

TO: Faculty Senate

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

DATE: December 5, 2024

SUBJECT: Academic Affairs Report for December 2024

---

## **Faculty Development**

### *Intersession Grants 2025*

The Faculty Development Board awarded the following Intersession Grants:

Michael Azar	<i>Gospel of John and the Development of Jewish Christian Passover</i>
Ovidiu Cocieru	<i>An exploration of educator experience in an externally oriented Classroom-as-Organization.</i>
Megan Heeder	“Christocentric Ethics, Misguided Moralis, and Eating Disorders: <i>Veritatis Splendor’s</i> Contribution to Understanding eating Disorders in the Age of Social Media” in the 30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of <i>Veritatis Splendor</i> Special Issue, Spring 2025.
Vanessa Jensen	<i>Realignment of Applied Behavior Analysis Curriculum to Meet Accreditation Standards and Support Student Success of the Behavior Analyst Certification Board Exam.</i>
Joseph Klobusicky	<i>Generating microstructure with machine learning.</i>
Jinqing Liu	<i>From Ritual to Explorative: The Impact of Writing Collective Arguments on Preservice Teachers’ Fraction Knowledge Development.</i>
Ehsan Mahyari	<i>Optimal Charging Control for Autonomous Electric Ride-Sharing Fleet.</i>
Krzysztof Plotka	<i>Large Multiplicative Groups within the class of Hamel functions.</i>
Sheli Pratt-McHugh	<i>Gun Violence Prevention and Libraries.</i>
Yamile Silva	<i>Unearthing a Hidden Voice: Abigail Mejía’s Literary Response to the US Occupation (1916-1924).</i>
Nabil Tamimi	<i>Employing Optimization Techniques to Compute Perfect Withdrawal Rates of Immediate Fixed Annuities Under Various Interest Rates and Life Expectancies.</i>
Mehmet Yetim	<i>Empathy As A Strategic Asset: Creating Multi-Dimensional Value in Organizations.</i>
Xinyu Zhou	<i>Navigating Uncertainty: Mitigating Negative Effects through a Social Norm Perspective.</i>

## **Sabbaticals**

The Faculty Research Committee recommended, and the Provost approved the following sabbaticals:

### **Fall 2025**

Anthony Betancourt (pre-tenure)  
Ovidu Cocieru  
Satyajit Ghosh  
Emily Hopkins  
Robert Smith

### **Spring 2026**

Michael Friedman  
Maria Poggi-Johnson  
Christos Pargianas  
Paul Sampson (pre-tenure)  
Maria Squire

### **Summer 2025 & Intersession 2026**

Kate Cummings  
Ian O'Hara

### **Academic 2025-2026**

Joseph Kraus  
Cara Krieg  
Janice Voltzow  
Joseph Wilson

## **Prison Program**

The second cohort at the Dallas SCI will graduate on December 18, 2024. Several of the graduates have applied to Villanova's B.A. program at SCI Phoenix, and one has applied to attend the University of Scranton as a commuter student to complete his bachelor's degree. I want to thank all the faculty who have taught in this program and Dr. Haw for his leadership, passion, and dedication.

## **Graduate Studies**

### **Online Course Migration**

We currently have 68 out of 79 online graduate spring 2025 courses completed and 12 awaiting faculty input or approval. There are a total of 39 summer/fall courses needing to be migrated and 14 of them are in progress. Overall, we have 58% of courses migrated and approved by faculty.

There are 4 online courses scheduled to run in Brightspace for intersession. This will give us a chance to troubleshoot any issues that may occur.

The Center for Teaching Excellence hosted faculty trainings via Zoom for Brightspace the week of December 2nd. There were 2 faculty at each training. Student training is scheduled for Friday, December 13 to assist in becoming familiar with Brightspace. Trainings will continue into January for both faculty and students.

We have a specialized Help Desk for online students and faculty.

- *For online courses that were previously offered in Engage, we have a specialized Help Desk for faculty and students, which will be operated by Collegis. The new Help Desk phone number to call for your online courses (previous Engage courses) is 570-941-2433 (AIDE), available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When this number is called there will be 2 prompts:*

- Press 1: my.scranton password or duo issues [this will ring to the Technology Support Center (TSC) during our open hours and to the TSC closed menu when we are closed]
- Press 2: Brightspace Learning Management System support (this will ring to the TSC from 8-5 M-F and go to Collegis otherwise)
- \*Please note- in order for the Collegis team to verify your credentials, they may ask for your R number, name, Scranton email, birth year, mailing city, mailing state, and/or mailing nation\*
- *For assistance with all other courses, please call (570)-941-4357 (HELP). Please keep in mind these services are available during our normal operating hours for the TSC. Collegis will not be able to assist with on-campus issues or courses.*

Collegis will be available for Help Desk issues for the 4 intersession courses from 5pm Friday, December 20 through 8am January 2.

Graduate Assistant Information (this is a memo that will be sent out to faculty, but it is important to include here as well)

In response to feedback received about graduate assistant tuition remission and stipends, we made modifications for the 2025-2026 academic year. As you can see in the table below, we have added one new level of tuition remission and stipend and increased the remission amount of the upper level, and adjusted the others to be proportional:

Work Hours Expected per Week	Tuition Remission	Stipend per Academic Year
5	20%	\$2,200
10	40%	\$4,400
15	60%	\$6,600
20	80%	\$8,800

As a reminder, graduate assistant applications are currently available, however, in order to be considered for a graduate assistant position, students must submit a *Graduate Admissions Application* as well.

In addition, please note:

- November 1- Graduate assistant applications opened
- March 1- Graduate assistant applications due; *applications will not be accepted* after this date.

- May 1- Faculty submission of graduate assistant offers due; any department who has not submitted a graduate assistant offer via Slate by this date may have the position reallocated to another department.

Department faculty can review graduate assistant applications any time prior to May 1. We can send the offer with the admissions acceptance letter, which should assist with graduate student recruitment.

## **ORSP**

Since the beginning of the Fall 2024 semester, ORSP has submitted 8 grants to various agencies including the National Science Foundation, NASA, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, subawards funded through NSF and the Department of Homeland Security, and various smaller agencies. A total of \$840,370 was requested. Grants awarded this semester include NSF DASI Track 2, an individual award provided by the Frankford Radio Club, and a subaward through Catholic University of America (NASA – PHaSER) for a total of \$282,905 in funds received.

Eighteen Research as a High Impact Practice internal grants were awarded on Dec. 5, funding faculty-led student research across 7 academic departments including Psychology, English & Theatre, Counseling & Human Services, Biology, Mathematics, Physics/EE, and Chemistry. Funding totals were \$7,413, max award \$500.

## **Curriculum**

### New Course

T/RS 321: God, Science, Race

### Date Posted

10/7/24

### Program Change

Business Analytics Certificate

10/16/24

### Course Change

MKT 351: Introduction to Marketing

HPRO 210: Introduction to Health Promotion & Disease Prevention

11/11/24

HPRO 230: Multicultural Health

11/11/24

HPRO 310: Behavior Theory in Health Promotion Practice

11/11/24

HPRO 320: Planning and Implementing & Evaluating Health Promotion

11/11/24

HPRO 330: Research Methods in Public Health

11/11/24

HPRO 340: Advocacy and Health Communication

11/11/24

HPRO 400: Health and Wellness Coaching

11/11/24

HPRO 413: Worksite Health Promotion

11/11/24

HPRO 420: Interprofessional Seminar in Health Promotion

11/11/24

## **Updates:**

- Fr. Marina has asked Dean Barry and Associate Dean Dzurec to convene representatives from each of the Humanities departments to create a proposal for a Humanities Commons including a digital humanities lab on campus.
- Notifications for students who have been accepted into Alpha Sigma Nu are being sent out prior to Thanksgiving with a ceremony on March 30, 2025.

- On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, all three schools/colleges partnered with the Jesuit Center to host first and second-year tenure-track faculty for a dinner further explaining the Jesuit mission and opportunities for faculty development to deepen their understanding of and ability to carry out their mission in their teaching, research, and service. Dr. Amelia Randich (Biology) was the featured speaker.
- The second round of applications for undergraduate student research is due on December 15<sup>th</sup>.
- We discovered recently some not surprising but great [news](#) about the success of our CAS students: among Catholic undergraduate colleges and universities in the U.S. ranked for producing Ph.D. recipients from 2016 to 2022, The University of Scranton ranked No. 3 in the area mathematics and statistics; No. 10 for biological and biomedical sciences; No.10 for chemistry and No. 16 for health sciences.
- **Edward R. Leahy Jr. Clinic for the Uninsured**  
The Medical Clinic in the Leahy Clinic reopened in January 2024 under a partnership with Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine (GCSOM). Students from many majors across campus have been volunteering in the clinic, e.g., health administration, nursing, occupational therapy, pre-health professions, modern languages, etc. From the GSCOM side there have been a steady stream of medical students volunteering in the clinic (many of whom did their undergraduate degree at the University of Scranton) and some of the family medicine residents from Geisinger have volunteered to see patients. Under the direction of the clinic Medical Director, Susan Russell, MD, the Leahy Clinic was awarded a prestigious grant from American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation to purchase much needed imaging and diagnostic equipment for the clinic.

Our DPT students continue to treat patients in the Pro Bono PT Clinic every Tuesday and Thursday under the supervision of the PT faculty. The Royal Nurses from our BSN program rotate through the Leahy Clinic during spring term as part of NURS 471L Clinical Experience in Nursing Care in the Community. Efforts are currently underway to add a Speech Language Pathology Clinic and to expand the OT clinic to areas beyond low vision.

- **Reopening of the Counseling and Behavioral Health Clinic**  
The Edward R. Leahy Jr. Clinic for the Uninsured is excited to announce that the Counseling and Behavioral Health Clinic, which last operated prior to the pandemic, is again seeing clients. The clinic offers counseling to adults and children from Lackawanna County who are marginalized and uninsured and/or have limited access to these services. The clinic's services can improve the health and well-being of individuals and families by having both a treatment and prevention focus.

This clinic is housed in the former autism hub building on Mulberry Street. With funding from the Highmark Foundation, the space enjoyed a facelift to create an inviting, comfortable and inclusive space where hope, healing and growth can occur on the part of both the clients being seen and the counseling students working there. The clinic is equipped with technology that enables real-time viewing of in-progress sessions as well as the ability to record sessions for later review. The clinic is also able to train students to utilize electronic medical records.

- **Summer Academy for Speech and Language Enrichment**

The first cohort of students from The University of Scranton's Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) master's degree program gained more than they expected during their first eight-week clinical rotation at the Summer Academy for Speech and Language Enrichment at the Scranton School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children (SSDHHC).

The Summer Academy 2024 hosted 15 children from the SSDHHC and the local Abington community. Children were 3-10 years of age with a broad spectrum of disabilities and speech/language impairments. Many children have coexisting disabilities including autism, apraxia of speech, Charge Syndrome and intellectual disabilities. Hearing loss varied from mild to severe and included the use of hearing aids and cochlear implants. This unique learning opportunity for SLP students to work with these children was developed by the program's director, Dr. Hope E. Baylow, associate professor, and Tara Carito, the clinical education coordinator for the SLP program. Financial support for the Summer Academy for Speech and Language Enrichment was provided through the generosity of the Edward R. Leahy Jr. Endowment.

- **First Cohort Enrolled in Doctoral Program in Occupational Therapy**

Students seeking a degree in occupational therapy at The University of Scranton now have the option to pursue a clinical doctorate degree, OTD, as an alternative to the MS degree. The inaugural doctoral cohort is currently planning their capstone project, which is an independent, collaborative project aimed at addressing a need in the community. The capstone project is an intensive academic endeavor that will span two years from concept to completion and will include a full semester in the clinical or community setting.

OTD students at The University of Scranton bring a rich background to apply to the development of meaningful capstone projects. In addition to the rigorous academic and clinical education they have received, Scranton students have the benefit of being immersed in the Jesuit mission for the entirety of their OT program. OTD students approach this opportunity with a unique, caring and empathetic view of persons and of a society in need. This is well exemplified in the range of projects currently being developed by the doctoral students: an arts program for incarcerated individuals; performing arts for children with special needs; advocacy for OT programs in Africa; a farm-based program for mental health; life-skills program for people in recovery; and an adaptive cheering program for school-age children, among others.

The OTD program is being led by Dr. Deborah Budash, who is the doctoral capstone coordinator. There are nine students in the first OTD cohort and 10 in the second. The first capstone projects, and thus the first OTD degrees, will be completed by May of 2026.