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Jaya Kannan, Ph.D., has been named the executive director of the Jandrisevits Learning Center (JLC) at Sacred Heart University.

The JLC, located on the lower level of the Ryan Matura Library offers students from every academic level an opportunity to improve their knowledge in many content areas and to develop writing, math and study skills needed to succeed in college courses. Staffed by experienced faculty, graduate and peer tutors in disciplines across the curriculum, the JLC provides a friendly learning environment where meeting the academic needs of students is the primary goal.

It offers support services to all SHU students, including individualized and drop-in tutoring; classroom learning assistants; monthly workshops; disability services; computer adaptive technology and online writing labs; and a student study lounge.

“The most important thing we need to do is to be able to provide supplementary academic support to the learning that is going on in the classroom. The goal is student learning. The vision that I bring to the center is that we want to create a suitable learning environment where students are provided with learning strategies and tools that can empower them to develop as self-directed learners,” Kannan said.

Kannan, a resident of Stamford, joins SHU from the Metropolitan College of New York, where she was director of the Title V Learning Enhancement Center and an associate professor. She also held short adjunct positions at the University of Connecticut (in Stamford), Rutgers University and Sacred Heart University. She was a lecturer at Temasek Polytechnic in Singapore. She is a published author and has made numerous presentations on the subject of the independent learner.

She obtained her doctorate in 1996 in CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) from Anna University, India. She holds a Master of Philosophy degree in English language, literature and linguistics from the University of Madras in Chennai, India, where she was a winner of the gold medal; a Master of Arts degree in English language and literature, also from the University of Madras; and a Bachelor of Science in physics from the University of Mysore in Mysore, India.

With her ongoing research involving the role of affect in fostering learner autonomy and the development of self-directed learning in an online environment, Kannan sees the goal of the JLC as building “a culture of evidence-based self-assessment in developing the program, starting with goal setting, then program implementation and review aimed at continuous improvement. Self-assessment is so crucial to self-directedness. We already have started to work on a strategic plan that is in alignment with the University’s goals and timeline. We want to build meaningful bridges with the classroom, faculty, and other academic aspects of the University’s learning communities.”
She added, “The JLC’s philosophy and vision of promoting self-directedness ties in beautifully with the curriculum of the Human Journey in that every student is viewed as a unique learner, and part of their journey of self-discovery can be in using the JLC as a valuable learning resource.”