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Clement and Linda McGillicuddy Humanities Center

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# Clement and Linda McGillicuddy Humanities Center

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## Four Students Join McGillicuddy Humanities Center as Undergraduate Fellows for Spring 2022

May 19, 2022 | [Uncategorized](#)

In January 2022, the McGillicuddy Humanities Center (MHC) welcomed four new undergraduate research fellows for the next two semesters: Benjamin Allen, April Messier, Tom Pinette and Sheralynn Robbins. This new cohort will join existing fellows Luke Miller, Sabrina Paetow, Stephanie Tillotson, and Heather Webb, who are finalizing their research in Spring 2022.

Incoming fellow **Benjamin Allen**, an English and Philosophy major from Johnston, Rhode Island, will spend the next academic year exploring, "The Embodied Performance of Tourette's Syndrome in Communication and the Academic Environment." Allen will draw on his own lived experience, as well as contemporary scholarly research in the fields of disability studies, communication theory, intersectional theory, and performance theory, to examine how tic disorders, and specifically Tourette's Syndrome (TS), are predominantly performative, and can irreversibly impact the phenomenal experience of those afflicted, especially as it relates to stressful situations in academia and the classroom experience. Allen will be advised by Dr. Carla Billitteri from the Department of English.

**April Messier**, an English major minoring in creative writing from Old Town, Maine, will spend her fellowship analyzing "The Power of Words: Tracing Poetry's Roots in Magic." Messier became interested in researching poetry's roots in religious ritual and magical practice after learning about practices used during the Medieval period in a class with Dr. Sarah Harlan-Haughey. While Messier plans to gain insight from many disciplines and time periods, she will be doing a deep dive on the poet H.D.'s works. Her end product will be a prosimetrum piece (a poetic piece of writing combining prose and verse) that explores the common threads that surface in her research. She will be advised by Jennifer Moxley.

The MHC's inaugural Wiggan fellow is **Tom Pinette** from Limestone, Maine. A history major minoring in religious studies, Pinette will be researching, "This Land is Your Land and This Land is My Land": Conflict between the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy Nations and the


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Land is My Land: Conflict between the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy Nations and the Portland Diocese of Maine over Land-use as a Remnant of Colonial Attitudes.” His project seeks to compile and analyze instances of conflict between the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy Nations and the Portland Diocese of Maine, with a specific focus on disputes from 1900 to the present day. At the culmination of his research, he hopes to coordinate a roundtable discussion between tribal citizens, faculty members at UMaine, the Portland Diocese, and himself, to create a better dialogue about the legacy of the Catholic Church’s infringement upon Wabanaki tribes’ rights. John Bear Mitchell from the Native American studies program will be advising Pinette’s research fellowship.



The final member of the 2022 fellows cohort will be **Sherralyn Robbins**, an English major minoring in legal studies from Brewer, Maine. Robbins’ research proposal title, “You Write Like a Girl,” was inspired by a statement her own middle school teacher made after reviewing her writing. Throughout her time at UMaine, she has become increasingly interested in the gendered and linguistically biased structure of academia. For her fellowship, she hopes to examine the historical perspectives that brought about these standards, do a case study focusing on her own writing, and create dialogues between herself and female scholars of writing and gender studies. Paige Mitchell, lecturer in English and Director of the University of Maine Writing Center, will be advising Sher’s research.

The MHC funds a rotating cohort of undergraduate fellows who are granted awards to complete research or creative projects of their choosing in collaboration with a faculty mentor. In addition to honing their research skills and building their academic networks, fellows serve as humanities ambassadors to their peers, the campus, and beyond. For students interested in becoming a McGillicuddy Humanities Center undergraduate fellow, and faculty who might like to nominate a fellow, the next deadline to apply for a fellowship is October 17, 2022. Research and creative work of all types across the humanities will be considered, from academic papers and art gallery shows, to community workshops or films. More information, including application instructions, proposal guidelines, and a rubric, is available at [umaine.edu/mhc/research/for-students/undergraduate-fellowship/](https://umaine.edu/mhc/research/for-students/undergraduate-fellowship/).



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