



UMass Amherst
College of
Humanities & Fine Arts



HFA Dean's Newsletter | September 2026

Dear HFA Community,

Welcome to the 2026–2027 academic year. I hope the summer offered opportunities for rest and renewal as we begin another semester of teaching, learning, research, and creative activity across HFA.

One of the things I would like to highlight is the increased number of resources the college has invested in new research funding for faculty and graduate students. For fiscal year 2027, the college has committed approximately an additional \$152,000, including summer funding. HFA has responded to external funding challenges by creating robust internal funding opportunities for research and creative activities for faculty and graduate students. I encourage you to apply for funding and to nominate yourself and others for college and university level awards.

There is already much to celebrate, including international recognition for our architecture students, new faculty publications, and professional appointments. I hope you will also take advantage of the upcoming opportunities to gather, learn, and connect.

I look forward to all that we will accomplish together this year.

Be well,

Maria del Guadalupe (Lupe) Davidson

Dean, College of Humanities and Fine Arts

NEWS & UPDATES

HFA Announces Expanded Funding and Awards Opportunities

HFA is pleased to announce an expanded slate of funding and recognition opportunities for faculty, staff, and graduate students. Highlights are organized into three categories:

Faculty and Staff Awards and Fellowships

Nominations are due Oct. 30 for the [HFA Dean's Fellowship Program](#), [Faculty Research and Creative Activity Award](#), [Global Engagement Award](#), [Joye Bowman Social Justice Award](#), and [Outstanding Staff Award](#).

Funding for Research and Creative Work

New faculty opportunities include the [HFA Book Symposium](#), providing up to \$5,000; two interdisciplinary [Research & Creative Laboratories Grants](#) of up to \$40,000 each; and funding for faculty participation in [OpEd Project](#) workshops.

Opportunities are also available through these continuing HFA programs:

- [Supplemental Research Presentation Fund](#)
- [Research Grant](#)
- [Conference Grant](#)
- [Subvention Grant](#)
- [Art, Design, & Creative Productions Fund](#)
- [Manuscript Development & Completion Fund](#)

Graduate Student Funding and Recognition

New opportunities include the [Graduate Student Research Intensive Semester Fellowship](#) and [Professional and Creative Master's Project Completion Grants](#), both due Oct. 5; [Dissertation Completion Fellowships](#) of up to \$8,000, due March 8; and [Summer Research Grants](#) of up to \$1,500, due April 1. Nominations for the established [Outstanding Graduate Student Award](#) are due Oct. 30.

[Explore All Opportunities, Deadlines, and Eligibility Requirements](#)

New HFA in DC Opportunity for Students

HFA and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences have developed a joint initiative that will extend the SBS in DC program to HFA sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The semester-long program will combine a Washington, D.C.-based internship with academic coursework, professional development, and alumni mentorship. Participants will earn 15 UMass credits and receive an HFA stipend. Faculty and staff are encouraged to share this opportunity with students.

Applications for the fall 2027 cohort will be open Sept. 27–Oct. 12. Contact Philippe Baillargeon for more information or to schedule a class visit (baillargeon@llc.umass.edu).

[Learn More](#)

HFA Welcomes New Faculty Members

Meet several of the educators, scholars, and artists joining the college, learn about their work, and discover what they are looking forward to at UMass Amherst.

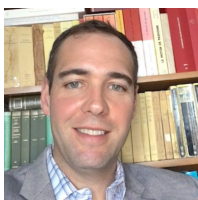




Interview with Rebecca Dingo, New Associate Dean for Faculty

Rebecca Dingo, professor of English, has been named associate dean for faculty in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts. Dingo brings extensive experience in faculty development, mentoring, academic leadership, and personnel processes to the role.

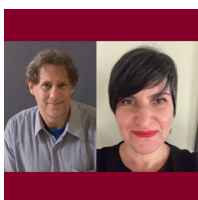
[Read More](#)



Interview with Philippe Baillargeon, New Associate Dean for Careers, Professional Pathways, and Innovation

Philippe Baillargeon has been named associate dean for careers, professional pathways, and innovation. In this newly established role, Baillargeon will help strengthen career services, experiential learning, and partnerships while advancing the proposed HFA Student Success Center.

[Read More](#)



Ela Gezen and David Mednicoff Appointed Directors of the Interdisciplinary Studies Institute

Professors Ela Gezen and David Mednicoff have been appointed directors of the Interdisciplinary Studies Institute. Together, they will build on more than 25 years of interdisciplinary exchange and intellectual engagement while expanding the institute's reach across UMass Amherst and surrounding communities.

[Read More](#)

TINY SPACES, BIG IDEAS



Occupied Words: What the Holocaust Did to Yiddish

Thousands of new words were invented in the Yiddish language during the Holocaust, terms that unlock deeply human histories of the catastrophe. Hannah Pollin-Galay, Pen Tishkach Chair of Holocaust Studies and director of the Institute for Holocaust, Genocide & Memory Studies, explores what these words reveal about people's experiences during the Holocaust.

[Watch the Episode](#)

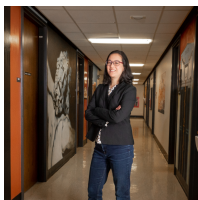
FACULTY PUBLICATIONS AND HONORS



Marianna Ritchey Named UMass Amherst Spotlight Scholar

Marianna Ritchey, associate professor of music history, has been named a UMass Amherst Spotlight Scholar. Her research examines classical music in the context of modern American capitalism and explores how music can deepen our understanding of culture, politics, and the world around us.

[Read More](#)



Melissa Mueller Edits New Collector's Edition of Barnard's *Sappho*

Professor of Classics Melissa Mueller has edited a new collector's edition of Mary Barnard's influential translation of *Sappho*. Published Sept. 1 by the University of California Press, the edition is the first to present Barnard's English translations alongside the original Greek and includes a new introduction by Mueller.



Miliann Kang Publishes *Not Tiger Moms: Reimagining Asian American Motherhood*

Professor Miliann Kang of the Department of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies has published *Not Tiger Moms: Reimagining Asian American Motherhood*.

[Learn More About the Book](#)



Jonathan Skolnik Appointed Editor of Association for Jewish Studies Magazine

Jonathan Skolnik, associate professor of German, has been appointed co-editor of *AJS Perspectives*, the magazine of the Association for Jewish Studies. In this role, Skolnik will also serve on the association's board of directors.

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STUDENT NEWS



UMass Amherst Architecture Students Win Honors in International Design Competition

Architecture undergraduate Paul Dominic "Pollo" Drilon earned second place in the 2026 Concrete Masonry Student Competition for his project, "River Futures Museum." UMass Amherst architecture students also received two honorable mentions: Angela Zou and Caytlin Yii for "Bumble Blocks" and Smriti Rijal for "The Orbit Center."

[Read More](#)



Linguistics Major Nat Thompson Awarded American Philosophical Society Fellowship

Linguistics major Nat Thompson has received a 2026–2027 Daythal L. Kendall Fellowship from the American Philosophical Society.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Finding Her Way Back to Art

HFA alum Kymberly S. Newberry '22MA, '24PhD, curated *BLACK WORK: Absence/Absorption*, an exhibition of visual, sonic, and mixed-media works that invites visitors to consider Blackness as a living, evolving condition.

[Read More on the UMass Foundation Site](#)

EVENTS

For all events, visit the [UMass Events Calendar](#).

SHARE YOUR NEWS & STAY CONNECTED



To be featured on the HFA website, social media, or its newsletters, share your news, accomplishments, research projects, photos, and more.

Communications Support

