



MARIST
UNIVERSITY

School of Science



Spring 2025 Newsletter



A Message from the Dean

As we move further into the academic year, I am continually inspired by the remarkable achievements of our faculty and students. Their dedication to excellence, both in and out of the classroom, continues to shape the vibrant academic community we are so proud of in the Marist University School of Science.

As we celebrate these successes in this newsletter, let us remember that each achievement reflects the collective effort of our entire academic community — faculty, staff, and students working together to foster an environment of growth, learning, and impact. I look forward to seeing all that we will accomplish together in the coming months as we advance Marist 100's aim to *"improve the world through education."*



-Dr. Alicia Slater, Professor and Dean, School of Science,
and Associate Provost for Academic Operations

Welcome to Marist University!

On January 29, 2025, Marist College officially transitioned to [Marist University](#), marking a significant milestone in its 96-year history. The celebration, known as [Marist University Day](#), was held at the Dyson Center and attended by over 1,000 students, faculty, staff, and alumni, with more than 3,000 participants joining online, including students from Marist's campuses in Florence and Dublin. President Kevin Weinman emphasized that while the institution's name has changed, its mission remains the same: to provide a distinctive blend of liberal arts education and hands-on learning opportunities. The transition to university status reflects Marist's growth in size, stature, and global reach, positioning it for greater national and international prominence. An experiential learning expo showcased innovative, hands-on educational experiences, such as virtual reality demonstrations and AI-powered medical simulations. The [School of Science](#) programs were featured as part of the celebrations - our [athletic training](#) students offered complimentary therapeutic massages, the [DPT program](#) sponsored wellness assessments, and our [PA students](#) were able to demonstrate and interact with [HAL-S5301](#), our high-fidelity patient simulation manikin.

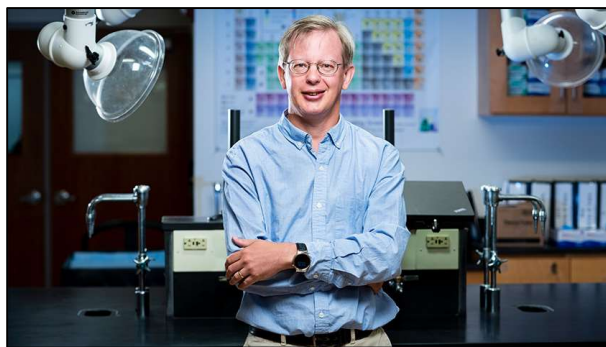




Dr. Neil Fitzgerald Named the Negler '70 Chair in Science

The School of Science is pleased to announce that [Dr. Neil Fitzgerald](#) has been appointed as the inaugural Joseph T. Negler '70 Chair in Science at Marist University, marking the School's first [endowed chair](#). This role, established through a generous gift from the late Joseph T. Negler, aims to attract and retain distinguished faculty who are national experts in their fields and dedicated educators.

Dr. Fitzgerald, a Professor of Chemistry and Associate Dean of the School of Science, has taught courses in analytical chemistry, research methods, environmental chemistry, and general chemistry since 2001. He has also led short-term abroad programs in



environmental chemistry and co-taught a Chemistry of Fine Art course that included travel to London and Paris. His research focuses on atomic spectrometry, environmental analysis, and chemical education, with recent work on the analysis and authentication of foods and beverages using analytical chemistry techniques and chemometric methods.

Expressing his gratitude, Dr. Fitzgerald intends to use this position to support the personal and professional development of faculty and students while continuing to advance Marist's mission. Dr. Alicia Slater, Dean of the School of Science, praised Dr. Fitzgerald as “*an innovative teacher, active scholar, and dedicated university leader*,” and expressed gratitude to Mr. Negler and his wife, Becky, for their generous support in making this endowed chair position possible. Joseph T. Negler, a 1970 Marist graduate and recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award in 2008, passed away in 2022.

DPT Student Wins National Essay Contest

Congratulations to Doctor of Physical Therapy Student **Katie Spencer '25**, who won first place in the annual [Student Essay Contest](#) co-sponsored by the American Council of Academic Physical Therapy and the *Journal of Humanities in Rehabilitation*! Her award-winning essay, titled “[The Young Doctor: One Day, Inshallah](#),” is featured in the Spring 2025 issue of JHR and reflects her experience as a U.S. Army medic in a Syrian refugee village. Spencer's essay highlights the importance of empathy and understanding patients' lived experiences in providing compassionate care, lessons she will carry into her future as a physical therapist.





Chemistry Faculty Member Receives Promotion to Professor

In February 2025, the Marist University Board of Trustees unanimously approved the promotion of [Dr. Elisa Woolridge, PhD](#) to Professor of Chemistry. Dr. Woolridge joined Marist in 2002, and her primary teaching responsibilities include general chemistry, biochemistry, and research methods courses. Dr. Woolridge served as Chair of the [Department of Chemistry, Biochemistry, & Physics](#) from 2012-2018 and was honored with the Kilgariff Award by the Faculty Affairs Committee for her distinguished service and leadership. She was also awarded the Board of Trustees' Faculty Award for Distinguished Teaching in 2021. Dr. Woolridge is committed to the teacher-scholar model and is *"grateful for the many opportunities to mentor Marist students and observe their progress, both in the laboratory and beyond, as they embark upon careers of their own."*



SOS Students, Faculty Featured Across Podcasts

Students in the Physician Assistant Program collaborated with [Clinical Assistant Professor Dr. Padmavati Garvey MD](#) to create the [Marist Health Forum](#) podcast series. In each monthly episode, Dr. Garvey, a board-certified OB/Gyn and certified in Lifestyle Medicine, and her students explore health and wellness topics focusing on common misconceptions and conflicting information regarding diet and wellness. You can download and listen to the latest episodes of their podcast via the [Spotify](#) app.



[Dr. Jeff Midgley, PA Program Director](#), was featured in a recent episode of [Between 2 Foxes](#), where he spoke with Marist University President Dr. Kevin Weinman about his personal journey and about the success of our PA program.

Two faculty from the [Department of Environmental Science & Policy](#) were recently featured on different podcast media outlets. [Associate Professor Dr. Ramesh Laungani](#) was the guest on a December 2024 episode of [Poll Hub](#) by the Marist Poll titled *"The New Space Race + EV Stall Out"* where he shared his perspectives on recent developments related to electric vehicles. [Dr. Zion Klos](#) was a March 2025 guest on Radio Kingston's [Nature Nuggets](#) where he discussed the transformative importance of immersive outdoor experiences for young people and the dynamic intersections of hydrology and geology with human psychology in decision making regarding community responses to the climate crisis.





SOS Welcomes New Pre-Health and Laboratory Staff

Jessica Welsh, MS, CCC-SLP joined the SOS as the Pre-Health Program Coordinator in January 2025. In this role, Jessica will administer the pre-health program which prepares students for successful careers in the health professions. Jessica is an ASHA-certified,



New York State-licensed speech-language pathologist with clinical experience across diverse healthcare settings. Before joining Marist as the Pre-Health Program Coordinator, she was a faculty member in SUNY New Paltz's Communication Disorders department and previously served as Education and Outreach Coordinator at the Adler Aphasia Center. Marist's Pre-Health Program offers students the chance to explore health-related careers, connect with like-minded peers and alumni, participate in healthcare-focused workshops, receive personalized advising, and become competitive applicants for a wide range of graduate and professional programs in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, and beyond.

Rachel Carrock, MS joined the SOS in the fall of 2024 as the Biology Laboratory Coordinator. As the lab coordinator, Rachel is responsible for oversight of all the undergraduate biology labs, including supply and equipment management, ensuring the safety of all lab operations, and assisting with teaching and research activity. Rachel earned a B.A. in Biology with a minor in Anthropology from Skidmore College, where she conducted research on protein binding simulations and bird learning behavior. She completed her M.S. in Biology at Villanova University, focusing on how gecko morphology influences adhesion, movement, and behavior. During her graduate studies, she also taught General Biology I and Microbiology labs. Afterward, she worked for NYS Parks, conducting invasive species surveys and removals across the Capital Region.



School of Science Honors Class of 2025 Award Recipients

The Mary Lou Gantert Award for Excellence in Science: **Lucas Iommazzo**

The Boehringer Ingelheim Award for Excellence in Scientific Research: **Taha Ali**

The Glenn Marinelli Award for Excellence in Athletic Training: **DeAngela Brackman**

The Barnes & Noble College Bookstores Award for Excellence in Biology: **Chloe LoSauro**

The Andrew A. Malloy '51 Award for Excellence in Chemistry: **Victoria Sciarra**

The CH Energy Group Award for Excellence in Environmental Science: **Shannon Hickey**

J&J Clinical Diagnostic Award for Excellence in Medical Technology: **Jayna Rose Ramesh**





Kyra Campbell Wins Conference Logo Design Contest

Kyra Campbell '27 won the meeting [logo design contest](#) for the 2025 S-STEM Scholars Meeting in San Diego, California. Her design creatively blends STEM imagery with San Diego's coastal aesthetics, featuring a blue cell doubling as a pool with organelles represented as surfboards and innertubes, and a chromosome-based island surrounded by sand and umbrellas. Originally from Southern California, Kyra is a sophomore who is double majoring in Environmental Science and Biochemistry. She is actively involved on campus as a tutor, lab assistant, and researcher studying the MSC2 gene. Her career aspirations focus on molecular biology, particularly immunology or neurology. Outside of academics, she enjoys sports and runs a custom baked goods business.



DPT Faculty Members Recognized for Educational Innovation

Two faculty members in the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program received [Education Innovation Awards](#) from the Physical Therapy Learning Institute (PTLI). [Clinical Assistant Professor Dr. Holly Korzendorfer, PT, PhD, CWS®, FACCWS](#), earned the award for her poster, "*Determining Sex Bias in DPT Curricula with the Sex Bias in Physical Therapy Education Scale (SBPTES)*," presented at the 19th Annual Physical Therapy Education Leadership Conference in Oakland, CA. Her research was co-authored by DPT alums Gabrielle Dy, Tatyana Joseph, Jennifer Lee, and Sera Denlea. Dr. Korzendorfer and



[Clinical Associate Professor Dr. Francine Sage-King, PT, DPT](#), also received the award for their presentation, "*Missing the Pulse? The Ischemic Awareness of Peripheral Artery Disease in the Curriculum and Community*." PTLI's mission is to drive innovation in physical therapy education, research, and practice, and the Innovator Award recognizes presentations that advance new ideas and align with PTLI's vision.

Environmental Science Student Awarded Summer Funding

Nickolas Webster '27, an Environmental Science & Policy major, received the [Open Space Institute's \(OSI\) 2025 Barnabas McHenry Hudson River Valley Award](#) in the Environmental Conservation category which provides research funding for up to five exceptional young leaders in the fields of environmental conservation, historic preservation, environmental justice, the arts, and tourism. OSI's funded projects are intended to educate local and academic communities, promote awareness about the history and environment, and invoke change. This award will support Nickolas's research on understanding how beaver behavior influences hydrology in the Hudson Valley.





NSF S-STEM Scholars Join Faculty at Conference in Chicago

Dean Alicia Slater and Lecturer of Biology, Dr. Liz Godin, accompanied four National Science Foundation S-STEM scholarship recipients to the annual NSF S-STEM Scholars conference in Chicago, IL in November 2024. The conference provided an opportunity for the scholars and principal investigators to network and attend poster sessions that featured student research projects and knowledge dissemination from S-STEM grant programs. Students also had the opportunity to take professional headshots.

From left: Umberti Likolai '27, Calvin Cote-L'Heureux '27, Ezienne Irozuru '27, Dr. Liz Godin, Kyra Campbell '27, Dean Alicia Slater



Environmental Science Professor Named a Sound Science Fellow

Associate Professor of Environmental Science Dr. Ramesh Laungani has been selected for the inaugural cohort of Sound Science Fellows by the National Center for Science Education (NCSE).

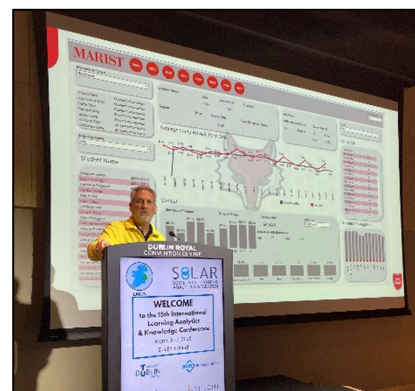


This prestigious, two-year fellowship is part of NCSE's Supporting Teachers Program, which partners with higher education and museum educators to improve how evolution and climate science are taught. Fellows will engage in professional development, contribute to research on science education, and support teachers navigating challenging topics in the classroom. *"These fellows are passionate about inspiring the next generation of scientifically literate citizens,"* said NCSE Executive Director Amanda L. Townley.



DPT Director Invited to Present Research in Dublin

James Rauh, PT, SSD, ATC, Clinical Associate Professor and Director of the DPT Program, presented his research with Marist colleague Dr. Ed Presutti, Director of Data Science and Analytics, at the 15th International Conference on Learning Analytics & Knowledge in Dublin, Ireland, in March 2025. The project, titled *"Early Detection of at-risk students in a DPT program utilizing predictive analytics and data utilization"* outlines the development of a data-driven system to identify at-risk students in a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program.





2024-2025 School of Science Student Research Presentations

Abby Bell '25, Ellen Zureick '25, Kevin Henry, MEd, ATC. *In a Healthy Population, is Time-Restricted Eating, Combined with Resistance Exercise, More Effective in Decreasing Body Fat Percentage Compared to Resistance Exercise Without Time-Restricted Eating? A Critically Appraised Topic.* EATA Annual Meeting – Philadelphia, PA. January 2025.

Morgan Blusewicz '25, Ariana Messina '24, Troy Pandolfi '24, Holly Korzendorfer PhD, PT. *Are Cognitive Behavioral Techniques Superior to Graded Exercise for Improving Functional Outcomes in Physical Therapy?* APTA Conference – Albany, NY. June 2025.

DeAngela Brackman '25, Mikelis Alsbergs '26, Kevin Henry, MEd, ATC. *Does an Increased Dietary Omega-3 Intake Lead to a Faster Recovery from Delayed-Onset Muscle Soreness in a Healthy Population? A Critically Appraised Topic.* EATA Annual Meeting – Philadelphia, PA. January 2025.

Kristen Fitzgibbon '26. *Categorization of Human and Black Bear (Ursus americanus) Interactions in iNaturalist to Improve Conservation Data Science.* International Urban Wildlife Conference – Atlanta, GA. June 2025. (funded by Marist School of Science Student Research Travel Grant)

Lucas Iommazzo '25. *Oxidation of a Lignin Model Compound by the Laccase Mediator System: A Study of Mediator Effectiveness.* Mid-Hudson American Chemical Society Undergraduate Research Symposium – SUNY New Paltz. April 2025.

Khadija Rizwan '25. *Design and Evaluation of a Potential Redox-Robust Xylanase.* Mid-Hudson American Chemical Society Undergraduate Research Symposium – SUNY New Paltz. April 2025.

Nicholas Sume '24, Michael Powers, PhD, ATC, Heather Roberts, DPT, PT. *A Comparison of Accentuated Eccentric Training and Traditional Resistance Training for Muscle Hypertrophy and Strength.* EATA Annual Meeting – Philadelphia, PA. January 2025.

Sydney Warren '25, David Buzharsky '25, Kevin Henry, MEd, ATC. *Does the Use of Instrument-Assisted Soft-Tissue Mobilization Have an Effect on Ankle Dorsiflexion Range of Motion? A Critically Appraised Topic.* EATA Annual Meeting – Philadelphia, PA. January 2025.

Emily Zheng '25, Richard Feldman PhD. *Repeated Cutting of Reynoutria japonica, s.l. (Japanese Knotweed) Diversifies Flora in Marist University Nature Preserve.* Northeast Natural History Conference - Springfield, MA. April 2025 (research funded by Office of the Provost)





Career Services Sponsors Trip to Montefiore Medical Center

In March 2025, the Center for Career Services and the School of Science co-hosted a *Road to the Workplace!* trip to the Montefiore Medical Center campuses in the Bronx. Nearly 30 student attendees toured catheterization labs, the electrophysiology lab, and the coronary care unit, and had the opportunity to view a live heart procedure in the cardiology department! *Road to the Workplace!* trips give Marist students opportunities to network with alumni and other professionals at their company work sites.



School of Science Advisory Board Members

Mr. Robert Dyson, Chair; *Chairman and CEO, The Dyson-Kissner-Moran Corporation*

Ms. Nicole (Havill) Burden '17, M'20, PA-C; *Physician Assistant, Saratoga Hospital*

Dr. Christian Campilii, PT, DPT; *Owner, Center for Physical Therapy*

Mr. William "Bill" Ciambrone; *Former Executive Vice President, Technical Operations, Sarepta Therapeutics*

Ms. Barbara Citarella, RN, BSN, MS, CHCE, NHDP-BC; *President, RBC Limited Healthcare & Management Consultants*

Dr. George Dawson '71; *Former Research Scientist and Distinguished Research Fellow, Abbott Laboratories*

Ms. Beth Marshdoyle; *Account Executive, Apple Inc. in Higher Education and Healthcare*

Dr. Bridget (Foy) Pomerantz, DO; *Physician, Osteopathic Faculty, Institute for Family Health*

Dr. Samuel Simon, MD; *Retired Orthopedic Surgeon and Chairman of the Board of Visitors, Mid-Hudson Regional Hospital; Founder, Hudson Valley Fresh*

Dr. Henry Yoon, MD; *Physician, Director of Family Medicine Residency Program, Stamford Health; Medical Director, Physician Assistant Program, Sacred Heart University*

Dr. Alicia Slater, PhD, *Dean, School of Science, and Senior Associate Provost for Academic Operations, Marist University*

Mr. Mike Byerley, *Associate Vice President for Development, Marist University*





Additional School of Science Highlights



Dr. Heather Schiller, Lecturer of Biology was honored as the SGA 2025 Faculty of the Year Award winner for the School of Science. A first-year faculty member, Dr. Schiller teaches General Biology and serves an advisor to Biology and Biomedical Sciences majors. (Left to right) Jen Liguori '25, Abigail Oliveros '26, Dr. Heather Schiller, and Alexa Abrams '26



The PA Program students honored their faculty with a surprise celebration that included signed graduation stoles and diplomas for faculty members who earned their Doctorate of Medical Science from the University of Pittsburgh. Congratulations to **Dr. Chris Barela**, **Dr. Jen Winus-Robinson**, and **Dr. Jeff Midgley**!



The Department of Environmental Science & Policy hosted a career panel of alumni and local professionals in December, followed by a reception in the Greenhouse. Students were able to interact with panelists Amanda (Rollizo) Ronan '08, Gannon Osborne '14, Martice Smith '18, Mieke Scherpbier of SLR International, and Dr. Natalie Umphlett from the Northeast Regional Climate Center.




The School of Science Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee hosted a Faculty & Students Sports Night to allow attendees to engage and become more acquainted outside of the classroom. Over 50 students and faculty attended the mixer in the McCann Arena, which consisted of volleyball, corn hole, Kan Jam, basketball, ping-pong, and badminton games.

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