



UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH

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UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH WELCOMES NEW FACULTY

WEST HARTFORD, Conn. (Sept. 13, 2018) – The University of Saint Joseph (USJ) welcomed new faculty members at the start of the 2018-19 academic school year.

“The University of Saint Joseph is proud to welcome these new faculty members to our institution at an exciting time in our history,” said Provost Michelle Kalis, Ph.D. “We look forward to seeing our students prepare for their careers alongside our expert faculty.”

Charity-Ann J. Baker '08, M'13, Ed.S., visiting assistant professor, joined the School of Arts, Sciences, Business, and Education in the department of Education this fall. After earning her bachelor's and master's degrees from USJ, Professor Baker received her Education Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Connecticut. With over 10 years in the education field, she specializes in classroom teaching, school administration, curriculum development, the coordination of Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI), instructional coaching, teacher mentorship, and literacy/language arts professional development. Prior to joining USJ, Professor Baker was a classroom teacher, instructional coach, and interim elementary school principal in the Connecticut public education system. Her research – which explores the academic, social, and emotional benefits of incorporating interactive, multimedia technology in the primary grades – has been published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Christine C. Caruso, Ph.D., visiting assistant professor, recently joined the School of Interdisciplinary Health and Science in the department of Nutrition and Public Health. Dr. Caruso received her Ph.D. in Environmental Psychology from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. A public health psychologist with expertise in food systems and social determinants of health, she also served as a research fellow at New York City's School Food Focus. Dr. Caruso's research explores the factors and influences that shape school food and meal service, and the associated impact on both students and school food workers. Her most recent project, *Making it Healthier/Making it Regional*, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, examines purchasing changes aimed at making school food both healthier and more sustainable in six school districts across the U.S.

Heather L. Evans, Ph.D., RNC-MNN, CLC, assistant professor, joined the School of Interdisciplinary Health and Science in the department of Nursing this fall. Dr. Evans earned her Ph.D. in Nursing from the University of Arizona. A registered nurse with

expertise in maternal/child nursing and mental health nursing, she previously served as a faculty member at the University of Connecticut, Quinnipiac University, and Norwich University. Her research focuses on vulnerability and life transition. Fluent in Arabic, Dr. Evans has served as an Arabic linguist in the United States Army, and currently uses her translation skills to volunteer for a non-profit organization aimed at resettling Syrian refugee families into local communities. Additionally, she has served as director of International Programs for a large school of nursing, where she organized and coordinated nursing faculty and students with in-depth, hands-on clinical work in Puerto Rico, South Africa, Beijing, and more.

Eileen M. González, Ph.D., visiting assistant professor, recently joined the School of Arts, Sciences, Business, and Education in the department of Education. Dr. González, who received her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Connecticut, has completed over 23 years in education, including 13 years of classroom teaching experience and 10 years in higher education. She returns to USJ after a two-year leave. An integral member of the taskforce that helped create USJ's master's in Education with a concentration in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Dr. González will continue her research examining the dispositions, beliefs, and instructional practices of teachers working with English Language Learners (ELLs) while participating in the TESOL Program. An ELL herself when she moved from Puerto Rico to the United States, Dr. González remains dedicated to enhancing the educational agenda for all students.

Camille Payne Johnson, DNP, assistant professor, joined the School of Interdisciplinary Health and Science in the department of Nursing this fall. Dr. Payne Johnson, who received her Doctor of Nursing Practice from Quinnipiac University (QU), is a nurse practitioner with expertise in primary, urgent care, and surgical specialties. Prior to joining USJ, she worked at Yale-New Haven Health and served as a part-time faculty member at QU. Her research explores the needs of vulnerable populations, human error making, and implications on patient outcomes. Dr. Payne Johnson has participated in health missions to Central America, and also volunteers her time in various church and local community outreaches, educating attendees on preventive health topics in New Haven County.

Heather Mangino '06, MSN, RN, joined the School of Interdisciplinary Health and Science as an instructor in the department of Nursing during the summer of 2018. An alumna of USJ's Accelerated Second Degree Program, Professor Mangino later received her master's degree in Nursing from the University of Hartford. She also holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Northeastern University. As a registered nurse with a clinical background in organ transplantation and end-stage organ disease, Professor Mangino discovered a love of nursing education early in her career, while working with students on the transplant floor. She has taught at the vocational, undergraduate, and graduate levels, and her research interests include curriculum development, the creation of cohesive connections between the classroom and clinical settings, and best practices for NCLEX preparation. A first-generation college student and lifelong learner, Professor Mangino is currently a doctoral student in the Nursing Education Program at Southern Connecticut State University.

Gina Rosich, Ph.D., joined the School of Interdisciplinary Health and Science as an assistant professor in the department of Social Work and Equitable Community Practice. Dr. Rosich

received her Ph.D. in Social Work from Fordham University. She is a social worker with expertise in Homeless Policies and Services, Gerontology, and LGBTQ Rights. While completing her doctoral studies, Dr. Rosich was the program director of an Article 81 Adult Guardianship Program in New York City. She has served over 19 years in community settings within the City, working primarily within the shelter system. A passionate educator and advocate, Dr. Rosich has developed social work courses on policies affecting LGBTQ people, has lobbied and organized for changing policies and increasing funding for programs serving the homeless, and educated elected officials on the particular needs of vulnerable and homeless older adults. Her research explores the gaps in rights, policies, and services for LGBTQ and homeless older adults from a social justice perspective.

Lauren Tucker, Ed.D., assistant professor, joined the School of Arts, Sciences, Business, and Education in the department of Education this fall. Dr. Tucker received her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, with a concentration in Educational and Assistive Technology, from Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU). An assistive technology specialist with expertise in evaluations and consultations for individuals from birth to adulthood, she previously worked with districts around Connecticut to build assistive technology capacity and match technology to student needs. Prior to joining USJ, Dr. Tucker served as an assistant professor at SCSU. With over nine years of experience in special education, Dr. Tucker has cross-certification in regular and special education, and has worked in primary, middle, and high school programs. Her research explores effectiveness of assistive technology for students with disabilities and informal teacher learning through social media.

Nikos Valance, J.D., LL.M., joined the School of Interdisciplinary Health and Science as a visiting assistant professor and the director of USJ's Criminal Justice/Restorative Justice program. Professor Valance received his degree in Law from Fordham University, his LL.M. in Indigenous Law and Policy from the Rogers College of Law at the University of Arizona, and his master's degree in Economics from the New School for Social Research. He is currently pursuing his master of Divinity on a part-time basis at the Claremont School of Theology. A native of New York City, Professor Valance spent many years working to improve housing situations for residents of the City. In addition to his work at USJ, he is actively committed to implementing restorative justice practices in North Dakota's adult criminal court and the tribal court system of the North Dakota-based MHA Nation.

Leanne Vallee, M.S., PA-C, assistant professor, joined the School of Pharmacy and Physician Assistant Studies in the department of Physician Assistant Studies in spring 2018. Professor Vallee received her master's degree in Physician Assistant Studies from Springfield College. A physician assistant in pediatrics, sports medicine, and physiatry, she worked at a private pediatric office in Springfield, Mass. before joining USJ. Professor Vallee's professional background includes over six years as a physician assistant and seven years as a certified athletic trainer. She is a sports medicine-trained physician assistant who has provided sideline coverage for NCAA Division I, II, and III athletic contests, including ice hockey, football, and men's lacrosse. She is currently pursuing her doctorate of Education from the College of Saint Mary in Omaha, Neb.

Jessica Vialva, Ed.D., assistant professor, joined the School of Arts, Sciences, Business, and Education in the department of Education this fall. Dr. Vialva received her doctoral degree

in Mathematics Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. A licensed educator with expertise in applied mathematics and mathematics pedagogy, she was an assistant professor of Mathematics Education at York College – City University of New York prior to joining USJ. Dr. Vialva’s professional background includes over nine years of teaching experience, having taught, mentored, consulted, and supervised in mathematics education throughout Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. Her research, which stems from her classroom experiences, explores reformed pedagogical practices and curriculum reforms within secondary and higher education that help to lessen mathematics anxiety, address the achievement gap, and improve learning and engagement. Dr. Vialva is committed to working with students and educators within urban communities.

Stephanie Zahn, Pharm.D., joined the School of Pharmacy and Physician Assistant Studies as an associate professor in the department of Pharmacy Practice and Administration this semester. Dr. Zahn, who received her Pharm.D. from Butler University, is a pharmacist with expertise in ambulatory care. Prior to joining USJ, she was a pharmacy resident at St. Vincent Indianapolis, where she served as the chief resident. Her research explores outpatient medication safety and pediatrics. Dr. Zahn’s professional background includes work with an underserved patient population in Indianapolis and the completion of a resident teaching certificate program coordinated through Butler and Purdue Universities. Her scholarship portfolio includes one publication, four ACPE-accredited CE presentations, and several national and local presentations.

For more information about USJ and its expert faculty, visit www.usj.edu.

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The University of Saint Joseph (USJ) offers a wide range of coeducational undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs that combine a professional and liberal arts education with opportunities for mentored research, community service, clinical field work, and internships. Programs are taught on the University’s two campuses in West Hartford and Hartford, Connecticut; at off-campus locations throughout the state; and online. Founded in 1932 by the Sisters of Mercy, the University of Saint Joseph offers degrees with value and values. To learn more, view our website at www.usj.edu.

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