



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

Faculty Affairs Newsletter

Faculty Appreciation Week

Each year in the second week of April, we celebrate you, our faculty, for the great work you do for students, staff, and your colleagues.

To show our appreciation, you had the opportunity to get free coffee, discounts at the bookstore and UREC, a daily drawing for various prizes, and attend a Razorback softball game at a discounted price.

In this issue we want to highlight the faculty and departments who were recognized at the Annual Provost Faculty Recognition Reception.

We also highlight graduates from our Leadership Exploration Program, Enjoy!

Please congratulate your colleagues on their achievements, we do!

**2026 Daniel Ferritor Award for Departmental Excellence in
Teaching**



The Civil Engineering Department in the College of Engineering received the 2026 Daniel E. Ferritor Award for Departmental Excellence in Teaching sponsored by the Chancellor's Office.

2026 Provost Award for Departmental Excellence in Mentoring



Department of Chemical Engineering received the 2026 Provost Award for Departmental Excellence in Faculty Mentoring.

2026 SEC UA Faculty Achievement Award



The SEC UA Faculty Achievement Award honors those with excellent records in both teaching and scholarship. This year's recipient is Dr. Stephen Luoni.

Earlier this year, the Provost Office and the Division of Research and Innovation began collaborating to develop a recognition program to honor the amazing work happening across campus to advance the University's Research Excellence Strategic Pillar. We launched EXCEL-AR, the External Funding Celebration Program, and to recognize the inaugural recipients of

the Pinnacle and Distinction Medallion Awards. Because funding norms vary across academic disciplines, EXCEL-AR establishes three discipline-specific award categories, each with two tiers of recognition. Principal and Co-Principal Investigators who have secured significant external funding for the university during the previous calendar year are recognized in the following funding categories: Science and Engineering, Non–Science and Engineering, and Humanities, Arts, and Design.

Pinnacle Award Science & Engineering category, we recognize the following individuals for securing external funding of \$ 3 million or more in calendar year 2025.

1. Silicon Carbide Semiconductor Research Fabrication Line

- Alan Mantooth, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
- Zhong Chen, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
- Gregory Salamo, Department of Physics
- Shannon Davis, Engineering Research Coordinator

2. E-RISE RII: Arkansas Smart Transportation Research Incubator

- Heather Nachtmann, Industrial Engineering
- Jackson Cothren, Geosciences
- Justin Chimka, Industrial Engineering

3. The Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Augmentative and Alternative Communication

- Christine Holyfield, Communication Disorders & Occupational Therapy
- Sheida Raley, Curriculum and Instruction
- Elizabeth Lorah, Curriculum and Instruction

4. BOTAA: 23-01 Military Engineering – Geoengineered Materials

- Cameron Murray, Civil Engineering
- Andrew Braham, Civil Engineering
- Clinton Wood, Civil Engineering
- Ernie Heymsfield, Civil Engineering

Distinction Award Science & Engineering category, we recognize the following individuals for securing external funding between 1 and 3 million dollars in the calendar year 2025.

1. DESC: Type II: ECOCHIPLETS: Embodied Carbon Optimization

- Jia Di, Computer Science and Computer Engineering

2. Investigating the Mechanobiology of Multicellular Morpho

- Jian Zhang, Biomedical Engineering

3. Soft Target Protection Against Unmanned Aerial System Threats

- Heather Nachtmann, Industrial Engineering
- Kelly Sullivan, Industrial Engineering
- Rich Ham, Industrial Engineering

4. SkyLark: Carbon Dioxide Transportation Safety Research

- Thomas Spicer, Chemical Engineering
- Keith Walters, Mechanical Engineering
- Keisha Walters, Chemical Engineering

5. Robotic System for Spinal Decompression and Interbody Fusion

- Mehran Armand, Mechanical Engineering

6. Delivering Advanced Electronics Education Through Lab V

- Alan Mantooth, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
- David Huitink, Mechanical Engineering
- Jeff Dix, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
- Shawn Bell, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
- Zhong Chen, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science

7. SCH: Large-scale Multi-Modality Learning System to Identify

- Khoa Luu, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science

Pinnacle Award in the Non-Science & Engineerig category, we recognize the following individuals for securing external funding of \$1 million or more in calendar year 2025.

1. Statewide Crisis Model

- Johanna Thomas, School of Social Work
- Mindy Bradley, Sociology and Criminology

2. Arkansas Teacher Corps

- Sarah McKenzie, Education Reform

3. TRIO Student Support Services Project

- C.J. Mathis, Student Success

4. A-State DHS Expansion

- Karan Burnette, Partners, College of Education and Health Professions

5. Office of Innovation for Education

- Feng Jiang, Office of Innovation for Education
- Crystal Beshears, Office of Innovation for Education

6. Seamless Transition for Arkansas

- Brent Williams, Counseling, Leadership, and Research Methods
- Shaida Raley, Curriculum and Instruction
- Suzanne Kucharczyk, Curriculum and Instruction

7. ABC Professional Development Grant

- Kathy Pillow-Price, Early Childhood Education

Distinction Award in the Non-Science & Engineerig category, we recognize the following individuals for securing external funding of \$500,000 to 1 million or more in calendar year 2025.

1. Rehabilitation Long-Term Training Program

- Feng Jiang, Office of Innovation for Education
- Crystal Beshears, Office of Innovation for Education

2. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Career Counseling, Information, and Referral Services

- Brent Williams, Counseling, Leadership, and Research Methods
- JoAnn Benson, Counseling, Leadership, and Research Methods

3. Arkansas CCMS-Aligned Business Coaching

- Mary Beth Brooks, Small Business Development Center

4.English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

- Alissa Blair, Curriculum and Instruction

5. Oak Ridge Hillside Trail and Restoration Project

- Georgeta Galbraith, Facilities Management
- Jay Huneycutt, Facility Operations

6. NoVo Foundation Support 2025-2028

- Claire Allison accepting on behalf of Carly Hotvedt, School of Law

Pinnacle Award in the Humanities, Arts, and Design category, we recognize the following individuals for securing external funding of \$150,000 or more during calendar year 2025.

1. The Whipple Family Forest Education Center Phase II at GWG + Garvan's Pratt Welcome Center Redesign

- Rebecca Ohman, Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design

2. Windgate Art Accelerator

- Bethany Springer, School of Art
- Rachel Debuque, School of Art

Distinction Award in the Humanities, Arts, and Design category, we recognize the following individuals for securing external funding between \$75,000 and \$150,000 during calendar year 2025.

1. 2025 National Endowment for the Arts State Partnership Agreement – Folk Arts Partnership Allocation

- Virginia Siegel, Special Collections, Mullins Library
- Lauren Willette, Special Collections, Mullins Library

2026 Faculty Applause Winners



The Faculty Applause Award is co-sponsored by the Associated Student Government and the Office for Faculty Affairs. This award gives students the opportunity to recognize a professor who has made a lasting impact on them both in the classroom and in their future careers. This year's recipients:

- Ashlea Milburn, Industrial Engineering
- Chris Farnell, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
- Jim Maddox, Human Resources and Workforce Development
- Kate Walker, Biological Science
- Craig Schmitt, Recreation and Sports Management

2026 Outstanding Faculty Mentors



The Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award recognizes faculty who have been nominated by their peers and faculty mentees as representing the best of what it means to be an exceptional faculty mentor. Outstanding Mentors assist other faculty with building excellence in teaching, research, and/or service while encouraging a healthy balance of work and home life. They cultivate faculty career advancement and assist mentees in building their professional networks. This year, the following five faculty members have been selected as recipients of the Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award:

- **Rupesh Kariyat, Entomology and Plant Pathology**
- **Hugh Churchill, Physics**
- **Lynn Meade, Student Success**
- **Sami Dridi, Poultry Science (not shown)**
- **Robert Coridan, Chemistry and Biochemistry (not shown)**

Faculty Mentoring Graduate Students Workshop Series Graduates

This workshop provides faculty with the opportunity to learn best practices in mentoring to inspire, direct and professionally develop graduate mentees and post-docs. The workshop also helps faculty develop a mentoring philosophy, experiment with various mentoring methods and discuss mentoring challenges and successes with peers.

The 2025-2026 Graduates are:

Fall 2025 - Dennis Beck, Tom Bennett, Morgan Broberg, Anna Clymer, Christianne Corbett, Sisi Hu, Laura Kent, Valerie Lane, Ambrin Ling, Rodica Lisnic, Ashlea Milburn, Lauren Quetsch, Brittany Romanello, James Sinclair, Renee Speight, Cara Spencer, Sarah Tonkin, Lora Walsh & Ruslan Yusupov

Spring 2026 - Christa Bentley, Jean Hughes Bit'a'menye, Jenna Donohue,

Jullian Doyle, Joanna Fiddler, Raluca Jacobs, Sarah Hixson, Renette McCargo, Jami Padgett & Amy Poe

Bridge Workshop Series Graduates

The Bridge Program provides mentorship and onboarding resources to new faculty through an innovative and comprehensive teams-based approach. The Bridge Program also allows new faculty to network with other faculty across departments and schools.

The 2025-2026 Graduates are:

Fall 2025 - Lauren Brewer, Jennifer Carpenter, Miguel Garcia-Salas, Anup KC, Nicholas Levis, Lily Mank, Abhi Rajagopala & Zoe Thijs

Spring 2026 - Bruno Chaves, Morone Pinto, Anna Clymer, Jennifer Day, Taylor Enoch-Stevens, Nikki Gross, Kendrick Hardaway, Sarah Hixson, Aelim Kim, Rely Kincaid, Mark McDonald, Megan Rexus, Robin Roggio & Lora Shadwick

2026 Faculty Appreciation Week Drawing Winners

During Faculty Appreciation Week, faculty received free coffee and discounts at Hog Heaven and the U of A bookstore. In addition, over 180 faculty entered our drawing to receive one of our door prizes. The winners are listed below.

Two Razorback Football Suite Tickets: Dara Gaines, Political Science

Razorback T-Shirt: Rachel Glade, Clinical Science & Disorders

Razorback Pull-over: Sarah Lueke, Management

Razorback Sweatshirt: Annie Smith, Law

Razorback Visor: Hannah Denker, Education Reform, Amanda Sullivan, Health & Human Performance, Trenton Roberts, Crop Soil & Environmental Science, Sheri Deaton, Curriculum & Instruction, James Barton, Agriculture & Environmental Science

Razorback Hat: Kelly Nuckolls, Law, Taylor Enoch-Stevens, Counseling, Leadership & Research Methods, Ariane Breton, Library

Razorback Water bottle: Maria de Lourdes Carrean Garciduenas, Chemical Engineering

Razorback insulated lunchbox: Caleb Rawson, Accounting

Free Gear Rental: Zoe Thijs, Communication Sciences and Disorders

Personal Training: Maria de Lourdes, Chemical Engineering

Thank you to Athletics, The Campus Bookstore, UREC, and Office of the Chancellor for your generous donations.



The University of Arkansas is an institutional member of the Faculty Success Program by **NCFDD**. The mission of the NCFDD is “Empowering faculty for lasting success with programs, coaching, and on-demand support.”

Other resources and upcoming webinars and events can be found on the [NCFDD site here](#).

Our faculty, postdocs, and graduate students can access professional development webinars, courses, mentoring tools, and workshops focused on strategic planning, writing, work-life balance, and more. Please [sign up](#) TODAY for your free membership using your uark email address.

If your college or department is interested in highlighting a professional development opportunity please submit your article for consideration by the 1st Friday of every month.



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Faculty Affairs, University of Arkansas
ADMN 421
1125 West Maple Street
Fayetteville, AR 72701
[Email](#)
[Website](#)

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