

3-8-2019

Merrimack College Record

Merrimack College



MERRIMACK COLLEGE

RECORD

Agenda for the Future Discussions Show Power of Community

Colleagues,

The public discussion of our Agenda for the Future is now under way, and I could not be more proud of the participation on our campus community. More than 200 faculty and staff have joined the eight committees that will flesh out the broad goals and specific objectives that will continue Merrimack College's amazing upward trajectory through 2025.



I am proud but I am not surprised. This is who we are as a community — engaged, enthusiastic and transparent. That so many of you have joined in this process of defining our future is in line with everything we believe and love about Merrimack, its history and its traditions. We draw this in part from our patron St. Augustine, who preached the value — and joy — of living and learning in fellowship, rather than simply silent meditation.

What I have heard from chairs of the committee chairs, and what I have seen myself, is that discussions so far have been robust and promise to be enlightening and fruitful to this great project of mapping our collective future. We will understand better who we are and what we want to be, what kind of academics we will offer and in what way, and how we will continue to build our community on campus and through the world.

The AFF process will not only build our strategic plan but lay the groundwork for the College's upcoming reaccreditation process — and accreditation teams have been favorably impressed in the past by just how engaged and knowledgeable our campus community is about institutional planning, direction, goals and values.

I applaud the great start to the AFF discussion, and remain eager to see what comes out of all this wonderful work. Thank you to all who are participating, and to all who do so much, every day, for our students and this great institution.

Best,
Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D.
President



Annual Tolle Lege Celebrates Campus Authors

Merrimack recently recognized more than 80 authors during Tolle Lege, an annual event celebrating faculty, staff, students and alumni who published in the last year.

“Follow your restless heart,” St. Augustine advised, and these writers did just that, exploring topics they are passionate about in books, scholarly journals and other publications. Eight faculty and staff presented highlights of their work to a packed room at the **Writers House**, including:

- Assistant professor **Daniel Herda** of sociology spoke about rampant misperceptions about immigrants and the damaging consequences. In one study of Muslim youth in Michigan, he found they struggled to assimilate, constantly feared discrimination, and acted out against other minorities.
- Associate professor of management **Rodrigo Bandeira de Mello** touched on the advantages and pitfalls of government-supported corporations. “It’s important for students to know that international players have had government support to become successful,” he said. He’s also studied how governments punish companies that don’t support their agendas.
- Assistant physics professor **Christopher Duston** shared his struggle to quantify dark matter. “Physics fails all the time to estimate it,” he said. But he won’t give up trying to convert the “abstract ideas of mathematicians” into workable theories. “We want to know, does the universe hang together the way we want it to?”

Kathryn Geoffrion-Scannell, director of McQuade Library, which sponsors Tolle Lege, said she was particularly struck by Duston’s perseverance. “He and his colleagues keep refining their experiments in the face of negative results.”

Joseph Vogel, assistant professor of English, could take the prize for most prolific. Four years of work led to three books published in 2018. His secret? “Writing marathons in the summer of seven to 10 hours a day.” He said he’s most proud of “James Baldwin and the 1980s: Witnessing the Reagan Era.”

“It’s cool to be part of the James Baldwin renaissance,” said Vogel.

Find the **Tolle Lege Collection** on the second floor at McQuade. Tolle Lege is a reference to St. Augustine, who heard a voice telling him to “tolle lege,” or “pick up and read.” Reading the Bible led him to become a Christian — and a prolific writer.

Community, Students Join to Pack Meals for Hungry

At the fifth annual Feed Your Neighbor at the Sakowich Campus Center, volunteers of different faiths and traditions gathered with one goal: to help the hungry.

Hoping to pack 20,000 meals over the course of a day, event organizers were thrilled to send 24,000 fortified rice and bean meals to the Merrimack Valley Food Bank.

“We crushed our previous record by 9,000 meals,” said Aldebran Longabaugh-Burg, assistant director of the Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations, the event sponsor. “It’s a terrific feeling.”

Nearly 200 volunteers worked hour-long shifts on an assembly line, filling bags with dried pinto beans, mixed rice, dried vegetables and other ingredients supplied by The Outreach Program. Members of 23 community organizations and congregations joined with Merrimack faculty, staff, administrators and students.

Stanley Carter '21 was there with classmates from Intro to Social Justice. Privilege — something oft discussed in class — was on their minds. “We can just swipe a card and get food,” noted Carter.

Alongside him were friends and fellow sophomores Brayden Downing, Ben Morrill and Kate Longo. “This makes me think about how some people don’t have as much,” Longo said. Morrill agreed: “It’s eye-opening.”

In an hour, they and 44 others filled more than 1,000 bags, each bag serving six.

“This was very successful,” said Tamar Miller, a social justice adjunct professor. “Students are learning there is a very poor community nearby in Lawrence. The message to students is you’re not responsible for the problem but you are responsible for doing something about it.”

Area faith leaders spoke to the volunteers during the work, among them Shashikala Dwarakanath of the Chinmaya Mission Boston, a Hindu temple in Andover, who said: “The greatest charity is to feed someone.”

Vice Provost Cowart Named VPAA at LVC

Vice Provost Monica Cowart has been named vice president for academic affairs at Lebanon Valley College in Annville, Pa. She begins her new position July 1.

“I’m very sorry to see Monica leave us, but I congratulate her on this exciting new challenge,” said Provost Allan

Coming up

March 8 — Spring Break begins

March 14 — 6:30 p.m., film: “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf,” Rogers Center for the Arts

March 18 — Classes resume

March 20 — 4 p.m., human rights lawyer and activist Hernan del Valle, The Writers House

Weatherwax. “She has been instrumental in advancing Merrimack’s academic goals, particularly in creating and professionalizing our graduate programs.”

Cowart, who holds a doctorate in the psychology of philosophy from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, previously served as associate dean of the School of Liberal Arts and chair of the Philosophy Department. She is also a licensed mental health counselor.

She was an American Council on Education Fellow during the 2017-2018 academic year.

**March 21 — 6:30 p.m., film: “Chi-Raq,”
Rogers Center for the Arts.**

**March 26 — 4 p.m., author Alan Shapiro,
The Writers House.**

Merrimack Record

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update your profile](#) | [Forward to a friend](#)

Copyright © 2017 All rights reserved.

www.Merrimack.edu