

Faculty Recognition and Foundation Awards

August 2026



**MIDDLE
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Faculty Tenured and Promoted

Through commitment to teaching, research, and professional service, the MTSU faculty achieves the University's mission of providing quality educational programs in a supportive campus environment.

Jessica Arbour

Department of Biology

College of Basic and Applied Sciences

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor



Jessica Arbour joined the Biology Department in 2019 after receiving her Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Toronto and completing a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Washington. Her research spans diverse topics including macroevolution, comparative biology, and ichthyology, and focuses on how animal form, function, ecology, and evolutionary history interact to produce biological diversity, especially in freshwater fishes. Her integrative research program combines field, laboratory, and computational approaches to reveal some of the important ways that adaptation, innovation, and functional constraints have shaped the timing of trait evolution and the distribution of diverse fish clades like darters and cichlids.

Her research has been published more than 30 times in prestigious journals including *Evolution*, *Nature Communications*, *BMC Biology*, and the *Proceedings of the Royal Society*; has been cited nearly 1,300 times; and includes the development of two software packages in R language. This work was supported by two grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF), totaling more than \$440,000 in direct support.

Arbour's teaching is focused on building career-essential skills for undergraduate and graduate students, especially in biostatistics and computer programming for biologists, as well as ichthyology. She has mentored 20 undergraduates, as well as eight graduate students through the M.S. in Biology and Molecular Biosciences Ph.D. programs, several of whom have served as authors on peer-reviewed manuscripts.

Arbour has led extensive public outreach efforts during her time at MTSU, including NSF-funded outreach and exhibit improvements at the Discovery Center at Murfree Spring, field excursions to local rivers and streams with high school students, and sharing of digital specimen models through open-access repositories like Sketchfab. She also served on key committees in her department, including undergraduate awards, biosafety, and graduate curriculum and admissions, and she played a significant role in updates to the Ph.D. curriculum in Molecular Biosciences.



Danielle Brown

Department of Biology

College of Basic and Applied Sciences

Promoted to Master Instructor

For more than a decade, Danielle Brown has dedicated her career to advancing student success and strengthening the teaching mission of the Department of Biology. A native of New Orleans, Brown earned her bachelor's degree from Cornell University and her master's and Ph.D. in Animal

Behavior from the University of California, Davis. Since joining the department as a visiting dissertation fellow in 2010, she has been building a reputation for excellence in teaching, student research mentorship, and inclusive STEM education.

Brown teaches a diverse range of courses, including General Biology, Human Anatomy and Physiology, and upper-level Animal Behavior. Beyond the classroom, she is passionate about providing undergraduates with meaningful research experiences. Since 2017, she has developed collaborative opportunities with partners including the Murfreesboro Airport, the Nashville Zoo, and the La Selva Biological Station in Costa Rica through a National Science Foundation-sponsored Research Experiences for Undergraduates program. Starting in 2021, her research with students in Honors and the Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity (URECA) program has focused on scavenger behavior at the MTSU Outdoor Forensic Facility on Manson Pike in Murfreesboro.

Brown views service as a natural extension of teaching and is committed to fostering an inclusive academic community. She is married to fellow MTSU faculty member Andrew Owusu (Department of Health Sciences, College of Behavioral and Health Sciences). Together, they have one son and have over 30 combined years invested in the MTSU family and community of Murfreesboro.

Brown remains committed to creating transformative educational experiences that cultivate scientific curiosity, critical thinking, and a strong sense of belonging. She is honored to serve MTSU students and continues to advance the department's mission through innovative teaching, impactful research mentorship, and meaningful service.

Racha El Kadiri

Department of Geosciences

College of Basic and Applied Sciences

Promoted to Professor



Racha El Kadiri is a professor of Geosciences and associate dean of the College of Graduate Studies. An interdisciplinary scientist, hydrologic engineer, and educator, her research sits at the intersection of hydrology and geospatial science, integrating satellite remote sensing, geographic information systems, and machine learning to address water-resource management and agricultural sustainability. She earned her Ph.D. in Hydrology and Remote Sensing from Western Michigan University and her B.S. in Hydrological Engineering from Mohammed V University in Morocco.

Her research spans groundwater drought, harmful algal blooms, soil erosion, sediment transport, and the placement of agricultural conservation practices. Working with federal and state agencies, academic institutions, and international partners, she has turned that research into decision-support tools for scientists and resource managers, and has contributed to securing more than \$2 million in externally funded research from NASA, the National Science Foundation, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

El Kadiri brings that same applied approach to the classroom, engaging students with real-world environmental problems through field investigations and spatial technologies. She mentors undergraduate and graduate researchers through externally funded projects and extends that mentorship internationally through hydrology field programs in Morocco.

She has also shaped academic programs and governance at MTSU, coordinating the Environmental Science program and chairing the University Council for Sponsored Scholarship. She co-chaired the Academic Quality Pillar Committee for the MTSU 2035 Strategic Plan, helping shape institutional priorities for academic excellence and research innovation.

As associate dean of the College of Graduate Studies, El Kadiri focuses on enrollment growth, student success, and program innovation, expanding graduate assistantship opportunities and streamlining policies across programs. Among her leadership initiatives, she launched Grad-AI, a University program supporting the ethical, discipline-specific integration of artificial intelligence into graduate education.

Across her research, teaching, and administration, El Kadiri translates hydrology and geospatial science into programs and partnerships that strengthen both sustainable agriculture and graduate education at MTSU.



Hardik A. Gohel

Department of Computer Science

College of Basic and Applied Sciences

Tenured

Hardik A. Gohel is a professor of Computer Science and holds a joint appointment as the director of the Institute for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence. He earned his Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of Hertfordshire, U.K., in 2015 and completed his postdoctoral training at Florida International University.

Prior to joining MTSU, Gohel served as a tenured associate professor and director of research at Texas A&M University–Victoria. He has extensive research experience in cybersecurity, quantum AI, and other cutting-edge areas of applied artificial intelligence. His expertise includes developing and leading externally funded research projects and establishing collaborations with major federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Department of Defense, National Science Foundation, U.S. Department of State, and several national laboratories.

Gohel's research has been published in leading journals, including *IEEE Transactions on Intelligent Transportation Systems*, *IEEE Journal of Biomedical and Health Informatics*, *Computers & Security*, *Internet of Things*, and *Scientific Reports* (Nature Portfolio). His work focuses on advancing trustworthy, secure, and intelligent AI systems across diverse application domains.

In addition to his research, Gohel actively contributes to the scientific community through professional service. He serves as the general chair of IEEE conferences focused on Artificial Intelligence in Cybersecurity and Generative AI for Secure Systems, promoting innovation and collaboration in emerging AI technologies.

Siti Hidayati

Department of Biology

College of Basic and Applied Sciences

Promoted to Master Instructor



Siti Nur Hidayati is a master instructor in the Department of Biology. Originally from Yogyakarta, Indonesia, she earned her B.S. in Biology from Universitas Gadjah Mada. She continued her studies at the University of Kentucky, researching the ecology of the Indonesian endemic plant *Rafflesia patma* for her M.S. degree and then examining the seed germination ecology of plants in the honeysuckle family for her Ph.D.

Hidayati began her career as a lecturer in the Department of Biology at Universitas Bengkulu, Indonesia. She later served as a research assistant professor at the University of Western Australia and Kings Park and Botanic Garden in Perth, where she continued her research in plant ecology and seed biology. Afterward, Hidayati held adjunct positions for a few years at MTSU and at Motlow State Community College. In 2014, she returned to Indonesia through the Fulbright U.S. Senior Scholar Program to conduct research on *Rafflesia arnoldii*, the world's largest flower.

Hidayati joined MTSU as a lecturer in 2016, and her role transitioned to instructor in 2024. In these positions, she also contributed internationally through teaching and outreach. She taught an online course on Seed Physiology and Technology for Universitas Sebelas Maret (Indonesia) in 2022 and was a guest lecturer for the International Course on Tropical Biodiversity and Sustainable Development at Universitas Gadjah Mada (Indonesia) in 2019 and 2022.

Hidayati's research centers on seed dormancy and germination, focusing on the role of climate change in plant regeneration, and on the diversity, population biology, and conservation of *Rafflesia* in Sumatra, Indonesia. She has served as a visiting scientist at institutions in Australia, China, Indonesia, South Korea, and Taiwan, and has given numerous invited talks on her research.

Beyond her teaching and research, she has used her own experiences as an international student and scientist to encourage students to pursue careers in science and to engage globally in scientific discovery and research opportunities.



Jennifer N. Lovett

Department of Mathematical Sciences

College of Basic and Applied Sciences

Promoted to Professor

Jennifer N. Lovett is a former middle school and high school mathematics teacher from Cincinnati. She holds a B.S. in Mathematics Education and a B.A. in Mathematics from Miami University, an M.A.T. in Mathematics from Miami University, and a Ph.D. in Mathematics Education from North Carolina State University.

Lovett has taught a variety of mathematics, mathematics education, statistics, and statistics education courses. She has secured over \$2 million in grant funding to support her teaching and research efforts and was lead principal investigator of the National Science Foundation grant “Preparing to Teach Mathematics with Technology – Examining Student Practices,” a multi-institution collaborative research project. This grant focused on designing curriculum to prepare future middle school and high school mathematics teachers to teach mathematics with technology and on researching its effectiveness. Her work in this area has been recognized nationally; she has won the National Technology Leadership Initiative Award from the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators three times since 2015.

Drawing on her research agenda and years of teaching experience, Lovett and a colleague brought together theory and best practices for teaching mathematics with technology in their book, *Exploring Math With Technology: Practices for Secondary Math Teachers*. It serves not only as a guide for teachers but also as evidence of how Lovett’s scholarship translates into meaningful impact on mathematics education. Its adoption in professional development and teacher education programs demonstrates its reach and influence across both academic and practitioner communities.

Justin Miller

Department of Chemistry

College of Basic and Applied Sciences

Promoted to Professor



Justin Miller joined the Department of Chemistry as an assistant professor in 2016. He now serves as director of the Molecular Biosciences Ph.D. program, an interdisciplinary doctoral program within the College of Basic and Applied Sciences. He earned his Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where he studied the molecular mechanisms of bacterial protein machines as a National Institutes of Health Ruth L. Kirschstein T32 training fellow, and completed postdoctoral research in structural biology at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Miller's research focuses on polymer biochemistry, with particular emphasis on microbial polymer-degrading enzymes and polymer-based antimicrobial coatings. A major area of study in his laboratory has been the characterization of poly(aspartic acid) hydrolases from *Sphingomonas* sp. KT-1, linking fundamental enzymology to questions surrounding biodegradable polymer design. Through collaborations with researchers at MTSU and institutions across the Southeast, his work has expanded into areas such as fluorescent probe development for biological imaging.

His scholarly record includes 24 peer-reviewed publications in journals such as *Nature Communications*, *Biochemistry*, and *ACS Sustainable Chemistry & Engineering*, as well as a peer-reviewed book, three book chapters, and other scholarly works.

Miller has demonstrated significant leadership through service to both the University and his profession. His contributions to the Molecular Biosciences program over six years in governance, admissions, and curriculum development led to his appointment as program director. Within the Department of Chemistry, he has chaired the Tenure and Promotion Committee and led a comprehensive revision of the Chemistry M.S. curriculum. He also serves on the Institutional Biosafety Committee and the CBAS Research and Innovation Funding Committee.

In the classroom, Miller has taught approximately 1,000 students in undergraduate and graduate courses in biochemistry, physical chemistry, and molecular biosciences. He has mentored doctoral, master's, and undergraduate students, with student collaborators appearing as co-authors on many of his publications, reflecting his commitment to integrating research and student success.



Keely O'Brien

School of Agriculture

College of Basic and Applied Sciences

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Keely O'Brien is an associate professor and program director for Fermentation Science in the School of Agriculture. Her work connects microbial biotechnology, sustainable food systems, and pollinator health. She holds a B.S. in Biological Sciences from the University of

Tennessee–Chattanooga and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Animal and Dairy Sciences from Louisiana State University. Prior to joining MTSU, she served as director of cultured products for Fairlife LLC, leading pilot-scale and industrial processing, product development, and commercialization efforts. She draws on that industry experience to strengthen curriculum, expand partnerships, and provide students with hands-on learning opportunities.

O'Brien's research focuses on microbial biopolymers for sustainable food packaging, medical and veterinary applications, and honeybee nutrition. Her laboratory develops plastic-free packaging materials and edible coatings by transforming food and beverage industry byproducts through fermentation and advanced processing techniques. She also holds a patent in membrane filtration technology for milk-fraction separation. Her bee-related research examines pesticide and herbicide residues in regional honey, identifies environmental factors affecting contamination, and evaluates nutritional strategies to support colony health.

She teaches Fermentation Science courses ranging from introductory instruction to advanced applications, integrating processing, sensory evaluation, analytical methods, and quality control. O'Brien mentors undergraduate and graduate researchers, supervises internships, and guides students whose work has earned regional and national recognition.

An active University and professional leader, O'Brien serves on the Faculty Senate Steering Committee, leads curriculum and assessment initiatives for the Fermentation Science program, advises the Fermentation Science Association and MTSU Bee Club, and supports undergraduate research initiatives. She is also deeply engaged in community outreach, regularly leading fermentation workshops and consulting with regional food and beverage producers.

Through her research, teaching, service, industry collaboration, and outreach, O'Brien advances sustainable food innovation and pollinator stewardship while preparing students and industry partners to address emerging challenges in food systems and agriculture.

Ramchandra Rimal

Department of Mathematical Sciences

College of Basic and Applied Sciences

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Ramchandra Rimal is an associate professor of Data Science in the Department of Mathematical Sciences, where he specializes in machine learning, statistical network models, and classification and clustering problems. His work spans applications from finance to biological sciences, with a focus on developing novel methods and rigorous modeling frameworks for real-world data challenges.



He holds a B.A., B.Ed., and M.A. from Tribhuvan University, and both an M.S. and a Ph.D. in Applied Mathematics from the University of Central Florida, where he was recognized with the Graduate Research Excellence Award and the Graduate Teaching Assistant Award. His doctoral training under leading statisticians equipped him with deep expertise in latent position models and spectral inference methods that continue to anchor his research program at MTSU. His scholarly contributions appear in high-impact venues including the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series B*, the *Journal of Machine Learning Research*, and *Financial Innovation*, among others. He actively mentors undergraduate and graduate student researchers and has secured five internal grants through various MTSU programs to support teaching and research.

Rimal has taught 16 distinct courses at MTSU spanning undergraduate, graduate, and research levels in mathematics, statistics, and data science. He has supervised Honors theses, independent studies, master's theses, and U*NEXT experiential training students, and has mentored students under the Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity (URECA) grant. His dedication to student success has been recognized by graduating classes across four semesters, and he was named the most influential faculty member by new Phi Kappa Phi initiates in spring 2023. In addition, he strengthens MTSU through extensive service across all institutional levels. Externally, he reviews manuscripts for journals, chairs sessions at national and international conferences, judges science expos, and serves on the executive committee of the Association of Nepalese Mathematicians in America.



Timothy Rosser

Department of Aerospace

College of Basic and Applied Sciences

Tenured

Timothy Rosser is an associate professor in the Department of Aerospace. A former airline pilot, Rosser brings over 17 years of professional flight experience to MTSU. In addition, he has 16 years of higher education experience prior to his start with the University. Rosser holds a B.S. in

Aeronautical Science from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, an M.B.A. in Finance from Marywood University, and a Ph.D. in Aviation Science from Florida Institute of Technology.

After completing his bachelor's degree, Rosser worked as a certified flight instructor at a large flight school on Long Island, New York, where he provided primary and advanced flight instruction. He was promoted to an operations manager position and later added charter pilot duties to his resume. He was hired by Allegheny Airlines, a wholly-owned subsidiary of USAirways, in 1989 as a first officer and upgraded to captain 10 months later. While with the airline, he held the position of line check airman.

While flying with the airline, Rosser completed his M.B.A. with Marywood University and shortly after began his career in higher education with Marywood. He was hired as the director of the university's Aviation Management degree program. While in that position he worked to grow the enrollment, more than doubling the number of students in the program, and led the university through the process of purchasing its first aircraft and flight simulator.

After four years at Marywood, Rosser was hired at Florida Institute of Technology, where he taught in the College of Aeronautics. He completed his Ph.D. there and served as director of the undergraduate division within the college and later chair of flight degree programs. Rosser's research interests focus on aviation consumer preferences and perceptions, pilot flight training issues, and aviation safety.

Hanna Terletska

Department of Physics and Astronomy

College of Basic and Applied Sciences

Promoted to Professor



Hanna Terletska is a professor of Physics, founding director of MTSU's Quantum Research, Interdisciplinary Science, and Education (QRISE) Center, established in 2025, and founding leader of MTSU's Quantum Initiative, which launched in 2022. Her leadership has placed MTSU on the state and national map for quantum research, education, and workforce development.

An internationally recognized theoretical physicist, Terletska studies quantum materials, strongly correlated systems, disorder, nonequilibrium phenomena, and quantum information science. She has authored more than 45 peer-reviewed publications and delivered more than 150 invited talks and conference presentations, collaborating across the United Kingdom, Poland, Ukraine, India, and Canada.

Terletska has served as principal investigator or co-principal investigator on six National Science Foundation awards, two U.S. Department of Energy awards, and one National Institute of Standards and Technology award, representing approximately \$14 million in external funding. She has trained four postdoctoral researchers, four MTSU graduate students, and more than 25 undergraduate researchers.

At MTSU, Terletska developed a quantum education and workforce program spanning undergraduate curriculum, Quantum Train-the-Trainer workshops, Quantum Quest summer camps, teacher development, and community college outreach. She built MTSU's partnership with Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) through the DOE-supported TN-QuMAT program, and she leads the Tennessee Quantum Academic Consortium, uniting ORNL, MTSU, and other higher education institutions in middle Tennessee. She also founded the Amplify quantum program, which prepares students for competitive research experiences, national fellowships, and careers in quantum science and technology.

Terletska serves on the boards of the Tennessee Quantum Initiative, Southern Quantum Collaborative, American Association of Physics Teachers, and Emerging Research Institutions Network. Her honors include the NSF CAREER Award, MTSU President's Silver Column Award, Honors College Service Award, the 2023 Distinguished Senior Research Award, and an Athena Award nomination. Through her research, mentorship, and leadership, she continues to advance MTSU's reputation in quantum science and innovation.



Xin Yang

Department of Computer Science

College of Basic and Applied Sciences

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Xin Yang joined MTSU in 2020 and has taught a variety of undergraduate and graduate courses, including Computer Science II, Discrete Structures, Web Technologies, Machine Learning, and graduate research. Her teaching emphasizes student engagement, hands-on

learning, and the integration of research experiences into the classroom.

Yang, who holds a Ph.D. in Computational Science from MTSU, focuses her research on machine learning, artificial intelligence, data mining, and biomedical data analysis. Her work explores the application of machine learning and deep learning methods to neuroimaging data for autism spectrum disorder classification, as well as computational approaches for medical imaging and chemistry data analysis. She has published numerous peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers spanning computer science, biomedical informatics, and data analytics. Her research has been supported through both internal and external funding, including U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded projects and MTSU research grants.

A dedicated mentor, Yang has supervised undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students on research projects that have resulted in publications, conference presentations, thesis completions, and multiple student awards, including MTSU Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity (URECA) awards and Scholars Week recognitions. She also contributed to curriculum development through the creation of the Machine Learning course.

Yang has served on numerous University, college, and departmental committees, including the Academic Misconduct Committee, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, ABET Course Evaluation Committee, and faculty recruitment committees. She also serves as a reviewer for scholarly journals and professional conferences.

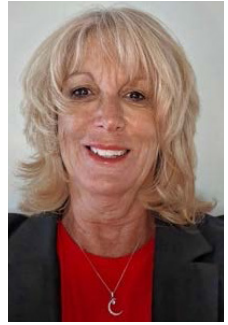
She is committed to advancing knowledge through innovative research, excellence in teaching, dedicated mentorship, and meaningful service to the University and the profession.

Melissa Allen-Weeks

School of Nursing

College of Behavioral and Health Sciences

Promoted to Clinical Associate Professor



Melissa Allen-Weeks is a registered nurse, nurse practitioner, professional lecturer, and educator who brings four decades of experience in multiple arenas of maternal-child nursing. She holds a B.S.N. from the University of Alabama in Huntsville, an M.S.N. from Stony Brook State University of New York (SUNY), with a neonatal nurse practitioner focus, and a post master's certificate from Middle Tennessee State University, with a family nurse practitioner focus. She holds dual board certifications in both specialties. Furthermore, she is board certified in inpatient obstetrics, maternal newborn nursing, electronic fetal heart monitoring, and obstetrical emergencies. Her commitment to nursing education is underscored by her membership in the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) and the National League of Nursing (NLN), where she received board certification as a clinical nurse educator.

With a notable 40-year career, Allen-Weeks has imparted knowledge in both classroom and clinical environments, instructing students across practical nursing, associate, bachelor's, and master's degree programs. As the creator and owner of Neo-Productions: Maternal Newborn Seminars, she developed, copyrighted, and delivers maternal-child certification review courses across the country.

Her career as an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) encompassed extensive travel, where she provided care in rural and urban family practice settings, as well as obstetrical, maternal-child, and neonatal intensive care units, including air-ground transport.

Since 2020, Allen-Weeks has taught the didactic and clinical components of Caring for the Childbearing Family, as well as clinical instruction within the Family Nurse Practitioner program. She has served as a member and is currently chair of the Student Success Committee. Each semester she organizes the M.S.N./B.S.N. recognition ceremonies and leads the development of student audiovisual presentations, celebrating graduating students from MTSU's Nursing programs.

Allen-Weeks actively contributes to her community, providing first aid assistance at the Jack and Back bike ride, and continues to work as a nurse practitioner.



Don Belcher

Department of Kinesiology and Sports Medicine

College of Behavioral and Health Sciences

Promoted to Professor

Don Belcher serves as graduate program director and undergraduate and graduate coordinator for the Physical Education program in the Department of Kinesiology and Sports Medicine. He earned his Ph.D. in Kinesiology from Louisiana State University with specializations in pedagogy and curriculum theory, following graduate study at the University of Wyoming and undergraduate teacher preparation at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada.

Prior to joining MTSU in 2007, Belcher held faculty appointments at the University of Alabama, the University of New Hampshire, and the University of Southern Mississippi. Throughout his academic career, he has taught undergraduate and graduate courses spanning physical education pedagogy, curriculum, motor learning, sport psychology, sociology of sport, and teacher education, preparing generations of educators, coaches, and scholars.

Belcher's research explores physical education pedagogy, teacher education, curriculum theory, technology integration, and issues of race, gender, and equity in physical activity and sport. His scholarship has appeared in leading journals and edited volumes, and he has presented his work at numerous national and international conferences. His recent research has focused on the effective use of technology and video feedback to enhance teaching and learning in online physical education.

Committed to student success and faculty leadership, Belcher has chaired numerous master's and doctoral committees, mentored junior faculty, and led curriculum development and assessment initiatives. His professional service includes leadership roles within MTSU, including chair of the Athletics Committee, as well as national service through the National Evaluation Series Physical Education Content Advisory Committee, editorial leadership with *SAGE Open* (Sport and Physical Activity), and manuscript reviewing for several scholarly journals.

Through his teaching, scholarship, and service, Belcher has advanced the preparation of physical educators while promoting inclusive, evidence-based, and innovative practices that strengthen the profession and enhance student learning.

Linda Gibson-Young

School of Nursing

College of Behavioral and Health Sciences

Tenured



Linda Gibson-Young is joining the University as the Adams Chair of Excellence in Health Care Services and the director of the Center for Rural Health and Healthcare Research.

A family nurse practitioner, educator, and nationally recognized researcher, Gibson-Young brings more than three decades of experience in nursing, population health, and community-engaged research. Throughout her career, she has advanced innovative approaches to improving healthcare access and outcomes for rural and underserved populations. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Auburn University, Master of Science in Nursing and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and a Master of Business Administration from Auburn University.

Gibson-Young will lead interdisciplinary initiatives that address the unique health challenges facing rural communities across Tennessee and the Southeast. She aims to work collaboratively with faculty, students, and community partners across disciplines to develop community-based research projects that integrate evidence-based practice with real-world solutions. The new Center for Rural Health and Healthcare Research will also work collaboratively with MTSU's Center for Health and Human Services (CHHS), led by Cynthia Chafin, bringing a healthcare research perspective that complements CHHS' expertise in public health practice, community impact initiatives, service delivery, program evaluation, and applied research.

Throughout her career, Gibson-Young has been recognized nationally for her contributions to nursing education, research, and public service. She is a distinguished fellow of the National Academies of Practice, a fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners, and a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing. Through interdisciplinary collaboration and community-engaged scholarship, Gibson-Young is helping establish the Center for Rural Health and Healthcare Research as a regional leader in advancing rural health.



Jay E. Hinnenkamp

Department of Psychology

College of Behavioral and Health Sciences

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Jay Hinnenkamp has served on the Psychology faculty since August 2020. He earned his Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology from Utah State University in 2020, following a Master of Science in Behavior Analysis from the University of North Texas in 2013, and a Bachelor of Arts in Biology and Psychology from the University of Minnesota–Morris in 2005.

At MTSU, Hinnenkamp is dedicated to advancing both teaching and research, regularly instructing undergraduate and graduate courses, including learning theories, basic statistics, and behavioral methodology. He co-directs the Translational, Experimental, and Applied Behavior Analysis research laboratory on campus. His primary research programs focus on social stimuli and interactions, risky and suboptimal decision-making, and conditioned reinforcement. His recent experimental work notably investigates how olfactory cues influence suboptimal and probabilistic choices in rats, as well as the effects of social isolation on preferences for social stimuli.

A cornerstone of Hinnenkamp's academic career is his robust commitment to student mentorship. He actively advises and supervises numerous undergraduate and graduate students in his laboratory, guiding them through thesis projects, Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity (URECA) grant applications, and scholarly presentations at regional and international conferences, such as the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) and the Southeastern Association for Behavior Analysis (SEABA).

His scholarly research has been featured in peer-reviewed publications, including the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior* and *Perspectives on Behavior Science*. Beyond his research and classroom teaching, Hinnenkamp is deeply involved in professional and University service. He served on the board of directors of SEABA and frequently contributes to departmental initiatives, notably by chairing the Social Planning and Activities Committee (SPAC) to foster a strong sense of community among faculty, staff, and students.

Tiffany D. Rogers

Department of Psychology

College of Behavioral and Health Sciences

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor



Tiffany D. Rogers is an associate professor of Psychology and director of the Social and Affective Neuroscience (SAN) Laboratory. She earned her B.S. in Psychology from Lipscomb University and her M.S. and Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology with a concentration in Behavioral Neuroscience from the University of Memphis. She completed postdoctoral training in molecular and cellular neuroscience and pharmacology at Vanderbilt University before joining the MTSU faculty, where she established one of the University's first *in vivo* behavioral neuroscience laboratories.

Rogers' research integrates behavioral neuroscience with pharmacological, molecular, and circuit-level approaches to investigate the neurobiological mechanisms underlying social behavior, social motivation, and social reward. Her scholarship has resulted in numerous peer-reviewed publications, interdisciplinary collaborations, and presentations at international conferences. In addition to advancing understanding of social behavior, her research explores ways to strengthen research training environments and expand opportunities for undergraduate students to engage in STEM disciplines.

Teaching and mentoring are central to Rogers' work at MTSU. She teaches courses including Behavioral Neuroscience, Introduction to Biopsychology, Applied Psychopharmacology, and Research Methods. In recognition of her excellence in the classroom, she received MTSU's Outstanding Teaching Award in 2021. Through the SAN Laboratory, Rogers has mentored more than 63 undergraduate researchers and 11 graduate students. Her students have earned research funding, presented at national and international conferences, participated in competitive summer research programs, and gained admission to prestigious graduate programs.

Rogers is committed to service and leadership across the University. She has served on numerous committees supporting undergraduate research, animal care and use, and sponsored scholarship. In addition, she is affiliated with the Tennessee STEM Education Center (TSEC); the Center for Methodology, Evaluation, and Applied Statistics for University Research and Education (C-MEASURE); and the Molecular Biosciences doctoral program.

Through her research, teaching, mentorship, and service, Rogers fosters research-intensive learning environments that prepare students for scientific careers while advancing knowledge of the neurobiology underlying social behavior.



Ciera E. Schoonover

Department of Psychology

College of Behavioral and Health Sciences

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Ciera Schoonover is an associate professor of Psychology and a licensed clinical psychologist with health service provider designation. Her teaching, scholarship, and service focus on advancing evidence-based clinical training and preparing students to become skilled and compassionate mental health professionals. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on psychological disorders, disorders in childhood, and evidence-based therapies, while mentoring students at multiple educational levels through collaborative research and scholarly projects.

Schoonover's research centers on improving the mental health and well-being of children and families through evidence-based interventions. Her work focuses on parent-child interaction therapy (PCIT), behavioral parent training, disruptive behavior disorders in childhood, prevention and intervention related to adverse childhood experiences, and childhood traumatic stress. She is particularly committed to expanding access to effective services for underserved children and families, including through innovative approaches such as telemental healthcare.

Her recent scholarly accomplishments include publication of the edited volumes *Telemental Healthcare for Children and Families*; *New Perspectives on Mental Health Issues in Child Maltreatment: Multidisciplinary Strategies for Assessment and Intervention*; and *Violence Against Women: Intersectional Case Studies*. She has also published peer-reviewed journal articles, presented widely at professional conferences, and maintained active collaborative research programs.

Within MTSU, Schoonover has provided significant leadership and service to the Clinical Psychology master's program. She served for several years as admissions coordinator and now serves as practicum coordinator, cultivating community partnerships, coordinating clinical training placements, and supporting students' professional development through practicum seminars and mentorship.

Schoonover is also active in professional service through PCIT International, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing parent-child interaction therapy through training, certification, and research. A certified PCIT therapist and trainer, she serves on the organization's board of directors, helping guide its mission and strategic direction.

Through her scholarship, teaching, clinical expertise, and leadership, Schoonover continues to advance psychological science while expanding access to evidence-based care for children and families.

William “Todd” Vickrey

School of Nursing

College of Behavioral and Health Sciences

Promoted to Clinical Associate Professor



William “Todd” Vickrey is an associate professor in the School of Nursing. As a registered nurse, Vickrey has 20 years of experience in the areas of critical care, cardiac stepdown, home health, and endoscopy. He holds a B.S.N. and M.S.N., both from MTSU. As a veteran of the U.S. Army, he brings advanced leadership skills and holds rigorous standards to ensure the success of future caregivers.

Prior to his career in higher education, Vickrey developed his skills in critical care working in the intensive care units at Middle Tennessee Medical Center and Stonecrest Medical Center. It was while working in these facilities that he found his love for teaching nursing via the role of preceptor for students completing their critical care rotations. What began as a part-time adjunct position in the School of Nursing at MTSU is now the rich career that he has continued to advance over the past 16 years.

As a member of the Nursing faculty, Vickrey has served on various committees including student admissions, curriculum redesign, and student success, and he helped develop the Tracey McCauley Award for Clinical Excellence. He has also been a member of the Student Nurses Association (SNA) and Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society.

Prior to nursing, Vickrey received the following honors in the U.S. Army: the Army Achievement Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Overseas Medal, and Honorable Discharge for six years’ active duty.

In nursing, he has held roles as a clinical instructor, course coordinator, and lab coordinator and has been nominated twice and awarded once the DAISY Award for nurse educators.



Kristie Abston

Department of Management

Jennings A. Jones College of Business

Promoted to Professor

Kristie Abston's journey to professor of Management began in a chemistry lab. After earning a bachelor's degree in Biology from East Tennessee State University, she spent two years in polymer research with a chemical company before moving internally into human resource management. She held HR generalist and training and development roles before pursuing graduate studies.

Abston earned her Ph.D. in Business Administration and an M.S. in Human Resource Development, both from the University of Tennessee, and holds two HR management certifications, SHRM-SCP and SPHR. In the classroom, she uses high-impact teaching practices to prepare students for modern workplace challenges. She has also accompanied students to conferences and coached teams to competitive wins, including the SHRM case competition and the Small Business Institute Project of the Year. Her undergraduate HR management students design and deliver management training for project clients, culminating in an annual showcase open to employers and the campus community; students have now partnered with eight organizations, including six nonprofits.

Her research explores how individual behaviors shape employee and organizational effectiveness, focusing on employee branding, leader humility, organizational commitment, and turnover. Abston's work has been published in journals including *American Business Review*, *Journal of Business Research*, and *Journal of Management*, and she serves on four journal editorial boards. She is a fellow of both the Southeast Case Research Association and the Association for Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, where she serves as dean of the fellows.

Abston has received Jones College's E.W. "Wink" Midgett Distinguished Service Award and the Bill and Kathy Jones Outstanding Faculty Award. In the department, she serves as Human Resource Management discipline coordinator and chairs the Assurance of Learning Committee, and she regularly judges the district DECA competition, the High School Entrepreneurship Fair, and the Middle School Invention Convention.

Sandra M. Billings

Department of Information Systems and Analytics

Jennings A. Jones College of Business

Promoted to Senior Instructor

Sandra M. Billings is a senior instructor in the Department of Information Systems and Analytics. An experienced technical leader, corporate strategist, and educator, she brings over 35 years of professional experience in information systems, along with a dedicated career in higher education.



Before joining MTSU, Billings established a distinguished corporate career, notably serving as the chief information officer in major retail environments. She has also driven strategic institutional operations as an interim vice president for information technology. She continues to provide specialized consulting on technical infrastructure, vendor relations, and IT executive alignment across the region. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Management Information Systems from Winston-Salem State University and a Master of Business Administration with a concentration in Management Information Systems from Gardner-Webb University.

Billings delivers high-quality pedagogy across both traditional and online learning environments. Her teaching portfolio spans courses from introductory undergraduate classes to graduate-level offerings. Reflecting her commitment to educational excellence, she has consistently earned recognition from institutional leaders, colleagues, and students alike, with course evaluations regularly rating her teaching effectiveness as outstanding. In 2024, she received MTSU's Make a Difference recognition and has been repeatedly acknowledged by graduating seniors as an instructor who significantly contributed to long-term student success.

Deeply committed to professional growth, modern learning theory, and technological innovation, Billings has completed advanced, postgraduate coursework in informatics and is currently completing an Ed.S. degree in Administration and Supervision with a concentration in Higher Education. Through her blend of executive leadership experience, innovative technology instruction, and active University service, Billings maintains a forward-thinking educational model designed to prepare students for success in today's competitive workforce.



Susan K. Bradley

Department of Accounting

Jennings A. Jones College of Business

Promoted to Master Instructor

Susan K. Bradley, J.D., graduated from Western Kentucky University in 1983 and from the University of Tennessee School of Law in 1990. As a partner with Wilson and Bradley Law Offices, Bradley engaged in private practice for more than 20 years. She served as an administrative law judge for the Murfreesboro Disciplinary Review Board from 1999 until 2014 and was a Rule 31 Listed Mediator until 2017. Bradley is admitted to practice before the U.S. District Courts for the Eastern and Middle Districts of Tennessee, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit, and all Tennessee courts.

Bradley began teaching at Middle Tennessee State University in 2011. She teaches Legal Environment of Business, Commercial Law, Industrial Relations Legislation, and Employment Law for Business. She has developed courses for the new Master of Science in Legal Studies curriculum, including Employment Law and Survey of Selected Business Law Topics.

Bradley received the MTSU Accounting Advisory Board Outstanding Professor Award in 2019 and 2025 and was nominated for the E.W. “Wink” Midgett Distinguished Teaching Award in 2025.

Bradley, along with Professor Sandra S. Benson, authored “Should Accounting Firms Arbitrate Employment Disputes?” which was published in the *Tennessee CPA Journal*. She is also a certified Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) Prepare Training Program instructor.

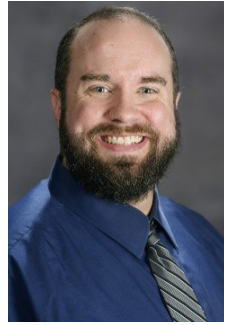
Bradley is an active member of City Church and has been involved in various nonprofit organizations including Animal Rescue Corps and Special Olympics.

Stoney Brooks

Department of Information Systems and Analytics

Jennings A. Jones College of Business

Promoted to Professor



Stoney Brooks is a professor and graduate program director for the Department of Information Systems and Analytics.

He holds a Ph.D. in Management Information Systems from Washington State University, a master's degree in Computer Information Systems from Colorado State University, and a B.B.A. in Business Administration – Marketing and a B.S. in Computer Information Systems from Mesa State University.

Brooks teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in both Information Systems and Cybersecurity Management. In addition to creating or redeveloping six courses, he leads the annual Study Abroad: Technology and Business in Japan course, where he takes up to 12 students to Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka to experience Japanese culture, business processes, and technological innovation. He received the Bridgestone Americas Distinguished Lecturer award for the Jones College of Business in 2018.

Brooks' research primarily focuses on the negative effects of technology use on individuals, particularly through social media. He has authored or co-authored more than 50 journal articles and conference proceedings and is currently the sixth-most-cited scholar from MTSU according to Google Scholar. In 2018, he received the E.W. "Wink" Midgett Faculty Research Award in the Jones College of Business.

He has served the discipline as an associate editor for the European Conference on Information Systems, as elected president and current treasurer of the Society to Advance Information Systems at MBAA, and as a reviewer for numerous journals. At MTSU, Brooks has chaired numerous committees and served as faculty sponsor for the student organization for Information Systems.

Through his commitment to student success and scholarly excellence, Brooks equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the ever-changing marketplace.



Ricky Fergusson

Department of Marketing

Jennings A. Jones College of Business

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Ricky Fergusson is an associate professor of Marketing who brings over two decades of experience in B2B sales and marketing to the classroom. He holds a B.B.A. degree from the University of Louisiana–Monroe as well as M.B.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of North Texas. He was recognized as the Lou E. Pelton Emerging Scholar Award by the Association of Collegiate Marketing Educators in March 2022 and received the *Journal of Marketing Analytics* Best Reviewer Award for 2023.

His classes are structured to integrate industry experience into the classroom. He believes higher education is about going beyond content mastery: To become engaged members of society, students need to understand the facts presented in books and lectures, as well as the questions they should ask based on that information.

Beyond the classroom, Fergusson works closely with students in the Center for Professional Selling, coaching them in preparation for intercollegiate sales competitions each semester. Student participation in these events offers the opportunity to gain experience that cannot be duplicated in the classroom and allows the students to grow in confidence and skill by competing against the best students from other top-flight sales programs. He also serves as the faculty advisor for the Society for Professional Selling, a student-led organization focused on the professional development and growth of marketing and sales students.

His primary research interest is critically exploring how organizational and customer demands on salespeople impact performance outcomes, well-being, and customer ownership. His research has been published in the *European Journal of Marketing*; *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*; *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*; *Journal of Consumer Marketing*; *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing*; *Journal of Marketing Analytics*; *Journal of Selling*; *Journal of Marketing Channels*; *Marketing Education Review*; and *Journal of Marketing Education*, among others.

Kristen Shanine

Department of Management

Jennings A. Jones College of Business

Promoted to Professor



Kristen Shanine holds a Ph.D. from the University of Alabama and an M.B.A. from Bradley University, and she brings experience from the public, private, and education sectors to her roles as the Pam Wright Chair of Entrepreneurship, director of the Center for Entrepreneurial Innovation, and director of the Family Business Institute in the Department of Management within the Jones College of Business.

She teaches Family Business, Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship, and Small Business Management. Her commitment to student success earned her the MTSU Jones College of Business State Farm Outstanding Professor Award.

She draws on psychology and sociology to examine the family dynamics behind family business succession failure, and her work on family business and gender in entrepreneurship and family business has earned growing national and international recognition. Her research appears in the *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Small Business Management*, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *Family Business Review*, *Human Resource Management Review*, and *Academy of Management Annals*. Her contributions to the field were recently recognized with the Theories of Family Enterprise Conference James J. Chrisman Contribution to Theory Research Award.

She chairs MTSU's chapter of the Sigma Nu Tau Entrepreneurship Honor Society and serves on numerous department and college committees. She guest-edited the family business special issue of *Human Resource Management Review* and serves on the editorial review board of *Family Business Review*. Beyond campus, she is an active member of Rutherford Cable and an advisory board member for the Tennessee Small Business Development Center.



Sara Shirley

Department of Economics and Finance

Jennings A. Jones College of Business

Promoted to Professor

Sara Shirley is a professor of Finance and the director of the Data Science undergraduate programs. She earned her B.S. in International Business and her M.B.A. with a concentration in Finance from Canisius College, and she received her Ph.D. in Finance from Southern Illinois University.

Her primary research interests are in mutual funds, exchange traded funds (ETFs), and behavioral finance. She has published in top-ranked journals and presented her research at regional, national, and international conferences. Shirley is grateful to be a part of the MTSU community and is excited for all the opportunities that lie ahead.

Jeffrey Stark

Department of Economics and Finance

Jennings A. Jones College of Business

Promoted to Professor



Jeffrey Stark is originally from New York and has also lived in Illinois and Rhode Island before moving to Tennessee. While in New York, he earned a B.S. in Finance from Canisius College and an M.B.A. from SUNY Binghamton. He later enrolled in the Finance Ph.D. program at Southern Illinois University. During his doctoral studies, his interest in understanding financial markets developed, leading to his primary research focus: how information flows into financial markets. This research has resulted in numerous publications as well as presentations at regional, national, and international conferences.

Currently, Stark is the director of Finance graduate programs and associate director of the MTSU Data Science Institute, where he works on public health projects. His teaching interests lie at the intersection of finance and data science, with a focus on helping students use financial data to make business decisions. He primarily teaches within the M.S. in Finance program and in the interdisciplinary undergraduate Data Science program.



Peter M. Eley

*Womack Department of
Teaching, Learning, and Innovation*

College of Education

Tenured

Peter Eley is a professor and associate dean for curriculum, assessment, and academic policy in the Womack Department of Teaching, Learning, and Innovation. A mathematician, mathematics educator, scholar, and higher education leader, he brings extensive experience in academic administration, accreditation, assessment, program development, faculty support, and strategic innovation across public and private universities.

Eley holds a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from Elizabeth City State University, master's degrees in Applied Mathematics and Mathematics Education from North Carolina State University, and a Ph.D. in Mathematics Education from North Carolina State University. His research focuses on access, technology integration, assessment, and data-informed decision-making that improves student learning and institutional effectiveness.

Before joining MTSU, Eley served in senior academic leadership roles including interim dean, associate dean, interim department chair, special assistant to the provost, and faculty administrative fellow. His leadership portfolio includes curriculum development, academic policy review, accreditation support, faculty development, assessment planning, and the creation of new academic programs. He has supported CAEP and CACREP accreditation efforts and worked with faculty to enhance evidence-based continuous improvement systems.

Eley has been recognized for excellence in teaching, leadership, and service. His honors include the UNC Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching, institutional teaching and advising awards, the Elizabeth City State University Chancellor's Legacy Award, and TRIO Achiever of the Year honors at both the state and regional levels. These recognitions reflect his longstanding commitment to student success, educational access, and transformational leadership.

His service to the field includes leadership and engagement with mathematics education organizations, accreditation and assessment initiatives, faculty development, and national conversations on educational technology and artificial intelligence. He has served at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and professional organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and state mathematics education associations, contributing to conference programming, research communities, and professional learning for educators.

Ryan “Seth” Jones

*Womack Department of
Teaching, Learning, and Innovation*

College of Education

Promoted to Professor



Ryan “Seth” Jones is a professor whose work focuses on mathematics, science, and data science education. A Tennessee native, he earned his undergraduate degree in Secondary Mathematics Education from Tennessee Technological University before teaching high school mathematics. He later completed both an M.Ed. and Ph.D. in Mathematics and Science Education at Vanderbilt University and worked as a research assistant at North Carolina State University, where he helped develop innovative digital tools for middle school mathematics teachers.

Jones is an interdisciplinary scholar whose research examines how students develop concepts and practices related to data, modeling, chance, and inference. Framed through a data literacy perspective, his work explores how learners use data to construct, evaluate, and communicate evidence-based claims. Conducted in collaboration with teachers and students, his research has been published in leading journals in mathematics, science, and data science education. He has secured more than \$3.8 million in external funding as principal investigator or co-principal investigator.

At MTSU, Jones teaches courses in the Mathematics and Science Education Ph.D. program, the Secondary Education MTeach minor, the True Blue Core, and the Leaders in Education Advancing Data Science (LEADS) Ed.S. program. He serves as leader of the interdisciplinary concentration in the Mathematics and Science Education Ph.D. program and works to create learning environments that help students develop sophisticated, research-based understandings of teaching and learning.

Jones also serves as research coordinator for the College of Education, collaborating with colleagues across campus to strengthen research infrastructure and support faculty and student scholarship. His leadership has contributed to initiatives including the College of Education Research Committee and the University Council for Sponsored Scholarship.

Through his research, teaching, and service, Jones advances innovative approaches to data science education while supporting the development of future educators, researchers, and academic leaders.



C. Rebecca Oldham

*Department of Leadership, Development,
and Educational Systems*

College of Education

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Rebecca Oldham ("Dr. O") is an associate professor in the Human Development and Family Science (HDFS) program and a Women's and Gender Studies affiliate faculty member.

Her research with colleagues on romantic relationships has been presented at national and international conferences and published in esteemed journals such as *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, and *Personal Relationships*. Oldham has mentored dozens of students in conducting, presenting, and publishing research, as well as in applying for graduate school and jobs.

Oldham teaches courses on romantic relationships, family science, and program evaluation. She has received multiple teaching awards, such as the National Council on Family Relations Emerging Teacher/Mentor Award (2022), MTSU's Outstanding Teaching Award (2025), and the MTSU Career Development Center Career Influencer Award (2025). Oldham and librarian Ashley Shealy published quantitative and qualitative assessments of their integration of information literacy curriculum into an HDFS course. Moreover, she and her HDFS colleagues have replaced expensive textbooks with open educational resources and shared lessons learned through MTSU workshops, a national conference roundtable, and publication. Also, Oldham hosts her annual Q&A panels with local professionals so the public can learn about domestic violence, child abuse, and elder abuse prevention and intervention.

Oldham has served as an elected officer in both the National Council on Family Relations and the International Association of Relationship Research and has peer-reviewed for their flagship journals. Locally, she has served on the Engage Advisory Board, the Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence State Leadership Team, and the Women's and Gender Studies Council. Oldham also chaired a faculty committee to establish the first Blueprint for the True Blue Core. In 2021, she mentored HDFS students in founding a National Council on Family Relations student affiliate at MTSU, the Middle Tennessee Council on Family Relations, and she remains their faculty advisor.

Jim K. Rost

*Department of Leadership, Development,
and Educational Systems*

College of Education

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Jim K. Rost is originally from Chicago. He was active in youth sports and earned a baseball scholarship to MidAmerica Nazarene University (MNU), where he lettered for three years before an injury ended his playing career.

While at MNU, he also worked in athletic training across multiple sports and graduated in 1994.

He earned a master's degree in Physical Education with a concentration in Sports Psychology from San Diego State University in 1999. He then began working in academic support for student athletes, serving as a counselor and administrator at University of Southern California, Louisiana State University, Middle Tennessee State University, and Auburn University from 1999–2011.

Rost returned to MTSU in an administrative role within the College of Education as advising manager for Student Success and Advising Services and completed his Ph.D. in Human Performance in 2015. In addition to his administrative responsibilities, he served as an adjunct instructor in the Health and Human Performance Department from 2013 until 2020. He also completed the College and University Teaching Certificate in 2020.

He was appointed assistant professor in Educational Leadership in August 2020. He continues to draw from his 20-plus years of higher education administration experience as the lead faculty member for the Ed.D. in Assessment, Learning, and Student Success Higher Education concentration. His areas of research include quantitative methodology, doctoral student self-efficacy toward program completion, and online andragogy.





Katie Schrodt

*Womack Department of
Teaching, Learning, and Innovation*

College of Education

Promoted to Professor

Katie Schrodt is a professor, researcher, teacher educator, and literacy advocate. She brings more than two decades of experience spanning elementary classrooms and university instruction. Schrodt teaches undergraduate, master's, and doctoral courses in literacy and elementary education, and her sustained excellence in the classroom has been recognized with MTSU's Outstanding Teaching Award and the College of Education's Womack Innovation in Teaching Award.

Committed to connecting theory and practice, she partners with local school districts and literacy organizations to provide family literacy events and meaningful field experiences for preservice teachers. She also serves as a national literacy consultant for Teacher Created Materials, delivering professional development for educators across the country.

Schrodt's research focuses on early reading and writing development, particularly spelling acquisition and evidence-based instructional practices. Her work has appeared in leading journals including *Education Sciences*, *Reading Psychology*, *The Reading Teacher*, and *Annals of Dyslexia*, and she has been recognized as a Wiley Top Cited Author. Her scholarship has also been featured on Timothy Shanahan's widely read Shanahan on Literacy blog. She has secured nearly \$1 million in external funding, including support from the U.S. Department of Education and the 95 Percent Group, and has presented at premier research conferences such as the Society for the Scientific Study of Reading and the Literacy Research Association.

In addition to her teaching and research, Schrodt serves as director of the Middle Tennessee Writing Project, a site of the National Writing Project network. In that role, she coordinates teacher institutes and professional development opportunities that reach educators nationwide. She is also a consulting editor for NAEYC's *Young Children* and recipient of the Bonnie Campbell Hill National Literacy Leader Award.

Through her research, teaching, and professional service, Schrodt advances evidence-based literacy education while preparing future educators to connect effective classroom practice with meaningful community engagement.

Samantha Weir

*Department of Leadership, Development,
and Educational Systems*

College of Education

Promoted to Master Instructor



Samantha Weir is a master instructor in Human Development and Family Science (HDFS). She received her B.S. in Family and Consumer Studies and her M.S. in Human Sciences from Middle Tennessee State University. Prior to joining the faculty, Weir spent nine years working in the field of child sexual abuse, specifically in prevention and intervention. During this time, she trained thousands of children and adults on the prevention and recognition of child abuse and worked as a forensic interviewer assisting with the prosecution of hundreds of offenders.

Weir works as an advocate for families and individuals throughout the lifespan. She teaches a wide range of courses, covering family relations, advocacy, and aging. Through this coursework, she prepares students to support diverse populations at all stages of life.

Throughout her career, Weir has been recognized for her dedication to teaching and leadership. In 2023, she received the Athena Young Professional Leadership Award that recognizes an emerging leader under 40 who exemplifies leadership attributes and serves as a role model for young women. Weir also received the Outstanding EXL Faculty Award in 2024 for teaching Aging Health and Development, an intergenerational program where students connect with older adults at local senior facilities to plan and implement activities that add enrichment to their daily lives.

Weir is committed to service at MTSU and in the community. She has participated in multiple Faculty Learning Communities and received grants for public service projects, incorporating open educational resources, experiential learning programs, and Engage Week in an effort to enrich curriculum and students' experiences. She is a founding member of MTSU's Positive Aging Consortium, a board member for the League of Women Voters of Murfreesboro/Rutherford County, and an active member of the Rutherford County Coalition Against Child Abuse.



Mandi Bates Bailey

Department of Political and Global Affairs

College of Liberal Arts

Tenured

Mandi Bailey joins the Department of Political and Global Affairs as professor and chair. An interdisciplinary scholar, editor, and mentor, she brings extensive experience in teaching, research, and academic leadership. Prior to arriving at MTSU, she held appointments at American University and Valdosta State University, where she was named one of four national recipients of Pi Sigma Alpha's Advisor of the Year Award in 2023. She currently serves as co-editor-in-chief of *The Social Science Journal* and co-editor of its special issue, "American Politics: Decade in Review."

Bailey earned a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Kentucky, an M.A. in Political Science from the University of Tennessee, and a B.A. in Communications from Morehead State University. She has served on review panels and committees for organizations including the National Science Foundation, the American Political Science Association, and Pi Sigma Alpha.

Her teaching and research focus on political psychology, American political institutions, and the intersections of politics and culture. Bailey has authored or contributed to more than 20 books, articles, and book chapters examining political scandals, social media, stereotyping, and music and politics, with work appearing in journals such as *The Social Science Journal*, *Social Science Computer Review*, and the *National Review of Black Politics*.

Her book, *The Downhome Sound: Diversity and Politics in Americana Music*, has attracted attention from both academic and public audiences, drawing speaking engagements across the country and recognition from music and cultural organizations. She is also co-editor and contributor to *LGBTQ Public Opinion: The United States in Global Context*, a forthcoming volume from the University of Michigan Press that includes a chapter she co-authored with former students, reflecting her strong commitment to mentorship and student research. Through her scholarship, leadership, and dedication to student success, Bailey brings a dynamic interdisciplinary perspective to MTSU and the study of politics and society.

James P. Chaney

Department of Political and Global Affairs

College of Liberal Arts

Promoted to Professor



James Chaney teaches geography, global studies, migration, and Latin American studies. He earned his Ph.D. in Geography from Louisiana State University and has built a distinguished career centered on the cultural geographies of migration, identity, and place in the U.S. South.

Chaney is the author or co-author of numerous peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, as well as the award-winning book *Hispanic and Latino New Orleans: Immigration and Identity since the Eighteenth Century*, recipient of the American Association of Geographers' John Brinckerhoff Jackson Book Prize. His scholarship has been recognized nationally and internationally through invited lectures, conference presentations, and media appearances. He also produced and co-directed the documentary *Oye, We're from Here, Too!*, which explores the experiences of second-generation Latinos in Nashville.

At MTSU, Chaney has championed experiential and place-based learning through curriculum development, community engagement, internships, and education abroad. He has revised and developed numerous undergraduate and graduate courses, helped create the University's Geography minor in collaboration with the Department of Geosciences, and expanded opportunities through Engage and EXL-designated courses. He has also led faculty-directed study abroad programs in Spain, Cuba, and Mexico and contributed scholarship examining the impact of international education.

A dedicated mentor, Chaney has supervised internships, chaired Honors theses, guided graduate research projects, and supported students pursuing scholarships, graduate education, and professional careers. His commitment to student success has been recognized with the College of Liberal Arts Faculty-Student Mentoring Award and national recognition from the American Association of Geographers for excellence in undergraduate teaching.

Beyond the University, Chaney has served in leadership roles with nonprofit and community organizations focused on immigration, anti-human trafficking efforts, and educational access. In recognition of his sustained public engagement and community service, he received the Harold Love Outstanding Community Service Award from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.



Eric Detweiler

Department of English

College of Liberal Arts

Promoted to Professor

Eric Detweiler is a professor in the Department of English and inaugural director of the interdisciplinary Public Writing and Rhetoric (PWR) program in the College of Liberal Arts. He is the author of the book *Responsible Pedagogy:*

Moving Beyond Authority and Mastery in Higher Education

and coeditor of the forthcoming collection *Navigating Space On and Beyond Campus*. He also hosts and produces a podcast called “Rhetorcity.” His work has appeared in academic journals and edited collections including *Resonance: The Journal of Sound and Culture*; *Rhetoric Review*; *Pedagogy*; *Philosophy & Rhetoric*; *Tuning in to Soundwriting*; and *Teaching Games and Game Studies in the Literature Classroom*.

Detweiler has developed and teaches courses on public writing, digital rhetoric, video games, and podcasting and sound studies.

He has served as digital communications officer for the Rhetoric Society of America; editor of the sonic projects section of *enculturation: a journal of rhetoric, writing, and culture*; and co-chair of the Symposium on Sound, Rhetoric, and Writing. At MTSU, in addition to directing the PWR program, he has completed the Faculty Leadership Development Institute, led the working group that created the University’s policy on classroom and instructional use of artificial intelligence, and chaired his department’s non-tenure-track voting rights committee.

When he’s not on campus, he can be found gardening, cooking, and squeezing in the occasional gaming session. You can read more about his projects at ericd.site.

Bridget Donnelly

Department of English

College of Liberal Arts

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Bridget Donnelly is an associate professor and incoming graduate program director in the Department of English. She holds a Ph.D. in English from the University of North Carolina and a B.A. from Lawrence University. Since joining MTSU in 2020, she has taught courses across the department, from True Blue Core and service courses to upper-division and graduate seminars. She has also developed several special-topics courses that connect her research interests with innovative classroom experiences, including courses on women's literature, 18th-century studies, and contemporary culture.



A dedicated teacher and mentor, Donnelly supports students both inside and outside the classroom. She serves as faculty advisor for the English Graduate Student Organization and the Sigma Tau Delta international honor society and regularly mentors graduate students through the department's Mentored Teaching Assistant program. Since joining the Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity (URECA) Committee, she has guided multiple students who have earned competitive undergraduate research awards.

Donnelly's scholarship focuses on 18th-century literature, women's writing, pedagogy, and popular culture. In 2026, Routledge published her critical edition of Elizabeth Meeke's 1795 novel *The Abbey of Clugny* as part of the Chawton House: Women's Novels series. The project grew out of an MTSU course in which undergraduate and graduate students collaborated on research, annotations, and critical commentary. The course received the Martha F. Bowden Prize for Innovative Pedagogy from the Southeastern American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

Her recent publications also include work on digital archival research in literary studies and the intersections of Taylor Swift's songwriting with 18th-century women's literature. Beyond MTSU, Donnelly remains active in professional organizations, particularly the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, where she was recently elected co-chair of the organization's Women's Caucus.

Through her teaching, scholarship, mentorship, and professional leadership, Donnelly has strengthened opportunities for student research while advancing innovative approaches to literary studies.



Paul N. Eubanks

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

College of Liberal Arts

Promoted to Professor

Paul N. Eubanks is an archaeologist specializing in the Indigenous history of the American Southeast, with research interests in salt production, craft specialization, exchange, and the development of complex societies.

He earned his B.A. in Anthropology from the University of North Carolina in 2008 and his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Alabama in 2016. He joined the faculty at Middle Tennessee State University that same year and was promoted to associate professor in 2022.

Eubanks' research has increasingly taken on an international dimension through his work on the archaeology of salt. He has presented invited research at international conferences in Spain, Mexico, the Czech Republic, Oman, Poland, and Austria, and currently serves on a working group for the COST Action called SaltAges, which is investigating the social, biological, and climatic impacts of salt. (A COST Action is a research network organized through the European Cooperation in Science and Technology.) His scholarship includes numerous peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, technical reports, and edited volumes, including *Salt in Eastern North America and the Caribbean: History and Archaeology* (2021) and *Meridians of Salt: Global Perspectives on Archaeology and Ethnoarchaeology* (2025).

At MTSU, Eubanks leads archaeological research projects in Tennessee, including long-term investigations at the Castalian Springs Mound Site and Cragfont State Historic Site, where he integrates student training, research, and public outreach. He has mentored numerous undergraduate research projects, several of which have resulted in conference presentations and publications. In addition to his teaching and research, he serves on the Tennessee Historical Commission's State Review Board.

Alyson Muenzer Lynn

Department of English

College of Liberal Arts

Promoted to Master Instructor



Alyson Muenzer Lynn was born and raised in Knoxville. After graduating from the University of Tennessee with a B.A. in English, she enrolled at MTSU; upon receiving her M.A., she began teaching full time in the English Department in 2001.

For the last 25 years, Lynn has taught numerous sections of lower division English courses, including Honors sections. In that time, she has frequently participated in Raider Learning Communities and the Engage program. Regardless of the subject matter, Lynn's teaching philosophy is firmly grounded in learning, understanding, and flexibility. Ultimately, she knows that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to teaching, for students are diverse in every way imaginable—and every single student deserves a voice.

In 2022, Lynn won one of the University-wide Outstanding Teaching Awards, and in 2019, she was the sole recipient of the John T. Bragg Sr. Distinguished Service Award. She was also recognized as the English Department's Full Time Temporary (FTT) of the Year in 2018. Too, her extensive work with our student-athletes has garnered multiple recognitions; most recently, she was recognized by three student-athletes at the Most Valuable Professor softball game this past spring.

From May 2023 through May 2026, Lynn served as coordinator for the English Department's general education program. She conducted 45 observations of her Dual Enrollment English and lecturer colleagues, and she also heavily assisted in the planning and execution of the department's yearly orientation and bi-yearly curriculum meetings.

Outside of these responsibilities, she cherishes her role as a parent. Her son, Wil, is also an MTSU graduate! Lynn is also an avid collector of lunchboxes, cereal boxes, board games, and knickknacks. With an unrelenting and unmatched enthusiasm for capturing the perfect sunrise on film, Lynn embraces each day as an opportunity for personal growth.



Mark Mcleod

Department of Art and Design

College of Liberal Arts

Tenured and Promoted to Professor

Mark Mcleod teaches three-dimensional design and serves as Foundations coordinator. He holds an M.F.A. in Sculpture from Syracuse University and a B.F.A. from Winthrop University.

Mcleod's creative research combines traditional sculpture with digital fabrication technologies, including CNC routing, laser cutting, 3D printing, and 3D scanning. His work explores how personal and collective memories are translated into physical form. More recently, his research has examined the relationship between artificial intelligence and human memory, investigating how both systems reconstruct and reinterpret the past. This work culminated in "Synthetic Nostalgia: Memory, Myth, and Machine," a solo exhibition at the Michigan State University Museum in which he re-created a teenager's bedroom from the early 2000s using AI-generated imagery that was subsequently fabricated into physical objects.

His work has been featured in solo, juried, and invited exhibitions at institutions including the Kipp Gallery, Birke Art Gallery, Alexander Brest Gallery, Zeitgeist Gallery, VisArts, the Mint Museum, the Spartanburg Art Museum, the Athens Institute for Contemporary Art, and the Masur Museum of Art. His artwork has been acquired by private collections, including the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Texas, and he recently completed a major commission for a global technology company. His research has also been supported by museums, galleries, and MTSU's MT-IGO program.

Beyond his studio practice, Mcleod is committed to advancing art education. Through a Digital Seed Grant from James E. Walker Library, he developed Studio Art Teaching Resources, a repository of 81 assignments designed to support art educators and emerging faculty. He regularly shares his expertise through conference presentations and workshops on photogrammetry, augmented reality, and digital fabrication.

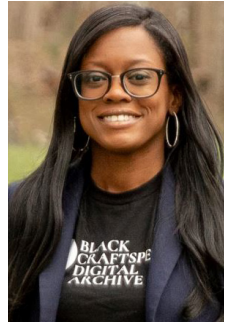
An active advocate for the arts in middle Tennessee, Mcleod serves on MTSU's University Council for Sponsored Scholarship and previously chaired the Rutherford Arts Alliance. In 2025, he was named a Murfreesboro Cultural Arts Laureate.

Tiffany Momon

Department of History

College of Liberal Arts

Tenured



Tiffany Momon is an associate professor of History and director of the Center for Historic Preservation. A scholar, curator, and public historian, she centers her research on Black craftspeople and their contributions to the decorative arts, architecture, and material culture of the early American South. She holds a B.S. in Political Science from Tennessee State University, a B.A. in African and African American Studies from the University of Memphis, and an M.A. in History and a Ph.D. in Public History from Middle Tennessee State University, where she served as a graduate assistant at the Center for Historic Preservation. She returns to MTSU as a tenured scholar to lead the center.

Momon is the founder and co-director of the Black Craftspeople Digital Archive, a digital humanities project that explores the lives and labor of enslaved and free Black artisans. Her scholarship translates directly into preservation practice and museum exhibitions. Her early research on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) led her to successfully nominate several such properties to the National Register of Historic Places. Her exhibitions include “Fighting for Freedom: Black Craftspeople and the Pursuit of Independence,” which opened at the Daughters of the American Revolution Museum in Washington, D.C., and travels nationally through 2028, and “Troubled Like the Restless Sea,” currently on view at the Milwaukee Art Museum. Her most recent publication is *Fighting for Freedom: Black Craftspeople and the Pursuit of Independence* (University of North Carolina Press, 2025). Her keynotes and invited lectures span major museums and universities, from the Metropolitan Museum of Art to the University of Alabama.

At MTSU, Momon leads the center in its long-standing traditions of community-driven preservation and student success while charting new directions in research, public engagement, and digital scholarship. She teaches courses in historic preservation and public history and mentors graduate research assistants.



Brian Mueller

School of Music

College of Liberal Arts

Promoted to Senior Instructor

Brian Mueller is a senior instructor of percussion in the School of Music, where he has been on faculty since 2015. His teaching has included private lessons in classical and jazz percussion, directing the MTSU Percussion Ensemble and Steel Pan Ensemble, writing for and coaching the MTSU Front Ensemble, and teaching the Percussion Techniques course each spring. He is also on faculty with the Tennessee Governor's School for the Arts.

Mueller holds a Doctor of Music degree from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music (2016). He also has a Master of Music from the University of North Texas (2009) and a Bachelor of Music from Wichita State University (2007). Mueller has worked as a freelance drummer and percussionist for many years, and is a published composer and arranger, with pieces available through Tapspace Publications, Row-Loff Productions, C. Alan Publications, and Cimarron Music Press. He has recorded for Row-Loff Productions and Electronic Arts. He also has developed a metronome app for iPhone, The Gnome, which is published through the Apple App Store.

Mueller has performed and presented clinics nationally and internationally, including at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention; the International Tuba and Euphonium Conference; the MTSU Jazz Festival; the Shanghai Jazz Festival; the Columbus (Ohio) International Festival; the North Georgia Percussion Festival; the McCormick Marimba Festival; Reinhardt University; Southeastern University; Florida State University; the University of Georgia; Tennessee Tech University; Indiana University; Wichita State University; Kansas State University; the University of Texas—El Paso, Middle Tennessee State University; the University of the South (Sewanee); the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Paris; the Central Conservatory of Beijing; the Midi School of Music (Beijing); Wuxi Grand Theater (Wuxi, China); Hangzhou Normal University (Hangzhou, China); the Zhejiang Conservatory of Music (Hangzhou, China); and the Wuhan Conservatory of Music.

He proudly endorses Innovative Percussion and Pearl/Adams Concert Percussion.

Wendy Rountree

Department of English

College of Liberal Arts

Tenured



Wendy Rountree is joining the University as a professor and department chair in the Department of English. She brings over 20 years of experience as a professor, researcher, and administrator. She has worked at Salisbury University, North Carolina Central University, and most recently Northern Arizona University. She holds a B.S. in Biology from the University of North Carolina, B.A. and M.A. degrees in English from East Carolina University, and a Ph.D. in English from the University of Cincinnati. Her expertise is in 20th-century American literature, 20th-century ethnic American literature with an emphasis in African American literature, and 20th-century ethnic American drama.

As a scholar, she has published book chapters, journal articles, and two academic books—*Just Us Girls: The Contemporary African American Young Adult Novel* and *The Boys Club: Male Protagonists in Contemporary African American Young Adult Literature*—and is author of a young adult novel, *Lost Soul*. Her pedagogical essay “Teaching the Importance of Place and Space: Utilizing Robert Stepto’s ‘Ritual Grounds’” appears in the edited collection *Teaching Space, Place, and Literature*. Her book chapter “Space, Identity, and Voice in Angie Thomas’ *The Hate U Give*” has been published in the edited collection *Containing Childhood: Space and Identity in Children’s Literature*. As a scholar-teacher, her research influences her teaching and vice versa. Some of the courses that she has taught include Africana Women; African American Autobiography; American Women Writers of Color; Black Cinema; Ethnic American Literature; Freshman Composition; Race, Identity, and Film; and The Short Story.

Over the course of her career, she has served as a department chair and a program director. In addition, she has chaired committees at the department, college, and university levels. She is looking forward to contributing to faculty, staff, and student success in the Department of English, the MTSU community, and the region at large.



Aaron Shapiro

Department of English

College of Liberal Arts

Promoted to Master Instructor

Aaron Shapiro is a poet, essayist, and scholar. He brings 20 years of teaching and writing experience to MTSU, having served as a writing center assistant, adjunct, lecturer, and instructor since his arrival in 2005. He holds a B.A. in English with a concentration in Creative Writing from the University of Florida and an M.A. and Ph.D. in English from MTSU, where he focused on critical theory, cultural studies, popular culture, and modern American literature.

As a scholar, Shapiro's work focuses on the tradition of Jewish literature, examining how Jewish writers have navigated their place within the framework of western aesthetics. He was an integral member of the committee, chaired by Elyce Helford, that pioneered the Jewish and Holocaust Studies minor at MTSU, where he continues to teach courses in Jewish American writing and Jewish culture and civilization, along with Introduction to the Holocaust.

Shapiro also teaches undergraduate composition, including expository and argumentative writing. In all his classes, he cultivates a student-centered environment aimed at helping students hone their rhetorical and analytical skills while deepening their appreciation for critical inquiry.

Beyond the University, Shapiro is active in the local creative writing scene, maintaining a long-standing relationship with organizations such as Poetry in the Boro and the Bloom Stage, where he is a frequent contributor and performer. He has been an Art Wire fellow for Oz Arts Nashville and a Pushcart nominee, and he won the 2025 Porch Prize. His work has appeared in *The Explicator*, *The Legacy of Mad Men*, *Swing, Shift*, *Art Wire*, *Reckoning: Tennessee Writers on 2020*, *Dandelion Scribes*, *Dream Geographies*, and elsewhere.

Through his teaching and his commitment to writing and the arts, Shapiro helps students make meaningful contributions to their fields.

Lisa Swart

Department of History

College of Liberal Arts

Promoted to Master Instructor

Lisa Swart earned her B.F.A. from Rhodes University (South Africa), followed by an M.A. in Ancient Near Eastern Studies and Ph.D. in Ancient Studies with an emphasis on ancient Egypt from Stellenbosch University (South Africa). She joined MTSU in 2016.



Swart teaches U.S. history general education courses in both on-ground and online formats, including sections within the Reading History Initiative for student success, as well as graduate topics in ancient Egyptian history and society. She designed and is teaching a new online thematic course on ancient food history in alignment with the True Blue Core. Deeply committed to equity and accessibility in the classroom, she transitioned all of her on-ground and online courses to open educational resources (OER) in the 2021–22 academic year through an OER grant.

Swart's teaching has been widely recognized across the University. In 2024, she received the College of Liberal Art's Faculty Teaching Award. She has also been recognized by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students as a faculty member who makes a real difference in students' lives. In 2026, MTSU student-athletes named her a Most Valuable Professor. Early in her time at MTSU, she earned the designation of faculty fellow through MTSU's Center for Teaching and Learning, a meaningful milestone in her professional development.

Beyond the classroom, Swart is a devoted scholar of the ancient world. Her research explores funerary art and mortuary practices in Third Intermediate Period Egypt, uncovering how ancient society transformed and adapted over time in response to significant social, political, and environmental upheaval. It is work that has taken her around the world. She has presented at numerous national and international conferences and has been published in leading journals dedicated to the ancient world.



Tammy Donham

Department of Recording Industry

Scott Borchetta College of
Media and Entertainment

Promoted to Professor

Tammy Donham is a professor in the Department of Recording Industry, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in music business, marketing, branding, and digital strategy. She also coordinates the M.B.A. with a

Music Business concentration, where she helps shape the graduate curriculum and prepares students for leadership roles in the entertainment industry. Before joining MTSU in 2013, she spent nearly two decades in the music business, including 17 years with the Country Music Association (CMA), where she served as vice president of marketing. During her time at CMA, she led marketing, creative, and research initiatives for signature events including the CMA Awards, CMA Music Festival, and CMA Country Christmas.

At MTSU, Donham has developed and redesigned courses that integrate experiential learning with current industry practices, engaging students through hands-on projects, data analytics, and emerging technologies. In recognition of her innovative teaching, she received MTSU's Outstanding Experiential Learning (EXL) Faculty Award.

Donham is co-author of the fourth edition of *Marketing Recorded Music: How Music Companies Brand and Market Artists*, a textbook adopted by colleges and universities throughout the United States and internationally that helps prepare the next generation of music business professionals. Her scholarly work focuses on music marketing, branding, experiential learning, and the growing role of artificial intelligence in higher education and the music industry.

Beyond the classroom, Donham provides leadership through University and college service. She collaborates on the department's social media and digital marketing initiatives, oversees the department's Chartmetric educational partnership that supports instruction across multiple courses, and serves on numerous departmental, college, and University committees. Her service supports student outreach, curriculum development, and initiatives that enhance student learning and engagement.

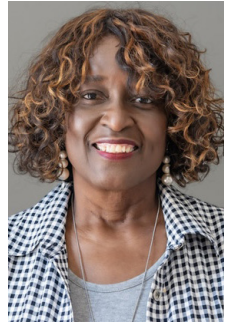
Through her industry leadership, innovative teaching, scholarship, and service, Donham continues to advance MTSU's nationally recognized Recording Industry program while preparing students to succeed in an evolving global music industry.

Gloria Green

Department of Recording Industry

Scott Borchetta College of
Media and Entertainment

Promoted to Professor



Gloria Green is a professor of Music Business who teaches courses on artist management, concert promotion and touring, and the talent agency business, as well as professionalism in the recording industry and music publicity.

As chair of the department's newly formed Live Entertainment Committee and advisor to its new Live Entertainment minor, Green leads a team of Audio Production, Commercial Songwriting, and Music Business faculty in building curriculum to keep pace with the touring industry. She recently published a textbook, *The Business of Live Concert Touring: From the Artists to the Fans*.

Prior to entering academia, Green was a music agent at the world-renowned William Morris Agency (now WME), where she negotiated concerts and tours for artists including Cece Winans, Charlie Daniels, Josh Turner, Joy Williams, Kirk Franklin, Randy Travis, Switchfoot, and Take 6. She earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology and her master's degree in Mass Communication from the University of South Carolina, where she also worked in the sports information office and as an assistant to the press secretary in the South Carolina lieutenant governor's office. After a stint as a writer with the South Carolina Forestry Commission, she put her public relations skills to work as public information officer at South Carolina State Parks before moving to Nashville.

Green remains active in the music business as a member of the International Entertainment Buyers Association, where she spent three years on the Educational Outreach Fund Board, and the Music and Entertainment Industry Educators Association, where she served two terms on the board of directors. She is also an alumna of the Women in Music Business Association and the National Association of Black Female Executives in Music & Entertainment, and a longtime member of the Gospel Music Association, where she served over nine years on the GMA Foundation board of directors.



Kristine Potter

Department of Media Arts

Scott Borchetta College of
Media and Entertainment

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Kristine Potter is an internationally recognized artist, educator, and editorial photographer whose work explores mythology, landscape, history, and identity in the American experience. Her photographs have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Time*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, among other publications. She holds a B.F.A. in Photography and a B.A. in Art History from the University of Georgia and an M.F.A. in Photography from Yale University.

Potter's creative practice has earned international recognition through exhibitions, publications, and major awards. She is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in Photography, the Grand Prix Images Vevey, the Hariban Award Grand Prize, MTSU's Distinguished Early Creative Activity Award, and the University of Georgia's Margie E. West Alumni Prize. Her work is held in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the High Museum of Art, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Her monographs *Manifest* and *Dark Waters*, published by TBW Books and Aperture, are recognized as significant contributions to contemporary photography; *Dark Waters* is currently featured in "Photobooks USA 2000–25" at the International Center of Photography, an exhibition examining influential American photobooks of the past quarter century.

At MTSU, Potter has played a central role in shaping the Photography program. She helped lead the curriculum redesign that established the B.F.A. in Photography and has developed many of the program's signature courses, with teaching that emphasizes visual authorship, critical thinking, and sustained creative practice.

Beyond the classroom, Potter is committed to mentorship, advising students on exhibitions, grants, internships, and graduate study while connecting them to artists, editors, curators, and publishers through her professional network. She also contributes to curriculum planning and program assessment, and remains active as an invited lecturer, critic, and workshop leader throughout the United States and abroad.

Michele Abernathy

Department of University Studies

University College

Promoted to Senior Instructor



Michele Abernathy joined the MTSU faculty in fall 2020 and is a senior instructor of reading in the University Studies Department. An alumna of MTSU, she holds a B.S. in Elementary Education and an M.Ed. Her instructional career spans over three decades, focusing on building foundational literacy skills and cultivating the critical thinking habits undergraduate students need for academic success. Abernathy not only teaches in the reading area but also in Professional Studies.

As an instructor, Abernathy's teaching philosophy is built on a foundation of continuous improvement with a pedagogy honed through extensive professional development and collaborative efforts, including a pilot program to implement a scenario-based assessment with the University of Memphis. She also co-piloted innovative practices with the reading area coordinator, focusing on interdisciplinary reading and writing, which resulted in the development of model lessons for the program and a colleague's recent publication.

Beyond collaboration, she designed and implemented several innovative instructional tools to aid comprehension and text annotation into a high-quality, interdisciplinary comprehension technique. This proactive approach to instruction is reflected in her students' success and efforts beyond the classroom; she has implemented a strategy of early identification and targeted individualized intervention to build confidence as independent learners. In recognition of her classroom impact, she received the University College's Outstanding Full-Time Faculty Award in spring 2024.

Through effective teaching, student mentorship, and collaboration efforts, Abernathy continues to support the academic mission of the University Studies Department and the broader MTSU community.

Faculty Emeriti

Teaching | Research | Service

Faculty members who have served Middle Tennessee State University with distinction may be awarded the title Emeritus or Emerita upon retirement. The President may confer Emeritus status upon eligible faculty who have given honorable and distinguished full-time service to the University.

Note: Department/School names reflect those in effect at the time each honoree was granted Emeritus status.

Robert B. Blair

Department of Marketing

Professor Emeritus



Robert B. Blair retired as professor of Marketing after 30 years of service to Middle Tennessee State University. During his tenure, he served as director of the Center for Economic Education for 16 years and chair of the Department of Marketing for six years. His career reflected both the evolution of business education at MTSU and a longstanding commitment to preparing students for professional success.

Blair's expertise centered on business teacher education, business communication, and workforce preparation. He supervised numerous student teachers in partnership with the College of Education and served as business coordinator and internship coordinator for the Master of Science in Professional Science program in the College of Basic and Applied Sciences. Throughout his career, he remained dedicated to connecting academic learning with professional practice.

He earned a Ph.D. in Vocational Education from Louisiana State University, an M.B.E. in Business Education from MTSU, and a B.S. in Business Administration and Business Education from Oral Roberts University. Before entering higher education, he taught at the secondary level and became the first Tennessee career and technical education teacher to earn National Board Certification. He also sponsored student organizations including Collegiate DECA, Future Business Leaders of America, Phi Beta Lambda, and Collegiate Secretaries International.

Blair's professional credentials include certified online instructor, certified business and social etiquette consultant, and Professional Registered Parliamentarian. During his 39-year teaching career, he received numerous honors recognizing excellence in teaching, research, leadership, and service. Among those recognitions were the MTSU Public Service Award, the Jones College of Business Outstanding Service Award, the National Business Education Association Distinguished Service Award, and the National Association for Business Teacher Education Outstanding Leadership Award.

Beyond the University, Blair provided extensive leadership in professional and community organizations. He served as president of national, state, and local associations in business education, parliamentarian practice, and community service, including the National Business Education Association, Tennessee Business Education Association, and Master Gardeners of Rutherford County.



Ron Bombardi

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

Professor Emeritus

Ron Bombardi has been teaching logic and philosophy in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies since 1984. In 1995 he was appointed department chair, a post he held for 25 years before returning to full-time teaching. In addition to his regular course complement—comprising both introductory classes and advanced seminars—he has delivered numerous papers for the Honors Lecture Series, directed several Honors theses, taught Honors classes, and served as both a member and chair of the Honors Council.

When John Adams wrote to his beloved Abigail in 1780 that “I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy,” he understood the pursuit of philosophy to encompass what we should today call the natural and social sciences. English usage has since changed; disciplinary boundaries have been declared, funded, and institutionalized. Yet, as Bombardi sees the role of philosophy in contemporary American education, the spirit of Adams’ aspiration remains central, for we too recognize that there are two educations: one that “should teach us how to make a living, and the other how to live.”

The tenor of his own teaching is grounded in this fundamental principle: that liberation of the intellect is essential to human flourishing. Intellectual freedom is, in his view, tantamount to the practice of sound scholarship—that is, to maintaining rigorous habits of organized skepticism and reasoned consensus in all collective endeavors. Because both doubt and consensus depend as much on logic and analysis as they do on data and engineering, his pursuit of the perennial goals of higher education has, for more than 40 years, been hungrily interdisciplinary, spanning philosophy from antiquity to the latest news.

Michelle Boyer-Pennington

Department of Psychology

Professor Emerita



Michelle Boyer-Pennington earned her B.A. in Psychology and Music from Emory University and both her M.S. and Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from the University of Florida. She joined the MTSU Psychology Department in 1995.

She taught a number of undergraduate and graduate courses in developmental psychology, as well as general psychology and the Careers in Psychology seminar course. Alongside Professor Teresa Davis, she worked on the most recent edition of the department's custom textbook for General Psychology, the proceeds from which support student research and travel.

From 2011–23, she served as the department's undergraduate coordinator. During that time, she led the department through a Tennessee Board of Regents academic audit and an external review. She was also responsible for annual assessment of the undergraduate program. Most recently, she served on the department's Assessment Committee, where she helped develop and implement the department's new exit exam.

At the University level, in addition to serving on numerous task forces, faculty learning communities, work groups, and committees, she was heavily involved in the development of Engage, the University's most recent Quality Enhancement Plan. Beginning with the topic selection committee, she continued to chair the goals and assessment subcommittee for the QEP, helping develop the program's student learning outcomes and assessments and serving on the leadership committee for several years.

Initially, her research focused on the development of event memory in toddlers and preschoolers but shifted to the effects of parental divorce on children and predictors of college retention and adjustment in college students. She worked with a number of Honors students, Central Magnet School students, and undergraduate and graduate students. Her research has been published in journals such as *Child Development*, *Memory*, *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, and *Infant and Child Development*.



Mike Boyle

Department of University Studies

Professor Emeritus

Mike Boyle has served Middle Tennessee State University with distinction for nearly two decades, contributing as an administrator, professor, mentor, and leader in student success. He began his MTSU career as dean of the College of Continuing Education and Distance Learning, where he helped shape the University's emerging online learning footprint and laid important groundwork for MTSU Online. He later served as dean of University College and vice provost for student success, where he continued to advance MTSU's mission of supporting student achievement and oversaw the newly created University Studies Department.

Following his administrative service, Boyle transitioned to the faculty as a professor in the University Studies Department. In that role, he supported the undergraduate Integrated Studies and Professional Studies programs, the Master of Professional Studies, and the College of Education's Ed.D. in Assessment, Learning, and Student Success, where he mentored numerous doctoral students pursuing careers in educational leadership and student success.

Throughout his career, Boyle has been an exceptional colleague and trusted mentor. He has guided numerous faculty members and served on important committees, continuing to shape the direction of the department and institution. His scholarly work, including peer-reviewed publications and national presentations, reflects his commitment to improving teaching and learning outcomes.

Recognized with honors such as the Association for Continuing Higher Education (ACHE) Outstanding Faculty Award and the University College Outstanding Tenured Faculty Award, Boyle has made a lasting impact on MTSU through his teaching, leadership, service, and scholarship.

Teresa Davis

Department of Psychology

Professor Emerita



Teresa Davis earned her B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Richmond and her M.S. in Social Psychology and Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from the University of Florida. She worked as a postdoctoral research associate in the Child Psychiatry Department at the University of Florida prior to joining the faculty of the MTSU Psychology Department in 1993.

For the past 26 years Davis has been the coordinator of MTSU's General Psychology course. In this capacity, she pioneered an empirically assessed peer tutoring program leading to research presentations and publications on the program's impact and effectiveness. With the help of her colleague, Mary Ellen Fromuth, she developed a custom textbook for General Psychology that enriches students' experiences by including customized critical thinking and interactive activities. Davis also was instrumental in the development of a royalties-based fund that supports student research and travel. She is a recipient of the MTSU Outstanding Honors Faculty Award, has been nominated for several teaching honors, and has been selected for the True Blue Core Newsletter faculty spotlight.

As an advisor to the Psychology Club and MTSU's Psi Chi Chapter, Davis helped to revitalize and grow these organizations and has mentored student leaders. She has served as the undergraduate coordinator and chaired the redesign of the undergraduate Psychology program. Davis has been a member of, and chaired, many University and department committees. She has been involved in the development of MTSU's True Blue Core and recently chaired the True Blue Core Committee.

Initially, Davis' social psychology research interests focused on judgments of blame and responsibility, and her developmental research investigated children's emotion regulation. More recently, her research program has focused on student academic success. Her research has been published in journals such as *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *Developmental Psychology*, and *Teaching of Psychology*.



Terry Goodin

Womack Department of Educational Leadership

Professor Emeritus

Terry Goodin received his bachelor's degree from Western Kentucky University, his Master of Education from Lipscomb University, and his Doctor of Education from Vanderbilt University. At Vanderbilt, he was introduced to problem-based learning (PBL), an active approach to teaching and learning that engages learners in solving real problems. For

his dissertation, he designed and tested a middle school PBL curriculum in entrepreneurship education.

Since arriving at MTSU, his career has been defined by his involvement with PBL as a designer, developer, researcher, and teacher. He has taught more than 40 different courses during his tenure at MTSU, most using the PBL approach he developed. He represented the Educational Leadership Department in the Tennessee Board of Regents' redesign of teacher preparation in Tennessee. The program, called Ready2Teach, was built around the PBL framework that Goodin devised, and he addressed the Board of Regents to explain the PBL process.

Thereafter, he led the development of the department's Residency I program, which received national recognition from the Association of Teacher Educators as a finalist for Outstanding Program of the Year in 2016. He served as coordinator of Residency I for eight years.

Goodin works with universities at the state, regional, and national levels on the design and implementation of PBL across a variety of disciplines and conducts training for schools, universities, and corporations. His research includes authoring and co-authoring book chapters, papers, articles, conference presentations, and PBL events. His most recent work is the book *Mindset for Success*, co-authored with fellow Professor Heather Dillard, which explores the use of PBL as a personal and professional decision-making and problem-solving tool. He continues to envision the future of PBL, whether in learning teams for students and professionals or in fostering the "PBL Mindset" in individuals.

Mary S. Hoffschwelle

Department of History

Professor Emerita



Mary Hoffschwelle served MTSU and its students, faculty, and staff for more than four decades. She is an exceptional scholar, teacher, and administrator who elevated and deepened the lives of countless students, both directly and indirectly.

Hoffschwelle began her career at MTSU in 1992, when she was hired as an instructor of History. She gained a tenure-track position in 1999 and rose through the ranks to become professor in 2004. In that time, she taught hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students and was vital in the creation of the department's Public History graduate program.

Hoffschwelle put her leadership skills to the test when she took over as director of the University's Quality Enhancement Plan, MT Engage, in 2016. She established MT Engage as a cooperative and supportive teaching enhancement program that continues to pay rich dividends throughout the University. Her immense success at the position led to her last appointment as vice provost for planning and effectiveness, where she, among many other duties, oversaw the University's accreditation processes and helped shepherd the University's strategic planning initiatives.

In addition to her outstanding leadership, Hoffschwelle is an accomplished historian and scholar of Tennessee and the American South. She has published articles and essays in the top journals of her field, including the *Journal of Southern History* and *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, among many others. Both of her historical monographs, *Rebuilding the Rural Southern Community: Reformers, Schools, and Homes in Tennessee, 1900–1930* (University of Tennessee Press, 1998) and *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South* (University Press of Florida, 2006), investigate the importance of the Rosenwald Schools, an early 20th-century program that built schools for Black Southerners in 15 states between 1917 and 1932. Her work has been foundational in exposing the generational impact of the schools.



William Levine

Department of English

Professor Emeritus

Bill Levine has served as an English professor at MTSU since 1998 after teaching at several universities in Texas for nine years. He is retiring after serving as the English graduate program director, one of many major service assignments and leadership appointments he has completed over the years for his department, the College of Liberal Arts, the University, and the Tennessee Board of Regents.

He has taught the History of Criticism graduate course since 2009 and developed two popular, longstanding general education courses on the literature of jazz and the blues and philosophical literature. His many articles deal with the convergence of aesthetics and politics in British culture from 1740 to 1830, especially in poetry and critical prose writing, as well as literary treatments of jazz and other genres of music. One of his articles on the redirection of political language in the poetic forms of the 1740s has been cited over 40 times in the past three decades.

He is currently preparing a book manuscript on the ways that jazz knowledge has informed the history of Nashville music and, more broadly, the interplay between country and western genres and jazz experimentation. His early research on this project was awarded a fellowship at the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University. For several years, he produced interviews with musicians for WMOT-FM and wrote articles for arts weeklies in Houston and Nashville. He has appeared on the NPR flagship program *Jazz Night in America* and has been interviewed about his music research for Sky TV and an award-winning documentary on Billie Holiday.

Amy Sue Macy

Department of Recording Industry

Professor Emerita



Amy Sue Macy is a professor whose career reflects a unique combination of music industry leadership, teaching excellence, and student mentorship. She holds an undergraduate degree in Music Education and an M.B.A. from Belmont University.

Before entering higher education, Macy spent more than 15 years on Music Row, working for MTM, MCA, and Sparrow Records before advancing to senior director at the RCA Label Group. In that role, she developed marketing and sales strategies for major artists including Martina McBride, Kenny Chesney, Clint Black, Alabama, and Lonestar. She also managed national retail relationships with companies such as Walmart, Target, Best Buy, and Kmart while coordinating distribution and marketing efforts with Bertelsmann Music Group (BMG).

Since joining MTSU in 1999, Macy has been a driving force in the Recording Industry program. She served for nine years as Music Business internship coordinator and taught a wide variety of courses, including Marketing of Recordings, Record Retail Operation, Survey of the Recording Industry, Recording Industry Professionalism, and Amp and Lens: The Music Industry Through Documentaries. She also revitalized the student-run label Match Records and provided leadership as coordinator for both the undergraduate Music Business program and the Jones College M.B.A. concentration in Music Business.

Macy is co-author of *Record Label Marketing*, now in its fourth edition and adopted by universities nationwide. A certified online instructor, she played a key role in developing MTSU's fully online Recording Industry with the Music Business concentration degree program. Her teaching excellence has been recognized with the Distinguished Educator in Distance Learning Award and the Outstanding Achievement in Instructional Technology Award.

Beyond academia, Macy remains an active musician, vocalist, and multi-instrumentalist. She has toured internationally, performed at venues including the Ryman Auditorium and Tennessee Performing Arts Center, served as an artist-in-residence at the Country Music Hall of Fame, and created educational concert programs exploring Civil War and Irish music traditions.



Brian T. Miller

Department of Biology

Professor Emeritus

Brian T. Miller began his MTSU career as an assistant professor in the Department of Biology in 1989. He was tenured and promoted to associate professor in 1995 and promoted to full professor in 1999.

Miller has taught a diversity of undergraduate and graduate courses (more than 30 lecture and lab courses) that explored major principles in ecology and evolutionary biology, morphology, and physiology. His courses were well-received and helped prepare students for careers in the biological sciences, including conservation, ecology, and medical and paramedical professions.

Miller maintained an externally funded research program throughout his career. Students co-authored many of his more than 100 publications. He served as major advisor on 28 M.S. and two Honors theses, and he was a committee member on many others. He served as an editor for several professional publications (including *Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles* from 1999 to 2013 and *Herpetological Conservation and Biology* from 2006 to present). In addition to editorial responsibilities, Miller served as a reviewer for many journals, the National Science Foundation, and the Austrian Science Fund.

He was also heavily involved in community service, serving on the advisory boards of various conservation or educational organizations. Miller currently serves as an instructor with the Tennessee Naturalist Program, a nature education program for adults coordinated by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. Lastly, to help raise awareness about biodiversity in middle Tennessee, he wrote and continues to update guides on the amphibians and reptiles of this region. Collectively, these guides consist of more than 500 pages and over 1,000 photographs, which he distributes free of charge to all participants in programs in which he instructs and to any interested individuals or groups.

Todd O'Neill

School of Journalism and Strategic Media

Professor Emeritus



Todd O'Neill is associate professor and coordinator of the Interactive Media B.S. program in the School of Journalism and Strategic Media. He led the program's development from a departmental concentration to a full degree program, building curriculum across social media, digital analytics, user experience, content strategy, and digital media law and policy.

His University service reflects a sustained commitment to shared governance. O'Neill has served on the General Education Committee, the University Curriculum Committee (including as secretary), MTSU's Strategic Plan 2025–2035 Community Engagement Pillar, and the Faculty Senate. At the college level, he has contributed to curriculum, mentoring, promotion and tenure, and AI-focused committees.

Central to his recent work is a three-year appointment to MTSU's AI Initiative Team, where he helped develop the University's approach to artificial intelligence in teaching and curriculum. He served on the committee that established MTSU's formal AI instruction policy and has delivered workshops and presentations on AI for faculty, staff, alumni, and community organizations, including United Way and the Tennessee Farmers Co-op.

O'Neill connects the University to Nashville's broader professional and civic ecosystem through involvement with Nashville UX, Nashville Product, BarCampNashville, Craft Content Nashville, the Murfreesboro Technology Council, and the Rutherford Neighborhood Alliance. He hosted World Information Architecture Day 2026 and serves as outgoing chair of the Broadcast Education Association (BEA) Festival of Media Arts' Interactive Media and Emerging Technology Competition, student division.

Prior to joining MTSU full time in 2012, he completed a 30-year career as an award-winning video, multimedia, and online producer serving Fortune 500 clients and local nonprofits. He has taught part-time for 23 years. As an educator, his goal is straightforward: that students leave more confident, more curious, and more capable than when they arrived.



Richard Pace

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Professor Emeritus

Richard Pace retired in July 2026 as a professor of Anthropology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. He earned a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Florida in 1987. After working at the University of Wyoming and Western Kentucky University, he began a 29-year career at Middle Tennessee State University.

His research focus over the years has been in Brazil, with a particular emphasis on the Amazon. Pace has researched and published on social movements among rural populations (peasants/rubber tappers) and the ethnographic study of media engagement (radio, television, film, cell phones, and the internet) in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. He is the author, co-author, or editor of five books, with one translated into Portuguese, and has published in multiple anthropology journals.

He has been awarded three Fulbrights, received research funding from the National Science Foundation and National Geographic Society, and served as a visiting professor at the Federal University of Pará and the Goeldi Museum, both in Belém, Brazil. Since 2013 he has collaborated with the Mëbêngôkre-Kayapó Indigenous peoples in film production and media analysis, including an award-winning short film called *Nhakpoti* produced in collaboration with other MTSU faculty. He has also organized or co-organized the InDigital Conference (Indigenous Media across the Americas) five times in collaboration with Vanderbilt University and the Smithsonian Institution.

Over the years, Pace has taught undergraduate courses on Brazil, anthropological theory, visual and media anthropology, and cultural anthropology, and he was awarded MTSU's Outstanding Teaching Award in 2003. He has directed a dozen study abroad courses in the Brazil Amazon. Upon retirement, he will continue researching and publishing as a visiting professor at the Goeldi Museum.

Sharon Campbell Parente

Walker Library User Services

Professor Emerita



Sharon Campbell Parente provided more than 41 years of distinguished service to Walker Library and Middle Tennessee State University, leaving an enduring mark on the evolution of library services and library user support. She joined MTSU in January 1984 as a reference librarian with a tenure-track appointment after earning a Master of Science in Library Science from the University of Kentucky and a Bachelor of Arts in English and History from Lynchburg College. Parente was awarded tenure in 1990 and continued to expand her impact through positions as a liaison librarian, Reference and Instruction team leader, and Distance Learning Services librarian. Her tenure was defined by excellence, collaboration, and dedication to the academic community.

Throughout her career, Parente played a critical role in transforming Walker Library services, particularly during MTSU's expansion into online education. She was instrumental in developing and advancing course-embedded library services, ensuring that students and faculty, both on campus and online, received consistent, high-quality research support.

For decades, Parente was the trusted and compassionate face of the Walker Library reference desk, recognized for her thoughtful guidance, deep expertise, and unwavering commitment to helping students navigate their research journeys.

In 2005, the Tennessee Library Association honored Parente's significant contribution to library instruction in Tennessee with the James E. Ward Library Instruction Award. In 2025, library faculty initiated the Sharon Campbell Parente Scholarship fund in recognition of Parente's lasting contributions to Walker Library, MTSU, and the many students, faculty, and colleagues she served.

Beyond the library, Parente enjoys spending time with her husband, a former MTSU faculty member, and sons Michael and David, both MTSU graduates.



Sandra Poirier

Department of Human Sciences

Professor Emerita

Sandra Poirier served as professor of Nutrition and Food Science from 2005 to 2025, bringing more than 40 years of distinguished experience in nutrition, family and consumer sciences, and education. She earned her Doctor of Education from Florida International University in Miami, where her dissertation focused on health-related quality of life.

Throughout her career, Poirier demonstrated an unwavering commitment to excellence in teaching, innovation, and global engagement. She contributed more than 15 years of international teaching experience in culturally diverse settings, including the United Arab Emirates, the Philippines, and Canada, enriching her work with a strong global perspective.

At MTSU, Poirier was a leader in advancing student-centered education. She expanded online and hybrid learning opportunities to increase access for rural and nontraditional students across Tennessee. Her courses were known for their integration of experiential and service learning, connecting students with meaningful community partnerships and real-world applications. She served as faculty advisor for the student chapter of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences until her retirement in 2025.

Her strengths included developing innovative academic programs, identifying impactful outreach initiatives, and empowering students for successful and purposeful careers. She played a key role in strengthening academic offerings by redesigning courses to meet state endorsement requirements and by integrating food, culture, and nutrition across the curriculum.

A prolific scholar, Poirier has published more than 44 journal articles and has been invited to present her work internationally in countries across Europe, Asia, and beyond. Her legacy is defined by her dedication to student success, global engagement, and transformative education, leaving a lasting impact on MTSU and the many students she mentored.

Greg Reish

School of Music

Professor Emeritus



Gregory Reish is an integrative scholar-performer who served as professor of Musicology in MTSU's School of Music and director of MTSU's Center for Popular Music from 2014 until his retirement in 2025. Reish earned his Ph.D. in 2001 at the University of Georgia, where he studied historical musicology with a specialization in modernist Italian music. He also received his M.A. from the University of Georgia and his B.M. in Studio Music and Jazz Guitar from the University of Miami. Before arriving at MTSU, Reish served on the faculties at Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts, SUNY–Buffalo State College, the University of Hawaii at Hilo, and the University of Georgia.

Over the last 20 years, Reish's work has focused on musical and cultural analysis of traditional music of the southern United States and eastern Mexico, including bluegrass, oldtime, Tejano, and son jarocho. He has performed and given workshops at a wide range of venues and festivals in the U.S., Mexico, Ireland, Japan, and China. As an author and editor, Reish has published on topics as diverse as the old-time music revival in the U.S., son jarocho fusion, and the music of Italian composer Giacinto Scelsi. Reish has recorded and produced numerous albums of traditional music, many of them as part of his work directing the Center for Popular Music.

Reish was a two-time recipient of Fulbright awards, first to Italy as a doctoral student in the 1990s, and in 2023 to Mexico as Fulbright-García Robles U.S. Studies Chair at the University of Veracruz. He now makes his home in Xalapa, Veracruz.



Donald Snead

Womack Department of Educational Leadership

Professor Emeritus

Donald Snead earned his bachelor's degree from Fort Valley State University, a Master of Arts in Teaching from Western Kentucky University, and a Doctor of Education from the University of Kentucky. He began his career teaching mathematics in Georgia and science in Kentucky, where he was inducted into the Kentucky Distinguished

Educators cadre. After more than 20 years in public education, he joined Middle Tennessee State University in 2000.

During his 26-year tenure at MTSU, Snead contributed through teaching, scholarship, service, and student mentorship. He became a certified online instructor, served as Honors College faculty, and held graduate faculty status. His commitment to students earned multiple recognitions, including a nomination for the OWLs (Older, Wiser Learners) Professor Award.

Snead engaged in international and professional initiatives, including co-directing the Friendship Project, an exchange program involving Naruto University, the University of Puget Sound, and MTSU. He also participated in leadership development programs such as the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) Leadership Academy, Tennessee Education Association (TEA) Leadership Academy, the SCORE initiative (State Collaborative on Reforming Education), and MTSU Leadership Academy.

At MTSU, Snead taught more than 20 courses, published peer-reviewed articles and editorials, presented at professional conferences, and chaired doctoral dissertation committees. He additionally served as co-director of a Tennessee Board of Regents grant and participated in the Experiential Learning program.

During the final six years of his tenure, Snead served as chair of the Womack Educational Leadership Department, where he supported graduate programming, online leadership licensure development, and departmental operations during a period of transition within the College of Education.

Jonathan Trundle

Department of Media Arts

Professor Emeritus (Posthumous)

Jonathan Trundle (1979–2026) was an associate professor of Photography and the Photography program coordinator. A proud MTSU alumnus, he earned a B.S. in Mass Communications in 2001 before completing an M.F.A. in Photography and Digital Imaging at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) in 2006. After serving as photography department manager at MICA, he returned to MTSU in 2011 and devoted the remainder of his career to teaching, mentoring, and advancing photographic education.



Trundle was an accomplished artist whose work was exhibited in galleries in Baltimore, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C. His creative practice centered on experimental photographic processes, particularly slit-shutter and slit-scan photography. By building and modifying cameras, projection devices, and digital tools, he explored the relationship between time, motion, and image-making, creating photographs that challenged conventional ways of seeing. Equally skilled in traditional and alternative photographic processes, he worked across film, large-format photography, artist books, screen-printing, pinhole cameras, and emerging digital technologies.

Beyond his artistic achievements, Trundle was widely recognized for his generosity, creativity, and unwavering commitment to students. Colleagues described him as the heart of MTSU's Photography program, a thoughtful educator who paired deep technical knowledge with curiosity, humility, and kindness. He was known for encouraging students of all experience levels, helping them discover their creative voices while fostering a supportive learning environment. His influence extended well beyond the classroom through mentorship, collaboration, and his dedication to student success.

Remembered as an innovative artist, gifted teacher, and beloved colleague, Trundle left a lasting mark on the Department of Media Arts, the Photography program, the Governor's School for the Arts, and the generations of students whose lives and careers he helped shape. His legacy continues through the creative community he nurtured at MTSU.



Carroll Van West

Department of History

Professor Emeritus

Carroll Van West is an extraordinary teacher, scholar, and administrator who has provided decades of leadership at the Center for Historic Preservation (CHP) and MTSU. He has been a valuable member of the History Department since 1985 and has served as the director of the CHP since 2002. He has been a force of nature in generating and overseeing major external grants and historic preservation projects in our region, our state, and across the United States, securing well over \$10 million in external funding in his career.

West serves as chair emeritus of the Tennessee 250th Commission and on the national board of advisors of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He is also a member of the National Historic Landmarks Commission of the National Park Advisory Board (appointed in 2019). In 2013, Gov. Bill Haslam appointed West as the Tennessee State Historian, a position he continues to hold.

West's research has been as influential as it has been prolific. In total, he has written 17 peer-reviewed books, over three dozen peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, and over four dozen historic preservation exhibits or articles, in addition to his impressive and growing list of successful National Register of Historic Places nominations for sites across the United States.

Despite these incredible accomplishments, West's impact is still centered on his passionate mentoring of graduate students and professional public historians. Over his career, he has directed more than 125 M.A. theses and 45 Ph.D. dissertations, and his former students now hold high-level positions in the National Park Service and in museums and historic sites throughout the nation. Consequently, the impact that West has had on MTSU and the public history profession is almost too large to measure.

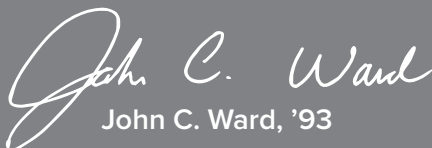
Foundation Awards

On behalf of the MTSU Foundation Board, I would like to thank you for your dedication and leadership, which have made MTSU the institution of choice for the region's top scholars.

We are grateful to all the faculty and staff seeking to provide a supportive learning environment to our students and an experience that is as personal and unique as our diverse student population. Since the establishment of the MTSU Foundation in the early 1960s, the University has been the beneficiary of gifts that have contributed significantly to its growth and development. Our mission is to provide financial assistance from alumni, friends, and the community to build an even stronger MTSU.

I congratulate today's recipients and all the faculty. Best wishes for an exciting, fulfilling, and successful academic year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "John C. Ward". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

John C. Ward, '93

President, MTSU Foundation

Outstanding Teaching Award



Bonnie Barksdale

*Womack Department of
Teaching, Learning, and Innovation*

Bonnie Barksdale is a professor of literacy education whose career reflects a deep commitment to teaching excellence, literacy advocacy, and student success. She earned her Ph.D. in Reading Education from Texas Woman's University and also holds a B.S. in Early Childhood Education from Texas Woman's University and an M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in elementary literacy from Texas Christian University.

Before joining the faculty at Middle Tennessee State University, Barksdale served in public school systems in Texas and Illinois as an elementary classroom teacher, literacy interventionist, literacy specialist, and literacy coach. Those experiences continue to shape her teaching, scholarship, and service activities.

At MTSU, Barksdale teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in literacy education. Her research focuses on writing instruction in primary-grade classrooms, diverse classroom libraries, and the instructional decisions educators make during literacy teaching. She regularly presents at local, state, and national conferences, and her scholarship has appeared in journals including *The Reading Teacher*, *Young Children*, *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, and the *Tennessee Literacy Journal*.

Her commitment to innovative and student-centered teaching has earned significant recognition. She received the Literacy Association of Tennessee Distinguished Professor Award in 2023, the Outstanding EXL Faculty Award in 2021–22, and the College of Education Ambassador Award in 2026. She has also been recognized six times as an instructor who makes a difference, reflecting her sustained impact on students both inside and outside the classroom.

In addition to her teaching and research, Barksdale contributes extensively through service. She serves on departmental and college committees, supports curriculum development, reviews scholarship for professional organizations, and chairs the Williamson County Literacy Association. Beyond the University, she volunteers with the Pawsabilities program at the Williamson County Animal Center, mentoring adults with intellectual disabilities through dog-handling instruction and community service opportunities. Through her dedication to literacy, teaching, scholarship, and community engagement, Barksdale continues to enrich the lives of students, educators, and community members across Tennessee.

Outstanding Teaching Award

Scott McDaniel

Department of University Studies

Scott McDaniel has been teaching mathematics and statistics full time at MTSU since 1995, and his approach to teaching has been shaped by a simple question: When am I most valuable to my students? Over time, that question has led him to move beyond delivering content toward creating learning environments where students build confidence and discover meaning in mathematics and statistics.



As a professor in the University Studies Department, McDaniel teaches courses ranging from foundational mathematics for underprepared students to graduate-level statistical analysis. Across all levels, his goal is to help students who may not see themselves as “math people” develop confidence and competence. His classes emphasize combining real-world applications with opportunities for reflection and revision so that students learn not just from getting correct answers, but from improvement and collaboration.

In recent years, McDaniel has focused on redesigning courses to better support student learning in both online and on-ground environments. He has developed project-based courses built around authentic datasets, video-supported instruction, and structured feedback that encourages revision and deeper understanding. He has also designed assignments and assessments that emphasize authentic application, reflection, communication, and problem-solving, helping students demonstrate genuine understanding in meaningful and observable ways. He has received multiple teaching awards, including the Outstanding Online Faculty Award and the Outstanding Faculty Award from University College.

Beyond the classroom, McDaniel is an active contributor to his department and the University, serving in leadership roles, mentoring faculty, and helping shape initiatives that support student learning. He previously served as assessment coordinator for Engage, MTSU’s Quality Enhancement Plan, helping faculty assess and improve high-impact educational practices. His scholarly interests include student belonging, online engagement, assessment, and innovative approaches to helping students develop confidence and success in mathematics and statistics.

Outstanding Teaching Award



Andrew Polk

Department of History

Andrew R. Polk has a B.A. in History from Lipscomb University, an M.A. in Biblical Studies from Hazelip School of Theology, an M.A.R. in American Religious History from Yale University, and a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Florida State University. He started his career as an assistant professor of History and director of Social Studies Education at Arkansas State University in 2013, but came to MTSU a year later. A

former high school teacher, he directed the history and social studies education initiatives for the Department of History and College of Liberal Arts for over a decade. He served as interim chair of the History Department in 2025–26 and becomes the permanent chair this year.

Polk teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on American religious history, history pedagogy, and 20th-century America. He teaches using the History Labs model, which emphasizes primary source analysis, group projects, and investigations over traditional lectures. In 2019 he won both the Faculty Teaching Award from the College of Liberal Arts and the University's Outstanding Teaching Award.

He is a scholar of American religious history who has published articles and essays in numerous academic journals, including *Church History* and *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, among many others. His first book, *Faith in Freedom: Propaganda, Presidential Politics and the Making of an American Religion*, was published with Cornell University Press in 2021. He is currently hard at work on two major book projects, a textbook on history teaching for undergraduates co-authored with his colleague Jennifer Pettit and a biography of the civil rights activist, author, and rogue preacher Will D. Campbell.

True Blue Core Outstanding Teaching Award

Candie Moonshower

Department of English

Candie Moonshower is a master instructor of English and a member of the Honors faculty. She earned a B.A. in English and Philosophy and an M.A. in English from Middle Tennessee State University, as well as an M.F.A. in Writing Popular Fiction from Seton Hill University. Since joining the MTSU faculty in 2009, first as an adjunct and later as a full-time faculty member, she has established a reputation for innovative, student-centered teaching and a commitment to student success.



Moonshower has taught a wide range of courses, including first-year composition, literature, creative writing, and upper-division courses in children's literature. She has been actively involved in high-impact educational initiatives, including Engage and the True Blue Core. In 2024, she helped pilot the True Blue Core initiative, serving as the English Department liaison and ENGL 1010 fellow while also participating in University assessment efforts. Her work has strengthened her commitment to the True Blue Core mission of developing critical thinking, problem-solving, information literacy, and effective communication skills as the foundation for lifelong learning.

Known for her interactive workshop approach, Moonshower helps students view writing as an ongoing process of revision, discovery, and self-expression. She works to create classroom environments where students gain confidence in their abilities as writers, readers, and critical thinkers. Her teaching philosophy emphasizes that every student has a unique voice and that meaningful learning occurs through exploration, reflection, and practice.

Moonshower has received numerous recognitions for her teaching and mentorship, including the English Department General Education Faculty Award and the Outstanding Honors Faculty Award. She also developed the popular Themes in Literature and Culture course "Happily Ever After: A Survey of the Modern Romance Genre," which has been offered regularly since 2019.

Through her creativity, instructional leadership, and dedication to student learning, Moonshower continues to make a lasting impact on students across the University.

Outstanding Public Service Award



Cynthia Chafin

Center for Health and Human Services

Cynthia Chafin is director of the Center for Health and Human Services, where she has served since 2002 and has led the center as director since 2015. Over the course of her career, spent largely in public health at MTSU, she has advanced community-engaged initiatives that improve health outcomes across Tennessee. Under her leadership, the center's annual operating budget has grown from \$405,000 in 2015 to \$4.8 million in fiscal year 2026,

alongside an expansion from fewer than two full staff positions to a multidisciplinary team of more than 20 paid staff and faculty—growth that has significantly increased the center's capacity to deliver public health services and reach communities across Tennessee.

Over the past five years, she has helped secure and manage more than \$16 million in funding supporting a broad range of public health initiatives. This includes more than \$13 million dedicated to substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts. These initiatives serve communities across all 95 counties, with a strong emphasis on rural and underserved populations.

Her work focuses on translating research and partnerships into practical programs addressing a broad range of public health priorities, including substance use disorder, mental health, chronic disease prevention, and rural health disparities. She has played a key leadership role in statewide efforts to address the opioid epidemic, advancing collaborative, evidence-based strategies that expand access to care.

Chafin's leadership is grounded in a strong commitment to teamwork, beginning with the dedicated staff and faculty within the center and extending to multidisciplinary campus colleagues and community and state partners. She fosters a collaborative environment that supports shared ownership of initiatives and enables the scale of impact achieved across Tennessee.

A recipient of the 2024 Rural Health Association of Tennessee President's Award, Chafin has built sustainable partnerships and workforce development opportunities that strengthen health systems across the state. Her work reflects a deep commitment to public service and improving the health and well-being of communities statewide.

Outstanding Public Service Award

Mei Han

School of Music



Mei Han is a professor of Music and director of the MTSU Center for Chinese Music and Culture (CCMC). An ethnomusicologist, performer, educator, and cultural ambassador, she is internationally recognized as one of the premier performers of the zheng, a traditional Chinese long zither. Her innovative work has expanded the instrument's reach across a wide range of musical settings, including symphonic, chamber, traditional, world, improvisational, electronic, and contemporary music.

Since becoming founding director of the CCMC in 2015, Han has advanced MTSU's mission through public engagement, cultural exchange, student development, and international outreach. Under her leadership, the center has become a hub for Chinese music and culture in the region, connecting University and community audiences through performances, lectures, exhibitions, workshops, and educational programs.

Over the past decade, Han has organized more than 60 concerts, festivals, exhibitions, and special events at MTSU and throughout middle Tennessee. These programs, offered free of charge, have reached thousands of participants while creating opportunities for cultural exploration and cross-cultural understanding. Her widely used educational video series, *Introduction to Chinese Music and Musical Instruments*, has further extended this impact to schools, museums, arts organizations, and classrooms around the world.

Han is equally committed to scholarly collaboration and international exchange. She has delivered invited lectures and keynote presentations at universities and cultural institutions worldwide and has contributed regularly to scholarly and professional publications. She has mentored 12 visiting scholars from Chinese universities and led numerous exchange initiatives, including MTSU faculty concert and lecture tours in China. In 2024, performances by the MTSU Chinese Music Ensemble in China attracted national media attention and millions of online views.

In addition to her public outreach and international work, Han contributes actively to University governance, graduate education, strategic planning initiatives, and regional cultural organizations. Through her teaching, performance, scholarship, and public engagement, she has strengthened MTSU's global profile while fostering meaningful cultural connections across communities.

Outstanding Public Service Award



Sam Zaza

Department of Information Systems and Analytics

Sam Zaza earned her Ph.D. in Management Information Systems from Florida State University. Zaza's public service spans regional workforce development and national and international scholarly leadership. She is the founder and organizer of Tech Vision, an annual regional technology conference at MTSU that brings together students, faculty, industry professionals, and government representatives to explore emerging technologies and their impact on the workforce and community.

She serves on the boards of Women in Technology Tennessee, where she directs the statewide scholarship program; the Murfreesboro Technology Council; the Tennessee Digital Government Summit; and the Information Systems Security Association (ISSA) Middle Tennessee Chapter.

At the national and international levels, Zaza has held leadership positions within the international Association for Information Systems (AIS), including president of the Special Interest Groups on Social Inclusion and Leadership in IT, chair of the AIS Women's College, and president of the AIS Middle East and North Africa Chapter. She has served as conference chair for the ACM SIGMIS Computers and People Research Conference multiple times, bringing it to MTSU in 2024 with participants from over 10 countries.

Zaza's service has been recognized with numerous awards, including the AIS Sandra Slaughter Service Award, the ACM SIGMIS Early Career Award, the AIS Distinguished Member Cum Laude distinction, four AIS Leadership Excellence Awards, the Murfreesboro Technology Council Innovation Award, and the Nashville Technology Council Inclusion and Diversity Advocate of the Year Award. She has also been recognized as a finalist for the Nashville Technology Council Community Leader Award and nominated for the Athena International Leadership Award.

Distinguished Early Career Research Award

Jessica Arbour

Department of Biology



Jessica Arbour received her Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Toronto on a Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) Canada Graduate Research Scholarship, held an NSERC postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Washington in Biology, and has been a faculty member of the Department of Biology at MTSU since 2019.

Her research explores the broad-scale evolutionary drivers that generate morphological, ecological, and species diversity, especially within freshwater fishes. She has built a highly integrative research program leveraging field collections, advanced medical imaging, anatomy/biomechanics, phylogenetics, computational modeling, and the unique and endemic diversity of Tennessee fishes. Her work explores such topics as 1) how the tempo and mode of evolution has varied across diverse radiations of animal species, 2) how developmental and functional tradeoffs constrain the ability of groups of animals to diversify, and 3) how adaptation and opportunity shape organismal form and function on evolutionary timescales. Her most recent work has highlighted the importance of small stream habitats on the diversification and species richness of American freshwater fishes.

Her work at MTSU has secured more than \$440,000 in competitive funding from the National Science Foundation, and she has published more than 30 peer-reviewed articles in prestigious journals, including *Evolution*, *Nature Communications*, *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, *BMC Biology*, and the *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*. She mentors a team of undergraduate, master's, and Ph.D. students in research projects on freshwater fish diversity and evolution that have contributed to this research.

Arbour is also a major contributor to new methodological approaches in her field, including the development of software packages in R language for the analysis of biological shape and structure. Her hope is to develop the southeastern U.S. fish fauna into a major model system for macroevolutionary study of species and trait diversity.

Distinguished Senior Research Award



Ying "Iris" Gao

School of Agriculture

Ying Gao is a professor of Plant and Soil Sciences in the School of Agriculture. She received her Ph.D. in Plant Molecular Biology from Peking University and completed her doctoral dissertation as a visiting scholar at Yale University. She joined MTSU in 2011 as a research assistant professor and a founding member of the Tennessee Center for Botanical Medicine Research. She later became the founding director of the International Ginseng Institute at MTSU.

Gao's research focuses on medicinal plants and sustainable agriculture; she serves as principal investigator on multiple funded research projects in these areas. She has authored and co-authored approximately 50 peer-reviewed publications in leading journals, including *Plant Cell*, *Plant Physiology*, *Plant Molecular Biology*, *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*, *Planta Medica*, *Journal of Functional Foods*, and *Plant Disease*. Gao also serves the scientific community as an editorial board member and reviewer for numerous scholarly journals and as a grant review panelist for federal funding agencies. She previously received the College of Basic and Applied Sciences Distinguished Research Award in 2021.

Distinguished Senior Research Award

Christoph Rosenmüller

Department of History



Christoph Rosenmüller is a professor of Latin American history and has also taught U.S. and world history. He is author of the book *Viceroy Güemes's Mexico: Rituals, Religion, and Revenue* (University of New Mexico Press, 2024), which received the 2025 Bandelier-Lavrín Book Prize in Colonial Latin American History from the Rocky Mountain Council on Latin American Studies, and the book *Corruption and Justice in Colonial Mexico, 1650–1755* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), which received the 2020 Alfred B. Thomas Award of the Southeastern Council of Latin American Studies for best book on a Latin American subject. Rosenmüller also published the book *Patrons, Partisans, and Palace Intrigues* (2008) and the edited volumes *Corruption in the Iberian Empires* (University of New Mexico Press, 2017) and *Dádivas, Dones, y Dinero* (with Stephan Ruderer), which was also translated into Chinese in 2023 by China Fangzheng Press.

Additionally, he has written over 20 articles and book chapters, published in the *Hispanic American Historical Review*, the *Latin American Research Review*, the *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas*, and elsewhere. Rosenmüller served as visiting scholar at El Colegio de México (The College of Mexico), the University of Graz (Austria), and University of Münster and the University of Munich (Germany).

The Fulbright Program, the Gerda Henkel Foundation, the Max Planck Institute for Legal History, and the German Academic Exchange Service have supported his research. Rosenmüller received his Ph.D. from Tulane University in New Orleans and his M.A. from the University of Hamburg (Germany).

Distinguished Early Career Creative Activity Award



Collin McDonald

Department of Aerospace

Collin McDonald, who grew up in middle Tennessee, is a pilot, aircraft owner, educator, and aviation content creator whose work combines aviation education, aircraft maintenance, flight safety, and public outreach. He earned a B.S. in Aerospace (Maintenance Management) from Middle Tennessee State University in 2017 and an M.S. in Aeronautical Science (Aviation Safety and Security Management) in 2022.

Following graduation, McDonald and his wife relocated to Papua New Guinea, where he served with an aviation missionary organization supporting remote communities through medical evacuation logistics, cargo operations, and transportation services. After returning to Tennessee, he worked in instructional and leadership roles at regional flight schools, helping develop curricula for private pilot, instrument, and tailwheel training programs.

While completing his graduate studies at MTSU, McDonald served as a teaching assistant in the University's Part 147 aircraft maintenance program, worked as an aircraft mechanic, and earned his FAA inspection authorization. His thesis examined the impact of COVID-19 on FAA written test performance among aircraft maintenance students.

He teaches courses in the Professional Pilot concentration, including Professional Pilot I and II, Aviation Weather, and advanced flight training classes. His scholarly and creative work focuses on flight operations, pilot decision-making, and aviation safety culture. He has presented nationally on preventive maintenance, flight instruction methods, and operational safety, including advocacy for the pre-takeoff departure briefing as a practical risk management tool.

Beyond the classroom, McDonald volunteers with the Flagship Detroit Foundation's historic DC-3 operations and mentors aspiring aviators through the Sattler Foundation. He is an active member of several professional aviation organizations, including the Experimental Aircraft Association, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, and National Association of Flight Instructors.

McDonald is also widely known through his aviation media platform, The Flying Mechanic, where he creates educational content that has reached millions of viewers while promoting aviation safety, maintenance education, and accessibility within general aviation.

Distinguished Senior Creative Activity Award

Rodrigo Gómez Claros

Department of Media Arts

Professor Rodrigo Gómez Claros is a Colombian native. He worked in his home country as a graphic designer and received the National Graphic Design Award from the Ministry of Culture, an honor presented by the Colombian president in 1994. Gómez holds a bachelor's degree in Graphic Design from the National University of Colombia and a master's degree in Computer Animation from the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York.



Gómez worked for over 14 years at Mattel/Fisher-Price Inc. as a producer and director of children's animated cartoons, corporate videos, and commercials. He became a U.S. citizen in 2018. He is passionate about the creative process of animation and searching for new stories to create innovative visuals. He enjoys working with students to explore their creative ideas while striving for the highest quality.

Gómez is the founder and content creator of MT Imagine Animation Studio, an organization within the Scott Borchetta College of Media and Entertainment that offers animation services to clients in middle Tennessee. MT Imagine has received accolades including a Silver Telly Award, two Broadcast Education Association awards, and selections at the Cannes World Film Festival and the CIC International Film Festival. It has also received official selections at multiple international film festivals, including the Nashville Film Festival.

Gómez is married and is the father of two young adult college students. He enjoys art and sports, especially soccer.

Distinguished Senior Creative Activity Award



Sheri Selph

Department of Art and Design

Sheri Flournoy Selph is an associate professor whose career bridges professional creative practice, design education, and community-engaged research. With more than 20 years of experience in graphic design, interaction design, art direction, and creative strategy, her work has served clients in the travel, entertainment, banking, healthcare, and nonprofit sectors.

Before joining MTSU in 2013, Selph served as associate creative director for Acxiom LLC, where she led award-winning print and interactive design projects for major organizations including Wyndham Hotel Group, MGM Resorts International, Caesars Entertainment, Wells Fargo Bank, Hyundai, Cadillac, Ferrari, the American Red Cross, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cigna Healthcare, and Kroger.

In recent years, her research and creative practice have focused on using design as a tool for public service and community impact. She has developed creative strategies and communication campaigns that support nonprofit organizations and underserved populations. Working in partnership with Allard Consulting LLC, she has led initiatives funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

Selph has also contributed her expertise to organizations including the Down Syndrome Diagnosis Network, the Judge Seth Norman Recovery Foundation, and the Shelby County Veterans' Court Foundation. Her recent projects include branding and outreach materials for the 26th Judicial District Recovery Court and Veterans Treatment Court, as well as communication resources designed to connect rural west Tennessee residents with substance-use treatment and recovery services.

At MTSU, Selph teaches graphic and interaction design courses and shares innovative approaches to design education through presentations at conferences including the AIGA Design Educators Conference, the University & College Designers Association Design Education Summit, and the SECAC Educators Conference. She received MTSU's Innovation Grant for Instructional Technology in 2017.

Selph holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Louisiana Tech University and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Tennessee.

Career Achievement Award

Lalo Davila

School of Music



Lalo Davila is an internationally acclaimed percussionist, composer, and educator whose 38-year career at MTSU has left an indelible mark on his students, his colleagues, and the performing arts. A professor of Music and director of percussion studies, he earned his B.M. from Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi and his M.M.E. from the University of North Texas.

Davila’s teaching blends technical mastery with creative expression, and he is renowned for mentoring generations of students into successful professional careers. He also directs the MTSU Salsa Band, an ensemble dedicated to the study and performance of Afro-Cuban salsa music, whose student members are admitted by audition and perform both on and off campus. His performances, workshops, and collaborations abroad continue to elevate the visibility of both MTSU and the School of Music.

A prolific performer and recording artist, Davila has appeared with the Corpus Christi Symphony Orchestra, the Nashville Symphony, the Nashville Jazz Orchestra, the Nashville Chamber Orchestra, and the Nashville Ballet. He has toured and recorded with artists including Arturo Sandoval, Allen Vizzutti, Six Pence None The Richer, Clay Walker, and Take 6, which he accompanied on a summer 1996 tour in Japan. He can also be heard on Kirk Whalum’s Grammy-nominated album *Hymns in the Garden*. He continues to perform with several Latin ensembles, including his own group, Lalo Davila and Friends.

Davila’s playing and voice have reached audiences worldwide through stage works like *Disney’s Aladdin* (Dual Language Edition), films such as *The Equalizer* and *McFarland, USA*, and video games including “Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic,” “Call of Duty: Black Ops III,” and EA Sports’ “College Football 25.” He has also composed original music for television series such as *Breaking Bad*, *Burn Notice*, *Drop Dead Diva*, and *Prison Break*.

Davila’s honors include Nashville’s Top Five 1998 Percussionist of the Year Award and *Nashville Scene*’s 2012 Best Latin Jazz Musician recognition. As an author, he has written more than 50 compositions and 10 instructional books used in percussion programs worldwide, among them *Contemporary Rudimental Studies and Solos*, *Play at First Sight*, *Timp-Tastic*, and *Uncommon Duos*.

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He was recently named MTSU's 2026 Conference USA Faculty Achievement Award winner, selected from a competitive pool of faculty nominees, and represented the University as its institutional nominee for the Conference USA Professor of the Year Award. He is an active clinician and adjudicator for the Pearl Corporation, Row-Loff Productions, Avedis Zildjian Co., Innovative Percussion, Grover Pro Percussion, and Evans Drumheads. Davila has held clinics and performances across the United States, Australia, Mexico, Sweden, Cuba, Poland, and Japan. Davila's career exemplifies sustained excellence in teaching, creative activity, and sharing his music with the world.