



# Ursinus College

## OFFICE OF THE DEAN

VOL. 3, ISSUE 2

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

### FROM THE DEAN

#### Finishing the semester

As you likely know, the commonwealth of Pennsylvania has recently issued a variety of mitigation measures, in force through January 3, to combat the spread of COVID-19. Of significance for faculty is the use of remote work whenever possible, and mandatory temperature checks for those who need to work in person. As the campus density is very low, it is not difficult to follow requirements of physical distancing. As for temperature checks, we have placed temperature check stations in [convenient locations](#) all over campus.

#### Winter Break

All of us in the Dean's Office wish to express our sincere thanks to the faculty for their stamina through this challenging semester. We recognize that for many of you, this winter break will be the first real break you have had in a year, with most of the summer absorbed with preparation for the fall, and our extended "spring break" of last March consumed with preparing to move to remote instruction. Winter break has different meaning for each of you—opportunities to spend time with family or friends, catch up on sleep or domestic tasks, or a time to bring thoughts to personal health, religious activities, or whatever helps you feel grounded and stable. I wish you all time and space to rejuvenate, and connect with those who help you find meaning in life.

In conversation with chairs, and faculty in general, the need for attention to our overall wellness was stressed. Susanna Throop helped make this concrete, with a set of suggestions for the college to consider—a list we are reviewing to see what we can accomplish in the short term. On that list was "Ensure all FT employees have access to medical plan coverage for mental health." While we recognize benefits could be better here, we wanted to make sure that faculty were aware of the resources that are currently available:

- All FT Employees have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) with up to 5 phone or video consultations with a counselor. This can also be extended to eligible members of their home. The information can be located in the [benefits guide](#) on page 18.
- Employees have access to coverage for in-patient and out-patient mental health services through IBX; base plan coverage is listed [here](#). The coverage is subject to copays and deductibles, similar to regular medical coverage. Information can be located on the IBX website under "[find a provider](#)". The IBX site is not the easiest to navigate, so if you need additional help, you may reach out to the [KTB Client Advocate Center](#) or to our Human Resources office.
- As a more informal support, NewU will be organizing a support group for parents navigating the challenges of the pandemic for families with school-age children; you can register for this group [here](#).

#### Spring Calendar

Following discussions with faculty chairs, the Dean's Office is accepting a proposal to make some rearrangements of the class-day assignments for the last five class days of the Spring 2021 semester. In particular, those assignments will be:

Thursday, April 29 – Thursday Schedule  
Friday, April 30 – Tuesday Schedule  
Monday, May 3 – Wednesday Schedule  
Tuesday, May 4 – Tuesday Schedule  
Wednesday, May 5 – Thursday Schedule

The Registrar will be updating the online calendar to reflect this change.

Additionally, we are responding to concerns about how to make the break days as effective as possible for students *and* faculty. We need not remind faculty to consider scheduling of major assignments to allow for a breather on those days to the extent possible. But additionally, we recognize that other requirements for students and faculty, such as department meetings, or advising appointments may also intrude, so we encourage you to consider treating those days as you might if they regularly fell during spring break.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REMINDERS

#### Registrar's Office Grading Deadline

Faculty should aim to submit grades by 48 hours after a course's scheduled final exam. Grades received after December 28 will not be available to the Academic Standards and Discipline Committee when it meets to discuss candidates for probation, suspension, and dismissal.

#### Faculty Development Deadlines

Note: The Faculty Development Committee is now the Professional Development Committee! Deadlines for small research grants, summer support grants, and student humanities research assistantships will be March 15. SHRAs should be carried out virtually for the time being and small grants may not be used to support travel. Preference will be given to first-time recipients. The conference participation deadline is January 15. Please apply through the appropriate surveys on the Faculty Development web page.

#### Spring Classroom Spaces

The Dean's Office is continuing to work with Facilities on getting tents for class use beginning in March. Faculty with questions about tents or other particularities related to COVID teaching should reach out to Kelly Sorensen and/or Stephanie Mackler.

## THOMAS J. WATSON FELLOWSHIP

Our four finalists for the Watson Fellowship—Mary Margaret Baldy, Shelsea Deravil, Jadidsa Perez, and Sianneh Vesslee—presented on their projects at a common hour on November 18 co-sponsored by the Institute for Inclusion and Equity and Center for International Programs. The finalists were introduced by Tommy Armstrong (UC '20 Watson Fellow) and took questions from prospective participants. Chris Kasabach, director of the Watson Foundation, interviewed the finalists in the first week in December. The 53<sup>rd</sup> annual class of Watson Fellows will be announced in mid-March. Please ask prospective applicants to contact Meredith Goldsmith or Talia Argondezzi for more information.

## FACULTY GOOD NEWS

Despite a global pandemic, UC faculty are working hard at their academic and creative endeavors. If you would like to share your good news with us, please [complete our survey](#).

**Rebecca Roberts**, Biology Department, published an essay for ASBMB Today, [\*A biochemistry professor and two students navigate the COVID-19 pandemic\*](#)

**Oscar Useche**, Modern Language Department, published an article: [\*A Story of Failed Conversions: The Impossible Refashioning of Tradition in Benito Pérez Galdós's Rosalía\*](#)

**Talia Argondezzi**, Center for Writing and Speaking, has published multiple articles:

For Studies in American Fiction, [\*The Haitian Revolution and the Limitations of White Feminism A Comparison of Zelica, the Creole and Leonora Sansay's Secret History\*](#)

Featured in McSweeney's, [\*Noted Philosophers Reconsider their Key Insights after a Month of Social Distancing\*](#)

For Points in Case, a literary humor publication, [\*This Halloween, Dress as an Old-Timey Person from 2019\*](#) and [\*List: How to Explain the Pandemic to Young Children, Using Classic Picture Books\*](#)

On The Belladonna, Comedy and Satire for Women, [\*Quiz: Is Your Boyfriend a Hip, Quirky Misfit or an Evil Villain Bent on Destroying the World?\*](#)

**Jasmine Harris**, Anthropology and Sociology Department, published an article in Journal of Economics, Race, and Policy, [\*Black on Black: the Vilification of "Me-Search," Tenure, and the Economic Position of Black Sociologists\*](#)

**Christopher Tralie**, Mathematics and Computer Science Department, presented on the topic of [\*The Graph Laplacian and Applications in Multimedia Data Processing\*](#) with MAA and ASA

**Alice Leppert**, Media and Communications Studies, was [\*named Co-editor of Celebrity Studies Journal\*](#) where she also recently published an article, [\*We're all television stars in a pandemic\*](#).

**M. Nzadi Keita**, English Department and African American/Africana Studies Program, offered two presentations, *A Poetry Reading via Zoom with her student, Codi Yhap* for the Sacramento City College program and *Artists & Poets Speak to Race, Racism, and Anti-Racism Readings and Panel Discussion* at Arcadia University.

**Tony Nadler** and **Doron Taussig**, Media and Communications Studies Department, continue their project, [\*Unmasking Polarization: What Conservatives Really Feel About COVID-19 Coverage, and How to Rebuild Mutual Trust\*](#).



**Happy Holidays**  
**from all of us in the Dean's Office!**



### Dean's Office Members

Mark B. Schneider  
Kelly Sorensen  
Meredith Goldsmith  
Nathan Rein  
Stephanie Mackler  
Simara Price  
Nicole Smith  
Melanie Cunningham  
Julia Arnowitz  
Alyssa Martin

