

new faculty & librarians

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2024 – 2025



Fitchburg State University is pleased to welcome ten new faculty members this fall. Over the course of the last academic year, faculty members devoted time and resources to recruit these new members of the academic community, and we are happy to welcome them to our Fitchburg family. I have the privilege to work with a phenomenal group of faculty and staff who are inspiring students to defy expectations through high-quality academic programs. It is clear that when a student becomes part of Fitchburg State, they become part of a fellowship intensely committed to academic excellence and learning. These new members join a group of talented teacher-scholars who serve as the anchor of this thriving institution. We are confident that these new faculty members will find a home here at Fitchburg and we are proud that they will be joining our distinctive faculty. On their behalf, I welcome you as new colleagues.

Sincerely,

Dr. Patricia A. Marshall

PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Behavioral Sciences Department



DR. STACY PETERSON joins the department of Behavioral Sciences as a full-time visiting Assistant Professor of Human Services. She earned her Doctorate of Social Work from the University at Buffalo School of Social Work, her Master of Social Work from Columbia University, and her Bachelor of Arts in Social Work from the University of New Hampshire. Dr. Peterson is an active researcher with current work focused on effective strategies to increase the use of Trauma-Informed Educational Pedagogy and how community within educational settings can help support and foster healing among survivors of gender-based violence, as well as a practicing therapist with a focus on individual counseling to adolescents and adults. With 20+ years of direct practice in social work, Dr. Peterson is eager to combine her experience in the field with her passion for teaching and innovating education.



Communications Media Department



MR. ANDRES GONZALEZ joins the department of Communications Media as a full-time visiting Assistant Professor of Game Design. He earned his Master of Interactive Technology in Digital Game Development from the Guildhall at Southern Methodist University and his undergraduate degree in Computer Engineering from Simon Bolivar University in Caracas, Venezuela. He has over 16 years in the game industry as a video game designer working on 1st and 3rd person games. Mr. Gonzalez has served as lead designer for Bioshock Infinite DLC Burial at Sea: Episodes 1 and 2, Judas, and Noobs in Space, lead combat designer for Bioshock Infinite, world designer for Saints Row the Third, and level designer for Red Faction Guerilla, and is currently a founder and co-creative for Mad Tale Games.



MS. XIAOYING MENG joins the department of Communications Media as a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Game Design after serving for one year as a visiting Assistant Professor of Game Design. She earned her Master of Entertainment Technology and her B.A. in Architecture with a Human-Computer Interaction Minor from Carnegie Mellon University and has experience in multiple aspects of game development including game design, narrative design, 3D art, and production. She worked on gamifying a tutoring system for middle school students and designed educational games centered around teaching history in her roles as narrative designer and game designer with the Human-Computer Interaction Institute, designed game mechanics for BAM! Build A Mustang in her work as a game designer with the MuseumLab-Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, and designed and shipped 30 levels and the level progression path for Solitaire Tripeaks on Amazon Alexa in her work as a game design intern at Volley in San Francisco. She has additional experience working with AR, VR, and Tobii Eyetracker and was a Gold Winner of the GDC Game Narrative Review Competition for her analysis essay on Spiritfarer. Ms. Meng's goal is to provide her students with opportunities to experiment with new ideas and concepts, creating an environment in her classroom that encourages exploration and fosters growth in all of her students.

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY

Computer Science Department



HEFEI QIU will join the Department of Computer Science as an Assistant Professor in September 2024. She is expected to receive her Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of Massachusetts Boston in August 2024. Her research interests lie broadly in Natural Language Processing, machine learning, and artificial intelligence (AI), especially AI for Education. Hefei is passionate about teaching and has had substantial experience teaching undergraduate courses in Computer Science as a teaching fellow.



DR. GUY KARLEBACH joins the Department of Computer Science as an Assistant Professor. He earned his BSc in Computer Science at the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, his Master's in Computer Science at Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Israel, and his PhD in Computer Science at Tel Aviv University in Israel. He conducted his post-doctoral research at the DKFZ in Heidelberg, Germany, and worked as an Associate Research Scientist at the Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine. During his post-graduate work, he recharacterized the problem of finding the optimal inference procedure for Boolean networks based on Kolmogorov complexity, with the goal of reliably inferring gene regulatory networks. His research interests also include Bayesian modeling of large-scale biological processes, in particular for resolving methodological issues associated with orthodox statistical approaches. He is also interested in optimization algorithms for complex problems of statistical inference and their application to Bioinformatics.



Engineering Technology Department



DR. VISAL VENG is a visiting Assistant Professor in Engineering Technology at Fitchburg State University. He earned his Ph.D. in Energy Engineering from the UMass Lowell and completed a distinguished postdoctoral fellowship in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities.

Dr. Veng has contributed to high-profile journals such as Renewable Energy Engineering, Plasma Science and Technology, Smart Grid, and Clean Energy. He has actively participated in writing successful grants during his time as a doctoral scholar and postdoctoral fellow. His passion for teaching and research is evident through his achievements, including sixteen first-author publications, one patent, and a total of twenty-five publications. He is dedicated to both education and service, demonstrated by his experiences as an adjunct professor, researcher, and consultant in mechanical engineering design, engineering graphics, and renewable energy engineering. Dr. Veng also co-founded a start-up company specializing in producing liquid fertilizer from air and water using solar energy and plasma technology.



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Education Department



DR. KIMBERLY BENNETT joins the department of Education as a Visiting Assistant Professor in Early Childhood Education. She received her doctoral degree in Early Childhood Special Education from Walden University and completed her M.Ed. at Wheelock College. She has nearly 20 years' experience as a consultant, parent-child group facilitator, early interventionist, manager, and clinical supervisor for numerous educational and parenting agencies. In the classroom, Dr. Bennett has taught a wide range of courses related to early childhood education, educational psychology, developmental therapy strategies and other related areas at Curry College, Emerson College, Fisher College, and DePaul University. Dr. Bennett's passion is educating, training and supervising students and professionals to improve the outcomes for all children, families, and providers in the state.

SCHOOL OF HEALTH & NATURAL SCIENCES

Mathematics Department



DR. NESTOR FERNANDO DIAZ MORERA joins the Department of Mathematics as an Assistant Professor. He grew up in La Palma, a small town in Colombia, where he worked in the fields, clearing sugar cane, coffee, and pasture with his machete while nurturing a keen interest in science. He earned his bachelor's degree from Universidad Sergio Arboleda (Bogotá, D.C.), his master's degree from Instituto Politécnico Nacional de México (Mexico City), and his Ph.D. in Mathematics from Tulane University. His research focuses on representation theory, exploring the interplay between algebraic groups and combinatorics. He is passionate about fostering a collaborative learning environment both inside and outside the classroom. Outside of academia, Fernando enjoys playing football (soccer), running, dancing, and exploring new cuisines.

Nursing Department



AMANDA CARMICHAEL earned her BSN in Nursing and MBA at Rivier University. She obtained her MSN in Nursing Education at Western Governors University and is currently enrolled in a doctoral program at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Amanda joins our Nursing Department with almost 17 years as a practicing nurse in medical-surgical, orthopedics, emergency, and post-anesthesia nursing.

She has taught nursing students since 2016 and has experience teaching online and face-to-face in ASN and BSN programs. Amanda is passionate about educating the next generation of nursing students and fostering a collaborative learning environment. Research interests include resiliency in students and faculty, the association between health literacy and resiliency in adult cancer survivors, and health disparities among pediatric clients with acquired brain injury (ABI).



PAMELA MASOKA is a dedicated nursing professional with a diverse educational background and a passion for mental health. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing at the University of Malawi in 2012. Following her undergraduate studies, Pamela pursued a Master of Public Health (MPH) at Southern Medical University in Guangzhou, China, broadening her expertise in public health issues.

Currently, Pamela is advancing her career as a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) student at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Her specialization lies in mental health, an area she finds particularly rewarding to teach. Pamela's enthusiasm for mental health education stems from her belief in its critical importance in overall healthcare and her desire to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illnesses.

As a mental health expert, Pamela brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to her teaching role. She is committed to fostering a supportive learning environment and empowering future nurses with the skills and understanding necessary to provide compassionate, effective mental health care.



