

BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

The Utah Valley University (UVU) Awards of Excellence program recognizes faculty and staff who dedicate their time and talents to students, scholarship, and the advancement of higher education.

This year, UVU's Board of Trustees elected to honor five awardees for their contributions to the university's mission of student success. An additional six outstanding faculty and staff members were recognized as this year's Presidential Awards of Excellence recipients for their efforts related to UVU's values of exceptional care, exceptional accountability, and exceptional results.



Rick Nielsen

BOARD OF TRUSTEES'
MESSAGE

Congratulations to our distinguished 2025 Trustee and Presidential Awards of Excellence honorees! The Trustees join President Tuminez and the entire UMJ Cabinet in recognizing and honoring you for your commitment to student success.

These awards are the highest Utah Valley University honors for faculty and staff and are bestowed upon each of you for exemplary demonstration of our UMJ core values — exceptional care, exceptional accountability, and exceptional results — in a manner that elevates the significance of the university.

This recognition also acknowledges your dedication to creating and maintaining a student-centered focus. Your commitment to displaying outstanding work ethic and fostering collaborative engagement sets a standard of excellence to which each student and professional peer should aspire.

As Trustees, we thank you for making UMJ a wonderful place for students and staff to learn, explore, discover, develop, and shine.

With appreciation,

Rick Nielsen
Chair, Board of Trustees
Utah Valley University



Astrid S. Tuminez

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to the 2025 UVU Awards of Excellence. Tonight, we honor the exceptional contributions of our faculty and staff, who represent the very best of UVU!

What makes the best of UVU? I believe these are the individuals who bring their best selves to work every day. They are clear about their goals and embody our core values. They work effectively alone or in teams. They are ambitious and gritty. They model behaviors we want our students to have when they leave the halls of UVU.

To the awardees, thank you for your dedication, passion, skills, and leadership. Together, you help create a supportive atmosphere where students are encouraged to pursue their dreams. Your impact includes everything from the beauty of our grounds and the cleanliness of buildings to the dynamic conversations that take place in our classrooms and labs. Because of you, our students learn and grow so that they can thrive, both personally and professionally.

Thank you for believing in our students and the mission of UVU. You have my sincere appreciation and admiration.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Astrid S. Tuminez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "A" and "T".

Dr. Astrid S. Tuminez
President
Utah Valley University

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE



Mario Daniel Markides

ASSISTANT DEAN, COLLEGE OF
HEALTH AND PUBLIC SERVICE

BOARD OF
TRUSTEES
AWARD OF
EXCELLENCE

Mario Daniel Markides hails from the beautiful Swedish capital city of Stockholm. He holds an Associate of Science in aviation science, a Bachelor of Science in technology management, and a Master of Public Service, all from UVU. During his almost three decades of experience at UVU, Markides has made a significant impact on the fabric of UVU. Amongst his accomplishments, he has highlighted serving as a UVSELF Senior Executive Leadership Forum member in the 2023-24 session, receiving a UVU Spot Service Award, and receiving a UVU Distinguished Employee Dean's Award. A meaningful institution for both he and his family, UVU has been what Markides called a "definitive cornerstone of my journey, shaping my life in transformative ways." He appreciates how UVU has cultivated an atmosphere of mentorship, teamwork, and collaboration. Markides is a proud parent of two children (Elliana and Alec) and views them and his partner Nicole as his greatest sources of unwavering support. When he and his family aren't pursuing education, they have many enriching hobbies, including skiing, camping, hiking, and reconnecting with family in Stockholm, Athens, and the Greek island of Evia.



Barney Nye

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT,
ACCESS AND OUTREACH

BOARD OF
TRUSTEES
AWARD OF
EXCELLENCE

Barney Nye, Ph.D., hails from nearby Provo, Utah, and first made his mark at UMU as a student employee and summer staff member for the TRIO programs in 1996. He holds a Bachelor of Science in integrated studies from UMU and a Master of Public Administration and Ph.D. in educational leadership and policy from the University of Utah. Nye is passionate about education and student success and has received the UMU Student Affairs Award of Excellence, a Champion of UMU Award, a TRIO Heart Award, and many other recognitions. His favorite part of working at UMU is the way people cheer for each other's successes and roll up their sleeves to help. Nye has had many mentors at UMU and calls himself lucky to work with his amazing leadership team in Access and Outreach. Nye attributes any success he's had to the support of his mom and his husband, Adam. He and Adam love to be "the favorite uncles" and are doting cat dads to Misty and Stormy.



K. Wade Oliver

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF THE
ADULT LEARNER INITIATIVE,
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

BOARD OF
TRUSTEES
AWARD OF
EXCELLENCE

K. Wade Oliver, Ed.D., hails from Utah's capital city and has been a UMU Wolverine since 2010. Oliver holds a Bachelor of Science in sociology from the University of Utah, a Master of Science in instructional technology and learning sciences from Utah State University, and an Ed.D. in higher education administration from Northeastern University. Oliver has represented UMU as a Senior Fellow for Advance HE, received a 2015 Vice-Presidential Award of Excellence from UMU, served as a Utah Valley Senior Executive Leadership Forum fellow, and more. As a first-generation college graduate, Oliver's favorite part of working at UMU is the many students he encounters and UVU's open-admission model that makes the university a place for all. Oliver is married to Jenny Oliver and has four children (Abby, Sam, Kate, and Maddie), all of whom are Wolverine alumni. In addition to creating stained glass works of art, Oliver has been raising exotic birds for 30 years and is the author of a book called "Ringneck Doves: A Handbook of Care and Breeding."



Evelyn Porter

PROFESSOR, MATHEMATICS
AND QUANTITATIVE
REASONING

BOARD OF
TRUSTEES
AWARD OF
EXCELLENCE

Evelyn Porter calls Sierra Vista, Arizona, home and has been at UMU since 2007, when she began as an academic counselor for the Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning Department, which was previously called the Developmental Mathematics Department. She holds a Bachelor of Science in mathematics with honors from the United States Naval Academy and a Master of Engineering Management from Old Dominion University. Porter has worked to better U.S. education through co-authoring a July 2024 publication with two other UMU professors titled “Success in Asynchronous Courses Through Increasing Student’s Social Presence,” and co-presenting with another UVU colleague at the National Organization for Student Success’s 2021 conference about using technology to increase social presence in online classes. UMU’s commitment to accepting and supporting all students, including those whose life circumstances might make it challenging to attend college, is Porter’s favorite aspect of working at the university. When she isn’t serving students of UMU and beyond, she serves her country and community as a Navy reservist, which she has done for almost 18 years.



Tami Pugmire

DIRECTOR OF DONOR
SCHOLARSHIPS &
COMPLIANCE, DONOR
STEWARDSHIP & ENGAGEMENT

BOARD OF
TRUSTEES
AWARD OF
EXCELLENCE

Tami Pugmire is a proud first-generation college graduate who began her journey at Utah Valley University as an aviation student. Today, she helps steward the university's future through donor and scholarship engagement, ensuring students have the resources and opportunities to succeed. She holds a Bachelor of Science in aviation administration from UVU and a Master of Science in commercial aviation from Delta State University. Before stepping into her current role, Pugmire supported students as a financial aid and scholarship advisor—work that resonated deeply with her own experience navigating college as a first-gen student. She was also an adjunct instructor in the aviation department from 2015-2023. Earlier in her career, Pugmire spent a decade working at Bear Lake State Park, where she developed a lasting love for public service and the outdoors. She finds deep meaning in working at a university often viewed as an “underdog” and is inspired by UVU's mission of access and the remarkable people who bring that mission to life every day. Pugmire and her husband, Darrell, are raising eight children together—her greatest pride and joy. In her free time, she enjoys kayaking and traveling to NASCAR races across the country.

PRESIDENTIAL
AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE



Qianwen (Rachel) Bi

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR/
DEPARTMENT CHAIR, FINANCE
AND ECONOMICS & DIRECTOR
OF UVU FINTECH CENTER

PRESIDENTIAL
AWARD OF
EXCELLENCE

Qianwen (Rachel) Bi, Ph.D., has been at UMJ for a decade and is an associate professor in the personal financial planning program. She serves as the Chair of the Finance and Economics Department as well as the Director of the UMJ FinTech Center. She holds a bachelor's degree in management of information systems from Dalian Maritime University and a Master of Science in financial planning, an MBA in finance, and a Ph.D. in personal financial planning from Texas Tech University. A teacher of financial planning software for over fourteen years, Bi's decorated UMJ tenure is highlighted by leading UMJ FinTech Center students to build the UMJ NFT platform in 2022, serving as a content reviewer for the "Guide to CFP Board's Technology Standard" in 2023, and being a keynote speaker at the Silicon Slope AI Summit. In November 2024, she delivered a speech at the Schwab Impact Annual Conference titled "Empowering RIA Firms Through Advanced FinTech Solutions and AI Education for Tomorrow's Challenges." As a pioneer in FinTech, Bi serves on the Governor's FinTech Council and successfully secured a significant multi-year grant from the Charles Schwab Foundation to advance the growth and innovation of the UMJ FinTech Center. Through her leadership, she champions FinTech certification curriculum development and fosters strategic partnerships both domestically and internationally.



Jody Birch

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF
INTEGRATED MARKETING,
MARKETING AND
COMMUNICATIONS

PRESIDENTIAL
AWARD OF
EXCELLENCE

Jody Birch is from Pleasant Grove, Utah, and has lent her talents to UMJ for almost seven years. A Wolverine to her core, she holds a Bachelor of Science in marketing with a minor in digital media. Birch's UMJ tenure is highlighted with several recognitions, including a 2024 Marketing and Communications Divisional Award of Excellence, a 2024 Golden Spike Award, and two 2024 CASE Circle of Excellence Gold Awards for UMJs "A Place for You" campaign. Her favorite parts of working at UMJ have been discovering the university's countless opportunities while marketing for a brand she truly believes in. Another aspect of working at UMJ that Birch loves is tuition reimbursement for her and her husband Cody's three kids (Sequoia, Indie, and Averi). When she isn't fueling her inner "advertising nerd" with new creative strategies and watching "Mad Men," Birch keeps busy with two dogs, five chickens, twenty houseplants, and a myriad of hobbies, including, but not limited to, painting, poetry, hiking, mountain biking, traveling, and trying local cuisines.



Riley Johnson

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF
END USER TECHNOLOGY
SUPPORT, DX

Riley Johnson is from Orem, Utah, and has called UMU home for over 10 years. A Wolverine to his core, he holds an Associate of Science in university studies from UVU and is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in technology management with a special emphasis in information technology and photography. Johnson brings great expertise to his position with several IT certifications, including Apple ACMT, CompTIA A+, Jamf 100, and a Lenovo Certified Technician certification. He has also been featured in the UMU Student Art Exhibition for his landscape photography and has competed on UVU's Skills USA team for IT and computer troubleshooting. Johnson's favorite part of working at UMU has been the care and schedule flexibility offered while he gains vital skills that will follow him for life. Curious by nature, his hobbies include photography, reading, building custom computers, and using problem solving to work on cars.

PRESIDENTIAL
AWARD OF
EXCELLENCE



Mitch Murdock

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR/
DEPARTMENT CHAIR,
MARKETING

PRESIDENTIAL
AWARD OF
EXCELLENCE

Hailing from Pocatello in “the Gem State” of Idaho, Mitch Murdock, Ph.D., has been a Wolverine for almost nine years. He holds a Bachelor of Science in business management (entrepreneurship) from Brigham Young University and a Ph.D. in business administration (marketing) from the University of South Carolina. Murdock has received several awards, including the UMJ Faculty Senate Excellence Award, the Woodbury School of Business Dean’s Award of Excellence for Scholarship With Impact, the Thomas C. Kinnear Award from the American Marketing Association, and others. His favorite part of working at UMJ is being able to collaborate with dedicated colleagues to help transform the lives of students. When Murdock isn’t putting exceptional care into his work at UMJ, his favorite pastime is skiing at Sundance with his wife, Kristen, and their three children (Ellie, Mathison, and Vivian).



Christine Peterson

EXECUTIVE PROGRAM
MANAGER, PEOPLE & CULTURE

PRESIDENTIAL
AWARD OF
EXCELLENCE

Christine Peterson originally hails from Tustin and La Cañada, California, and later moved to Orem, Utah. She officially became a Wolverine in 2014 as an administrative assistant for the Engineering Technology department. Peterson holds an Associate of Science in office systems management from Ricks College and a Certificate of Proficiency in information systems and technology from UVU. Among her many accomplishments, highlights include being a 2019/2020 PACE Full-Time Distinguished Employee Award recipient, serving on the Summer University Planning Committee for six years, and making new connections as a UNSELF Executive Planning Committee member for six years. Peterson's favorite parts of working at UVU have been the rewarding community experiences she's had through UNSELF and being mentored by People & Culture VP Marilyn Meyer. When not at UVU, her happy places are the beach and being in the kitchen planning and baking fancy cakes. Peterson and her husband of 29 years, Mark, have three children (Jessica, Ashley, and John).



Frank Young

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT,
FACILITIES

Frank Young is from Springville, Utah, and has called UMJ home for 23 years. He approaches his role as AVP of Facilities with a Bachelor of Science in construction management, 12 years of experience on the Springville Planning Commission, and a spot on the Water Utility Board of Star Valley Ranch in Wyoming. Young has decorated his time at the university with a UMJ divisional award win, a Green Business Leadership Award from Rocky Mountain Power, and a UNSELF Fellow title. His favorite part of working at UMJ has been collaborating with everyone to ensure great outcomes on projects. Young punctuated this sentiment and said, "Nothing keeps us down. We know that everything can get fixed." Additionally, he loves opportunities for creativity and fun and likes the cool summer mornings on UMJ's beautiful campus. Young keeps busy outside UMJ with skiing and is a proud father of three and grandfather of eight.

PRESIDENTIAL
AWARD OF
EXCELLENCE

PROVOST'S DISTINGUISHED EMPLOYEE AWARDS

Acacia Overono

Associate Professor, Psychology & Counseling Tina Homolik

Alessandro Zanazzi

Professor, Earth Science

David Waite

Professional in Residence, Accounting

Debra Ward

Associate Professor, Mathematics

Eugene Seeley

Professor, International Business

Gary Johnson

Professional in Residence, Sales

Kris Oldroyd

Assistant Professor, Psychology & Counseling

Lindsey Gerber

Associate Professor, Developmental Math

Tearsa Burke

Executive Program Manager, Office of the President

FACULTY SENATE DISTINGUISHED EMPLOYEE AWARDS

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC SERVICE

David McEntire
Professor, Emergency Services

Jamie Russell
Associate Professor, Nursing

Jill Johnson
Assistant Professor, Nursing

Stephanie Lutz Carter
Professional in Residence, Health Sciences

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Kaicee Beal Postler
Assistant Professor, Family Science

Kristin Bone
Lecturer, English and Literature

Mandy Luszeck
Assistant Professor, English and Literature

College of Science

Amanda Lavelle
Lecturer, Biology

Britt Wyatt
Assistant Professor, Biology

Heather Wilson-Ashworth
Professor, Biology

Jessica Wagner
Adjunct Instructor, Biology

Josh Premo
Assistant Professor, Biology

Nathan Toke
Associate Professor, Earth Science

School of the Arts

John Newman
Professor—Noorda Director, Theatre Arts

Kristen Hawkins
Adjunct Instructor, Dance

Shane Jones
Assistant Professor, Percussion

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Delanie Wu
Adjunct Instructor, Education Masters Program

Kalee Crandall
Professional in Residence, School Counseling

Marinda Ashman
Associate Professor, Student Leadership and Success Studies

Stacy Waddoups
Associate Professor, Student Leadership and Success Studies

Smith College of Engineering and Technology

Brandon Ro
Assistant Professor, Architecture

Mohamed Lotfy
Associate Professor, Information Technology

Owen Peterson

Associate Professor, Digital Audio

Paul Monson

Assistant Professor, Architecture

WOODBURY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Jacque Westover

Lecturer, Strategic Management and Operations

Kyle Stubbs

Assistant Professor, Accounting

LynnAnn Erickson

Professional in Residence, Human Resources Management

Nikhil Chur

Assistant Professor, Strategic Management and Operations

DEAN'S DISTINGUISHED EMPLOYEE AWARDS

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC SERVICE

FACULTY

Karen Mulitalo

Assistant Professor – Director, Physician Assistant Program

Kent Huntsman

Public Safety Instructor, Police Academy

Kevin McCarthy

Associate Professor, Emergency Services

Rick Howard

Professional in Residence, Emergency Services

STAFF

Meagan McKell

Admin Support III, Emergency Services

Sabine Berlin

*Director – Curriculum, Accreditation, and Assessment,
College of Health and Public Services*

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

FACULTY

Kristina Gibby

Assistant Professor, Humanities

Kyler Wakefield

Program Manager, Master of Social Work

Meghana Rawat

Assistant Professor, Public Relations & Strategic Communication

Shannon Mussett
Professor, Philosophy

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

FACULTY

Carl Hjelman
Assistant Professor, Biology

Lydia Lindsey
Adjunct Instructor, Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning

Matthew Olson
Assistant Professor, Earth Sciences

Michael Bohne
Professor, Exercise Science

STAFF

Kirsten Paustenbaugh
Academic Advisor I, College of Science

Melissa Cavan
Teaching Lab Manager, Biology

SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

FACULTY

Jes Booth
Adjunct Instructor, Art & Design

Ross Hagen
Associate Professor, Music Studies

STAFF

Joseph Solomon
Director – Interim Production Performance Operations, Noorda Center for Performing Arts

Travis Lunt

*Assistant – Customer Service, School of the Arts
School of Education*

FACULTY

Andria Disney

Assistant Professor, Teacher Education

Angie Martinek

Adjunct Instructor, Communication

Benjamin Johnson

Associate Professor, Student Leadership and Success Studies

STAFF

Beth Reid

Admin Support III, Student Leadership and Success Studies

SMITH COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY

Dan Hatch

Associate Professor, Web Design and Development

Dan Sutliff

Assistant Professor, Aviation Science

Jenny Mackenzie

Assistant Professor, Digital Cinema

Jonathan Allred

Associate Professor, Architecture Engineering

STAFF

Emma Lam

Student Employee, Digital Media

James Hancock
Lab Assistant, Computer Science

Kim Shaw
Admin Support III, Digital Media

WOODBURY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Faculty

Chong Meng
Assistant Professor, Finance

Dale Jolley
Professional in Residence, Research and Sales Smart Lab

Hyrum Smith
Professional in Residence, Personal Financial Planning

Kari Olsen
Associate Professor, Accounting

Luke Dean
Professor, Personal Finance Planning

Maritza Sotomayor
Professor, Economics

Michelle Rankin
Professional in Residence, Accounting

Sheldon Smith
Professor, Accounting

Tai Thornock
Adjunct Instructor, Accounting

Victor Fong
Adjunct Instructor, Finance and Economics

Staff

Alessandra Camargo
Senior Coordinator, Entrepreneurship Institute

Alicia Hatfield
Assistant Director, Woodbury School of Business Graduate Programs

DIVISIONAL DISTINGUISHED EMPLOYEE AWARDS

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Adam Black

Director, Pre-Professional Advising Center

Laurie Toro

Director, Faculty Development

Andrea Calaway

Director - Academic Advising, School of the Arts

ADMINISTRATION & STRATEGIC RELATIONS

Austin Hamilton

Maintenance Lead, Facilities Services

Christian Brinton

Senior Director, Strategic Relations

Jared Kearns

Senior Director, Special Events Venue

Joshua Morzelewski

Head Coach, Strength and Conditioning

Julie Shepherd

Assistant Athletic Director, Wolverine Club

Tena Doran

Manager, Parking Operations and Appeals

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Ashton Parke

Information Systems Engineer II, End-User Technology Support

Olivia Robinson Gledhill

Senior Admin Support, DX Administrative Support

FINANCE AND AUXILIARY SERVICES

Hannah Michels

Assistant – Pro Card Auditor

Heath Gertsch

Director, Printing Services

Karen Foster

Program Director, ESL

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

Lauren James

Assistant Director, Institutional Advancement Communications

Stacy Smither

Application Administrator II, Alumni Relations

MARKETING & COMMUNICAITONS

Bobby Gomez

Production Technician – Video Editor, Studios and Broadcast Services

Eliza Jackson

Content Specialist III, University Communications

John Kung

Senior Director, Creative Services

Maddison Eborn

MarCom Manager, Integrated Marketing

Melissa Reay

Production Technician – Production, Studios and Broadcast Services

PEOPLE & CULTURE

Brenda Martinez-Trujillo

Specialist I, Talent Operations

Jill Crawley

Coordinator, HRIS

Lara Edmondson

Assistant – HR Service Center, HRIS

STUDENT AFFAIRS

Jamie Hattaway

Student Success Aide, Student Success Center

Laurie Miller

Senior Research Analyst, PK-16, Grants, Outreach & Partnership

Marie Squyres

Assistant Director, Student Leadership and Involvement

Michiko Arthur

Coordinator II, International Student Services

Scott Davis

Business Systems Analyst I, Financial Aid

Valarie Browning

Specialist, Quality Improvement

Whittney Dansie

Assistant Rodeo Coach, SLWC Fitness Center

PACE DISTINGUISHED EMPLOYEE AWARDS

Alisa Allebest

Assistant Director, Money Management Resource Center

Amanda Campbell

Assistant Supervisor - Assistant TAC Supervisor, Public Safety

Brandon Springer

BI Analyst III, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Bridgette Womack

Admin Support II, Concurrent Enrollment Customer Care

Brooklyn Slade

Specialist II, Learning and Development

Chad Johnson

Senior Director, Admissions

Curtis Pendleton

Senior Director, Sponsored Programs

Jane Morgan

Senior Manager, Accounts Payable

Joe Nettleton

Director, Departmental Accounting/Help Desk

Kristen Nuesmeyer

Director, Academic Standards

Laura Jones

Academic Advisor I, College of Health and Public Service

Miki Brent

Director, Articulations & Extended Programming

Monica Ferreyra

Director - Academic Advising, College of Science

Nick Gledhill

Communications Manager, Internal Communications

Sarah Frei

Admin Support III, School of Education

Silvia Lobendahn

Program Manager, Woodbury School of Business Graduate Programs