Fall Semester: Week 5 Issue

Highlights from this issue:

- **Shout Out:** Emily Heying
- **Events:** JFS (9/26), Study Abroad Fair (9/26), Reuter Professorship + SOT speaker (9/27), Thursday Forum (9/28), JFA (9/28) and LAI Poetry event (9/28)
- **Updates from:** Strategic Plan, Honors Scholars, Research and Grants office, Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholars, IT Services and the Integrations Curriculum/Center for Teaching & Learning/Office of Academic Assessment and Effectiveness

**Strategic Plan**

Please be sure to complete the Strategic Planning Draft Initiatives survey by **Tuesday, September 26 at 8 pm.** For more information, see the email sent by Kara Kolomitz on 9/19.

**Upcoming Events**

**TODAY:** Joint Faculty Senate

4:30 – 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, September 26th, CSB Gorecki 204 + Zoom*

During the meeting, Senators will be asked to provide feedback on the draft strategic initiatives. All other faculty are strongly encouraged to complete the community wide survey. An email with the agenda and additional information was sent on 9/19 from JFACHAIRANDVICECHAIR@csbsju.edu with the agenda and additional information.

*Only individuals who are present will be recognized for comments, announcements, or presentations.

**Study Abroad Fair**

2:00 – 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, September 27, CSB Gorecki 204

*Sponsored by Center for Global Education.* The Study Abroad Fair will allow students to explore a variety of study abroad options: semester & short-term embedded programs. Visit the [CGE website](#) for more information on the event.

**Galaxies, Stars, Planets, and Life: A Universe of Wonder with Dr. Jennifer Wiseman**

7:45 p.m., Wednesday, September 27, SJU Pellegrone Auditorium

*Co-sponsored by the Reuter Professorship of Science and Religion and the School of Theology and Seminar.* Dr. Jennifer Wiseman is an astrophysicist at MIT, co-discovering comet Wiseman-Skiff in
1987, and is currently a senior astrophysicist at the Goddard Space Flight Center. The attached flyer has more details.

**Thursday Forum: Working Across Institutions to Collectively Improve Inclusive Teaching and Learning**
3:00-4:00 p.m., Thursday, September 28, CSB Gorecki President’s Dining Room (PDR)
**Presenters:** Amanda Macht Jantzer (Psychology), Kyhl Lyndgaard (Environmental Studies & The Writing Center), Deborah Pemleton (Global Business Leadership), Annette Raigoza (Chemistry), Jen Schaefer (Biology) & Laura Taylor (Theology & Center for Teaching & Learning)

**Joint Faculty Assembly**
4:30 – 5:30 p.m., Thursday, September 28th, Zoom
An email with the agenda was sent on 9/21 from JFACHAIRANDVICECHAIR@csbsju.edu with the agenda and Zoom meeting information.

**Language, Silence, and the Spaces that Shape Us: A Public Reading & Conversation with Three Eastern European Poets**
7:00 p.m., Thursday, September 28, CSB Gorecki 204
Join the Literary Arts Institute for a poetry reading and Q&A with three eastern European poets:
- Ilya Kaminsky (originally from Odessa in Ukraine, and author of the award-winning *Deaf Republic*),
- Valzhyna Mort (originally from Minsk in Belarus, and author of *Music for the Dead and Resurrected*), and
- Nikola Madzirov (from Macedonia, and author of *Remnants of Another Age*).
This is an AR-approved event. For more information, please refer to the attached flyer or click here.

**Honors Scholars for Community and Collaborative Leadership**
**Call for course proposals!**
Applications are currently being accepted for all Honors courses, except Honors CS. All Honors courses are also IC courses. **Deadline for proposals is Friday, October 13th.** Submit course proposals here. Please contact Beth Wengler, Honors Director, or Emily Esch, Associate Honors Director, with any questions.

**The Research and Grants Office**
**Shout Out**
A shout out to Emily Heying in Nutrition, who was invited by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) to participate in a new college-student basic needs working group with other leaders in higher education from around the state. This group was established by the 2023 higher education omnibus bill and will review, assess, and make specific recommendations on state-level legislative strategies to better meet the basic needs of college students in Minnesota. The committee’s final report will be available to legislators in 2024. Congrats, Emily!
Want to **Shout Out** your own achievements or raise up one of our colleagues? Submit a **Shout Out** [here](#) or find the link on the Research & Grants Office [page](#).

**REGISTER:** Writing/Working Retreat @ the Episcopal House of Prayer

Registration is now open for the Sun. Oct. 8 – Tue. Oct. 10 writing/working retreat at the Episcopal House of Prayer. Take advantage of multiple days of unstructured working time, fall colors in Collegeville, and shared communal meals and informal conversations with colleagues. Stay overnight or just come during the days. The cost is free, and all are welcome! Visit the [Research & Grants Office website](#) to learn more or [sign up here](#).

**Gather!** Join the next Gather event on Wednesday, October 4th at 5:00 p.m. at Milk & Honey. **Dr. James Read**, Professor of Political Science, will draw from his new book, *Sovereign of a Free People: Abraham Lincoln, Majority Rule, and Slavery*, to examine Lincoln's defense of majority rule, and his hope before the war that slavery could be peacefully and democratically abolished. Read will also discuss Lincoln’s complicated legacy on issues of race, and his relevance for our contemporary, deeply divided American democracy. Books will be available for purchase and signing. Enjoy complimentary non-alcoholic cider and cookies from Flour & Flower!

**Experience HUB**

*Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholars (OURS)*

An email announcement on 9/20 from [AcademicAffairs@CSBSJU.edu](mailto:AcademicAffairs@CSBSJU.edu) shared that CSB and SJU have been named a finalist for the Council of Undergraduate Research’s Award for Undergraduate Research Accomplishments (AURA). This award recognizes higher education institutions that have successfully implemented the characteristics of excellence, have devised exemplary programs to provide high-quality research experiences to undergraduates, and have evaluated the success of these programs.

OURS is soliciting information from departments across campus for any information regarding their undergraduate research efforts that has not yet been shared with OURS and can be reported [here](#). Departments may opt to have individual faculty members complete this form or may submit one form on behalf of the full department.

**Information be submitted no later than October 5 at 5:00 p.m.**. Any questions can be directed to [Lindsey Gunnerson Gutsch](mailto:LindseyGunnersonGutsch@csbsj.edu).

**Reflection Groups for Thematic Focus, CI & CS Faculty**

*Co-sponsored by the Integrations Curriculum, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Office of Academic Assessment and Effectiveness.*

Join a series of reflection groups to learn about the assessment data related to Thematic Focus, CI and CS courses, and then interactively reflect upon your experiences with teaching and learning in these classes. These sessions are for faculty who have taught or are currently teaching these courses/designations. Join to discuss and generate ideas to (a) support student learning in your courses, (b) consider the learning goals in practice, and (c) reflect upon assessment data.
There are two different sessions, one for Thematic Focus and one for CI and CS courses. Two options for each hour-long session will be offered to accommodate schedules and location:

**Thematic Focus:**
- Monday, October 16th from 4:15 p.m., CSB Gorecki 120 (Refreshments provided), or
- Tuesday, October 17th from 12:30 p.m., SJU Learning Commons 378 (Lunch provided)

**CI and CS:**
- Monday, October 23rd from 4:15 p.m., CSB Gorecki 120 (Refreshments provided), or
- Tuesday, October 24th from 12:30 p.m., SJU Learning Commons 378 (Lunch provided)

**RSVP using this form.** See the attached flyer for more information. Contact Laura Taylor with questions.

**IT Services**
IT Services has put together a comprehensive technology checklist to help faculty, staff, and students that separate or retire from CSB and SJU. The goal of this document is to clarify what happens with technology access and services upon separation or retirement. If you have any questions about the services listed here, please contact the IT Help Desk for additional information.

**Buzz on Campus**
**Fine Arts Programming:** Announced at the Arts Showcase during Inauguration festivities, Fine Arts Programming is excited to welcome The Wallin’ Jennys back to the BAC at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 4th. For more information and to purchase tickets for the one-night event, please click [here](#).

Check out the latest episode of Johnnie Bennie Campus News [here](#).

**Benedictine Institute:** The next “Building Community” event will be from 9:00 – 10:45 a.m. on Friday, September 29th in Quad 264 (SJU).

**Lunch & Learn with Fr. Michael Patella**
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., **Wednesday, October 4th**, **SJU Quad 264**
In honor of the 25th anniversary of The Saint John's Bible celebration taking place on Thursday, October 5, Fr. Michael Patella will share some fascinating details about The Saint John's Bible. All faculty, staff and monastics are welcome and there is no charge associated. Space is limited. Click [here](#) to read more and RSVP.

**Benedictine Education Program**
The Benedictine Education Program is an opportunity for any employee, new or old, to gain an understanding of the Benedictine heritage. The fall sessions at St. John's have filled. Please click [here](#) to get more information and register for the fall **CSB Session 1: Wednesdays** (Oct. 25, Nov. 1, 8, 15) from 10:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. in the Oratory & Benedicta Riepp Room (Sacred Heart Chapel), includes prayer and lunch.
More Information

Do you have information for The Buzz? If you have information you would like included in The Buzz please submit to this link: The BUZZ information

The Buzz can be found on the Academic Affairs website under related links. https://www.csbsju.edu/academic-affairs
Please join us for a series of reflection groups to learn about the assessment data related to Thematic Focus and CI and CS courses, and then interactively reflect upon your experiences with teaching and learning in these classes. We will discuss and generate ideas to (a) support student learning in your courses, (b) consider the learning goals in practice, and (c) reflect upon assessment data.

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**Thematic Focus:**

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Contact Laura Taylor (LTAYLOR@CSBSJU.EDU) with questions.
Join Us for
Lunch & Learn

In honor of the 25th anniversary of
The Saint John’s Bible

Wednesday, October 4
11:30-12:30
Quad 264, SJU

Help celebrate the 25th anniversary of the commissioning of The Saint John’s Bible. Father Michael Patella will share with us the vibrant history and the impact The Saint John’s Bible has had on our institution as well as on biblical interpretation among scholars and others throughout the world.

Complimentary lunch provided by the Benedictine Institute. Registration is required and space is limited. See the link on the bulletin or the Benedictine Institute website.
Galaxies, Stars, Planets, and Life:
A Universe of Wonder
Wednesday, September 27
7:45 PM Pellegrene Auditorium

Dr. Jennifer Wiseman
Astrophysicist

Recent advances in astronomy are revealing a dynamic universe filled with massive galaxies, beautiful star-forming nebulae, black holes, and even planetary systems around other stars. The universe also hosts mysteries of dark matter, dark energy, and the possibility of life beyond earth. These wonders can inspire many diverse human reactions: awe, curiosity, fear, praise, dismay, and joy. In this lecture, we’ll consider some of the coolest discoveries in modern astronomy and the highest priorities for future exploration. These rekindle ancient questions: How do the heavens impact faith, hope, and love on planet Earth? What is the place and significance of human life in this vast, dynamic Cosmos?

Sponsored by the Reuter Professorship of Science and Religion and the School of Theology and Seminary
On behalf of the Strategic Planning Committee, we invite your feedback on the draft strategic initiative descriptions below. The initiatives were generated based on input from the community over the past six months through various focus groups, surveys, community forums, and the strategy insight report. They are clustered by strategic areas called pillars. The pillar definition drafts are provided at the beginning of each cluster of initiatives. We recognize there will be overlap in some areas across pillars, however there are differences in perspective and emphasis. The initiatives are presented in no particular order.

The feedback you provide will help the Strategic Planning Committee identify which initiatives to move forward.

For each initiative consider the following:

1. How well does this initiative…
   a. align with our mission
   b. respond to a pressing need
   c. move us towards the institutions we aspire to be
   d. provide a clear picture

Considering all initiatives across pillars

1. Which ones would you be most supportive of moving forward at this time?

PILLAR ONE, The Student Experience

A comprehensive, integrated student experience is the unique hallmark of being a Bennie and a Johnnie. Living and learning on our campuses evokes a deep pride for who we are and all that we become. This pride is rooted in the tradition of transformational education and student experiences focused on personal growth and development that is centered on serving one another and the common good. Our integrated and rigorous liberal arts education and residential experience produce nationally ranked results and outcomes. The Saint Ben’s and Saint John’s student experience facilitates each student’s exploration of the critical inner dimensions of oneself that matures and creates meaningful lives.

1.1 Partnerships and Community Engagement. The CSB and SJU community create intentional and deep connections with local and regional partners to identify needs of organizations, our students, and our academic programs to develop meaningful experiences that align with our mission centered practice. CSB and SJU will increase presence in local and regional community initiatives and organizations. CSB and SJU community engages local K-12 students in career areas to support the growth of central Minnesota and increase
1.2 Facilities that Enhance the Quality of Student Life: State-of-the-art residential facilities leveraging technology that provides welcoming personal and communal spaces across the campuses, exciting fitness facilities in both locations, student services (such as food) available in the later evenings, and little to no deferred maintenance.

1.3 Evolving and Innovative Academic Programs.

Initiative 1.3.1: Strategic Academic Innovation. We will be forward thinking in identifying potential new programs, including undergraduate and graduate offerings, certificate programs, academic centers, and other academic opportunities that attract students, are mission and market driven, leverage our strengths, and generate revenue.

Initiative 1.3.2: Interdisciplinary Centers and Programs. CSB and SJU will develop interdisciplinary programs and centers that will enhance the humanities and liberal arts with an initial focus in two areas: Environment and Health and Wellness. The centers and programs will be interdisciplinary, meaningfully incorporate the humanities, engage with community partners and create connections between the academic curriculum and co-curricular programming.

1.4 Belonging and Community through Mental Health Support. The CSB and SJU community, through education, new systems, inclusive practice and policies will promote positive student mental health and support resilience for academic success.

1.5 Equitable High Impact Practices (HIP). We guarantee all students support and resources to complete one key HIP (Internship, Undergraduate Research, and Study Abroad). Students will receive the financial and transportation resources needed to complete a HIP that best meets their educational needs.

1.6 Leader in Career Exploration. Embedded career exploration programming for all students which enhances opportunities for connecting the liberal arts with skills valuable to employers. Systemize resources from current programs, corporate and community partners, and faculty, staff, and alumni mentorship to support our graduates in pursuit of meaningful careers.

1.7 Inclusive and Holistic Mentorship. Excel at attending to the inclusive, holistic development of the student through a mentorship model that connects students, faculty, staff, peer, monastic and alums in mentorship that promotes academic and personal growth. Mentorship would include meaningful and intentional relationships.

1.8 Funding for Academic Support Systems. Fund robust academic support systems that fully meet the academic support and student accessibility needs of our current and future
1.9 A Leader in Athletics, Club Sports and Recreation Activities. We will be known for our strong athletic departments and vibrant game day environments, numerous club opportunities aligned with student interests and recreation activities that leverage our outdoor campus strengths.

1.10 Transfer Initiatives. Become transfer-friendly institutions by providing academic pathways, new policies and enhanced programming, with a focus on students from recruitment to graduation.

PILLAR TWO, Financial and Operational Excellence

Well-managed financial resources and integrated operations are essential for a thriving and evolving College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University. Together, by optimizing Strong Integration (two separate institutions with individual missions that have joined appropriate resources to leverage market position and thus coexist), we are committed to strengthening our position in the marketplace and establishing a reputation as the model of 21st century Catholic, higher education. Operations, which encompass enrollment, fundraising, space management, technology, marketing, human resources, and finances, are essential components of a healthy future. We are distinguished by the ways in which we drive change internally and externally, making our institutions leaders in defining a contemporary, private, Catholic higher education practice.

2.1 Capital Planning Strategy. Develop a capital planning and execution strategy that provides asset protection and curtails deferred maintenance. The initiative will be grounded in the student experience and supported by a sound financial strategy.

2.2 Data-Informed Culture. To continuously enhance the student experience and ensure resources (human, capital, and financial) are being utilized in the most beneficial way, build a data-informed culture across the organizations that prioritizes the use of data in decision making.

2.3 Diversified Strategic Enrollment Approach. To bolster and diversify the institutions' primary revenue stream, develop a comprehensive strategy surrounding enrollment that considers populations that haven't historically been CSB and SJU's focus while staying true to our mission. This might include strategies for transfer enrollment, continuing education, or certificate programs.

2.4 Employee Experience. Develop an employee experience that attracts and retains our talent and makes us an employer of choice. CSB and SJU's employees are our most valuable asset, and this initiative focuses on ensuring we're supporting and developing our people in an
ongoing way.

2.5 Enhanced Partnerships with Outside Organizations. In order to increase efficiency and foster better connections with communities on several levels, CSB/SJU will strive to make more meaningful partnerships with external organizations. With this initiative we hope to move to a culture where partnerships are constantly considered, proposed, tended to, and ended when appropriate.

2.6 Financial Sustainability Plan. To ensure the long-term viability of the institutions, develop and implement a well-defined comprehensive financial sustainability plan that will achieve a long-term balance between revenues and expenses in alignment with strategic priorities and mission. This plan would include strategies for things like strategic investments, alternative revenue sources, reserve utilization, and expense efficiencies.

2.7 Fundraising Growth. In order to stabilize the institutions' medium- and long-term financial position, achieve significant endowment growth that directly supports operations and strategic priorities.

2.8 Organizational Structure. Develop an organizational structure that enhances student outcomes through employee development, sustainable practices, and financial favor. This includes finding efficiencies through resource sharing and developing a culture that allows for an environment of reliable commitments and continuous improvement to emerge.

2.9 Strong Integration & Monastic Community Relationship. To ensure the long-term viability and flourishing of each of the individual entities, continue to foster the relationships between the College of Saint Benedict, Saint John's University, Saint John's Abbey, and the Saint Benedict's Monastery. This will be done in a manner that recognizes, appreciates, and leverages the strengths of each of the organizations and makes each of the organizations stronger than they would be individually.

2.10 Telling the CSB and SJU Story. Make the outstanding student experience and outcomes delivered by CSB and SJU more widely recognized and known to a broader swath of the higher education marketplace, with a goal of making the institutions revered locally and recognized nationally.

PILLAR THREE, Mission-Centered Practice

Our Mission traditions and practices are the heartbeat of the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University. Our mission, and how it is practiced and lived out on our campuses, distinguishes our institutions by the ways in which we recognize, celebrate, and claim our founders’ values within every facet of the Bennie and Johnnie experience – in the classroom, the residence halls, the athletic venues, the workplace and in our community. Our mission
traditions include Benedictine wisdom and values, Catholic intellectual and social traditions, liberal arts, and residential community living. Bennie’s and Johnnie’s experience our mission through the unique Benedictine concept referenced in The Rule as *conversatio*, how one lives a life of authenticity and alignment, grows together with God through living life in community, and how Bennies and Johnnies see God in each other. Bennies and Johnnies living our mission ensures the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University will continue to be nationally renowned Catholic, Benedictine liberal arts institutions.

3.1 Communication and Education about Mission: Create contemporary and accessible communication platforms for students, families, and employees to articulate the Catholic and Benedictine traditions and promote greater understanding of the connections between Benedictine practice, the Catholic intellectual tradition, the liberal arts, and the modern world around us. To do so, this initiative would involve constructing multi-media (web info, social media, video) communication channels for messaging to each audience that includes engagement (e.g., feedback, testimonials) that promote understanding and demonstrate outcomes and impact of mission-centered practice.

3.2 Community Partnerships and Outreach: Create new sustainable community partnerships that align with our institutional values and objectives. These collaborations will focus on mutual growth, knowledge exchange, and community development. Through these partnerships, we will enhance our students' experiential learning opportunities, foster innovation in both academic and community settings, and contribute positively to the socio-economic and cultural fabric of our community. Specifically, introduce a "Community Fellowship Program" for which select students and faculty are paired with community leaders to work on joint projects. These projects are then showcased in an annual expo, celebrating the mutual growth and achievements of both the college/university and community.

3.3 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) and Benedictine Mission: Contemporary Benedictine education, grounded in Catholic Social Teaching, stresses transformation of the human mind and heart specifically doing so to advance Benedictine mission and values in light of the contemporary social, political, and economic landscape. We will encourage an active sense of belonging to our campus community through opportunities to critically examine the intersections of faith and reason around a variety of contemporary issues that reflect our diverse world. Specifically, the university will introduce lectures, presentations or facilitated discussions between renowned, high profile speakers who represent different perspectives on an issue related to DEIJ and its relationship to Catholic, Benedictine values over the course of an academic year. Throughout the year students, faculty, and staff will participate in a series of dialogues related to the topic.

3.4 Developing Interfaith Experience Focused on Spaces and Dialogue: Develop a Center for Faith and Social Justice that dedicates space for practicing diverse faith traditions, along with a space to gather as an interfaith community for dialogue and connection rooted in the Benedictine practice of respect for persons. Having an interfaith community space as well
as a Center will foster dialogue, understanding, and unity among diverse religious communities promoting tolerance and cooperation to support interfaith experiences, education, and outreach for all community members.

3.5 Gender-Focused Institutional Identities: Remaining true to our mission as a college for women and a college for men, we should prepare students to navigate a world that encompasses the full gender spectrum. In alignment with our dual mission as a college for women and a college for men, we commit to expanding our educational and community engagement efforts to respect the full gender spectrum. Recognizing the evolving understanding of gender identities and the importance of inclusivity, we will provide regular workshops, seminars, and programming on gender inclusivity, and foster a campus environment where all students, regardless of their gender identity, feel seen, respected, and empowered. These efforts will build upon the contributions of the Cultural and Social Difference course sequence in the Integrations Curriculum and the Gender Studies minor. This initiative not only upholds our foundational principles but also ensures our students are equipped to engage constructively and empathetically in a diverse and inclusive world.

3.6 Holistic Development as a Reflection of Mission: Allow students to not only focus on academic achievement but also encourage a life of service. We will foster a well-rounded educational experience that emphasizes both academic rigor and the importance of community service, ensuring that students graduate with a deep sense of social responsibility and a commitment to positive change. Specifically, require all students to complete a service project during their academic career at CSB and SJU (with a minimum number of service hours) in order to graduate. These projects can be achieved through various programs, internships, or organizations that the university partners with, ensuring a blend of academic and community-based learning.

3.7 Benedictine Practices across the Saint Ben’s and St. John’s Experience: We will deeply integrate the values and practices of the Benedictine tradition into the fabric of our institution, fostering a holistic educational experience that nurtures both the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. We aim to provide students with a structured and immersive journey through the core tenets of this tradition. Each semester will be dedicated to exploring and reflecting upon a specific Benedictine practice, ensuring that by the end of their academic journey, students have been enriched by the wisdom and insights of all eight practices. This initiative not only reinforces our commitment to the Benedictine ethos but also equips our students with values and perspectives that will guide them in their personal and professional lives beyond the campus. To do so we will select and define eight Benedictine practices and focus on one each semester. With a rotating cycle, this will ensure that by the time a student graduates, they will have experienced intentional programming that helps bring meaning to each of the eight practices. Each semester one practice will inform programming and reflection across the institutions. For example, during a semester focusing on “Stability,” programming could be specifically planned to support the practice, or other annual programs could tie into the practice in some way.