



### A Message from the Provost

We are delighted to welcome our new faculty to the McKendree University community. Each of them brings a unique set of knowledge, skills, and expertise that will enrich the academic experience for our students. Their areas of

professional interest are diverse, including the study of fish behaviors, chemical analysis of biological systems, and economic demand for professional sports, among others. They are an impressive group of professionals, and we look forward to working with them for many years to come!

Christine M. Bahr, Ph.D.  
Provost



### **Dr. Francesca Ortegren**

*Visiting Assistant Professor of Psychology*

- PhD in Experimental Psychology with a concentration in Cognitive Psychology, Texas Tech University
- MA in Experimental Psychology, Texas Tech University
- BA in Psychology, Texas Tech University

Ortegren served as the Assistant Department Chair at the University of Southern Indiana, where she has worked since 2015. She has taught classes in cognitive psychology, research methods, and sensation and perception in a variety of formats – traditional, online, and hybrid. She has mentored seven undergraduate students as they prepared to give conference presentations. To date, she has given 19 scholarly presentations and published two research articles.



### **Dr. Tyson Thomas**

*Assistant Professor of Economics*

- PhD in Economics, Kansas State University
- MS in Economics and Finance, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
- BS in Economics, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Thomas has served as an Assistant Professor of Economics at Blackburn College since 2015, where he taught courses in corporate finance, labor economics, and money and banking. His current research focuses on understanding the demand for professional sports. To date, he has given one scholarly presentation and published two research articles. In 2013, he received the Graduate Student Teaching Award from the Department of Economics at Kansas State University.



### **Dr. Michael Louison**

*Assistant Professor of Biology*

- PhD in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- MS in Biology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- BA in Biology, Ripon College

Louison recently completed his PhD at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His dissertation was titled, “Role of behavior and physiology in driving vulnerability to recreational angling in sportfish.” During his graduate studies, he designed and taught a new course that included the use of software to analyze data taken from behavioral and physiological experiments on fish. He has directed three undergraduate independent study projects, given four scholarly presentations, and published four research articles. Since 2013, he has been involved in community service and outreach activities in environmental science.



### **Dr. Maria Salari**

*Assistant Professor of Chemistry*

- PhD in Chemistry and Chemical Biology; also Computational Biology and Molecular Biophysics, Rutgers University
- BS in Chemistry, University of Pittsburgh

Salari, a physical chemist, has served as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Bucknell University and at the University of Illinois at Springfield. She completed a teaching postdoctoral program at Rutgers University in Spring 2016. She has designed and taught an upper-level course in computational chemistry and a chemistry course for pre-nursing students. She has given four scholarly presentations and published eight research articles. In 2014, she received the Reid Award for Excellence in Research from the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology at Rutgers University.



### **Dr. Sara Trask**

*Assistant Professor of Speech Communication*

- PhD in Communication, University of Missouri-Columbia
- MA in Communication, University of Missouri-St. Louis
- BA in Organizational Communication with an emphasis in Marketing/Sales, McKendree University
- BA in Speech Communication with an emphasis in Public Relations, McKendree University

Trask, an alumna of McKendree, has served as an Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at Randolph-Macon College since 2015, where she taught courses in communication theory, health communication, and interpersonal and small group communication. She has given 11 conference papers (three of which earned the “Top Paper” designation), written two book chapters, and published five research articles. In 2017, she received the Art Conway Enthusiasm for Teaching and Learning Award from the Honors Program at Randolph-Macon College.