



68th Annual

FACULTY
RECOGNITION

April 3, 2026

FACULTY RECOGNITION EVENT

- I. Welcome Dr. Sherri Jackson
- II. Recognition of Dr. Daphne Wang Professor of the Year 2025-2026, & Presentation of the Eric and Mark Lammerding Award Dr. Sherri Jackson
- III. Recognition of Past Professors of the Year Dr. Sherri Jackson
- IV. Longevity of Service Awards/Recognition of Retirees Dr. Sherri Jackson

Brooks Rehabilitation College of Healthcare Sciences

Dean Mark Tillman

25 Years of Service

Dr. Cheryl Bergman
Professor of Nursing

Dr. Mary Gipson
Professor of Nursing

Retirements

Dr. Kathryn Kott
Clinical Assistant Professor of Nursing

Dr. Gail “Buffy” Maetozo
Clinical Assistant Professor of Exercise Science

Davis College of Business & Technology

Interim Dean Lisa Sutherland

25 Years of Service

Dr. Kim Capriotti
Associate Professor of Accounting & Finance

Dr. Annmarie Kent-Willette
Professor of Communication



20 Years of Service

Dr. Carol Dole
Professor of Economics

Dr. Sarah Murphy
Associate Professor of English

25 Years of Service

Professor Dana Tupa
Professor of Art

Dr. Julie Brannon
Professor of English

Dr. Brian Palmer
Professor of Dance

- V. Faculty Excellence Awards
 Adjunct Excellence Award
 Community Service
 University Service
 Scholarship & Professional Activities
 Teaching
- VI. Recognition of Professor of the Year
 Finalists and Announcement of 2026-2027
 Professor of the Year
- VII. Raffle and Dessert

Dr. Thomas Geismar
Dr. Connie Duke
Professor Tiffany Leach
Dr. Ashley Johnson
Professor Shelley Grant

Dr. Sherri Jackson



2025-2026 Professor of the Year

Since joining JU in 2015, **Dr. Daphne Wang** has taught and mentored students across undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs. A first-generation college graduate and immigrant from Taiwan, she spent over 20 years in Texas and raised four children while she earned her MBA and Ph.D. degrees in finance. Dr. Wang is a certified management accountant (CMA) and has served as chair for Jacksonville University's Planning and Budget and Instructional Resources committees, and as an active member of the Institutional Review Board. Dr. Wang has published 18 research articles, presented at 48 conferences, and received over \$160,000 in grants. Her achievements have earned recognition, including the Walker/Wells Fargo Endowed Chair of Finance and the Jacksonville University Faculty Excellence Award in Scholarship and Professional Activities in 2023. She has been inducted into Phi Kappa Phi and Beta Gamma Sigma honor societies and previously served as faculty advisor for the JU Dolphin Student Investment Fund, guiding students in the CFA Research Challenge.

Longevity of Service & Retirees

Brooks Rehabilitation College of Healthcare Sciences

Dr. Cheryl Bergman, APRN began at Jacksonville University in 1995 as an adjunct nursing faculty. She was hired in 2001 and has been at Jacksonville University for 25 years full-time, 31 years in total. During this time, she has been a clinical and classroom instructor, served as the Undergraduate Director of Nursing, the Associate Dean of Nursing, and the Interim Dean of the Brooks Rehabilitation College of Healthcare Sciences. Teaching is where she receives the most satisfaction. Contributing in a tangible way to educating future nurses and to the strength of the nursing profession, while building relationships with students and colleagues is most rewarding to her. On a personal note, Dr. Bergman and her husband are blessed to have three grown children nearby. They make it a priority to spend quality family time together as often as possible and have seven grandchildren who fill their lives with joy, contentment, and gratitude.



Dr. Mary Gipson is a tenured professor at the Jacksonville University Keigwin School of Nursing. She has been teaching at JU since 2001 in both the undergraduate and graduate programs. Dr. Gipson obtained her BA in Psychology at Arizona State University, a BSN, MSN, and Family Nurse Practitioner Tract at the University of North Florida, and a PhD in Nursing from Barry University. Her research interests include teaching and learning methodologies, critical care, and advancing the use of evidence-based practice and research among acute care staff nurses. She has served on many University committees, was Chair of Faculty from 2017-2021, and was awarded Professor of the Year in 2020.

Kathryn Kott, PhD, APRN, FNP-C is a dedicated nursing professional with a strong foundation in clinical practice, advanced nursing education, and academic scholarship. Beginning her career as a registered nurse 46 years ago, she developed expertise in patient-centered care across diverse healthcare settings. She later advanced her training as a nurse practitioner, expanding her scope to include diagnosis, treatment, and health promotion across the lifespan. With a passion for teaching and mentorship, Kathryn transitioned into academia, where she prepares future nurses and nurse practitioners for evidence-based practice and leadership. Her work integrates clinical excellence, research-informed instruction, and a commitment to improving healthcare outcomes through education and innovation.

Dr. Buffy Maetozo comes from a strong background in physical education, inspired by her parents, who were both physical educators. Her passion for exercise physiology and exercise science developed naturally. She earned her undergraduate degree in Physical Education from Springfield College in Springfield, Massachusetts and a master's degree in Exercise Science at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. Dr. Maetozo gained diverse professional experience in the wellness and fitness industry. She served as an adjunct faculty member at Penn State University and as an instructor at Frostburg State University in Maryland. She then moved down south to pursue her doctorate in Exercise Science/Teacher Education at Florida State University, which also provided the opportunity to begin a position at Bainbridge Junior College in Georgia. The next chapter of her career brought her to Jacksonville University, where she dedicated 27 years to teaching and mentoring students, an experience she describes as the best job ever.

Davis College of Business & Technology

Dr. Annmarie Kent-Willette is an award-winning Professor of Communication and Executive Director of Global Academic Partnerships at Jacksonville University, where she has dedicated 25 years to teaching, scholarship, and leadership. Her work has been recognized by her peers with nominations for faculty excellence every year over the past decade and as the 2008 Jacksonville University Woman of the Year. A respected educator, Dr. Kent-Willette teaches communication courses domestically and internationally, while cultivating university-wide academic partnerships throughout Italy. She has sponsored more than 50 nationally recognized, award-winning undergraduate research projects, and has served in multiple faculty governance leadership roles including Chair of the University Tenure and Promotion Committee. Beyond campus, Dr. Kent-Willette served as the City of Jacksonville's appointed Education Commissioner and a member of the Jacksonville Children's Commission. Her work has garnered national recognition, including invitations from the Gates Foundation and a White House Convening on college access. She is also a trusted communication advisor to senior corporate executives across Florida, specializing in public speaking and media relations. Dr. Kent-Willette holds degrees from the University of South Florida and a doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of North Florida.

Linda Berry Stein College of Arts & Sciences

Dr. Julie Sloan Brannon belongs in a classroom, and for 25 years has been able to thrive in that element at Jacksonville University. Having completed her undergraduate degree at a small liberal arts college, Dr. Brannon strives to provide the same invigorating and personalized educational experience to students at Jacksonville University. Through interactive and creative projects like *Modernism on Trial*, student podcasts and films, and other non-standard research projects, she gets students to synthesize and apply research to course materials in memorable ways. Her teaching philosophy boils down to this: learning should be fun, and curiosity should be cultivated. Study abroad is also one of her passions, and she has been fortunate to lead students on a variety of programs to Iceland, Cuba, Ireland, New York, and London. Her colleagues in the Division of Humanities have been an outstanding group to work with, and she is grateful for their advice, laughter, and friendships over the last 25 years.



Professor Brian Palmer has been a professor at Jacksonville University since 2002 and has served as Unit Administrator from 2007 to 2025. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance from Radford University and a Master of Fine Arts in Dance from Florida State University, where he was awarded the Suzanne Farrell Fellowship. Mr. Palmer began his career as a professional ballet dancer, performing for ten seasons with Richmond Ballet and two seasons with The Suzanne Farrell Ballet, sponsored by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. He continues to perform as a guest artist with various dance organizations in the city of Jacksonville. His professional service includes work as a dance review panelist for Florida's Division of Cultural Affairs and as Secretary and Site Evaluator for the National Association of Schools of Dance. In 2014-2015, he was honored as Jacksonville University's Professor of the Year.

Professor Dana Tupa likes to joke that after a quarter century in higher education, she lasted longer than most marriages, and certainly longer than any houseplant she owned. Tupa is a history-making, award-winning educator and artist whose research on the ephemerality of memory has been exhibited, lectured, and collected throughout the U.S. Professor of Art, Honors Faculty Principal, and Stein College Associate Dean, she champions interdisciplinary learning with focus on sculptural ceramics. Studio-based in Tennessee, she has an MFA from Tulane and a BFA from Texas Woman's University. As an artist, Tupa has one of the longest signed gallery partnerships in the contemporary French Quarter. By the numbers, her work is in more than 260 collections and has been in 142 shows; she has delivered over 1,000 credit hours to nearly 3,000 students; spent 20 years overseeing the Alexander Brest Gallery, served 14 years as Department Chair, and six as Associate Dean; built Northeast Florida's 1st Wood Kiln; partnered with Empty Bowls 24 years; hosted 35 visiting artists, served on 52 university committees, mentored 57 thesis projects, and lives on campus with roughly 260 teenagers in North Hall. Tupa's grounding state is to be better than her current best, every time without fail, because she believes the masterwork is in the progression.



Finalists for 2026-2027 Professor of the Year

Dr. Cheryl Bergman, APRN began at Jacksonville University in 1995 as an adjunct nursing faculty. She was hired in 2001 and has been at Jacksonville University for 25 years full-time, 31 years in total. During this time, she has been a clinical and classroom instructor, served as the Undergraduate Director of Nursing, the Associate Dean of Nursing, and the Interim Dean of the Brooks Rehabilitation College of Healthcare Sciences. Teaching is where she receives the most satisfaction. Contributing in a tangible way to educating future nurses and to the strength of the nursing profession, while building relationships with students and colleagues is most rewarding to her. On a personal note, Dr. Bergman and her husband are blessed to have three grown children nearby. They make it a priority to spend quality family time together as often as possible and have seven grandchildren who fill their lives with joy, contentment, and gratitude.

Dr. Tam Caudill is an Associate Professor of French and English. After earning her Ph.D. from Tulane University, she arrived at Jacksonville University in 2017 and since then has participated fully in all aspects of campus life. She has previously been honored as the Faculty Woman of the Year and the SGA Advisor of the Year and received Faculty Excellence Awards in both Teaching and University Service. Her primary research area is short narrative genres of the 12th and 13th century, and she is under contract with the University Press of Florida for a book, *An Introduction to Marie de France*. She serves as the co-editor of the scholarly journal *Le Cygne* and has published a total of 21 articles, book chapters, pedagogical dossiers, and reviews, as well as a single piece of flash fiction. She lives in northern St. Johns County with her husband, Dave, and three children: Asher, Willa, and Gavin... all of whom wish she worked less.

Dr. Daniel Franz graduated from Kenyon College in 2010 with a B.A. in Mathematics and a minor in Physics before obtaining his Ph.D. in Mathematics from the University of Virginia in 2016. After holding a Visiting Assistant Professor position at College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts for three years, he joined Jacksonville University as an Assistant Professor in the fall of 2019. He became department chair of the Department of Mathematics in the summer of 2022 and gained tenure and promotion to Associate Professor in Spring 2025. His research interests are in the intersection of Algebra and Graph Theory. In his teaching, he uses active learning and alternative grading methods to foster a growth mindset in students and create a learning environment that is both rigorous and supportive.



Professor Tiffany Leach is Professor of Art, Chair of Fine Arts, Director of Study Abroad, and a studio artist whose works explore the human experience through metaphorical and physical narratives. Nationally, the works have been shown at the MoCA Jacksonville, Ogden Museum of Southern Craft, Yellowstone Art Museum, Gadsden Art Museum and the Boca Raton Museum of Art. Her work is exhibited internationally, including at Rome Art Week and being selected as one of only twenty international ceramic artists for the *Du Bol* exhibition in Lille, France. Leach has presented at national conferences including SECAC and the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts and has been featured on the *Mother/Artist Podcast* and the National Clay Week platform. She has completed artist residencies at C.R.E.T.A. Rome in Italy and the Skopelos Art Foundation in Greece. Her work is held in over 100 private and public collections. Leach holds an MFA from the University of Georgia and a BFA from UNC Charlotte.

Dr. Jeff T. Wight was promoted to Full Professor of Exercise Science in spring, 2024. For the past five years, he has served as Chair for the Department of Health and Exercise Sciences, Supplemental Research Scientist for Mayo Clinic Florida, Department of Family Medicine, and Director of the JU Running Laboratory. Dr. Wight teaches three cross-listed courses (graduate and undergraduate students) focused heavily on experiential learning and developing skills (HLSC 406/EXSC 506 - Journal Seminar, EXSC 485/585 – Biomechanics, EXSC 430/530 – Measurement & Evaluation). Dr. Wight's graduate training is in biomechanics, so he helps students develop laboratory skills including video analysis, gait mat walking analysis, force plate balance testing, ultrasound muscle assessments, running biomechanics, biking biomechanics, and VO2 Master metabolic testing. Dr. Wight's current research is focused on collaborating with Mayo Clinic and the YMCA to provide strength and conditioning programs (lead by JU graduate students) for Mayo Clinic patients.

Dr. Mini Zeng is an Associate Professor of Computing Science and Cybersecurity and Director of the Center for Cybersecurity at Jacksonville University. Since joining JU in 2018 after earning her Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of Alabama in Huntsville, she has been dedicated to advancing student success through experiential, project-based learning. Dr. Zeng serves as Principal Investigator of a \$943K NSF S-STEM award supporting career readiness in engineering and computing, and as Co-PI on a 2025 NSF/NSA GenCyber grant. Her research interests include intrusion detection, incident response, software and database security, and AI applications in cybersecurity. She holds the CISSP certification and has led JU's B.S. in Cybersecurity program to earn the prestigious National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense designation. Passionate about mentorship and industry collaboration, Dr. Zeng prioritizes preparing students for meaningful careers in computing and cybersecurity.



Past Professors of the Year

Dr. Daphne Wang	2025-2026
Dr. Courtney Barclay	2024-2025
Dr. Sarah Parker	2023-2024
Dr. Julius Demps	2022-2023
Dr. Daniel Moseley	2021-2022
Prof. Kimberly Beasley	2020-2021
Dr. Mary Gipson	2019-2020
Dr. Julie Brannon	2018-2019
Dr. Nisse Goldberg	2017-2018
Dr. Colleen Wilson	2016-2017
Dr. Pam Crawford	2015-2016
Prof. Brian Palmer	2014-2015
Dr. Karen Jackson	2013-2014
Dr. William Crosby	2012-2013
Dr. Barry Thornton	2011-2012
Capt. Jerry L. Terrell	2010-2011
Dr. Peter Ryan	2009-2010
Dr. Russell Baker	2008-2009
Dr. Bashir Sayar	2007-2008
Dr. Rody Borg	2006-2007
Prof. Jeane Richards	2005-2006
Dr. Sherri Jackson	2004-2005
Prof. Dennis Dormady	2003-2004
Dr. June Main	2002-2003
Prof. Eric Thomas	2001-2002
Dr. John D. Garrigus	2000-2001
Dr. Paul R. Simony	1999-2000
Dr. Janet M. Haavisto	1998-1999
Dr. Toufic M. Hakim	1997-1998
Dr. Margaret L. Janz	1996-1997
Dr. Ruth R. O'Keefe	1995-1996
Dr. Lee Ann Clements	1994-1995
Dr. Hassan Pordeli	1993-1994
Dr. William A. Vessels	1992-1993



Past Professors of the Year

Dr. R. Wayne Hamm	1991–1992
Dr. S. Barre Barrett	1990–1991
Prof. Debra L. Murphy	1989–1990
Dr. S. Walker Blanton	1988–1989
Dr. A. Quinton White, Jr.	1987–1988
Dr. George E. Buker	1986–1987
Dr. Elizabeth Winstead	1985–1986
Dr. J. Steve Browder and Dr. M. Kathleen Johnson	1984–1985
Dr. Zahara C. Tandet	1983–1984
Prof. Mun S. Quan	1982–1983
Prof. Ernest W. Tyler	1981–1982
Dr. John A. Sullivan	1980–1981
Dr. G. Elizabeth Buie	1979–1980
Dr. Jesse S. Robertson, Jr.	1978–1979
Dr. Marilyn L. Repsher	1977–1978
Dr. James M. Olson	1976–1977
Dr. Richard S. Cromwell	1975–1976
Dr. Sharon L. Scholl	1974–1975
Dr. Kenneth G. Relyea	1973–1974
Dr. George G. Kelley	1972–1973
Dr. Joan S. Carver	1971–1972
Dr. Ted T. Allen	1970–1971
Dr. Frederick S. Aldridge	1969–1970
Dr. Gerson Yessin	1968–1969
Prof. Clarence P. Lee	1967–1968
Dr. Richard K. Morton	1966–1967
Dr. Lawrence Breeze	1965–1966
Dr. George W. Hallam	1964–1965
Dr. John E. Tilford, Jr.	1963–1964
Dr. John Sweigart	1962–1963
Dr. Frances B. Kinne and Dr. Ivan Parkins	1961–1962





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