FIN-TASTIC

USCB FACULTY AND STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

January-May 2026

Message from Dr. Al M. Panu, Chancellor

Dear Fellow Sand Sharks,

As we reflect on the Spring 2026 semester, we celebrate the vibrant and evolving community at the University of South Carolina Beaufort and recognize the continued dedication and accomplishments of our faculty and staff. The energy and momentum across our campus remained strong as we began a new season filled with opportunity, innovation, and growth. USCB continues to advance through meaningful progress in academic programs, campus initiatives, partnerships, and student engagement. Our shared commitment to excellence and student success remains at the heart of everything we do. Each contribution made by our faculty and staff strengthens our university community and reflects the collective achievements of our students.

To our dedicated and forward-thinking Fin-Tastic Sand Sharks, thank you for your continued commitment, passion, and service to our university community. We look forward to all that we will accomplish in the upcoming academic year!

RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, & INTELLECTUTAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Angell, Joanna, MFA • Associate Professor of Art and Director, USCB Sea Islands Center Gallery (Department of English, the Arts, & Interdisciplinary Studies)

Awarded. ON::VIEW Residency 2026. Arts Southeast, Savannah, GA. Link

Presented. "Art and Science on Pritchards Island." Pritchards Island Research Symposium, April 7, 2026. Link

Presented. "Listening: My Personal Experience with Art and Healing." BALM: Binding Art, Life, Medicine, USCB Interdisciplinary Studies Conference, March 27, 2026. Link

Exhibiting Artist. SIP: A Ceramic Cup Show National Juried Show, Juror: David Kring, Ology Gallery, Savannah, GA. Link

Exhibiting Artist. Where We've Been, Where We Go, Juried Members' Exhibition, Arts Southeast, Savannah, GA. Link

---

Barnes, Mollie, PhD • Associate Professor of English
(Department of English, the Arts, & Interdisciplinary Studies)

Published. “Paper Heroines: Women Writers in Conversation and Community Across the Sea Islands, 1838–1902.” University of South Carolina Press, February 2026. Link

Published. “Reclaiming the Vote from the Manosphere: Louisa May Alcott, Ednah Dow Cheney, and the Case for Recovering Municipal Suffrage.” The Dial: A Journal of the Emerson Society, vol. 2, no. 2, 2026. Link

Presented. “Biography of a Biographer: Recovering Ednah Dow Littlehale Cheney.” “Unearthing Lives: Writing Biographies of Nineteenth-Century Americans” (Seminar Workshop). C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Conference, Cincinnati, OH. March 2026. Link

Presented. “Reminiscences as Reclamations: Reading Susie King Taylor and Elizabeth Hyde Botume in Conversation.” Beaufort County Historical Society and Beaufort District Collection, Beaufort County Libraries. Beaufort, SC. March 2026. Link

Presented. “Amoretta Daise’s Paper Trails: Recovering the Life and Life Writing of An Early Penn School Student.” Institute for the Study of the Reconstruction Era (ISRE) “Let’s Talk Reconstruction 2025–2026 Series.” Beaufort, SC. January 2026. Link

---

Brown, Carmen, PhD • Assistant Professor of Psychology
(Department of Humanities & Social Sciences)

Presented. “Developing “AIced It!”: A Program for Ethical Student AI Usage.” Finalist for Early Career Research Award at the Southeastern Psychological Association, March 2026. Link

---

Canada, Brian, PhD • Professor of Computational Science
(Department of Computer Science & Mathematics)

Invited Speaker/Panelist. “Turning Your Ideas into Results: A Business Leader's Trustworthy AI Stack.” Session on AI & Info Tech: Changing Landscape & Workforce Development, 16th USA-India Business Summit / 31st Georgia Tech Global Business Forum, Georgia Institute of Technology, November 2025. Link

---

Dudas, Kimberly, PhD • EVCAA & Provost
(Academic Affairs)

Selected. University of South Carolina Beaufort’s Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost. May 2026. Link

Invited Speaker. Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program, April 2026. Link

Invited Panel Speaker. 2026 State of the Community, “Workforce Development for the Future.” Beaufort Chamber of Commerce, March 2026. Link

---

James, Timothy M., PhD • Professor of History
(Department of Humanities & Social Sciences)

Published. “La justicia de los estados, el juicio de amparo y la Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación,” in Andrews, Catherine, Becerril Hernández, Carlos de Jesús (coords.), El papel histórico de la Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación. A doscientos años de su fundación, México, Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación, Tirant Lo Blanch, 2025. Link

Kelley, Kimberly, PhD • Director of Libraries and Professor
(USCB Libraries)

Invited Speaker. "Controlled Digital Lending: Risks and Rewards." Georgia Library Association Carterette Series Webinar, Fall 2025. Sep. 3, 2025. Link

---

Kilgore, Richard • Beaufort Campus Maintenance Supervisor
(USCB Facilities)

Awarded. Southeastern Association of Housing Officers (SEAHO) Service Award 2026. In recognition of significant contributions to residence hall students and the housing organization. Link

---

Kilgore, Rob, PhD • Associate Professor of English
(Department of English, the Arts, & Interdisciplinary Studies)

Presented. With Brian Henderson. "Organizing Conversations in Dangerous Times: Strategies for Collective Action in and around English and Writing Programs." Conference on College Composition & Communication, Cleveland, OH. March 2026. Link

---

Lahar, Cindy, PhD • Professor of Psychology
(Department of Humanities & Social Sciences)

Awarded. Fulbright Association. Travel and presentation award, Fulbright Scholars Liaison Training, Washington DC., February 2026. Link

---

Malphrus, Ellen, PhD • Professor of English
(Department of English, the Arts, & Interdisciplinary Studies)

Awarded. Poetry Society of South Carolina Dr. Linda Veldheer Memorial Prize, Runner-Up. Charleston Literary Society, Charleston, SC. May 15, 2026. Link

Invited Speaker. "Rose Hill Winter Speaker Series: Pat Conroy Remembered—Ellen Malphrus and David Lauderdale in Conversation with Jonathan Haupt." Bluffton, SC. February 17, 2026. Link

Invited Speaker. "Pat Conroy as Nature Writer: Our Prince of Scribes" panel. Village Social of Habersham, Beaufort, SC. February 23, 2026. Link

Presented. "Words Beneath the Witness Tree: A Pat Conroy Literary Center March Forth Poetry Reading." Beaufort, SC. March 4, 2026. Link

Presented. "USCB Libraries Celebrates Poetry Month: Faculty Poetry Reading." Bluffton, SC. April 6, 2026. Link

Published. "Balcony at Big Sur," and "Cowboy Blue and the Villain Elle." *Blue Mountain Review*. Issue 36, April 2026. Link

Published. "At the Alt[e]r." *The Raven Review*. Volume VII Issue II, Spring 2026. Link

Published. "To Chase a Moon and Miss It," "Turn, My Turn," and "Origami." *Two Hawks Quarterly*. Antioch University. Los Angeles, CA. Spring 2026. Link

Published. "Super Fly: A Borderline Sestina for My Students." *We Hold These Truths Anthology*. Women Writing for (a) Change. Cincinnati, OH. May 2026. Link

Invited Membership. The Southern Collective Experience, 2026. Link

---

Montie, Eric, PhD • Professor of Biology
(Department of Natural Sciences)

Invited Speaker. Jessica Miller, Alyssa Marian, and Eric W. Montie presented, "Salinity Shifts and Serenades: The Impacts of Extreme Weather and Salinity Drops on Fish Courtship Songs." Annual Meeting of the South Carolina American Fisheries Society, February 19, 2026. Link

Invited Speaker. Hayden Dunning, Alyssa Marian, and Eric W. Montie presented, "Lost in the Noise – Vessel Traffic Contaminates Seasonal Fish Choruses in Urban Estuaries." Annual Meeting of the South Carolina American Fisheries Society, February 19, 2026.Link

Invited Speaker. Alyssa Marian, Lily Blake, Jessica Miller, Garrett Willford, Warren McClellan, Patrick Jones, Isabella Dubois, Hayden Dunning, Joseph Ballenger, and Eric W. Montie presented, "It's All About Food! Long-term Passive Acoustics and Visual Surveys of Bottlenose Dolphins as Evidence for Bottom-Up Ecology in Estuaries." Annual Meeting of the South Carolina American Fisheries Society, February 20, 2026. Link

Attended & Participated. The Ocean Acoustics Education and Expertise Workshop sponsored by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, April 9–10, 2026. Link

---

Poore, Daphne, EdD • Adjunct Professor of Education
(Department of Education)

Presented. "From Overuse to Empowerment: Guiding Students Toward Thoughtful and Ethical AI Use." Southern Regional Faculty & Instructional Development Consortium's Annual Conference. Auburn University, Auburn, AL. March 2026. Link

---

Ritchie, Kim, PhD • Associate Professor of Genetics & Prokaryotic Cell Biology
(Department of Natural Sciences)

Awarded. 2026 Eminence in Research Award. International Coral Reef Society (ICRS). Link

---

Rychalsky, Laura, MA • Associate Director of Housing Operations & Facilities
(Office of Housing & Student Conduct)

Elected. South Carolina State Representative for the Southeastern Association of Housing Officers (SEAHO). Link

---

Sawyer, Caroline, PhD • Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies
(Department of English, the Arts, & Interdisciplinary Studies)

Awarded. With USCB student crew. 2026 Bronze Telly Award: Category – Series Interview & Talk Show. "Books by the River – Season 1." Producer/Director. Link

Awarded. With USCB student Kristina Cunningham. 2026 Bronze Telly Award: Category – General Student. "Behind the Scenes – A Books by The River Documentary." Executive Producer. Link

Sevim, Volkan, PhD • Associate Professor of Mathematic
(Department of Computer Science & Mathematics)

Published. Cifarelli, V. & Sevim, V. "Exploring Connections between Problem Posing and Problem Solving: Illustrations of Problem Posing as Meaning-Making Within Problem Solving." In Jinfa, C. & Leikin, R. (Eds.), Mathematical Problem Posing: New Advances and Directions. New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2026. Link

Presented. Sevim, V. & Cifarelli, V. "Exploring the Ways in Which Problem Posing and Problem Solving are Connected." Paper presented at the 49th Annual Meeting of the Southwest Educational Research Association (SERA), New Orleans, LA. February 2026. Link

---

Sidletsky, James, MFA • Associate Professor of Media Arts
(Department of English, the Arts, & Interdisciplinary Studies)

Chaired. "Research, Teaching, Making: Managing Animation Workflow for Productivity, Efficiency and Sanity." CASP, Collective of Animation Scholars and Practitioners Affiliate Session. SECAC (formerly the Southeastern College Art Conference),
Cincinnati, OH. Fall 2025. Link

Presented. "What Do We Keep, What's Still Needed?" CASP, Collective of Animation Scholars and Practitioners Affiliate Session. SECAC (formerly the Southeastern College Art Conference), Cincinnati, OH. Fall 2025. Link

Selected Panelist. Official Selection and Panelist. For short film "112 Steps." Beaufort Film Festival, Beaufort, NC. Fall 2025. Link

---

Vargo, Lori, MEd • Director of eLearning
(Department of eLearning)

Presented. "Reimagining Online Quality: Building Human-Centered Course Review Through QSCOPE." Southern Regional Faculty & Instructional Development Consortium's Annual Conference. Auburn University, Auburn, AL. March 2026. Link

---

Weir, Carol, MA • Senior Director of Communications
(Office of Marketing & Communications)

Presented. With USCB Honors students Savanna Fumbi & Daniela Lopez. "Passports, Pushpins, & Paper Sharks: How to Pull Off a Blockbuster International Week with No Budget and No Burnout." South Carolina Association of International Educators, Charleston, SC. March 6, 2026. Link

---

Zhang, Xiaomei, PhD • Professor of Computer Science
(Department of Computer Science & Mathematics)

Presented & Published. With former USCB graduate students Flowrence Dirisipamu & Khushi Jadhav. "Secure and Efficient Vehicle-to-Vehicle Task Offloading via Trust-Aware Collaboration." 44th IEEE International Performance, Computing, and Communications Conference (IPCCC 2025). Link

USCB FACULTY COLLABORATIONS

Brugler, Mercer, PhD • Chair of Department of Natural Sciences (Department of Natural Sciences) – **Pettay, Daniel, PhD** • Assistant Professor of Biological Oceanography (Department of Natural Sciences)

Published. With 11 USCB student co-authors: Lynette Wyant, Brendan Cruz, Aydanni Gonzalez, Joshua Kovalcik, Maria Carolus, Lauren Hutto, Hope Chutjian, Jude Roman, Anneau Cappelmann, John Ankney, & Aidan Popp. "Partial mitochondrial genome of the enigmatic Bermuda fireworm Odontosyllis enopla Verrill, 1900 (Annelida, Syllidae, Eusyllinae) and its phylogenetic implications." ZooKeys. Pensoft Publishers. February 19, 2026. Link

---

Villena-Alvarez, Juanita Babet, PhD • Associate Vice Chancellor for International & Academic Engagement (Academic Affairs) – **Weir, Carol, MA** • Senior Director of Communications (Office of Communications) – **Wells, Brianna, BA** • Office Coordinator for International & Academic Engagement (Academic Affairs)

Presented. With USCB Honors students Grayson Hershey, Kalliopi Harden & Daniela Lopez. "Steps Taken Towards a National Award-Winning International Program." South Carolina Association of International Educators, Charleston, SC. March 6, 2026. Link

---

Roberts, Summer, PhD • Program Coordinator & Assistant Professor, Sociology (Department of Humanities & Social Sciences) – **Powell, Alyssa, PhD** • Assistant Professor, Public Health (Department of Public Health & Human Services) – **Alvarez, Butch, MD** • Senior Instructor (Department of Natural Sciences) – **Barth, Sean, PhD** • Professor of Hospitality, Resort, & Tourism Management (Department of Business, Communication Studies & Hospitality) – **Brown, Carmen, PhD** • Assistant Professor, Psychology (Department of Humanities & Social Sciences) – **Gill, Diana, PhD** • Program Chair (Department of Public Health & Human Services)

Each Awarded. QSOC (Quality Standards for Online Courses) Exceptional Status. The QSOC peer-review program is designed to support faculty through constructive peer feedback focused on course organization, accessibility, instructional design, and student success. Link

***Faculty interested in having their courses reviewed this summer, or faculty who have already completed a review and would like to improve their score towards Exceptional status, are encouraged to contact Lori Vargo at vargolij@uscb.edu.*

2026 FACULTY/STAFF ACADEMIC AWARDS

Libby Ricardo, MFA
Vincent P. Mesaric Award

Angela Nadeau, MA
Academic Advisor of the Year

Daphne Poore, EdD
Adjunct Professor of the Year

Volkan Sevim, PhD
Professor of the Year

USCB GRANTS (AWARD JANUARY 2026-MAY 2026)

Angell, Joanna. Pritchards Island Research Program, $12,021 *(NEW)*. Art and Science: An Artist's Residency Illuminating the Botany of Pritchards Island.

Cavanagh, Kimberly. USC Office of the Vice President for Research (RISE), $6,000 *(NEW)*. The Garden Site (38BU929): A Native American Shell Midden or an Eighteenth-Century Tabby Production Site, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.

Cavanagh, Kimberly. Pritchards Island Research Program, $27,499 *(NEW)*. Pritchards Island Anthropological Research Program: Towards Engaging Students and Exploring the Buried Cultural Landscape on Pritchards Island, South Carolina.

Cobb, Warren/Smith, Emily/Neff, Victoria/Kelley, Kimberly. American Library Association (ALA)/Carnegie-Whitney Grant, $5,000 *(NEW)*. Freedom Takes Root: A Digital Gateway to the Reconstruction Era.

D'Antonio, Edward. Pritchards Island Research Program, $10,000 *(NEW)*. Cytoglobin-1 from Amphibalanus amphitrite: Biochemical Evaluation of Enhanced Peroxidase Activity Against Halophenols and Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals.

Hanscom, Ryan. Pritchards Island Research Program, $27,500 *(NEW)*. Wildlife Monitoring and Fine-Scale Behavioral Ecology of Terrestrial Vertebrates on Pritchards Island: A Next-Generation Natural History Approach.

Hanscom, Ryan. USC Office of the Vice President for Research (RISE), $6,000 *(NEW)*. The Impact of Snake Fungal Disease on the Behavioral, Thermal, and Spatial Ecology of Northern Cottonmouths (Agkistrodon piscivorus).

Madden, Kathryn. Pritchards Island Research Program, $19,812 *(NEW)*. Pritchards Island Plant Community Survey, Summer 2026.

Montie, Eric. Pritchards Island Research Program, $27,499 *(NEW)*. Listening to and Remotely Sensing Marine Life Surrounding Pritchards Island, SC.

Pettay, Daniel. Port Royal Sound Foundation, $42,650 (Renewal). Support to the Port Royal Sound Water Quality Monitoring Network.

Shinn, James/Littlefield, Valinda. Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Support to USCB ISRE 2026 Spring Symposium, $6,000 *(NEW)*. Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor/NPS/DOI.

Shinn, James/Littlefield, Valinda. SC State Historical Records Advisory Board Grant, $1,000 *(NEW)*. SC Department of Archives & History (SCDAH)/NHPRC/NARA.

Wright, Brandon. The SC Institute on the Prevention of Sexual Violence on College Campuses (SCIP), $3,500 *(NEW)*. 2025-2026 South Carolina Sexual Violence Prevention Grant.

Total for the period (new & renewals): $194,481

Contribute an item for Fin-Tastic by requesting our form: **Highlights@uscb.edu**

Share this email:

Manage your preferences | **Opt out** using **TrueRemove®**
Got this as a forward? **Sign up** to receive our future emails.
View this email **online**.

1 University Blvd.
Bluffton, SC | 29909 US

This email was sent to .
To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

emma

Subscribe to our email list.