

# URSINUS COLLEGE HUMAN RESOURCES

# OUR PEOPLE

JULY 2020

Contact us: email [hr@ursinus.edu](mailto:hr@ursinus.edu) or visit [ursinus.edu/offices/human-resources](https://ursinus.edu/offices/human-resources)



## DEAR COLLEAGUES,

While this quarter has presented us with a very challenging work environment as a result of COVID-19, we have made great strides in moving both the strategic work and the operational work of the college forward in a positive manner. Thank you, again, for all your hard work, your dedication and your flexibility as we continue to push forward into continued unknown circumstances.

From an HR perspective, this quarter we have focused our time and energy on two strategic initiatives: collaborating and preparing action plans (in accordance with legislation, CDC guidelines and college practices) for your safe return to work; and continuing the emphasis on our revised performance management platform as a result of your feedback.

As we think about both initiatives, it's evident that they complement each other. On one hand, we are now thinking about different ways of doing our work, different opportunities available to support us and the work that we do, and different processes

or technologies that have proven to work well for us. On the other hand, we can use the annual review not only to clarify or modify the expectations of our work, but to also set goals based on our gained knowledge of how we accomplish our work. These discussions encourage open dialogue between employees and their supervisors which, in turn, builds a positive culture and contributes to successful performance.

This edition of our quarterly newsletter provides you with much information on these two initiatives as we build upon our "new normal." I hope it is useful to you as our restrictions are slowly being lifted, but if you have any questions about your particular circumstance, I encourage you to reach out to us so that we can work with you to alleviate any concerns. I hope everyone is and remains creative, safe and healthy!

Sincerely,  
Kelley Williams  
Director of Human Resources

## Meet Michael Thompkins, Assistant Director of Residence Life



This summer marks Michael's one-year anniversary at Ursinus College. The South Jersey native joined the student affairs team in 2019

and oversees Main Street houses. Prior to that, the Towson University graduate worked at Johns Hopkins University and the University of Connecticut. While Michael is a familiar smiling face frequently seen around campus, his Ursinus colleagues may not know that he's a music lover—he sings, plays the alto saxophone, the guitar and even a little piano—and has a black belt in taekwondo. When not on campus, Michael loves to travel. He recently shared one very meaningful opportunity, stating, "In December 2017, I had the chance to go to Israel through the Birthright Program, and it was one of the greatest experiences I had ever had in my life. To see, touch and experience a country that has so much personal significance to me was overwhelming and it is a trip that I will never forget."



JOIN US ON  
MAIN STREET  
(VIRTUALLY)!

LIVE! On Main is a new online platform where we can meet as friends, neighbors and colleagues to celebrate and support our community's inspirational thought leaders, creative artists, talented musicians, big-hearted local restaurants and innovative entrepreneurs. Visit [ursinus.edu/LiveOnMain](https://ursinus.edu/LiveOnMain) this summer!

# YOUR RETURN TO CAMPUS

As restrictions in Montgomery County are being lifted, we are preparing for your eventual return to campus.

The Office of Human Resources and the college's COVID 19 task force are working with individual offices and departments to prepare plans for working on campus. Each employee should continue remote work where possible and guidelines for each division will reflect a staggered and flexible return-to-work arrangement. Furthermore, due to the COVID 19 pandemic and a shift in summer work accommodations, we will not be employing a flexible summer hours policy as we typically do.

For employees who believe they are in an "at-risk" category with regard to returning to work and to support confidentiality as best we can, we ask that those employees self-identify to the Human Resources Office so that there can be engaged discussions as to how we might proceed with work expectations. HR will work individually in collaboration with supervisors to ensure that these individuals establish safe and reasonable working situations. The college will also work with each division to allow for adequate support for returning employees to mentally prepare for all necessary workplace changes.

To ensure we implement consistent guidelines for working on campus, human resources and the COVID 19 task force recommend a series of considerations that should occur at the individual, divisional and institutional level. Taken collectively, they provide an outline of sensible and practical practices that promote safety and better hygiene. More details will be provided on the Ursinus website. Visit [ursinus.edu/BearsReturn](https://ursinus.edu/BearsReturn).

## BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Ursinus is committed to creating as safe an environment as possible as we welcome students, faculty and staff back to campus. That will include several guiding principles for faculty and staff:

- Working remotely should remain the preferred option for those who are able.
- Continue excellent hygiene practices.
- Minimizing travel to and from campus.
- Testing of all students, faculty, and staff for COVID infection.
- Working with at-risk faculty, staff and students, including those with home concerns such as child-care and vulnerable family members.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT



At Ursinus, we have creatively adapted to new ways of engaging with one another. Virtual One Book, One Ursinus and

Conversations About and Across Difference events are just two examples of how our community adjusted to a new online environment in the spring. This summer, NewU and Staff Assembly want your help in identifying ways to engage online! Share your ideas by emailing [newu@ursinus.edu](mailto:newu@ursinus.edu) or [staffassembly@ursinus.edu](mailto:staffassembly@ursinus.edu).



# ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

This spring, the Office of Human Resources held a series of virtual meetings to share changes to our performance management platform. That process will begin in July—a late start given the nature of our remote working environment—with the goal of completing the reviews by the end of August.

All employees will receive a recap of the information discussed in the virtual presentations by mid-July. The materials will also include an updated annual review form, individual job descriptions and detailed instructions for the new process.

As presented to you, the performance review platform is again based on job responsibilities, but it has been revised based on your feedback and the rating system has been adjusted to provide more range for accurately reflecting performance; how your job supports the community values of the college; and goal setting initiatives for FY21 that will be rolled out later this fall (as outlined in the March newsletter).

Keep an eye out for more details in your email inboxes in July.

## ***Retirement Plan Change***

The college will not make contributions into the 403(b) retirement plan for benefit-eligible employees during FY21. If you wish to continue to contribute to your retirement account, please complete the salary reduction agreement on our webpage at [go.ursinus.edu/RetirementPlan](http://go.ursinus.edu/RetirementPlan).

## ***New Hire***

Brendan Dougherty joined the enrollment division as an admission counselor on May 26. Brendan is a sports fan who plays volleyball and flag football and he loves cars. He and his fiancée, Kaitlyn, own two dogs, a Dalmatian named Sophie and a Great Dane, Finn. Welcome to Ursinus, Brendan!

## ***Faculty Honored with Annual Awards***

The online celebration of the Class of 2020 in May included virtual presentations of the traditional commencement awards for faculty. President Brock Blomberg was joined by Dean Mark Schneider and faculty representatives to surprise the recipients of this year's Laughlin Award for Distinguished Professional Achievement (Jennifer Fleeger, associate professor of media and communications studies and film studies coordinator); the H. Lloyd Jones Award for Distinguished Advising and Mentoring (Susanna Throop, associate professor and chair of history); and the Lindback Distinguished Teaching Award (Ryan Walvoord, assistant professor of chemistry). Congratulations to our faculty honorees! View the videos at [ursinus.edu/commencement](http://ursinus.edu/commencement).

## ***Staff Awards Update***

Staff Assembly rolled out the call for [nominations for the Tortorelli and Laughlin Awards](#) in May, but given the remote work environment, not many nominations were received. They would like to extend the nomination process through July and honor the winners sometime in August. Please look for more communication from Staff Assembly about this in the near future.

## ***In Memoriam: Martena Roshon***



Martena Roshon, former gift records coordinator in the advancement office, passed away in April after a valiant battle with cancer. Martena was a beloved colleague and worked with the largest of grins and the greatest “can do” spirit. She reflected the best of our Ursinus values and made

the advancement team better and our lives richer by her presence. As the advancement office lead for gift processing from September 2012 through August 2019, Martena was at the center of the operational wheel that kept the advancement team moving forward. Beyond that, she formed lasting friendships with her colleagues. In her free time, Martena enjoyed gardening, attending concerts and visiting Florida and Ocean City, N.J. She is survived by her daughters, Lindsay and Jaime, and son-in-law, Nathan, as well as her brothers Richard, Kevin and Delmar.

# SPOTLIGHT: THE INSTITUTE FOR INCLUSION AND EQUITY

In support of our commitment to being a more inclusive campus, Ursinus is creating professional development programs, ongoing events and educational activities that will expand beyond the Institute for Inclusion and Equity. At the same time, the IIE will



continue broadening its reach to include more opportunities that engage faculty and staff. In conjunction with these efforts, Ashley Henderson will be elevated to the position of director of the Institute for Inclusion and Equity, effective July 1. In

her new role Ashley will continue to direct student inclusion groups, plan programs and grow opportunities for further collaboration across campus. Her vision for the Institute, is for it to “continue to be a resource and gem for the campus.”

Terrence Williams will continue supporting the college’s inclusion efforts by bringing greater focus and intentionality to the development of inclusion programming for faculty and staff, and identifying opportunities for us to strengthen our work in this area. In his role as chair, he will also bring greater focus to the work of the Diversity Committee. Terrence will continue in his role as assistant dean of student affairs.

We acknowledge the recent and upcoming retirements of these members of the Ursinus community. Please join us in thanking them for their dedication and service to our mission. We wish each of them well in their retirement. They will be missed!

## ANTI-RACISM RESOURCES FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

In light of the racial injustices happening throughout our country, the Institute for Inclusion and Equity and the Diversity Action Resource Team (DART) have come together to develop a list of resources to help better understand issues of social justice in America.

### Top Books

1. *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
2. *If Beale Street Could Talk* by James Baldwin
3. *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race* by Beverly Tatum
4. *The New Jim Crow: Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander
5. *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson

### Top Films

1. *When They See Us* (2019)
2. *I Am Not Your Negro* (2017)
3. *Hidden Figures* (2016)
4. *Selma* (2014)
5. *Do the Right Thing* (1989)



Visit [ursinus.edu/offices/institute-for-inclusion-and-equity/resources](https://ursinus.edu/offices/institute-for-inclusion-and-equity/resources) for more.

### June 2020

#### Mark Gadson

Executive Director, Leadership Giving and Advancement Resources



#### Charles Jamison

Professor and Special Collections Librarian



### July 2020

#### Michele Steinmetz

Administrative Coordinator for Major and Planned Gifts



### August 2020

#### Ruth Sprague

User Support Specialist, Library and Information Technology

