Welcome back. For myself, I have appreciated reconnecting with colleagues and students. I am deeply aware of the "double feel" of this moment in time in our community—the energy of being back and starting something new collides with other emotions associated with the loss of cherished colleagues and staff and the challenges we face. Faculty Commons—the space, activities and events create opportunities to connect and be in community with each other formally and informally—whether for collaboration, learning or support.

On behalf of the Faculty Commons, we would like to take a moment to invite you to join us at some of our upcoming Spring 2015 activities and events we have planned—some as soon as next week. For all events, you can learn more by visiting our Faculty Commons Website:

http://usm.maine.edu/facultycommons

**Faculty Development Series: Lunch and Learns**

**Metropolitan University Activities**

**Title III Symposium and Activities**

**Thriving and Flourishing in Uncertain Times**

**Faculty Development Lunchtime Series**

**Student Mental Health and College Success: What Faculty Need to Know**

The Counseling Center at USM has seen a steady increase in students seeking services over the past several years. In the last academic year, the Disability Services Center saw a 63% increase in the number of students seeking services for a documented psychiatric disability. Both offices receive numerous calls from faculty seeking consultation on best practices to support students in the classroom. This series will include four sessions with specific learning outcomes for each module. Participants will gain an understanding and awareness of college mental health topics and issues. This will include specific information on best practices for helping a student in crisis. Confidentiality, faculty responsibilities, and specific university resources will also be covered.

**Speakers:**

Joanne Benica, Director of the Disability Center

Robert Small, PsyD., licensed psychologist and Clinical Director of Counseling Services
1. Steps to Take When You Know a Student in Crisis  
   **Th Jan 22nd, 12-1:30 PM, Portland Faculty Commons, 3rd Fl Glickman**

2. Shhhhh! Keep Student Information Confidential In and Out of the Classroom  
   **Th Jan 29th, 12-1:30 PM, Portland Faculty Commons, 3rd Fl Glickman**

3. You, Your Course, and Students with Mental Health Concerns: How to be Prepared  
   **Th Feb 5th, 12-1:30 PM, Portland Faculty Commons, 3rd Fl Glickman**

4. Can We Talk? An Open Forum for Faculty to Discuss Teaching Students with Mental Health Illness  
   **Th Feb 12th, 12-1:30 PM, Portland Faculty Commons, 3rd Fl Glickman**

*Bring your own lunch beverages (coffee, tea, water) will be available. We are working on live streaming and/or recording.* If you want to attend from another campus Thursday 1/22, please let Hilarie Fotter, the GA for the Commons, know (hfotter@usm.maine.edu). We will update the Registration Form to include this information for future events. In any case, please complete the online registration so we have an idea of numbers. Thanks.

**Find out more information about this event here:** [http://usm.maine.edu/facultycommons/student-mental-health-and-college-success-what-faculty-need-know-](http://usm.maine.edu/facultycommons/student-mental-health-and-college-success-what-faculty-need-know-)

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**Writing Group**

What are your goals for writing and publication this term? Whether you are struggling to stay focused on your writing goals or want to meet with colleagues who are also working on writing/publication projects, please join Professor Samantha Langley-Turnbaugh, Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research, Scholarship and Creative activities for regular monthly writing meetings in the Faculty Commons. Sam has mentored many colleagues and students in scholarly activities and has volunteered to be available as you share your work in progress, resources and support each other in the process. (Note this is not a "how to write" session). Light refreshments will be available.

**Tu. Jan 20th, 12-1PM**  
**Tu. Feb 17th, 12-1 PM**  
**Tu. Mar 17th, 12-1 PM**  
**Tu. Apr 21st, 12-1 PM**  
**Tu. May 19th, 12-1 PM**

*For more information visit: [https://usm.maine.edu/facultycommons/writing-group](https://usm.maine.edu/facultycommons/writing-group)*

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**Metropolitan University Convocation Activities**

The MU group, building on the energy of the December 2014 sessions with Barbara Holland have planned a number of activities (community visits, pop-up cafes, and lightning talks). While more information about some of these activities will be coming from the MU group and the Offices of Community Engagement, Faculty Commons in collaboration with the MU group, will be hosting the Lightning Talk Series. A description of Lightning Talks, dates and locations are below.

Community engagement is happening at USM and often in unexpected ways! These are opportunities to share experiences, build relations and explore new potentials. Each talk combines the visual and the verbal and lasts only 8 minutes! Three sessions will be held in the Spring 2015 term, one on each campus (with some way to access if you are on another campus). Join your colleagues. Tell us your story and come hear those of others!

**Wed. March 4th, 4:30-6 PM, 109/110 Abromson, Portland Campus**  
**Wed. March 25th, 3-5 PM, Room 283, Lewiston Campus**  
**Thurs. April 16th, 4-6 PM, 10 Bailey Hall, Gorham Campus**

*For more information on either participating by offering a Lightning Talk or attending please visit the website: [http://usm.maine.edu/facultycommons/lightning-talks](http://usm.maine.edu/facultycommons/lightning-talks)*
Title III Grant Activities

Save the Dates: March 23rd and 24th, 2015

Title III Symposium with Dr. Saundra Yancey McGuire

Upon the recommendation of several faculty who heard Prof. McGuire speak at a 2013 conference, she has agreed to come to our campus. We gladly invite you to a presentation by Dr. Saundra McGuire, recognized expert and scholar in the fields of chemical education and learning assistance. She is a widely sought after speaker who has presented the work she has done with her colleagues at the Center for Academic Success at over 100 colleges and universities across the United States. You can learn more about her at her website http://cas.lsu.edu/dr-saundra-yancy-mcguire

In her talk for faculty she will emphasize improving the success of all students rather than remediating those needing assistance with study skills through her presentations focused on teaching students how to learn by equipping them with metacognitive learning strategies.

Outline of Events

**Event for Students and Staff (Faculty Welcome)** Monday, March 23rd

- Evening event for students to which faculty are invited
- 4:30–5 PM— Pizza and beverages served
- 5–6:30 PM— Presentation for Students: The Key to Acing Courses

**Faculty Development Event** Tuesday, March 24th

- 8–8:30 AM— Registration with light breakfast
- 8:30–11:30 AM— Faculty Workshop (topics below):
  - Get students to focus on learning instead of grades
  - Approaches to teaching metacognition strategies to individuals and groups

*For more information visit the Event Page: [https://usm.maine.edu/facultycommons/title-iii-grant-symposium-dr-saundra-mcguire](https://usm.maine.edu/facultycommons/title-iii-grant-symposium-dr-saundra-mcguire)*

**FIG Updates**

**Faculty Interest Groups-Fall 2014 Awards**

We had a really good response to our Call for FIG leaders in the Fall 2014 semester. A formal announcement of those receiving awards will be made soon—a list of the topics is below. Look for Faculty Commons e-mails on invitations, activities and opportunities. Below is the list of topics for the fall awards. Think about what interests you and stay tuned for e-mails sent from/on behalf of the faculty who are convening the FIGs.

- Integrating Screen Share and Video Casting Technology into Virtual Classrooms, Meetings, and Professional Development
- Reflective Practice
- Strengths-based Education
- Three Steps for USM STEM Classrooms: Technology Tools (1) open possibilities for Active Learning (2) including High Impact Educational Practices (3) –

We hope to highlight the work of these groups at the **Title III Symposium on March 23rd and 24th with visiting speaker Professor Saundra McGuire.** More information to come…

*For more information about Faculty Interests Groups visit: [http://usm.maine.edu/facultycommons/faculty-interest-groups](http://usm.maine.edu/facultycommons/faculty-interest-groups)*

**Faculty Interest Groups-Call for Spring Applications**

The call for the next round of FIGS will be coming out next week—*stay tuned*
Connect in the Faculty Commons: Using the Space
We have been working on a process for scheduling the space. We try to leave a good chunk of time unscheduled so you can connect, collaborate, reflect, have a cup of coffee or tea (please turn the devices off when you leave), or do a dry run of a presentation. Access cards are available at the circulation desk of the library—if you use one please return it. Checking the Faculty Commons website is a good place to start if you want a specific time. Note we will be scheduling more events as the FIG groups get underway. Please e-mail Hilarie Fotter for further instructions or advice about using the space hfotter@usm.maine.edu

Other Upcoming Events
Tuesday April 21, 2015 Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity Celebration
April 24, 2015 Thinking Matters
Be sure to check out our website on a regular basis (http://usm.maine.edu/facultycommons/programming) for a detailed listing of events and activities. Our team strives to keep the Faculty Commons website up to date and current. Feel free to reach out with any questions, concerns, or feedback. We are always happy to hear from you.

Warm regards,

Judy Spross
Rev. Judith A. Spross, PhD, RN, FAAN
Professor of Nursing and Coordinator of the Faculty Commons