

Merrimack College

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February 2018



MERRIMACK COLLEGE

# RECORD

## From the President



Colleagues,

Recently, Merrimack College hosted the largest Admitted Student Day in our history. Our campus played host to 690 admitted students plus their families — 1,700 people in all — and we nearly doubled same-day tuition deposits over last year's event.

Attending an ASD is one of the most accurate predictors of a student's enrollment in the fall, and Merrimack has always put its best foot forward for this event. Everyone pitches in: Dean of Admission Darren Conine and his tremendous team, as well those in communications and marketing; the engaging faculty, deans and vice provosts/vice presidents who present to families and take the time to chat one-on-one with students; the facilities workers who maintain campus; the police who keep us safe and manage parking; the Rogers Center staff who host ASD; Sodexo crews who provide food for the day; and all the administrators and staff who each play some part in creating this major event.



The building of a freshman class is becoming increasingly complicated due to rapidly changing socio-economics, shifting demographics, more competition for fewer students and the quickly rising need for greater student financial assistance, we are currently on track for what we hope will be another successful Merrimack admissions cycle. However, one only needs to scan the news each day and read another article about the struggles our peer institutions are suffering to understand how strategically critical admissions is to our future success. Although Merrimack has had an unprecedented run of successful and growing freshman classes, we cannot take anything for granted.

So this is no time to rest.

This ASD was the first of three planned for this spring, and I know everyone will continue to maintain the energy and enthusiasm that made Saturday's event so outstanding. The passion and commitment everyone has provided is the key element for building an outstanding

freshman class of adequate size, deep diversity and academic achievement. In other words, your enthusiastic involvement with accepted and prospective students is the thing that matters most.

The admissions staff is again doing an outstanding job in bringing prospective students to our doorstep, but the ritual of student college selection has become very complicated and fluid over the past decade. It is increasingly evident that admissions is no longer just the purview of a few key offices; it takes an entire community, and the alignment of everything from academic programs to financial aid, housing, advising, academic support and student life matters more than ever. With rising student anxiety, increased parental involvement, unprecedented student achievement pressures, student safety concerns, growing student loneliness and an increasing role of government in higher education, freshmen today are looking not just for a college but for a community where they can thrive, fit and feel successful.

The Merrimack community is an example of the very best in higher education today, and showing prospective students, their parents and families the power and cohesion of our community in working toward common goals is our greatest asset of all.

Thank you for everything each of you does, every day, to make Merrimack the special place it is.

God bless, and congratulations to all on a successful Admitted Student Day.

Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D.  
President



### **15,000 Meals Packed At 4<sup>th</sup> Annual “Feed Your Neighbor”**

On February 7, volunteers from all walks of life gathered to pack 15,000 nutritious meals for the Merrimack Valley Food Bank during the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Interfaith Feed Your Neighbor event. Hosted by the Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations, in collaboration with Outreach, Inc., the event was open to all individuals, congregations, and communities, both religious and non-religious.



From 10:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m., volunteers worked in one-hour shifts, during which they

packed meals in assembly lines. And while they were working, they enjoyed opportunities to meet people of other faiths and traditions while engaging in dialogue and reflection — making the day even more meaningful.

“I am really happy that Feed Your Neighbor has become an annual tradition here at Merrimack,” said Rev. Raymond Dlugos, O.S.A., vice president for mission and ministry. “During this event, people from the community come to our campus and interact with our students while making a difference in the lives of people in need. This allows the wider community to appreciate the culture of care, concern, and respect for the dignity of others that is a hallmark of our campus. And it demonstrates that this culture not only exists in a few individuals who go out to serve, but is actually a part of the air we breathe here on this campus.”

There is still plenty of opportunity to support the Outreach Program and end hunger. Please see a few ways Merrimack community members can help:

#### ONLINE

1. Go to [OutreachProgram.org](http://OutreachProgram.org)
2. Hover over **Donate Now** (the blue box in the upper right-hand corner)
3. Select **Donate to a specific meal packaging event** (the top option in the dropdown menu)
4. Note **EndHungerNE event #15** under **Add special instructions to the seller** on the second page. The transaction cost, which is 2.2% + 30 cents per transaction, will be deducted from your total donation.

#### BY MAIL

- Send to: 93 Whiffletree Lane, Marshfield, MA 02050
- Make your check payable to: The Outreach Program
- Note “Event #15/Merrimack” in the memo section

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## Sophomores PAUSE; Professors “Confess” During Inaugural Retreat

Dozens of Merrimack sophomores went on the college’s first-ever PAUSE Retreat, held at the Champion Renewal Center in Weston, Massachusetts Jan. 18-20, 2018, to reflect on the meaning and purpose of their lives. The retreat focused on helping students understand they don’t

need to micro-plan their futures before they even graduate from college. Instead, they should accept that life brings unexpected twists and turns for which they cannot plan.



The tone of the retreat was set during an opening 15-minute video written by professor Joseph Kelley and filmed by Director of Media Instructional Services Kevin Salemmé. The video evoked St. Augustine and the need for reflection and service to others. “By taking the time to look within, we can discover the meaning, the purpose, the strength, and the joy of what life is asking of us,” Kelley said. “In this quiet pause, we can learn more about ourselves; remember who has carried us, and whom we have carried; treasure our talents, and discern how to bring them to ever-wider circles of care and creativity.”

“We based the retreat on the way Saint Augustine would approach things,” said the Rev. Ray Dlugos, O.S.A., Vice President for Mission and Ministry, who took part along with more than 20 other members of Merrimack’s faculty and staff. Several of them, including President

Christopher Hopey, Provost Allan Weatherwax, and professor Anne Flaherty, offered their “confessions” (a play on St. Augustine’s seminal work of the same name) that described how their life experiences made them who they are today.

The confessions reinforced the retreat’s message that students will eventually have challenges that will shape their lives and values. The most powerful and defining life experiences were not the ones that were planned or chosen but rather those that presented unexpected challenges.

After each confession, students were given the opportunity to ask questions, offer their own comments and observations, individually reflect on their questions, and finally gather in small groups for further discussion.

Fr. Ray led the retreat in guided meditation exercises on Thursday and Friday evenings, then closed the retreat with the celebration of Mass on Saturday morning.

Life’s curves and happenstance circumstances will often shape our destinies, Fr. Ray said after the retreat. Students may choose careers such as teachers, accountants, or police officers, but their profession will not define who they are. It’s life unexpected challenges that often shape lives and vocations as people.

“Very often that’s where we discover that we are made of much more than we thought,” Fr. Ray said.

Faculty who participated also included professors Michael Mascolo, Art Ledoux, Jane Parent, and Zoe Sherman. Staff members who served as facilitators for small group discussions were Karen Harrington, Victoria Landry, Nora Cochrane, Kate Laughlin, Traci McCubbin, Nicholas DiSalvatore, and Katell Guellec. Mary McHugh served as the retreat’s emcee, offering an introduction and context for each phase. Assistant Dean of Students for Student Engagement Allison Pukala, professors Mark Allman and Zoe Sherman, and student Javi Reyes appeared in the video.

“It was amazing to see the student take it all in and connect with the idea that they don’t have to have everything figured out right now,” Guellec said

The PAUSE Retreat was made possible largely through the efforts of Sr. Jeanne Gribaudo, C.S.J., who spearheaded the college’s application for a \$57,000 grant from the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education, a subsidiary of the Council of Independent Colleges. The grant will also fund a second PAUSE Retreat in January 2019. The Lily Foundation provided funding for initiatives to promote the awareness of vocation in life.

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## Professional Development Retreat Set for February 15–16 in Boston



In partnership with the College Leadership Council, the O’Brien Center for Career Development will host its semi-annual Professional Development Retreat (PDR) for 60 juniors on February 15–16 at the Battery Wharf Hotel in Boston’s historic waterfront district. This semi-annual, two-day, career development conference aims to help students better understand their emotional intelligence and strengthen essential workplace skills in the areas of

problem-solving, communication, teamwork, networking and adaptability.

Students spend two days with distinguished speakers engaging in interactive learning sessions, public speaking exercises and networking sessions with members of the College Leadership Council, Board of Trustees, faculty and staff members representing senior leadership, Human Resources, Academic Success Center, Office of the Provost, Admission and corporate partners. This distinctive program includes a self-awareness assessment, group problem-solving challenges and activities aimed at enhancing public speaking skills.

The PDR's fast-paced and comprehensive curriculum includes a personal strengths assessment that students take at the start of the retreat to better understand their personal and professional tendencies. These findings are key as students work side-by-side with industry and College representatives on workplace scenarios that test their reactions to various challenges throughout the program, from problem-solving scenarios to crafting personal elevator pitches in advance of the evening's networking reception.

The two-day PDR includes the following sessions and activities:

- Welcome keynote by Courtney T. Sullivan '98 and College Leadership Council member
- Understanding and communicating your strengths using Gallup's StrengthsFinder 2.0
- Team problem-solving challenge, an engaging puzzle-driven activity that focuses on communication, leadership, negotiation and collaboration
- Telling Your Story—A deep dive into developing individual elevator pitches
- A networking workshop followed by a networking reception with President Hopey
- Etiquette dinner
- Industry roundtable discussions

The PDR is generously funded by corporate partners and alumni leaders and also offered in the fall for members of the senior class. To learn more about the PDR or if you wish to volunteer for this event, please contact Courtney Luongo at [luongoc@merrimack.edu](mailto:luongoc@merrimack.edu).

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***Have story ideas for the Record? Please share them with us at [record@merrimack.edu](mailto:record@merrimack.edu).***



## Merrimack Policy

### **403(b) Retirement Plan Reminders**

With the spring semester now underway, the Office of Human Resources would like to share with employees the following timely reminders regarding the College's 403(b) Retirement Plan.

**2018 IRS Employee Contribution Limit:** The IRS has increased the annual employee contribution limit for 403(b) retirement plans by \$500 for 2018. See the attached notice for specific dollar limits. If you are interested in changing your contribution for 2018, please complete and return the attached Salary Reduction Agreement.

**Individual Counseling Sessions Available on Campus:** The Human Resources Department is pleased to announce that a financial consultant from TIAA will be on campus monthly over the first half of 2018 to provide personalized retirement counseling to our plan-eligible employees. See the attached flyer for the specific dates and details on how to make an appointment.

**Educational Webinars On Demand:** TIAA also offers an on-demand educational webinar series through their virtual learning environment - TIAA.org/VE. Webinars are presented live online at a given date and time. Employees can register to watch a webinar when it is presented live, or access a library of topics that were recently presented and recorded for reference over a 30-day window. See the attached calendar of events and topic summaries to learn more.

For more information, visit the [Human Resources Benefit Page](#) on MyMack.

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## Tips for Preventing Slip and Fall Injuries

Fresh snow fall, packed snow, freezing rain, ice, snow-covered ice, rough frozen slush, snow stuck to your footwear and other winter conditions make it difficult to navigate through campus.

Here are some tips to help you get through the season standing upright and injury free:

- Be aware of surface conditions and slow down; take small steps.
- Keep your eyes on your feet and walk attentively on hazardous surfaces, by taking smaller steps or shuffling on ice. This is one time to leave the spring out of your step!
- Choose your path carefully and avoid icy conditions whenever possible.
- Avoid sudden movements when stepping onto a hard surface. It's easy for a tile or concrete floor to have slippery puddles during wet weather.
- Get the snow off from the bottom of your footwear when entering buildings.
- On campus containers of sand have been placed at some building entrances and sidewalks by Facilities Management. When you see icy or hard packed snow conditions, consider spreading some sand. You might help to prevent an accident or injury.
- Report trouble spots to building maintenance personnel on or off campus.
- Select appropriate footwear. Materials such as plastic, leather, and foam are very slippery on snow and ice, but rubber soles provide superior traction. Strap-on non-slip shoe treads are available in stores.
- Get an earlier start to your destination. It takes more time to navigate winter walkways safely so it's a good idea to leave a little earlier to get to your destination on time and injury free.
- Be extremely careful getting out of your vehicle. If possible, swing your legs around and place both feet on the pavement before you attempt to stand. Steady yourself on the door frame until you have gained your balance and avoid reaching beyond your center of balance to take hold of the door - this might cause a fall.
- Don't take shortcuts. Always use sidewalks and the cleared paths in parking lots and

never walk between parked cars.

- Be especially careful when stepping to different levels — down or up steps or from curbs (don't step on curbs). And remember, grassy slopes can be as dangerous as snowy steps.

## Welcomes & Farewells



**Catherine Usoff, Ph.D.** was named Dean of the Girard School of Business, and assumed leadership of the school in January. Usoff is a strong academic leader with more than 25 years of experience as a teacher, researcher and administrator, and a powerful advocate for experiential learning and field-based education.

Most recently dean of the Graduate School of Management at Clark University, Dr. Usoff led efforts there to advance the management school through growth in the master's program in accounting, launch of a master's program in business analytics and revision of the M.B.A. program. She was instrumental in the school's maintenance of AACSB accreditation through two review cycles. AACSB is the premier international accrediting body for business schools worldwide.



She serves on the steering committee of the Small Schools Network Affinity Group in the AACSB, was an officer in the Northeast Business Deans Association and has served on peer review teams for other business schools' continuous improvement reviews.

"I am very happy to be joining Merrimack College as the new leader of the Girard School of Business," said Usoff. "This is a very warm, supportive community where the student is at the center of everything we do. I am excited to contribute to our mission of preparing graduates to adapt creatively to tomorrow's realities. The Girard School is positioned to be a leader in business education and I look forward to working with my colleagues to achieve our collective aspirations. "

Prior to Clark, Dr. Usoff was a professor and department chair in accounting at Bentley University for 19 years. While at Bentley, she made significant contributions to curriculum development and taught a project-based MBA course, in which student teams created major process improvement projects for more than 20 large, brand-name organizations.

She has published journal articles on accounting, business process management and business education, and wrote a chapter for "Shaping the Future of Business Education."

Dr. Usoff earned her B.S. in accounting from Boston College and her M.B.A. and Ph.D. in



accounting from The Ohio State University. She and her husband have two grown children and reside in Acton.

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**Nicole Labrecque-Blue** was hired Jan. 16 as the assistant director of accessibility services in the Academic Success Center. She is responsible for academic success coaching, managing the testing center and assisting manage accessible materials for students such as digital texts. Labrecque-Blue previously worked at Northeastern University as an academic advisor and Brandeis University as a health professions advisor and in accessibility services.

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**Kelly Maccario** joined Merrimack Jan. 29 as an administrative assistant in Academic Support Services. She is responsible for keeping records at the Academic Success Center and tracking student involvement in its programs. Maccario spent the early part of her career in administrative positions after graduating Marian Court College in Swampscott, Massachusetts but worked at Sacred Hearts School in Bradford, Massachusetts for nearly 20 years, including the last 10 as its librarian.

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**Sarah Hinkle '15**, joined the Police Department as a full-time dispatcher Jan. 26 and is assigned to the overnight shift from 11 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. She earned a bachelor's of arts degree in criminology with a minor in Law, Ethics, and Society. Hinkle was also the recipient of a Merrimack College O'Brien Scholarship 2011-2015.

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**Samantha Ackerson** was hired Jan. 18 as an on-call campus police officer to supplement the full-time staff on an as-needed basis. She has worked at Lasell-Mount Ida College and currently works full-time as a police officer for the state Department of Mental Health.



**Reminder: Mission and Vision Sessions**

Just a friendly reminder that the Merrimack community are encouraged to attend one of the below listed mission sessions. President Hopey has asked Father Raymond Dlugos, O.S.A., vice president for mission and ministry and Nancy Ludwig, vice president for institutional effectiveness, to develop a process through which the entire community could be engaged with the Mission and Vision Statement of the College. Food and beverages will be provided courtesy of the Office of the President. Please RSVP to Sarah McCarthy at [mccarthy@merrimack.edu](mailto:mccarthy@merrimack.edu).

- **Tuesday, Feb. 20, 12 to 2 p.m., open session for administrators and staff, Cascia Hall**
  - **Tuesday, Feb. 20, 4 to 6 p.m., invited students, Blue Line Club**
  - **Tuesday, Feb. 27, 12 to 2 p.m., open session for administrators and staff, Cascia Hall**
  - **Wednesday, Feb. 28, 4 to 6 p.m., Girard School of Business, in Crowe Hall**
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**Tuesday, February 27, 2018**

**7:00 p.m.**

**Rogers Center for the Arts**

**9th Annual First Lecture - Alfred Larsson '18**

Sweden native Alfred Larsson '18, senior mechanical engineering major and mathematics minor and member of the men's ice hockey team, will deliver the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual First Lecture - where a student speaks on the topic of their choice. The First Lecture will follow the Open Forum for Students with President Hopey that begins at 4:30 PM in Cascia Hall. First Lecture is presented by Merrimack Circle of Omicron Delta Kappa, Merrimack College Honors Program, Division of Mission and Student Affairs, and the First Lecture Interview Board. A reception will immediately follow the event.

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**Tuesday, March 6, 2018**

**7:00 - 8:00 p.m.**

**Cascia Hall**

**15th Annual Interfaith Prayer - "Where We Dwell Together"**

Join us in *Shalom, Peace, Salaam, Shanti!*

Rev. Ray Dlugos, OSA, presiding

Guest sermon by Rev. Mariama White-Hammond

We will cultivate the practice of Welcoming the Stranger and give thanks for the variety and richness of our faith traditions. Featuring the Merrimack Concert Choir, under the direction of Dr. Hugh Hinton. Free and open to the public. Contact: [jcm@merrimack.edu](mailto:jcm@merrimack.edu)

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**Thursday, March 8, 2018**

**4:00 p.m.**

**McQuade Library**

**Annual Tolle Lege Reception**

McQuade Library is very proud to present the 15th Annual Tolle Lege Reception. Please join us at the Writers House to honor members of our Merrimack community who have contributed to the Tolle Lege collection in the past academic year. Snow date March 13, 2018 at 4:00 p.m.

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**Sunday, March 11, 2018**

**2:00 p.m.**

**Rogers Center for the Arts**

**3rd Annual Faculty Concert**

Enjoy a variety of styles and genres, as our music faculty and their invited guest artists perform an afternoon of classical, world music, jazz and the blues.

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**Save the Date**

**Thursday, April 12, 2018**

**5:30 - 8:00 p.m.**

**Faculty Retirement & Faculty Emeriti Dinner Celebration**

President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D. and Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Allan T. Weatherwax, Ph.D. ask you to please Save the Date for the Retiring Faculty & Faculty Emeriti Celebration Dinner.

*Location TBA. Formal invitation to follow.*

Merrimack Record

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