

Calendar

March 31—The Changing Nature of Higher Education: Politics and Policy. President Mary Grant convenes series of campus conversations. Murdock 218, 3 p.m.

April 1—“Crisis in Crimea,” a discussion with Professors Robert Bence, Petra Hejnova, Ben Taylor and Peace Corps volunteer Robin Picard, Feigenbaum Science Center, 6:30 p.m.

April 1—“Tricks of the Trade: Collective Impact: Working together,” art workshop, Gallery 51 & PRESS Gallery, 6 p.m.

April 2—Portfolio Workshop for faculty members seeking reappointment, promotion, tenure and PTR. Murdock 218, 10 a.m.

April 2—Teaching Diversity: Across the Queer Spectrum, Teaching Roundtable, Faculty Center, 1 p.m.

April 3—“Permaculture and Resilient Food Systems,” led by Jono Neiger, Green Living Seminar series, M218, 5:30 p.m.



April 4—“Bombay, City of Dreams,” Brown Bag lecture by Professor Rita Nnodim, Faculty Center, 3 p.m.

April 5—MCLA “Scholar Saturday,” Academic Achievements Brunch & induction of students to Lambda Iota Tau (National English Society for English Literature) and Delta Mu Delta (International Business Honor Society).

April 14—The Changing Role of Faculty. VP Cindy Brown and Prof. David Eve lead conversation, Murdock 218, 3 p.m.

April 16—Ribbon Cutting, MCLA’s Veterans Resource Center, Venable Hall 309, 12 noon.

April 17—Undergraduate Research Conference. Posters presented in Venable Gym from 8:30-10:30 a.m. . Paper presentations, exhibits, and performances, Murdock Hall and Venable Theater, 9–5 p.m.

April 23—Teaching Roundtable:



History Professors Frances Jones-Sneed and Ely Janis (4th from right in back) gather at the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama. Photo by Buffy Lord, a member of our Board of Trustees, who accompanied the Freedom Trail study tour during spring break.

Faculty Notes & Credits

History Professor **Frances Jones-Sneed** was honored at the Second Annual Berkshire Awards on March 21 at the Berkshire Museum. One of three awardees, she was recognized for her extensive work in discovering and documenting the heritage of the black community in Western Massachusetts.



A story by **Jenifer Augur**, “Coasting Down the Rockies,” will be published in the online magazine, *Route Nine*, published at the University of Mass., Amherst. Jen teaches journalism and fiction writing in the English/Communications Department.

An article co-authored by Psychology professor **Rebekah Benjamin** has been published in *Reading & Writing Quarterly*. The title is “The longitudinal relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension skills in second grade children.”

Education professor **Ellen Barber** received the One of Us award March 24 in a reception held by the Women’s Center. She was honored as “an outstanding alumna, leader, role model, teacher and and inspiration.”

Art professor **Tony Gengarelly** and his wife, Ann, recently hosted 10 students from the Navajo Nation in a poetry-art workshop. For many years Tony and Ann have worked with Navajo educators and community members in exploring the creative arts in Navajo culture.



Modern Languages professor **Mariana Bolivar** has been elected an assembly delegate to the Modern Language Association (MLA) for a 3-year term.

Glenn Lawson, supervisor of Library Circulation Services, attended a conference hosted by the Irish Rugby Football Union on “Collegiate Rugby Club & Team Development,” in Dublin, Ireland March 8-10.

Head Women’s Soccer Coach **Deb Raber** presented a Champions Coaches’ Clinic earlier this month with Olympic Gold medalist Tony DiCicco.

Forum

Moving to a four-credit-course curriculum at MCLA



With renewed discussion on campus about changing MCLA's course structure to a 4-credit model, I have been asked to write about a few implications of that change.

First, the overall picture: the standard course at MCLA is currently for 3 credits (with obvious exceptions). The new model for a standard course would be 4 credits (with exceptions). Instead of taking 5 courses per term (15 credits), students would customarily take 4 courses per term (16 credits). All of our current exceptions for lab courses, course overloads, and other administrative accommodations would remain roughly similar.

The structural difference: students would now need 32 courses to graduate rather than 40—a pattern that is fairly widespread among private liberal arts colleges around the country.

The biggest change for faculty would be that our teaching responsibility would shift from offering four 3-credit courses to offering three 4-credit courses. We would continue to hold 12 class sessions, or hours, per week, but we would not be meeting a fourth course. (Illustration: if the average class size equals 20, then we would have 60 students on our course rosters rather than 80.)

The benefits of this 4-credit arrangement are considerable. It means students could concentrate their attention more closely on a smaller range of subjects. It would also allow courses more time to focus on dimensions of learning (critical thinking exercises, writing and revision, mathematical competency) that need reinforcement and application to “stick” with students. The arrangement would also allow faculty to concentrate attention on students who are having difficulties.

The chief drawback for this 32-course model is that students would not (customarily) take the same wide range of courses that they currently do. Highly motivated students could still take a wide range of courses (as they already do now by taking a sixth course), but course structure would reduce the number of courses most students would take.

About 15 years ago, when MCLA considered this change, we contacted the faculty at Framingham State University, whose course load has been a 4-credit model for decades. The faculty members at Framingham were universally enthusiastic about the plan, and their emissaries to MCLA recommended it highly. Because Framingham has the work-load for this model already written into the MSCA contract, there is no extra level of concern about re-negotiating the contract—except to include MCLA in the formulas that currently apply only to Framingham.

Another advantage of Framingham's experience is that their curriculum has already sorted out some of the decisions regarding course sequence and number of credits for different major programs. MCLA would certainly not be obliged to follow Framingham's pattern, but at least we would not need to re-invent the wheel from scratch. Based on our former conversations with the Framingham faculty, I think a fair number of them would be happy to visit MCLA again and explain their rationales for the curricular decisions they have made in fine-tuning a 4-credit model.

The idea of a 4-credit model has always appealed to me. I would concentrate my work on fewer students; I would have greater flexibility in the range of courses I teach; the students would receive a more substantial immersion in the topics and methods for their courses. The Framingham faculty's endorsement of the idea also helped persuade me it was workable and stronger than what we do now.

— David Langston, professor of English



Support starts at “home”

Few of us have not at one time felt like the late Rodney Dangerfield. As faculty members, we feel a lack of respect when faculty concerns are not taken seriously. Or when only a few show up for an important faculty event.

We want the administration to show respect and support. We want the same from our colleagues, our students, our fellow employees and the community.

Yet respect and support, like charity, begin at home. How can we expect support from others when we fail to support each other? We get too busy to show up for a faculty-author's reception, or a Brown Bag lecture, or workshop.

Or we fail to show support for adjuncts and contingent faculty, who face daunting obstacles in building careers and making a living.

Or we are too busy to join our community when it rallies to protest the closing of a hospital.

Before I go any further, let me express gratitude and appreciation to the many faculty who daily and yearly find ways to support their colleagues and their community in all sorts of ways.

We need more of this. We need more respect. We need to show respect.

— Ben Jacques



*The
Faculty
Center*

Ben Jacques

Program Director/Editor

h.b.jacques@mcla.edu

*Faculty Art:
Laura Christensen*

*Did you hear about
the magic tractor?*

*It drove down the
lane and turned into
a field!*

**Photo art & text from
Laura Christensen's
Collage Heaven on
[www.etsy.com/uk/shop/
ChristensenArt](http://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/ChristensenArt)**



The tractor in this picture would have to stand off against a Grandma Moses girl perched on the foot of a humongous Picasso woman before even thinking about turning into a field!

I found the photograph of the tractor in a pile of old snapshots. The driver and location are as much a mystery to me as they are to you. To create this surreal scene, I cut up reproductions of paintings from art history books and adhered them to the original photograph. An art historian might recognize the woman hanging upside down from the Ellsworth Kelly sky... Hint: She's not exactly human.

You can find this collage plus other fun collages and prints at my new Etsy shop, Laura's Collage Heaven. Please check it out, share it, and let me know what you think.

Just one caveat: Though the tractor here is a John Deere, this is not a plug for green John Deere over red Farmall tractors. There've been many a feud about which is better.

