



Change is in the Air

Robert Prezant, Provost

As many of you know I have a sign in my office (graciously gifted to me by one of our stellar faculty colleagues) that states "Do not be afraid of change. Be afraid of not changing." This important mantra can fit an array of scenarios, from university branding to disciplinary focus to how we manage curriculum. It can also cover the colleagues we have come to know, count on, and value. In the coming months we will see change in that category. An all-star array of individuals who are so important to our home institution will be retiring.

There is no one on campus who does not know or been helped by **Linda Robinson**, Coordinator of Academic Affairs and, previous to that, Academic Affairs Administrative Assistant. Linda has been our "go to" person for years. She is "that" individual who knows everyone, knows who to go to for whatever you need, knows what form to fill out, is never flustered as the work seemingly piles up in an unending cycle, and apparently has a good word to say about everybody. Her leadership in all aspects of our Academic Affairs Office, in ensuring our Senior Honors Convocation comes off professionally and without a hitch, and her attention to budgetary detail and LAF processing has been amazing and deeply appreciated.

While budgetary constraints have always hovered over the past many years, Southern has always managed to retain sound fiscal bottomlines through the adept and wise money management of **Mark Rozewski**.

Mark has offered the finest budget management during challenging times and done so with consistency, an adept ability to manage increasingly complex budgetary needs, and a wry sense of humor. Mark has never been rattled by some of the twists and turns thrown into our budgetary and infrastructural challenges (I'm not sure but his calm demeanor might be influenced by his regular support of and visits to Dunkin'). We owe our ongoing sound budgetary stance to Mark and his excellent team.

In her years at Southern, **Diane Ariza** has built an amazing division that reflects her dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Her leadership has been inspiring and well worth emulating, especially in these very challenging times. Diane has created and supported a team that we can all be proud of as they have adhered to and emulated her focus, energy, stamina, and vision. Through smart (and sometimes appropriately challenging) programming, creative workshops, and constant outreach, Diane has brought Southern much closer to our aspiration of being a social justice institution.

And there is no one on campus who has not depended upon our outstanding IT team, led by the indefatigable **Dennis Reiman**. As our Chief Information Officer Dennis has created an exceptionally well informed team that responds to the largest of technology challenges to the most minute laptop issues. Importantly Dennis has never laughed (at least not in my presence) when I call with one of my all too often technology questions that fully demonstrates my Neanderthalic knowledge of technology. For that I am grateful. Dennis' level head and deep knowledge has gotten us through a number of tech-issues that would have shut other universities down.

Of course there will be searches and strongly qualified individuals coming in to take on each of the portfolios currently covered by these remarkable individuals. I'm not hesitant to say they will be deeply missed. I know we all wish them the best as they each launch into new opportunities and post-Southern lives.

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Things Are Looking Up

At least they were on April 8th, as the campus came together by the rock garden to watch the solar eclipse. The next chance we may get at another view like this in Connecticut will be August 23, 2024. We are grateful to the departments of **Earth Science** and **Physics** for coordinating this fantastic viewing!



Taking Flight

It is with mixed emotions we bid farewell to three team members from Academic Affairs. Beloved student workers **Aaron Lapham** and **Mary Pelkey** are leaving the nest with the rest of the class of 2024. Aaron will be returning to Southern next semester to pursue an MBA with a concentration in business analytics. He will be rejoining the Office of First-Year Admissions as a Graduate Assistant. Mary intends to continue to pursue her love and passion of theatre in the field of stage management.

Linda Robinson is retiring after over 21 years of dedicated service to SCSU. She began in the Office of Institutional Advancement as the CSU Administrative Assistant to the VP. Linda switched gears in 2012 and became the CSU Administrative Assistant for the Provost. In 2020, Linda was promoted to the Coordinator of Academic Resources. Linda has been an amazing friend and colleague. She touched the lives of many during her career, always offering assistance and guidance with a smile. We hope her retirement is filled with joy and relaxation.

Accepted Students Day

This year's Accepted Students Day saw a turnout of 502 accepted students and families with a total of over 1300 attendees. Thank you to all the faculty and staff who volunteered their time to attend one of the various offerings that day! Thanks to your support, knowledge, and attendance, we received amazing feedback.

"THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THAT THIS IS WHERE I WANT TO BE FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS"



Million Women Mentors: Stand Up for STEM Awards



In a resounding show of support for women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), 70 leaders and supporters congregated at the Buley Library Art Gallery for an event hosted by Million Women Mentors. The gathering for the Stand Up for STEM Awards which took place on April 5th, brought together prominent figures from the community, including the Lt. Governor **Susan Bysiewicz**, the Commissioner of Education for the State of Connecticut, **Charlene M. Russell-Tucker**, and the State's Chief Manufacturing Officer, **Paul Lavoie**.

The event was kicked off with opening remarks by Interim President **Dwayne Smith**, emphasizing the importance of empowering women in STEM fields. He highlighted the critical role women play in driving innovation, solving complex challenges, and shaping the future of technology and science.

Throughout the afternoon, attendees listened to the challenges women face in STEM and the importance of mentorship in overcoming these obstacles. Associate Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and Outreach at Southern, **Colleen Bielitz**, who is also the State Leader for Million Women Mentors, underscored the impact of mentorship programs in supporting and empowering women throughout their STEM journey. She also noted the powerhouse of female talent and STEM leadership at Southern Connecticut State University, many of whom were in the room.

"It's not just about encouraging women to pursue STEM careers; it's about providing them with the guidance and support they need to thrive in these fields," remarked Dr. Bielitz, reflecting on the mission of Million Women Mentors.

The Lt. Governor echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the need for collaborative efforts to break down barriers and create more opportunities for women in STEM. "When we support women in STEM, we're not only investing in their futures but in the future of our communities and economy," she stated. She also noted that she loved being at Southern Connecticut State University, surrounded by all the female doctors in the room.

Among the awardees were STEM Mentor of the Year, **Elizabeth Waller** Peterson; Next Generation winner, **Doorva Garg** from Farmington High School; Youth in Action winner, **Matilda Ryder** from Hamden High School; Corporate winner, Girl Scouts of Connecticut and Male Ally, **Ron Utterbeck**, CIO for Eversource.

The event served as a testament to the growing momentum behind initiatives aimed at promoting gender diversity and inclusion in STEM. As the conversation continues to evolve, it's clear that events like these play a crucial role in rallying support and fostering meaningful change.

In closing, Dr. Bielitz thanked **Jacqueline Isabella** and **Cort Sierpinski** for their invaluable service in making the event such a success. She also expressed her gratitude to all those who attended and pledged to continue their efforts in advancing the cause of women in STEM. With strong leadership and unwavering commitment, the path toward a more inclusive and equitable STEM landscape appears brighter than ever.





Patience with Patients

Jackie Isabella, Administrative Operations Assistant

Rosie Marquez, an Athletic Training grad student, greeted me with a smile. I limped my way to the appropriate bay and began “I hurt my ankle a week ago...” A few months earlier, I received an email inviting me to take place in a Care Planning and Therapeutic Intervention Simulation.

My torn ligaments, and the many other ailed “patients,” created an opportunity for students in the Masters of Athletic Training program to practice crucial skills, handle challenging situations, and refine their judgements in a non-threatening and controlled environment.

I was in awe of the skills Rosie and her classmates displayed.

Faculty and staff from various divisions were in slings, heating pads, and being whisked to the whirlpool.

My simulation was meant to provide a “pre op” scenario for Rosie, and she talked me through what I could expect in the days leading up to - and weeks following - my surgery. Fingers crossed this was the first and last time I ever had to be put into a cast!

Many thanks to **Matthew Rothbard** and the other MAT faculty who coordinated this fantastic opportunity.

FACULTY MENTORS



She continued, “We’ve had the opportunity to bond over shared experiences and interests, both professionally and personally. Our interactions have not only been productive but also enjoyable.”

Joann Petrini of (HSI) says “I was fortunate to have a very supportive home department, but my mentor, **Troy Paddock** (HIS), helped me understand what to expect in my new role from a different perspective. Troy has been very kind, thoughtful, and generous with his time. This is a great program and having Troy as a mentor has helped me feel supported in my first year at Southern. I hope I can do the same for someone in the future.”



As higher education continues to change and evolve, having a colleague to help navigate a path to success is essential. Did you know that the Office of Faculty Development offers one-on-one mentoring as part of its Faculty Mentoring Program?

Says new faculty member **Thanh (Minnie) Hoang** (PSC) about her experience with mentor **Svenja Gusewski** (CMD), “She has been incredibly helpful. Having someone who understands my feelings and challenges as a new international faculty member means a lot to me.”



If you would like to become or request a faculty mentor, visit <https://inside.southernct.edu/faculty-development/mentoringprogram>

New faculty member **Saira Soroya** (ILS) says “I found a mentor who became both a kind guide and a true friend. Prof. **Jess [Gregory]** (EDL) was always there to guide, encourage, and support me. It was an amazing experience, and I highly recommend continuing the mentoring program for new faculty.”

I have enjoyed meeting with many of you this semester to discuss writing at Southern. Uniformly, everyone I have met with sees the importance of good writing for student success. The same skills that help students perform well in their class allow them to succeed after graduation.

We already have excellent resources available to support students with their writing in the Writing Center housed within CASAS. This year we have focused on expanding those resources for graduate students. We have hired excellent support staff and trained them using best practices. These staff help students with short-term needs and coach them in skill development as they build relationships over time.

One issue we face is that the usefulness of the Writing Center is somewhat limited because of a lack of visibility. We are currently working on signage and expanding our online presence to increase its visibility.

In our conversations it became clear that students need support in at least two different facets of their writing. First, they need training in writing clearly. Second, they need assistance

Writing Across the University



Tess Marchant-Shapiro
Writing Director

in the technical aspects of style, e.g. how to cite sources and set up the structure of a paper.

We will be sponsoring a series of workshops to help students develop these skills. With a view to the relevance of these skills to the workforce, students will be able to earn micro-credentials for the two tracks that can be included on a resume.

The resources I create for these workshops will be available on an expanded version of the Writing Center's webpage. These will be available to students as they work

to improve their own writing. They will also be available to faculty to use in class or for referring students. In addition, I'll be working with Faculty Development to present workshops for faculty who want training in teaching their students to write better. Although it is relatively easy to identify good writing, we need a vocabulary to explain the elements of clear writing to students—both in class and in providing feedback.

Going forward, the external reviewers of Writing's StAR report made it clear that we need to develop a coherent unified writing program. One of my priorities in developing the program will be to align it with assessment so that we can track the impact of the writing program on student writing and, through it, on student success. This is important both for accreditation purposes and also so we can identify what we do well and where we need to improve.

I am in the process of establishing a working group that will meet next year to develop a proposal for structuring a comprehensive writing program. Please contact me if you are interested in serving on that group.

Early College Updates

Our outgoing, founding Early College Faculty Coordinator, **Olcay Yavuz** will be making two presentations on May 17th at the New England Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NEACEP) Conference. We will be welcoming a new Early College Advisor, **Joan Weir** this year. In addition, thanks to a state-grant to expand dual enrollment, participating departments have each identified an Early College Liaison to connect directly with high school faculty teaching SCSU courses to ensure courses taught in the high school provide the same quality and rigor as SCSU courses. On May 29th, we will be welcoming over 80 instructors to campus for our annual EC Professional Development Day.

Emma Cross' dedication to keeping aquaculture students in Connecticut through NOAA funded early college courses can be found in Aquaculture North America's article "Fostering the Future." Check it out here: <https://mydigitalpublication.com/publication/?m=53591&i=819752&p=16&ver=html5>



*As of 5/8/24	Eligible Seniors	Application Submitted	Accepted	Deposited
Fall 2023	311	291	269	63
Fall 2024	517	444	402	36

Senior Honors Convocation



On Sunday afternoon, April 28th, Southern held its 68th Annual Senior Honors Convocation in Lyman Auditorium. Southern is enormously proud of these highly accomplished students who earned recognition from faculty for exemplary academic achievement, scholarship, and leadership. At the Senior Honors Convocation, each student is individually showcased by receiving his or her award from a faculty or staff presenter on stage.

This momentous event was well attended this year. 596 students were invited to the event; of which 554 were recipients of Latin Honors. 194 of these invited students received Departmental Honors or Honors in Community Engaged Research, and/or Departmental Awards. 36 students received recognition for their participation in SCSU's four-year Honors College program. Several students received multiple awards. In total, there were approximately 400 students who attended the event and 37 faculty award presenters. Those receiving Latin Honors were presented with cords on the stage by Interim President **Dwayne Smith**, and Provost **Robert Prezant**.

The upbeat processional music, in the style of New Orleans jazz, was led by **David Chevan**, [MUS], student-**Greg Vanderlyn**, and outside musicians **Will Barlett**, **Chris Casey**, and **Sarah Uyar**.

Soloist and recipient, **Alexina Cristante**, beautifully sang "America the Beautiful" and was accompanied by **Jonathan Irving**, [MUS], on the keyboard. The duo also performed "The Climb" during the musical interlude.

Four individuals were presented with the Henry Barnard Distinguished Student Awards: **Kyle Mashia-Thaxton**, **Jen Ng**, **Emily Rowland**, and **Nadesha Shakes**. Their stories of accomplishments and portraits were beautifully presented in the program provided by **ICM**.

Barnard Award recipient, **Fatou Muteba**, gave the Senior Honors Convocation address. Her inspiring message included congratulations to fellow students on their persistence and success in completing their education. Fatou is a first-generation immigrant from Congo with Zambian, Malian, and Congolese ancestry. She is fluent in Swahili and teaches English to women in her community who have immigrated to the U.S. She works as an academic specialist in **CASAS**, tutoring students in English, Physics, and Anatomy and Physiology. During the Nursing program's international study in Peru, Fatou was inspired by the beautiful and intricate textiles that Peruvian women labor over for many hours. This became the topic for her Honors international studies capstone project titled "The Essence of Beauty: Exploring the Intricacy of Creating," in which she researches the cultural and historical context of this indigenous art form and explores the significance of laboring to infuse beauty into everyday utilitarian objects. Fatou is truly a citizen-scholar, engaging wholeheartedly with the world she encounters.

The Senior Honors Convocation Committee is co-chaired by **Margaret Huda**, **Christine Petto**, and **Linda Robinson**. This committee consists of 17 faculty and staff members who work diligently at handling numerous details to ensure a well-organized, celebratory event. Special thanks to **Isabel Chenoweth**, who captured stunning photographs and portraits for this occasion.

Academic Affairs congratulates our graduating seniors who were recognized for their amazing achievements as part of this memorable program. They leave a legacy for Southern students for years to come. We wish them continued success in all their future endeavors.

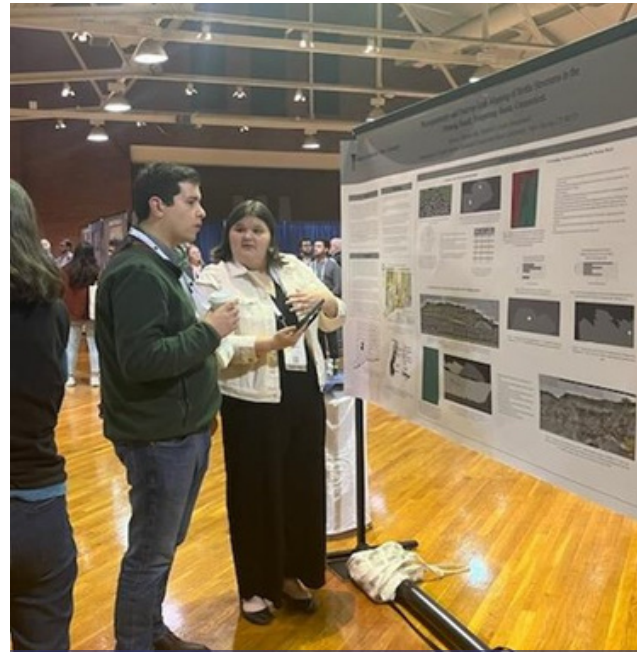
Student Presenters Reflect on the NEGSA Conference

This past March, students and faculty from the Earth Science Department and Club attended the Northeastern Section Meeting of the Geological Society of America in Manchester, New Hampshire. The conference was well attended by scientists from around the globe with an interest in the geology of the northeastern portion of the U.S. and eastern Canada. Researchers presented their work on a range of topics such as the investigation and mitigation of natural hazards in the northeast, critical mineral resources, emerging contaminants within surface and groundwater, and glacial geology.

Dr. **Cooper Boemmels** (Earth Science Club Faculty Advisor) co-chaired and presented her research in a topical session on magmatism and tectonics in the northeastern US.

Katelyn Alix, the Earth Science Club president indicated "GSA gave me incredible insight into what people are doing in surrounding areas in the field and potential topics I could research in my career! It was also very inspiring to see students my age giving talks at this kind of conference, and it gave me hope for my own future." Funding for the trip was provided by the Relyea Endowed Earth Science Fund. Several SCSU students volunteered at the meeting and assisted with running technical sessions.

Bianca Chernowsky, a senior SCSU Earth Science major, presented her work using photogrammetry to map outcrop-scale structures within the Pomperaug Basin in Woodbury and Southbury, Connecticut.



Senior Earth Science major, Bianca Chernowsky, explaining her research to Dr. Fedorchuk.

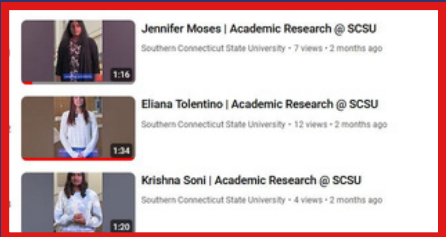


Group dinner following a long day of talks at the conference. Left to right: Gaby Galicia Barrientos, Heather Vollhardt, Bianca Chernowsky, Katelyn Alix, Amanda Ohlson, Jennifer Cooper Boemmels, Nicholas Fedorchuk, Will Kopley, Joshua Esposito, Phillip Eldridge, Jake Caplan, and Fawzi Musa

Bianca's thesis research was funded by an SCSU RSAC Undergraduate Research Grant and a grant from the Geological Society of Connecticut. As described by Bianca, "This year's trip to NEGSA was amazing! Not only did I have the opportunity to present a poster for my undergraduate thesis at the conference, but I also volunteered and established some valuable connections with individuals in my field. Also, the memories made with my peers who also attended are ones I won't forget." **Gaby Galicia Barrientos**, an SCSU Earth Science major, was included as a co-author of a talk given by Dr. Cooper Boemmels. Beyond the research, students took advantage of the experience to network and gain valuable connections within the field. The meeting was engaging and inspiring for students and faculty who are looking forward to next year's conference!



Press Play: Academic Research at Southern



In her studies, **Jennifer Moses**, has unlocked the potential of biochar as a sustainable solution for capturing CO2.

Eliana Tolentino's research delves into the Drive Intervention Style of learning, a method that pairs younger students with older ones to enhance their reading comprehension skills.

Krishna Soni's research explores how the impact of social justice events and resources on campus on students' interactions and how these experiences influence their perception of collegiate life.

These stellar students are leading the way in academic research here at SCSU. If you or someone you know have conducted research in your field that you would like featured on the Academic Affairs' website, please contact Jackie Isabella at isabellaj2@southernct.edu.

