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ELEVATING EXCELLENCE

CELEBRATING OUTSTANDING TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.

by [Kelley McGee](#) | May 16, 2024*Read time: about 3 min*

As the academic year drew to a close, Christopher Newport celebrated its dedicated faculty's exceptional achievements with a series of promotions and tenure awards announced during the 29th Convocation for the Conferral of Honors and Awards at the Ferguson Center. The event also honored graduating seniors who achieved Latin Honors, including cum laude, magna cum laude and summa cum laude.

President William G. Kelly praised students for their academic success, and expressed gratitude to the faculty for their outstanding teaching, mentorship, and dedication to providing research opportunities that contribute to student success.

"This event is second in importance only to Commencement," said President Kelly. "We are here to officially recognize the truly outstanding academic achievements of our newest Captains for Life, and our amazing faculty that got them here. We honor those graduating seniors who have performed at the very highest levels of academic excellence throughout their time at Christopher Newport. We also celebrate those members of our faculty who have reached important milestones in their careers."

President Kelly presented the Gregory Klich Academic Achievement Award, the highest recognition of academic excellence at Christopher Newport, to Michael J. Lowry, '24 [Physics](#). The Klich Award is presented to the student who has completed at least 120 credits, has earned the highest number of credits at CNU, and maintains a 4.0 GPA. Lowry also received a \$5,000 prize.

“Michael had a 4.0 GPA. As you might imagine, he has many distinctions to his credit but this one jumps out. Embodying our value of Service, he volunteered at the Virginia Living Museum, teaching local residents how to use telescopes at stargazing evenings. He has earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics with minors in Computer Science and Chemistry. He will pursue a Ph.D. in Physics at the University of Virginia,” said President Kelly.

Board of Visitors Rector Lindsey Carney Smith, Esq. ‘01 awarded Promotion, Tenure, Emerita and Emeritus Status to 39 faculty members.

“Today, we recognize faculty members who are making an important transition in their professional lives,” said Rector Carney Smith. “As Rector of the Board of Visitors, I am pleased to recognize the promotion of three faculty members to the rank of master lecturer; the promotion of four faculty members to the rank of senior lecturer; the promotion of eleven faculty members to the rank of associate professor; the awarding of tenure to twelve faculty members; the promotion of four faculty members to the rank of full professor; and five awards of emerita status. My congratulations to each of you.”

“Promotion is the result of a careful peer review of a candidate’s teaching, scholarship, and campus and professional service records,” said Provost Quentin Kidd. “The process of earning tenure generally lasts six years, during which time the candidate is periodically evaluated on their teaching, research, and service by their faculty peers. It is a distinction signified by the medallion presented here today.”

“Emerita, emeritus, or emeriti status is the recognition that the Board of Visitors confers at retirement upon those members of the faculty who have completed long, productive and distinguished careers in the service of Christopher Newport University,” Kidd added. “This is the University’s way of extending their faculty status into the years beyond their time of active service. The ‘E’ in Emeritus refers to ex, as in ex-officio. In other words, these are faculty who have served their active time as professors but whose knowledge and wisdom is such that we want to keep them around in some capacity if they wish to stay around. This is a permanent reminder of the affection and respect generated by a career of dedicated and distinguished service.”

[English](#) Professor Dr. Margarita Marinova, described by President Kelly as a “beloved teacher and mentor who embodies the teacher-scholar model of Christopher Newport’s faculty” was the keynote speaker for the celebration.

Dr. S. Lynn Shollen, Associate Professor and Chair of the [Department of Leadership and American Studies](#), was selected as the recipient of the 2024 Alumni Faculty Award for Outstanding Teaching and Mentoring, awarded for her exceptional commitment to teaching and learning excellence and to University citizenship.

The list of faculty members who have been promoted or granted tenure is as follows:

Promotion to Senior Lecturer

- **Neville L. Fogarty, B.S., M.A., Ph.D.**, Lecturer of Mathematics
- **Diane L. Griffiths, B.S., M.S.S., Ph.D.**, Lecturer of Sociology, Social Work and Anthropology
- **Margaret A. Richardson, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.**, Lecturer of Fine Art and Art History
- **Patricia A. Siewe Seuchie, Licence, Maitrise, D.E.A., Ph.D.**, Lecturer of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures

Promotion to Master Lecturer

- **Gwynne D. Brown, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.**, Senior Lecturer of Molecular Biology and Chemistry
- **Sean T. Connable, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.**, Senior Lecturer of Communication
- **Dawn L. Hutchinson, B.M., M.A., Ph.D.**, Senior Lecturer of Philosophy and Religion

Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

- **Sara E. Black, B.A., Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of History
- **Rik Chakraborti, B.Sc., M.A., M.S., Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Economics
- **Youssef E. Chouhoud, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Political Science
- **Benjamin A. Corbin, B.M., M.M., M.M., D.M.A.**, Assistant Professor of Performing Arts

- **Joanna C. Eleftheriou, B.A., M.F.A., Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of English
- **Ryan P. Fisher, B.S., Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Physics, Computer Science and Engineering
- **James P. Kelly, B.S., Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Mathematics
- **Matthew S. Lattanzio, B.S., M.S., Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Organismal and Environmental Biology
- **Matthew A. Morena, B.S., M.S., M.A., Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Mathematics
- **Iordanka N. Panayotova, M.Sc., Ph.D., Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Mathematics
- **Colin M. Ruffer, B.M.E., M.M., M.F.A.**, Assistant Professor of Performing Arts
- **Taiyi Sun, A.B., M.A., Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Political Science

Promotion to Full Professor

- **Bradley B. Buszard, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures
- **Laura C. Deiulio, A.B., M.A., Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures
- **Michael D. Meyer, B.S., M.S., Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Organismal and Environmental Biology
- **Dmitriy S. Shaltayev, B.S., M.S., M.A., Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Management

The Awarding of Emerita and Emeritus Status

- **Kelly B. Cartwright, B.S., M.A., Ph.D.**, Professor of Psychology
 - **Dorothy C. Doolittle, B.A., M.S., Ph.D.**, Professor of Psychology
 - **Kara K. Keeling, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.**, Professor of English
 - **Nazur Rahim, B.S., M.B.A., Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Finance
 - **Rebecca S. Wheeler, B.A., M.S., Ph.D.**, Professor of English
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