

MICUA — MATTERS —

The Newsletter of the Maryland Independent College and University Association



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Five Teachers of the Year Have Ties to MICUA Institutions

Each year, Maryland's 24 local school systems honor their best teachers through the Teacher of the Year program. For the 2026-2027 year, five alumni from MICUA member institutions were named Teacher of the Year at the county level: **Loyola University Maryland** graduate Alice Tickler (Queen Anne's County); **McDaniel College** graduate Emily Brynes (Carroll County); **Mount St. Mary's University** graduate Alicia Souder (Frederick County); and **Notre Dame of Maryland University** graduates Alison Benkovic (Baltimore County) and Joe Bigsby (Anne Arundel County). On October 9, 2026, at the annual Maryland State Department of Education Teacher of the Year gala, Michael James (Harford County) was named the 2027 Maryland Teacher of the Year.

Of MICUA's 13 members, 11 prepare highly qualified teachers for Maryland primary and secondary education classrooms through State-approved teacher preparation programs. Over the last five years, MICUA institutions have awarded over 10,550 Education degrees and certificates. Across all degree levels, last year MICUA institutions awarded 43% of the Education degrees, at or above the bachelor's degree, in the State.



Alison Benkovic

Post Master's Certificate in TESOL from
Notre Dame of Maryland University
Baltimore County Public Schools
Chadwick Elementary School
Teacher of the Year finalist



Emily Brynes

Master of Science in Educational Leadership
from McDaniel College
Carroll County Public Schools
Westminster High School
Teacher of the Year finalist



Alice Tickler

Master's in Reading from
Loyola University Maryland
Queen Anne's County Public Schools
Church Hill Elementary School
Teacher of the Year finalist



Joe Bigsby

Master of Science in Leadership in Education
from Notre Dame of Maryland University
Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Broadneck High School



Alicia Souder

Master's in Reading from
Mount Saint Mary's University
Frederick County Public Schools
Parkway Elementary School

New Faculty, New Technology for Construction Education



Written by Erica Decker, Edited by Lise Dykes

Capitol Technology University welcomed Professor Tara Labosky to its construction management programs this fall.

Labosky's career includes decades of experience in architecture, construction management, land development, and education, along with successful projects across California and Maryland. She earned her master's in construction management from Drexel University, taught at the Community College of Baltimore County, and fosters industry connections from the American Institute of Architects and National Association of Women in Construction. Now, she brings her expertise to Capitol Tech, helping shape the University's growing construction, facilities, and safety programs.

These fields—and programs—are undergoing a transformation driven by technology. “With the advent of Building Information Modeling (BIM), Virtual Design and Construction (VDC), and AI, we are seeing an unprecedented acceleration in how design and construction processes evolve,” said Labosky. “At Capitol Tech, students have many avenues to explore these technologies. In my new role, I am developing a dedicated lab where both current and prospective students can gain practical exposure to the architecture, engineering, construction, and operations industry.”

Other plans will help strengthen networking with industry professionals by connecting students with guest speakers, demonstrations, expert panels, internships, and site visits.

“A successful construction professional should demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning and networking,” said Labosky. “Our curriculum combines classroom instruction with hands-on experiences, including capstone courses and an internship in construction management, giving students the opportunity to apply academic principles directly to workplace situations for success in their careers.”

The University's first construction management program was established in 2018 under the leadership of President Bradford L. Sims. Since then, the department continues to grow, offering undergraduate and graduate degrees in construction cybersecurity, civil engineering, occupational safety and health, and more.



Professor Tara Labosky, AIA, LEED AP, CCCA, brings her industry expertise to Capitol Tech's construction programs.

Goucher Receives \$1.3M Grant to Support Humanities for All Times Project

By Goucher College Staff

Goucher College has received a \$1.3 million three-year grant from the Mellon Foundation to support a Humanities for All Times project, “Curiosity, Complexity and Social Justice: Invigorating the Essential Humanities for All”. The project builds on Goucher’s community principles, rooted in respect, inclusion, service, and social justice, to support curricular and research opportunities.

By foregrounding humanistic methods in class, the grant will help establish an interdisciplinary humanities minor intended primarily for non-humanities majors. Through collaborative humanities research opportunities, faculty research, team teaching, professional development opportunities, and the development of an innovative course registration process designed to promote curiosity, the grant will impact the experience of all Goucher students.

With Humanities for All Times support to develop new humanities-based curricular and research projects, Goucher will build on its commitment to a liberal arts education to help students develop critical thinking, adaptability, and a global perspective, becoming complex problem solvers.

“A transformative higher education like the one Goucher provides prepares the next generation of students not only for future careers but also to be informed, thoughtful citizens and potential global changemakers,” said Goucher College President Kent Devereaux. “This direct support for our humanities programming reinforces our efforts and core values.”

As part of their undergraduate studies, Goucher students explore rigorous academics through an immersive global perspective, with study abroad for all students. Students participate in an internship accelerator for career experience each year of their education, and community-based learning, in which Goucher partners with numerous Maryland nonprofit organizations to serve the surrounding communities better, is also integrated into the curriculum.



Goucher College students participating in a collaborative learning project

Hood College, Maryland Department of Commerce, Endow \$2M in Support of Nurse Practitioner Chair Position



By Mason Cavalier

Ruth Whitaker Holmes '55 Endowed Nurse Practitioner Chair position to support growth of graduate nursing, counseling programs

Hood College joined the Maryland Department of Commerce in the endowment of \$2,020,905 towards the Ruth Whitaker Holmes '55 Endowed Nurse Practitioner Chair position within the Ruth Whitaker Holmes School of Behavioral and Health Sciences.

Hood was awarded \$1 million from the Maryland Department of Commerce Maryland E-Innovation Initiative Fund (MEIF), a State program created to spur basic and applied research in scientific and technical fields at colleges and universities. The College matched the award via a generous \$1,020,905 gift from Ruth Whitaker Holmes '55, H'93, and G. Burt Holmes.

The Chair will support the growth of the College's graduate nursing and counseling programs by bringing both clinical and active research experience to the classroom. As students develop their skills in mental health assessment, integrated care, and interdisciplinary collaboration, the Chair will help ensure they can meet the complex demands of modern healthcare and are prepared for long-term career success.

HOOD COLLEGE



Nursing students work through simulation exercises in Hood College's lab, practicing patient care and assessment.



Johns Hopkins Partners With Baltimore Libraries for Safe Gun Storage Distribution

By Doug Donovan

Select Enoch Pratt Free Library locations in Baltimore will distribute safe gun storage devices as part of a new partnership with Johns Hopkins University.

Anyone at least 18 years old will be eligible to pick up a safe gun storage device at five Enoch Pratt branches: Central, Cherry Hill, Walbrook, Hamilton, and Southeast Anchor. Devices include cable locks and biometric gun safes that can be programmed to open with a fingerprint or code. No library card or proof of residency are required.

A Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions analysis shows homicide rates have started to decline while gun suicide rates continue to reach all-time highs. Safe storage is a critical public health intervention to prevent such deaths. Research regularly shows that safe storage of firearms prevents suicide, homicide, theft, and unintentional injuries.

Funding for the initiative comes from a federal earmark of \$245,000 sponsored by U.S. Rep. Kweisi Mfume and supported by the U.S. Department of Justice. Mfume announced the partnership in July with Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott and officials from Hopkins and Enoch Pratt.

Beyond the library, the funds support safe gun storage device distribution at adult and pediatric trauma centers at Johns Hopkins Hospital, Johns Hopkins Children's Center, and Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. The initiative supports a longstanding partnership between Johns Hopkins' Office of Government, Community, and Economic Partnerships and the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement to distribute free storage devices in clinical and community settings.



U.S. Rep. Kweisi Mfume; Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott; Maria Harris Tildon, vice president of government, community and economic partnership at Johns Hopkins; and Dr. Joseph Sakran, Johns Hopkins trauma surgeon.

Credit: Will Kirk, Johns Hopkins University

Loyola Awarded Nearly \$1 Million in Federal Funding to Create Forensic Science Training Center

By Liam Davis



LOYOLA
UNIVERSITY MARYLAND

Loyola University Maryland has been awarded nearly \$1 million in federal funding to create a forensic science training center to support forensic science innovation and training through the University's partnerships with local law enforcement agencies and the City of Baltimore.

Resources provided through the \$965,000 in federal funding will enable cutting-edge research in areas like DNA analysis, toxicology, digital forensics, and pattern analysis.

"This funding is significant not just for Loyola, but for our entire community," said Terrence M. Sawyer, J.D., president of Loyola. "It ensures that the University will continue to graduate highly skilled, civic-minded forensic scientists who are ready to serve, while also building upon the mutually beneficial training partnerships Loyola has with local law enforcement agencies and investing in experiential learning opportunities for young people interested in careers in the forensic sciences."

U.S. Representative Johnny Olszewski, Jr., of Maryland's 2nd Congressional District, presented Loyola with the funding in a ceremony at Newman Towers on Loyola's campus on July 9, 2026.

"This investment will prepare students for high-demand careers, give law enforcement better tools to do their jobs, strengthen partnerships across our region, and ultimately make our communities safer," Congressman Olszewski said. "That's exactly the kind of investment taxpayers deserve and this is exactly what responsible government looks like."

Loyola's forensic science department provides support for community programs such as the annual Loyola University Maryland and Baltimore Police Department Forensic Science Summer Academy, where high school students from Baltimore City and surrounding counties participate in a free, week-long camp designed to introduce them to careers in forensic science and law enforcement.



Congressman Olszewski presents President Sawyer with the ceremonial \$965,000 check at Newman Towers on Loyola's campus on Thursday, July 9, 2026. Credit: Aaron Boutwell



MICA Students Reimagine an Iconic Maryland Brand

By Trish Shea, MICA Marketing and Communications

When McCormick & Company began planning the return of OLD BAY® to its iconic metal tin, the company turned to an unexpected source for inspiration: students at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA).

The collaboration challenged students to create a limited-edition OLD BAY® tin celebrating Baltimore and the Chesapeake region while working within the constraints of one of Maryland's most recognizable brands. MICA's Graphic Design department partnered with McCormick on the two-course project, with faculty Kristian Bjørnard, Mileka Hugley, and Hayelin Choi integrating the collaboration into their courses and guiding students throughout the design process.

MICA helped make the project especially meaningful by transforming a classroom assignment into an authentic professional experience. Students researched Baltimore's history and McCormick's connection to the city, worked directly with the company's design team, visited McCormick facilities, presented concepts, and responded to professional critiques. Faculty mentorship helped students balance creative expression with real-world production requirements and brand standards while encouraging them to explore how thoughtful design can honor the people, history, and traditions that give Baltimore and Maryland their distinctive character.

Graphic Design graduate Priscilla Cruz '26 created the winning concept, "Hands of the Harbor." Her design celebrates the people whose labor helped build Maryland's identity, incorporating photographs of workers and scenes reflecting Baltimore's industrial history and Chesapeake Bay traditions.

The partnership gave students valuable experience working with a real client and nationally recognized brand while demonstrating how MICA connects rigorous design education, Maryland's creative community, and professional practice.



President Cecilia M. McCormick and designer Priscilla Cruz '26 reveal the design. Courtesy of Maryland Institute College of Art



*Design detail.
Credit: McCormick & Company*

New Health Sciences Programs at McDaniel College Address Workforce Needs

McDANIEL
COLLEGE

By Cheryl Knauer

McDaniel College is expanding its academic offerings in the health sciences with new programs designed to address critical workforce needs in Carroll County and the surrounding region. Building on the College's proud history of excellence in the sciences, these initiatives are transforming McDaniel into a premier regional center for healthcare education.

- **Occupational Therapy:** McDaniel's Master of Science in Occupational Therapy program can be completed in 24 months, preparing graduates for careers in healthcare and community settings. The inaugural cohort began in May 2026 with an orientation on campus before transitioning online for the summer. Students returned to campus for fall courses in a newly renovated facility in Merritt Hall that was supported by a \$2.16 million grant from the State of Maryland.
- **Speech-Language Pathology:** Launching in summer 2027, McDaniel's new Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology will help address the regional and statewide need for speech-language pathologists, particularly in K-12 schools. It will be the fourth such program in Maryland and only the second at a private institution. The program, which holds candidacy status for accreditation from the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), also includes a five-year accelerated bachelor's-to-master's pathway and an online bridge program for students who need prerequisite coursework.
- **Nursing:** The McDaniel College Kahlert Nursing Education Center at LifeBridge Health's Carroll Hospital provides classrooms, labs, and offices for McDaniel's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. The state-of-the-art facility allows Nursing students to learn in a hospital setting alongside practicing nurses and physicians. McDaniel also is exploring master's programs in nursing and has partnered with Carroll Community College on a grant proposal to create a pipeline from Carroll's associate degree nursing program to McDaniel's BSN program.



McDaniel College Kahlert Nursing Education Center classroom



McDaniel's first cohort of Occupational Therapy students



Mount St. Mary's Creates New Path for Future Nurses

By Ashlen Renner

Communities across the region and the nation need more well-prepared nurses. Building on its physician assistant program and growing commitment to health professions education, Mount St. Mary's University is launching a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program to prepare skilled, compassionate nurses for the patients, families and communities counting on them.

The program will extend the Mount's work to educate future health leaders who combine strong clinical preparation with ethical judgment, attentive communication and care for the whole person. It will also carry forward Emmitsburg's longstanding legacy of nursing education, healing and service.

The BSN program will recognize the area's deep history of nursing education and healthcare service. That history includes St. Joseph College and the Daughters of Charity, whose commitment to educating women, caring for people in need and serving communities helped shape the region.

Healthcare organizations continue to face nursing vacancies and long-term workforce pressures, and nursing schools have not been able to keep pace with student interest. In 2025, U.S. nursing schools turned away 75,255 qualified applications to entry-level bachelor's degree programs, largely because of limited clinical placement sites, faculty shortages and classroom capacity, according to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. Mount St. Mary's developed the program to add capacity to that pipeline, creating another pathway for students to enter the profession and serve in hospitals, community settings, public health organizations and other areas of care.

The program is expected to welcome its first entering class in fall 2027 pending approval from the Maryland Board of Nursing. Applications are now open.



Mount St. Mary's University's plans for the expansion of Coad Science Building include classroom spaces, labs, and common areas that will house students of the new B.S. in Nursing program.

Notre Dame of Maryland University's Fourier Hall Reimagined for the Future of Learning



By Sabrina Miller

A \$4 million renovation has transformed Fourier Hall, one of Notre Dame of Maryland University's historic academic buildings, into a modern learning environment designed to support hands-on education in business, art therapy and art.

The renovation preserves the character of the historic building while introducing new classrooms, specialized labs, and collaborative spaces throughout Fourier Hall. The project includes a Wall Street-style Finance Lab, professional boardroom, Art Therapy Simulation Lab, upgraded photography rooms, and an expanded Gormley Gallery. The historic Fourier Library has also been refreshed to provide additional space for large meetings and events, with updated lighting and technology to support multimedia presentations.

Among the new spaces is a Finance Lab featuring a Wall Street-style ticker with real-time market data, creating an immersive environment that mirrors the technology and experience of professional financial firms. The space allows business students to analyze real-time information, develop practical skills, and apply concepts learned in the classroom in an environment designed to prepare them for internships and careers.

For students studying art therapy, the new Art Therapy Simulation Lab provides a dedicated clinical practice environment where students can participate in simulated therapy sessions, role-play clinical interactions, conduct assessments and receive faculty feedback and reflection. The space allows faculty and students to closely observe therapeutic communication, art-making processes, group dynamics, and other developing professional skills. It also provides a controlled environment to support faculty and student research involving observation, recording, arts-based inquiry, and other forms of data collection.

The updates extend beyond the academic labs and classrooms. An expanded Gormley Gallery provides additional space for large-scale professional and student exhibitions, while the refreshed Fourier Library offers a modern venue for meetings, presentations and events for the NDMU community and the public.

The transformation of Fourier Hall represents more than an investment in the University's physical campus. It reflects NDMU's commitment to creating learning environments where students can practice, collaborate, experiment, and apply what they learn. From analyzing real-time financial markets to practicing clinical skills and exhibiting artwork, the renovated Fourier Hall gives students more opportunities to learn by doing and connects their academic experiences to the professional and creative worlds they will enter after graduation.



NDMU's Fourier Hall Library



ST JOHN'S
College

St. John's College Great Books Program Recognized as a Triple Major

By St. John's College Staff

St. John's College recently announced that its longstanding undergraduate Great Books program has been recognized by educational authorities as equivalent to a triple major. The degree will be renamed from a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts to a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, Literature, and the Natural Sciences.

The Class of 2027 will be the first class to graduate with the new designation. There is no other college in the country where every student's degree is recognized as a triple major upon completion of the program of study.

"At St. John's College, we offer an all-required, interconnected program across disciplines, and that isn't changing," says St. John's College President J. Walter Sterling. "This new degree name allows the outside world to better understand what our students and alumni have always known: that this education gives students a deep foundation in the humanities and in math and science."

The Maryland Higher Education Commission, the New Mexico Higher Education Department, and the Higher Learning Commission have officially recognized that the credit hours offered by St. John's are the equivalent of a triple major in philosophy, literature, and the natural sciences. This recognition provides the St. John's College undergraduate degree with three CIP codes (Classification of Instructional Programs), standardized codes developed by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics to identify and classify postsecondary programs of study across the United States. These codes are used in most college search websites and databases. Additionally, the College has applied to the Department of Homeland Security for STEM designation of the degree, which is expected to benefit international students and those pursuing postgraduate studies.



A bookshelf showcases some of the Great Books studied by all students at St. John's College.

Stevenson's Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) in Clinical Psychology Earns APA Accreditation and Graduates First Cohort



By Nick Barczak

Stevenson University's Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) in Clinical Psychology, the University's first doctoral program, has reached two historic milestones: earning initial accreditation from the American Psychological Association's Commission on Accreditation (APA CoA) and graduating its first cohort of doctoral students.

The program was granted initial APA accreditation effective October 24, 2025, following more than five years of planning, development, and evaluation. This spring and summer, the program celebrated another significant milestone as its inaugural students—also Stevenson's first doctoral students—graduated from the program.

Developed in response to the growing demand for highly trained clinical psychologists, the Psy.D. program enrolled its first cohort in 2021 and has since grown to more than 70 students. Its accreditation marks an important achievement for Stevenson and reflects the dedication of the faculty, administrators, students, and staff who helped establish and grow the program.

Rooted in a practitioner-scholar model, the five-year program emphasizes rigorous academic and clinical training, along with mentorship from faculty who are licensed psychologists with substantial clinical practice experience. Through coursework, clinical training, and research experiences, students are prepared to pursue licensure and provide a range of evidence-informed clinical services to individuals and populations with diverse identities and experiences.

"Receiving APA accreditation not only reflects the academic excellence of our Doctor of Psychology program, but is a historic accomplishment for Stevenson," said Meredith Durmowicz, Ph.D., Stevenson's Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs and Provost. "I would like to acknowledge and thank the administrators and faculty of our Psy.D. program, as well as all the students, faculty, and staff from across Stevenson who participated in October's APA site visit. Their hard work and dedication built this program and made this achievement possible."



Stevenson's Psy.D. faculty, administrators, students, and alumni gathered Monday, September 14, to celebrate the program's APA accreditation and the graduation of its first cohort.

WAU Celebrates 18 Years of Leadership by Dr. Weymouth Spence, Welcomes Dr. Cheryl Kisunzu as Interim President

By Everett Wiles

Washington Adventist University is celebrating the remarkable 18-year presidency of Dr. Weymouth Spence, expressing gratitude for nearly two decades of visionary leadership, dedicated service and unwavering commitment to the University's mission, while welcoming Dr. Cheryl Harris Kisunzu as interim president.

During Spence's presidency, WAU navigated significant changes in higher education while remaining firmly committed to its Seventh-day Adventist identity and its mission of academic excellence, spiritual development, student success and service. His leadership helped position the University to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities through innovation, strategic partnerships, campus development and an enduring focus on preparing students to become competent moral leaders in their communities and professions.

Spence's commitment to the future of WAU was also reflected in significant improvements to the University's physical campus. Under his leadership, two important academic facilities, the Peters Music Building and the Boyer Building were renovated, enhancing spaces where students learn, create and prepare for their professions. These improvements were part of a broader commitment to investing in the student experience and strengthening the University for future generations.

The University now begins its next chapter under the leadership of Dr. Cheryl Harris Kisunzu, who has been appointed interim president. Kisunzu assumes the role with a deep appreciation for WAU's history and a strong sense of optimism about its future. That optimism is grounded in the University's continuing impact. At WAU's May 2026 Constituency Meeting, it was reported that more than 1,000 students had passed through the University's "Gateway to Service" during the previous five years, prepared to fulfill their individual callings and make a difference in the world.

As WAU enters the 2026-27 academic year, Kisunzu has emphasized moving forward with prayer, hope and courage while advancing the University's Vision 2030 initiatives and strategic plan.



Dr. Weymouth Spence



Dr. Cheryl Kisunzu

New Washington Insider Series Focuses on Faculty Expertise

By Mark Jolly-Van Bodegraven



Professors are first and foremost mentors and educators, especially at a liberal arts school like Washington College that emphasizes innovative and impactful teaching. But professors play many other roles as well, conducting research, facilitating community collaborations, and producing creative work.

Washington Insider is a monthly video interview series featuring faculty members talking about their areas of expertise, their passion projects, and knowledge from their field that is particularly interesting or useful to people outside of it.

For the 2026-27 academic year, the series will focus on conversations between two professors in each episode, all of whom contributed to *Media and Information Literacy as Civic Practice*, a book edited by Cromwell Center for Teaching and Learning co-directors Sara Clarke-De Reza and Meghan Grosse, professors of education and of communication and media studies, respectively.

The book provides case studies based on courses taught at Washington College that can provide faculty at colleges and universities across the country with ideas for lessons, projects, and even entire semester-long courses that combine civic engagement with critical thinking skills. The videos throughout the year will pair writers of different chapters for conversations about where their disciplines and teaching practices overlap, how they see civic engagement as fitting into their field, and topics that join their expertise.

The first episode features Grosse and Clarke-De Reza, who provide an overview for the idea of the book and set the stage for some of the professors who will be featured in future videos. Future topics will include social justice and activism, campaigns and voting, AI use in education and business, and more. Check in every month on this YouTube playlist at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLN9P3d_VP_go.



Sara Clarke-De Reza and Meghan Grosse sit down to talk civic engagement and their new book, kicking off the 2026-27 Washington Insider series.

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Affiliate Members



MICUA's 2026 Business Affiliates

The MICUA Business Affiliate Program is an initiative designed to create additional connections between the business community and Maryland's thirteen independent colleges and universities.



Approved collaborators await to connect with you!