Faculty often ask how they can possibly compete with faculty from research intensive institutions (RIs) who typically have reduced teaching loads and a supply of graduate assistants. The key to understanding Molloy’s competitive advantage is to recognize that faculty are not necessarily competing with faculty at RIs or judged by the same criteria.

Molloy is a Predominantly Undergraduate Institution (PUI) i.e. a U.S. small doctoral college that (1) grants baccalaureate degrees in National Science Foundation (NSF) - supported fields; (2) has undergraduate enrollment exceeding graduate enrollment; and (3) awards an average of no more than ten PhD degrees per year in all NSF-supportable disciplines.

Several federal agencies have special mechanisms and programs to fund PUIs. The key advantage of almost all PUIs is their access to students that RIs are not reaching – those from underrepresented groups or who are economically disadvantaged. How the research benefits student learning is often as important as the research itself. Close connections with local high schools, industry, and museums are also especially important for enhancing competitiveness of PUI proposals, especially if these connections are part of an ongoing relationship.

A Faculty team from the Biology Department (Jodi Evans, Anthony Tolvo, Maureen Sanz, Mary Kusenda and Noelle Cutter) are submitting a PUI proposal to the National Science Foundation to acquire a laser scanning confocal microscope, which will enrich faculty research and student learning in the multidisciplinary research track. Faculty Research Development along with Sherry Radowitz, Senior Grants Officer and other Molloy administrators are contributing to the effort.

Much thanks to Pamela Kenley-Meschino, Writing Center Coordinator, for her valuable contributions.
I was very inspired by Molloy College’s theme of Civic Engagement and its mission of Transformative Education as well as Social Good. So I developed partnerships with local municipalities. I used the Bloomberg philanthropies guidelines for its national competition where any town or city that has 30,000 residents or more can compete for nine million dollars. Though my students were not competing, they did work directly with a mayor and his or her staff to identify something that needed improvement.

So far my students have worked with the incorporated villages of Babylon, Port Jefferson, Freeport and Mastic Beach. This past semester I had my undergraduate capstone student’s work for Mayor Robert Kennedy of the Village of Freeport. On July 22nd the Mayor invited the students to present their recommendations directly to the trustees at a public meeting. One of my undergraduate students told me that an influencing factor in her getting a full-time job was having the capstone consulting project on her resume. It made a difference not only to her, but to her future employer.

Q. How is the research you are doing relevant to the capstone course?

A. With the public success of the real-world capstone this past year, I designed a research study to more broadly explore what employers’ value as relates to this topic. I’ve received approval from Molloy’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) and have started gathering the data. I am interviewing employers as well as students upon completion of their capstone course. Many students have reported the experience to be among the best of their college journey.

The role as the professor shifts to the role of mentor with the civic client becoming the real-world client. Now, as I conduct the research, I will move the assessment of this capstone design from anecdotal to evidence based. This capstone design would be great for an evidence established credibility with both my long term employees as well as my colleagues. I would demonstrate how another company was successfully handling a process or would share new knowledge emerging from an industry think tank. Evidence empowered employees to embrace and value the change. Building evidence through research became a leadership strategy for supporting organizational change.

Q. What was your first experience with research after graduating from college?

A. A lot of it goes back to my career as a Divisional Manager at Allstate Corporation. I learned that the way to enact change was to build evidence. Empirical evidence established credibility with both my long-term employees as well as my colleagues. I would demonstrate how another company was successfully handling a process or I would share new knowledge emerging from an industry think tank. Evidence empowered employees to embrace and value the change. Building evidence through research became a leadership strategy for supporting organizational change.

Q. How did you use your research skills in your other professional roles?

A. I integrated research behaviors into my professional roles. When I was faced with a significant question or task, I used research methods to close my knowledge gap. For example, at my previous college I served as the college-wide curriculum chair charged with re-designing the General Education Program. I worked with the academic chairs for the five divisions. Very quickly I could see the territorial behaviors of the academic chairs. No one was willing to give up a course in the General Education Core; we came to a standoff. So, I designed a research study to analyze the academic themes in the most selective colleges and universities in the Northeast as defined by The News and World Report. This led to the article “Exploring the Forms and Features of an Undergraduate General Education Curriculum,” 2008, Long Island Education Review, 7(2), 31-33.

As I did with my Allstate initiatives, I now had evidence that we could collectively use to move forward. Research became the method and strategy I used when I had a gap in knowledge. When the research results emerged, I found the path to share what had been learned, perhaps as a conference paper or journal article.

Q. Can you tell me about the Business capstone classes you are teaching?

A. I was hired in May 2012 and agreed to teach both graduate and undergraduate capstone classes. The capstone of a program provides the evidence that learning has taken place. For example, if the student is a Fine Art major, he or she may produce a dance recital or create a gallery event. In the nursing program the students must demonstrate skills while interacting with patients. So I designed the capstone where my students have an opportunity to use the knowledge they have learned in their program of study; and they must work within a real world situation to demonstrate those management and business skills.
Q. How did you come to work with the deaf-blind population?

A. One of my first nursing jobs was at a small hospital where I was working on a post-op unit and the physicians were doing cataract surgery. I was always asking the physicians questions because I was interested in research, and I soon found out they were also working at the Helen Keller National Center. They encouraged me to join them there because I would have the chance to see some interesting clinical cases. I followed them to the Center, which at the time was strictly a training facility for individuals who were deaf and blind.

I was fascinated by all the unique cases, all the diagnoses of deaf-blind, and the associated etiologies. After working with them for a week, the Director of the Center and I carved out a position for a nurse. I started working, seeing cases and developing that role at the facility. I was observing the unique characteristics of Congenital Rubella as well as Usher Syndrome and all the other etiologies involved in deaf-blindness.

Q. Can you tell us a bit about the current study you are involved in?

A. The current study involves “health literacy” in the deaf-blind population. “Health literacy” has come about with the new health care reform and it is based on educating people about prevention and promoting healthy practices. The whole thing is prevention, but when you have a population that has limited access to health information there are many obstacles. When you look at the current information, it’s geared for certain reading levels, certain educational levels, and differing levels of physical ability. When somebody has a disability their access to information using traditional delivery methods is limited. By looking at the available information, targeting problem areas, and adapting the health information for these individuals, we hope it will prevent problems.

Q. Is your interest in health literacy related to your experience with Congenital Rubella?

A. Definitely. This population is restricted to their fingertips which limits their vocabulary and understanding of commonly used terms. For example, we commonly use the term “silent killer” for heart attack but some deaf-blind individuals may interpret this phrase to mean “killer of deaf people.” I have been involved with this population for over 30 years. The deficits in vision and hearing pose serious problems to health because individuals who are deaf-blind often do not understand or misinterpret critical information related to their diagnosis and treatment.

And it doesn’t stop with people who are already deaf-blind; the current population is aging many of whom will lose their sight and hearing.

Q. Can you tell me about the proposal to the National Institutes of Health (NIH)?

A. Most of the research focusing on deaf-blind populations has been anecdotal. We need more quantitative data. There are really no validated instruments appropriate for the deaf-blind population because most of the tools require vision or hearing. I did a literature search and found a number of instruments to assess health related vocabulary for non-English speaking populations. We adapted one of these instruments and did a pilot study to measure how long it would take to administer and to determine if it was understood. The NIH grant would make it possible to test the instrument, refine it, and establish validity and reliability.

Q. In what settings would this instrument be used?

A. Right now, the ultimate agenda is to provide the clinician with an assessment tool they can use to tailor the presentation of patient information. It’s difficult to get a handle on someone’s health literacy. If they come into your office you don’t really know if they understand you or not.

We need an instrument that indicates that this person’s information should be provided in a different way. The instrument would be a practical tool for the clinician. It would take less than ten minutes to administer and then the clinician would have a baseline of what needs to be done or what would be the best modality to present the information: written, verbal, tactile, auditory or Braille.

The instrument could be used in the hospital setting as part of discharge instructions. There is no sense in sending people home if they don’t understand how to care for themselves. Clinicians can administer this instrument and adapt their teaching in the community setting. The instrument would be useful in the pharmacy context as well. For instance, the pharmacy label will say one tablet three times a day. What does three times a day mean? For one person it might be breakfast, lunch and dinner. For somebody else it may be every eight hours.

Q. Why did you submit a proposal to the National Institute of Health?

A. I had the concept for the study, but needed funding to actually perform it. The NIH program for Understanding and Promoting Health Literacy supports research to improve access and quality of health care services for health literacy among vulnerable populations. Nothing to date has been done with deaf-blind. So I had the unique population: there was an open invitation for funding, and it seemed to be a nice match. It met all the criteria.

Q. What has Molloy shaped your career and research?

A. I am in love with Molloy. The education I received at both the undergraduate and graduate levels really set the stage for everything else I have done. It is unique in terms of the one-on-one attention and emphasis on research, writing, APA formatting and the library service.

That’s why I am happy to be here now teaching, because I had such a great education. Although I went to other schools for the doctorate and for the Nurse Practitioner, it was Molloy that made the difference. Everyone is supportive and I feel comfortable that I can approach anyone with a question.
The Office of Faculty Research Development (FRD) will conduct three workshops in collaboration with the Faculty Professional Center during the 2013-14 academic years. On October 29, faculty new to Molloy learned about FRD can help them launch their research and obtain external funding to expand their research activities.

“Getting Your Research Started at Molloy” will be held on Thursday, December 5th in the Reception Room from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. A panel of Molloy researchers will share how they became involved in research, their collaborations with other researchers in and outside of Molloy, and their grant seeking experiences. There will be ample opportunities to interact with panelists.

A hands-on workshop “The Road to Writing Winning Research Grants” is planned for the Spring 2014 semester for faculty members seeking external funding who are not familiar with the systematic steps to formulating and submitting a grant application. Participants will learn how to identify potential funding sources, match the funding source guidelines to their request and build partnerships with funding sources. Follow-up with participants will support their future grant development efforts.

Faculty Professional Center & Faculty Research Development
GETTING YOUR RESEARCH STARTED AT MOLLOYS
Thursday, December 5, 2013
The Frank and Gertrude Kaiser Art Gallery
Public Square (2nd Floor)
2:00-3:30 p.m.

A Faculty Panel shares:
- How they became involved in research
- Collaborations with researchers at Molloy
- Building relationships with external organizations
- Benefits of conducting research
- Experiences with funding agencies
- Obstacles encountered
- Molloy services they have helped them
- Impact of research on graduate and undergraduate students

Research areas include….
Developmental biology, signal transduction Autism Spectrum Disorders, music therapy, parental stress, civic engagement, juvenile delinquency, residential care, business ethics, health literacy, moral distress…

All Faculty and Graduate Students Are Welcome!

Faculty Research Orientation - December 2012

Debra Hanna (Nursing), Maureen Mackenzie (Business), Stella Manne (Faculty Research Development), Madeline Gunn (Experiential Learning), Aliya Kuerban (Nursing), Susan Bliss (Social Work), Laura Kestemberg (Psychology)
On August 28, the Rebecca Center for Music Therapy at Molloy College conducted an orientation for all practicum students and music therapy interns planning to fulfill clinical hours for Fall 2013, as well as for students who expressed interest in being part of the research study. The orientation included an overview of the research study, policy and protocols, clinical work, data collection and filming procedures. Students also met with their supervisors to review client schedules and plan meetings.

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) involve impairments or delayed development in social interaction and communication skills. ASD affects over 2 million individuals in the U.S. and tens of millions worldwide. Moreover, government autism statistics suggest that prevalence rates have increased 10 to 17 percent annually in recent years.

The Rebecca Center for Music Therapy is the U.S. site for a study entitled “Randomized controlled trial of improvisational music therapy’s effectiveness for children with ASDs (TIME-A)”, the largest randomized control trial of any psychosocial intervention for autism to date. TIME-A will include 300 children, ages 4 to 7, diagnosed with ASD, from nine countries: Australia, Brazil, Israel, Italy, South Korea, Norway, Italy, Britain, and the U.S. John Carpente, Assistant Professor in Music and Music Therapy and Director of the Rebecca Center for Music Therapy, is the US site manager.

The study is attracting significant attention locally (Newsday, March 6, 2013), and from major academic centers including the Weill Cornell Center for Autism and the Developing Brain. Based on extensive review of the literature, John Carpente and Stella Manne, Ph.D., Director of Faculty Research Development are developing a research agenda to identify factors critical for successful treatment. The review and analysis has been presented at two major international conferences: 7th Nordic Music Therapy Congress in June 2012 and the International Conference on Neuroplasticity and Cognitive Modifiability in June 2013. A more extensive analysis will be presented at the American Music Therapy Association’s national conference in Jacksonville, Florida on November 21, 2013.

TIME-A’s experimental infrastructure offers opportunities for faculty across departments to explore research questions specific to their own interests such as parent stress. Levels of stress experienced by parents of children with ASD are enormously high, compared with those experienced by parents of children with almost any other type of disability or health problem. Laura Kestemberg, Associate Professor in Psychology and Counseling and, Laura DeGennaro, M.S. Clinical Coordinator and John Fessenden, Graduate Assistant in Music Therapy are investigating the relationship between parenting stress and certain characteristics of children with autism within the context of the TIME-A study.

Molloy College has received a grant for $60,000 from the Uniondale Public Schools to improve teacher content knowledge, vertical articulation of high school and college courses, and curriculum writing. Several Divisions are involved in planning Molloy's role, including Education and Natural Sciences. Molloy faculty and administrators will also work with Uniondale to enhance our existing tutoring partnership. This summer, the tuition and transportation for the summer science camp will be underwritten by the grant.

The program will be implemented using the “transformation” of school intervention model which emphasizes evaluation of staff effectiveness in areas of student growth, multiple observation-based assessments, and portfolios of professional activities. In addition to providing valuable resources to teachers, the project offers multiple opportunities for research, especially related to assessing school progress on meeting goals related to student achievement in mathematics, science, and reading/language arts.

The grant is a culmination of many years of collaboration between Molloy College and Uniondale Public Schools spearheaded by Madeline Gunn, Director of the Office of Experiential Learning.
Civic Engagement Seminar

Diverse members of the Molloy Community gathered on April 12, 2013, at a seminar entitled “The Civically Engaged Campus” to begin the process of consolidating the College’s community engagement efforts into a comprehensive college wide plan to instill a lifelong motivation to make a difference in the community. The day-long gathering was organized by Madeline Gunn, Director of the Office of Experiential Learning, and Kathleen Maurer Smith, Associate Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs and Dean of the Division of Social Sciences. They received a grant from the Association of American Colleges and Universities based on a proposal submitted to its Bringing Theory to Practice Seminar Grant Program. The program featured a presentation by Stephen Priscilla, Ph.D., Professor of Civic Engagement & Leadership at Wagner College, and his Assistant Director, Ms. Samantha Siegel.

It is believed that students who actively apply their knowledge to real world situations learn more academic content and higher order skills such as critical thinking. Their interpersonal effectiveness and sense of self-efficacy (i.e., feeling that they make a positive difference in the world) is also increased. Madeline Gunn and Kathleen Maurer Smith are working with faculty to integrate civic engagement with course content across the Molloy curriculum. They also plan to conduct research exploring the relationship between college students’ civic engagement experiences, their psychological well being and their professional and personal growth over the short and long term.

The Graduate Assistantship Program

The Graduate Assistantship Program at Molloy offers an exciting opportunity for students to work alongside faculty and administrators, while participating in a valuable “hands on” educational experience that complements their degree program curriculum. Students receive a credit voucher and a $500 stipend, provided they are enrolled for at least 6 credits and work 10 hours per week.

Many of the graduate assistantships allow students to benefit educationally and professionally from the program. They gain further experience in their field, enhance research skills, enjoy collegial collaborations with their supervisors that may result in joint publications, and take part in many other professional activities. These research assistantships provide a wide variety of responsibilities and duties such as creating a library of reference works, documents, newspapers, and statistical records, and reading and summarizing research data. Graduate assistants can also play a key role in data collection and analysis by interviewing individuals, coding and entering data and preparing statistical tabulations.

The Graduate Assistantship which is housed in the Office of Academic Affairs was first offered in the early 1990s. The first Graduate Assistant worked in the Nursing Department with Valerie Collins, who was then the Director of the Nursing Research Center. Over the years, the number of Graduate Assistants increased to the current number of thirty two Assistants. Kathleen Maurer Smith, the Associate Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs, oversees the Graduate Assistant Program with an advisory group composed of Valerie Collins, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Linda Albanese, Vice President for Enrollment Management, and Lisa Miller, Director of Human Resources.

The process begins when faculty and administrators complete applications to request a graduate assistantship position in their area which includes detailed information on the duties and responsibilities involved in the assistantship. This year, a notice soliciting requests for graduate assistantship positions was sent to the Molloy community in September. The approved positions will be announced by the end of the fall semester. The Associate Deans of the six graduate programs will then inform prospective students of the available graduate assistantship positions at the time of their interviews. They also will be posted on Molloy’s website. Interested students are then interviewed by the supervisor of the assistantship who decides to whom the position will be offered. The student is then referred to the Office of Human Resources to fill out an application form.

Kathleen Maurer Smith described her own experience as a graduate assistant when she was studying for her master’s degree. “I worked with a sociologist on a study of public opinion regarding controversial political issues of the time,” she explained. “I reviewed and summarized articles which reported on public opinion surveys that became the basis for a journal publication. The professor included me as an author so I had a publication while working towards my degree.” To have such experience as a graduate student is invaluable. At the same time, those who supervise graduate assistantships benefit from the student’s contributions to their research projects.

Office of Faculty Research Development serves Molloy College in the dual roles of promoting research and assisting in the administration and management of grants and contracts supporting research. It reports to the Office of Academic Affairs.

Stella Manne, Ph.D.
Director of Faculty Research Development

Valerie Collins, Ph.D.
Vice President for Academic Affairs