Inspired to Teach:
PERSPECTIVES FROM NEW FACULTY
BRYANT UNIVERSITY MISSION

Educate and inspire students to discover their passion and become innovative leaders with character around the world.
At Bryant, our dedication to student learning is at the heart of our mission. We are proud to be known for our strong commitment to undergraduate teaching and our continued investments in exciting approaches to education.

In particular, over the last two years, we’ve hired 29 new faculty whose credentials and passion for teaching are second to none. This next generation of Bryant academics are accomplished scholars who have worked and studied at top institutions such as Yale, Notre Dame, Penn, Auburn, Duke, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, U.C. Berkeley, and the London School of Economics.

They’re energized by the opportunity to contribute to Bryant’s mission. Individually and collectively, they are the future of Bryant. We are proud to introduce you to this group of talented scholars, teachers, and leaders.

Glenn M. Sulmasy
Provost and Chief Academic Officer
Richard Gorvett, FCAS, CERA, MAAA, ARM, FRM, Ph.D.
Chair of Mathematics
Department and Professor
of Mathematics
BEFORE BRYANT: Staff Actuary, Casualty Actuarial Society (CAS), Arlington, VA, where he was also a member of The Automated Vehicles Task Force; Director, Actuarial Science Program, State Farm Companies Foundation Scholar in Actuarial Science and tenured professor, Department of Mathematics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; M.B.A. University of Chicago; B.S. University of Illinois at Chicago
INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “Everything about Bryant – the quality of its students and faculty, its excellent reputation, the emphasis on teaching and mentoring – makes teaching here an incredible opportunity. I find Bryant’s philosophy of integrated education to be both compelling and absolutely appropriate as preparation for today’s world.”

James Shanahan, Ph.D.
Jeanne & John Rowe Professor of Data Science, Associate Professor of Information Systems and Analytics, and Executive Director of the Data Science Initiative
BEFORE BRYANT: Founding faculty member of the Master’s in Data Science programs at University of California, Berkeley, and Indiana University; Founder and VP of Engineering of Wavelength, which develops AI solutions for autonomous cars; Chief Scientist and Founder of Church and Duncan Group, Inc., a data science consultancy firm; SVP of Data Science at NativeX
DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D. University of Bristol, UK; B.S. University of Limerick, Ireland
INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “The workforce of the future will require constant up-skilling, and employee digital dexterity will outweigh tenure and experience. Bryant recognizes this and is well-positioned to prepare its students with the technical and critical thinking skills needed to successfully compete in the digital marketplace.”

Valerie Carrigan, M.A.
Visiting Artist and Lecturer of English and Cultural Studies
BEFORE BRYANT: Book artist, printmaker, educator, and proprietor of Messenger Press; mentor for Master of Fine Arts candidates, Maine Media Workshops + College; Associate Professor of Art, Green Mountain College
DEGREES AWARDED: M.A. The University of the Arts; M.Ed. Western Washington University; B.S. Nazareth College
INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “I was attracted to Bryant because of its burgeoning programming in the arts. A newly renovated art classroom, visiting artist studio space on campus, and fully enrolled visual arts courses (with waiting lists) indicated to me that students here were hungry for creative avenues that would encourage self-expression and broaden their worldview.”
**Thomas Dougherty, M.A.**

**Executive in Residence of Information Systems and Analytics**

**BEFORE BRYANT:** Executive experience includes Vice President of Database Analytics at Fidelity Financial Advisor Solutions; Vice President of Database Marketing, Grand Circle Corporation; Senior Vice President of Database Marketing at Putnam Investments

**DEGREES AWARDED:** B.A., M.A. Binghamton University

**INSPIRED TO EXCEL:** “I’ve been impressed by the many Bryant students and alumni I’ve interviewed. It’s clear to me that a Bryant education seamlessly blends theory and application, and excels at preparing students for the types of problems they will face in the business world.”

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**Gene Kovacs, Ph.D.**

**Visiting Professor/Lecturer of Accounting**

**BEFORE BRYANT:** Vice President at Analysis Group, Inc., one of the largest economics consulting firms in the world; Founder and CEO of EJKovacs Consulting, Inc.

**DEGREES AWARDED:** Ph.D. Columbia University; M.B.A. University of Chicago; B.S. Babson College

**INSPIRED TO EXCEL:** “My professional experience in litigation consulting and finance inspired me to teach. The students seem to respond well to the level of rigor covered in my classes and the added insight my experience brings.”

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**Frances Varin**

**Lecturer of Information Systems and Analytics**

**BEFORE BRYANT:** Managing Partner and Director of Development for LaunchBlot, a managed WordPress hosting and design company; Web Development Manager at Amica and leader of 20-person development team for Amica.com

**DEGREES AWARDED:** M.S., B.S. Bryant University; A.S. Community College of Rhode Island

**INSPIRED TO EXCEL:** “I’m in a position to bring industry experience to the classroom. Blending industry experience with course subject matter can provide students with an enhanced understanding of how these concepts are applied daily.”

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**John Fellingham, Ph.D.**

**Lecturer of Finance**

**BEFORE BRYANT:** Visiting Professor of Finance at Roger Williams University; Practitioner Faculty of Finance at Providence College

**DEGREES AWARDED:** Ph.D. University of Rhode Island; M.B.A. Fordham University; B.S. State University of New York at Stony Brook; Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA)

**INSPIRED TO EXCEL:** “My background includes approximately 25 years in the investment industry as a trader, analyst and portfolio manager. As an educator, I like to draw on my experiences as they relate to investments and the capital markets. I believe this helps students understand the material as it relates to ‘real life’ and here-and-now situations.”

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**R. Isil Yavuz (Rukiye Isil Yavuz Isiklar), Ph.D.**

**Assistant Professor of Management and Entrepreneurship Program Coordinator**

**BEFORE BRYANT:** Angel investor with Next Wave Impact, part of the Rising Tide Europe program, which seeks to increase women’s participation in angel investing; mentor at InoSuit, an innovation-focused mentorship project in cooperation with Turkish Exporters Assembly; Assistant Professor at Ozyegin University in Istanbul, Turkey

**DEGREES AWARDED:** Ph.D. University of Minnesota-Twin Cities; M.S. Middle East Technical University, Turkey; B.S. Middle East Technical University, Turkey

**INSPIRED TO EXCEL:** “University-level teaching is not about answers, but rather about promoting an analytical way of thinking. I was attracted to Bryant because its people are fully committed to creating a positive atmosphere of trust and respect where students are partners in the knowledge discovery process and not a consumer of information.”

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**At Bryant, “students are partners in the knowledge discovery process and not a consumer of information.”**

R. ISIL YAVUZ, Ph.D.
Ella Browning, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of English and Cultural Studies

BEFORE BRYANT: Associate Professor of History and Director for Center for Global Education, Oglethorpe University

DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D., M.A. Duke University; M.Sc. London School of Economics and Political Science; B.A. University of Pennsylvania

INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “I am fortunate to have been part of two award-winning writing programs, one at the University of South Florida and one at the University of Pennsylvania. This standard of excellence is one that I have carried with me to Bryant.”

Drea Brown, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of English and Cultural Studies

BEFORE BRYANT: Visiting Assistant Professor of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies in the Center for Geographies of Justice at Goucher College; Instructor, Education Unlimited, Stanford University Emerging Writers Institute, Palo Alto, California

DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin; M.F.A. University of Oregon; B.A. Hollins University

INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “I aim to help students deepen their critical and creative thinking and engagement while encouraging them to build relationships with themselves and others, so they feel wholly empowered.”

Ronald Bobroff, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of History and Social Sciences

BEFORE BRYANT: Associate Professor of History and Director for Center for Global Education, Oglethorpe University

DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D., M.A. Duke University; M.Sc. London School of Economics and Political Science; B.A. University of Pennsylvania

INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “My training and research have taken me to libraries, archives, and city streets in several corners of France, Russia, and the United Kingdom [where] I have learned about alternative views on not only historical developments but also current events. I convey those differing perspectives to try to help my students see things that they might take for granted from a new angle.”

KATHLEEN DALY, Ph.D.

“I’m particularly interested in helping students develop the tools they’ll need to understand the world.”

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Ella Browning, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of English and Cultural Studies

BEFORE BRYANT: Associate Director, Writing in the Disciplines, The Critical Writing Program, University of Pennsylvania; Lecturer, College of Liberal and Professional Studies, University of Pennsylvania

DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D. University of South Florida; M.A. Simmons College; B.A. Boston College

INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “I am fortunate to have been part of two award-winning writing programs, one at the University of South Florida and one at the University of Pennsylvania. This standard of excellence is one that I have carried with me to Bryant.”
Kathleen Daly, Ph.D.

Lecturer in History and Social Sciences

**BEFORE BRYANT:** Visiting Lecturer of Interdisciplinary Studies, Salem State University

**DEGREES AWARDED:** Ph.D. Boston University; B.A. Smith College

**INSPIRED TO EXCEL:** “Because I teach American history, I’m particularly interested in helping students develop the tools they’ll need to understand the world. In grad school, we were taught to ask ‘Why are things the way they are?’ I hope I can pass that mindset on to my own students.”

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Erim Ergene, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Management

**BEFORE BRYANT:** Instructor, Isenberg School of Management, UMass Amherst

**DEGREES AWARDED:** Ph.D. University of Massachusetts; M.S. Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey; M.S. Lehigh University; B.S. Pennsylvania State University, State College

**INSPIRED TO EXCEL:** “My professional experiences and my graduate education showed me the high degree of interconnectedness within and across firms, industries, and nations. My goal is for my students to recognize that the problems they face will never be isolated issues but rather faced with implications and consequential effects across departmental, organizational, and national boundaries.”

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Ganga Urumutta Hewage, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Marketing

**BEFORE BRYANT:** Instructor, University of Central Florida; worked as Senior Brand Manager in Sri Lanka at Unilever Plc, one of the world’s top five consumer packaged goods companies

**DEGREES AWARDED:** Ph.D. University of Central Florida; M.B.A. University of Colombo, Sri Lanka; B.S. University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka; Professional Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing, The Chartered Institute of Marketing, UK

**INSPIRED TO EXCEL:** “When I teach, I take the diversity of my students into consideration and use a variety of tools that enhance engagement in the classroom. I strive to use my experience in the industry, studying in diverse environments, and teaching in diverse classrooms to mentor students and lead them to become successful in all facets of their lives.”

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GANGA URUMUTTA HEWAGE, PH.D.
“Bryant is a place where the distance between professors and students does not seem to exist.”

KACY KIM, Ph.D.
Gerald John, Ph.D.
Lecturer of Science and Technology

BEFORE BRYANT: Air Lab Analytical Chemist; postdoctoral research associate, Department of Civil Engineering, Auburn University

DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D., M.S. Auburn University; B.S.T. Anna University, India

INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “One key area I am working on is adapting research projects in line with citizen science and introducing them as undergrad classroom exercises. This provides an opportunity for undergrad students to have hands-on experience with advanced research projects.”

Kacy Kim, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Marketing

BEFORE BRYANT: Assistant Professor of Marketing, Elon University, Love School of Business; Visiting Professor, McCann New York (McCann Worldgroup); Visiting Scholar, Harvard University, Department of Psychology (Ellen Langer’s Lab); also worked in industry as a research consultant and social media analyst

DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D. and M.A. University of Texas at Austin; M.A. Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea; B.A. Chung-Ang University, South Korea

INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “Bryant is a place where the distance between professors and students does not seem to exist. I have taught in different higher education settings, a big state school and a small private school, but Bryant is unique in the sense that students and professors communicate face to face.”

Deniz Ozdiktas Lasater, Ph.D.
Lecturer of Economics

BEFORE BRYANT: Teaching and research assistant, Clark University

DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D., M.A. Clark University; M.A. Central Michigan University; B.A. Yeditepe University, Turkey

INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “My passion for teaching began with the many inspiring professors with whom I have been privileged to study. As an instructor in the social sciences, fostering critical thinking skills is the ultimate aim of my teaching because this is a tool students can utilize everywhere.”

Ryan Marnane, Ph.D.
Lecturer of English and Cultural Studies

BEFORE BRYANT: Instructor of Humanities, MIT

DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D., M.A. Salve Regina University; B.A. Providence College; A.A. Newbury College

INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “I was attracted to Bryant because of the various interdisciplinary opportunities available for students and faculty alike; along with strengthening the cross-disciplinary paths already forged on campus, I hope to help build new bridges across departments and colleges to advance academic programing in environmental justice and sustainability studies, as well as the digital humanities and studies in technology.”
Robert Massoud, PMP, MBA

Lecturer of Management

BEFORE BRYANT: After teaching high school, entered the corporate arena working in customer service, project management and operations management. Most recently, Senior Production and Applications Infrastructure Manager at Fidelity Institutional Investment Services Company

DEGREES AWARDED: B.A. Catholic University of America; MBA, Salve Regina University

INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “What sets Bryant apart is an amazing focus on ‘the good of the learners.’ From the first day, I noticed faculty and students in dialogue outside of class time. That tells me there’s more to education at Bryant than what happens in the classroom.”

Michelle McAllister, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Accounting

BEFORE BRYANT: Visiting Assistant Professor, Northeastern University

DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D. Florida State University; M.B.A., University of Colorado, Colorado Springs; B.S. United States Military Academy at West Point; Certified Public Accountant

INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “I was attracted to Bryant because of the University’s commitment to teaching excellence as well as its support for high quality research... At Bryant, students and faculty are made to feel like they are part of something greater than themselves – that they are working together toward something great. That unique environment is very special and not easily replicated.”

Cedric Oliva, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Modern Languages

BEFORE BRYANT: Visiting Assistant Professor of Francophone Studies and Italian and Director of the Less Commonly Taught Language (LCTL) Program, St. Lawrence University; Lecturer of Linguistics, French and Italian (for Spanish Speakers) and Language Program Coordinator, California State University, Long Beach, CA; consultant project director for a multinational technology company

DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D. University of Corsica; M.A. California State University, Long Beach; M.A. University of Corsica, France; B.A. Stendhal University, France; B.A. University of Sussex, Brighton, UK, University of Corsica (Erasmus exchange program)

INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “I was exposed to diverse models of teaching excellence through my graduate education which took place in three countries, five states and in five languages. My hope is that my passion for teaching, closely linked to these international models of excellence, helps me define and enact educational standards of excellence.”

Kathryn Ostermeier, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Management

BEFORE BRYANT: Teaching Fellow, University of North Texas

DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D. University of North Texas; M.B.A. University of Texas at Tyler; B.A. Texas A&M University

INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “There is a lot of excitement and energy for learning, exploring, and innovating at Bryant University. Students and faculty have the opportunity to work closely together through team-based learning and practical application. The small class sizes make it easy to know students as individuals rather than just numbers.”

KATHRYN OSTERMEIER, Ph.D.

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INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “There is a lot of excitement and energy for learning, exploring, and innovating at Bryant University. Students and faculty have the opportunity to work closely together through team-based learning and practical application. The small class sizes make it easy to know students as individuals rather than just numbers.”

KATHRYN OSTERMEIER, Ph.D.

“There is a lot of excitement and energy for learning, exploring, and innovating at Bryant University. Students and faculty have the opportunity to work closely together.”
Jeremy Pearson, Ph.D.
Lecturer of History and Social Sciences

BEFORE BRYANT: Lecturer and Postdoctoral Senior Research Associate, Medieval Institute, University of Notre Dame

DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D. University of Tennessee, Knoxville; M.A., B.A. San Francisco State University

INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “I teach critical empathy, a vital skill that transcends history and will give students a richer life and an advantage in an increasingly globalized economy.”

Yasamin Salmani, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Management

BEFORE BRYANT: Instructor, Drexel University, Lebow College of Business

DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D. Drexel University; M.Sc. Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran; B.Sc. Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran

INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “I believe active and rigorous engagement of students in the process of learning is a primary key to inspiring students for lifelong knowledge. My objective for every class I teach is to create an interactive environment which imparts not only knowledge of the topic at hand, but the ability to relate to the content and think critically.”

Mary Robins
Lecturer of Communication

BEFORE BRYANT: Lecturer, Northeastern University; also worked as marketing consultant for a social media marketing firm

DEGREES AWARDED: M.S. University of Bridgeport; B.A. Assumption College

Kristin Taylor-Costello, Ph.D.
Lecturer of Sociology

Before Bryant: Instructor and Lecturer, University of Rhode Island

DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D. Florida State University; M.A. University of Massachusetts; B.A. Rutgers University; A.A. Community College of Rhode Island

INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “The access that all students have to technology allows me to create interactive lessons that would be impossible at other institutions.”

“What sets Bryant apart is an amazing focus on ‘the good of the learners.’ I notice faculty and students in dialogue outside of class time. That tells me there’s more to education at Bryant than what happens in the classroom.”

ROBERT MASSOUD, PMP, MBA
“The interaction between the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Business creates the potential for a wide range of ideas that can be brought to the classroom.”

STEVEN WEICKSEL, Ph.D.

Steven Weicksel, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Science and Technology
BEFORE BRYANT: Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, Providence College; Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Genetics, Yale University
DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D. Providence College; B.S. University of New Hampshire
INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “What makes Bryant’s environment so special is the interaction between the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Business. The opportunity for interdisciplinary projects is unlike any other undergraduate experience. Because of this, I feel there is the potential for a wide range of ideas that can be brought to the classroom.”

Zhongyuan Williams
Lecturer of Modern Languages
DEGREES AWARDED: M.S. University of Massachusetts; B.A. Kanto-Gakuin University, Japan
INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “My experience as a small-business entrepreneur... gives me the ability to equip my students with cross-cultural insights to excel as global entrepreneurs and business leaders.”

Leila Zbib, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Finance
BEFORE BRYANT: Instructor, Washington State University; Accountant, Al-Media subsidiary of J-Group, Beirut, Lebanon
DEGREES AWARDED: Ph.D. Washington State University; M.A. University of Idaho; B.B.A. at Lebanese International University, Beirut, Lebanon
INSPIRED TO EXCEL: “What makes Bryant special is the combination of small class environment and the use of highly innovative class technology which result in a more interactive learning experience for the students. The welcoming culture at Bryant, the availability of teaching resources, and the opportunity to collaborate across disciplines allow me to accomplish my goals.”
“What makes Bryant special is the combination of small class environment and the use of highly innovative class technology which result in a more interactive learning experience for the students.”

LEILA ZBIB, Ph.D.
100% of Bryant classes taught by professors

100% of students graduate with both a major and a complementary minor, integrating business and liberal arts

U.S. News & World Report 2020

#8 MOST INNOVATIVE SCHOOL

#3 BEST COLLEGE FOR VETERANS

#17 BEST UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING
“It is in Bryant’s collective consciousness that teaching itself is a noble profession. It’s not just a job. Bryant faculty have a passion and love for teaching that’s evident in the classroom.”

PROVOST AND CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER GLENN M. SULMASY, J.D., LL.M