

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND  
PROFESSIONAL STUDIES  
VOLUME 15  
SPRING 2024

# PILLARS

Noyce Grants  
Prepare STEM  
Grads to Teach





# PILLARS

VOLUME 15 | SPRING 2024

PILLARS MAGAZINE is published once a year by the University of South Alabama College of Education and Professional Studies and distributed to alumni and friends.

**Retired Dean**

Dr. John Kovaleski  
*Retired Jan. 1, 2024*

**Associate Director of  
Creative Services**

Kim Lovvorn

**Dean**

Dr. Angela Barlow

**Contributors**

Thomas Becnel  
Mike Kittrell  
Seth Laubinger  
Michelle Matthews  
Steve Millburg  
Acacia Stanley  
Sarah Waddell

**Associate Dean**

Dr. Tres Stefurak

**Director of Marketing  
and Communications,  
Development and  
Alumni Relations**

Amber Day

Trinity Walker earned a bachelor's degree in hospitality and tourism management. She now serves as a partnership coordinator for Visit Mobile.







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## Catalysts for Change

South grads are leaders in contributing to the betterment of our diverse and dynamic world.





Welcome to the spring 2024 edition of the Pillars magazine – the College of Education and Professional Studies’ publication about its people and

their accomplishments and the many events happening in the college. Our pledge, through our mission statement, is to transform our community and expand our outreach through a commitment to excellence in education and human services, advancement of innovative research and support for the dedicated service of our faculty, staff, students and alumni. Looking back at the 2022-2023 academic year, we have reason to celebrate our mission through the achievements of our students, faculty and alumni. But we are not only looking at our past accomplishments – our future is here. And through innovation, our faculty are actively seeking new opportunities and initiatives and creating solutions that will help shape the future of education and knowledge through their teaching and research. This work also has a transformative impact on the lives of all who come in contact with our graduates. In this edition of Pillars, you will find success stories about some of these people and their collective accomplishments.

On a personal note, I have had the honor to lead this fine college for the past three years as interim dean, but I decided to retire effective January 1, 2024. I am both excited and bittersweet about my decision, but I want to take this opportunity to thank colleagues and former students for their support and friendship. I have genuinely enjoyed my journey as a faculty member, department chair, associate dean and interim dean. My time at the University began in 1988, and over the course of my tenure, I was fortunate to work for all four presidents of the University, on both the academic and healthcare sides, and make countless friends along the way.

I have especially enjoyed supporting the college’s mission and carrying on the work of previous deans of the college whom I knew and respected – George Uhlig, Richard Hayes and Andi Kent – and associate deans Tom Chilton and Bill Gilley. I am grateful to my former longtime department chair Fred Scaffidi and former colleagues of more than 20 years Bob Heitman, Larry Gurchiek, Phil Norrell, Kathy O’Keefe and Steve Pugh. We all worked well together and supported each other over those many years, and I want to express my appreciation for all of their support and hard work. I also thank each member of the current college leadership team, led by Associate Dean Dr. Tres Stefurak. I am proud to have achieved so much as interim dean and to have shared many accomplishments with such fine and respectable colleagues. They are an incredible team that will continue to advance the college and thrive as I move on to retirement. Any success on my part has been a shared success because of their work!

Before I conclude my message, it is my honor to introduce and welcome the next dean of the College of Education and Professional Studies – Dr. Angela Barlow. Barlow is a native Alabamian and holds a Ph.D. in Mathematics Education. She comes to South from the University of Central Arkansas, where she served as dean of the graduate school, director of sponsored programs and professor of mathematics education. Barlow presents a demonstrated commitment to making student-centered decisions while leading academic program administration. As a mathematics educator with more than 20 years of experience, she has a distinguished academic record that clearly aligns with program areas in the College of Education and Professional Studies. Her outstanding reputation as an administrative leader in teaching, research and professional service will serve the students, faculty, staff and alumni of the college and contribute to a bright future. Join me in welcoming Dr. Barlow with best wishes for much success!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John E. Kovalski".

*Dr. John E. Kovalski  
Former Interim Dean  
College of Education and  
Professional Studies*







Where are you from?

It seems like a simple question, but for 24 years it is one that has given me pause. That's because 24 years ago, I left the state of Alabama after earning my

Ph.D. and began a journey that would take me to four universities across four Southeastern states. And in each state, I always answered the question, "Well, I live in (insert state here), but I'm originally from Alabama – that's home."

When I visited South for my interview in July 2023, it felt like home. I was impressed by the faculty, staff and students as they shared their perspectives on the University and College of Education and Professional Studies programs. Clearly, there are wonderful things happening in the college. Through these conversations, though, I felt a strong connection with the people. In fact, during my talk I made a joke about Ricky Bobby, and they laughed! I immediately knew: These are my people, and South is my home.

This next adventure for me as dean of the College of Education and Professional Studies represents the opportunity to not only move home but also to give back to a state that I love. I look forward to working with the people in the college as we lead today and impact tomorrow.

Sincerely,

***Dr. Angela T. Barlow  
Dean and Professor  
College of Education  
and Professional Studies***



# Around the

South Alabama pole vaulter and exercise science major Kyle Rademeyer claimed the 2023 NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championship.





# College

## Q&A

South Alabama pole vaulter and exercise science major Kyle Rademeyer claimed the 2023 NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championship on the first night of competition at Mike A. Myers Stadium in Austin, Texas. Rademeyer is originally from Paarl, South Africa, near Cape Town.

### WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING A STUDENT-ATHLETE AT SOUTH?

Being a student-athlete requires me to spend a lot of time dedicated to practicing between classes, but there are many rewarding moments. I'm part of a community, and I've made lifelong connections with teammates and friends.

### WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE IN THE FUTURE?

I hope to take my pole-vaulting career as far as I can, and after that, I'm most interested in physical therapy and chiropractic care.

### WHY DID YOU CHOOSE SOUTH?

Niel Giliomee, who is also from South Africa and a former teammate, helped me decide on South. I ultimately chose South because it's a smaller school, and I felt like I would be more than just a number on a team.

### >> LEARN MORE

[SouthAlabama.edu/CEPSNews](https://SouthAlabama.edu/CEPSNews)



### SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PERSEVERANCE SCHOLAR

Kenya Valrie received the Leadership in Social Justice and Perseverance Scholarship, which is awarded annually to students who demonstrate leadership qualities as well as a commitment to social justice and perseverance. Valrie graduated in May 2023 with a bachelor's degree in exercise science. She is now pursuing a master's degree in sports management at South and has previously interned for Fan Engagement in the USA Department of Athletics. She hopes to work as head of player development for an NFL team one day. "The scholarship lifted a huge weight off of me," she said. "When I received the email saying that I had won, I just cried and thanked God. I am extremely thankful to the committee for helping me keep my mother's dream alive. She wanted me to be successful while striving to become the best I can be."



### NATIONAL MORTAR BOARD FELLOW

Annie Mascia was awarded a National Mortar Board Fellowship for her post-baccalaureate studies, and she is now pursuing a master's degree in South's clinical mental health counseling graduate program. She plans to obtain her counseling license, which will enable her to serve children and adolescents in her community.

### GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM

Three hospitality and tourism management undergraduate students received scholarships at the 2023 Alabama Governor's Conference on Tourism. Congratulations to Sarah Simpson, Lenzie Richardson and DJ Harris. Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management Chair Dr. Khal Nusair, Executive Vice President and Provost Dr. Andi Kent, Assistant Professor Dr. Min Hwang and Senior Instructor Amanda Donaldson attended the conference at the Grand Hotel Golf Resort and Spa in Point Clear, Alabama, to celebrate the students' success.



# Jags Abroad

Studying abroad can be a life-changing experience.

Students explore new cultures, learn new languages and gain a unique perspective of the world.



Faculty-led study abroad programs in the College of Education and Professional Studies offer a unique opportunity for students to travel abroad each year. During summer 2023, the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management took seven students to Seville, Spain.

"There are two classes associated with this study abroad program for a total of six credit hours, which include International Culture, Cuisine and Culinary Practices and International Hospitality Management," said Amanda Donaldson, the instructor who led the three-week trip.

Students who went to Spain participated in cooking workshops where they made paella, traditional Spanish breads and sweets. They took flamenco dancing lessons, attended traditional flamenco shows in the caves of Granada and participated in a tile painting workshop. They visited beautiful palaces, such as the Real Alcázar and Alhambra, and toured Triana and Santa Cruz neighborhoods and the Plaza de Toros.

"Culture, cuisine and culinary classes allowed students to be fully immersed in Spanish culture," Donaldson said.

Through the international hospitality management course, students learned that careers are available worldwide for those with a degree in hospitality and tourism management.

"Students toured a family-run vineyard, an olive oil hacienda and multiple hotels, including the Alfonso XIII, a five-star hotel that previously hosted kings and queens," Donaldson said.

"They spoke with managers, owners and interns to learn more about their establishments, experiences and necessary procedures and skills for working with hospitality organizations in Spain."

In addition, students from the clinical mental health counseling and school counseling master's degree programs attended a study abroad trip to Italy during summer 2023.

"Students participated in seminars every other day led by Italian counselors, psychiatrists, educators and counseling faculty regarding differences in counseling and educational professions between Italy and the U.S. In addition, they discussed cultural differences in families and systems, as well as topics such as trauma, advocacy and meeting the needs of diverse individuals," said Dr. Amy Upton, the faculty member who led the trip.

"While in Italy, I learned the value of living in the present and enjoying oneself more," said Kathryn Brazil, a clinical mental health counseling graduate student. "Wellness begins at an early age. It can start with something as simple as what we consume or can be as complex as how our school systems influence our stress levels. Taking things slowly and intentionally is a key element to maintaining wellness, and learning self-care can help promote happiness at any age."

## >> SUMMER 2024 TRIP INFO

[SouthAlabama.edu/StudyAbroad](https://SouthAlabama.edu/StudyAbroad)







# Gaining Perspective

Internships provide opportunities for students to network with leaders in the field. Students gain hands-on experience to sharpen their skills before entering the workforce. They develop a passion for their future and find the right direction.



"You need a certain amount of experience and a portfolio to get hired once you graduate, and internships give you both," said **DAVID WOOLVERTON**, who is pursuing a Ph.D. in instructional design and development at South. He updated e-learning software during an internship for the United States Coast Guard.

Woolverton earned a master's degree in English from South. In 2020, he started his Ph.D. program and began

his internship for the Coast Guard Aviation Training Center in Mobile. Woolverton develops self-paced e-learning products. His projects include outlining existing in-person training courses and recommending improvements. He corrects information, fixes broken interactivities, edits videos, animates graphics and prototypes electronically fillable versions of student support and assessment materials.



**JESSICA MCCANTS** recently earned a master's degree in library media from South. As a graduate student in the program, McCants interned at Spanish Fort Public Library as well as Spencer-Westlawn Elementary School and Phillips Preparatory School, both in Mobile. She assisted with circulation, processed new books and collaborated on lesson plans to make sure they met school library standards. McCants now works as a media specialist and technology coordinator at a new charter school, Covenant Academy of Mobile, where she is building a school library from the ground up.

"I taught English language arts for 11 years and desired to do something new," McCants said. "Providing students with access to information and technology that they may not have access to outside of school is something that gives me pride."





**OLIVIA MILLS** came to South to pursue a master's degree in health promotion. With the help of her mentor, South Professor Dr. Shelley Holden, Mills started an internship at Victory Health Partners in Mobile. Mills helped design social media posts, quoted prices for marketing materials and attended community engagement events. And she performed less exciting but still essential clerical work such as checking patients in, taking payments, handling patient files and rescheduling appointments.

Mills also undertook a graduate assistantship at the University's JagPantry, a resource for students facing food insecurity. "Every day has been a new experience in helping individuals better their health," she said. Mills hopes to broaden her career in health promotion by serving communities on the Gulf Coast.

**CHELÉ RIGNEY** recently earned a master's degree in higher education administration. As a graduate student, Rigney interned with the University of South Alabama's Office of Academic Advising and Transfer Services from October 2022 to May 2023. She assisted incoming freshmen and referred students to helpful campus resources like the Center for Academic Excellence, Career Services, JagSPOT, South Serves and student organizations. She learned how to be a leader in advising and she managed a caseload of students. During her internship, Rigney was hired as a full-time education-abroad advisor in Global USA, the University's central international office.

"Through my internships, I have been able to observe in real time the change and influence that higher education professionals have in the field," Rigney said. "It was rewarding to witness the students' growth firsthand."







**KATIE POIRIER** graduated in May 2024 with a dual Bachelor of Science in Hospitality and Tourism Management and a Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages and Literature. With the help of Amanda Donaldson, an instructor at South, Poirier accepted an internship at The Country Club of Mobile.

Poirier works closely with the events manager and director of event operations. Together, they oversee all aspects of events, including communication with clients for event-related needs and relaying information to the rest of their team.

"I've been able to expand upon what I have learned in the classroom," Poirier said. "I have learned new skills and information that will be extremely valuable in my future career, and this experience has allowed me to mature and grow."

**KENNETH WILSON** recently earned a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies. With the help of Dr. Paige Vitulli and Dr. Eric Moody, Wilson secured an internship with former Alabama State Sen. Bill Roberts in Mobile. As an intern, Wilson gained insights about his future career. He hopes to run for political office. Working alongside Roberts, Wilson gathered political research and interviewed county, state and government political figures.

"I went from being a full-time truck driver with two kids to going back to school at 38," Wilson said. "I never put limits on myself. I believe this is where I'm meant to be, and what I'm supposed to do."







UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES



**CEPS STUDENTS**  
are from

**29**  
states and  
**31**  
countries

**PROGRAMS OF STUDY**

**20** Undergraduate Majors  
**5** Undergraduate Minors  
**49** Graduate Programs

**56 FULL-TIME FACULTY  
AND 24 STAFF**



**15,084 CEPS ALUMNI**  
(As of December 2023)

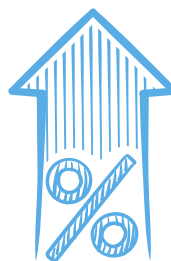


**72 ENDOWED  
SCHOLARSHIPS**  
Academic Year 23-24  
total \$152,683

**236 EDUCATOR  
EXCELLENCE  
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**  
(AY 22-23)



**545 INTERSHIPS  
COMPLETED**  
in the 2022-2023  
academic year



**NUMBER OF STUDENTS  
ENROLLED**

**1,700**  
SPRING 2023

**934**  
SUMMER 2023

**1,760**  
FALL 2023

**STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

- Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Honor Society
- Instructional Design & Development Graduate Association
- Clinical and Counseling Psychology Graduate Student Organization
- Eta Sigma Delta International Hospitality Management Honor Society
- Hospitality Club
- Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society
- Recreational Therapy Association
- Jaguar Sport Management and Administration Club
- Exercise Science Club
- Health and Physical Education Majors Club



**386%**

INCREASE IN PEER-  
REVIEWED SCHOLARLY  
PUBLICATIONS BY CEPS  
FACULTY SINCE 2015.

CEPS FACULTY PRODUCED  
AN AVERAGE OF

**80**  
**PEER-REVIEWED  
JOURNAL ARTICLES**  
EACH YEAR SINCE 2015.

DURING THE 2022-2023  
ACADEMIC YEAR, CEPS  
FACULTY PUBLISHED AN  
ALL-TIME HIGH OF

**116**  
PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL  
ARTICLES.

CEPS FACULTY PUBLISHED  
**SEVEN BOOK CHAPTERS  
AND THREE BOOKS**  
DURING THE 2022-2023  
ACADEMIC YEAR.

**80**  
NATIONAL OR  
INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARLY  
PRESENTATIONS  
(FALL 2022-SUMMER 2023)

College of Education and Professional Studies programs are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, Alabama State Department of Education, American Psychological Association, and Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs.



AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION







# Community-Engaged Scholarship

USA College of Education and Professional Studies researchers work toward a common goal – to serve as leaders in each of their respective fields. Faculty strive to be innovators who lead growth and change, and they disseminate their findings and knowledge to communities across the world. They conduct research, program evaluation, consulting and service activities in the following spaces:

- **K-12 Education:** Faculty have made particular contributions in the areas of STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) and literacy education.
- **Disabilities:** Special education and counseling faculty are making distinctive contributions to understanding the needs of disabled Gulf Coast residents and promoting the dignity and empowerment of these citizens in schools and within the larger community.
- **Mental Health:** Faculty in the counseling programs, the clinical and counseling psychology doctoral program and health promotion and therapeutic recreation programs study ways to improve individuals’ mental wellness throughout their lifespan.
- **Public Safety:** In partnership with colleagues in nursing, criminal justice and psychology, faculty in the college pursue efforts to better understand the causes behind public safety concerns and ways of preventing threats to public safety, beginning with projects involving young children.
- **Physical Health:** Faculty in exercise science are performing cutting-edge research to understand the connections between exercise and holistic health, including brain health.

## Externally Funded Community Engagement Research and Service Projects



### Impacting Education

**Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative**  
The AMSTI grant is funded by the Alabama State Department of Education. Professionals work to deliver coaching in high-impact teaching methods in math and science to Alabama K-12 teachers. The grant also supplies teachers with materials to promote hands-on demonstration and lab activities in the sciences.  
**Funded by:** Alabama State Department of Education  
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Très Stefurak (College of Education and Professional Studies)  
**Total Funding:** \$2,666,129

**Alabama Technology in Motion**  
Alabama Technology in Motion funds specialists around the state who provide research-based professional development in the integration of digital literacy and computer science into K-12 classrooms.  
**Funded by:** Alabama State Department of Education  
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Stephanie Hulon (South Alabama Research and Inservice Center)  
**Total Funding:** \$144,034

**South Alabama Research and Inservice Center**  
USA-SARIC provides copious and rigorous professional development workshops for Alabama public school teachers, principals and superintendents across the south Alabama region.



**Funded by:** Alabama State Department of Education  
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Stephanie Hulon (South Alabama Research and Inservice Center)  
**Total Funding:** \$368,644

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**Alabama Possible**  
Alabama Possible is a statewide nonprofit organization that breaks down barriers to prosperity through advocacy, education and collaboration. The program has four areas of focus: postsecondary access, postsecondary success, advocacy and civic engagement.  
**Funded by:** ECMC (Educational Credit Management Corporation) Foundation  
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Kathy Thompson, Director, Center for Innovation in Postsecondary Education  
**Total Funding:** \$300,000

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**Noyce Pathway to Mathematics 2**  
An Integrated STEM Initiative Focused in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (PTM-2). The Noyce PTM-2 grant funds tuition assistance, career counseling and other supports for students who have previously earned an undergraduate STEM degree and wish to obtain teacher certification through the alternative master's degree mechanism. The grant applies particular focus to increasing access and success in STEM education for students from underrepresented and under-resourced groups.  
**Funded by:** National Science Foundation  
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Susan Ferguson, Department of Leadership and Teacher Education  
**Total Funding:** \$1,199,945

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**PASSAGE USA Expansion**  
PASSAGE USA (Preparing All Students Socially and Academically for Gainful Employment) offers a college experience to students with intellectual disabilities. The new grant allows PASSAGE USA to expand from a two-year to a four-year program. It also enables new services to be provided by graduate students in the counseling and occupational therapy programs.  
**Funded by:** U.S. Department of Education  
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Abby Baxter, Department of Leadership and Teacher Education  
**Co-Principal Investigators:** Dr. Linda Reeves, Department of Leadership and Teacher Education; Dr. Yvette Getch, Department of Counseling and Instructional Sciences; and Dr. Tara Thompson, Department of Occupational Therapy (Pat Capps Covey College of Allied Health Professions)  
**Total Funding:** \$321,811

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**Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (SWAPTE) Job Supports**  
This grant funds compensated work experiences for PASSAGE USA students.  
**Funded by:** Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment  
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Abby Baxter, Department of Leadership and Teacher Education  
**Total Funding:** \$165,405

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**Rapid Research Response (RAPID) Artificial Intelligence Grant: Integrating Culturally Relevant Project-Based AI Learning into High School STEM Education**

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The grant focuses on enhancing K-12 educators' ability to effectively teach concepts related to artificial intelligence as well as supporting educators in the effective demonstration and use of AI teaching and learning tools.

**Funded by:** National Science Foundation  
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Shenghua Zha, Department of Counseling and Instructional Sciences  
**Co-Principal Investigators:** Dr. Na Gong, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (College of Engineering), and Dr. Pamela Moore, Department of Counseling and Instructional Sciences  
**Total Funding:** \$149,979

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**Science Teacher, Research, Education and Methods (STREAM):**  
This grant funds recruitment and scholarships for STEM teachers earning the alternative master's degree in secondary science education in the College of Education and Professional Studies. The program provides a range of support as well as scholarships that promote professional STEM education skills, professional identity as a STEM educator and resiliency among these future STEM educators.

**Funded by:** National Science Foundation  
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Katie Guffey McCorrison, Department of Leadership and Teacher Education  
**Co-Principal Investigators:** Dr. David Forbes, Department of Chemistry (College of Arts and Sciences); Dr. Justin Sanders, Department of Physics (College of Arts and Sciences); Dr. André Green (East Carolina University); and Dr. Trés Stefurak (College of Education and Professional Studies)  
**Total Funding:** \$1,171,305

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**Preparing Elementary Pre-service Teachers to Integrate Computing across the Curriculum (PEPTICC)**  
This grant funds the training of K-12 teachers to deliver instruction on computer coding in their curricula. The content focuses on four types of knowledge: computing, K-6 subject content, technology and pedagogy. The second goal of this project is to establish an evidence-based model with guidelines for integrating computing in K-6 subject content.

**Funded by:** National Science Foundation  
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Shenghua Zha, Department of Counseling and Instructional Sciences  
**Co-Principal Investigators:** Dr. Lauren Brannan, Department of Leadership and Teacher Education; Dr. Na Gong, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (College of Engineering); Dr. Karen Morrison, Department of Leadership and Teacher Education; and Dr. Kelly Byrd, Department of Leadership and Teacher Education  
**Total Funding:** \$299,929

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**UTeach South**  
This grant funds the implementation of a new STEM educator preparation pathway at South. Students in math and science majors receive tuition assistance to take initial courses that can ultimately lead to a minor in math and science secondary education that meets Alabama teacher certification standards. Students do not need to leave their STEM major to earn teacher certification. The grant also funds two master teacher positions to mentor students through the process of pursuing teacher education training.



**Funded by:** Alabama Commission on Higher Education  
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Christopher Parrish, Department of Leadership and Teacher Education  
**Total Funding:** \$2,000,000



## Impacting Health and Wellness

### Salidroside and Exercise Performance

This grant funds a randomized, double-blind study to evaluate the effect of salidroside nutrition supplements on exercise performance and on markers of muscle damage and inflammation. Salidroside is a compound in the Rhodiola plant. It has been found to have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and neuroprotective effects and to reduce muscle atrophy, and it is purported to be an adaptogen that reduces the body's response to stress.

**Funded by:** Double Rainbow Biosciences Inc.  
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Neil Schwarz, Department of Health, Kinesiology, and Sport  
**Total Funding:** \$174,415

### Effects of Adding MitoBurn (L-BAIBA) to Exercising Adult Overweight and Obese Men and Women on Changes in Body Composition, Glucose Control and Cardio-Metabolic Risk Factors

This contract funds research into the effects of the amino acid metabolite L-BAIBA in enhancing exercise among obese adults. L-BAIBA plays a critical role in the browning (good fat) of

white fat (bad fat) and reducing insulin resistance.

**Funded by:** NNB Nutrition  
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Neil Schwarz, Department of Health, Kinesiology, and Sport  
**Co-Principal Investigators:** Dr. Mathew Stratton, Department of Health, Kinesiology, and Sport; Dr. Ryon Colquhoun, Department of Health, Kinesiology, and Sport; and Dr. Shelley Holden, Department of Health, Kinesiology, and Sport  
**Total Funding:** \$96,000

### Dying to Be Masculine: Investigating the Longitudinal Relationships between Traditional Masculinity and Men's COVID-19 Vaccine Attitudes and Behavior

This grant funds research into the factors behind sex differences in COVID-19 vaccination rates. Men, especially men of color, are disproportionately more likely to develop severe COVID, but their rates of vaccination lag behind those of women. Increasing evidence points toward internalized masculinity norms, i.e., rigid and restrictive gender roles for men that prohibit a variety of healthy and adaptive behaviors, as a contributing factor.

**Funded by:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and American Psychological Association  
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Ryon McDermott, Department of Counseling and Instructional Sciences  
**Total Funding:** \$247,239

### A Comparative Study of Media Consumption in Relation to Healthcare in Rural and Urban Counties in Alabama

This grant funds research on the associations between social media use and beliefs in conspiracy theories and misinformation among rural and urban communities and white and African American communities in Mobile, Alabama. The primary goal is to visualize how information (both false and accurate) flows through social media, traditional media and social networks to influence decision-making.

**Funded by:** Air Force Office of Scientific Research  
**Principal Investigator:** Dr. James Van Haneghan, Department of Counseling and Instructional Sciences  
**Total Funding:** \$597,906



## Impacting Community Safety and Youth Resilience

### Preventing Youth Violence through Building Equitable Communities: An Evaluation of a Multisystemic Intervention

This grant funds research to look at whether an intervention addressing structural racism in education and law enforcement reduces interpersonal violence and suicidal behaviors among middle-school students. The study focuses on African American and low-income communities and examines both youth-level and community-level changes.

**Funded by:** National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities  
**Principal Investigators:** Dr. Krista Mehari (Vanderbilt University) and Dr. Phillip Smith, Department of Psychology (USA College of Arts and Sciences)  
**Co-Principal Investigators:** Dr. Benterah Morton, Department of Leadership and Teacher Education, and Dr. Joél Billingsley, vice president for diversity and community engagement  
**Key Personnel:** Dr. Très Stefurak (College of Education and Professional Studies)  
**Total Funding:** \$3,671,405

### Community-Based Crisis Intervention Training and Support for Primary Responders

As part of a program in partnership with Global USA and the Center for Continuing Education and Conference Services, this grant funds delivery and evaluation of the Crisis Intervention Team training model for law enforcement officers throughout the region. The Crisis Intervention Team model focuses on tactics that reduce use of force and promote referral to mental healthcare services when officers encounter people with mental illness.

**Funded by:** U.S. Department of Justice  
**Principal Investigators:** Dr. Très Stefurak (College of Education and Professional Studies) and Joy Aull (Center for Continuing Education and Conference Services)  
**Total Funding:** \$500,000





**EDUCATOR EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIP**

## **Alabama Educators Qualify to Receive 20% Tuition Reduction**

Enroll in a graduate-level teacher education program today.  
Multiple online and in-person Master of Education and Ed.S. programs qualify.  
No GRE/MAT required. Increase your salary and expertise.

**ENROLL NOW**

**[SouthAlabama.edu/EducatorExcellence](https://SouthAlabama.edu/EducatorExcellence)**





**SOUTH ALABAMA  
RESEARCH AND  
INSERVICE CENTER**

The University of South Alabama Research and Inservice Center (SARIC) provides professional learning for more than 8,000 educators in Southwest Alabama. Dr. Craig Parkes, an assistant professor in the Department of Health, Kinesiology and Sport, partnered with SARIC and the Alabama State Department of Education to host a Health and Physical Education Conference at the University in summer 2023.

The Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management and SARIC hosted family and consumer science high school teachers for the Alabama Association for Career and Technical Education Conference. Visitors had a chance to meet local celebrity chef “Panini Pete” Blohme.

**>> K-12 PROFESSIONAL  
LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**



**JOB PLACEMENT**

PASSAGE USA is a postsecondary, nondegree certificate program for students ages 18–28 with intellectual disabilities. Students like Ian Lundy (pictured above) develop on-the-job skills. Lundy has worked at the USA Archaeology Museum and GulfQuest Maritime Museum in downtown Mobile. “I enjoy teaching students about ancient toolmaking and creating content for exhibits,” Lundy said. “With the help of PASSAGE USA, I am working in a field I love and learning to live independently.”



**>> LEARN MORE**

**TECHNOLOGY IN MOTION**

Alabama Technology in Motion at the University of South Alabama provides research-based professional development focused on equipping K-12 educators with content knowledge and teaching skills to integrate digital literacy into the course curricula. The center serves more than 8,000 educators in Mobile, Baldwin, Washington, Monroe and Clarke counties.



**>> ATIM EVENTS**



**AMSTI-USA ENGINEERING  
LABS**

University of South Alabama preservice teachers and local secondary educators spent a day learning various engineering labs as part of the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative. These activities can be replicated in the K-12 classroom and will help to show students that learning can be fun.

**>> AMSTI-USA EVENTS**







**A podcast by the University of South Alabama  
College of Education and Professional Studies**

*Meaningful conversations with faculty, students,  
alumni and community partners*



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Submit ideas to [sincerelysouth@SouthAlabama.edu](mailto:sincerelysouth@SouthAlabama.edu)





### LEADING IN LIBRARY MEDIA

Dr. Pamela Moore, an assistant professor of instruction, educational media and educational technology at South, shared information about the library media and educational technology master's programs at the 2023 American Association of School Librarians National Conference in Tampa. Moore served as the research-in-practice co-chair as part of the national conference planning committee. During the conference, she also served as a facilitator for the research symposium and an author spotlight session. In June 2022, Moore served as the chair of a two-day Alabama School Library Association professional development conference titled "Librarians Make it Happen," held at South. More than 100 individuals attended the conference, which included visits with local school librarians, vendors, presenters and keynote speakers. Moore serves as immediate past president of the Alabama School Library Association and immediate past section chair of the Educators of School Librarians Section of the American Association of School Librarians.



### REMOVING BARRIERS IN STEM EDUCATION

The University of South Alabama hosted the 2023 Southeast Regional Noyce Conference, "Removing Barriers in STEM Education," to kick off a summer of planning and collaboration among STEM teachers throughout the region. Through a generous grant from the National Science Foundation Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program, South's team has been able to host preservice and inservice STEM teachers whose teaching certification in STEM disciplines was funded through Noyce scholarships. In addition to workshops led by nationally known leaders in STEM education, the conference included hands-on learning at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Airbus Flight Works Alabama and Mobile's Environmental Studies Center.

### OFFICE OF ADULT LEARNER SERVICES

The University of South Alabama Office of Adult Learner Services partnered with the Department of Integrative Studies to host more than 100 current and prospective students for a family-friendly Week of Welcome event. Students learned about South's fully online bachelor's degrees in organizational leadership and interdisciplinary studies. University representatives were on hand from the Marx Library, Office of Veteran Affairs, Department of Campus Recreation and Wellness, Title IX Office, Center for Academic Excellence, Office of Financial Aid, Career Services Center, and Counseling and Wellness Center.

### TENNIS NIGHTS

City of Mobile Parks and Recreation and the nonprofit AdaptFocus host inclusive tennis nights at the Mobile Tennis Center. Gabby Biggs, right, a South student majoring in recreational therapy, serves as a volunteer. She's pictured enjoying a game with one of the participants, Gracelee Pugh.







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<b><i>Summer 2024</i></b>	<b><i>Fall 2024</i></b>	<b><i>Spring 2025</i></b>
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# ROOTS OF STEM

A photograph of a student with long dark hair in a blue hoodie, sitting at a desk and working on a laptop. In the foreground, there is a blurred laptop screen and a red object. The background shows a whiteboard with some handwritten notes and numbers.

Noyce grants at South  
help prepare graduates in  
fields outside of education  
to become teachers in  
science, technology,  
engineering and math.







Ramsey Willis, a math teacher at Davidson High School in Mobile, enjoys an easy banter with algebra students as they review the slope intercept form of a straight line,  $y = mx + b$ , and begin graphing coordinates.

Students take turns solving simple problems and working through difficult ones. Those who seem uninterested learn they are more likely to be called upon. The class clown gets just enough slack to entertain his classmates without sidetracking the lesson.

Willis, a Noyce Scholar who earned an alternative master's degree in education at the University of South Alabama, fills a whiteboard with equations. In class and on quizzes – but not tests – he encourages students to work together. He wants them to ask each other questions and figure out the answers.

His own questions tend to run in series. The first one is often easy, designed to build confidence and get them started. The second one tests how far they can follow a concept. The third one sometimes reveals where he's been heading all along.

"Could you graph that?" he asks one student. "What's your y intercept? Is it zero?"

Yet Willis never planned on teaching mathematics in Mobile. The 44-year-old Detroit native had earned a college degree and was working in business when he enrolled at South to become a mathematics teacher.

The Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program, funded by the National Science Foundation, helped Willis become an educator. This program and others address a nationwide shortage of science and mathematics teachers, especially in disadvantaged and underserved communities. They offer scholarships and stipends to non-education graduates and prepare them for careers in the classroom.

"I love mathematics," Willis says. "I think math and physics explain a lot about the world we live in. And if I can explain that to my students, I've done something for our society."

At Davidson, he's one of four Noyce Scholars from South. Nearby Baker High School has six Noyce Scholars. Many of these teachers serve as mentors for students entering the graduate program at South.

Dr. Susan Ferguson, an associate professor in the Department of Leadership and Teacher Education, attends Noyce conferences with Willis. He's a collaborator on her latest grant. She remembers when he first joined the program.



"I think math and physics explain a lot about the world we live in. And if I can explain that to my students, I've done something for our society."

#### —RAMSEY WILLIS

"He's one of those people who's a career changer," Ferguson said. "He had a whole other career but wanted to teach, and that was attractive to us. He had the competency and work mindset. He was a little more mature. He had the motivation, and he was determined to do everything he needed to do."

When the Noyce program at South began in 2009, the Noyce scholarship package for graduate students was \$28,000. Now it's up to \$40,000 over four semesters.

"Ramsey is one of the reasons for that," Ferguson said. "We used him as part of a focus group to see how we could improve our Noyce programs. He said that for someone like him, someone with a family, it can be difficult financially to make it through the program."

#### South Grants in STEM Education

The College of Education and Professional Studies at South has secured multimillion-dollar Noyce grants and other external funding to promote STEM education. Dr. Katie McCarrison, an associate professor of science education, began her education career as a Noyce Scholar and graduate student in North Carolina. As a Ph.D. student in Wyoming, she was a research assistant on a Noyce grant. At South Alabama, she resumed work with Noyce students.



The program is part of her life.

"I still keep in touch with my first Noyce family," McCorrison said. "There's one student who's now a principal. Another one has been the North Carolina Teacher of the Year."

The Noyce program includes yearly conferences and social media sites for students, teachers and mentors. Newcomers often have a fresh perspective on STEM education. Enthusiasm makes recruiting easier, as do scholarships and stipends.

This past fall, McCorrison met a biology graduate from South who wasn't sure about his future.

"So I said, 'Come test the teaching waters,'" McCorrison said. "'You'll be paid \$2,000, no strings attached, but 98 percent of our students go on to become successful science teachers. And you have the opportunity to change student lives. Not many careers give you that option.'"

### Noyce in the Classroom

Students at Davidson High wear a school uniform of khaki pants and white shirts. So does Willis. He's Black, as are most of his students, which makes him a role model as well as a STEM educator.

The boys tease Willis about the shine on his shaved head. He laughs it off. When students ask how old he is, he says 21.

In the classroom, he's confident. Comfortable. Sociable, even.

"I like to take time and just enjoy being with the students," Willis says. "We'll joke around a little bit. Some teachers are afraid to do that, but I want class to be more than just go, go, go."

In the evening, after his school days at Davidson, Willis teaches algebra classes at South as an adjunct professor. Sometimes he thinks about returning to graduate school and earning a Ph.D.

At conferences and meetings with young teachers from South, Willis shares classroom ideas and instructional tips. Algebra is often perceived as a dry subject with little relevance to real life, so he encourages students to solve problems in groups.

"I like my students to work together," he says. "It makes sense. Instead of struggling by yourself, learn to depend upon each other."

That's something Willis and other Noyce Scholars understand.



In 2023, the College of Education and Professional Studies secured grants related to STEM education that will ultimately total \$4.75 million. This funding will help train more science and math teachers and aid in alleviating the national and regional teacher shortage. Among the awards:


- **Dr. Katie McCorrison**, associate professor of science education, is the principal investigator of a \$1.1 million grant for Noyce STREAM – Science Teacher, Research, Education and Methods.
- **Dr. Susan Ferguson**, associate professor of secondary education, secured a \$1.2 million grant for the Noyce Pathway to Mathematics 2: An Integrated STEM Initiative Focused in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. This grant assists students with a bachelor's degree in mathematics by funding their graduate education to teach math in secondary schools.
- **Dr. Christopher Parrish**, associate professor of mathematics education, is the principal investigator for a grant that will ultimately total \$2 million from the Alabama STEM Council in partnership with the UTeach Institute. It's part of a nationwide program that helps undergraduate STEM majors earn a minor that leads to teacher certification so they can begin careers in K-12 education.
- **Dr. Shenghua Zha**, an associate professor of counseling and instructional sciences, secured \$300,000 and \$150,000 grants for programs that introduce computer coding and computational reasoning to elementary and middle grades education and artificial intelligence to high school curricula.





Dr. Katie McCorison (right), associate professor of science education and principal investigator of a \$1.1 million grant for Noyce STREAM (Science Teacher, Research, Education and Methods), works with Kaylee Huerta, a current Noyce scholar, to evaluate water samples along Mobile Bay.





Since fall 2022, South has secured more than \$4 million in grants to help address the national teacher shortage, specifically in math and science teaching.

South is currently training more than 500 future teachers.

*(as of winter 2024)*

In a typical year, the College of Education and Professional Studies awards more than \$70,000 in endowed scholarships to education majors.

Since 2009, more than 80 students have become teachers because of the Noyce Scholars programs at the University of South Alabama.

In fall 2023, the College of Education and Professional Studies reported record enrollment of first-time freshmen.

Since 2004, the USA College of Education and Professional Studies has graduated 5,430 students with teacher preparation degrees. Of those, 276 were in STEM fields.



# Catalysts for


South prepares exemplary professionals committed to life-long learning who are leaders in contributing to the betterment of our diverse and dynamic world. Learn more about a few recent College of Education and Professional Studies graduates in this section. Read their full stories at the QR code and webpage below.



**>> LEARN MORE**

[SouthAlabama.edu/CEPSAlumni](https://SouthAlabama.edu/CEPSAlumni)





*Livie Puranen, a recreational therapy graduate from the University of South Alabama, uses fun and games to help people with disabilities.*

for Change



[illegible]













*Trinity Walker built a portfolio of connections that led to a dream job in hospitality and tourism management at Visit Mobile.*



*Elizabeth Southern, a mental health counselor with a master's degree from South, hits the road for home visits with Health Connect America.*
















*Jerry Hatfield, a retired Alabama state trooper, earned a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies while working with the Alabama Department of Archives and History.*





### CLINICAL AND COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY PH.D. PROGRAM EARNS REACCREDITATION

The University of South Alabama's Clinical and Counseling Psychology Ph.D. Program earned a 10-year reaccreditation from the American Psychological Association. This is the maximum possible time period for reaccreditation and represents a significant validation of the program's training model and student outcomes. The Clinical and Counseling Psychology Ph.D. Program, housed in the College of Arts and Sciences and College of Education and Professional Studies, was initially accredited in 2014. Since that time, students have been successfully placed in pre-doctoral internships and postdoctoral fellowship positions across the nation. Alumni move on to work in health service psychologist roles, and many continue to serve the Gulf Coast region.

### HIGH SCHOOL RECRUITMENT EVENTS

In addition to the University's typical undergraduate recruitment events, College of Education and Professional Studies faculty stepped outside the box during the 2023 academic year to connect with high school students. In partnership with Mobile County Public Schools, the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management hosted a one-day conference for more than 200 high school seniors. Students were taken on guided tours to The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel & Spa, the Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel, ASM Global Mobile and PP Hospitality Group. Students also listened to presentations by industry experts about the advantage of a hospitality degree.

The Department of Leadership and Teacher Education also hosted more than 200 future teachers on campus during the spring 2023 semester. High school students enjoyed breakout sessions with South professors and students. They also participated in demonstrations and hands-on activities like working with robots, drones, podcasting and more. The sessions showed what preservice teachers are learning in class.

In April 2023, Baker High School hosted its first Future Educators' Signing Day, during which four graduating seniors signed commitments to become educators and study at the University of South Alabama. These students, who are members of Baker's chapter of Future Teachers of Alabama, visited South earlier in the year as part of the Department of Leadership and Teacher Education's outreach efforts. Educators' Signing Day, during which four graduating seniors signed commitments to become educators and study at the University of South Alabama.



### TEACHER PREP FOR READING EARNS AN 'A'

The undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation programs at South were recognized by the National Council on Teacher Quality for their rigorous preparation of future teachers in how to teach reading, earning an A grade in the council's new report, "Teacher Prep Review: Strengthening Elementary Reading Instruction." South's programs are among just 23 percent nationwide to earn an A for meeting standards set by literacy experts for coverage of the most effective methods of reading instruction — often called the "science of reading."



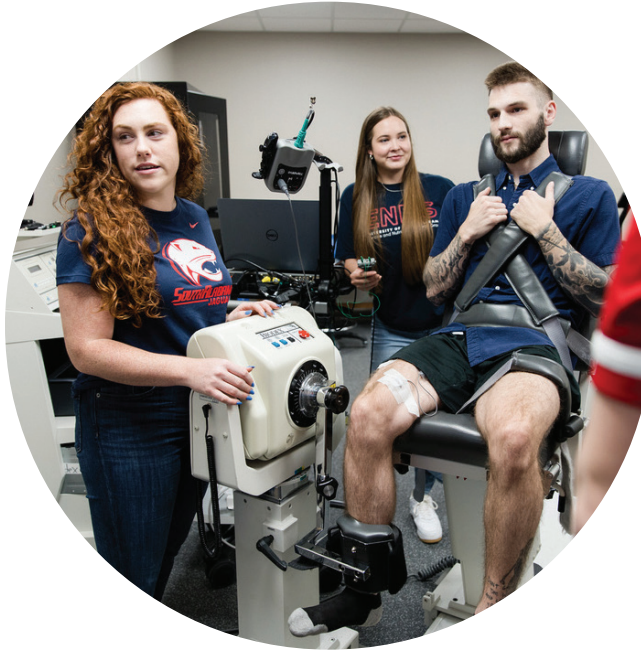


### ONLINE BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Effective leadership at all levels is crucial for success in any business. The ability to motivate and inspire teams to navigate challenges and seize opportunities is essential for optimal employee performance. Employers along the Gulf Coast represent a range of industries that include maritime, aerospace, logistics, engineering, construction, petrochemical, hospitality and more. To meet the demand for dynamic leaders, the University of South Alabama designed a comprehensive bachelor's degree in organizational leadership that offers a unique blend of academic rigor, practical insights and flexible online learning.

#### >> LEARN MORE

[SouthAlabama.edu/OrganizationalLeadership](https://SouthAlabama.edu/OrganizationalLeadership)



### PH.D. IN EXERCISE SCIENCE AND PERFORMANCE NUTRITION

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education voted unanimously in spring 2023 to approve a Doctor of Philosophy degree program in Exercise Science and Performance Nutrition at the University of South Alabama. The new program was created to equip students with a balanced blend of formal coursework and practical laboratory skills, enabling them to conduct high-quality research in the fast-growing fields of exercise and nutritional sciences. This program meets a significant demand, given the local and regional growth in athletic competitions and fitness enthusiasm, contrasted with rising rates of diseases related to sedentary lifestyles. By supporting independent researchers, the program aims to address regional health and fitness challenges.

#### >> LEARN MORE

[SouthAlabama.edu/HKS](https://SouthAlabama.edu/HKS)

### HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM HYFLEX OPTION AND NEW CONCENTRATIONS

Students at South who earn a bachelor's degree in hospitality and tourism management become dynamic leaders in one of the world's fastest-growing industries.

This fall, the department is offering two additional accredited degree concentrations focused on events marketing and management as well as global leadership. South's hospitality and tourism management courses are now available via hybrid-flexible (hyflex) instruction. This is an added benefit for community college graduates and working professionals. The new hyflex model enables students to attend some sections virtually.

#### >> LEARN MORE

[SouthAlabama.edu/HTM](https://SouthAlabama.edu/HTM)



### DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE CERTIFICATE

The Department of Counseling and Instructional Sciences is now offering an undergraduate certificate in diversity and cultural competence. The certificate program provides students with an in-depth understanding of contemporary social diversity needed to successfully interact with clients, patients, students, co-workers and community members from a broad spectrum of experiences and cultures in a diverse and global society. Enrollment is available to current undergraduate students at South and others seeking to earn a stand-alone certificate.

#### >> LEARN MORE

[SouthAlabama.edu/DiversityandCulturalCompetence](https://SouthAlabama.edu/DiversityandCulturalCompetence)



"Graduating in May 2023 was special for me, not only because I was able to walk and accept my diploma, but also because my mom and dad saw me finish! What a great moment in my life and theirs as well."

—CHAD KINNEY







# Joseph “Chad” Kinney

## INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES '23

The Captain George A. Manders Scholarship in Interdisciplinary Studies allowed me to further my studies as an entrepreneur and business owner. I am grateful for the Manders family's generosity! I am a Cold War and Gulf War-era U.S. Air Force veteran. I am also a twice-patented inventor. I started a residential and commercial cleaning business in 2019, which allowed me the flexibility to complete my senior year at South Alabama.

My journey at South began in fall 1987. I wasn't the best student, and my GPA reflected it. I wasn't mentally ready for college at the time. I wanted to see the world, so I joined the military! After a few years in the United States Air Force, I returned to Mobile to help manage my family's horticulture nursery business in Semmes, Alabama. I would take night classes after working all day in the south Alabama heat and humidity or wet, rainy, cold days, trying to complete what I should have done years before.

I had to take another break from going to South because of the growing cost of college and other family priorities. After raising a family and being able to pay down some debt, I decided to come back to the University and finish my senior year with a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies with a concentration in professional development. It was the best decision ever! I didn't want to regret never finishing what I had started.

My son Alex told me, “Dad, it's not how you started that matters; it's how you finish that counts.” That positively resonated with me. I truly enjoyed going back to college, taking classes online and a few classes in person on campus.

Graduating in May 2023 was special for me, not only because I was able to walk and accept my diploma, but also because my mom and dad saw me finish! What a great moment in my life and theirs as well.

Unfortunately, my mom passed away from stage 4 cancer just two months later. Before she passed away, I told her I was going to get my master's degree, and she was so excited. I am now working on a master's in human environmental sciences focusing on consumer quality management at the University of Alabama online. My graduation date is May 2025.





"I truly hope this scholarship will both inspire and help future students pursue research and achieve a successful career in academia."

— DR. JOHN E. KOVALESKI



# Dr. John E. Kovalski Future Faculty Scholarship

Dr. Damon Andrew, a University of South Alabama alumnus, created the Dr. John E. Kovalski Future Faculty Scholarship to assist undergraduate students in the Department of Health, Kinesiology, and Sport with a demonstrated interest in research and a future career as a faculty member in higher education.

Kovalski, who recently served as interim dean for the College of Education and Professional Studies, retired in December 2023 after working at the University of South Alabama for more than 30 years.

Kovalski inspired Andrew, who serves as dean of the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences at Florida State University. Andrew earned a bachelor's degree in exercise science and master's in exercise physiology from South. Kovalski served as his adviser and mentor and encouraged Andrew to further his education and pursue an academic career.

"This is such an honor," Kovalski said. "I am humbled by having a student scholarship named in my honor, and I am extremely thankful to Dr. Andrew for creating this fund. One of my greatest enjoyments as a professor has been helping and guiding students, much like Dr. Andrew, to discover knowledge. I truly hope this scholarship will both inspire and help future students pursue research and achieve a successful career in academia."

Andrew changed his major several times before going into his junior year, but he took a couple of courses as electives in exercise science, and his mind was set.

"That department had a great group of faculty," Andrew said. "But the one faculty member that I connected with the most was Dr. Kovalski. He was my faculty adviser, and I remember going to an advising meeting one time, and he said, 'Have you ever thought about being a faculty member?' And to be honest, I said, 'I had never really thought about it. I never thought about what it would take to be a faculty member.' That was a life-changing moment for me.

"I knew early on that education was the key to a better life. I knew I was going to college. When I came to South, I looked at how much individual attention I would receive because of the lower student-to-faculty ratio compared to many other universities. Going to South was one of the best decisions I ever made."

As a graduate student, Andrew volunteered and worked in Kovalski's research lab. He served as a graduate assistant, took on various jobs off campus, and strung rackets for the men's and women's tennis teams at South to make extra money.

"But I didn't have quite enough money to buy needed equipment for my thesis research," Andrew said. "Dr. Kovalski went to the department chair and advocated for funding on my behalf, and we received a \$500 grant to buy the additional needed equipment. It made my graduate thesis possible. I truly appreciated that support. By the time I left South in 1999, I had multiple publications and was really well prepared to further my education."



"I am so pleased that future generations of students at South will receive support like I did through this scholarship to honor Dr. Kovaleski, and I hope other South alumni consider doing something similar to honor faculty members who impacted their lives."

—DR. DAMON ANDREW



Andrew earned two additional master's degrees in biomechanics and sport management from the University of Florida and a Ph.D. in Sport Management from Florida State University. Additionally, he completed postgraduate certificates in higher education administration from Harvard University's Graduate School of Education and Vanderbilt University's Peabody College of Education and Human Development.

Andrew directed the University of Louisville's doctoral program in sport administration from 2004 to 2006 and founded a doctoral program in sport management at the University of Tennessee that he directed from 2006 to 2008. He then served as the dean of the College of Health and Human Services at Troy University and dean of the College of Human Sciences and Education at Louisiana State University. He returned to his doctoral alma mater, Florida State, as dean of the College of Education in 2018.

His scholarly achievements include a published textbook in research methods and design, now in its second edition; 31 funded grants and contracts; 195 peer-reviewed articles, reviews, proceedings and book chapters; and 133 presentations at

national and international conferences. He has served as an editor for various academic journals and as an editorial board member for seven other journals. His scholarship has been recognized via the Applied Sport Management Association Scholar Lifetime Achievement Award, National Association for Kinesiology in Higher Education Distinguished Scholar Award, Southern District Society of Health and Physical Educators Scholar Award, and Society of Health and Physical Educators Mabel Lee Award. He has been named a fellow of the National Academy of Kinesiology and National Association for Kinesiology in Higher Education. He has been named a distinguished alumnus of the University of South Alabama.

"None of that would have been possible without Dr. Kovaleski," Andrew said. "I really appreciate everything that he has done for me."

Both of Andrew's research methods and design textbooks are dedicated to Kovaleski.

"When you open them up, both say, 'This textbook is dedicated to Dr. John Kovaleski, who first encouraged me to pursue an academic career.' But that's not enough. I am so pleased that

future generations of students at South will receive support like I did through this scholarship to honor Dr. Kovaleski, and I hope other South alumni consider doing something similar to honor faculty members who impacted their lives."

While in the College of Education and Professional Studies, Kovaleski served as professor of exercise science and chair in the Department of Health, Kinesiology, and Sport. Prior to his assignment as interim dean, Kovaleski served as associate dean and director of graduate studies in the College. He earned a bachelor's degree in health education with minors in biological sciences and athletic training from Ohio University, a master's in exercise science from Central Michigan University, and a Ph.D. in Human Bioenergetics from Ball State University.

#### >> GIVE NOW

[Giving.SouthAlabama.edu/Kovaleski](https://Giving.SouthAlabama.edu/Kovaleski)







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### IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER

An IRA rollover allows people age 70 ½ or older to reduce their taxable income by making a gift directly from their IRA. Donors have created a scholarship or given an outright gift toward a variety of programs.

# Prioritized Giving

Financial support dramatically impacts the lives of students in the College of Education and Professional Studies. Your support allows us to transform our community and expand our outreach through a commitment to excellence in education and human services. Two areas of priority for the college are:

### STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

The enrollment, education and graduation of outstanding students is of paramount importance to the College of Education and Professional Studies. Employers and other external constituents benefit from inspired graduates entering the workforce. In order to attract these students, the college must offer competitive scholarships. Help our students fulfill their dreams.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Studies have shown that community engagement improves learning outcomes, improves critical thinking and increases ability to apply classroom knowledge of real-world problems. The College of Education and Professional Studies provides multiple community engagement opportunities for students, faculty and staff, including work with the USA Literacy Center, Williamson Middle Grades Preparatory Academy, local court systems and many other organizations. Support from donors allows the college to continue to provide meaningful service to the local community.

Create a lasting impact. Your investment makes a difference to both existing and future students at the University of South Alabama. Contact Senior Associate Director of University Development Aimee Meyers to start planning your legacy.

Please visit [USALegacy.org](http://USALegacy.org) for more information, or contact Meyers at [ameyers@SouthAlabama.edu](mailto:ameyers@SouthAlabama.edu) or (251) 414-8276.

### >> GIVE NOW

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## South Celebrates Extra Yard for Teachers Week

The University joined education supporters from across the country in a nine-day celebration dedicated to honoring and recognizing great teachers. Extra Yard for Teachers Week was Sept. 15–23, 2023.

The University of South Alabama College of Education and Professional Studies and South Alabama Athletics partnered with the College Football Playoff Foundation to celebrate teachers in Mobile and Baldwin counties. Through the USA Classroom Project Contest, South awarded one \$1,000 gift card, one \$500 gift card, two \$250 gift cards and one \$100 gift card to the teachers who submitted the best project ideas for classroom enrichment.

University representatives traveled to Robertsdale High School on Sept. 19 to surprise the top Classroom Project Contest winner as part of the national “Big Day for Teachers” celebration. Dr. Anita Salinas, a science teacher at Robertsdale High, received \$1,000 for her project “Cutting Into Cartilage: Sharks Inside and Out.” All five Classroom Project Contest winners were honored Sept. 23 at the Jags vs. Central Michigan football game at Hancock Whitney Stadium.

### CLASSROOM PROJECT CONTEST WINNERS

#### **\$1,000 Big Day Winner: Dr. Anita Salinas**

**Robertsdale High School**

Project: Cutting Into Cartilage: Sharks Inside and Out

#### **\$500 Winner: Emily Rankin**

**Florence B. Mathis Elementary School, Foley**

Project: Share Your Voice

#### **\$250 Winner: Jacquelyn Adams**

**Phillips Preparatory School, Mobile**

Project: Pirates Robotics

#### **\$250 Winner: Rebekah Campbell**

**W. C. Griggs Elementary School, Mobile**

Project: Breaking Out of the Boredom Box!

#### **\$100 Winner: Ellis Passmore**

**UMS-Wright Preparatory School, Mobile**

Project: Pop Art and Printmaking in the Classroom





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