

New Faculty

Viewbook
2025-2026



MONTCLAIR
STATE UNIVERSITY

Leah Tonnette Gaines Bloomfield

Humanities Program Area

Africana Studies

- PhD in African American and African Studies, Michigan State University
- Interdisciplinary scholar and educator whose research and teaching bridge Africana Studies, Education, and Gender Studies
- Her research interrogates structural inequities, Black resistance, and diasporic experiences, with published work addressing topics such as Afro Puerto Rican immersion programs, beauty politics, and sociolinguistics



Figen Suchanek Bloomfield

Computational, Natural, and Applied Sciences

Assistant Teaching Professor of Natural Sciences

- Develops AI-assisted machine learning workflows to predict air quality and assess public health impacts
- Leads undergraduate research in environmental and computational chemistry through the McNair Scholars Program and independent studies
- Dedicated to innovative teaching practices that integrate data science, real-world chemistry applications, and strong student mentorship



Dov Zazkis

Bloomfield

Computational, Natural, and Applied Sciences

Mathematics

- Dov comes from Arizona State University where he spent the last decade teaching and studying how undergraduate mathematics students learn advance mathematics topics
- He specializes in how students generate and refine novel (to them) mathematical arguments as well as instructional design aimed at achieving student agency with mathematics
- His research includes two dozen research articles in top mathematics education journals



Joshina Johnson Bloomfield

Nursing

Assistant Teaching Professor, Maternity and Pediatrics

- Joshina is excited to be moving into a Full-Time Faculty Position at Bloomfield College of Montclair State University
- As an educator, combines real-world clinical knowledge with innovative teaching strategies to foster a supportive and engaging learning environment for her students
- Joshina's goal is to continue educating and mentoring future nurses



Jacqueline Tierney Bloomfield

Nursing

Assistant Teaching Professor,
Medical Surgical Nursing

- Dr. Tierney's clinical focus is Hospice and Palliative Care
- Dr. Tierney is a proud mother of four adult children, balancing her professional responsibilities with her family life
- Hopes her passion for nursing and commitment to education continue to inspire those around her



Seth Howard

CART

Art and Design

Assistant Teaching Professor, Fashion

- Seth comes to Montclair from Western Kentucky University where he was most recently a Full-time Instructor of Fashion Design and Merchandising and the recipient of the 2023-2024 University Excellence in Teaching award.
- Prior to his arrival in higher education in 2020, he enjoyed a robust, 20-year career in the fashion industry.
- Today, he draws on his network of industry professionals to enhance his students' learning experiences and to directly connect them with leaders in the industry.



Kaitlin Santoro

CART

Art and Design

Assistant Teaching Professor, Photography

- Kaitlin joins the university from Temple University and Queensborough Community College, where she served as an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Photography programs.
- As an interdisciplinary artist, her practice spans photography, sculpture, glass, and printmaking, investigating themes of impermanence, loss, and memory.
- Her art has been exhibited internationally, with shows at the International Center of Photography, UrbanGlass, and the Print Center of New York, and she has participated in residencies at the Manhattan Graphics Center, Pilchuck Glass School, and the Fabric Workshop and Museum, among others.



Caroline Woolard

CART

Art and Design

Assistant Professor, Foundations

- As the founder of multiple cooperatives and nonprofits—including Pollinator.coop, Art.coop, and TradeSchool.coop—she is passionate about building thoughtfully designed systems.
- Since 2011, Woolard has taught undergraduate and graduate students, bringing a hands-on, interdisciplinary approach to the classroom, a methodology detailed in her 2020 book *Making and Being*.
- Her work has been commissioned by MoMA, the Whitney Museum, and the Brooklyn Museum, and she has been featured twice (2014, 2016) on *New York Close Up*, a digital film series produced by Art21 and broadcast on PBS.



Leah Batstone

CART

Cali School of Music

Assistant Professor, Music History
Area Head, Music History

- Leah is a historical musicologist, whose research focuses on music, politics, and philosophy in Central and Eastern Europe, and her first book, *Mahler's Nietzsche: Politics and Philosophy in the Wunderhorn Symphonies*, was published by Boydell and Brewer in 2023.
- She is also a leading scholar of art music in Ukraine, and she is currently working on two monographs about Ukrainian composers. Her scholarship has appeared in numerous peer-reviewed journals, including the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*.
- She is also the founder and creative director of the Ukrainian Contemporary Music Festival in New York City.



Micah Killion

CART

Cali School of Music

Assistant Teaching Professor, Brass
Area Head, Brass

- Micah comes to us from the Center for Music Learning at the University of Texas at Austin, where his research on the cognitive processes underpinning music learning was published in the Journal of Expertise, Music Educators Journal, and the International Trumpet Guild Journal.
- A former principal trumpet of the U.S. Air Force Band in Washington, D.C., he has performed with Sigur Rós, The American Brass Quintet, Diana Ross, Shakira, and Father John Misty, and he has presented masterclasses at institutions that include The Colburn School, The Juilliard School, and the Royal Academy of Music.



Derek Crescenti

CART

Theatre and Dance

Assistant Professor, Dance

- Derek is a dance artist and educator who has performed with the companies of Chase Brock, Donald Byrd, Daniel Gwartzman, Larry Keigwin, Mark Morris, David Parker, Megan Williams, and 10 Hairy Legs. His choreography has been presented at numerous festivals across the US.
- He serves as assistant to Donald Byrd: working on commissions at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, teaching Donald Byrd Contemporary Technique, and staging his works.
- As an associate choreographer for Larry Keigwin, he has staged his work and assisted with commissions for the Paul Taylor Dance Company and Vail Dance Festival.



Benton Greene

CART

Theatre and Dance

Assistant Teaching Professor, Acting for the Camera

- Benton is an award-winning actor who works extensively in theater, television, film, and commercials. Among his recent work —two years as Director of Apollo Stories for the world-famous Apollo Theater, as well as directing the MFA graduate thesis productions in both the Acting and Playwriting departments at Columbia University.
- He also appeared in Nobel Prize–winner Wolé Soyinka’s *The Swamp Dwellers* at Theatre for a New Audience in Brooklyn, New York and made his Broadway debut in the Pulitzer Prize–winning play *Sweat*, which was also nominated for four Tony Awards.
- During his decades-long career, he has been a proud member of the AEA and SAG–American Federation of Radio and Television Artists.



Kevin Lerner

CCOM

Journalism and Sports Media

Professor and Chair of Journalism & Sports Media

- U.S. journalism history
- Press criticism
- Literary and alternative journalism



Bryan DeNovellis

CCOM

Journalism and Sports Media

Assistant Teaching Professor of Sports Media

- Producing engaging and compelling sports videos and features for studio and live-game productions.
- Improving students' writing skills for sports features and television scripts
- Coaching students with their on-camera presence and delivery



Julia Kots

CCOM

Animation, Film and Television

Assistant Professor of Film and Television

- Screenwriting
- Film directing
- Film/TV editing



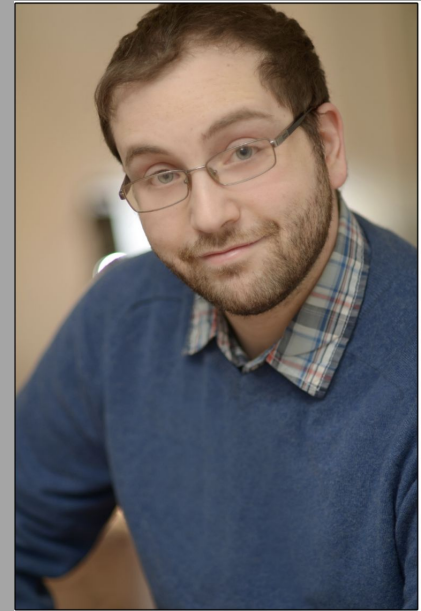
Eli Bosnick

CCOM

Animation, Film, and Television

Assistant Teaching Professor of Film & Television

- Multicamera narrative production
- Acting for the camera
- Casting



Victor Morales

CCOM

Animation, Film, and Television

Assistant Teaching Professor of Animation & VFX

- Media for live events and performance
- Video game development
- Storytelling using real-time media/game engines



Jason Mandel

CCOM

Strategic Communication

Assistant Teaching Professor of Advertising

- Branding
- Copywriting
- Advertising



Julius Torres Kellinghusen

CCHL

Public Health

Assistant Teaching Professor, Public Health

- DrPH, MPH NYU School of Global Public Health
- Research interests: Workplace wellbeing among humanitarian organizations
- Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (Panama 2016-2018)



Mitra Britton

CCHL

Communication Sciences and Disorders

Assistant Professor, Audiology

- Ph.D. from University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- Areas of interest: Epidemiology/Tinnitus/Noise Exposure
- Investigating the mechanisms of tinnitus and identifying effective prevention and treatment strategies through an interdisciplinary approach combining audiology, epidemiology, and lifestyle factors.
- Advancing public health awareness on noise-induced hearing loss by identifying at-risk populations, with a particular focus on students frequently exposed to high noise levels, such as music majors, and helping them protect against noise damage through prevention strategies and interdisciplinary research.



Fan-Yin Cheng

CCHL

Communication Sciences and Disorders

Assistant Professor, Audiology

- Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin
- Research Interest: Auditory Neuroscience
- Investigates how attention and cognition shape auditory neural encoding from the brainstem to the cortex
- Explores auditory plasticity and perception in both typical and clinical populations (e.g., cochlear implant users, children with auditory processing disorder) through EEG, behavioral research, and translational work in audiology



John Harrichand

CCHL

Counseling

Associate Professor of Counseling

- Ph.D., Liberty University
- Research interests: culturally responsive counseling with minoritized communities, including LGBTQ+ individuals, immigrants, refugees, international students, and survivors of sex trafficking
- Engages in scholarship and teaching on pedagogy, ethics, religion/spirituality, clinical supervision, and leadership/advocacy in counselor education



Theresa Brown

CEEL

Educational Foundations

Professor, School Psychology

- Ph.D. Bowling Green State University
- Research Interests: Parenting children with disabilities, professional issues in school psychology and behavior analysis (research); educational psychology (teaching)
- Certifications in BCBA-D, LBA



Susanne Harnett

CEEL

Educational Foundations

Assistant Teaching Professor, Educational Psychology and Learning Assessment

- Ph.D., Educational Psychology, University of Virginia
- Previously served as Assistant Professor (temp) teaching: Methods of Research, Assessment, Learning Sciences, and Ethics, Psychological Foundations of Education, Testing and Evaluation.
- Has served as the Principal Investigator on dozens of federally funded grant projects, including the US Department of Education, the Institute for Education Sciences, the National Science Foundation, and the Department of Labor.



Jinxia He

CEEL

Educational Leadership

Assistant Professor, Educational Technology Leadership

- Ph.D. Instructional Technology, University of Central Florida
- Research Interests: Impact of generative AI on education, using VR and AR in teaching and learning, building online learning communities, preservice teachers' perspectives on active learning.
- Leverages innovative pedagogical strategies and appropriate technologies to enhance teaching and learning experiences across both K-12 and higher education settings. Former staff member of ITDS and Adjunct Faculty in TLRN.



Chelsea Grant

CEEL

Teaching and Learning

Assistant Teaching Professor, Multi-Tiered System of Supports

- Ph.D., School Psychology, Lehigh University
- Extensive training and experience in working with diverse learners in a variety of positions with a background in special education and school psychology.
- Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NASP) Youth Mental Health First Aid Instructor Certificate PA K-12 Student Assistance Program (SAP TEAM) Certificate PA Professional Certificate K-12 Educational Specialist, School Psychology PA Professional Certificate N-12 Instructional I, Special Education



Priya Voleti

CEEL

Teaching and Learning

Assistant Teaching Professor, Inclusive Education

- Ed.D., Curriculum and Teaching, Teachers College, Columbia University
- Teaching Philosophy: Commitment to inclusive education and disability studies, and to prepare educators to work toward equity and justice in educational settings.
- Previously served TLRN as a temporary Assistant Professor in Inclusive Education, Adjunct Faculty, and Coordinator of Clinical Experiences.



Jennifer Fleeger

CHSS

English

Marie Frazee-Baldassarre Professor of
Film Studies

- Ph.D., Film Studies, University of Iowa
- Her research has focused on the relationship between voices and technology, writing *Mismatched Women: The Siren's Song Through the Machine* and co-editing an anthology on media ventriloquism, all published by Oxford University Press.
- She teaches courses on American film history, genre, theory, and film music and is currently writing on the aquamusicals of MGM swimming star Esther Williams.



Jason Abbott

CHSS

Political Science and Law

Professor, International Relations and
Political Economies

- Ph.D., Political Economy, Nottingham Trent University
- Research interests in comparative politics, international relations and international political economies with a strong focus on Southeast Asian Politics.
- His most recent work explores digital activism within hybrid authoritarian regimes, analyzing how the internet and social media influence political engagement and censorship.



Elizabeth Chan

CHSS

Psychology

Assistant Professor, Clinical Psychology

- Ph.D., Clinical Psychology, Florida State University
- Completed a doctoral internship at Johns Hopkins Medicine/Kennedy Krieger Institute.
- Her research utilizes strength-based approaches to enhance the quality of life for individuals with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) across the lifespan.



Ana DiGiovanni

CHSS

Psychology

Assistant Professor, Psychology

- Ph.D., Psychology, Columbia University
- Her research lies at the intersection of relationship science and affective science, with a strong emphasis in advanced quantitative methods.
- Her research examines the experiences — both good and bad — that we share with those closest to us - much of this work centers the role stress plays in relational processes, with an emphasis on how people talk about problems and negative feelings.



Adam Natoli

CHSS

Psychology

Assistant Professor, Clinical Psychology

- Ph.D., Psychology, Adelphi University
- His research investigates all aspects of how we measure psychological functioning and strives to develop, evaluate, and apply advanced measurement and statistical methodologies to the empirical study of psychological assessment with a concentration on instrument psychometrics, multimethod assessment, and applications of Artificial Intelligence in these domains.
- Dr. Natoli predominantly teaches quantitative and research methodology courses in the department.



Tamara Jean-Jacques

CHSS

Psychology

Assistant Teaching Professor, Psychology

- Psy.D. School Psychology, Fairleigh Dickinson University
- Dr. Jean-Jacques has served as a certified school psychologist, supervisor, and special education administrator, leading special services departments in diverse urban and suburban school districts, supervising multidisciplinary teams, and developing specialized curricula.
- In her university role, she prepares future school psychologists through hands-on clinical training, assessment, and supervision.



Denise Marques

CHSS

Psychology

Assistant Teaching Professor, Psychology

- Ph.D., Counseling Psychology, University of Miami
- She has focused on cross-cultural approaches to psychology, while focusing specifically on underserved communities.
- In addition to teaching in our clinical programs, she serves as the Assistant Director of Training for the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. program.



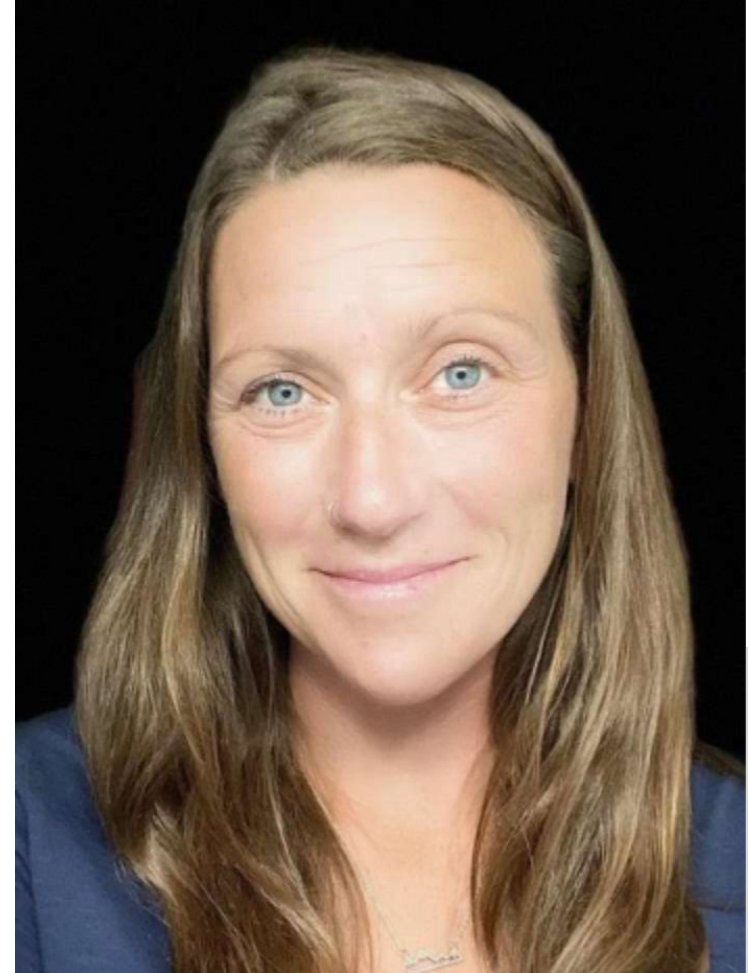
Lauren Schaible

CHSS

Psychology

Assistant Teaching Professor, Psychology

- Psy.D., Psychology, Georgian Court University
- Her areas of expertise include applied behavioral analysis with a special interest in obsessive compulsive disorder and ADHD.
- Her previous experiences include supporting students as a school psychologist, BCBA, and teacher.



Mark Rose

CHSS

Psychology

Assistant Teaching Professor, Psychology

- Ph.D., Industrial and Organizational Psychology, University of South Florida
- His research interests include use of innovative item types in test development, people analytics, and critical thinking assessment.
- He will serve as the Director of the Industrial/Organizational MA Psychology Program.



Melody Benedict

CHSS

Social Work/Child Advocacy

Assistant Professor, Social Work

- Ph.D., Social Work, University at Albany (SUNY)
- She possesses extensive social work direct practice experience with adults diagnosed with mental health disorders, particularly in inpatient psychiatric settings, which informs her research, teaching, and practice.
- Her research primarily focuses on innovative strategies designed to promote equity within the United States healthcare system, addressing systemic issues at the macro, mezzo, and micro levels of social work practice.



Giselle Balfour

CHSS

Social Work/Child Advocacy

Assistant Teaching Professor, Social Work
and Child Advocacy

- Ph.D., Social Work, University of Georgia
- Dr. Balfour's doctoral research, centered on the intervention and reintegration experiences of trafficking survivors and at-risk women in Ghana.
- She has spent the last decade working as a member of NGOs helping children and adult survivors of human trafficking.



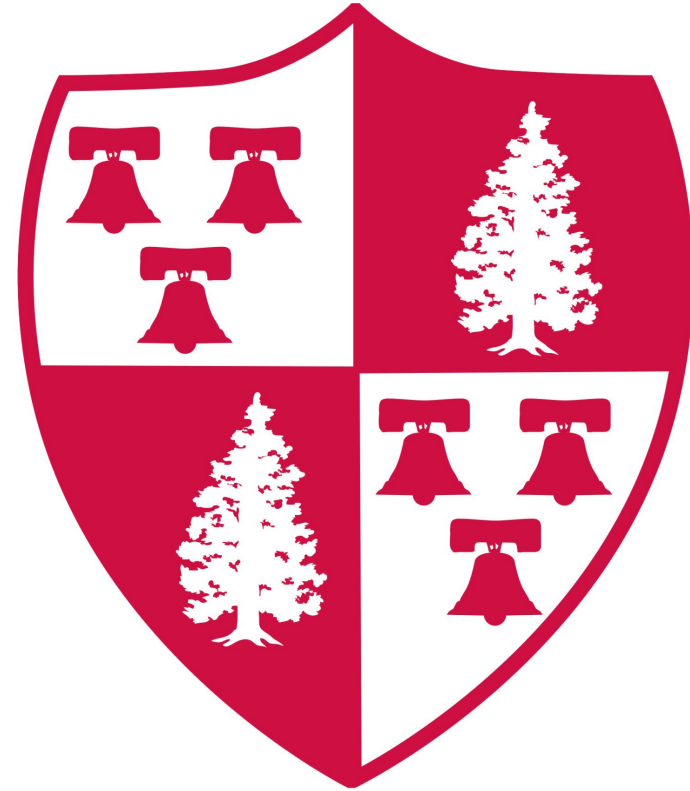
Stephen Tillotson

CHSS

Justice Studies

Assistant Teaching Professor

- Ph.D., Criminal Justice, Indiana University
- His primary interests in corrections are the historical development of punishment and also the collateral effects of incarceration.
- With respect to both, his primary focus is on local and county jails.



Stephanie Diehl

CHSS

Writing Studies

Assistant Teaching Professor, Writing Studies

- Ph.D., English, Rutgers University
- Her composition pedagogy is informed by her research on disability studies; her focus on student accessibility and inclusivity on both macro and micro levels includes a program-wide revision of participation assessment in the composition classroom.
- Her expertise in the intersection between Disability Studies and educational writing has also informed her teaching of literacy and social justice writing.



Aishwarya Santosh Deshpande

CSAM

Assistant Professor, Biology

Microbiology, Molecular Biology, and Bioinformatics

- Ph.D. in Microbial Biology from Rutgers University, New Brunswick
- Graduate research focused on hosts and hotspots of environmental antibiotic resistance genes
- Experience spans academia, national laboratory research, and industry collaborations



Mabel Akinyemi

CSAM

Assistant Teaching Professor, Biology

Animal Science and Genetics

- Ph.D. in Animal Science from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria
- Research focused on genetic basis for adaptation to heat stress in animals
- Experienced project manager passionate about advancing science through education and collaboration



Jennifer Woodring

CSAM

*Assistant Teaching Professor, Chemistry
and Biochemistry*

Synthetic Organic and Medicinal Chemistry

- Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry from Northeastern University
- Research focused on multi-step syntheses of small heterocyclic molecules and carbohydrate compounds targeting infectious diseases
- Spent multiple years working in the biotech and pharmaceutical industry, applying hit-to-lead drug discovery approaches and designing DNA-encoded libraries (DEL)



Debapriya Hazra

CSAM

Assistant Professor, School of Computing

Artificial Intelligence and Human Interactions

- Ph.D. in Machine Learning from Jeju National University in South Korea
- Research focuses on AI in medicine, specifically generative models and deep learning for precision medicine
- Held postdoctoral fellowships at Stanford University and University of Pittsburgh and contributed research to prestigious journals and scientific conferences, including the American Heart Association's 2024 Scientific Sessions



Junyi Ye

CSAM

Assistant Professor, School of Computing

Application of Artificial Intelligence

- Ph.D. in Computational Science from NJIT
- Research focuses on the diverse applications of AI systems, including using large language models to study creativity in mathematics
- Investigates how AI can better support decision-making processes across various domains



Yanhui Zhu

CSAM

Assistant Professor, School of Computing

Theoretical Computer Science and Algorithms

- Ph.D. in Computer Science from Iowa State University
- Research focuses on algorithm design/analysis for optimization problems with an emphasis on submodular optimization in social networks and AI
- Passionate about connecting theoretical advancements with real-world impact



Ioannis Agadacos

CSAM

Assistant Professor, School of Computing

Cybersecurity

- Ph.D. in Computer Science from Stevens Institute of Technology
- Research focuses on system security and privacy, and their intersection with neural networks
- Spent multiple years working in big tech, specifically Amazon Web Services, in the area of privacy engineering and program analysis



Hongbo Zhou

CSAM

Assistant Teaching Professor, School of Computing

Innovative Pedagogy, Software Engineering, and Human Computer Interaction

- Ph.D. in Computer Science from Southern Illinois University Carbondale
- Computer Science educator and engineer with expertise in teaching, curriculum development, user-centered product design, and software engineering
- Dedicated to integrating cutting-edge technologies into academia and advancing student success through innovative pedagogy



Prince Waqas Khan

CSAM

Assistant Teaching Professor, School of Computing

AI, Machine Learning, and Smart Manufacturing

- Ph.D. in Computer Engineering from Jeju National University in South Korea
- Focuses on building applications of blockchain in the smart manufacturing and renewable energy sector
- Has engaged in research and teaching experiences worldwide and is passionate about interdisciplinary innovation



Cheng Lu

SBUS

Accounting and Finance

Assistant Professor, Finance

Cheng joins from Stevens Institute of Technology having earned his doctorate in 2025 with a dissertation focus on “Advancement of Reinforcement Learning in Asset Allocation and Pricing.”



Kyungmyung Jang (KJ)

SBUS

*Information Management & Business
Analytics*

Assistant Professor

KJ joins from Mississippi State University having earned his doctorate in 2025 with a dissertation focus on The Impact of Blockchain Technology Adoption on Data Breach Incidents.



Elizabeth Benfanti (Liz)

SBUS

*Information Management/Business
Analytics*

Assistant Teaching Professor, Business
Communication (BCOM)

Liz brings more than 20 years of extensive experience as an executive coach specializing in communication and has served as an adjunct BCOM professor since 2022. MA Educational Leadership.



Glenn Herdling

SBUS

*Information Management/Business
Analytics*

Assistant Teaching Professor, Business
Communication (BCOM)

Glenn joins with an MS, Publishing. Author,
Editor (including of popular comic books)
with extensive experience marketing and
editing. Glenn has served as an Adjunct
Professor since 2018.



Maryam Nezhadian

SBUS

Marketing

Assistant Professor, Marketing

Maryam joins from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee having earned her doctorate in 2025 with a dissertation focus on Contextual Topic Models using LLMS.



Shashi Shekhar Rapaka

SBUS

Marketing

Assistant Teaching Professor, Marketing -

Shekhar joins bringing more than 30 years experience marketing consumer packaged goods on a global basis. Currently pursuing doctoral studies with research focus on AI and Innovation in the consumer packaged goods industry.



Cory Simpkins

SBUS

Economics

Assistant Teaching Professor, Economics

Cory, a native of NJ, earned his doctorate in Economics from Clemson University and joins us from Miami University of Ohio where he served as a Visiting Assistant Professor at the Farmer School of Business.



Lauren Sullivan

NURS

Nursing

Assistant Professor of Nursing

Lauren earned her Master of Science in Nursing from Seton Hall University and her Doctor of Nursing Practice from Chamberlain University. She is a registered nurse licensed in both New Jersey and New York and an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse licensed in New Jersey. Lauren is a certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner and a Certified Lactation Counselor, with a specialized focus in pediatric nursing and brings over 20 years of combined clinical and educational experience in the field of nursing.



Lauren Lohe

NURS

Nursing

Assistant Teaching Professor of Nursing

Lauren earned her Master of Science in Nursing with a specialization as a Family Nurse Practitioner from Rowan University. She is a registered nurse licensed in New Jersey and brings over 16 years of combined clinical and educational experience in the field of nursing. Her areas of expertise include nursing fundamentals, medical-surgical nursing, pediatrics, maternal-newborn care, psychiatric nursing, clinical skills training, and process improvement.



Bridget Jivanelli

University Libraries

Head for Collections Strategies

- Oversees all aspects of collection development and acquisitions for the University Libraries.
- Analyzes collections, budgets and other data to develop strategies and decision-making for collection development and management activities that ensure alignment with university priorities.
- Participates in the libraries' efforts to advocate for open access and other initiatives that promote equitable access to information.

