



Office of the Provost

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Honors and Awards

UF professor elected to National Academy of Sciences



University of Florida Distinguished Professor Emeritus Pierre Sikivie, Ph.D., was elected this spring as a member of the National Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Sikivie is best known for his contributions to the study of axions, which are hypothetical elementary particles that some scientists believe could make up dark matter. As a part of a 120-person class, Dr. Sikivie is now one of 2,705 total active members and the 16th UF faculty member.

Professor Sikivie's election to the NAS caps an extraordinary career.

He earned the Galileo Galilei Medal in 2025 and the American Physical Society's 2020 J.J. Sakurai Prize. He also was recognized as an American Association for the Advancement of Science Lifetime Fellow in 2024.

See this [UF press release](#) for further details.

Political science professor receives career award



UF Political Science Professor [Daniel Smith](#) in June received the American Political Science Association's State Politics and Policy Section's Career Achievement Award, the highest recognition in the field.

The award recognizes a political scientist who has made a significant lifetime contribution to the study of politics and policy in the American states, according to the APSA.

"Dr. Smith's deservingness for this award can be summed up in the following sentence from a letter by one of his numerous nominators, stating he, 'is the very best combination of the qualities that have been so abundant in our section from the very beginning: outstanding scholarship, generous mentorship and relentless civic engagement,'" the APSA said at its State Politics & Policy Conference in

Chicago on June 5.

Dr. Smith's coauthored book *Educated by Initiative* is foundational in the study of direct democracy. He has published in some of the discipline's top journals, such as the *APSR*, *JOP* and *AJPS*, and numerous other subfield journals relevant to his interests, including *SPPQ*.

College of Dentistry Fellows announcement



[Daniel W. McNeil](#), Ph.D., who elected as a Fellow of the Association for Psychological Science, or APS, as one of 37 new Fellows internationally in the class of 2026.

McNeil joined the UF College of Dentistry faculty in 2022 and is the Parker E. Mahan Endowed Professor and chair of the Department of Community Dentistry and Behavioral Science.

Throughout his career, he has focused on the field of "Behavioral Dentistry." One of the principal architects of the international 2022 [Consensus Statement on Future Directions for the Behavioral and Social Sciences in Oral Health](#), his career has focused on behavioral and social aspects of oral health.

[Read more here.](#)

UF Faculty earn four international awards for interdisciplinary innovation in AI, Music and Healthcare



DR. JOSÉ VALENTINO RUIZ
Associate Professor & Founding Coordinator
Music Business & Entrepreneurship Program
Associate Member, Intelligent Clinical Care Center (IC3)
College of the Arts

DR. AZRA BIHORAC
Senior Associate Dean for Research Affairs
Distinguished Professor of Medicine
Director, Intelligent Clinical Care Center (IC3)
College of Medicine

UF
UNIVERSITY of
FLORIDA

Advancing Human Health and Well-Being Through the Power of Music, Innovation, and Collaboration

An interdisciplinary collaboration between the [University of Florida College of Medicine's Intelligent Clinical Care Center \(IC3\)](#) and the [College of the Arts](#) received four international honors recognizing innovation at the intersection of music, artificial intelligence, healthcare, and healthy aging.

[Dr. Azra Bihorac](#), Senior Associate Dean for Research Affairs, Distinguished Professor of Medicine, Surgery, Anesthesiology, and Biomedical Engineering, and Director of IC3, and [Dr. José Valentino Ruiz](#), Associate Professor and Founding Coordinator of the Music Business & Entrepreneurship Program, received international recognition for their collaborative work, while Dr. Ruiz also earned three additional international honors recognizing his scholarship and creative work in dementia care, therapeutic music, and senior living innovation.

Award-winning projects include:

- [Human Systems: Translating Clinical Intelligence into Music](#)
2026 Communicator Award of Excellence – Emerging Tech: AI Utility Integration
Drs. Azra Bihorac & José Valentino Ruiz
- [Leadeth Me Beside the Still Waters: Bass Flute Works for Dementia Care](#)
2026 Communicator Award of Excellence – Craft: Original Music
Dr. José Valentino Ruiz
- [Community as a Differentiator: Repositioning Senior Living Around Human Connection Using the TILLMAN Framework](#)
2026 Communicator Award of Excellence – Feature Article
Dr. José Valentino Ruiz

College of Pharmacy Fellows announcements



Larisa Cavallari, Pharm.D., BCPS, FCCP, FAHA, a professor and chair of the Department of Pharmacotherapy and Translational Research in the UF College of Pharmacy, has been elected a fellow of the American Heart Association — one of the world's most renowned organizations for treating cardiovascular disease and stroke.

[Read more here.](#)



The American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering, or AIMBE, has announced the induction of Mei He, Ph.D., an associate professor of pharmaceuticals in the UF College of Pharmacy, to its College of Fellows.

[Read more here.](#)

CJC Dean Hub Brown receives national award

UF College of Journalism and Communications Dean Hub Brown has been named the 2025 Scripps Howard Administrator of the Year.

Presented in partnership with the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), the award recognizes outstanding administrators in journalism education.

Under Brown's leadership, the College has continued to fund new faculty positions, grown enrollment post-pandemic and increased donor gifts by 35% including an [\\$8 million endowment](#) to sustain a major journalism award, the largest gift in the College's history.

More information is available at this [CJC press release](#).

Academic News and Happenings

Faculty course materials attestation

Friendly Reminder: Faculty Course Materials Attestation

As part of the Board of Governors regulation [8.003](#), faculty are required to attest each semester to the appropriateness and that they've reviewed all required materials for each course before sharing them with students.

Fall 2026 attestations need to be completed by Tuesday, September 15, 2026.

It only takes a minute to complete your attestation:

Log into [ONE.UF](#)

Click on the mailbox icon in the top right of the page, which will open the Action Items screen.

Click on Info and then Course Material Attestation.

Academic Artifact

Unusual, meaningful, revelatory, mysterious and just plain weird things turn up in professors' offices. *Academic Artifact* will spotlight those objects and the stories behind them.

This week's artifact ...



"Two small rocks"

Professor Ellen E. Martin

Geological Sciences

I'm holding two small rocks I collected on a roadside in Gubbio, Italy, for my PhD research. They were behind chain-link fencing installed to prevent rocks from falling on motorists, but I managed to retrieve two smaller pieces through the fence.

The white rock is limestone deposited by happy critters enjoying life in the warm Cretaceous Sea 66 million years ago. The red piece, from just above it, contains dust, ash and material from a major asteroid strike to the Yucatan Peninsula.

The asteroid's impact set off mega tsunamis, global acid rain, massive wildfires, and prolonged darkness and cooling (nuclear winter). All contributed to the extinction of dinosaurs, along with about 75% of all animal species on Earth.

I love these rocks because, small and plain as they are, they contain the clues geologists need to piece together the story of one of the most catastrophic events in the history of our planet.

Care to shine a light on your own academic artifact? Simply complete this brief [Qualtrics](#). If your artifact is selected for publication, you'll receive a sweet little Office of the Provost portable lantern.

Secrets of the Swamp

"The Water Was Cold..."

Welcome, new and returning readers, to another year of *Secrets of the Swamp*! Since it's still hot as blazes out there ...

Below, a UF archival photo, likely shot in the 1940s, of a long-gone public pool much loved by generations of Gainesville residents. Among them, in its later years, was native son **Tom Petty**, who wrote about this pool in one of his loveliest (and least-celebrated) songs.

The first person to name the pool AND the song in an email to ahover@ufl.edu becomes this academic year's first winner of the gorgeous Provost's Pen and UF travel mug.



Secrets of the Swamp **Contest Rules**

- Open to any current UF faculty or staff member.
- Players may enter and win repeatedly but are only eligible to receive prizes once each academic year.
- Have a UF secret you'd like to spill? If we use it, we'll send you a lovely Provost's Pen and UF travel mug. Email ahover@ufl.edu.

Faculty Update Submission – Fill out form

**The Office of the Provost
235 Tigert Hall
University of Florida
Gainesville, Fla. 32611**

This email was sent by: University of Florida
PO Box 112099, Gainesville, Florida, 32611 United States