



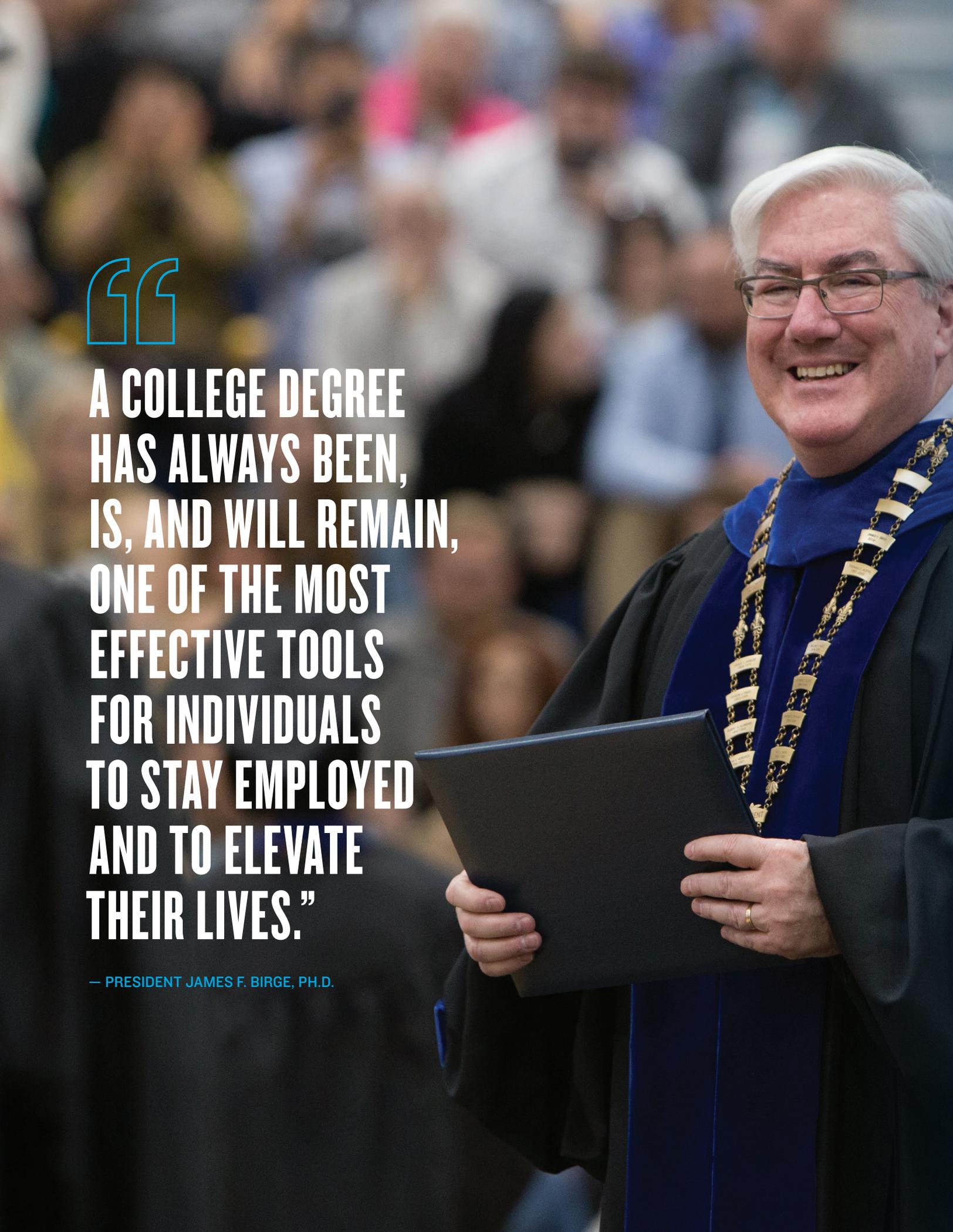
MCLA

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2020

TRAILBLAZERS

KEEP GOING





“

**A COLLEGE DEGREE
HAS ALWAYS BEEN,
IS, AND WILL REMAIN,
ONE OF THE MOST
EFFECTIVE TOOLS
FOR INDIVIDUALS
TO STAY EMPLOYED
AND TO ELEVATE
THEIR LIVES.”**

— PRESIDENT JAMES F. BIRGE, PH.D.

DEAR FRIENDS,

OUR MISSION HAS ALWAYS BEEN IMPORTANT
TO ALL OF US AT MCLA, BUT IT HAS NEVER BEEN
MORE IMPORTANT THAN RIGHT NOW.

For 125 years, MCLA has provided students with an affordable education that elevates lives. As the state's public liberal arts college, we challenge our students to study a variety of subjects in order to develop a more complex way of thinking. They learn to communicate with people from different backgrounds and make connections between what they learn in the classroom and how to apply it in the world through experiences such as internships, leadership opportunities, volunteering, and research.

Many of our students earn their degrees at MCLA while maintaining off-campus jobs, raising their children, starting or advancing in their careers, taking care of their senior family members, balancing their finances, and contributing to their communities.

MCLA also attracts a significant number of students who are the first in their families to go to college. Over the past three years, 45 percent of entering first-time, full-time undergraduates have been first-generation students. And about half of our students are eligible to receive a Pell Grant, which are awarded to those who display exceptional financial need in order to attend a college or university.

Data from the U.S. Social Security Administration indicates that bachelor's degree earners can make up to \$1 million more in the course of their lifetimes than those with high school diplomas. Now more than ever, we are committed to changing lives and opening doors through higher education.

In the last week of April, MCLA received \$650,000 through the federal CARES Act, the first tranche of a \$1.3 million allocation, to directly aid students in need. With this funding, we launched the Trailblazers Keep Going initiative, which will ensure this money is distributed equitably among our student community.

A large portion of MCLA's CARES Act funding will be distributed through the MCLA Resiliency Fund, which was set up in March by the MCLA Foundation and has since distributed over \$216,000 in private money to help ease immediate needs to more than 248 MCLA students struggling with financial hardships due to COVID-19. Additional dollars will be added to the Resiliency Fund's total in order to meet the needs of as many students experiencing economic hardship as possible. Students are applying for funding to cover rent payments, food, internet expenses, course materials such as laptops, and even the cost of a summer course to help stay on track due to the transition to remote learning.

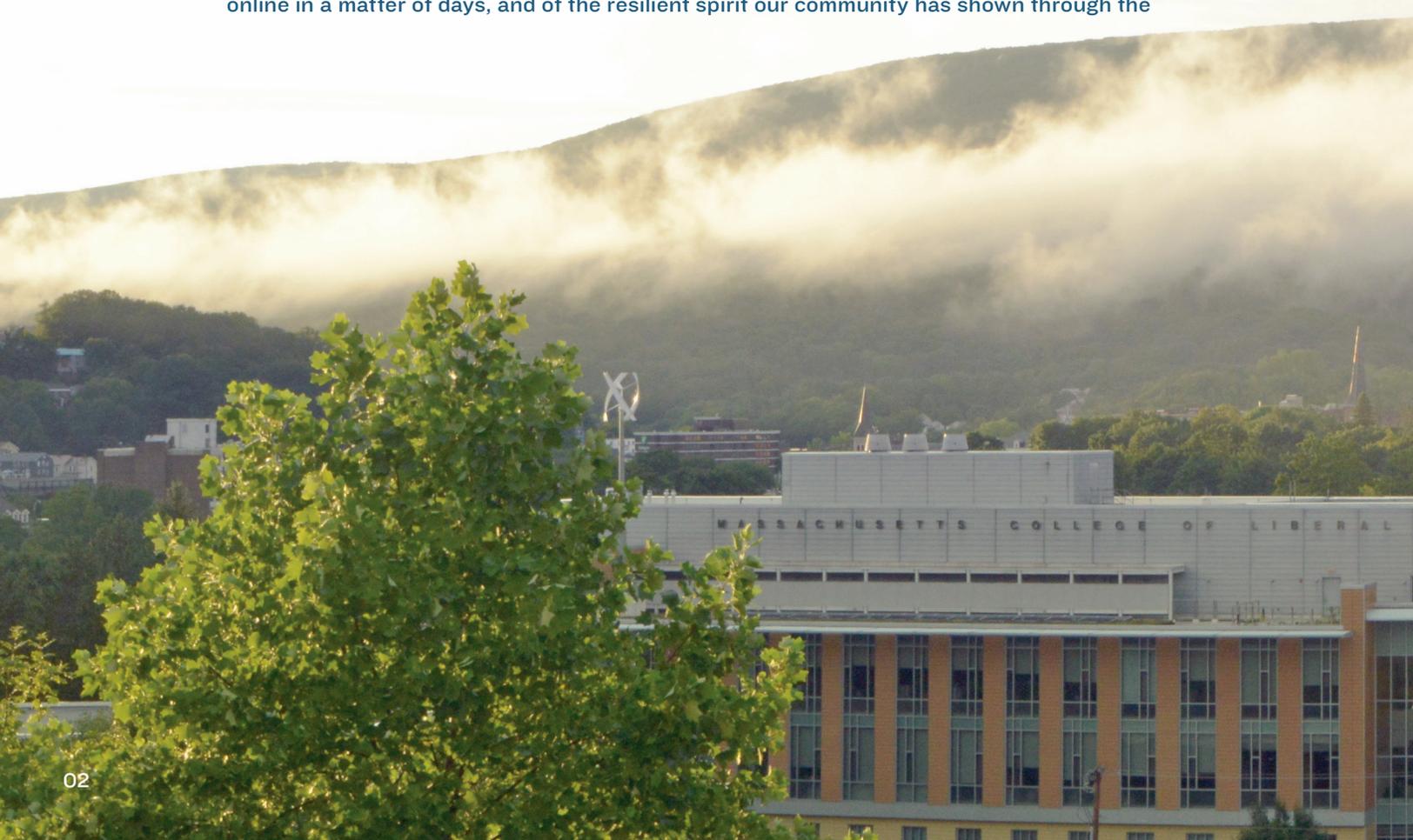
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Earlier this month, MCLA reimbursed resident students for partial housing, meal plan, and parking costs, due to COVID-19 moving the campus to remote instruction for the semester. The total of those reimbursements was \$1.5 million. Colleges and universities are not permitted to replenish these refund expenses with CARES Act funding.

We are already seeing widespread unemployment regionally and nationally, with dire economic projections due to COVID-19. MCLA, with 30 percent of its students coming from the Berkshires and so many successful alumni in our local board rooms, restaurants, cultural venues, town halls, small businesses, and nonprofits, will continue to be an economic driver here. The primary way we can do that is through our primary purpose: educating students so that they can make their own unique impact on the world.

During the Great Recession of 2007-2009, many people questioned the value of an education and chose not to enroll in college. During that time, I reminded people who doubted the value of a college degree that when the economy began to expand again, those with a college degree would be poised to advance professionally and economically. Moreover, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, during the Great Recession the unemployment rate for people with a college degree peaked at only 5 percent while the overall unemployment rate peaked at nearly 16 percent. Today, I continue to remind people that while our economy contracts, it will improve in the near future, and those individuals who maintain their plans to attain a college degree will benefit. A college degree has always been, is, and will remain, one of the most effective tools for individuals to stay employed and to elevate their lives.

I am grateful to receive CARES Act funding, but my mind and heart are full of concern for our students and the community. I'm incredibly proud that we moved nearly 500 classes online in a matter of days, and of the resilient spirit our community has shown through the



most challenging times in our living memory. I continue to reflect on what a significant loss it was for our students to abruptly move their educations, social lives, clubs, sports, and other activities to a remote format. It was a loss for us not to see them here, preparing for their finals, some preparing to graduate and move on to the next chapter of their lives.

In the past few months, so much has changed—but MCLA's mission remains. So when we encounter challenges as a community, we must be true to the values of access, affordability, and equity. The Trailblazers Keep Going initiative is designed to ensure that our students have every possible avenue to continue their academic journey and achieve their own interpretation of the American Dream. That we can rapidly respond to these students in need is a blessing. Educating them and preparing them for successful lives gives us purpose.



President James F. Birge, Ph.D.

“

I'M INCREDIBLY PROUD THAT WE MOVED NEARLY 500 CLASSES ONLINE IN A MATTER OF DAYS, AND OF THE RESILIENT SPIRIT OUR COMMUNITY HAS SHOWN THROUGH THE MOST CHALLENGING TIMES IN OUR LIVING MEMORY.”

Note: To contribute to the MCLA Resiliency Fund and help students in need, visit crowdfund.mcla.edu/mclaresiliency.



THE MCLA

RESILIENCY FUND

When the College was forced to move to online learning this spring, there were many concerns about how we would be able to support our students through the domino effect created from the COVID-19 pandemic. The MCLA Resiliency Fund was created as an emergency relief fund to ensure that all currently enrolled students receive the instruction and support they need without worry about the unexpected financial burden a crisis presents.

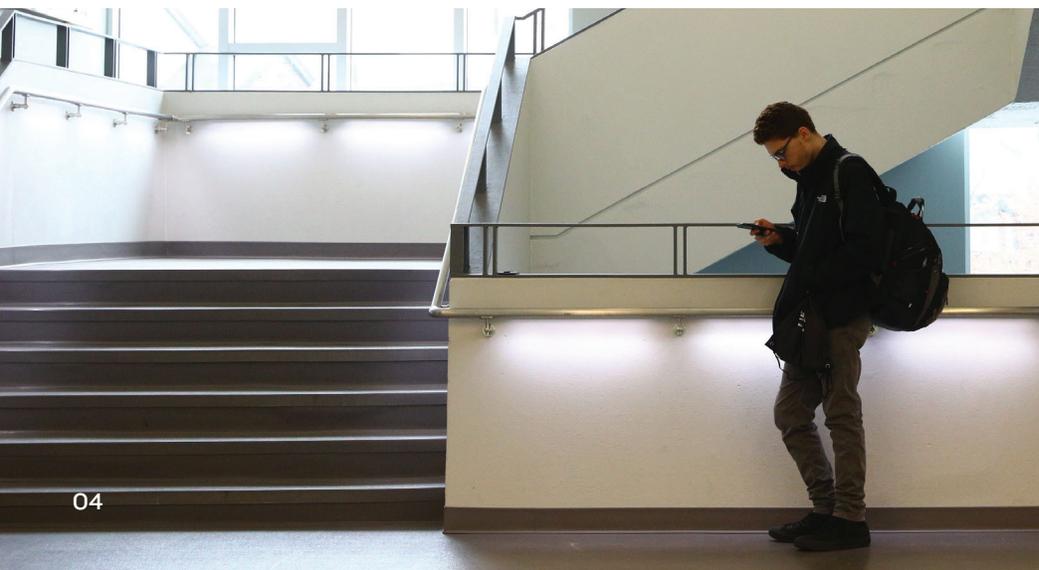
More than 40% of our undergraduate students are first-generation college students and over 45% receive Pell Grants.

Your support of this fund will aid us in providing stability and assistance to students who face great need in our current reality. We are committed to helping all MCLA students get through this health crisis without derailing their academic journey.

OVER

\$216,000

**DISTRIBUTED TO 248 STUDENTS
IN NEED OF AID** AS OF 6/15/2020



More than \$24,000 in Resiliency Fund contributions from more than 130 donors have been supplemented by MCLA Food Security Fund Donations, other Foundation funds, and CARES Act monies, allowing us to make the following total disbursements as of June 2020:

OVER
\$42,000
FOR STUDENT FOOD EXPENSES

OVER
\$67,000
TO HELP STUDENTS PAY FOR
UTILITIES, RENT AND EMERGENCY AID

OVER
\$29,000
IN LAPTOPS AND TECH NECESSITIES
FOR STUDENTS WITHOUT ACCESS
TO PERSONAL COMPUTERS

\$71,000
TO COVER COST OF COURSES
AND BOOKS, INCLUDING
SUMMER SCHOLARSHIP AID

“ **I AM BEYOND GRATEFUL**
AND AWESTRUCK AT HOW A COMMUNITY COULD
COME TOGETHER DURING SUCH A HISTORICAL
TIME TO ENSURE WE, THE STUDENTS, HAD AS
MUCH SUPPORT, ACCESS TO RESOURCES, AND
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE!”

—CURRENT MCLA STUDENT

“ **THE RESILIENCY FUND**
HAS TAKEN A WEIGHT
OFF MY SHOULDERS
DURING A CHAOTIC TIME WHERE THE
WORLD IS CHANGING AROUND US
UNEXPECTEDLY. AS A STUDENT, I AM HAPPY
TO KNOW THERE ARE PEOPLE AMONG THE
MCLA COMMUNITY THAT HAVE MY BACK
AND BEST INTEREST AT HEART.”

—CURRENT MCLA STUDENT



STUDENT AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Student Affairs Leadership Awards

MCLA holds a Student Affairs Leadership Recognition Dinner every year in April. The following students received awards virtually:

**Rho Pi Sigma Inductees:
MCLA Chapter of the National Residence Hall Honorary**
Scath Bogard
Ashley Clements
Ellie Craver
Julia Hager
Samantha Johnson
Corrigan Metcalf
Kayla Ruff
Cassandra Washburn

Diane Collins SGA Scholarship
Paula Kingsbury-Evans

Heather Fischlein Memorial Resident Advisor Scholarship
Corrigan Metcalf

Outstanding Resident Student Scholarship
Tarah Valin

James T. Amsler Service Award
Ryan Meehan
Erika Quackenbush

Advisor of the Year Award
Laura Lynn Dear

Club Executive Board Member of the Year Award
Joe Bellas

Club/Organization Excellence Award
Student Activities Council

Distinguished Service Award
Allison Williams

Behind the Scenes Award
Gabby Kernozek

Leadership Achievement Award
Kim Granito
Jake Vitali

Lorraine B. Maloney Spirit of Service Award
Paula Kingsbury-Evans
Meaghan Murphy
Tarah Valin

Multicultural Advancement Award
Don'jea Smith

Program of the Year Award
Black Student Union-Black History Month Programming

Rising Star Award
Jaela Horton
AJ Burton

Student Development Change Agent Award
Houa Xiong

MCLA Senior Who's Who
Karissa Barbosa
Mykaela Bell
Daniel Berk
Amanda Botelho
Lilly Broman
Holly Brunow
Julianne Clarke
Lakeria Darkins
Jordan DeGaetano
Matt Delson
Garret Derosia
Abigail Dumo
Julie Gambill
Amanda Gilmore
Tessa Gonsalves
Kim Granito
Sarah Groux
Katie Howe
Briana Higgins
Issa Jalloh
Alyssa Keegan
Gabrielle Kernozek
Elizabeth King

Lise Manasaray
Ryan Meehan
Stephanie Melito
Corey Mitchell-Labrie
Nevada Nelson
Simone Patrone-Lozoff
Ericka Quackenbush
Collin Recore
Christopher Reyes
Meghan Richardson
Samantha Schwantner
Jade Schnauber
Hannah Schnell
Najah Sims
Dahndray Sistrunk
Don'jea Smith
Leslie Tayi
Akira Taylor
Nadia Tenorio
Rachel Terlizzi
Allison Therrien
Jacob Valenti
Bryan Vega
Jacob Vitali
Rosalee Walter
Demetri Williams

Outstanding Senior Leader Award
Carrie Fontana
Allison Williams
Fabby Bogardus-Street
Stevelyn Desire
Tessa Sestito
Madison Taber

Vice President's Award for Distinguished Leadership, Scholarship and Service
Maya McFadden

Academic Department Awards

Specific awards given by MCLA's academic departments

BIOLOGY

Biology Achievement Award
Charles Nagimy

Health Achievement Award
Sarah Lavari

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Computer Science Award/Ada Lovelace Computer Science Outstanding Student Award
Benjamin Michener

EDUCATION

Raymond C. Sullivan Award
Tessa Langsdale

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Environmental Science Award
Noah Henkenius

FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS

Andrew S. Flagg Art Award
Spring Hajjar
Kelsey Sherman

Francis H. Bissailon Memorial Drama Award
Amanda Gilmore

Harlequin Drama Award
Kaley Norsworthy

Vivian Dix Redman Award
Sam Lee

Wilfred J. and Marion Quintin Music Award
Najah Simms

HISTORY/POLITICAL SCIENCE/GEOGRAPHY

Edmund K. Luddy Memorial Award
Samuel Levitz

Bob Bence International Studies Scholarship
Sarah Groux

Ames Samuel Pierce History/ Poli/Sci Award
Jack Anderson

Political Science Research and Methods Award
Tarah Valin

Historical Methods and Theory Award
Abigail Berry

Outstanding Student Achievement Award
Joe Bellas
Amanda Judson

LANGUAGES, INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES, AND PHILOSOPHY
Ellen Schiff French Award
Lily Jennings

Anthony Nicasastro Spanish/ Italian Award
T.J. Karis

MATHEMATICS
Iris Cavazza Lilly Award
Cassandra Crossier
Tessa Langsdale

PHYSICAL EDUCATION
James T. Amsler Intramural Award
Erika Quackenbush
Ryan Meehan

PSYCHOLOGY
Samuel H. Clarke Memorial Award
Madison N. Benlien

Psychology Department Award
Alyssa N. Keegan

SOCIOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY, AND SOCIAL WORK

Soc/Anth/Social Work Department Award
Karissa M. Barbosa
Kimberly E. Granito

Thomas & Jean Price Award
Mairead B. Noblewolf
Adelina M. Teodorescu

English/ Communications Awards

One of the College's largest departments, the English/ Communications faculty and staff honor their students annually.

P. Randolph Trabold Photojournalism Award
Kylan Martus

Joseph G. Mansfield Memorial Award
Symantha Kehr

Donald A. Thurston Communications Scholarship
Julia Parker
Emily Sienkiewicz

Ruth P. and Nicholas Boraski Scholarship
Liza Marsala
Anthony Troiano

Ellen J. Bernstein/Gadsby Fund for Journalism
Sabrina Damms
Symantha Kehr
Jennifer VanBramer

Ellen J. Bernstein/Gadsby Fund for Journalism Multicultural Internship
Symantha Kehr
Brian Rhodes
Jabari Shakir
Jennifer Van Bramer

James A. Hardman Scholarship
Brian Rhodes

Award for Excellence in Writing Studio Management
Hannah Snell

Award for Excellence in American Ethnic Studies
Rowan Lambert

Award for Excellence in Media Studies
Allison O'Keefe
Julia Parker
Jacob Valenti

Award for Critical Literary Studies
Lorinda Kalajian

Award for Disability and Childhood Studies
Kiki Wright

Award for Excellence in Metaphorical Thinking
Nicholas Gamble

Award for Excellence in Writing Studio Tutoring
Nicholas Gamble
Hannah Snell
Jacob Valenti

Award for Excellence in Community Outreach
Amanda Beres
Kate Breitenbach
Rowan Lambert
Destiny Lawrence-Foley
Don'Jea Smith
Hannah Snell
Parker Snyder

Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research
TJ Karis

Award for Excellence in Identity and Gender Equality
Lilly Broman

Award for Excellence in Internships
Renee Clark

Award for Excellence in Campus Community Building
Fabby Street

Award for Excellence in Writing Studies
Jacqueline Gamache

Award for Excellence in Literary Editing (Spires)
Allison O'Keefe
Jacob Valenti

Award for Excellence in Playing with Memoir
Giovani Lajoute
Lindsey Vachon

Award for Excellence in Experiments in Creative Writing
Parker Snyder

Award for Excellence in Collaborative Dialogue
Lilly Broman
Don'Jea Smith
Jacqueline Smith

Award for Outstanding Service to WJJW
Benjamin Testa
Jake Vitali

Award for Excellence in Literary Analysis & Criticism
Renee Clark
Megan McGinley
Matthew McKinney

Award for Excellence in Communication Research & Methods
Lily Schaub
Hannah Snell
Robert Wehry

Award for Excellence in Writing Pedagogy
Caitlin Mayes

Award for Excellence in the Liberal Arts
Reshawna Maine

Award for Excellence in Examining Political Discourse
Jessica Emery

Award for Excellence in the Study of Mental Health Discourse
Gianna Vigliatura

Award for All-Round Excellence in Communications
Robert Wehry

Award for Excellence in Current Event Connections
Elizabeth King
Oghenemarho Ogilo
Alexter Shand

Award for Excellence in Global Anglophone Literature
Brady Gerow
Natalie Hughes
Danielle Laureano

Award for Excellence in Writing
Sophia Player

Award for Excellence in Fantasy
Hannah Pimenta

Award for Excellence in Critical Thinking
Lise Mansaray

Award for Resilience
Hans Resignac

Award for Excellence in Journalistic Inquiry
Corey Mitchell-Labrie

Award for Excellence in Creative Writing (Poetry)
Rowan Lampert

Award for Excellence in Literary Studies
Amanda Botelho

Award for Excellence in Literary Analysis
Caitlin Mayes
Allison O'Keefe
Jacob Valenti

Award for Excellent Conversation Beyond the Classroom
TJ Karis

Award for Excellence in Creative Writing: Scripts
Matthew McKinney

Award for Outstanding Work in the Beacon
Lise Mansaray

Award for Excellence in Indie Lit & Small Press Publishing
Raelyn Sylvester

Athletic Department Awards

MCLA's Athletic Department holds an annual banquet to announce and celebrate Athletics award recipients; the 2020 banquet was held virtually.

Top GPAs

Ben Durland - Baseball
Tessa Sestito - Volleyball

Chi Alpha Sigma

Nick Bator - Golf
Jenna Berg - Cross Country
Ben Durland - Baseball
Julie Gambill - Cross Country
Kim Granito - Women's Lacrosse
Briana Higgins - Women's Tennis
Taylor Jarosz - Women's Soccer
Alyssa Keegan - Women's Tennis
Cetera Moore - Women's Soccer
Jula Parker - Softball
Hannah Poplawski - Cross Country
Shannon Prouty - Women's Lacrosse
Erika Quackenbush - Softball
Ryan Ruef - Baseball
Ahna Schlaefer - Volleyball
Christian Seariac - Baseball
Tessa Sestito - Volleyball
Hannah Sorensen - Women's Soccer
Miranda Wissman - Women's Soccer

Team MVPs

Nick Bator - Golf
Sam Edge - Men's Soccer
Briana Higgins - Women's Tennis
Kylah Langston - Women's Basketball
Kelly Moczulski - Volleyball
Ki-Shawn Monroe - Men's Basketball
Theodore Jones - Men's Cross Country
Hannah Poplawski - Women's Cross Country
Megan Richardson - Women's Soccer

Sportsmanship Honors

Nick Bator - Golf
Chris Becker - Men's Basketball
Nick Castle - Men's Soccer
Hannah Poplawski - Women's Cross Country
Theodore Jones - Men's Cross Country
Mackenna Jordan - Women's Tennis
Hannah Mazzeo - Women's Basketball
Alyssa Porter - Women's Soccer
Houa Xiong - Volleyball

Twitter Poll: Best Fall Moment—Tied

Megan Richardson - Soccer
named Defensive Player of the Year
McKenna Clark - Tennis
selected as NAC Rookie of the Year

Twitter Poll: Best Performance

Megan Richardson, Women's Soccer shuts out Rams on Senior Day

Additional Awards and Scholarships

MCLA offers more than 100 awards and scholarships for students who qualify.

Academic Achievement Scholarship
Madison Teta

Academic Achievement Transfer Scholarship
Adam Rodriguez

Ames Samuel Pierce Scholarship
Brett Murphy

Anna Ruth Chase Spurr 1930 Memorial Scholarship
Crystal Haas

Avaz Hajizadeh Scholarship Fund for Overall Excellence
Steven Luciano

Barbra Jayne Haddad Memorial Scholarship
Jaela Horton
Kara Paquin

Bernard (Bud) E. Riley Accounting Scholarship
Ivy Rodriguez

Bernard (Bud) E. Riley Business Major Scholarship
Jennifer Cummings

Bernard (Bud) E. Riley Business Major Scholarship
Dahndray Sistrunk

Bernard (Bud) E. Riley MBA Scholarship
Amanda Meczywor

Blue Chip Scholarship
Apollo Gillette

Board of Trustees Scholarship
Madeline Egbert

Charles Jackson Craig Foundation Scholarship
Brianna Christie
Rachel Lake
Brianna McNamara
Kayla Ruff

Class of 1954 Scholarship
Samantha Herrington

Class of 1965 Scholarship
Meaghan Murphy

Class of 1966 Scholarship Fund
Cindy Martinez

Class of 1986 Scholarship
Madeline Gibney

Class of 1986 Scholarship
Noelani Schober

Community Service Scholarship
Melanie Dow

**Denise C. Richardello '77
M.Ed. '81, Hon. D.P.S. '18
Honors Scholarship Fund**
Adelina Teodorescu
Tarah Valin

Diane Collins SGA Scholarship
Paula Kingsbury-Evans

**Don Westall 1969 Memorial
Scholarship**
Comfort Acheampong
Michelle Frost
Elizabeth George

**Donald A. Thurston
Communications Scholarship**
Julia Parker
Emily Sienkiewicz

Donald R. Dion, Jr. Scholarship
Corrigan Metcalf

**Dr. John Moresi Memorial
Scholarship**
Onasis Soto

Ducharme Family Scholarship
Anne-Marie Boyle

Educator's Scholarship
Jenna Berg
Abigail Berry

**Evelyn Hampel Jorge
1944 Scholarship**
Alecia Briggs
Edward Burdick
Martin Derrick
Shantell Manzira
Elly McMeniman
Cetera Moore
Mackenzie Viola
Casey Young

Fairbank Family Scholarship
Vincienza Alicandri
Apollo Gillette

Foster Family Scholarship
Ella Suters

**Frederick K. Bressette 1946
Performing Arts Scholarship**
Samantha Lee

**Gailanne M. Cariddi
Memorial Scholarship**
Sienna Paulsen

**Gary F. Kelley Computer
Science and Math Scholarship**
Brooks Robinson

**Henry J. Bruton Scholarship
for Women**

Vincienza Alicandri
Hope Blake
Jennifer Cummings
Taylor Durant
Sophie Elser
Richellmarie Hang
Penny-JoAnne Kickery
Mery Lemus
Joanna Loftus
Emma Marino
Hadley Mielke
Shirley Napravnick-Valer
Amber Pizani

Alanza Quinones
Jenna Revord

**Honors Program
Scholarship Fund**

Marie Brazeau
Haley Rode
Tarah Valin

**Ida Maino Trabold 1936
Scholarship Fund**
Emily Deaso

**Isanne and Sanford Fisher
Scholarship**
Elizabeth Rodio

**J. Michael Silsby 1976
Scholarship**
Laiken Cornwell-L'Hote

**James L. May, Ph.D. Memorial
Endowment Fund**
Cassandra Crosier

**Jane Kerr Kahlert 1922
Scholarship**
Roberto Castillo
Chase Lewis
Sienna Paulsen

**Jane P. Avis Memorial
Scholarship**
Nalisha De Castro

**Jenny Rosenberg Fyler 1913
Scholarship**
Jesse Carpenter
Emma Snyder

John M. C. Hess Scholarship
Taylor Bushika

**Kathleen M. Shea Memorial
Scholarship**
Shantell Manzira

**Lee Hamilton Ransford
Memorial Scholarship**
Symantha Kehr

Leilani Claire Scholarship
Joshua Curtiss
Tiffany Ferreira
Dana McCormick

**Linda and Stephen Crowe
Endowed Scholarship Fund**
Eric Willis

**Lola and Edwin Jaffe Arts
Management Scholarship**
Brittany Ellis
Makayla Keeney
Paula Kingsbury-Evans
Lindsey Rosa

Margaret A. Hart Scholarship
Tarah Valin
Crystal Wojcik

**Margaret, Frances, Nellie
Karrey Scholarship**
Sophie Rice

**Mary Ellen Harding Memorial
Scholarship**
Emma Convery
Matthew McGrory
Kaley Norsworthy
Megan Walsh

MCLA Scholarships
Kellie Donovan
Eamon Eliot
Miranda Maciejowski
Brooke Schlundt
Ashanti Thomas

**Melvin Band Scholarship
in Mathematics**
Kelli Garrant

**Michael and Elaine
Christopher Scholarship**
Tiffany Serrano

**Mitchell L. West Opportunity
Scholarship**
Houa Xiong

**Mohan Boodram and Robert Morris
Endowed Scholarship**
Kiah Daviega

**Nancy Wright Scalise Cozzaglio
Scholarship**
Xaida Brazeau

NASC Scholarship Fund
Bristol Sternfield

**Norma Lorell Starr
Memorial Scholarship**
Caitlin Briell

Pamela P. Dennis Scholarship
Ashley Avallon
Bianca Lascase

Paula Nickerson Plock Scholarship
Kaylea Nocher
Caroline Worthington

**Philomena J. Dolan
Memorial Scholarship**
Ellie Craver
Jack Vezeris

**Ruth P. and Nicholas Boraski
Scholarship**
Liza Marsala
Anthony Troiano

**The MCLA Alumni
Association Scholarship**
Brianna Baez
Alyssa Porter
Adelina Teodorescu
Houa Xiong

**Timothy Jay Psychology
Ambassador Fund**
Kelsey LaFreniere

Visual Arts Scholarship
Eloise Baker
Delano Mills

**Walter Grant
Memorial Scholarship**
Zuly Simor Johnson

Yvonne Leonesio Memorial Scholarship
Kelson Daniel

Biology

Dr. Ann Billetz, professor of biology

Dr. Billetz coordinated the 2019 Massachusetts PKAL Network Summer Meeting, which focuses on best practices in STEM teaching and was hosted by MCLA. Billetz and fellow MCLA biology professors Dr. Justin Golub and Dr. Christopher Thomas presented at the meeting.

Paige Howard and Dr. Eric Doucette, assistant professor of biology

Howard and Dr. Doucette were awarded a grant to support botanical research in the MCLA Forest. The award was funded by the Les Mehrhoff Botanical Research Fund, administered by the New England Botanical Club.

Dr. Doucette was co-author of *Grasses and Rushes of Maine*, published by the University of Maine Press.

Dr. Nicole Porther, assistant professor of biology

Dr. Porther and students in her Research Methods in Epidemiology course developed and implemented the MCLA Food Recovery Program. Students collaborated with Dining Services and the MCLA Food Pantry to recover and package pre-consumed food for distribution there.

Dr. Porther also received a Title III grant to establish a mentoring program for the MCLA Women Of Color Initiative (WOCI). Activities include a book club facilitated by Professor Emeritus Dr. Frances Jones-Sneed, mental health and self-care workshops, and weekly "Tea and Chill" gatherings with, on average, 20 WOC meeting for tea, snacks, and conversation.

Maryann Schroder, adjunct faculty member Schroder's Human Growth and Development course at MCLA was designated as a Course of Distinction at the 14th annual Massachusetts Colleges Online (MCO) Conference on eLearning. Schroder, and MCLA professors Dr. Anne Goodwin and Dr. Gerol Petruzella presented at the conference.

Chemistry

Dr. Carolyn Dehner, professor of chemistry, department chair

Dr. Dehner coordinated the 2018 and 2019 Berkshire Bank Summer STEM Academy, which serves as a bridge program for first-year students interested in STEM fields. Highlights included a field trip to the Albany Nanotech Complex and a roundtable dinner with local professionals. MCLA Professors Christopher Thomas, Carolyn Dehner, David Eve, Daniel Shustack, Justin Golub, Nicole Porther, Erin Kiley, Kebra Ward, Sharon Claffey, Tom Byrne, Pete Hoyt, and Anne Goodwin offered academic sessions. The program is funded by a grant from Berkshire Bank.

Interdisciplinary

Drs. Anne Goodwin, Anna Jaysane-Darr, Nicole Porther, and Elena Traister

Drs. Goodwin, Jaysane-Darr, Porther, and Traister implemented a grant-funded "Campuses for Environmental Stewardship" project involving collaborative teaching efforts and community outreach around the issue of food insecurity. Student projects associated with this work were presented at the Food Insecurity & Sustainability Mini Conference during the spring MCLA Undergraduate Research Conference.

Drs. Christopher Thomas, Erin Kiley, Nicole Porther, Sara Steele, Carolyn Dehner, Dan Shustack, and David Eve

Drs. Thomas, Kiley, Porther, Steele, Dehner, Shustack, and Eve developed and delivered a team-taught TIER III capstone course titled Food Insecurity. The course looked at the issue of food insecurity as it exists in Berkshire County through the lens of the various academic disciplines. The course was funded by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's STEM Starter Academy proposal with Berkshire Community College as the lead and MCLA the partner institution.

Mathematics

Dr. Elizabeth Hartung, associate professor of mathematics

Dr. Hartung was awarded a bilateral research grant for work with Nino Basic at the University of Primorska in Slovenia. This two-year collaborative grant will be funding joint work in chemical graph theory. The grant was awarded by ARRS, the Agency of Research of the Republic of Slovenia.

Dr. Hartung also co-authored the paper "Combinatorial Generation Via Permutation Languages," which was accepted for publication and presentation at SODA, the Symposium for Discrete Algorithms in January 2020. This paper was co-authored by Dr. Hartung, Hung P. Hoang (ETH Zurich), Torsten Mutze (TU Berlin), and Aaron Williams (Williams College).

Modern Languages

Dr. Graziana Ramsden, professor of modern languages

Dr. Ramsden presented "Teaching with Canvas" at the North Eastern Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL) in New York City, in February 2020.

Physics

Dr. Emily Maher, associate professor of physics, department chair

While working on the MINERvA Experiment, located at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, Dr. Maher and her colleagues published six papers explaining their research on experimental neutrino interactions and simulations of these interactions. Dr. Maher has served as the Calibration Coordinator on the MINERvA experiment for the last five years.

Dr. Maher also was accepted to and attended the Partnership for the Integration of Computation in Undergraduate Physics (PICUP) NSF at the University of Wisconsin River-Falls sponsored workshop, where she worked with experts to develop a plan to include more computation in the MCLA physics major.

Dr. Kebra Ward,
assistant professor of physics

Dr. Ward, assistant professor of physics, co-authored the paper “Routes to singlet exciton fission in rubrene crystals and amorphous films,” which was accepted for publication in the refereed journal *AIP Advances*. This paper was co-authored by Dr. Ward, Drew Finton, Eric Wolf, Vincent Zoutenbier, and Ivan Biaggio (all of Lehigh University).

Dr. Ward also accompanied MCLA students Kiah DaViega '21, Amalia Badohu '21, Reshawna Maine '20, and Robert Leonard '23 to the 2019 Sigma Pi Sigma Physics Congress (PhysCon), a quadrennial event that brings together physics students, alumni, and faculty members for three days of frontier physics, interactive professional development workshops, and networking. It is the largest gathering of undergraduate physics students in the world!

Psychology

Kabas Elmeligy '20, Nicole Nadeau '19,
and **Dr. Thomas Byrne, professor of psychology**

A paper Dr. Byrne, Elmeligy, and Nadeau submitted to *The Psychological Record*, a refereed journal published by Springer, was accepted for publication. Elmeligy and Nadeau dedicated hundreds of hours to this project over the course of 18 months and contributed substantially to the conceptualization, data collection, data analysis, and write-up.

Kabas Emeligy '20, Nicole Nadeau '19,
Brianna Lamb '18, and Dr. Thomas Byrne

In May 2019, MCLA students Kabas Emeligy, Nicole Nadeau, Brianna Lamb, and Dr. Byrne traveled to Chicago and presented the poster “Don’t let go: An analysis of short-duration presses in rats responding under fixed-duration schedules” at the convention of the Association for Behavior Analysis International.

Kara Adams '19 and Dr. Thomas Byrne
Adams and Byrne published the paper “Histamine alters environmental place preference in planaria” in the refereed journal *Neuroscience Letters*.

Dr. Byrne published the paper “Control of response duration by delayed reinforcers:

A systematic replication” in the refereed journal *Behavioural Processes*, describing an experiment on delayed reinforcement.

Dr. Sharon Claffey, professor of psychology

Professor Claffey led a discussion session titled “Building Meaningful Relationships with Students” at the Society for the Teaching of Psychology 2019 Annual Conference on Teaching in Denver, Colo., in October 2019. Along with Dr. Becky Benjamin, she led a group discussion about the techniques used to get to know their students and keep them engaged in the classroom experience. They discussed the importance of these techniques and how they are received by students.

Dr. Deborah Foss, professor of psychology

Dr. Foss was elected to the Board of Directors at The Brien Center in North Adams, and began her term in September 2019.

Dr. Benjamin Wood,
associate professor of psychology

Dr. Wood presented a paper titled “Conflicted about apocalyptic belief: Analyzing self-deceptive speech” at the Centre for the Critical Study of Apocalyptic and Millenarian Movements Conference in Bedford, United Kingdom, in June 2019.

Philosophy

Dr. Gerol Petruzella, visiting assistant professor of philosophy

In 2019, Dr. Petruzella served on the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Global Initiative on Ethics of Autonomous and Intelligent Systems, developing and releasing for public comment the second edition of *Ethically Aligned Design: A Vision for Prioritizing Human Well-Being with Autonomous and Intelligent Systems*. Since autonomous and intelligent systems (A/IS) affect human identity, data and agency very differently than other technologies, the goal of the project is to prioritize applied ethics questions, or values-driven design methodologies, needed at the beginning of any manufacturing process to examine end user values beyond assessing risk or harm. *Ethically Aligned Design* informs the development of the IEEE P7000™ Standards Projects.

In 2019, Dr. Petruzella’s work was published in the edited volume *Lessons*

Drawn: Essays on the Pedagogy of Comics and Graphic Novels. His chapter, “Death in Ancient Philosophy and the *Sandman* Series: A Case Study in Inquiry-Based Learning,” explores how Neil Gaiman’s classic *Sandman* graphic novel series is pedagogically valuable in exploring the tensions inherent in discussing death from a philosophical perspective.

Education

Dr. Dale Borman Fink,
professor of education

Dr. Borman Fink presented a session on his research on elementary school recess at the annual conference of the American School Health Association in Cincinnati, Ohio, in October 2019, with his co-author, Catherine L. Ramstetter. With Ramstetter, Dr. Borman Fink also published “Ready for Recess? The elementary teacher’s perspective” in *American Educator*, Vol. 42, no. 4, in Winter 2018-19 and “Even if they’re being bad, maybe they need a chance to run around: What children think about recess” in the *Journal of School Health*, Vol. 88, No. 12. December 2018.

Dr. Clio Stearns,
assistant professor of education

Dr. Stearns’ paper, “Let Them Get Mad: Using the Psychoanalytic Frame to Rethink SEL and Trauma-Informed Practice,” is forthcoming in the *Bank Street Occasional Papers Series*. She presented at an invited symposium on SEL and Social Justice at Radcliffe in November 2019, and served as editorial board member for *Integrating Social Justice Education in Teacher Preparation* (eds. Stephanie Logan and Courtney Clausen, ICI Global, 2020). Her book review “The complexities of development: A review of Lisa Farley’s *Childhood Beyond Pathology*” and article “Show Your Work: Math Curricula, Knowledge and Rehumanizing Pedagogy” were published in fall 2019 in *Pedagogy, Society and Culture*.

English and Communications

Dr. Caren Beilin,
assistant professor of English
and communications

Dr. Beilin published a book, *Blackfishing the IUD*, a work of creative nonfiction that explores reproductive health and gendered



medical gaslighting. In November 2019 she entered this book into the public record with her presentation at the FDA's Immunology Devices Panel. *Blackfishing* has since received recognition from literary institutions such as *LA Review of Books*, *Fence*, *The New Inquiry*, and *The Paris Review*, and Dr. Beilin has been invited to present on this work (for students of literature and medicine) at San Francisco State University, Naropa University, and the University of Mary Washington.

Dr. Amber Engelson, associate professor of English and communications, department chair
Dr. Engelson published a book chapter, "I Have No Mother Tongue": (Re) Conceptualizing Rhetorical Voice in Indonesia" in the *Routledge Handbook of Comparative World Rhetorics* and presented a conference paper titled "From Equitable Access to Cosmopolitan Engagement: What U.S.-based Scholars Might Learn from Indonesian Scholars" at Penn State's Writing Education Across Borders Conference in September 2019.

Dr. Victoria Papa, assistant professor of English and communications
Dr. Papa's essay, "'Clean, Original, Primitive': Sexual Radicalism, Race Consciousness, and the Case of Harlem's Queers," has been accepted for publication on the Print+ platform of *Modernism/modernity*. Papa made presentations at the MLA International Symposium, Modernist Studies Association, and the Association for the Study of the Arts of Present and co-organized *Slow: A Symposium in Praxis & Theory* in collaboration with MASS MoCA, for which she received a Faculty Fellow Mellon Grant via MCLA's Institute for the Arts and Humanities.

Dr. Jenna Grace Sciuto, associate professor of English and communications
Dr. Sciuto received an NEH grant to participate in a research institute on José Martí at the University of Tampa. Her article on William Faulkner's racially ambiguous bootleggers was published in *Southern Comforts: Drinking and the U.S. South* (LSU Press). She presented at the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha

conference, and she chaired a roundtable, "Experiences of Emerging Women, Trans, and Non-Binary Scholars in the Academy" at the NeMLA Convention. Three of Sciuto's articles have been accepted for publication in *New Faulkner Studies* (Cambridge University Press), an anthology on Ernest Gaines's work (University Press of Mississippi), and *The Global South*.

Fine and Performing Arts

Dr. Christine Condaris, professor of music
Dr. Condaris received a music grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and gave two presentations, "A Compositional Approach for Music Education" and "Creating a Digital Exhibition of the Artifacts from the Village of Dafni, Greece: A Work in Progress" at the 2019 Eurasia Research International Conference on Teaching, Education and Learning, in Rome, Italy. Dr. Condaris also published "Μια επιστροφή στην προγονική πατρίδα μου" in the ΜΕΣΟΤΟΠΙΚΑ ΝΕΑ, March edition. She was featured as a guest on the

Morning Drive Pittsfield Community TV/ WTBR radio show hosted by Bill Sturgeon, and is a board member of Berkshire Music School, the Elizabeth Freeman Center, and is an advisory board member to liberal arts and sciences at Mount Wachusett Community College.

Gregory Scheckler, professor of art
Professor Scheckler's science fiction story, "Confluent Equations," was published in the limited-edition anthology by artist Laura Christensen, *THEN AGAIN: Vintage Photography Reimagined by One Artist and Thirty-One Writers*. The anthology includes stories and poems by noted authors Jorie Graham, Paul Park, Akiko Busch and many others.

History and Political Science

Amanda Laury Kleintop,
assistant professor of U.S. History
Dr. Kleintop spent the Spring 2020 semester in New Haven, CT, as a faculty fellow at the Gilder Lehrman Center for Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition at Yale University. There, she revised her manuscript, *The Balance of Freedom: Abolish Property Rights in Slaves during and after the U.S. Civil War*. She was also awarded a Wallace Johnson First Book Program Fellowship from the American Society for Legal History (ASLH) to support this work. She presented research from the manuscript at Yale University's Gilder Lehrman Center, Yale's Macmillan Center for Visiting Scholars, and the Ohio Valley History Conference in Frankfort, Kentucky.

This summer, Kleintop received a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend to complete further research on *The Balance of Freedom*. She received two additional grants for her project: the William Nelson Cromwell Foundation Early Career Scholar Fellowship from the ASLH and the Congressional Research Grant from the Dirksen Congressional Research Center.

Kleintop also presented on the North Adams Archives, an online archive project, at the American Historical Association in New York City in January 2020. The presentation focused on the North Adams History Harvest collaboration with Professor Ely Janis and historical organizations and non profits in North

Adams. In Spring 2019, students in Kleintop's Introduction to Public History course added to the online archive digitized archival materials about North Adams history. MCLA students in Dr. Janis's Historical Methods and Theories class in Fall 2018 and staff at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art collected these materials from North Adams community members during events at the North Adams Public Library and Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in Fall 2018 and Winter 2019.

Kleintop contributed to her field by publishing a book review on *The Loyal Republic: Traitors, Slaves, and the Remaking of Citizenship in Civil War America* by Erik Mathison, in the Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, Vol. 118, No. 1 (Winter 2020): Appalachia.

Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work

Dr. Ingrid E. Castro,
professor of sociology, department chair
Dr. Castro published the coedited book *Child and Youth Agency in Science Fiction: Travel, Technology, Time* (Lexington Books, 2019), including a coauthored introduction chapter "Girl Zombies and Boy Wonders: The Future is Now!" and single authored chapter "*The Emergence of Agency after Bionuclear War: Posthuman Child – Animal Possibilities.*"

She also delivered the keynote address "Renditions of Agency: Something to Say/Hear, Somewhere to Go/Stay, Someone to Be/Become" at the 15th annual Midwest Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, February 2020. Dr. Castro was also elected to a three-year post as Council Member for the American Sociological Association's Section on Children and Youth.

Dr. Anna Jaysane-Darr,
assistant professor of anthropology
Dr. Jaysane-Darr's paper, "Enabling and Disabling Emotional Diversity: Negotiating Autism Spectrum Disorder in Therapeutic Encounters" was published in the journal *Children & Society* as part of a special issue on "Children and Youth as Emotional Suspects," edited by Rachael Stryker (CSU East Bay) and Elsa Davidson (Montclair State University).

Dr. Jaysane-Darr is also serving as a humanities scholar on the research and performance project "Diary of a Confused Immigrant" in collaboration with Juliet Najjumba of Africano (Waltham, Mass.) and Dr. Walter Leutz of Brandeis University, funded by a Mass Humanities Grant awarded in 2019.

Dr. Mohamad Junaid,
assistant professor of anthropology
In 2019, Dr. Junaid published two journal articles and a book chapter: "Counter-maps of the Ordinary: Occupation, Subjectivity, and Walking under Curfew" published in *Identities*; and "Disobedient Bodies, Defiant Objects: Occupation, Necropolitics, and the Resistance in Kashmir" in the *Funambulist*. "To be Kashmiri in the Present: Politics, Ethics, and History in the Work of Akhtar Mohiuddin" was published in the anthology *A Desolation Called Peace* (HarperCollins). Dr. Junaid gave invited lectures at Columbia, Princeton, Yale, Florida International University and Colorado College, among others. In addition, Junaid's op-ed pieces appeared in *The Globe Post*, *TRT World*, and *Asia Dialogue*, and he was interviewed on South African Broadcasting Corporation, NPR, South China Morning Post, and Public Radio International, as well as other journalistic outlets.

Interdisciplinary Studies

Dr. Rita Nnodim, associate professor of interdisciplinary studies
Dr. Nnodim gave a conference presentation titled "Outcast Voices in the Underbelly of the City – Anosh Irani's *The Cripple and his Talismans*: Navigating Bombay's streets and finding a humanism in 'awe of the other' while searching for a lost arm" at the MLA (Modern Language Association) International Symposium at Universidade Católica Portuguesa in Lisbon, Portugal, in July 2019.

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF

REMOTE INSTRUCTION

Earlier this year, as reports about COVID-19 began appearing in the news, Gerol Petruzella, MCLA's associate director of academic technology, took note.

"There were definitely a period of weeks during which I was aware of how COVID-19 was spreading and thinking, 'how would we respond if we needed to move the campus online? What would have to happen?'" he said.

Then, it happened.

When Massachusetts State Universities together made the decision to move to remote instruction as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, that mission became more urgent, with a close-approaching deadline: classes at MCLA would begin remotely on March 30, two weeks after spring break.

In normal times, MCLA's Center for Academic Technology, headed by Petruzella, supports and empowers faculty to create quality instructional materials, including help with instructional design, Canvas, the College's learning management system, and other tools. In the time of COVID-19, it mobilized to respond to immediate needs.

First, Academic Technology and the MCLA Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) came together to get the faculty community ready for remote learning before March 30. The CTL provides professional development opportunities for faculty and is headed by Ruby Vega, assistant professor of psychology and faculty development fellow, along with guidance from the CTL Advisory Committee, of which Petruzella is a member.

"Our goal was—and is—to support faculty in both using educational technology successfully to teach their students remotely, and supporting them in developing

a realistic plan for remote leaning under these very challenging conditions," said Vega.

The CTL worked with Academic Affairs, the Freel Library staff, and eight faculty mentors to provide professional development opportunities around online instruction.

All experienced Canvas users, these faculty mentors (Tara Barboza, Business Department; Anne Goodwin, Biology; Alyssa Dufresne, Radiology; Lisa Donovan, Fine and Performing Arts; Guangzhi Huang, Interdisciplinary Studies; Erin Kiley, Math; Shawn McIntosh, English; and Kebra Ward, Physics), acted as liaisons between academic technology and MCLA's academic departments, collecting questions, concerns, and professional development requests.

"That really stands out to me in terms of something amazing that came out of this," Petruzella said. "Just to have those faculty members step forward and become academic technologists, helping their peers through a really unexpected and potentially stressful time."

Next, the CTL worked to prepare mcla.edu/remoteready, a collection of resources for faculty and students that went live before remote instruction began. There, students and faculty can find out how to save their files to the cloud, manage their stress, join Skype meetings, use lab software at home, find reduced internet rates, and more.

"We wanted to put ourselves in the shoes of students and faculty facing this," Petruzella said. That meant figuring out the most useful resources to share, then making them immediately available and accessible no matter what device a person might be using."



“

I AM IMPRESSED AND PROUD WITH THE WAY EVERYONE HAS RISEN TO THE CHALLENGE.”

— RUBY VEGA, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT FELLOW

Among many other things, Petruzella made sure every single MCLA course (more than 500 courses in total) was available on Canvas, and created a stripped-down interface as an adjustment for those who didn't regularly use Canvas for their courses. He and MCLA's Media Services Manager Aaron Bieniek set up three rooms in Bowman Hall where faculty could drop in to record lectures and other materials for their classes.

Petruzella said it's important to note that a short-term shift to remote learning doesn't reflect the true theory and practice of online teaching and learning; it's a stopgap measure.

“What we did this semester was not online learning, by any stretch of the imagination,” he said. “It's emergency remote teaching. We were trying to do the best we can with zero prep and a minimum amount of time and space to do what we needed to do. My background in academic technology has been an invaluable foundation—and that has been incredibly helpful and necessary to work through this process.”

“I am impressed and proud with the way everyone has risen to this challenge,” Vega said. “It's incredibly difficult to balance what's best for students' learning with what is reasonable to expect of them, and ourselves, at a time like this. It has been my experience so far that faculty are approaching this situation very thoughtfully, and creatively, and with great care for our students.”

“There's been a wonderful response from the faculty community,” Petruzella said. “They understand the need for this. We all understand this is less than ideal; we're not really teaching the way we wish we could. We want to be there for our students however we can be—in messy or imperfect ways, but we're still here.”

MCLA OFFICE OF ADMISISON CREATES

VIRTUAL CONNECTION

FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

While nothing can replace an in-person visit to campus, the MCLA Office of Admission has been making sure prospective students and their families can experience the College's unique charms in other ways during the pandemic shutdown.

In lieu of an accepted student day that was scheduled to welcome more than 300 visitors to campus, Director of Admission Kayla Hollins and her team have created online events that include virtual tours, informational videos, webinars, and interactive meet-and-greets. "Right before spring break, some of our admission ambassadors ran around campus creating virtual tours and they came back with such amazing content," said Hollins. "The tours and videos were something we'd always wished we had, and there's nothing like a pandemic to get you motivated."



Kayla Hollins, Director of Admission, films an informational webinar for accepted students at MCLA's Feigenbaum Center for science and Innovation in March 2020.

Using a remote format has allowed the office to turn what normally would be one-day events into multiple, more intimate experiences spread out over five weeks.

The webinars have featured panels of MCLA staff members, current students, and resident assistants, and focused on everything from athletics programs and life on campus to the very popular "MCLA and the Berkshires Bucket List."

The more informal live opportunities included a trivia day where students answered pop culture and MCLA questions, and the winners earned MCLA swag. Meet-and-greet sessions were available for prospective students based on their location or interests (theater, LGBTQIA+, honors program), as well as some geared toward transfer students. "These events were more laid back," said Hollins, "because it's stressful for students right now, so we wanted to give them something fun to do."

The Office of Admission's "Face to Face with Faculty" series was a chance for future students to get to know the College's department chairs in a more personal way. Professors spoke about why they think MCLA is a great place to be, what the classes are like, and where struggling students can find help. "Prospective students asked really great questions and got a chance to see the professors as people," Hollins said.

Interested students still have time to apply to the College and take advantage of these new tools. MCLA offers rolling admission and a free application, and students can now apply without submitting SAT scores, as most of these tests have been canceled for the year.

You can contact the MCLA Office of Admission by calling 413-662-5410, or emailing admissions@mcla.edu.





KEEPING STUDENTS FOCUSED ON MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS

Through the pandemic, and through the summer, MCLA's Counseling Services staff have been reaching out to students, offering mental health support, and distributing information about how to maintain some consistency through a crisis.

"There has been a lot of adapting," said Heidi Riello, MSW, LICSW, who directs MCLA's counseling center. "This is new to every one of us."

After the spring semester moved to virtual instruction, Counseling Services moved its appointments with existing students to Doxy.me, a widely used telemedicine platform. "Our initial response was to email students who were already active clients to let them know the tele-therapy option was available to them if they wanted to connect with their counselor through the platform," Riello said.

Students have also been able to connect with their counselors via phone, or have opted to turn off the video aspect of their appointments. Those who may not have space to speak privately have been able to use the platform's chat function.

Students have been able to connect with three full-time counselors, including Riello, Jon Meehan, MSSW, LICSW, and Roxanne Morton-Fili, MSW. Meehan and the department's office manager, Marissa Parker, are still working out of MCLA's MountainOne Student Wellness Center, along with the College's Health Services staff.

"I can only speak to the students I've been in contact with, but our students, for the most part, are doing OK. They are functioning to the best of their ability," Riello said. "A handful are really struggling. A lot of the work we've been doing is case management: How are you doing? What was this week like? What do you need?"

Riello said establishing a routine is a large part of

maintaining wellness through this uncertain and unusual times. "Try to maintain a regular schedule," she said. "You have to get yourself up every day. We've been encouraging students to try to get outside, engage in physical activity, get some sunlight, and try to limit media exposure, because it's so destructive to how we feel sometimes."

Other tips for mental wellness: "Try to stay connected to family and friends remotely," said Riello. "And ask for help when you need it."

The Counseling Services staff have also been connecting students with the MCLA Resiliency Fund, which provides financial support for those with emergency circumstances related to the pandemic. "Many of them have accessed Resiliency Fund money, which is great," Riello said. "It's good to make contact with students and to hear they're safe, and for the most part, doing OK. It's good to validate those experiences."

Riello said she's proud of the dedication her staff has shown, including by part-time counselors Joan Dornhoefer, MSW, LCSW-R, and Claire Cabiles MSW, LICSW. "I'm proud of how willing and easily Jon and Roxanne jumped right in and adjusted to the use of the doxy.me platform," she said. "And I'm proud of our commitment to our students—including tracking some of our higher-risk students down, even if they didn't want to use the platform, just to make sure they are OK."

Riello has also been impressed with how MCLA's students adjusted to remote learning, and with the importance they place on mental wellness. "This generation doesn't stigmatize it at all," she said. "Our students have been remarkably adaptable. Many of them are adaptable to begin with; they have had to be. The move to remote learning was kind of just another obstacle."

RETURN TO CAMPUS

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As MCLA's Class of 2020 was being celebrated virtually on May 16, the College's Return to Campus Advisory Committee was already deep into the work of planning for the Fall semester and beyond.

The Committee was formed to identify operational needs and assess what is necessary for a safe return to campus in the fall—for students, faculty, and staff. To help identify these needs, President James F. Birge held town hall meetings, spoke directly to college community members, and assembled a committee to take on the planning and logistics, then make direct recommendations.

The Committee, comprised of representatives from every division at MCLA, made recommendations to President Birge on strategies for delivering courses, supporting students (including guidelines for life in the residence areas and dining halls), ensuring safe and sufficient staffing, and establishing protocols for campus events and gatherings.

Because of the continued uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic and the constantly shifting guidelines from the state and federal government, these recommendations will be responsive to ever-changing conditions in the Berkshires and beyond.

"Because we know that the world is changing quickly, the committee was prepared to pivot, and developed a 'Plan A' and 'Plan B' as part of its work," said Dean of Enrollment

Management and Community Engagement Gina Puc, who led the committee work. "We wanted to adhere to best practices and comply with federal, state, and local guidelines, while also making sure our community members would feel safe and confident about our plan."

Four subcommittees worked together to allow for a more thorough assessment of all areas. The Academic Affairs Subcommittee developed plans for course delivery models, faculty return and exemption policies, and potential pivots from the College's "Plan A" as per best practices from the state. The Staff Subcommittee collected department needs regarding office space, accommodations, and other needs, and worked closely with the Operations Subcommittee, which determined cleaning procedures, PPE and cleaning supply procurement, and other considerations related to health and safety of the campus infrastructure. Finally, the Student Affairs Subcommittee developed plans to safely and responsibly house the student population, communicate social distancing policies, work with Aramark on dining plans, and otherwise determine what the student experience will look like at MCLA this fall.

President Birge announced the plan at the end of June. Beginning with a staggered staff return in July and August, it corresponds with other state university planning, as well as addressing specific needs for MCLA, including purchasing defogging and sanitation equipment, moving the fall semester to a remote format after Thanksgiving, adjusting office spaces, and offering accommodations for staff.

"This fall, life at MCLA will be different, but we are still the same community," said Birge. "We are taking these precautions, planning thoroughly, and working together so that we can continue working together in the future."

For up-to-date information on the College's plans, please visit mcla.edu/COVID-19

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