

**Welcome to the  
20<sup>th</sup> Annual Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts  
Undergraduate Research Conference  
Thursday April 21st, 2022**

**Schedule of Events**

**8:30 AM – 10:00 AM**

Conference Registration\* (Bowman Lobby)

**1:00 PM - 1:30 PM**

Meet the Keynote Speaker (Students Only), Sullivan Lounge

**8:45 AM - 9:00 AM**

Welcome Remarks from Dr. Anna Jaysane-Darr, Chair of Undergraduate Research, and Dr. Ely Janis, Dean of Academic Affairs (Bowman Lobby)

**1:30 PM - 2:30 PM**

Paper Presentations II A (Bowman 203)  
Special Session: Feigenbaum Scholars (Bowman 122)  
Special Session: Explorations in Visual Culture (Bowman 201)  
Performance: Queering Sherlock Holmes (Murdock 218)

**9:00 AM - 10:00 AM**

Paper Presentations I A (Bowman 201)  
Paper Presentations I B (Bowman 203)  
Special Session: IAH Student Grant Panel (Bowman 122)

**2:45 PM - 3:45 PM**

Special Session: Interdisciplinary Worlds (Bowman 201)  
Special Session: Artist Talks (Bowman 122)  
Creative Writing at MCLA: A Special Session of Readings (Murdock 218)

**10:15 AM - 11:45 AM**

Poster Session (Venable Gym)

**12:00 PM – 12:45 PM**

Campus Center Gym  
Welcome Remarks from President Birge  
Feigenbaum Fellowship Award  
Keynote Address by Rose Mastico ('18)  
Lunches (to dine in or take away)

**3:45 PM – 4:45 PM**

Artist Open Studios (Bowman 319)  
Art Exhibit: Intro to Sculpture (Bowman 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Gallery)  
Special Session: Community Nutrition (Bowman 119)

*\*Conference Registration will be moved to Venable Gymnasium during the poster session from 10:15 AM – 11:45 AM, and then Campus Center Gym 12:00 – 1:15 PM.*

*\*\*Please remember to complete the attendee survey available at registration tables and in all presentation classrooms\*\**

***Paper Presentations (I A)***  
**Bowman 201, 9:00-10:00 AM**

**Title:** What part might collectivism play in the lower rates of PTSD in Asian cultures vs. the rates of Western Cultures? A review of the research

**Author(s):** Katherine Bailey

**Advisor:** Anna Jaysane-Darr

**Keywords:** PTSD, collectivist society, individualistic society, cross-cultural analysis

**Abstract:** Collectivist societies have historically been shown to have lower rates of trauma responses in contrast to the rates of Individualistic societies such as the United States and Europe. Cognitive theories of PTSD connect emotion and cognition in the development of the symptoms of PTSD. In individuals who are otherwise healthy, reviews of decades' worth of research has shown that emotional information is better remembered than neutral information. These strong memories of negative emotional information can in turn present as trauma responses amongst those who experience them. My review of the research sought to discover if a link could be made between the sociobiological differences and emotional perceptions of collectivist cultures and individualistic cultures. The prior research on this subject is limited, although researchers discovered the down-regulation of emotional processing amongst the Asian population studied was visible when brain wave patterns were studied in response to unpleasant, highly arousing photographs. The research was able to show that this suppression of emotion occurred at a biological level, with the presumption it was an end result of their cultural training to regulate emotional response to unpleasant experiences. Within the body of research reviews I conducted, however, a few important points stand out that may also serve as contributory to the lower rates of PTSD amongst the Asian population. Higher socioeconomic status may serve as a protective factor against PTSD, as does level of education. There often occurs a notable reticence on the part of the Asian population studied to seek therapy for trauma. The available research also does not account for the effects of cultural displacement, and the ethnocentric approaches to the assumption that the symptoms of PTSD are universal and require treatment by a society focused on medicalized approaches.

**Title:** Care as a Radical Form of Healing: Postcolonial Trauma Novels and Theories of Recovery

**Author(s):** Michael Rotigliano

**Advisor:** Jenna Sciuto

**Keywords:** care, postcolonial trauma, healing

**Abstract:** Postcolonial trauma literature is a subset of literary work that situates itself in active opposition to colonial power as a living testimony to shared histories of domination and widespread cultural and personal trauma. Simultaneously, these

narratives find space to present theories of recovery and potential ways of healing from the legacy of that trauma. Through an exploration of three novels –Jesmyn Ward’s *Sing, Unburied, Sing* (2017), Shanti Mootoo’s *Cereus Blooms at Night* (1996), and Edwidge Danticat’s *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994) –my research looks to highlight the ways these novels present localized culturally specific manifestations of recovery that utilize radical forms of storytelling and care. Pulling from previous work in literary trauma theory, I examine the link between postcolonial trauma, both transhistorical and individual, and specific narrative forms of recovery, manifesting in the use of care as a radical process of resistance that takes the form of shared public intimacy.

**Title:** Political Violence in Colombia: Looking Ahead, Contextualizing Today

**Author(s):** Anthony Gattuso

**Advisor:** David Cupery

**Keywords:** Colombia, political violence, FARC

**Abstract:** How should we best understand present and future trends in political violence in Colombia? In 2016, the government of Colombia under President Juan Santos signed a peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), marking an official end to the Colombian conflict. The conflict, a low intensity civil war between government forces and multiple independent guerilla groups and paramilitary organizations, spanned more than half a century killing hundreds of thousands and displacing more than five million people. It continues to have ripple effects today and will continue to in the future. My research analyzes the historical evolution of the conflict as well as the comparative research on political violence to provide insight about the future of this issue and others in Colombia.

***Paper Presentations (I B)***  
**Bowman 203, 9:00-10:00 AM**

**Title:** Racial Inequalities in Early Childhood Education

**Author(s):** Brianna Mensah

**Advisor:** Samantha Pettey

**Keywords:** early childhood education, racial inequality, case study

**Abstract:** Early childhood education, ECE, is a crucial step in a child's academic career, however there are racial and ethnic inequalities in access to early childhood education. This paper asks, "What in early childhood education programs, specifically for ages 0 to 5 years old, are creating racial inequalities?" Existing policies tend to focus on affluent, white communities with more resources and access to these programs. So, as ECE programs increase, the academic success of minority children will continue to be unequal because the policies bring a lack of access for them. This paper will examine existing research on outcomes surrounding ECE policies and how they impact children of color. Further, I will conduct a comparative case study on current ECE policies in Massachusetts, while drawing comparisons from differing policies of other US states. I expect to find discrepancies in ECE policies that negatively impact racial and ethnic minorities.

**Oral Presentation**

**Title:** Cooperative Rivals: U.S and Soviet Relations during World War II

**Author(s):** Samuel Levitz

**Advisor:** Sean Scanlon

**Keywords:** international relations, World War II, US History

**Abstract:** Although the United States shared diplomatic relations with many important nations during World War II, it is its relationship with the Soviet Union that was the most complex and critical to the Allied war effort. This presentation will explore the ways in which these two powers with seemingly opposite ideologies coordinated with one another, in order to combat their shared enemy, as well as how differences between the two powers complicated their relations. By utilizing sources gathered from diplomatic historians, as well as from letters and statements by American ambassadors to the Soviet Union, this presentation will argue that although there were attempts by U.S and Soviet officials to construct long-term cooperation between the two nations, ideological and strategic differences between the two powers led to the Cold War rivalry that dominated world politics in the post-war world.

**Title:** Chronically Online: A Look at Digital Interactions in a Time of Social Injustice

**Author(s):** Ian Crombie

**Advisor:** Anna Jaysane-Darr

**Keywords:** generation, online interactions, politics

**Abstract:** This project aims to gain a better understanding of behavior and interaction in online spaces, language as it relates to culture, and generational values. The main question being asked is how do people's generational and sociocultural identities influence language use online in relation to social justice topics? Generally, it is believed that younger generations interact with social media in a way that allows them to have a better understanding of age, race, disability and ability, gender and sexuality, economic inequality, religious beliefs, citizenship, mental health, political affiliation, and education status than older generations. This is believed to be because these affect them more than ever or more than any older generation. This allows for the creation of new language use to better fit progressive narratives on language use. It is also suspected that younger generations are influenced by echo chambers which provide self-confirming spaces online and therefore do not have a better understanding of these topics compared to older generations. The goal of this study is to better understand these interactions with old and young generations, how language is used in these interactions, and to find out if they are caused by self-confirmation bias or not, through surveying.

**Title:** Correlation between Age and Views of Climate Change Response

**Author(s):** Em Marlay-Wright

**Advisor:** Samantha Pettey

**Keywords:** climate change, youth, politics

**Abstract:** A notable amount of involvement in the fight against climate change is driven by younger generations. Therefore, when studying opinions on the government's response to climate change, it's important for researchers to examine how age impacts these opinions. Extant research finds younger generations will be significantly impacted by climate change. My research expands on existing literature by examining how the experiences of young people with the climate shape their views on the government's overall response to climate change. I run a crosstabulation analysis using the American National Election Studied (NES) Dataset and find younger age groups believe the government needs to do more to address climate change. This research suggests that the youth have a unique albeit negative experience with government response to climate change. Therefore, as these populations age and vote at higher rates, climate change policy will have to be addressed better by the government.

***Special Session (I C): IAH Student Grant Panel***  
**Bowman 122, 9:00-10:00 AM**

**Title:** IAH Student Grant Panel

**Author(s):** Brianna Christie, Odiase Williamson, Erick Ramos, Jonny Tobey, Alison Blakeslee, Johan Serrano, Paula Kingsbury-Evans, Kennedy Sobon, Quray Clarke, Kiara Bresett, Abigail Daggett, Paige Wandrei, Roman Robledo

**Advisor:** Erica Barreto

**Facilitator:** Roman Robledo

**Keywords:** students, funding, IAH

**Abstract:** Students will be invited to answer questions and share stories about how opportunities to fund independent research and student projects help build community and launch careers as well as support artistic and individual growth. It is our hope that sharing these stories can and will inspire other students to explore the variety of funding opportunities available to them at MCLA.

***Poster Session***  
**Venable Gymnasium, 10:15-11:45 AM**

**Title:** Effect of Cigarette Pollution on Soil Microbial Communities

**Author(s):** Roman Robledo

**Advisor:** Carolyn Dehner

**Keywords:** cigarette butts, pollution, soil ecosystems

**Abstract:** Cigarette butts are the most littered item worldwide. Some studies estimate that 5.6 trillion butts are littered annually. The prevalence of this waste in our soils exposes these ecosystems to a variety of toxins, such as heavy metals, plastics, carcinogenic tar and agricultural chemicals. Cigarette butt pollution can affect soil ecosystems by increasing heavy metal concentrations, changing the composition of microbial taxa and potentially lowering pH. Soil microbial communities provide many ecosystems services which are essential to terrestrial life. We set out to determine the effect of various types and amounts of cigarette butts on the health and function of soil and the microbial communities within them. Measurements included soil pH, heavy metal concentrations by ICP-OES and microbial composition via 16S rRNA gene sequencing. The obtained results will help us to understand the impact of this common contaminant on our terrestrial ecosystems.

**Title:** The Effects of Ethanol and Cocaine on Phototaxis in Planarians

**Author(s):** Timothy Duncan, Trinity Luther

**Advisor:** Thomas Byrne

**Keywords:** ethanol, cocaine, planarians, toxicology, behavioral pharmacology

**Abstract:** We examined the behavioral effects of ethanol in brown planarians in two experiments. In the first experiment, we tested both the acute and chronic effects of ethanol on travel time. To do so, we took advantage of the planarian's innate tendency to move away from a light source. Ethanol increased travel time in a dose-dependent fashion. However, there was no evidence of tolerance following chronic administration. In a second experiment, we examined the dose-dependent effects of cocaine. Results were collected using both within-subject and between-groups design. These experiments demonstrated that negative phototaxis in planarians is reliable and stable, allowing for experimental determinations of dose-response curves. In addition, we note that planarians may be a cost-effective animal model for behavioral pharmacology and toxicology. Being invertebrates, they are not subject to federal animal welfare regulations which may make vertebrate research too costly in some settings.

**Title:** Theoretical Approach on Styrene Synthesis via Pt Metal

**Author(s):** Molly Wojnicki & Justina Pardi

**Advisor:** Yavuz Ceylan

**Keywords:** styrene production, platinum, density functional theory, catalysts

**Abstract:** Styrene production by a (DAB)PtII(TFA)( $\eta^2$ -C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>) complex was modeled using density functional theory (DFT). The proposed catalytical cycle initiated with the monomerization from the dimer with the aid of ethylene, the produced C-H activated monomer, followed by ethylene insertion into the Pt-Ph bond, and then  $\beta$ -hydrogen elimination. The calculations provided broad kinetic and thermodynamic aspect of the styrene production and geometrical parameters help elucidate the catalytical mechanism. The theoretical calculations provide evidence of prospective advantage of using platinum in styrene synthesis and the present study were compared with that of a previously reported PdII complex to help identify more suitable catalysts for the direct production of styrene from ethylene and benzene.

**Title:** Music Use and Mood Regulation in College Students

**Author(s):** Timothy Duncan & Maia Rice

**Advisor:** Maria Bartini

**Keywords:** music, mood regulation, coping mechanisms, media consumption

**Abstract:** Music can be therapeutically utilized in various settings due to its high accessibility. Mindful listening to music help college students regulate their emotions more effectively and flourish academically and socially (Faran et al., 2021). The present study will examine how college students consume media as a strategy to cope with stress/negative emotions and explore which different types of music are most often used to cope. Participants will be asked questions about their mood regulation habits, use of music and other types of media as a means of coping, and their music and media habits. We expect that most students will use media and music as a form of coping. We also expect that happy and calm music is most likely to be used when coping with negative emotions. This study may help us understand how college students use music and media to cope with emotional turbulence.

**Title:** Breeding Habitat Use During Migration by *Junco hyemalis* (Dark-eyed Juncos) in Western Massachusetts

**Author(s):** Hannah Wait

**Advisor:** Daniel Shustack

**Keywords:** dark-eyed juncos, breeding habitat, migration

**Abstract:** *Junco hyemalis* (Dark-eyed Juncos) are observed year-round in Berkshire County, Massachusetts. The migration patterns and behavior of this population is not fully known and is part of our ongoing research. We used deuterium ratios from the most distal secondary feather to assess spring migration behavior of juncos captured at

two high elevation (>500m) breeding sites. At the “Fire Tower” site (760m), juncos breed, but do not overwinter. There is no supplemental food. The deuterium value of every Fire Tower junco sampled matched that of the local breeding population, and 60% were observed during the subsequent breeding season. The “Frost” site (518m) has juncos year-round, and supplemental food is available fall through spring. There, ~37% had isotopic values that aligned with the local breeding population, and >60% were migrants. A more nuanced and complete understanding of migratory behavior in specific populations of juncos is important in fully understanding this declining species.

**Title:** Effects of Social Isolation on Cortisol, Microbiome and Behavior of Zebrafish (Danio rerio)

**Author(s):** Bryanna Breault

**Advisor:** Justin Golub

**Keywords:** social isolation, stress, health

**Abstract:** The stay-at-home orders during the early days of the COVID-19 Pandemic brought to focus the issues of social isolation on mental health, which are likely to have continued and far-reaching effects on social behavior and overall health. Stress can affect biochemistry, microbiomes, and behavior. Our goal was to examine stress caused by isolation using a social species, Zebrafish (Danio rerio). We mimicked the effect of isolation by rearing fish for 1 month in isolation, and groups with (control) and without heterogeneous environments. After a month we collected tank water to measure cortisol (stress hormones), and culture bacteria representative of their microbiome, expecting changes as a result of isolation. We also tested behavioral responses to predator, foraging, and social cues, to correlate behavior with rearing environment. Any connections we observe between isolation and changes to biochemistry, microbiome, and behavior help us understand the effects of social isolation on individuals.

**Title:** Creating a Mesh-Networked Turbidity Sensor

**Author(s):** Jeremy Griffin

**Advisor:** David Eve

**Keywords:** turbidity sensor, mesh-network, Arduino

**Abstract:** For this presentation I will display a poster explaining my procedure for creating a mesh-networked, Arduino controlled, turbidity sensor project I worked on during the Fall 2021 semester. I will explain the decision-making process in deciding on what PCB to use. In this case I used an ESP-8266 module for its networking capabilities. After finding the correct hardware, I had to research code for setting up a mesh-network for three modules that can send and receive data no matter where they are located on the Wi-Fi network. I tried using the ESP\_NOW module but ran into difficulties displaying multiple sets of data (the only data displayed at the master sensor module was the data from the sensor directly connected to it) so ultimately decided on

using the painless mesh library. Setting up a power supply for the 3 sensor modules was the final step. For this I decided on using a power supply module (3.3V / 5V) for Arduino solderless breadboard.

**Title:** Measuring Microplastics in Store-Bought Mussels

**Author(s):** Lauryn Rogers & Hope Blake

**Advisor:** Anne Goodwin

**Keywords:** micro plastics, mussels, pollution

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to identify the amount of micro plastics that are present within store-bought mussels. This study will consist of the digestion of mussel tissues using hydrogen peroxide. The digested tissue solution will then be filtered, leaving only the micro plastics behind. Approximately 20 individual mussels will be used in this experiment. The hope is that the data collected provides insight into not only the amount of micro plastics mussels accumulate, but how many micro plastics humans are potentially ingesting when consuming mussels.

**Title:** Connecting Flock Size and Overwintering Ground Use by Songbirds Near the MCLA Campus

**Author(s):** Lillian deLemos

**Advisor:** Daniel Shustack

**Keywords:** Junco hyemalis, flock size, winter

**Abstract:** During the breeding season, Junco hyemalis (Dark-eyed-juncos) are known to be territorial birds. However, similar to other songbirds during the winter to early spring months, they can instead be found in flocks on their overwintering grounds. Through our research during the winter of 2021-2022, we were interested in describing flock size and winter grounds use in a suburban context. We hypothesized that flock location and size could be affected by bird feeder locations. Twice per day in the daylight hours, we used radio tracking to locate and observe junco flocks in the North Adams area near the MCLA campus. When located, we observed the flock for five minutes, noting the number of Junco hyemalis in the flock of the radio tagged Junco. We then marked the tagged junco's location on a map and its proximity to a feeder, if any. We also noted the flock size and its behavior, activity, and movements. We have found that a Dark-eyed Junco flock inhabits a multitude of locations during the daylight hours in North Adams near the MCLA campus. With this data we will present preliminary findings on Junco space use and flock size in North Adams.

**Title:** Analyzing Environmental Regulations in AOI for the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail

**Author(s):** Lillian deLemos & William Shanahan

**Advisor:** Elena Traister

**Keywords:** Ashuwillticook Rail Trail, environmental protection, wetlands

**Abstract:** The Ashuwillticook Rail Trail in North-Central Berkshire County is in the planning stage of being expanded in multiple municipalities including North Adams. There are currently issues surrounding wetland and endangered species protection. The goal of this service project is to consult with Nick Russo of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission on environmental regulations and awareness of sensitive habitats and ecosystems. Our methods will involve analysis of current Massachusetts regulations like the Wetlands Protection Act, listing of quantity and types of wetlands in areas of Interest, and usage of state mapping tools to explore and assess areas of Interest.

**Title:** An Empirical Analysis of Coronavirus Cases and Vaccination Rates in Massachusetts, Texas, and California

**Author(s):** Reagan Scattergood

**Advisor:** Chali Nondo

**Keywords:** COVID-19, vaccination, United States

**Abstract:** The COVID-19 pandemic that started in January of 2020 has wreaked havoc on the economy and upended our everyday lives. Data from John Hopkins University show that there have been some marked differences in COVID-19 infections and vaccination rates among the 50 U.S. states. The objective of this study is twofold, first I want to examine if there is negative relationship between COVID-19 vaccine rates and COVID-19 infections. Second, this study seeks to determine if there is any statistical difference in the mean cases of COVID-19 between Massachusetts, Texas, and California. This study uses daily pooled data covering January 2021 to March 2021. Regression analysis and ANOVA are used to test the above hypothesis. Results from the regression model indicate that there is a negative relationship between COVID-19 vaccination and COVID-19 infection rates. Based on the one-way ANOVA results there is evidence that there is a difference in the means cases between Massachusetts, Texas, and California.

**Title:** Quantifying Radiation Trails from Different Sources in a Cloud Chamber

**Author(s):** Jacob Sawyer

**Advisor:** Thomas Burton

**Keywords:** radioactive decay, ionizing particles, cloud chamber

**Abstract:** Radioactive decay is the process giving off high energy particles and gamma rays due to atomic instability, which is not visible to the naked eye. As these particles travel they ionize atoms/molecules in their path by stripping them of their electrons. This

process can be visualized using a device known as a diffusion cloud chamber which creates condensation trails when ionizing particles pass through a supersaturated alcohol vapor. In this project we propose a method for manually measuring radiation using a camera to record the condensation trails. To compare this methodology to standard practice we use a Geiger–Müller tube to measure the same radioactive samples under similar conditions. However, because these techniques have dissimilar geometries, we have constructed a simple collimating holder to equalize the ionizing radiation. Lastly, we compare their relative abilities to detect radiation using an efficiency calculation.

**Title:** Examining the Relationship Between Gender and Field of Study

**Author(s):** Jake Wedge, Lex Hart

**Advisor:** Maria Bartini

**Keywords:** gender identity, field of study, stereotypes

**Abstract:** The way that gender is perceived has changed rapidly over the past decade. There is a growing consensus that gender is not something that can be measured in as binary, but is instead a continuum. Our study was conducted with college students to examine how their gender identity predicts fields of study. We believe that people's chosen fields of study will correlate with stereotypes associated with their gender identity rather than assigned birth gender. In cases where their gender identity stereotypes correlate with their chosen field, they will report more dedication and attachment. We expect that people will gravitate towards fields of study that match with their gender identity due to pressures from society to conform and getting less pushback for their choice, leading to higher attachment and comfort.

**Title:** Social Media Use: How your thoughts and feelings about social media affect your social media habits

**Author(s):** Charlotte Kane & Sarah McMahon

**Advisor:** Maria Bartini

**Keywords:** social media, wellbeing, age

**Abstract:** In society today there has been an increase in social media use across the board, but social media use could vary for people of different ages and genders. In this study we focus on age and gender differences in relation to social media use and how it might predict overall well-being. We collected data using a variety of scales that cover social media use including addiction and overall self-esteem and life satisfaction. Even though there have been other studies done on social media use, we hope to see some age and gender differences in social media use and different patterns in correlations between use and psychological well-being. We aim to learn more about social media use in older generations, as well.

**Title:** Identification of bacteria associated with soccer equipment

**Author(s):** Junior Florent

**Advisor:** Ann Billetz

**Keywords:** skin infection, athletics, turf field

**Abstract:** Skin infections are very common for athletes. These infections may come from abraded skin contacting bacteria on other players, equipment, or turf. An initial study was done in 2020 by Jalloh and Billetz to analyze bacteria associated with MCLA's turf field. Their results indicated large amounts of bacterial growth, most commonly spore forming bacteria similar to what is found in soil. They did not detect the presence of *Staphylococcus aureus* which is often associated with skin infections. This study aims to identify other possible sources of bacteria associated with soccer.

Samples were collected and cultured from shin guards and goalie gloves belonging to MCLA soccer players. A wide variety of bacteria were isolated from the equipment with the most notable being the identification of *Staphylococcus aureus* from some samples. The presence of *S. aureus* on shin guards may provide an avenue for bacteria to enter skin abrasions resulting in infection.

**Title:** Effects of Sleep and Anxiety on College Students' Academic Motivation

**Author(s):** Jenna Berg, Kevin Lynch

**Advisor:** Maria Bartini

**Keywords:** students, anxiety, sleep, motivation

**Abstract:** A common experience for college students consists of high levels of stress or anxiety as well as inconsistent sleep schedules. The current study builds on previous literature that looks at the academic implications of sleep and anxiety. We propose that there will be a correlation between sleep and anxiety, as well as with additional implications for students' academic motivation. Participants completed a survey asking demographic questions and gather information from the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, State-Trait Anxiety Scale and Academic Motivation Scale. We used a bivariate correlation between sleep and anxiety before running a multiple regression to determine the relationship between the two previous variables and academic motivation. We propose that students experiencing low sleep quality will report high levels of anxiety. Furthermore, we propose these experiences may predict low academic motivation. These findings will provide insight and evidence to suggest changes to improve students' experience.

**Title:** Do They Care? Investigating Student Perceptions of Professor Empathy and Classroom Participation

**Author(s):** Aliza Gonzalez Valdez

**Advisor:** Ruby Vega

**Keywords:** belonging, empathy, racial discrimination

**Abstract:** Students of color go through different college experiences compared to white students like racial discrimination (Trent et. al, 2020). These college experiences may impact their academic performances, by affecting a student's confidence in their educational pursuits; they may feel as though their professors do not value their academics compared to their white peers (Cooper & Daughtry, 2015). Therefore, professors must be empathetic and ensure that classroom environments are gateways of academic success. This study aims to further investigate the relationship between perceived professor empathy and students of color sense of belonging and classroom participation. Participants read a vignette portraying an empathetic professor or a non-empathetic professor and completed a survey assessing their anticipated sense of belonging and willingness to participate in the professor's class. The results of this study are important in ensuring that all students are in academic environments that help them engage and experience a sense of belonging.

**Title:** Growing Healthy Gardens

**Author(s):** Chloe Martel, Hannah Wait, Caitlin Briell, & Lacey Anderson

**Advisor:** Elena Traister

**Keywords:** gardening, community service, local schools

**Abstract:** The Growing Healthy Gardens Program is a non-profit organization that supports a network of over 13 community gardens in Northern Berkshire County, Massachusetts. The food grown supports local schools and community lunches. Over the past several years, MCLA students have helped to start seedlings for the garden using the greenhouse located in the Feigenbaum Center for Science and Innovation (FCSI) at MCLA. Students visited the greenhouse twice daily to water seedlings and to maintain temperature and humidity for proper growing conditions. Seedlings will be transplanted into the outdoor community gardens in the late spring. Without the use of the FCSI greenhouse, enough room and ideal growing conditions for starting all the seedlings necessary would be more difficult to maintain. Food grown from the seedlings started during this community service project will have a direct impact on the health and nutrition of local children in schools and other community members.

## ***Lunch***

**Campus Center Gym, 12:00-1:00 PM**

Lunch is provided for URC presenters, their faculty advisors, and guests. Please make sure to pick up your lunch tickets during registration. Lunch may be eaten on site or taken away in boxes.

*Welcome Remarks from President Birge  
Feigenbaum Scholars Awards (presented by \_\_\_\_\_)  
Keynote Introduction (Brianna Christie '22)*

***Keynote Address (Rose Mastico '18)***  
**12:30-1:00 PM**  
**Campus Center Gym**

Rose Mastico (class of 2018) currently works as a User Experience (UX) researcher at Geode Capital Management in Boston. After graduating summa cum laude with a B.A. in Psychology, Rose went on to complete a Masters in Experimental Psychology in Washington State. With a heavy focus in neuroscience, Rose studied the conscious mind and emotions completing both a senior thesis at MCLA and a master's thesis on the subject. Believing she wanted fast track into a PhD program, Rose went to a master's that set her up for that track. One year into the program, however, she found a craving for a more dynamic approach to psychological research. Through trial and error, she soon found the field of User Experience Research.

Four months out of her master's program Rose landed an independent contractor gig working as a UX Researcher for a small robotics startup company based in Armenia and LA. The startup introduced her to a career in tech where she worked with consumers to understand their needs in relation to her company's product. From there, she learned that tech has no boundaries and can be found in a variety of businesses. She moved into her current position in November of 2021 after a year working in the startup world. Although her company is a financial asset company it has a thriving technology team that Rose is a part of. The company is on the forefront of creating cutting edge financial management systems and Rose's job in this company is to make sure the design of the system is supported by unbiased and intentional research. This year she is working toward a managerial position where she will lead product development and a future team of UX researchers.

In her free time, Rose enjoys staying close to friends and family in MA and exploring new parts of the city of Boston. She has recently taken on a new role as an aunt and is starting out as enthusiastic mentor to students who are looking to break into new research fields.

***Meet the Keynote Speaker (Students Only)***

Sullivan Lounge, 1:00-1:30 PM

Students will have the opportunity to have an informal question and answer session with the keynote speaker following the luncheon. Rose Mastico will be available to answer any questions you have about her experiences both at MCLA and after graduation. Take advantage of this opportunity to learn from someone who has walked in your shoes not too long ago.

## ***Paper Presentations II B***

Bowman 203, 1:30-2:30 PM

**Title:** Examining Exam Schools: Policy Alternatives to Attain Racial Equality in Education.

**Author(s):** David Perez Pacheco

**Advisor:** Samantha Pettey

**Keywords:** education, racial equality, policy

**Abstract:** The educational attainment between non-white and white students in the United States is increasing. Understanding that disparities are a result of deficiencies in funding to schools where minority groups constitute most of the student body, state and local government entities have engaged in policies that aim to solve the issue. For example, by facilitating the enrollment of students from disadvantaged backgrounds in exam schools, who enjoy access to more resources that would hypothetically increase academic success at the high school level. Yet, research finds this policy approach is not improving academic outcomes for minority students (Barrow, *et. al.* 2020), and further, state welfare policy at the local level tends to be economically counterproductive for the acquirement of capital (Glaeser, 2009). In my research, I present a feasible policy approach that can be implemented at the local level to satisfy the necessities of diversifying school districts, and counter arrest the negative effects of underfunding in students' academic performance.

**Title:** Re-entry and Recidivism: A College-Level Syllabus

**Author(s):** Rebecca Dionne

**Advisor:** Jennifer Zoltanski

**Keywords:** criminal justice, recidivism, pedagogy

**Abstract:** The field of Criminal Justice is vast in its range of subject areas that include studies of criminality to post-incarceration outcomes. My research centers on re-entry after incarceration to better understand factors associated with recidivism. One outgrowth of my research takes form as a syllabus designed for a hypothetical college-level course about re-entry and recidivism (with guidance from my faculty sponsor). I present this syllabus and discuss the strategies I used to design and build it.

**Title:** Race and Propaganda of the Pacific War – US Perceptions of Japan in World War II

**Author(s):** Samantha Herrington

**Advisor:** Sean Scanlon

**Keywords:** anti-Asian racism, World War II, propaganda

**Abstract:** The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 was a catalyst for American entry into World War II. However, the relationship between these two nations

was already influenced by perceptions surrounding race. Historically, the US had existing anti-Asian policies based in racism, claiming that the peoples of Asia were inferior. Wartime propaganda such as films, music, and posters had a deep impact on Americans' perception of the Japanese. Depictions of Japanese brutality and subhuman character were contrasted with American freedom and civility. Servicemen serving in the Pacific and civilians on the home front internalized these portrayals, further upholding ideas of American exceptionalism. Original examples of propaganda connect America's internal racial conflict with wartime conditions. This presentation argues for the power of race as a construct and division between the US and Japan in "the good war."

**Title:** Respectability Politics in Contemporary Queer Literature

**Author(s):** Corin Carpenter

**Advisor:** Caren Beilin

**Keywords:** literature, queer identity, queer activism

**Abstract:** This presentation explores how different literary authors interact with the idea of being a "good" queer person in contemporary literature. If you belong to the LGBTQ+ community, the struggle with the idea of what it means to be a "good" queer person can show up in many aspects of your life. Should you try and blend in with cis het society? Will your activism be less respected if you're angry? What does it mean for the community when queer people do immoral or illegal things, if it even means anything? This is a topic full of complication – some authors reject the idea that being a "good" queer person is something to strive for, while others make it clear that it is sometimes necessary to play these roles for the sake of safety. Exploring these differences across a variety of queer literature is crucial to our understanding of modern queer respectability politics.

## ***Special Session: Feigenbaum Scholars***

Bowman 122, 1:30-2:30 PM

Sponsor: Anna Jaysane-Darr

*Student in this panel were awarded the prestigious Feigenbaum Scholars award in 2021 to support an ambitious research project.*

**Title:** Establishing & Perpetuating Exoticization in Museum Spaces

**Author(s):** Julia Bertolet

**Advisor:** Anna Jaysane-Darr

**Keywords:** museums, exoticization, presentation of knowledge, cultural context

**Abstract:** Museums are often characterized as reliable sources of objective knowledge, however they remain situated within specific social and cultural contexts. These contexts often frame and form understandings of what is true/false and right/wrong, which often results in exoticism and/or primitivization of non-Western cultures and people. I visited three museums; The American Museum of Natural History in New York City, The National Museum of Natural History in Washington DC, and the Penn Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology in Philadelphia to examine the ways this materializes. My findings look at the presentation and descriptions of exhibits and the way that visitors interact with these displays. By placing this information in conversation with pre-existing literature on value, collecting practices, colonialism, presentation methods, visitor interpretation, and the lives of objects, my research examines the ways that museums deliver information to guests and the effect those practices have on developing understanding.

**Title:** Characterizing the Feather Degrading Microbiota on Dark-eyed Juncos

**Author(s):** Ryan MacKenzie

**Advisor:** George Hamaoui

**Keywords:** dark-eyed juncos, feather degradation, microbes, DNA analysis

**Abstract:** This study focuses on characterizing feather-degrading microbial communities of dark-eyed juncos (*Junco hyemalis*), a songbird species known to be found year-round in Western Massachusetts. Previous studies have characterized feather-degrading microbes using culture-based methods or molecular methods with limited scope and resolution. In this study sterile swabs were used to collect microbes from junco feathers and to inoculate feather substrate cultures. Cultures were grown at room temperature for 21 days, and supernatant samples were collected at seven-day intervals for feather degradation measurements and DNA extraction. Protein degradation rates varied between each bird with some cultures showing varying levels of turbidity and color. DNA extractions have not been successful, but new attempts making use of filtered cultures may produce usable DNA levels. Using protein

degradation rate data along with future DNA analysis, it is hoped that this study will shed light on the process of microbial feather degradation for dark-eyed juncos.

**Title:** Explorative Collisions of Linklater Theory and Chekhov Movement Theory

**Author(s):** Abby Daggett

**Advisor:** David Lane

**Keywords:** Linklater voice technique, Chekhov movement theory, performance training

**Abstract:** This presentation is an overview of my investigations of Linklater voice technique and Chekhov movement theory. I will share findings resulting from combining both techniques in the context of performance training and how that effort impacted the construction of expressive characters, teaching methodologies, and the performance of found text. I will also be sharing how I used both techniques in conjunction with each other to develop my own actor methodology and coaching pedagogy. The presentation will include a 10-minute session wherein two actors will demonstrate the collision of both techniques using found text as the basis for performance.

**Title:** Women in Design Artist Book

**Author(s):** Eloise Baker

**Advisor:** Melanie Mowinski

**Keywords:** women designers, artist book, art history

**Abstract:** Women in Design is an artist book that brings attention to twelve female designers who had significant but under-recognized influence on various design movements. It includes information about the designers' lives, careers, and impacts drawn from historical research. Existing knowledge about women in design is often difficult to find or entirely unavailable, so the research process focused on incorporating scattered information into one simple source. The book also includes portraits of each featured designer. The portraits were first made digitally from photographs, then transformed into print matrices and finally pressure printed on a letterpress, a process which served to honor the featured designers in a more personally meaningful way. The completed artist book is not an exhaustive source, but a jumping-off point meant to inspire readers to keep learning about women in design. This presentation discusses the twelve featured designers as well as the process of creating the artist book.

## ***Special Session: Explorations in Visual Culture***

Bowman 201, 1:30-2:30 PM

Sponsor: Victoria Papa

*Everyday life is saturated with visual imagery. Our encounters with images profoundly impact our experiences of the world. This special session explores concepts of visual culture, including the social dynamics of visibility and representation, power structures of looking, and phenomena of spectacle. In experimental presentations that make use of critical discourse and creative storytelling, students will examine whose vision is reinforced or discarded and what is seen or unseen in contemporary culture.*

**Title:** Climate Change Activism: The Visual vs The World

**Author(s):** Ashley DelRatez

**Advisor:** Victoria Papa

**Keywords:** climate change, activism, art

**Abstract:** This presentation based on a hybrid essay titled "Climate Change Activism: The Visual vs The World" explores themes of public activism with a specific focus on artwork and protest pieces about climate change. In this presentation, I highlight various images to show instances of powerful climate activist artwork. Following these images, I insert some personal poetic and prose pieces to further address the artwork. Amongst this interplay of imagery and personal writing, I have woven in scholarly sources to contextualize the power of activist climate change protest art. Through looking at various pieces of protest artwork, I hope viewers are inspired to do all that they can to work towards change.

**Title:** Disabled Representation in Media

**Author(s):** Brennan Eckman

**Advisor:** Victoria Papa

**Keywords:** media representation, disabilities, stereotypes

**Abstract:** Media in its many different forms has a real impact on the worldviews of those who engage with it. Advertisements are proof of this, if they did not have any effect on their potential consumers, then they would not be so prevalent online and in the physical world. This impact is why representation in media is so important because media changes how people see and interact, and if representation is minimal or enforces stereotypes, the larger beliefs of those groups will follow in suit. As a disabled person my research is focused on the disabled representation that exists in media, what the common themes and stereotypes are, what makes positive representation and how to achieve such through different means.

**Title:** Ni de Aquí, Ni de Allá: The Visual Culture of Chicano Survival after Joaquin

**Author(s):** Erick Ramos-Jacobo

**Advisor:** Victoria Papa

**Keywords:** identity, poetry, visual culture

**Abstract:** The 1967 epic, I am Joaquin, by Rodolpho “Corky” Rodriguez was the first time Mexican-Americans observed their existence written on paper. It ignited a visual culture revolution that is influential to Mexican-American identity today. Through a presentation of historical imagery by La Raza Magazine closely read with contemporary Mexican-American Immigrant poetry, I will analyze an identity crisis that would be resolved by the crafting of a Chicano identity. The objective of this reading is to discuss the universal elements of Chicano visuality: lament, past and present, and the declaration of a new Mexican identity.

### ***Performance: Queering Sherlock Holmes: An Interactive Presentation***

Murdock 218, 1:30-2:30

**Performer:** Leo R. Skoble

**Advisor:** Caren Beilin

**Keywords:** creative writing, mystery, gender and sexuality

**Abstract:** Fancy yourself a detective? Good. You've discovered a set of annotated letters from Victorian England detailing a murder that even the great Sherlock Holmes failed to solve. Step into the shoes of John Watson to solve a case that reveals there is more to the tall & gaunt genius than meets the eye. This presentation is an interactive experience that will frame and highlight the asexuality and transness of Sherlock Holmes. In this creative writing showcase, I will ask participants to challenge the notion that Holmes was uncaring/unemotional through the lens of asexuality and explore the possibility of a transgender reading of the character. The series of letters will contain a murder mystery that, if solved, will provide extra context to the narrative, but if left unsolved, will not detract from the experience.

## ***Special Session: Interdisciplinary Worlds***

Bowman 201, 2:45-3:45 PM

Sponsor: Rita Nnodim

*Understanding, analyzing, and finding answers to the complex issues that people face in contemporary societies within an increasingly interconnected world demands creative pathways toward knowledge, calls for ways of thinking 'outside the box,' and requires venturing out beyond established disciplinary boundaries. Emerging interdisciplinary student-scholars presenting in this panel open up such creative, outside-the-box, and integrative perspectives as they engage a plurality of important topics in culture and society.*

**Title:** Reducing the Flow: Possible Solutions to the School-to-Prison Pipeline

**Author(s):** Alissa Boucher

**Advisor:** Rita Nnodim

**Keywords:** schools, students, discipline, school-to-prison pipeline

**Abstract:** The school-to-prison pipeline is the path from school to prison that children may find themselves on when they are harshly disciplined as a result of an education system's use of zero-tolerance policies. It is a phenomenon in the United States that disproportionately affects low-income students, students of color, and students with disabilities. A lot of research has been published on the factors that contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. My paper expands this research to address the kinds of policies and reforms that would address the current injustices facing disadvantaged students in the United States.

**Title:** On Death and Dying: Cultural Negotiations of Mourning and Remembrance

**Author(s):** Mairead Noblewolf

**Advisor:** Rita Nnodim

**Keywords:** culture, death, memorialization, mourning

**Abstract:** In light of a new and ongoing era of mass trauma, highly-visible death, and increasing government regulation, it is only natural that we would look towards the one universal constant of life: death. By understanding the ways we think about death and those who have passed, how we consider our own death and the deaths of others, we can understand something about our society's past, present, and potential future. Whose deaths are mourned and remembered? Whose suffering is silenced? How does capitalism shape our sympathy, or lack thereof, for the dead and dying? This presentation will examine complex understandings, negotiations of, and practices relating to "acceptable" deaths. The paper argues that the politics and cultural practices

around the deaths of others unfold between considering the deaths of some acceptable, actively encouraged, silenced, while the deaths of others are recognized and incorporated into private and public (political) practices of memorialization.

**Title:** Public Libraries and the Community: An Interdisciplinary Approach

**Author(s):** Fiona Halloran

**Advisor:** Rita Nnodim

**Keywords:** public libraries, community, interdisciplinarity

**Abstract:** Public libraries are a staple in most communities across the U.S., providing invaluable resources to community members, something they have been doing since their inception. However, public libraries have become much more than a space for holding knowledge. In today's day and age, public libraries are integral parts of communities and even have legitimate impacts on aspects such as the public health of patrons. There are some obstacles that public libraries must navigate, such as the growing influence of the internet that, at first glance, appears to make libraries obsolete; and the geographic setting that may dictate how much funding a public library receives, and thus how much they are able to do for their community. An interdisciplinary approach to the function of public libraries takes all this into account to look at how libraries have become even more integrated and influential than when they first began.

## ***Artist Talks***

Bowman 122, 2:45-3:45 PM

Sponsor: Melanie Mowinski

*How do you communicate the abstract idea behind a body of artwork in concrete language that broadens the viewer's experience and helps you as the artist further understand your own work and process? This is one of the goals of ART 480: Senior Art Project, a course that all MCLA art majors take as one of their graduation requirements. This special session features students in ART 480, plus a bonus student, talking about the work they've created, their artist motivations, contexts, historical touch points and more.*

**Title:** Design in Duality: Vietnamese Fashion and Folktales

**Author(s):** Nhi Lam

**Advisor:** Melanie Mowinski

**Keywords:** Vietnam, folklore, art

**Abstract:** My artwork reflects my exploration of Vietnamese folklore and mythology. It is an exploration into elements of my own culture that I have never learned. The most common things associated with Vietnam are the Vietnam war and food. My artwork is inspired by Asian oriental designs and vintage designs of women from the covers of clothing patterns like Vogue. These digital drawings are anchored with the use of Vietnamese symbolisms, patterns, and fashion to highlight the aspects of the women in the folklore and mythological stories. My work showcases the differences between past and present conceptions of women. It is important to highlight Vietnamese mythologies because they are not common to the general public. This perspective gives the insights into the history and culture of Vietnam beyond the Vietnam war and food.

**Title:** Materiality of Art and Unicorns

**Author(s):** Ana Sheehy

**Advisor:** Melanie Mowinski

**Keywords:** materiality, multimedia, art, unicorns

**Abstract:** I have been asking questions surrounding materiality of art. Why do we value certain materials over others? Is one medium, or type of art more worthy of being considered art than others? As I ask these questions, I also focus in on one specific subject, unicorns, and how their meaning and portrayals have changed over time. My work takes its shape in many different styles across many different mediums. By exploring a variety of styles and mediums, I can gauge how people will interact with one medium versus another and begin to try and answer the question of which medium is the worthiest of appreciation. Balancing fantasy, whimsy, and symbolism my work is

meant to be as varied as possible. My goal is to create at least one image that each viewer will have a positive visual opinion of, regardless of the individual's person tastes and preferences.

**Title:** What's on the Inside We Wear on the Outside: A Series of Wearable Art.

**Author(s):** Kennedy Sobon

**Advisor:** Melanie Mowinski

**Keywords:** fashion, visual art, multimedia

**Abstract:** My wearable art pieces are created to push the boundaries of visual art, text, and fashion. Creative practices such as writing, painting, and fashion design are often kept separate even though they all require similar skills. Many artists have already explored this topic. Almost all of the notable fashion designers today have dabbled in the visual arts. We live in a consumerist society. Money dictates everything we do, including what clothes we wear. People tend to follow trends and spend money on items that are deemed "designer." Style choice becomes less about the aesthetics or artistic value, and more about the exclusivity of the product. I have always been interested in creating my own clothing, I feel it allows me to showcase my art and my style in a unique way. It was when I started to paint on clothing that I realized you can transform an article of clothing into a piece of art. Also being an avid writer, I started to question what role text plays in visual art. Writing, fashion design, and painting are all forms of art. However, when you combine the three, you are able to highlight the ways they reflect one another. It becomes evident that the separation between them is generated by the society we live in today, and the social structures that remain in visual arts and culture.

## ***Creative Writing at MCLA: A Special Session of Readings***

Murdock 218, 2:45-3:45 PM

Sponsors: Zachary Finch & Caren Beilin

*In this special session, our annual URC celebration of Creative Writing at MCLA, ten students will be reading from and performing their creative work across a variety of modes, styles and genres.*

### **Student Presenters:**

Brittany Czarnecki, Chloe Mascitelli, Katherine Napier, Ayannah Sheerin, Michael Rotigliano, Hannah Yeasley, Julia Donati, Hailey Rolon, Corin Carpenter, Alani Singh

## ***Special Session: Community Nutrition***

Bowman 119, 4:00-5:00 PM

Sponsor: Anne Goodwin

*Students will present variety of projects targeting nutrition issues that affect our campus community and other local communities.*

**Title:** Providing Accessible Recipes for North Adams Community Cookbook

**Author(s):** Octavia Crowell, Gianna Rachiele, and Quray Clarke

**Advisor:** Anne Goodwin

**Keywords:** recipes, North Adams, nutrition

**Abstract:** Our project seeks to enrich the nutrition knowledge of the North Adams community members by creating and adding twelve additional recipes to the local cookbook. Our group has conducted extensive research to find balanced recipes containing a starch exchange, a healthy-fat exchange, a protein exchange, and vegetable (or fruit) component, all of which combine to make a complete, nutritious meal. Each group member has provided one breakfast, lunch, and dinner recipe, with an additional recipe of choice, so we will collectively be adding three to four breakfast, lunch, and dinner suggestions that can help inspire members of the North Adams community to eat a greater variety of healthful meals that do not lack any major energy-providing macronutrients. We believe that providing healthy recipe additions to the local cookbook will help local community members gain a greater appreciation for the ways with which an individual can cultivate a healthy diet.

**Title:** Food Notes for the Cafe

**Author(s):** Daniel Smith-Colquitt & John Hankel

**Advisor:** Anne Goodwin

**Keywords:** nutritional guidelines, MCLA, student dining

**Abstract:** The average American does not know the biological effects of the foods they eat. With an emphasis on calories, protein, and energy, the Dietary Guidelines in America do not provide information behind the benefits and risks of certain foods or ingredients in foods. Not everyone knows that strawberries have as much vitamin C per serving as oranges or that garlic is anti-fungal, so the lack of ingredient information provided in the MCLA cafe brings us to our goal of providing food notes about the current dish being served that day and the benefits/risks associated with that dish and the main ingredients in them. Food notecards would be no larger than a regular notecard and could be placed at the three main food stations in the Cafe with a hopeful outcome that people will become more knowledgeable about the things they are consuming.

**Title:** Nutritious Meals for Limited Kitchen Appliances

**Author(s):** Veronica Deacon

**Advisor:** Anne Goodwin

**Keywords:** recipes, kitchen appliances, nutrition

**Abstract:** We will be addressing the concerns of limited kitchen appliances and quick recipes for different diets. Our group will address this concern by creating a layout of what a website would look like that had easy and healthy recipes of different diets that are more accessible for individuals that will be of easy access to students at MCLA, as well as have the option to be downloaded, for internet accessibility. The recipes will consist of a variety of diets, such as no restriction, gluten free, vegetarian, and vegan.

**Title:** What About Options for Vegans?

**Author(s):** Erin Marceau & Madison Breese

**Advisor:** Anne Goodwin

**Keywords:** vegan, local restaurants, diet restrictions

**Abstract:** Through our project we hope to find and evaluate vegan options in the North Adams community. There is a lack of options for people facing restricting diets such as being a vegan. We have researched and investigated the options at local restaurants along with what being a vegan means because many people are not aware. We plan to inform the community on the lack of options for vegans and how to increase the options. We will provide sample foods that are acceptable for vegans and explaining how certain food options could be made vegan.

**Title:** Healthy Eating Habits at MCLA

**Author(s):** Gabriel DeMello & Gabriel Dias

**Advisor:** Anne Goodwin

**Keywords:** nutrition, healthy eating, diet

**Abstract:** We know eating healthy is hard and very uncommon for college students especially for the younger/newer students. Many students have a hard time understanding what's right from wrong when it comes to eating. Despite the complaints, the cafe/dining hall has many different options students could choose from to get nutrients needed to have a somewhat healthy diet. We will be looking at the different food options/ ingredients used to design a pamphlet that would let students know what foods contain and how to create a healthy diet with those options.

**Title:** Nutritional Options for Off-Campus Students at MCLA

**Author(s):** Christopher Duff & Marco DiNicola

**Advisor:** Anne Goodwin

**Keywords:** commuter students, dining options, nutrition

**Abstract:** With about 1,500 students enrolled, 49 percent of MCLA students live on campus and 51 percent are commuter students. For students who live on campus, their options for nutritious food are varied, including cooking in their dorms, or going out into town. But what about students who don't live on campus? Especially those who live further in Southern Berkshire County? If they want to eat during school hours, what are the food and nutrition options available? We are both commuter students who live in Pittsfield, we also have specific diets. Both of us examined food availability on the MCLA campus (the cafeteria, food pantries, the campus store, Subway) and will present our findings of what nutritional options and variety are available for off-campus students. Our results take into consideration students who are vegan, gluten free, diabetic, etc.

**Title:** Looking into Having Food Trucks on Campus

**Author(s):** Bryanna Breault & Nora Griffin

**Advisor:** Anne Goodwin

**Keywords:** food trucks, MCLA, food diversity

**Abstract:** Looking at food selection on campus there really are just a couple of options and within those options there really is not much for a nutritionally and culturally diverse diet, which for some could really improve their college experience. For our project we spent our time searching through the internet and social media looking for potential food trucks near North Adams to offer more food options on campus. We will hopefully be able to get in contact and pitch to these various options why our campus is good for their business and then be able to propose to individuals on campus the ability to have these food trucks visit at varying times to be able to offer more options to the student population and therefore make their diet more diverse and even bring a bit more joy into a meal when the option of a food truck is available.

**Title:** Easy Meal for College Students

**Author(s):** Franchesca Gonzalez Duran, Zuly Simor Johnson

**Advisor:** Anne Goodwin

**Keywords:** cookbook, student resource, community

**Abstract:** One of the main struggles for MCLA college students is being able to make quick healthy meals that they enjoy. Most students at MCLA don't enjoy the cafeteria food and our goal is to give alternative options that will allow students to eat outside of the school cafeteria and cook meals without needing a kitchen. We plan on presenting a sample size MCLA student cookbook that consists of eight healthy quick and easy meals using microwaves and air fryers. We chose to do this because, since the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the kitchen in the Berkshire towers has been closed, restricting some students from making full course meals. We hope that this sample-size cookbook encourages some students to try these meals out and know that there are alternate options than just the cafeteria food or buying fast food meals.

**Title:** Local Foods GIS

**Author(s):** Eric Dupont, Andrew Ferrara

**Advisor:** Elena Traister

**Keywords:** food system, ARCGis, food insecurity, community resource

**Abstract:** GIS mapping software offers users the ability to convey geographically linked data, ideally in a way that is easily digestible to the end user. Using ArcGIS, we have gathered data on local food resources in Berkshire County and their attributes of interest, courtesy of Berkshire Grown. The goal of this project is to offer community members an easy-to-use resource that allows them to locate and interact with local food purveyors within Berkshire County. In offering this simple tool we seek to help foster a more resilient local food system and aid in dispersing information that may help to mitigate food insecurity in the Berkshires.

**Title:** Pantry Meals

**Author(s):** Franchesca Gonzalez Duran

**Advisor:** Anne Goodwin

**Keywords:** food pantries, recipes, healthy meals, North Adams

**Abstract:** In the community many residents rely on the food pantries as a source for food and meals. In my internship, I have been working on creating recipes with food pantry items found on the North Adams food pantry list to make healthy and good meals out of them. I have also been working with the E3 cookbook that was made using it as a reference. I hope to encourage residents in the community to try recipes with the produce given by the local pantries. My goal is to have a community and campus outreach with local food pantries in hopes to encourage the recipes provided.

**Artist Open Studios**  
Bowman 319, 4:00-5:00 PM  
Sponsor: Melanie Mowinski

*During the Art Exhibit Session, students in the Art Labs will be opening the doors to their art studios in Bowman 319 for an open studio walk through. 10 students skilled in a variety of art mediums including illustration, mixed-media, painting, photography, printmaking, writing and more. This is an incredible opportunity to meet MCLA artists, learn about their process, and share in celebrating their work.*

**Title:** Fantasy Biology Creatures: Scale models and encyclopedic/bestiary pages

**Author(s):** Sylvia Broome

**Advisor:** Melanie Mowinski

**Keywords:** fantasy, dragons, bestiary

**Abstract:** I am researching biology and fantasy and applying these two things together to create new fantasy creatures, namely dragons. Most dragons we see in media are reptilian, but I aim to create dragons that stray from this and more into mammalian and arthropoda designs. As someone who is fascinated by biology but works in creative settings that involve fiction, I found that creating creatures is a wonderful way to tie together the things I am passionate about. I think that stepping outside the normal expectations of dragons and providing almost medieval bestiary-like analyses of them will also serve as a storytelling function for the fantasy world I have created called "The Medusa Hymn," where the dragons were turned to stone following an enormous spell. I will be creating scale models of select dragons out of polymer clay and pairing them with an almost medieval bestiary-like analysis of them.

**Title:** Memories of the Body

**Author(s):** Brianna Christie

**Advisor:** Melanie Mowinski

**Keywords:** accordion book, the body, Black identity

**Abstract:** "Memories of the Body" is a series of accordion books that demonstrate my relationship with my body using written text and polaroid images. The motivation of this work is to push myself past my comfort zone of art making. I have often centered my art around my writing and/or personality, yet I want to focus my last semester of art making on the black body, thus, my black body is the center for this work. The project combines writing from a memoir writing class where I explored my history and trauma surrounding my body through childhood, adolescence, and now. The three books encompass these three stages with images to accompany it in an installation. The installation and work engages viewers in understanding one's relationship with their body as they get older as they face the trauma of being a black woman.

**Title:** Fear is a Fluctuating Fallacy

**Author(s):** Ian Crombie

**Advisor:** Melanie Mowinski

**Keywords:** fear, artist book, discrimination

**Abstract:** "Fear is a Fluctuating Fallacy" is an artist book that looks at how the body relates to power, and how fear is a reaction to mistaken belief. It is made using different types of paper, paste, paint, ink, and other materials to make the piece uncomfortable for the reader to handle, including its oversized scale. The project combines painting and collage to discuss the horrors people of different identities feel when faced with discrimination. This project came about from a love of DEI work and as an opportunity to show the horrors others feel in the face of discrimination. The creatures and uncanny imaging in the pages will act as metaphors for these horrors.

**Title:** What's on The Inside we Wear on The Outside: A Series of Wearable Art.

**Author(s):** Kennedy Sobon

**Advisor:** Melanie Mowinski

**Keywords:** fashion, art, mental health

**Abstract:** This collection explores what place fashion design fits in with the visual arts. The mediums used are vast, some of them include but are not limited to, fabric, poetry, and painting. Other than the exploration of mediums, the art centers around themes of mental health healing and self-love. Even though this is a shared personal experience, the story laid out is relatable to a wide range of audiences.

**Title:** (SUB)(E)MERGENCE

**Author(s):** Paige Wandrei

**Advisor:** Melanie Mowinski

**Keywords:** sculpture, psychology, language

**Abstract:** (SUB)(E)MERGENCE is a physical embodiment of the human psyche towards positive and negative words. It is close to life-size and made out of air-dry clay, paste paper, and aluminum. It appears as one person split into two, one appearing to emerge and the other submerged into a water-like bottom. It will be enclosed in a glass enclosure covered by both positive and negative words where viewers are invited to add their words. The sculpture is designed to evoke conversation and thought of how words, whether said intentionally or not, can affect a person psychologically.

**Title:** Concepts Through the Works

**Author(s):** Rachel Zemsky

**Advisor:** Melanie Mowinski

**Keywords:** comic art, multimedia, creative process

**Abstract:** My work will be called Concepts Through the Works, which will be multiple pieces that show the process of a comic artist. There will be three sketch layer final images, three ink layer final images, three colored final images, and one digital piece putting everything together, the three pieces being a character, a background, and the combination of the two. I was motivated to have this be my project by wanting to improve upon anatomy and perspective skills in drawing which would hopefully help me build a portfolio for becoming a comic artist down the line, as well as creating characters that I can hopefully also use in the future in my career as an artist. It could be said the metaphor of the piece shows how each stage of the process is a building block to the final image, and how all the properties and aspects of the different stages pull everything together to complete the image.

### ***Art Exhibit: Intro to Sculpture***

Bowman Third Floor Gallery, 4:00-500 PM

Sponsor: Melanie Mowinski

**Title:** Selections from Intro to Sculpture: Weekly Found Object Sculptures and more

**Author(s):** Caitlin Briell, Abby Daggett, Sergio Demo, Tiffany Ferreira, Mannie McBride, Delano Mills, Cleo Murphy, Alyssa Porter, Deianara Seamans, Kennedy Sobon, & Katherine Tomasetti

**Keywords:** sculpture, found objects, art

**Abstract:** Weekly found object sculptures are small, little works of art that are created from materials that you find in your recycle, trash, discarded, or otherwise. Adhesives, tapes, and wire can be used to put materials together, but otherwise the materials **MUST BE FOUND**. There will be selections from these weekly found objects plus other works that explore the four traditional ways of creating sculpture (carving, casting, modeling, assembling).

## ***Acknowledgements***

We congratulate all the student participants on their achievements. This conference would not be possible without their commitment and hard work!

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Nicole Porther, Associate Chair of Undergraduate Research  
Caren Beilin, English  
Ann Billetz, Biology  
Maggie Clark, Education  
Jonathan Del Sordo, Institutional Advancement  
Justin Golub, Biology  
Jacqueline Kelly, Institutional Advancement  
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