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MERRIMACK COLLEGE

# RECORD

## Merrimack Community Steps Up, Shows Its True Colors

Colleagues,

This past week has truly shown the world everything that Merrimack College is about.

On Monday, we learned we had been invited to join the Northeast Conference of NCAA Division I athletics, and we had moved into the top 50 schools in our US New category. On Thursday we formally opened the new Dr. Alfred L. Arcidi Center. As we cut the ribbon, gas fires and explosions began rocking the city of Lawrence and the towns of Andover and North Andover, and soon the electricity was shut off to all three communities, truncating our event and stranding our guests.



While some of us were overseeing the event, others were responding to the crisis — evacuating students, shutting down gas lines, communicating to our community and making plans for continuity of operations and student services.

On Friday we knew we could be in for a protracted situation, as utility companies and state and federal regulators began their response. A team of administrators ensured that faculty, staff, students and parents were kept constantly updated about what we knew and what we were doing. We maintained food service and housing for students who could not leave, and police and residential life staff kept up continuous patrols on campus and in residence halls. Safety remained our top priority.

But beyond maintaining campus operations, our community began responding with a Warrior's heart.

A group of faculty and staff came together to check on our colleagues from the three communities, offering support or just words of comfort. The College invited neighbors and first-responders from area communities to come to campus to eat and shower in the Sakowich Campus Center, one of that buildings that maintained power through the weekend. Students delivered fresh T-shirts to a wrung-out Lawrence firefighting force. The Austin Scholars began a GoFundMe campaign to raise money for victims of the fires and explosions, and Hands To Help, our Lawrence-based community service center, started collecting donated supplies for distribution.

Hands to Help also offered to care all day for the children it works with on a regular basis after school, while the public schools were closed; Service Learning gathered volunteers to go to

Lawrence and either support Hands To Help or sort donated goods in Lawrence. The mother of Merrimack student is creating T-shirts to sell, with all profits going to victims.

At the great rally on Thursday with the commissioner of the Northeast Conference, I told a group of faculty, staff, trustees and student-athletes: "This is who we are. This is who we will be." Little did I know that events later that day would prove, in a completely different way, just what Merrimack is and what Merrimack always will be.

Our mission is not just words — it is the distilled spirit of everyone in our community. I am so proud of our students, so proud of our faculty and staff, and so very proud of Merrimack College.

Best,  
Chris



NEC Commissioner Noreen Morris, center, with President Hopey and AD Gibson.

## **Merrimack Accepts NEC Membership for 2019-2020 Season**

Proclaiming "This is our house. This is our time," President Christopher E. Hopey publicly accepted the invitation to join the NCAA Division I Northeastern Conference at a rally Thursday in the Merrimack Athletics Complex.

Hopey was joined by Athletic Director Jeremy Gibson and NEC Commissioner Noreen Morris in announcing and celebrating the move, which takes effect for the 2019-2020 season.

The president explained that moving all sports to Division I was "not simply an athletic designation. It is a recognition of the kind of school Merrimack is today. We are being welcomed not just as competitors, but as peers."

The NEC includes Bryant, Central Connecticut, Fairleigh Dickinson, LIU Brooklyn, Mount St. Mary's, Robert Morris, Sacred Heart, St. Francis (Brooklyn), Saint Francis

(Pennsylvania) and Wagner.

Morris, who presented Hopey and Gibson with NEC ball caps on stage, said the member schools are “so excited to begin this partnership.” Merrimack’s entry “brings together a college and a Division I conference that share the same goals and values — to develop well-rounded and successful student-athletes who excel in the classroom, give back to their community, and compete and win on the playing fields, courts, tracks and pools against elite Division I competition.”

“It’s very clear that Merrimack and their athletics department are on the rise,” she said, “and I have no doubt that the Warriors will immediately make some noise in the NEC in 2019.”

Gibson recalled that his first email to Morris, asking about the potential of joining the NEC, was in 2013. “Over those five-plus years she responded to every one of my emails and she always took my call,” he remembered. “Over those five years, every email and every phone call had a new story to tell” about Merrimack’s rise and momentum.



Members of the Arcidi family gather in the lobby of the Dr. Alfred L. Arcidi Center on Thursday, under the portrait of the facility's namesake.

## College Opens Arcidi Center, Celebrates Benefactors

Merrimack College dedicated the Dr. Alfred L. Arcidi Center on Thursday, as President Christopher Hopey cut the ribbon surrounded by the benefactor family that has sent three generations to Merrimack College.

The ribbon-cutting preceded a scaled-down dinner, at which donors and friends of Merrimack came together to honor those who have supported the Together for Good campaign, including the Arcidi, Gallant and Edmunds families.

Hopey talked about Merrimack's progress, including recent recognitions for academics, athletics and the transformational nature of a Merrimack education.

"Truly, we have come into our own as an institution and as a community," he said. "These recognitions are not the reasons for our success — they are the results of it."

Part of that success, Hopey said, is due to "the support, the vision and the wisdom of those like the families we honor this evening — the Gallants, the Edmundses and especially the Arcidi family, whose legacy now greets everyone who enters the campus."

The Arcidi Center, named for the late Dr. Alfred L. Arcidi '53, will house the College's Visitor Center and the O'Brien Center for Career Development. Arcidi, who built a dental practice into the thriving multi-state Whittier Health Network, "looked to the future while always remembering where he came from."

A short video recounted for the attendees the life and legacy of Dr. Arcidi, and was followed by remarks from his sons Alfred'84, chairman of the board of trustees; Philip'81, chair of the trustees' committee on real estate; and Michael '85.

The Gallants were honored for their lead gift to support athletics through the Competing for Good goal of the capital campaign, and the Edmunds family — children of the late Robert F. Edmunds Jr. '66, a Merrimack trustee — for their gift to endow a scholarship in his memory.

The event was scaled back due to simultaneous events in Lawrence, North Andover and Andover as both campus officials and guests from the local area worked to respond.

## **Two More Full-Time Faculty Join Merrimack College**

Since the academic year began, Merrimack has hired two more faculty members, for a total of 29 new full-time faculty this year.

The most recent members of the community are:

**SALAH BADJOU, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor, Electrical Engineering

Dr. Badjou earned a B.S. in physics and mathematics, and an M.S. in physics at Syracuse University. He earned his Ph.D. in condensed matter physics at Northeastern University. He has over 20 years of experience teaching courses at the college level, including physics, electrical engineering, mechanical

## **Coming up**

Sept. 20 - Interdisciplinary Institute Mini-Lecture  
• 4 p.m., Blue Line Club.

Sept. 25 - Author Dan Kaufman  
• 4 p.m., Writers House

Oct. 8 — Columbus Day; college closed.

Oct. 26-27 - Homecoming Weekend

engineering, and biomedical engineering, and many of these as design and project-oriented approaches. Most recently, Dr. Badjou has been at the Wentworth Institute of Technology, where he taught in the electromechanical engineering department and created a popular biomedical engineering concentration. He has authored or co-authored 44 publications, the majority of which either include students as co-authors or are pedagogical in nature. His current research efforts include renewable energy applications (e.g. battery systems for microgrids) and biomedical applications (e.g. navigation systems for the blind).

**ALLISON HIGGINS, D.P.H.**

Lecturer, Health Sciences

Dr. Higgins earned a B.S. in business administration from Providence College, a M.Ed. in Health Promotion and Behavior from the University of Georgia and a Doctor of Public Health from Boston University. Dr. Higgins' work experience includes over 20 years in diverse health and wellness industries with special interest in building worksite health improvement and population health management programs. She has a strong background in corporate wellness program development and evaluation, communications, and policies and procedures for fitness and wellness activities with over 11 years of experience leading the strategy and execution for an award-winning wellness program at Raytheon company. As a teacher and fellowship mentor, her goal is to create an engaging environment through interesting real-world examples and exercises that allow students to put into practice what they have learned. Dr. Higgins has taught an experiential learning course in worksite health promotion at Boston University School of Public Health and last year in the Merrimack School of Health Sciences.

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