weekend.

But it is the participation of the entire college community — faculty, administrators and staff — who make the weekend especially memorable and meaningful for the newly minted graduates.

Therefore, all employees are asked to consider volunteering their time during commencement weekend. Managers have been asked to make the appropriate arrangements to accomplish this.

The greatest participation is needed at the undergraduate commencement ceremony on Sunday, May 21. Assistance is also needed at the graduate ceremony on May 19 and the honors convocation on May 20. But there are many other ways and events in which each person at Merrimack can make a difference.

Visit [bit.ly/mack-volunteer](http://bit.ly/mack-volunteer) to sign up for your part in the success of commencement weekend.



*Jodi Rachins, right, and Moriah Gross review the new accessibility website.*

## New Accessibility Website Launched

The Accessibility Services Office has launched a new website that will serve as a clearinghouse of information about disabilities and accommodations on campus. The site can be found at [merrimack.edu/accessibility](http://merrimack.edu/accessibility).

“Our goal was to increase our visibility and create a one-stop place where members of the Merrimack community could get at least some of the answers to their questions about accessibility issues,” Director of Accessibility Services Jodi Rachins said.

The Accessibility Services Office works with students, prospective students and other campus departments, including

the Hamel Health and Counseling Center, residence life, and the police department, to ensure that students with documented disabilities have full access to campus life and educational opportunities, both inside and outside the classroom. Services can range from note-taking assistance and additional testing time to accommodations in housing and parking.

Rachins and graduate fellow Moriah Gross spent months building the website with the assistance of Director of Web Services Stacie Bowman. They said the site has received positive reviews, with visitors praising its clarity and organization.



### MERRIMACK COLLEGE RECORD

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**President Christopher E. Hopye**  
Publisher

**Jack Minch**  
Editor  
[minchj@merrimack.edu](mailto:minchj@merrimack.edu)

Send submissions and story ideas to [record@merrimack.edu](mailto:record@merrimack.edu).



## IT'S ACADEMIC

### Faculty Reminded to File Early Alert Forms

The Academic Success Center reminds faculty to file an Early Alert referral for students who are having significant academic trouble such as failing grades, excessive absenteeism or missing work assignments.

The form contains a checkbox to

signify that no students are in need of being referred for assistance.

Form can either be completed online ([bit.ly/alert-online](http://bit.ly/alert-online)) or printed out ([bit.ly/alert-print](http://bit.ly/alert-print)) and returned to the Academic Success Center via email ([viscontiam@merrimack.edu](mailto:viscontiam@merrimack.edu)) or in person.

# Merrimack Expands Educational Assistance Benefits

Employees are Merrimack's most important and valuable resource, and the college is committed to providing educational opportunities to those looking to advance academic enrichment and professional development.

Merrimack remains sensitive to the influence that tuition has financially on members of this community and has expanded its tuition-assistance benefits to limit financial impact on employees and their dependents.

Therefore, President Hopey and members of the executive leadership group have announced a revised and expanded educational assistance benefits policy to assist employees and their dependents. The policy is retroactive to Jan. 19, 2017.

"Finding opportunities for all members of our community to develop their powers, abilities and talents is who we are as an institution," Hopey said. "After careful consideration and responsible budgeting, I am proud that we can offer these expanded benefits to deliver on our values."

Under the expanded policy, the length of service schedule has been eliminated and replaced with a 90-day holding period that will allow employees and their dependents to begin their course

work much faster than in recent years.

In addition, dependents of full-time employees are now eligible for 50 percent graduate and professional-education tuition reemission — a new benefit added to the policy.

Merrimack provides tuition reemission to eligible full-time and part-time employees. Eligibility guidelines under the new policy are as follows:

- Full-time administrators, staff, faculty and coaches (defined as working a minimum of 35 hours per week during the academic or fiscal year), who have been employed for a minimum of 90 days, are eligible for 100 percent tuition reemission for up to three undergraduate, graduate or professional-education courses per semester or term.
- Dependents of full-time employees who have been employed a minimum of 90 days are eligible for 100 percent undergraduate tuition reemission and 50 percent graduate and professional-education tuition reemission upon the effective date of this policy. The course must begin after the employee's hire date (no retroactive application).

- Part-time administrators, staff and coaches (defined as working a minimum of 20 hours per week during the academic or fiscal year or season), who have been employed for a minimum of 90 days, are eligible for 100 percent tuition reemission for up to three undergraduate courses per semester or term. Those who have been employed a minimum of 90 days are eligible following the effective date of this policy. The course must begin after the employee's hire date (no retroactive application).
- Dependents of part-time administrators, staff and coaches who have been employed a minimum of 90 days are eligible for 50 percent undergraduate tuition reemission following the effective date of this policy. The course must begin after the employee's hire date (no retroactive application).
- Retirees who are age 55 or older, and who have completed 10 years of continuous service as a full-time faculty, administrator, staff member or coach may receive 100 percent tuition

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## Lecture Series, Other Events Highlight Lenten Season

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in love to God and our neighbor."

The three pillars of Lent — prayer, fasting and almsgiving — are meant to facilitate our openness to God working within us, Father Dlugos added.

Merrimack will celebrate the Lenten season with a series of events through Good Friday on April 7.

The Grace J. Palmisano Center for Campus Ministry will sponsor a weekly discussion series each Thursday during Lent from 4 to 5:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary Coffeehouse. The sessions will be led by faculty members or an outside guest, and a simple Lenten supper of soup and bread will be served to those who participate.

The following themes will be explored:

- **March 9:** "On Broken Religion," with Mark Allman, associate dean of liberal arts and professor of religious and theological studies.
- **March 23:** Reflection and discussion led by representatives from Catholic Relief Services.
- **March 30:** "A Nun and an Atheist in Conversation," with Sister Jeanmarie Gribaudo, SSJ, STD, professor of religious and theological studies, and Michael Mascolo, director of the Compass program and professor of psychology.
- **April 6:** "When Finance Is Broken," with by Ana Silva, associate professor of accounting and finance.

In addition to the Thursday discussion series, other campus organizations will sponsor opportunities for reflection,

prayer and action during the Lenten season. They include:

- **March 3-5:** Merrimack Outreach Experience.
- **March 11-18:** Alternative Spring Break service trips to New Orleans; San Diego; Pine Ridge, South Dakota; Nicaragua; Almost Heaven, Nazareth Farm and Wheeling, West Virginia; and Baltimore.
- **March 24-26:** Restless Hearts retreat.
- **March 27:** Lenten concert and readings by the Merrimack Scholars, 7 p.m., Rogers Center for the Arts. Sponsored by Campus Ministry.
- **April 7:** Relay for Life, 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., Lawler Rink. With special guest speaker and champion gymnast Aly Raisman.



## New Director to Lead Online Master's Programs

Andrew Banasiewicz, a risk analyst and educator, has been appointed director of Merrimack's online master's programs in data science and business analytics.

Banasiewicz is founder and principle of Erudite Analytics, an independent research and analysis firm focused on risk measurement. He was previously director of data science at Liberty Mutual Insurance Co. and senior vice president of analytics at an insurance brokerage firm.

Banasiewicz, who has a doctorate in business from Louisiana State University, also has extensive experience in the classroom, previously holding teaching appointments at Boston University, Providence College and Harvard University.



*Andrew Banasiewicz*

## College Expands Educational Benefits for Eligible Employees

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remission for themselves and their spouse.

- Spouses and dependent children of a deceased full-time employee are entitled to these same educational benefits, provided that the employee completed 10 years of full-time continuous service and died while holding an active full-time position at the college.

The complete revised and expanded educational assistance benefit policy can be found on MyMack under the Human Resources tab, filed under "Tuition."

Questions may be directed to human resources at [humanresources@merrimack.edu](mailto:humanresources@merrimack.edu) or by calling 978-837-5157 (ext. 5157).



*From left: Joshua Seftel, Samuel Freedman and Robin Wright.*

## Jewish-Christian-Muslim Center Awards 2017 Goldziher Prizes

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Muslims," a multiplatform series of short nonfiction films. This first-person series uses humor and empathy to subvert stereotypes and reveal the truth about American Muslims' fascinating careers, unexpected talents and inspiring accomplishments, providing a counter narrative to the rampant Islamophobia prevalent in the media.

Freedman, a professor of journalism at Columbia University and former "On Religion" columnist for The New York Times, was cited for a selection of columns that ran in The Times from 2010 through 2016. The columns illuminate the normal, productive lives of American Muslims and how they push back against Islamophobia.

Wright, a renowned print journalist and joint fellow at the United States Institute of Peace and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, won for "Muslim Heroes, Writers, Artists and an Athlete in America," a series of five articles in The New Yorker magazine that reflects the rich and many-sided contributions of Muslims to the American experience.

More than 500 submissions were received from over 100 journalists and media outlets.

A panel of distinguished journalists and scholars judged the entries. They include journalist, playwright and TV host Wajahat Ali; Ari Goldman, a professor and director of the Scripps Howard Program in Religion, Journalism and Spiritual Life at Columbia University's Journalism School; Farhan Latif, president of the El-Hibri Foundation; documentary filmmaker and Senton Hall University professor Anisa Mehdi; Joseph V. Montville, senior associate at the Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations, and chair of the Goldziher jury; author, journalist and educator Peter F. Steinfels; and Diane Winston, the Knight Chair in Media and Religion at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.

The Goldziher Prize was created in 2010 by the Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations and the Greve Foundation in response to the rising fear and hateful actions toward American Muslims. It is awarded annually to scholars and activists working in the arena of Jewish-Christian-Muslim relations.

The prize is named for Ignác Goldziher, a Hungarian Jew and one of the first university scholars in Europe to admire and study the laws, poetry and practices of Islam.