Dr. Madalina Akli, has been selected to be director of the Office of National Scholarship Advisement (ONSA) and lecturer of International Studies. The appointment, effective July 2017, was announced by Dean Gretchen Gerzina on Monday, June 5, 2017.

“We are delighted to have someone with Dr. Akli’s extensive scholarship and international experience,” said Dean Gerzina. “Her work on global initiatives fits perfectly with the aims of ONSA and the International Scholars Program.” The Dean sees this role as integral to furthering UMass Amherst’s commitment to expanding undergraduate opportunities on a larger stage. Previous director Dr. Susan Whitbourne founded ONSA in 1998 and has served as director since its inception. Whitbourne retired at the end of May, but will continue her teaching and research career at UMass Boston’s Institute of Gerontology, where she has been appointed an Adjunct Professor and Faculty Fellow.

As director of ONSA, Akli will also take responsibility for the International Scholars Program (ISP), teaching students who study abroad. Through its curriculum, ISP prepares students for a study abroad experience by providing an understanding of the international system and America’s place in it. Akli’s combined role makes ONSA one of the only programs in the country to combine national and international scholarships and international study, strengthening its capacity to develop scholars who strive for global collaboration and impact.

Akli currently serves as associate director of Global Engagement at Rice University, working on international programs and partnerships, in addition to overseeing its Fulbright scholarship program and working on other national and international scholarships. She also teaches undergraduate classes on global engagement, international scholarship, research ethics, and international service learning. Akli began her studies in her native country of Romania and continued in France and the United States, where she earned a Ph.D. in French Studies from Rice University. Her work as a professor of French language, literature, and culture has been foundational to a career of preparing students to study and conduct research nationally and abroad, and become responsible citizens of the world.