

TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: Tracy M. Stewart, Ph.D.  
Interim Provost/Senior VPAA

DATE: May 1, 2026

SUBJECT: Academic Affairs Report for April 2026

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### **Provost and Associate Provost**

*Program Vitality Review* is the name selected by the task force working on a process for program health. There are two subgroups, one working on a proposed process and one working on proposed metrics. The hope is to have a draft proposal before some of the faculty go off contract (there are a few faculty with roles that continue into the summer). Work on revision may continue into the summer for review at the beginning of the 26-27 year before being moved into governance and approval processes.

*Curriculum development support* – the office is working to deepen a process to support faculty/departments in the assessment of market and competition as potential programs are being considered. Please look for more information shortly.

### **Strategic Planning & Division, College, and Departmental Planning**

Work continues to implement the Strategic Plan. The University Planning Committee is finalizing a recommended set of first year priorities, areas of early needed focus and attention. Several of these initiatives will directly overlay the work of the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan. Divisional vice presidents and academic deans are working with their teams to build divisional and college plans, which will both inform and be informed by academic and administrative departmental goals established and reported via the Annual Planning and Reporting process, which opened in April. Annual Reports are due from chairs and administrative leaders by June 30. Several elements of our new strategic plan will be explored within the Middle States Self-Study, including through unique lines of inquiry established by each of the seven standards-based working groups. Learn more about the strategic plan at [www.scranton.edu/strategicplan](http://www.scranton.edu/strategicplan), and within this new [electronic brochure](#).

### **Middle States Accreditation**

Our Self-Study process is well underway. I am deeply grateful to Steering Committee co-chairs Dr. Mike Jenkins and Dr. Sarah Kenehan, who are leading the Steering Committee in navigating key first-year milestones. These include hosting a successful Self Study Preparation Visit (SSPV) from our MCHE Vice President on March 25 and working with Steering Committee members to finalize the Working Group membership. This roster now totals over 70+ faculty and staff members, representing each college and administrative division, along with a student member serving on each. This spring, the seven Working Groups are preparing plans of work to meet the

next milestones established in the Self-Study Design & Timeline and identify anticipated resources and information relevant to their standard and the unique lines of inquiry developed by each. By the end of the term, we will have submitted the final draft of our Design document to Middle States. Looking ahead, the 2026–2027 academic year will be a busy one, as Working Groups will conduct critical research and analysis, including outreach to gather information and evidence across all seven standards, while also building in opportunities for campus-wide input throughout the academic year. Additional information about the study is available at [www.scranton.edu/selfstudy](http://www.scranton.edu/selfstudy).

### **Educational Assessment**

The OEA team continues to work with faculty in each college and the Library to support program assessment. The OEA has held a series of open office hours for CAS faculty to work on refining learning outcomes, and navigating the updated, streamlined CAS program assessment report template. Work is also underway to collate a complete, updated list of program learning outcomes across all programs, along with gathering and updating other materials in preparation for our Self-Study. Maria Squire, General Assessment Coordinator led a rubric writing workshop and started to actively recruit faculty for GE assessment for the 2026-2027 academic year. Work continues to gather assessment data related to generation education attribute areas assessed this year; faculty with GE related assessment information/findings are encouraged to share with Maria Squire. We look forward to emerging conversations to build a new assessment plan for the Ignatian Core Curriculum.

A priority for the Educational Assessment Advisory Committee has been reflection on our current Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), considering where they are connected to program and other educational opportunities, where and how assessment data from these and other sources has been obtained, including through curriculum mapping, and suggesting additional ILO assessment activities. This assessment data, together with reflections from our MSCHE self-study, will be used to review the ILOs with an eye to potential revisions in 2028. Lastly, the OEA held an Assessment Showcase on April 22. This event featured speakers from each of the three colleges and the Weinberg Memorial Library highlighting examples of recent assessment activity, illustrating how assessment data has been used to “close the loop” and make improvements to educational programs and pedagogy. These included examples from the Weinberg Memorial Library, presented by Prof. Donna Witek; the Kania School of Management, presented by Dr. Robert Giambatista; the College of Arts & Sciences, presented by Dr. Rob Waldeck; and the Leahy College of Health Sciences, presented by Dr. Vanessa Jensen & Dr. Paul Datti.

### **Faculty Searches**

We have hired two new faculty since last month’s report. This brings the total number hired to fourteen.

- Erica Getts                      Assistant Professor      Library
- Carla Enriquez                 Assistant Professor      Physical Therapy

## College of Arts & Sciences

- Faculty searches are underway for Writing (faculty specialist), Philosophy (VAP funded through EATC), Criminal Justice (VAP), and History (VAP).
- Concerning the CAS Strategic Plan, an extension was given for faculty and staff to provide feedback by April 17<sup>th</sup>, as well as for department chairs to discuss the plan in their April meetings and then send input onto the Dean. The Dean, Associate Dean, and UPC CAS faculty colleague, Gretchen Van Dyke, convened thereafter to finalize the plan in the coming week or so. The finalized plan will be shared with CAS faculty and staff and sent onto the University Planning Committee and Interim Provost by the end of the spring semester.
- Continued thanks to all faculty and staff who have assisted with Admitted Students' Days, inaugural Junior Open House, and Graduate Open House.
- 5/06 day is coming and the Dean has specified the CAS Student Research Fund as the primary priority. Akin to last year, she has personally made a challenge that she will donate \$500 for a particular number of donors to this fund; details forthcoming to CAS faculty and staff. Opportunities to donate to named scholarships, and a few other select CAS programs are also available. All faculty are encouraged to spread the word about the day. Within this last year, we awarded \$10,000 in funding, and yet the need was \$50,000.
- The Dean is continuing to engage with alumni through industrial advisory board meetings, alumni gatherings (D.C. with pre-law on 4.17.26), and others forthcoming in April through June, write thank you notes to all CAS donors at \$500 or more and have follow-up meetings with them to share CAS happenings.
- The Assessment Committee for CAS (ACCAS) is continuing to work through the PLOs for each program. Program directors who completed impact reports during the fall semester will be sharing their findings at the last Dean's Conference of the semester.
- The Dean stewarded her 2<sup>nd</sup> AJCU MOU to build pipelines to increase graduate enrollments. This MOU built upon an existing 4+1 between UofS and the Mechanical Engineering M.S. program at Fairfield. Another AJCU institution is now being considered next by the administration.
- In winter 2025, the Dean reviewed all quasi-administrative appointments and observed unevenness in faculty workload. While the Dean would have preferred a tiered system of compensation or having a single director oversee multiple lower-enrolled programs, such configurations are not possible within the Faculty Handbook. Moreover, by August 2025, all deans were tasked with zero-based budgeting given our university's fiscal constraints. Given these constraints, for concentrations and interdisciplinary majors with lower enrollments, these directorships will be being folded into department chair duties in partnership with steering boards (where applicable). Note this model already exists in CAS in three departments and in other schools within UofS.
- Last year, the Dean had Mary Ann Maslar coordinate the soliciting of a survey to seek input from CAS faculty and staff about the Dean during her first year. This year, a survey will be sent out during finals with a chance to respond by the end of May to provide feedback on the Dean, Associate Dean, rest of CAS Dean's Office, and the CAS Advising Center. Then, feedback will be separated and shared with each constituency and said group's direct supervisor, including the Provost (in the case of the Dean). In so doing, together, we strive for the *Magis*.

## **Leahy College of Health Sciences**

- **Departmental Reorganization** - The faculty and staff in three departments, HHP, HAHR and OT, to be reorganized into two departments starting in 2026-27. There will be no changes to three departments: Nursing, CHS and PT. One department will include Kinesiology, Public Health, Health Administration (undergrad and grad) and Human Resources (undergrad and grad). The temporary department's name will be Health and Human Performance until the faculty can decide on the permanent name. The other department will include Occupational Therapy (MS and OTD), Communication Sciences and Disorders and Speech Language Pathology. The temporary name will be Occupational Therapy and Communication Sciences and Disorders until the faculty can decide on the permanent name. There will be no changes to the location of faculty and professional staff offices or program-related spaces. The LCHS Deans Office will be working closely with departmental leadership to support programs, faculty and staff through this change. A notification will go out to students at a later date, but they will continue to be guided by their program directors and LCHS Academic Advising as they are currently.
- **New LCHS Mission Statement** - *The LCHS Mission Statement was approved at the Dean's Conference on 4/9/26.* The Leahy College of Health Sciences (LCHS) maintains the highest academic and professional standards in preparing students for personal and professional success through intellectual inquiry, scholarship, service and professional practice. LCHS upholds the University of Scranton's mission with an emphasis on academic excellence, *cura personalis*, social justice and ethical practice. We provide opportunities for our students, faculty and staff to promote the well-being of others through collaborative learning and innovative experiential opportunities that are responsive to community needs.

## **Kania School of Management**

- The KSOM Strategic Plan for 2025-2031 was approved at the KSOM Faculty/Staff Meeting
- The Kania School of Management created a new Assessment Model for 2025-2031

## **Weinberg Memorial Library**

- **Library Services Desk Renovation**
  - Thanks to a generous donation from A. Clarice Zaydon, M.D., the Library Services Desk and inner lobby will be renovated over Summer 2026. To ensure continuity of services during construction, all Library Services Desk functions will be temporarily relocated to the Reilly Learning Commons for the summer, with the project expected to be completed in time for the start of the Fall 2026 semester.
  - A renaming of the Library Services Desk and dedication ceremony will be planned for the 2026–2027 Academic Year.
- **AAC&U Institute on AI – Faculty Discussion Invitation**
  - The AAC&U AI Fellows will host a facilitated discussion on Artificial Intelligence open to all full-time faculty on Thursday, May 14, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Fireplace Room, TDC 405. This is an opportunity to contribute your voice to the

University's ongoing conversation about AI in teaching, research, and institutional life. Lunch will be provided thanks to the Ethics Across the Curriculum Initiative. Seating is limited to 35 faculty. To reserve your spot, please RSVP by emailing [Rose.Merritt@Scranton.edu](mailto:Rose.Merritt@Scranton.edu). An email invitation will also be distributed in May.

- **AAC&U Institute on AI – Campus Survey**

- The AAC&U AI Fellows extend their sincere thanks to all members of the University community who participated in the recent campus-wide AI survey. The results are forthcoming, and the Fellows are currently exploring avenues for dissemination. Please watch for updates in the weeks ahead.

- **Celebration of Faculty Scholarly Achievements**

- The Weinberg Memorial Library will celebrate faculty scholarship in May 2026 with an exhibit of recent scholarly publications and presentations hosted in the Charles Kratz Scranton Heritage Room. The exhibit will run from May 4 through May 17, featuring work produced since April 1, 2025, as well as earlier work not previously included in a Faculty Scholarship exhibit. To mark the occasion, the Provost's Office and the Library will co-host a community reception with light refreshments on Thursday, May 7, 2026, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. All are welcome.

- **MISO Survey**

- Dean Aulisio extends his sincere thanks to all who participated in this year's MISO Survey. Published responses to categorized comments will be made available toward the end of May, before the end of the semester. Depending on the timing of results and responses, Dean Aulisio hopes to send a campus-wide thank you letter, co-authored with Cindy Greene, that will direct readers to the published responses.

- **Electronic Resources Management Subcommittee**

- The Electronic Resources Management Subcommittee of the Library Advisory Committee met on April 23, 2026, to review resources under consideration for the Spring 2026 cycle.
- The subcommittee evaluated each resource based on cost effectiveness, usage data, and anonymous faculty feedback, and issued one of three recommendations for each: *Recommend Keep*, *Recommend Keep for Now*, or *Recommend Discontinue*.
- Resources reviewed this cycle include AP Newsroom, Cabells Journalytics, CloudSource OA, Credo Reference, Library of Latin Texts Online, Recent New York Times (Digital Microfilm), Recent Wall Street Journal (Digital Microfilm), Religion Past and Present, Sage Academic and Reference Books, Science (AAAS), and Statista.
- The Dean will review the subcommittee's recommendations and issue decisions over the summer.
- The Dean's decisions based on the Fall 2025 subcommittee's recommendations are available here: <https://www.scranton.edu/academics/wml/libadcomm/libadvdocs.shtml>

- **Conference on Confronting the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence**

- The National Interdisciplinary Conference on Confronting the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, co-organized by George Aulisio, Megan Heeder, and Dan Marena, took place this month at the University of Scranton. The conference brought together scholars, practitioners, and educators from across the country to engage with pressing questions surrounding the ethical dimensions of artificial intelligence. The University community is thanked for its enthusiastic participation and support. *A Royal News*

article on the conference can be found here:

<https://news.scranton.edu/articles/2026/04/news-ai-ethics-conference.shtml>

- **Unveiling Niccolo Betti's (1550-1617) *Madonna and Child with Young St. John the Baptist***
  - The Weinberg Memorial Library is pleased to announce the unveiling of a *Madonna and Child with young St. John the Baptist*, a generous gift of the Morgan family, now on permanent display in the fourth-floor quiet study room. The painting has been traced to 16th-century Italian Renaissance artist Niccolo Betti and was recently restored to reveal the hidden figure of St. John the Baptist. A Schemel Forum and Friends of the Library Collaborative program was held on April 30, 2026, in The Charles Kratz Scranton Heritage Room. The University is grateful to the Morgan family for this meaningful contribution to our shared spaces.
- **Ignatian Core Digital Literacies Workshop (Repeated from March Report)**
  - When: Wednesday, August 19 and Thursday, August 20, 2026
  - Where: Charles Kratz Scranton Heritage Room, Library 5th Floor
  - Faculty are invited to join a two-day faculty development workshop on improving how we teach digital literacies in ever-changing information environments. As artificial intelligence (AI) tools, applications, and outputs permeate the landscape, our approach to teaching students to use digital systems effectively and responsibly to gather, evaluate, use, and create new information must evolve. Attendees will develop their knowledge and pedagogy in support of the new First Year Digital Literacies (FYDL) attribute of the Ignatian Core Curriculum (ICC) with an emphasis on the ethical dimensions of information literacy. The workshop will be led by a team of faculty librarians with expertise in teaching information discovery, evaluation, and use in dynamic and complex information environments. Attendees will learn how they can partner with us to effectively teach students the digital literacies they need as ethical and responsible researchers. This workshop is funded by the Ethics Across the Curriculum initiative and includes a \$500 stipend for attendees. Registration will be announced in late April 2026.
- **New Subscription Request Form (Repeated from March Report)**
  - The Library has published a required form for requesting new recurring expense library resources (e.g., databases and journals). The Dean of the Library asks that the form be submitted to his office (either via email or campus mail) in as complete a manner as possible. The form was endorsed by the Library Advisory Committee with no audible dissent on 2/24/2026.
  - The form is located on the Library's homepage, under About the Library, then Policies and Forms. A direct link is here:  
<https://www.scranton.edu/academics/wml/about/policies/index.shtml>
- **Schemel Forum**
  - The Schemel Forum has had a strong Spring 2026 season. The Forum's World Affairs Luncheon Seminar series featured presentations on AI and predictive analytics (Prof. Anasse Bari, NYU), a living-history examination of the American Revolution at its 250th anniversary (James McKane), a timely discussion of federal institutions and democratic governance by former U.S. Senator Bob Casey, Jr., now Leahy Distinguished Fellow in Public Service at the University of Scranton, and a closing luncheon by Jennifer Houser Wegner, Ph.D. (Penn Museum/University of Pennsylvania)

on ancient Egyptian wisdom literature and its resonance with didactic traditions across the ancient world.

- A Wine Tasting event featuring wines of the Loire Valley will occur on Friday, May 29, beginning at 5:30 p.m. The event will feature four wines and paired hors d'ouvres. The event is \$60 per person and discounted to \$110 for couples. Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine and University of Scranton students, staff, and faculty must purchase a ticket. Must be 21 years or older. To purchase a ticket, please call 570-941-4740, or email [Rose.Merritt@scranton.edu](mailto:Rose.Merritt@scranton.edu).
- Videotaped lectures from the Fall 2025 season can be viewed on the [University's YouTube Channel Playlist for the Schemel Forum](#). Spring 2026 season videos will be made available over Summer 2026.

### **Office of Student Support & Success (OSSS)**

- Over the Spring 2026 semester, Dean Aulisio initiated a self-study of the OSSS, completed by the department staff. On April 30, 2026, Amy Kline, M.A. Director of the Student Success Center, Misericordia University, will conduct an External Review of the OSSS. Several key stakeholders, including the OSSS Advisory Committee, are slated to meet with the external review. Dean Aulisio has requested that Ms. Kline deliver a report to him, reviewing and recommending improvements to the OSSS's services, by May 15, 2026.

### **IDEA Center**

#### **● Recent Events**

- Wyoming Seminary 7th-grade field trip to the IDEA Center
- NEPA Pan African Coalition afterschool program field trip to the IDEA Center
- IDEA Center hosted CEEPS – Campaign School
- 4/1/26 - Podcast interview with author, Charles Bufalino
- 4/7/26 - Theology course introduction to 3D Design
- 4/8/26 - Bat Box Construction event with the Society for Sustainability and Conservation
- 4/9/26 - OT department visit - 3D design and Scanning
- 4/13/26 - Educational programming for students in the SOAR program with the NEIU 19
- 4/14/26 - Educational programming for students in the STRIVE program with the NEIU 19

- 4/16/26 - Presenting at the Communications Symposium

#### **● IDEA Center Upcoming Events (at time of submission)**

- 5/5/26 - SBDC Networking and Certification Presentation
- 5/8/26 - Holy Rosary Duryea Field Trip - 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- TBD - Kim Meckwood Presentation - From Conception to Fruition
- TBD - Less Stress Week - Prayer Rock Creation Event

### **Curriculum Updates: Signed by the Provost**

Ninety-Six ICC transition proposals forwarded by the CCC were accepted.

BSN Academic Progression Revisions

BHP Senior Project Revision

BHP-Revision to DEPT 483AK

PUBH-350 Epidemiology New Course Proposal

BIOL 141\_BIOL 141L

BIOL 142\_BIOL 142L

BIOL 210\_BIOL 210L

BIOL 250\_BIOL 250L

BIOL 260\_BIOL 260L

BIOL 350\_BIOL 350L

BIOL 351\_BIOL 351L

BIOL 370\_BIOL 370L

BIOL 371\_BIOL 371L

International Economics

PS 235- Introduction to the Non-Profit Sector

Criminal Justice, Cybercrime, and Sociology Dept Name Change

OIM 351-BUAN-SCM

OIM 351K Grid Change

ACC 527 Title Change

Personal Finance

#### **Following are Approved pending CCC:**

PS 420 - US Democracy Seminar

HIST 207 - Histories of Capitalism

HIST 204- Modern India and South Asia

TRS 353 - Just Business

PS 410 - Global Democracy Seminar

PHIL 432 -Free Will, Science, & Self

CMPS 451 New Course

### **Center for Teaching Excellence**

#### **• Final Workshops for Spring 2026**

The topics for the final workshops for Spring 2026 were decided by a People's Choice vote. The winning topics were as follows:

- **Interactive Lectures: Turning Listeners into Participants, April 23, 2026**  
Join us for a hands-on workshop on interactive lectures, designed to help you move beyond passive learning and create more engaging, student-centered class sessions. Attendance for this session included 3 joining in-person and 3 joining online. (4 CAS, 2 LSHS)
- **Shifting the Focus: Process-Based Assessment in an AI World, April 28, 2026**  
How do we assess student learning when AI can generate answers in seconds? Join us for this practical workshop focused on rethinking how and what we assess.
  - Time: 11:30 AM

- Location: STT 5115 Provost’s Conference Room or live-streamed
  - **Teaching with AI: Designing, Supporting, and Guiding Student Use, May 14, 2026**  
 AI is reshaping how we teach and how students learn. Are you ready to adapt? Join us for this practical workshop designed to help you thoughtfully integrate AI into your teaching.
    - Time: 11:30 AM  
 Location: Brennan Hall 502  
 Registration for the remaining topics is on the My Scranton site, using the Employee CTE Events Card. Sessions are available in-person or via live-stream.
- **Online Course Evaluation Tool Implementation**  
 We are beginning the process of implementing Explorance Blue as our new online course evaluation tool. During our initial meeting with our Explorance Team on April 15, Dr. Jerry Muir and Dr. Christopher Baumann joined us to help establish the goals for implementing this new tool. We are currently working with IT to determine who will be the support representative from their department and to sign off on the project charter. The tentative timeline for implementation will be Explorance guiding the process for Fall 2026, and the CTE personnel running the process independently in the following semester.
- **Accessibility Update**  
 On Friday, April 17, [the DOJ announced it is offering a one-year extension for digital accessibility compliance](#). For public institutions in areas with populations greater than 50,000, with the April 26 deadline, this provided a very last-minute reprieve. For private institutions like the University of Scranton, where the timeframe is less clear, the CTE hopes that the extension provides the time we need to ensure our digital educational content is accessible to everyone. We strongly urge everyone to continue to take steps to improve the accessibility of course content. The CTE is here to support those efforts and will continue to provide resources and guidance.
- **Transitioning to Teams**  
 The June deadline for sunsetting Zoom on campus is quickly approaching. [Support materials are available on the CTE website](#). Also, it is not too late to request a department-specific Teams transition workshop before the end of the semester or for the start of the Fall 2026 semester. Please contact Mary Jane Murphy-Bowne at ext. 4040 to arrange for a session.
- **Professional Video Captioning or Audio Descriptions**  
 Not only do we have 1000 hours of professional (human-created) captioning available with our Panopto license, but this time can also be used for professional audio descriptions. Audio descriptions are an accessibility feature that provides audio narration for essential parts of a video for users with low vision. There may be things you show in an educational video that you are not describing orally. Audio descriptions fill in these details but can be more challenging to include than captions. Our current 1000 hours expire in June, and we would like to see them used. [If you would like any video captioned or have audio descriptions added, please request that service using this form](#). This is a painless way to ensure course media is accessible.
- **Learner Usage Reports**

Do you need access to the Learner Usage Reports in Brightspace? Previously, requests were submitted through an IT ticket. Now we have a new dashboard where you can retrieve those reports when you need them. Reach out to [mary.murphy-bowne@scranton.edu](mailto:mary.murphy-bowne@scranton.edu) if you need access to this dashboard.

- **The CTE is Available All Summer**

The Center for Teaching Excellence is a year-round department. TechCons are available during the Summer Session. [Their current schedule is available on the CTE website and will soon be updated with the summer hours.](#) The CTE team is also available to assist with any summer projects, whether it be a course update, a change in assessment approach, plans for trying a new teaching strategy, or an educational research project. Feel free to schedule time with us when it works for you. [See Mary Jane's Booking page to schedule time.](#)

### **Office of Student Support & Success**

- The OSSS sends a newsletter to faculty each semester with updates and helpful information. In the spring edition, OSSS reminded faculty how to access a pre-recorded presentation on the accommodation process delivered in Fall 2025. The newsletter also highlighted how to schedule meetings with OSSS staff in classrooms, departments, or individual meetings.
- **Tutoring Services:**  
OSSS employs 120 tutors who have conducted 2,331 tutoring sessions so far in Spring 2026 (6,621 sessions this academic year). OSSS provides tutoring in 40 subjects across 157 different courses.
- **Writing Center:**  
Sixteen Writing Center consultants have met with 195 students, completing 390 total consultations to date (1,274 this academic year).
- **Academic Coaching & Student Support:**  
OSSS graduate assistants have conducted 384 academic coaching sessions to date (980 this academic year so far).
- **Students Receiving Academic Accommodations:**  
A total of 782 students on campus are approved for academic accommodations, with 487 currently active. During the 2025–26 academic year, OSSS received 233 accommodation requests: 180 in Fall 2025 and 53 in Spring 2026 to date. This is 20% of the incoming class and up from 16% in 2024-25.
- **Exams Proctored:**  
OSSS has proctored 1,045 exams to date (3,906 during the full academic year so far). OSSS continues to experience challenges related to limited testing space, often utilizing conference rooms and staff offices to accommodate exam proctoring needs.
- **Note-Taking Accommodations:**  
OSSS employs 199 note-takers. Note-taking services are provided in 370 classes, supporting 176 students who receive note-taking accommodations in one or more courses. 3 courses remain unfilled for note-taking support, most commonly due to limited student interest and the HR hiring process, including I-9 documentation requirements.
- **Professional Service & Outreach:**  
The OSSS manager serves on several committees, including Retention, MSCHE

(Standard 4 Co-Chair), and the AI Policy Committee. The manager has participated in 15+ meetings, workshops, and presentations, sharing information about OSSS services, metacognition, and study skills, reaching over 900 student impressions.

### **Graduate Academic and Student Services**

- **Graduate Assistant Information** - Graduate assistantships in non-academic areas have been approved; however, in alignment with the Board's cost-reduction mandate, overall allocations in this area has been reduced by 25% for the 2026–2027 academic year. Consistent with this directive, assistantship allocations within academic areas have also been reduced.
- **Graduate Program Committee** - An increase in fraudulent graduate applications has been identified by both faculty and the Admissions Office. During the April meeting, the committee received an update on efforts to detect and mitigate fraud, including the integration of fraud detection measures within Slate, the implementation of applicant interview requirements for select online programs, and enhanced identity verification processes. Committee members are encouraged to remain vigilant and aware of these application patterns. Prior GPC meetings also included discussions on improving website consistency, as well as ongoing budget challenges and the importance of shared governance.
- **Online Course Evaluations** - A new course evaluation system, Explorance Blue, has been adopted. Faculty collaboration has been instrumental in identifying a solution that effectively meets course evaluation needs. Implementation planning will commence over the summer, with a target launch in Fall 2026.
- **Graduate Student Commencement Speaker** - Seven applications were received for the Graduate Student Commencement Speaker. All candidates were reviewed by a committee, and four finalists were invited to audition. Harshil Prakashbhai Nariya has been selected as the 2026 Graduate Student Commencement Speaker.
- **New Online Graduate Student Orientation** - A new online graduate student orientation is being developed via Teams for each part of term (H1 and H2) across the summer, fall, and spring semesters. The orientation will include introductions to key university services, as well as an overview of Brightspace.
- **Graduate Student Social** - A graduate student social event is being planned to support efforts to enhance engagement and foster a stronger sense of community among graduate students. The event is intended to provide an opportunity for students to connect across colleges, campuses, and academic disciplines in an informal setting.

### **Study Abroad**

- Twenty-eight students are studying abroad for the Spring 2026 semester. They are attending programs in Spain (8 students), Italy (8); France (3); Denmark (2); Japan (2); Australia (1); Czech Republic (1); Ireland (1); Morocco (1); and the United Kingdom (1).
- Four faculty-led study abroad courses will go abroad in Summer 2026. These include T/RS 396 Christ, Resistance and Reconciliation in Germany led by Dr. Michael Azar (8 students); KNES 296 Sport and Physical Culture in Ancient Greece led by Dr. Joan

Grossman and Dr. Andrew Venezia (15 students); and S/CJ 295: Global Crime, Justice & Security – Argentina led by Dr. Michael Jenkins and Dr. Sinchul Bach (6 students).

- Twenty-one students will study abroad this summer on partner university programs hosted in Ireland (9 students); Spain (4); Denmark (3); Italy (2); Japan (2); and South Korea (1).
- Ten students are planning to spend the Fall 2026 semester abroad. Destinations include Spain (6 students); Japan (2); Czech Republic (1); and Ireland (1).

### **Fulbright**

- This year's semi-finalist for a Fulbright year in Finland in 2026-27 was unfortunately not selected as a winner. Indications are that this award cycle was more competitive than previous years – e.g. there were only 1800 grants available as compared to 2100 in the previous cycle, while application numbers were generally similar across years.
- The Fulbright U.S. student competition for the 2027-28 award launched earlier this month. Around 1800 awards are planned again this year. Interested students are invited to attend info sessions in the Office of Global Education in O'Hara Hall in April and May. Students need to complete most of their applications by the end of August, with an on-campus interview scheduled for September. The national Fulbright application deadline is early October 2026; these are for awards for the September 2027 to June 2028 academic year.