

Staff Profile

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Melanie Matson

Melanie Matson is enjoying her first academic semester at Emerson College. She was hired in May as the director of Violence Prevention and Response, which is part of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

Over the summer, Matson created a number of publications and new web pages for the community. She also began meeting students and staff, having been invited to speak at resident assistant and orientation leader trainings, a Greek summit, ECPD and Student Life meetings, and new hire orientations.

One of her main job responsibilities is to maintain a safe, confidential space for survivors of sexual violence, abusive relationships, and stalking. She connects survivors, whether they be students, faculty, or staff, with campus and community resources.

Just as important, though, is her work in promoting violence prevention. She has started a campaign called Emerson STANDS (Stand Together. Act Now. Do Something.) and is spreading the word through posters and



wristbands. In the future, her department will offer trainings based on bystander intervention theory.

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Staff Profile cont.

Current and upcoming programming she has planned includes the institution of an Emerson STANDS student leadership team and the co-sponsorship of a Bright Lights Series screening on December 2.

Matson started her career in the nonprofit industry in her native state of Minnesota. Through her work, she collaborated with small colleges and found that she enjoyed the higher education atmosphere. Her first job in a university setting was at University of Santa Barbara in the area

of violence prevention and response. She also worked at the University of Kentucky, home of the nationally recognized Green Dot bystander intervention strategy, before arriving at Emerson. She was attracted to the position at Emerson because it gave her the opportunity to create a new VPR department, and she also admired the College's innovative environment.

After receiving a BA in social sciences from Northwestern University, she went on to obtain an MA in counseling services from Bethel University and a PhD in educational leadership from the University of St. Thomas.

One of Matson's favorite pastimes is travel. Being new to New England, she is looking forward to exploring the region. She also enjoys learning languages and has learned Spanish, French, Italian, and German. She is inspired to learn Dutch as well, due to the College's Kasteel Well Program! She and her partner, Andy, live in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with their dog, Mr. Frumples.

Staff Profile cont.

Violence Prevention and Response Department Profile

How many people work in your department?

Two: survivor advocate Greta Spoering was recently hired.

Where is your department located?

Ansin 303/304

What are your department's major functions?

Violence Prevention: Our primary prevention efforts nurture a safe and violence-free community so students and employees can thrive academically, professionally, and personally. Individual safety is a community responsibility. Emerson STANDS (Stand Together. Act Now. Do Something.) is a strategy that equips the community with the knowledge and resources to actively convey the message that everyone deserves to be safe and violence-free.

Response: VPR advocates for trauma-informed and coordinated community approaches for responding to sexual

assault, stalking, and abusive relationships. The department provides survivors with information about options and resources so they can make the best decisions and choices for themselves. Based on these choices, VPR will listen, request academic/residential/workplace accommodations, accompany to medical/legal/Title IX appointments, and connect with campus and community resources as requested by survivors.

What population does your department work with?

Students and employees

What do you think is the most interesting facet of your department's contribution to the Emerson community?

VPR wants to build upon the strengths, talents, and diverse experiences of the Emerson community to develop a model for violence prevention and response strategy. The Emerson STANDS strategy

encourages each and every Emerson community member to play a role in violence prevention and response. One person might help a friend. Another might perform a song about safety and respect. Yet another might work on policy changes in his/her department. All of these efforts in concert convey the message that we: Stand Together. Act Now. Do Something.

Has your department recently accomplished a goal (or does it have one in the works) that may be of interest to the community?

Recently, we were one of 30 campuses that received an Avon Foundation grant for violence prevention. More than 100 campuses applied, which speaks to the strength of Emerson's creativity, engagement, and violence prevention strategy. Through this grant, we are advancing the message that everyone in our community deserves to be safe and respected.

Staff Notes

New Faces

- Sarah Benkendorf, Lab Systems/Support Specialist, Office of Information Technology
- Ida Candreva, Sergeant, Police Department
- Jessica Glaser, Associate Director, Student Financial Services
- Gregg Glover, Associate Director, Major Gifts, Development
- Takara Ketton, Executive Assistant, Emerson Los Angeles
- Alice Lee, Administrative Assistant/Assistant to the Chair, Visual and Media Arts
- Michael Murphy, Technical Director, ArtsEmerson
- James Olick, Director of Financial Aid, Student Financial Services

- Daryl Paranada, Assistant Director, News and Media Relations, Emerson Los Angeles
- Michael Sarra, Associate Vice President of Enrollment Marketing, Office of Enrollment Services
- Greta Spoering, Survivor Advocate, Violence Prevention and Response
- David Weinstein, Business and Circulation Manager, *Ploughshares*

Upcoming Staff Forum

November 19
2:00–4:00 pm
Bill Bordy Theater

Announcements

- The Department of Athletics invites staff and faculty to “Open Gym” at the Bobbi Brown and Steven Plofker Gym in Piano Row. Staff and faculty can use equipment, locker rooms, and showers every Monday–Thursday, 12:00–1:00 pm.
- Tori Weston (Professional Studies and Special Programs) is one of the featured artists in the [RAW: Boston](#) art show on November 16.
- Lynnet Weddas (Student Accounts) recently finished training with Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts, through her local library in Quincy, to become a literacy tutor. She is excited to have begun weekly one-on-one sessions with an adult learner.
- Does your pet dress up for Halloween? Send pics of your costumed pets to people@emerson.edu by November 12 for inclusion in the next issue.

Staff Notes cont.

Community Climate Survey

Staff, faculty, and students will have the opportunity to voice their opinions about life at Emerson through the upcoming Emerson360: Community Climate Survey, which will take place November 3–21. The goal of the survey is to obtain information about our campus climate, as well as the nature of support and resources for Emerson community members related to communication and collaboration, diversity and inclusion, and campus safety. Keep an eye out for this survey on November 3 and please take the time to complete it. The information you share will help the College identify issues that require attention and guide us as we work to address community needs.



EMERSON
360
COMMUNITY CLIMATE SURVEY

As recommended by Margolis Healy & Associates, the external review team examining the College's compliance with Title IX, and supported by the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, students will not only respond to general questions related to campus climate but they will also be asked to respond to questions related to safety and interpersonal violence. This information will be used to develop and enhance College violence prevention programs and services.

Emerson is working with ModernThink, a survey provider that has worked with the Chronicle of Higher Education on its "Great Places to Work for" survey. The Campus Climate Committee, chaired by Robert Amelio, director of diversity education and human relations, and composed of staff, faculty, and students, is overseeing the survey.

Staff Notes cont.

New Faces Spotlight

Daryl Paranada recently joined the Emerson Los Angeles staff as the assistant director of news and media relations. His main responsibility is to write news stories about ELA for the web. He covers events and student, alumni, and staff news.

He also manages ELA's social media accounts: Emerson Los Angeles on Facebook, @EmersonLAcener on Twitter, and Emerson_la on Instagram.

In addition to writing, Paranada takes photographs and shoots video for the web. He also pitches ELA stories to the local and national media.

Paranada comes to Emerson from a startup, where he was a personal finance reporter. Prior to that, he spent five years at the National Public Radio's business and economics program, *Marketplace*. Throughout his career, he has reported

for a number of publications, including *Us Weekly*, *Los Angeles CityBeat*, *Mother Jones*, and *Cape Argus Tonight* in Cape Town, South Africa.

His strong interest in education led him to apply for the job at Emerson. In college, he was involved in an organization whose focus was recruiting and retaining underrepresented students in higher education. During graduate school, he was an editorial assistant at the nonprofit Constitutional Rights Foundation. As he explained, "The job at Emerson combines my love of working in education with my love for writing and news."

Paranada has a bachelor's degree in English and communications from the University of California, Davis. In 2008, he graduated from the University of Southern California with a master's degree in journalism.



He was born in Daly City, California, a suburb of San Francisco, noting that he "misses the fog!" Currently, he lives in Los Angeles near the famed Melrose shopping area and is considering getting a canine roommate.

One of his favorite pastimes is traveling. He's visited five of the seven continents, and his favorite city in the world is Istanbul. He admitted that he's also fallen in love with Lisbon, Berlin, Paris, Buenos Aires, and Kyoto. When he's not traveling, he likes to cook, watch movies, and play tennis. He also volunteers at 826LA, teaching journalism skills to children.

Staff News

New Mural on Campus Celebrated

A reception celebrating a new mural in the lobby of the 10th floor of the Walker Building took place October 16. The mural was designed by artist and muralist Josué Rojas and brought to life by 30 Emerson staff, faculty, students, and community members in June 2014. The mural, which was sponsored by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the School of the Arts, was created as a way to promote community-building and collaboration.

The name of the mural, *Carnival of Light*, or *Carnaval de la Vida*, was revealed at the reception. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion ran a contest to name the mural over the summer. The winning name, which was chosen from 35 submissions, was submitted by Angelika Romero '15. She describes the mural in this way: "The colors remind me of the happiness that comes

along with life. Much like a party or carnival, the journey of life is filled with joy and turns."

When asked about the abstract, colorful mural, Robert Amelio (Diversity and Inclusion), said that the following words came to mind: "flowing, energy, waves, excitement, fun."

Amelio explained the origins of the mural. He said that the Office of Diversity and Inclusion wanted the 10th floor of the Walker Building to be inviting. "It seemed like the perfect thing to do was to greet people immediately with a beautiful painted wall," he said. Amelio contacted Joe Ketner, the Henry and Lois Foster Chair in Contemporary Art Theory and Practice and distinguished curator-in-residence, who suggested muralist Josué Rojas, a graduate student in painting at Boston University.

Jeeyon Kim



Artist Josué Rojas and Chris Daly (Student Success)

Amelio feels that the mural provides a sense of community for those on the floor, and spoke of the collaborative nature of the project, in which Emerson and Boston community members contributed to the mural that Rojas designed and oversaw. At the October reception, Rojas said, "We are all artists. We can celebrate ourselves as creators."

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He added, "In this very communal process—one which was both improvised and highly designed—I wonder which is the greater gift: the mural itself or its effect on people. Luckily we don't have to choose."

Two other murals were installed on campus in the last few months: *A Coney Island of the Mind—Marshall McLuhan* by artist Julia Cseko, located at the Boylston Place entrance to the Walker Building, and *Rock Wall for Sedimentary Drawing* by artist Annie Blazejack, located on the fifth floor of the Paramount Center.

By Jill Davidson, Academic Affairs



Peter Harris Studio



Peter Harris Studio

Staff News cont.

Staff Forum Recap

The first staff forum of the semester was held on October 2 in the Semel Theater. Donna Heiland (President's Office) and Miranda Banks (VMA faculty and Engagement Lab fellow) kicked off the meeting with an update on Community PlanIt's Emerson UnCommon, which ran from September 22 to October 6. Heiland gave a brief history of how the game came to be and explained the three "missions." A number of Emersonians were involved in the game's development; 40 community members brainstormed in May, and 20 people wrote the missions over the summer.

Banks noted that around a dozen high schools and city centers have used the Engagement Lab's Community PlanIt platform. She highlighted some of the game's features, which give the game

"a digital town hall" feeling. Players accumulate coins, which they can put toward player-created causes. The top three funded causes will each receive \$1,000 with which to implement their cause.

MJ Knoll-Finn (Enrollment Management) introduced the next presenter, Director of Retention and Student Success Chris Daly. Daly provided an overview of the new office's responsibilities. Three years in the making, the Office of Student Success launched in July.

Staff in this office are charged with increasing the retention rate. They will work directly with students who are at-risk or struggling and offer educational programming such as Money Matters, Emerson's financial education program. The office will also collect and analyze data about attrition and retention to identify possible areas of needed change.

The veterans program, leave/withdrawal process, and emersonPATHWAYS program will be overseen by the office as well.

The office's goal is to increase the current retention rate of 88% to 94% over the next several years. Daly explained the benefits of a higher retention rate. Students benefit because they usually lose credits and time in the transferring process, which can also be disruptive personally. Benefits to the College include more engaged alumni as well as cost savings (since recruiting new students requires additional costs). Retention rate is also used as an institutional success indicator.

Next up was the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Sylvia Spears expressed gratitude to the 34 departments who have developed Inclusive Excellence action

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Staff News cont.

plans. She reminded staff of the six pillars that serve as the foundation for Inclusive Excellence: access and success; climate and human relations; teaching, learning, and scholarship; civic and global engagement; recognition and accountability; and infrastructure.

Robert Amelio shared a few examples of different departments' goals and talked about next steps. He encouraged departments to make sure that employees are aware of their goals. He also suggested that departments select someone to oversee the plan, checking in on progress, possibly making revisions to the plan, and, most importantly, celebrating the goals.

The final presentation was given by Anna Feder (Visual and Media Arts). She provided an overview of this semester's Bright Lights Series, which she programs. The community and the general public are invited to free screenings most Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7:00 pm in the Bright Family Screening Room during the semester.

She showed a trailer of upcoming films and noted that a main goal of the series is to create a space for discussions after the films. She has collaborated with internal departments and external festivals for many of the screenings. Some examples of sponsors include: the offices of International Student Affairs and Violence Prevention and Response, the Boston Palestine Film Festival, and the Boston LGBT Film Festival.

President Pelton wrapped up the forum with some news and discussion. He noted that the College had an \$800,000 surplus in FY14 and that planning for FY16 has begun. He also said that the College is working on a plan for the Little Building repair and renovation.

He then opened up the floor for discussion about ideas that had been suggested through Emerson's Community PlanIt game. Hot topics that were discussed included bringing therapy dogs to campus, offering staff and faculty a discounted meal plan for the Dining Hall, and the institution of a campus-wide community service day.

Sustainable Emerson

Green Spotlight

Kudos to the offices at 99 Summer Street for recently launching some green initiatives. We encourage every department to follow their lead!

Offices at 99 Summer are no longer ordering disposable coffee cups for office use. Staff are encouraged to bring in their own reusable coffee mugs. A number of reusable mugs are being purchased for guest use and will be kept in the kitchen areas.

Campus Sustainability Coordinator Eric Van Vlandren visited 99 Summer to review its recycling setup. As a result, the bins in the kitchen areas will soon have better signage and will provide more direction on how to sort recyclables. (Single-stream recycling is not yet available at 99 Summer.)

The management company at 99 Summer will now recycle batteries for Emerson. There will be bins in the kitchen areas for collection of used batteries. (On campus, battery bins are located in most building lobbies.)

The offices have been recycling Keurig K-Cups through Keurig's newly formed sister company, Grounds to Grow On. This program has been running smoothly and the offices have graduated to ordering the large-sized collection boxes.

If you would like assistance with starting these initiatives in your office, contact [Eric Van Vlandren](#).

Tech Spot

Upcoming IT Workshops

IT and Lab Operations are co-sponsoring the following workshops. Learn more and RSVP at it.emerson.edu/page/workshops.

Intro to Social Media Management
November 4, 11:00 am–12:00 pm

Intro to Premiere Pro
November 5, 2:00–4:00 pm

Intro to WordPress
November 7, 11:00 am–12:00 pm

Lunch 'n' Lynda
November 7, 12:00 pm

Intro to After Effects
November 7, 1:00–3:00 pm

Intro to Photoshop
November 14, 1:00–2:30 pm

Upcoming Events

November 1–16

Times vary
Polish Film Festival
ArtsEmerson Film Screenings

November 3

6:30–8:45 pm
GunPlay: A Performance Exploring the Impact of Guns on American Life
Sponsored by Communications and Marketing

November 4

4:00–6:00 pm
“State Violence, Structural Violence, and Nonviolence”
Adventures in Ethics Lecture Series

November 4

7:00 pm
Three Short Films by Cristina Kotz Cornejo
Bright Lights Series

November 6–12

Times vary
Dancing at Lughnasa
Emerson Stage Production

November 6

7:00 pm
Stumped
Bright Lights Series

November 11

7:00 pm
Finding Vivian Maier
Bright Lights Series

November 13

7:00 pm
Silversonic Music Video Showcase
Bright Lights Series

November 18

6:00–7:30 pm
Graphic Novel Industry Night
Sponsored by Professional Studies

November 20–23

Times vary
The World Goes ‘Round
Emerson Stage Production

November 20–December 7

Times vary
The Trip to Bountiful
ArtsEmerson Production

people@Emerson

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