

Provost's Report  
April 2024

Once the April faculty meeting is done, thoughts turn to bringing the 2023/24 academic year to a close. The last month of the academic year is full of so many celebrations, final projects and performances. I wish you the best during this exceptionally busy time. In particular, the faculty will gather in regalia for the Honors Day Convocation on May 3. Other events take place on that day as well. I hope you will be able to visit some of the opportunities to see how our students excel. (And thank you for what you do to help make that excellence happen.)

*Upcoming Meetings*

At the April Faculty Meeting, the Curriculum Committee will consult with the faculty regarding possible revisions to the academic calendar. The calendar review process has been a deliberate one, so I'll briefly remind you that a Calendar Review Committee was charged with reviewing the current calendar, collecting feedback from all parts of the college, and--if it saw fit--to bring one or more calendar options to the Curriculum Committee. Students and members of the faculty and staff were consulted again this term, regarding the viability of a number of ideas. The Curriculum Committee has been further refining possible changes to the calendar in advance of bringing these to you for discussion. (The earliest that any calendar changes would come into effect would be 2025/26.) Of course, in addition to determining when classes are in session, the calendar affects much at the college, including Athletics, new student orientation, summer research and summer employment. For that reason, the Calendar Review Committee had broad representation, including the faculty, Music Organizations, Athletics, Student Life, the Academic Support Center, and Facilities Management, among others. It will be important for the faculty discussion to keep these other considerations in mind, as they can be key to how we deliver an excellent education.

Looking forward to the May meeting of the Board of Regents, we can expect the Academic Affairs Committee to refer to the Board the revised Academic Freedom statement for approval, as well as other revisions to the *Faculty Manual*. Doug Casson, Faculty Representative to the Board, led an excellent discussion of the draft statement with the Academic Affairs Committee back in February. I expect there will be additional good discussion with the full Board at this meeting. The Academic Affairs Committee will also review resolutions for graduating the class of 2024, granting emeriti status, and conferring endowed chairs. The committee will also hear reports from Doug Casson and from the Academic Assessment Committee.

*New Colleagues, New Positions.*

- Rick Moon, '2005, Registrar's Office: Assistant Registrar of Transfer Credit and Degree Completion. Rick majored in music and music education. He has worked at Wells Fargo in a variety of roles. Rick is also baritone section leader and soloist for St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral in Minneapolis.
- Emma Sheets, Academic Success Center: Success Coach. Emma has degrees in science education from Ohio State University and the University of Cincinnati. She has served as a marketing intern, a research assistant, and an academic coach, focusing in all three roles on supporting student athletes.

- Katie Ziegler-Graham, Professor of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science, will take on the role of Director of Academic Assessment from Colin Wells in June, 2024.

Congratulations to Emma, Katie and Rick!

### *Conclusion of 2023/24 Searches*

We concluded the 2023/24 search season, making 12 appointments. Five of the appointments are male and five represent diversity. Three searches were closed without making an appointment. We are seeing an increased volatility in searches, with a growing number of candidates at the Associate and Professor level. Most of that volatility is benefitting us, bringing a wide range of talented individuals to the college.

### *Tenure Track Searches for 2024/25*

Fifteen tenure track searches have been approved for next year. Four of the searches will be in the Humanities and IGS, three in the Fine Arts, 3 in the Social Sciences, and 5 in the Natural Sciences and Mathematics. Two of the searches are re-opened searches that we closed this year.

- Art – Film and Media Production
- Biology – Cell Biology
- Chemistry – Organic Chemistry
- Chemistry – Physical Chemistry
- Computer Science – subfield open
- Economics – Macro Economics
- English – Writing and Digital Studies
- Environmental Studies and Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Sexuality Studies – Critical Indigenous Studies (supporting the ES Humanities track)
- German – Language and Culture
- Music – Choral Conducting (Viking and Chapel choirs)
- Nursing – Nursing Care of Children
- Physics – Engineering/Applied Physics
- Political Science – American Politics
- Spanish – Hispanic Sociolinguistics
- Theater – generalist.

### *Things You Will Want to Know*

*AI and academics.* Our LITS colleagues have produced an important “[Lib Guide](#)” report that reflects on where we stand now with AI and identifies areas for continued consideration.

*Global Semester, 2025.* The Smith Center is now soliciting [applications](#) for faculty leaders.

*OLE Experience in Practice (OEP).* 2025 will mark the first year that we have an entire St. Olaf class graduate with the new OLE Core requirements. One of the requirements that often will be met in students’ third and fourth years is OLE Experience in Practice (OEP). Since this is a requirement that can be met in a number of ways, you and your advisees may need to make a point of discussing how they will do so. Start by reviewing the helpful guidance provided by Karil Kucera in her April 10 note to all faculty members. Also, it’s a good idea to revisit the [Registrar’s page on OEP](#).

*Oracle and SIS.* The implementation of the new Oracle system for the HR, payroll, finance and financial aid will continue for some time. As you may be aware, there are a number of issues that we continue to address. You will soon begin seeing communications regarding Oracle Student, the new student information system. At present, the Registrar's Office and IT are working closely with engineers at Oracle to design our new system. As the design work proceeds, it will also draw on input from Student Life, Advising, and the ASC. I encourage you to follow the Oracle-related communications as you receive them. If you run into Ericka Peterson or other members of the Registrar's Office, be sure to thank them for their work on this significant project.

*Did You Know...*

The Dance Department hosted 400 participants for the North-Central Conference of the American College Dance Association in March. Of the 40 works of dance adjudicated during the conference, St. Olaf's performances were honored as among the top 11.

St. Olaf is 1<sup>st</sup> in graduating students in Education who go on to earn the doctorate (2016-2022).

A St. Olaf student has received a prestigious and highly competitive Goldwater Scholarship that will support her studies in Biology and Environmental Studies.

*Faculty and Staff Recognition.* Please join me in congratulating

- Joseph Jefferson, Music: selected to serve at the 2024 International Trombone Festival
- Alyssa Melby, Program Director of Academic Civic Engagement, and Chris Chapp, Political Science and Director of the Institute for Freedom and Community, (and a number of great St. Olaf students) are featured in an MPR story on student voting engagement. You can view the [web version here](#).
- Tim Howe, History: co-founded a new journal *Res Difficiles* (Difficult Things), addressing inequities within the fields of Ancient History, Archaeology and Classics.

Receiving Inclusive Excellence Awards at the Inclusive Excellence Summit for "going above and beyond for equity and inclusion on The Hill" are Ryan Shepard (Sociology/Anthropology) and Kathy Glampe (Academic Success Center).

The final month of the semester can be as changeable as a Midwestern spring. As we approach the looked-for culmination of the year's work, pressures can mount. You are bringing the academic year to conclusion for your students, but also for colleagues and for yourself. We begin to anticipate the summer's activities, while the semester becomes yet more busy. Nature adds to these swings: mild and sunny one day, overcast and blustery the next. I wish you well as you negotiate this exciting, exhausting, joyful and sometimes frustrating season.

Coming Up – Be sure to consult "This Week" for the full roster of events at the college.

Mar. 5-May 6 IFC Series on "[Food Policy and Food Politics](#)"

Apr. 12 Last day to drop a class

Apr.	16	Social Justice Award lecture: Rehanna Kheshgi, “Creating Community through Sound: An invitation for Pursue Social Justice Work Here and Now” Registration for Fall Semester begins
Apr.	18	Faculty Meeting
Apr.	25	Academic Leadership
Apr.	29	Global Semester leader <a href="#">applications</a> due
May	1	Stromseth Award <a href="#">Proposals due</a>
May	2-3	Board of Regents Meeting
May	2	Teaching & Learning Showcase (3:00 - 5:00 pm)
May	3	Honors Day
May	9	Faculty Meeting
May	15	Reading Day!
May	16-21	Senior grades due 24 hours after the exam period
May	25 (Sat.)	Commencement!

#### Handy Links

[2023/24 Academic Calendar](#)

[2024-2025 Interfaith Calendar](#)