

SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT ACADEMIC NEWS

The




Change

Robert Prezant, Provost

With the close of the Spring 2023 semester, our academic newsletter brings you updates on award-winning plays and award-winning colleagues, a growing base of Southern scholarship, programs that look inward and enrich our colleagues, outstanding student research, and our ongoing array of celebratory events. Following our Senior Honors Convocation, we held three distinct commencement exercises where we celebrated our students at every level, capping the year with a combined total of some 2,000 students graduating who are moving on to new adventures. The year also brings the departure of "President Joe." We will not forget all the good work, successes, and positive change that he brought to our institution; not to mention his jovial spirit and social worker mindset. The good fortune for his new home at Stockton sparks change in our leadership at Southern.

June 1 brings Interim President Dwayne Smith with his deep experience previously serving as a Provost, Interim President, and CEO, most recently at Housatonic Community College. Our new HHS building is now joined by our new business building with business faculty members busily moving their academic venues. So, change is in the air.

Change, however, is what our university, any university, is about. Students, colleagues, disciplines, all change over time. Critical thinking, and a good level of EQ, prepares minds to change. That's why we teach. That's why we pursue scholarship of all types. A wise Southern Chair gifted me a sign early in my time here at SCSU that reads "Do not be afraid of change. Be afraid of not changing." This sign is posted in my office, and I hope is something we all live by.

Change can be a bit frightening because it is rooted in not knowing what comes next. But change is a necessity as we gather knowledge, learn new approaches, take new paths, learn from each other, and find ourselves nestled in an ever shrinking and changing world. Our students arrive in their first year or transfer in from another school and ultimately leave Southern changed. Our conversations and debates create change. And as we face new challenges, be they budgetary, curricular, student-based, or personnel focused, the path forward is always through change.

Everything you read in this newsletter is about change. Southern is a change agent and that is something to celebrate. Enjoy the summer. Make sure you find some time to re-energize while you also consider how we will work together to promote positive change in the next academic year.

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Puzzled in the A Wing




To start Spring off on a cozy note, students were encouraged to visit Engleman's 2nd floor A Wing for the Week of Welcome. Once there, they were greeted with records, a record player, snacks, and puzzles. It was nice to have a mix of tunes filling the halls during this time. Many passersby were intrigued by the presence of the record player, and a few were even brave enough to change the records out. Jessica (pictured) spent a bit of time with us every day that week, and nearly single handedly completed that puzzle. We appreciate everyone who stopped by to say hello, and revel in Mark Rozewski's (CFO) compliments - he insists we will never be able to top this WOW event.

Administrative Enrichment Series

The Administrative Enrichment Series is a collection of workshops, lectures, and activities designed to create connection, enrich work lives, and provide learning opportunities to staff at Southern. The sessions range from procedure and software based workshops to tours and wellness activities. What originated as a dream to unite and educate the Secretaries and Administrative Assistants within Academic Affairs has blossomed into a reality that serves staff campus-wide. So far, staff has discussed their goals for the series, discovered new ways to utilize Navigate, reviewed travel procedures, toured and used the Buley Makerspace, and practiced restorative justice techniques. We are so thankful that our colleagues across campus have been willing to take the time to share their expertise.



The impact of this initiative has been overwhelmingly positive. Jane Velez (Sec. II, MUS) attests, "Where do I begin? As a fairly new secretary myself, I find that the series has not only helped with my professional development, but also has created a welcoming community amongst the administrative professionals. We have a space where we can reach out and ask for help without judgement. I am truly thankful for all your hard work with coordinating these for us. I am also thankful for the folks that are taking time out of their day to help train and educate us. I feel that it is very important to the University to have all the administrative professionals trained so that the processes are uniform, and it makes for less error and increases productivity."

<p><i>May 25</i></p>		<p>ROB DEMEZZO Conferences and Events Protocol for reserving space, refreshment requests, and hosting events.</p>
<p><i>June 1</i></p>		<p>KELVIN RUTLEDGE & THE STAFF AT DEI DEI Overview & Brunch Brief overview of DEI over brunch. Sponsored by the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.</p>
<p><i>June 15</i></p>		<p>ANNA RIVERA - ALFARO & CYNTHIA SHEA-LUZIK Procurement Discuss the end of the fiscal year and closing out contracts, honoraria, PSAs, and other procurement services.</p>

Administrative Enrichment Series

Upcoming Sessions

Want to attend? Register here!
<https://inside.southernct.edu/academic-affairs/administrative-enrichment-series>

Have an idea for a session?
 Email Jackie Isabella at isabellaj2@southernct.edu

Promotion and Tenure Celebration



"The event was excellent! The vibe was fun and family-friendly. How wonderful to have friends, colleagues, and my family watch me be recognized and celebrated for the prestigious achievements of promotion and tenure," said Kauther Badr of the Management/ International Business department, after the April 18th Promotion and Tenure Recognition Event.

The event, held in the Adanti Student Center Ballroom, featured good food, camaraderie, and a touch of whimsy. Otus had the important duty of manning a DIY photobooth, which proved to be a hit with attendees.



President Joe Bertolino, Provost Robert Prezant, Dr. Maria Diamantis, Chair of the Promotion and Tenure Committee, and Dr. Jules Tetreault, Associate Vice President, Student Affairs gave remarks to celebrate the hard work and dedication of the 43 faculty members, librarians, and coaches who earned promotion and/or tenure for AY 22/23 (listed below).

David Allen (ACC): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenured, **Valerie Andrushko** (ANT): Promoted to Professor, **Stephen Axon** (EGMS): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenured, **Kauther Badr** (MGT/IB): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenured, **Sara Baker Bailey** (CMSS): Promoted to Associate Professor, **Edward Bethke** (Athletics): Promoted to Coach III, **Frank Bevino** (ACC): Promoted to Professor, **Gene Birz** (FIN): Promoted to Professor, **Patricia Bode** (ART): Promoted to Associate Professor, **Steven Brady** (BIO): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenured, **Braxton Carrigan** (MAT): Promoted to Professor, **Dana Casetti** (PHY): Promoted to Associate Professor, **Marian Evans** (PUB HLTH): Promoted to Associate Professor, **William Farley** (ANT): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenured, **Marisa Ferraro** (C&L): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenured, **Mark Fogel** (Athletics): Promoted to Coach III, **Parker Fruehan** (LIB): Promoted to Associate Librarian and Tenured, **Rachel Furey** (ENG): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenured, **Joshua Groffman** (MUS): Tenured, **Stephanie Hiriak-Lund** (Athletics): Promoted to Coach III, **Jessica Kenty-Drane** (SOC): Promoted to Professor, **Young Kyu Kim** (MKT): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenured, **Sobeira Latorre** (WLL): Promoted to Professor, **Kevin McGinniss** (RTSM): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenured, **A. Casey McPherson** (CSP): Tenured, **Khoa Nguyen** (FIN): Promoted to Associate Professor, **Brian Nill** (Athletics): Promoted to Coach II, **Frances Penny** (NUR): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenured, **Elizabeth Lewis Roberts** (BIO): Promoted to Professor, **Elizabeth Rodriguez-Keyes** (SWK): Promoted to Associate Professor, **Kristie Rupp** (HMS): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenured, **Carrie Anne Sherwood** (C&L): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenured, **Alaa Sheta** (COMP SCI): Promoted to Professor and Tenured, **Kevin Siedlecki** (Athletics): Promoted to Coach III, **Carmela Smith** (SWK): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenured, **Carol Stewart** (MGT/IB): Promoted to Professor, **Kelly Stiver** (PSY): Promoted to Professor, **Mikolaj Sulkowski** (BIO): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenured, **Katarzyna Toskin** (BIS): Promoted to Associate Professor, **Fred Volkmar** (SPE): Tenured, **Zheni Wang** (MGT/IB): Promoted to Associate Professor and Tenured, **Hao Wu** (COMP SCI): Tenured, **Richard Zipoli** (CMD): Promoted to Professor.



Kennedy Center gets *Civil*

Mary Pelkey, Theatre/History Senior

In November 2022, SCSU's Theatre Department and Crescent Players produced and performed *Civil*. A play written by Rob Matsushita and directed by Benjamin Curns. The show featured Abby Boyle, Eriean Pappano, Erian Diaz, Isaiah Carr, and myself. The run was sold out and standing room only. A brilliant show set in a dystopian courtroom where you, the audience, are the jury and will have to vote to decide the fate of these characters.

Each year Southern competes and participates in the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF). Respondents from all over the region attend a performance and provide feedback to the cast and crew. There is also the opportunity for students and faculty to be recognized for their work and compete at the festival the following January.

Civil received rave reviews and a great response from the KCACTF respondent. Our Stage Management team, Cameron Munoz and Allen McKeever were nationally recognized for their work on the show. I was nominated to compete for the Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship for my role as Cursor. In December, we learned that the show had been invited to perform at the 2023 festival in Cape Cod. The following two months were filled with chaos as we prepared to take the show on the road. Our incredible designers worked endlessly to adjust the set, lighting, and sound to fit an entirely different space. In the rehearsal room, the cast restaged the entire show. It was tiring and a challenge but an amazing opportunity to put on an even better show.



At the end of January 2023, we packed up everything and took a group of twenty-three students and faculty up to Hyannis, Massachusetts, where the festival was being held. After a four-hour drive, the crew unloaded and had to reassemble the entire set and other technical elements in less than 3 hours. It was all hands on deck. The following morning, load-in continued up until the very moment that audiences were let in the door. We performed two fantastic shows to an audience of other theatre students and faculty from all over the Northeast.

The response from others at the festival was incredible and overwhelming. People adored the show and were talking about it the rest of the week. At the closing of the festival, *Civil* was awarded "The Golden Hammer", an award recognizing the best ability to adapt, load-in, perform, and strike a production at the festival. *Civil* beat out four other shows to win this award.

Taking *Civil* on the road was an incredible experience and opportunity for both the SCSU Theatre Department and personally. Our team took on the challenge and went above and beyond.

Ziemba Earns Prestigious Research Fellowship



Emily Ziemba (SWK) was awarded a prestigious and competitive summer research fellowship with NIDA. She will spend 8 weeks this summer in CO supporting research about health equity among urban youth. She will then return to SCSU in the Fall to complete her MSW.

Emily is the second BSW student to win this award. The first student, Elena Sanon, spent the 2019 summer at University of Miami on a project about health communication in Haitian American families. She earned her MSW at NYU and is in practice in New York.

Soaring from Academic Affairs' Nest

Two of our outstanding student workers, Krista Jones (IDS) and Melanie Sanabria (PSY), are soaring to new heights after graduating this May.

Krista, a 2023 Barnard Scholar, is kind and eager to support the staff here in Academic Affairs. Her knowledge of Southern's divisions and resources proved extremely helpful when fielding the myriad of inquiries we receive. Krista was a fantastic researcher, and often tasked with obtaining data from various sources for Bob or Jackie. Krista will be pursuing her Master's degree in International Human Rights Law at the Cardozo School of Law in NYC.



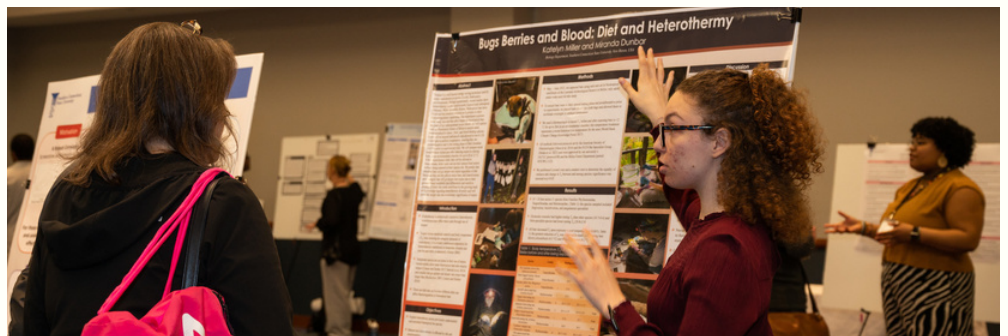
A transfer from Housatonic Community College, Melanie was a seasoned student worker when she interviewed for our position in January of 2022. We are so glad she took wing as an Owl. Melanie's thoughtful and caring demeanor helped put everyone at ease. She answered the phones and addressed guests masterfully. She loved her experiences as a resident at SCSU and was the shining example of an involved student. Melanie will be pursuing her Master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy here at Southern.

We wish Krista and Melanie well as they begin this new chapter and are proud of their efforts to further their education.

Undergraduate Research Conference

Michele Thompson, RSAC Chair

On April 29th Academic Affairs co-sponsored the 8th annual Undergraduate Research and Creativity Conference. This year's conference was particularly broad and deep with number of poster, oral, and artistic presentations which literally ranged from Art to Zoology. As usual the lunch break was enlivened by a fascinating glimpse into the work of our colleagues in the Art Department with the annual Art Crawl. Students from almost every discipline on campus, their family and friends, their faculty mentors and guests enjoyed a day which showcased what our undergraduates can do-and what they can do is very impressive.



Million Women Mentors

Colleen Bielitz, AVP Strategic Initiatives and Outreach



Southern Connecticut State University swept the 2023 Stand Up for STEM Mentorship Awards at the Million Women Mentors event, on May 3, 2023 in West Hartford. Dr. Colleen Bielitz, associate vice president of strategic initiatives and outreach, and alumna and Southern Foundation Board member, Dr. Jacquelynn (Jackie) Garofano, '06, took home the two Stand Up for STEM Mentorship Awards that were presented that evening. The Stand Up for STEM Mentorship Award honors women who have made significant contributions to the field of STEM and have helped lift up the next generation of STEM professionals. Million Women Mentors (MWM) is a dynamic and impactful organization that strives to address the gender gap in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. It is the premier network dedicated to encouraging girls and women around the world to pursue, persist, and succeed in STEM careers.

Founded in 2014 by the STEMconnector, a consortium of companies, non-profit organizations, and associations committed to advancing STEM education and workforce development, Million Women Mentors has quickly gained momentum and recognition as a driving force for change. The organization recognizes the immense potential of women in STEM and seeks to bridge the gap between their talent and opportunity. It is currently active in 40 states in the US and is quickly growing in Pakistan, India and Turkey.

At its core, Million Women Mentors is focused on establishing mentoring relationships that empower girls and women in their STEM journeys. The organization believes that mentorship is a powerful tool for fostering personal and professional growth, providing guidance, support, and inspiration to those navigating their way through the STEM landscape. By connecting mentees with experienced mentors from various STEM fields, MWM aims to create a nurturing environment that promotes skill development, confidence building, and career advancement.

The Connecticut chapter of Million Women Mentors is led by Honorary Chair, Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz. Knowing that sustainable change happens locally the organization's mentorship programs are designed to be flexible and adaptable. Whether through one-on-one mentoring, group mentoring, or virtual mentoring platforms, MWM provides opportunities for girls and women to connect with mentors who can offer guidance, share their experiences, and help mentees navigate the challenges and opportunities in their chosen STEM paths.

In addition to fostering mentor-mentee relationships, Million Women Mentors actively advocates for policies and initiatives that promote gender equity in STEM. Through collaborations with policymakers, educational institutions, and industry leaders, MWM strives to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages women to not just pursue STEM education and careers but to persist and thrive in these environments. By raising awareness of the gender gap in STEM and highlighting the importance of mentorship, MWM aims to inspire systemic change and drive the creation of equal opportunities.

To learn more visit: <https://mwm.stemconnector.com/states-initiative/connecticut/>

For Southern news coverage of the event: <https://news.southernct.edu/2023/05/11/bielitz-honored-for-standing-up-for-stem-mentorship/>

Substantive Change Accreditation Visit

Southern is in the third year from the launch of our 4th doctoral program: Counseling Education and Supervision (CES). Since we have not yet been approved at the doctoral level, NECHE sent representatives for a fourth visit to campus this spring for what is termed a, “substantial change” program review. During this two-and-a-half-day process, the two reviewers were afforded the opportunity to meet with CES faculty and students who demonstrated the amazing work being accomplished within the department.

For instance, faculty have co-authored with students:

- Foss-Kelly, L. & Bellucci, J. L. (2023 Spring). Financial privilege, poverty, and the counselor as advocate. *The Exemplar, Newsletter of the Chi Sigma Iota Counseling, Academic and Professional Honor Society International*, Vol 38(1), 30-34.

And co-presented at several conferences, such as:

- Bonjo, L. & Santo, B. (2023, March 24). Working with Military Service Members and Veterans. [Invited oral presentation] Connecticut Counseling Association (CCA) Conference, Trumbull, CT.
- Bonjo, L. Hotz, E., & Gorski, J. (2022, October 20-22). The “S” Word: Let’s Talk About Sex Counseling with Gender-Expansive Individuals. [Education session]. Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender-Expansive Identities in Counseling (SAIGE), Chicago, IL. <https://saigecounseling.org/saige-conference/>

Early College Professional Development Day

On Tuesday, May 16th, we hosted 52 new and returning early college (EC) instructors from 29 high schools across Connecticut. Six high school counselors also signed up to join us to learn about our updated early college student application, registration, and billing processes that have been streamlined for students taking courses within their high schools. EC instructors reviewed attendance and grading requirements, learned about student engagement, the library’s customized “libguide” for early college, and continued professional development opportunities. The session concluded with groups of peers meeting over lunch to discuss their syllabi and assignments with one another and relevant department chairs. The session was made possible by the work of our new early college university assistant Bri Smith, our faculty coordinator for early college Olcay Yavuz, early college admissions coordinator Sir Snowden and the first year admissions director, Nilvio Perez; we also want to thank Nina Cote, our Bursar, Katie deOliveira, Director of CASAS, Sal Rizza, Director of Orientation, Transition and Family Engagement, and Jennifer Hudson in the Office of Faculty Development for participating in the program.

We look forward to welcoming the approximately 1000 early college students in these SCSU courses in the high school during the next academic year. For more information, please see: www.southernct.edu/early-college

SCSU Authors Database

Rebecca Hedreen, Distance Education Librarian

Buley Library recently announced the new website for the SCSU Authors database. This website was designed by 3 Computer Science students, Kyle Cody, Andrew Chan, and Aaron Harrison, for their Capstone Project (under the direction of Prof. MD Hossain in Computer Science and Librarian Rebecca Hedreen in the Library.) They started from the open source Kerko project and produced a customized and tailored site that looks great!

View it at <https://Libguides.SouthernCT.edu/SCSUAuthors>



Senior Honors Convocation



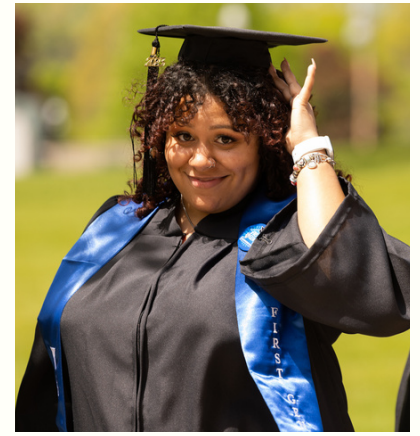
On a beautiful Sunday afternoon, May 7th, Southern held its 67th Annual Senior Honors Convocation in Lyman Auditorium. Undergraduate students who have performed with distinction in scholarship, leadership, and service to the university were given recognition at this special university event. The event was very well attended.

Southern takes great pride in recognizing its best and brightest students who have been selected by faculty for exemplary academic achievements. Each student is individually showcased by receiving his or her award from a faculty or staff presenter on stage. Details about the students are outlined in the program.

617 students were invited to the event; out of this number 570 were recipients of Latin Honors. 192 of these invited students received Departmental Honors or Honors in Community Engaged Research, and/or Departmental Awards. 42 students received recognition for their participation in SCSU's four-year Honors College program. Several students received multiple awards. In total, there were 406 students who attended the event, and there were 41 award presenters.

Four individuals at the event were presented with the coveted Henry Barnard Distinguished Student Awards: Breanna Arce, Autumn Church, Krista Jones and Samuel Martin. Their stories of accomplishments were beautifully written up in the event program.

This year the processional music was riveting and consisted of New Orleans style jazz music, lead by Dr. David Chevan, Professor of Music, SCSU student-Trey Debourgh, and outside musicians Will Barlett, Chris Casey, and Haneef Nelson.



At the start of the ceremony was soloist, SCSU student, Alexina Cristante, who beautifully sang "America the Beautiful." Alexina was accompanied by Jonathan Irving, Professor of Music, on the keyboard. During the ceremony there was also a vocal performance by students Alexina Cristante, Angel Rodriguez, and Ben Jesulaitis of the song "Louder than Words" (from the show "Tick Tick Boom!" by Jonathan Larson) which was also accompanied by Professor Irving.

Barnard Award recipient, Krista Jones, gave the Senior Honors Convocation address. Her message included congratulations to fellow students on their diligence and success in completing their education. She applauded SCSU for allowing students to flourish and find their path. In her speech, she discussed the importance of actively pursuing humility and that "achievement" is not an absolute requirement of learning. She encouraged students not to speak so loudly on issues that others are silenced or to force ideas whereby you can inevitably be proven wrong by others. She expressed the importance of being tolerant of others' views, even when you disagree, and open to learning from others.

Many thanks to The Senior Honors Convocation Committee, co-chaired by Margaret Huda, Christine Petto, and Linda Robinson. This committee consists of 16 faculty and staff members who work diligently at bringing all the details together for this beloved event.

Ripples of Innovation



The School of Business and the College of Health and Human Services have been awarded Ripples of Innovation grants designed to enhance the positive reputation of the divisions, promote enrollments, and generate revenue. The Ripples of Innovation program was designed to promote projects that will generate waves of momentum within the University and make a significant difference in the forward movement, positive reputation of Southern, while also ideally enhancing enrollment. Funds from our SCSU Coca Cola Foundation account were set aside to allow for one award of \$75,000 and a second for \$50,000. Each awarded proposal was required to develop an actionable effort that would enhance our university's reputation creating greater recognition for the good work we do and/or create a program/activity that would grow enrollment significantly while also seeking a 10-fold return on the investment (ROI). The submitted proposals were reviewed by six referees, both external and internal to Southern, with the two proposals generating the highest ranked scores in each funding category receiving the funds.



The School of Business will receive \$50,000 for their "Career Credential Academy". The Academy aims to provide students and learners from the external community unique value-added credentials designed to promote enrollment into the School of Business, enhance diversity, and better prepare participants to enter the workforce. Congratulations to J. Boronico, P. Bantasala, A. Grotzke, T. Rescigno, B. Abugri and School of Business faculty who created this program and will work to ensure its success.

And congratulations to S. Bulmer, W. Lunn, R. Axtell, R. Gregory, M. Robertson, K. Rupp, P. Latchman, and G. Morin, all from the College of Health and Human Services for their \$75,000 winning proposal to create a "Revenue Generating Physical Performance Testing Center" in our new HHS building. This program, designed to also generate additional enrollment in the M.S. in Exercise Science and the B.S. in Exercise and Sport Science,

will take advantage of our new, well equipped, performance laboratories when they are not being used for our Southern student programs (basically a fee-for-service enterprise).

Both new programs and approaches will bring people to campus who might otherwise not have visited, create new exciting opportunities to learn, to enhance physical health, and to ultimately spread the good word about the outstanding programs and opportunities housed on our campus.

