

Staff Profile



Jason Allen

According to Melia Bensussen, chair of Emerson's Performing Arts Department, her assistant, Jason Allen, is "a wealth of knowledge and sass."

"You have to have a sense of humor around here," Allen noted. The Performing Arts office space, which includes the offices of several full-time staff and faculty members and some part-time student employees, radiates warmth and camaraderie.

"My coworkers and I are of the same ilk," Allen said, "teetering on the line between artistic and crazy. The good thing is, if someone is leaning toward crazy on a given day, there is usually someone leaning the other way who can reel him in."

In addition to his duties as assistant to the department chair and assistant chair, Allen manages the budget, hires and manages part-time faculty and student staff, handles day-to-day office management, is the liaison between

the Performing Arts Department and other departments, and provides comic relief to his coworkers.

Allen has worked in office settings since he was 12 years old. Prior to Emerson, he worked in an outpatient mental health facility, helped design ethics rules for businesses, and worked at a pre- and post-adoption agency. He grew up in Whitman, Massachusetts, and attended the University of Southern California. He double majored, almost by accident, in theater and gerontology. "The professors were wonderful in that department," he said. "The classes were discussion-based and I liked that. I've always liked to learn from the people around me." As an actor, he was often cast in character roles, particularly elderly ones. "I could play them convincingly, having studied them," he concluded with a laugh.

Allen now lives in Lynn with his husband, Scott. They've been together 16 years, and were married on their 10th anniversary.

Although work keeps him busy, he finds time to perform in community theater; he has played Mother Ginger, a female character wearing a large skirt under which she hides her children, in *The Nutcracker* at the Northeast School of Ballet for the past 13 holiday seasons.

His favorite pastimes are reading, working jigsaw puzzles, and doing needlepoint on plastic canvas. His office sports a village of gaily colored needlepoint houses and three brightly colored butterflies on the wall.

Whether he's answering questions or wrangling spreadsheets, Allen loves Emerson's atmosphere and the creativity of its students, whom he calls "our kids." In his seven years on campus, Allen has undoubtedly found his niche.

By Emily Goodridge, MA '14

Staff Notes

New Faces

- Rebecca Blacker, Assistant Director of Admission/International Recruitment Coordinator, Undergraduate Admission
- Daniel O'Brien, Assistant Director of Media Relations, Communications and Marketing

Awards and Accomplishments

- Anna Feder (VMA) received an MFA in film production from Boston University in May 2012. She is also speaking on a panel at the International Film Fest Summit in Austin in December.
- Maria Piteros and Michael Duggan (Institutional Research) presented a session titled "How Less Selective, Four-year Institutions Responded to the Great Recession" at the annual conference of the North East Association for Institutional Research. Michael also co-presented "An Examination of Tuition Discounting Before/During the Great Recession."
- Wesley Rothman (WLP, FYWP) organized a panel for the AWP 2013 Conference in Boston: "Young Writers in Publishing: How Passion Fuels Professionalism." Abby Travis (MFA candidate and editorial assistant at *Ploughshares*) and Curtis Perdue MFA '11 will also participate.

- Wesley Rothman was named a finalist in *The Bellingham Review's* 49th Parallel Poetry Contest and *Ruminate* magazine's McCabe Poetry Contest. In December, he will join *Salamander Magazine's* board of directors. Poems have appeared or will appear in all three journals during the fall and winter.
- Peter Seronick (Marketing Communication) will speak at the November meeting of the Tulsa chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators.

Marriages

Wesley Rothman (WLP, FYWP) married Megan Menconi in Portovenere, Italy, on September 20, 2012.

Births

Diana Potter Chevignard (Advancement Services) and her husband, Alban Chevignard, welcomed Alice Valentine Elisabeth on November 1, 2012.

News and Notes

- Open enrollment for benefits continues through Friday, November 30, 2012. Benefits-eligible faculty and staff members may make changes to their benefit elections for 2013. For more information and to view employee rates for medical and dental coverage, please visit emerson.edu/open-enrollment.
- The Emerson College Police Department and the Berklee College of Music Public Safety Department are offering a series of RAD self-defense classes for women. Classes will take place from 6:00 to 9:00 pm on December 7, 11, and 12 at Studio #4, Paramount Center, 555 Washington Street. Participants must attend all classes to complete the program. To sign up, contact Officer Scott Baisley at 617-824-8555 or scott_baisley@emerson.edu.
- The College is now an institutional member of both the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA). Staff members can reserve passes to both museums through the Iwasaki Library for discounted admission. Other benefits at the Gardner include free self-guided group tours (advance reservations required), free tickets to lectures (book in advance), and \$10 off memberships at the Individual and Friend levels.
- Don't forget to sign up for the College's emergency notification system, Connect-Ed. Our state-of-the-art system enables the College to communicate with students, faculty, and staff in the event of an emergency. It simultaneously transmits messages via telephone, email, and text messaging (SMS). Log into ecommon.emerson.edu and select "Connect-Ed Emergency Notification System signup" in the Quick Links section of the home page to verify that your email and cell phone information is correct. Thank you!



Staff Notes

Staff Forum Report

Dozens of staff members gathered in the Bordy Theater on November 1 for Emerson's fall staff forum. President Pelton opened the meeting by asking new staff members to stand and introduce themselves, to applause from their colleagues.

Pelton presented his update of Emerson's strategic plan, emphasizing the need for growth in several areas. He plans to create several learning centers on campus, work to foster global and civic engagement among students and staff members, hire more full-time faculty members, and expand Emerson's online course offerings. The College is already partnering with Berklee College of Music to offer expanded online courses beginning in Spring 2014.

"Change is the status quo," Pelton reminded staff members. "We live in an age of change." He also admitted that these changes will come over several years, along with a capital campaign to increase Emerson's endowment and a thorough review of the School of Communication.

Wear It Everywhere

Send us your photos of Emerson gear—T-shirts, caps, water bottles—in an exotic location (read: not Boston!). We'll feature photos in each issue of the staff newsletter.

Maureen Murphy, vice president for administration and finance, gave a brief overview of the College's finances. She noted that the College saved some money during the 2012 fiscal year, helping it to begin the 2013 fiscal year in a solid position. Planning for FY14 is taking place now.

Alexa Jackson, associate vice president for human resources, gave an overview of her department's internal review and introduced several new staff members. She also announced the formation of the HR Advisory Council, made up of staff members from across the College. The Council will provide feedback to the Human Resources team on relevant issues and welcomes comments from all staff members.

The next staff forum will be held in the Bordy Theater on March 4, 2013.

By Katie Gibson, Web Services

Thanksgiving Traditions

What's your favorite Thanksgiving dish? Send your answers to Katie at katherine_gibson@emerson.edu, and we'll feature a buffet of them in the December issue of *people@Emerson*. Hope you had a nice Thanksgiving!

Mark Your Calendars

Holiday Party

December 10, 2012, 5:30 pm
InterContinental Boston, 510 Atlantic Avenue

Staff Appreciation Event

January 17, 2013, 4:00–5:30 pm
Ritz-Carlton Boston Common, 10 Avery Street

Spring Staff Forums

Monday, March 4, 2013 and Monday,
May 2, 2013; 2:00–4:00 pm
Bill Bordy Theater, 216 Tremont Street



at the Emerson College Holiday Party

Monday December 10, 2012
5:30–8:30 pm

InterContinental Boston
510 Atlantic Avenue

RSVP by December 3 to
presidentialevents@emerson.edu
Please include the number
of adults and children in your party.

*Roundtrip bus transportation
will be provided.*

Lunch Break

"Free to All" proclaims the stone inscription above the front doors of the central Boston Public Library, whose imposing front forms the eastern border of Copley Square. Despite this welcoming message, the BPL can seem intimidating, with its heavy front doors and its lamps topped by lethal-looking spikes. But whether you step through those doors into the elegant McKim Building or go around the corner to the less daunting entrance through the modern Johnson Building, you'll find a wealth of treasures, literary and otherwise.

The Exhibition Room in the McKim Building features rotating exhibits of treasures from the BPL's extensive collections, from vintage travel posters to Civil War-era maps, as well as photographs, letters, and (of course) antique books. After you've inspected



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**Send news
or suggestions to
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the current exhibit, head up the stairs past a pair of marble lions, taking in the paintings on the walls, and peek into Bates Hall, the central reading room, with its soaring ceiling and rows of tables dotted with green lamps. If you are a BPL cardholder (any Massachusetts resident can apply for a card), you can request a book or two, and stay to read awhile.

Behind the McKim Building, the BPL's courtyard offers a quiet place to read; relax; or enjoy a sandwich, drink, or

snack from the library's MapRoom Café. A fountain surrounded by plants contributes to the peaceful atmosphere, and the courtyard provides easy access to the Johnson Building, where most of the library's circulating materials are housed. Visit the BPL's website at bpl.org to learn more, and view the daily schedule of events at the Central Library at bpl.org/central/calendar.htm.

By Katie Gibson, Web Services