



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

College of Education

Lisa Zagumny, Dean

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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

As we conclude 2024, it is an opportune time for us all to pause and reflect on the moments, individuals, and experiences that have shaped our journey throughout these past semesters.

Let us take a mindful moment to celebrate the successes achieved, the goals reached, the friendships forged, and the challenges we've overcome. Each of these milestones contribute to the rich tapestry of our school community's collective experiences.

At our core, we provide unwavering support, valuable resources, and dynamic learning environments that are fundamental in fostering positive outcomes for our students, faculty, and staff alike.

Looking back on the academic year that was, and as we prepare to embrace the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, let us hold on to the memories of goodness, kindness, and the spirit of helpfulness that have defined our past year. May these qualities serve as guiding lights as we move forward together into the next year of our educational journey.

~Lisa

Lisa Zagumny, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Education



College of Education
TENNESSEE TECH

TECH TOMORROW STRATEGIC PLAN

Mission

Tennessee's technological university creates, advances, and applies knowledge to expand opportunity and economic competitiveness. As a STEM-infused, comprehensive institution, Tennessee Tech delivers enduring education, impactful research, and collaborative service.

Vision

Tennessee Tech will achieve national prominence and impact through its engaged students, dedicated faculty, and career-ready graduates known for their creativity, tenacity, and analytical approach to problem solving.

Core Principles

Academic Excellence

We expect and produce high academic achievement, foster collaboration, exemplify integrity, and inspire creativity and realized potential for the entire campus community.

Community Engagement

We collaborate with community members and organizations to advance positive societal and economic trends.

Meaningful Innovation

We are purposefully innovative in all we do.

Student Success

We empower students to realize their potential, craft individualized experiences, and discover their passion.

Supportive Environment

We are committed to a diverse and welcoming community and provide a campus size and atmosphere that fosters personal attention and fit.

Value Creation

We provide a high return on investment from our state, tuition, and donor resources and foster productive, responsible, and caring contributors to society.

MISSION, VISION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Mission

The mission of the College of Education is to provide unique and rigorous, learner-centered academic experiences for our students to achieve their highest potential as life-long learners, professionals, and citizens.

Vision

The College of Education will be an empowering force in education.

Conceptual Framework

Prepare effective, engaging professionals through a clinically rich, evidence-based program with a network of mutually beneficial partnerships.



ACCREDITATION & PROGRAM REVIEW

CAEP

The **Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)** advances equity and excellence in educator preparation through evidence-based accreditation that assures quality and supports continuous improvement to strengthen P-12 student learning.



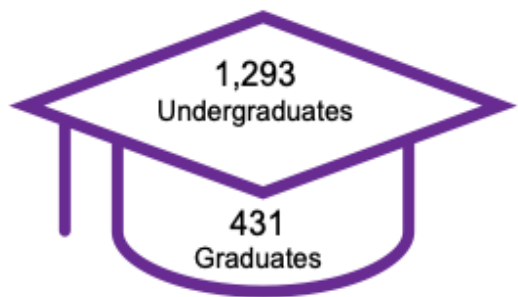
CACREP

The **Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)** accredits master's and doctoral degree programs in counseling and its related specialties offered by colleges and universities in the U.S. and internationally.



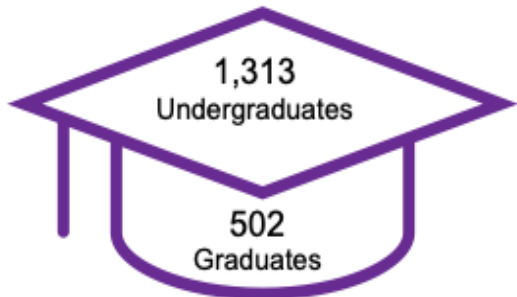
ENROLLMENT

Spring 2024



Total: 1,724

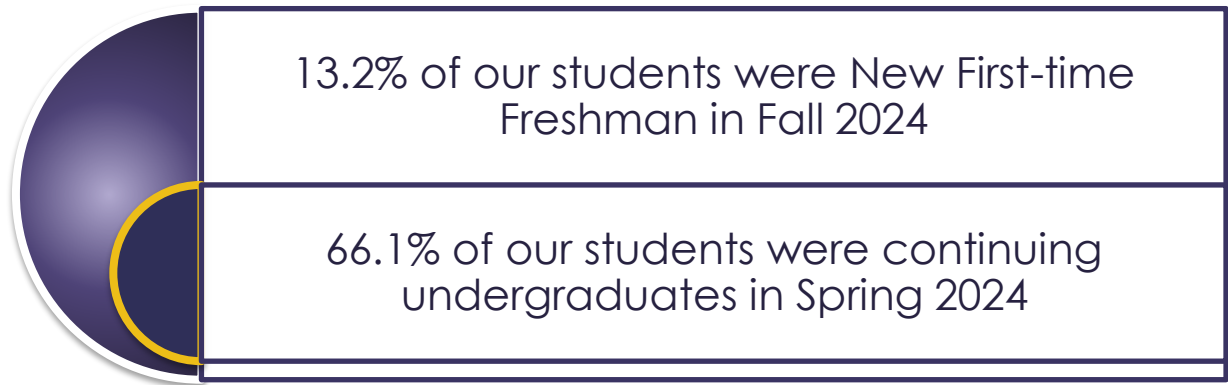
Fall 2024



Total: 1,815

Enrollment Characteristics

	Spring 2024	Fall 2024
New Freshman	7	240
New Transfers	30	117
Additional Bachelor's	1	0
Continuing Undergraduates	1,249	953
New Graduates	54	170
Continuing Graduates	376	332
New Special Graduates	1	3



First – Time Freshmen

First time freshmen play a crucial role in shaping the vibrant academic community and future successes of the College of Education.

As newcomers to the university, these students bring fresh perspectives, enthusiasm, and diverse backgrounds that enrich campus life and contribute to a dynamic learning environment. They represent the next generation of leaders, innovators, and scholars who will not only benefit from Tech's renowned academic programs but also contribute to its growth through their talent and ambitions.



First Time Freshman Headcount

240



Average ACT Score

22.1



Average High School GPA

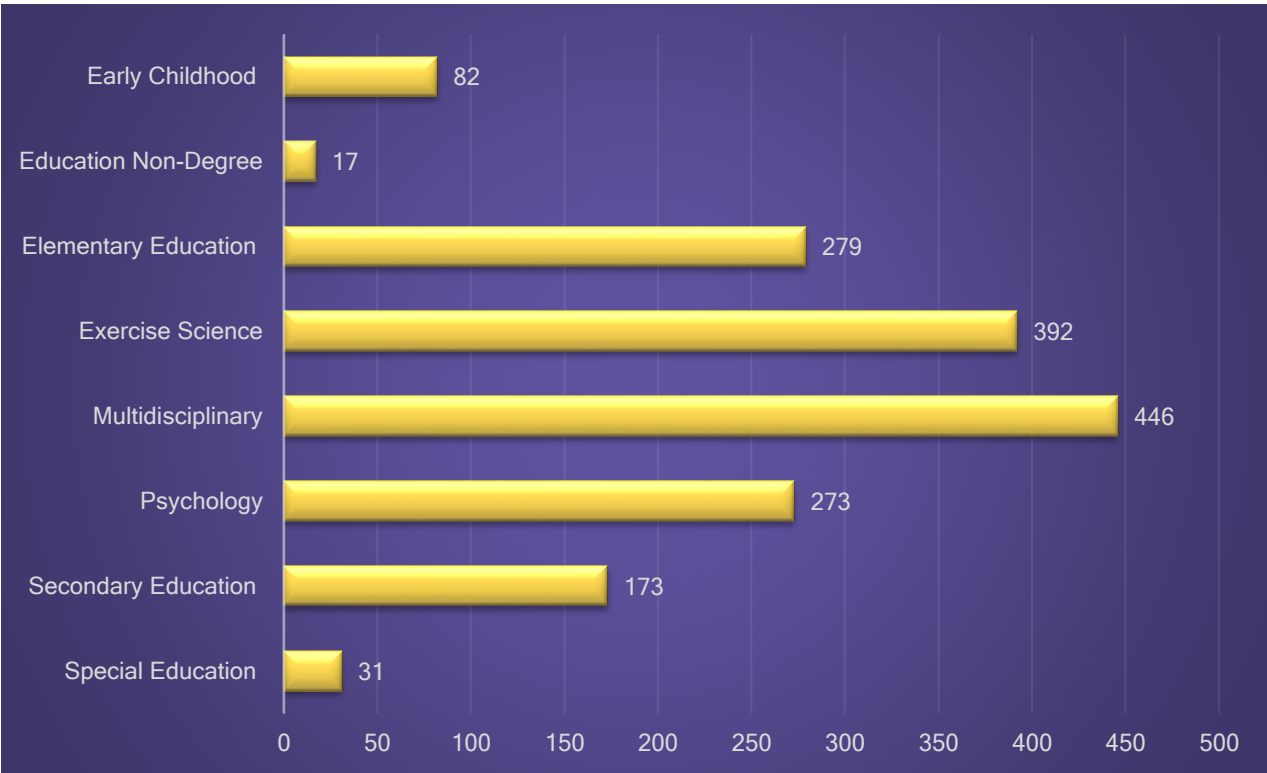
3.66

Fall 2024

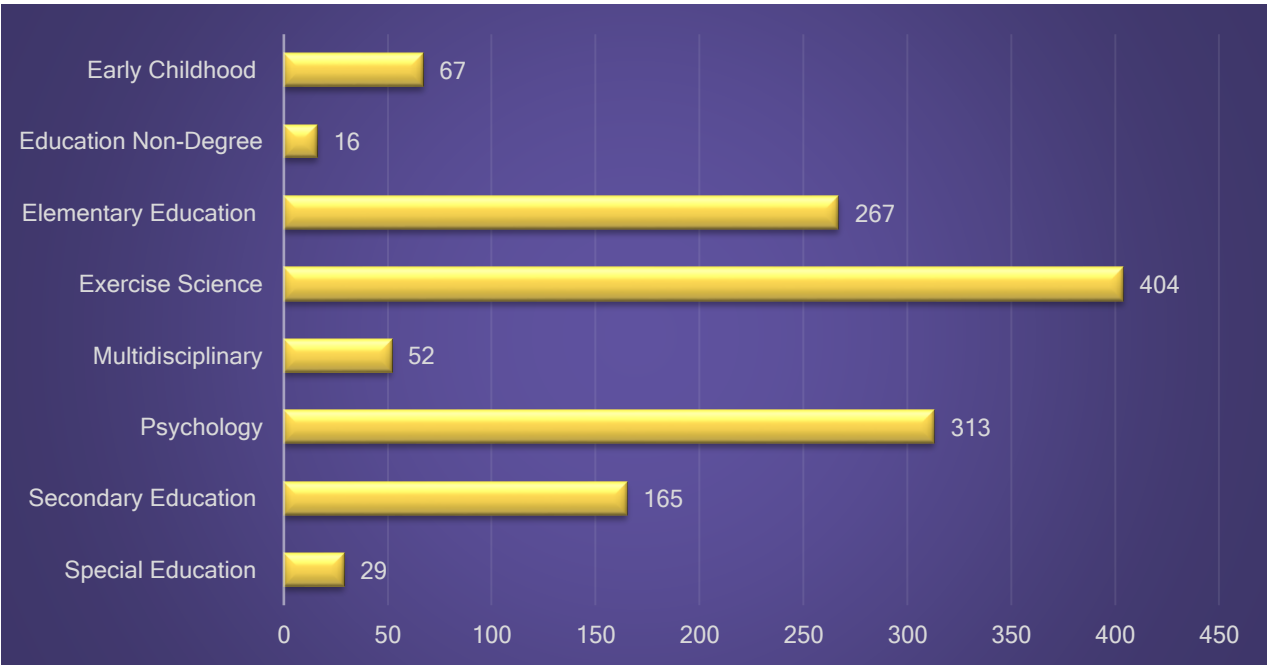
Their arrival signifies a new beginning and a promise of potential achievements, fostering a spirit of curiosity and exploration that drives both individual growth and collective progress within the university community. Therefore, investing in the successes and well-being of first-time freshmen is not just beneficial for their personal development but also essential for the vitality and continued excellence of Tennessee Tech.

Undergraduate Enrollment by Program

Spring 2024



Fall 2024

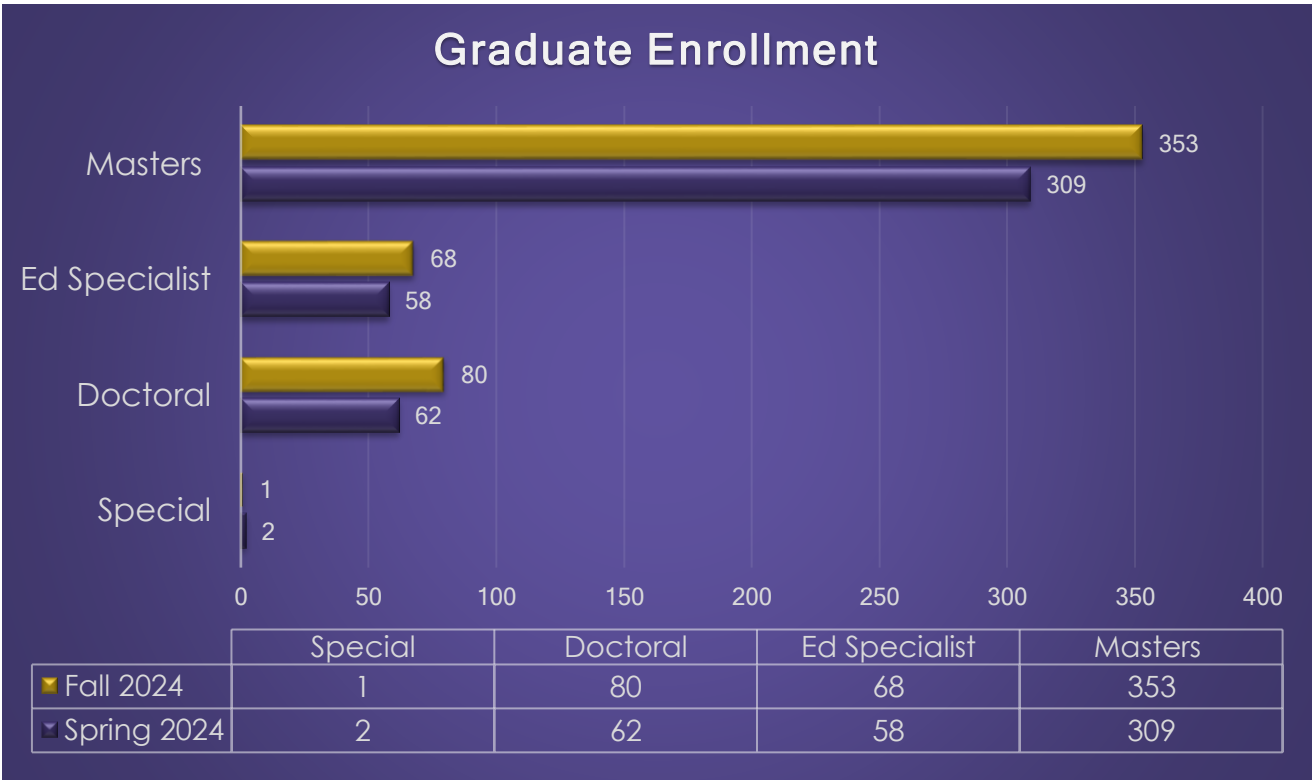


Graduate Enrollment Trends



Enrollment Characteristics

	<u>Spring</u>	<u>Fall</u>
New Graduates	54	170
Continuing Graduates	376	332
New Special Graduates	1	0



RETENTION

First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen Retention Rates

Fall 2023 Cohort by Program

Fall-to-Spring

Fall-to-Fall

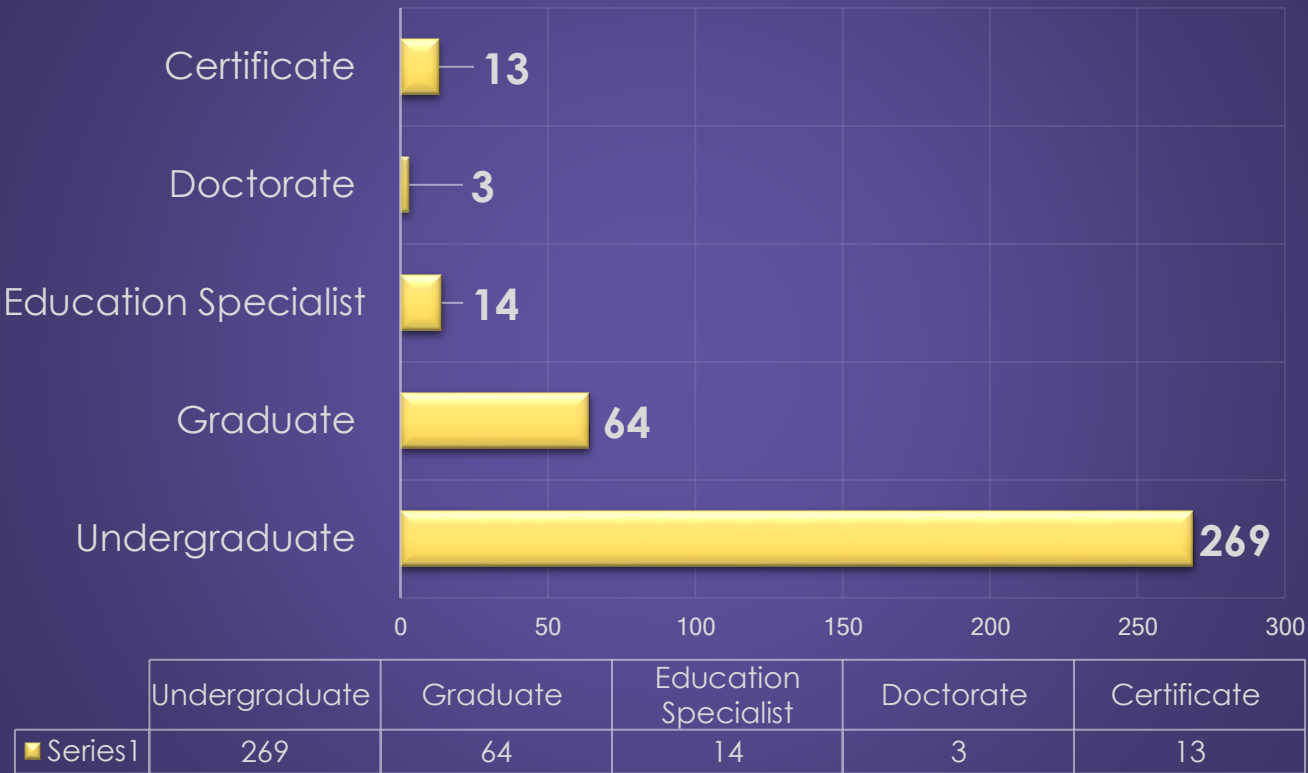
	N	At University	Original College	Original Program	At University	Original College	Original Program
Education	266	85.7%	80.8%	76.7%	77.1%	67.7%	57.9%
Early Childhood Education (BS)	8	62.5	62.5	62.5	37.5	37.5	37.5
Elementary Education (BS)	38	94.7	94.7	92.1	89.5	89.5	84.2
Exercise Science (BS)	96	84.4	80.2	75.0	75.0	62.5	39.6
Multidisciplinary Studies (BS)	4	75.0	50.0	50.0	25.0	25.0	25.0
Psychology (BS)	76	82.9	75.0	69.7	76.3	64.5	64.5
Secondary Education (BSEd)	38	89.5	84.2	81.6	86.8	76.3	71.5
Special Education (BS)	6	100.0	100.0	100.0	66.7	66.7	66.7

DEGREES CONFERRED

Five Year Trend

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Total	538	472	518	632	576
Bachelor's	374	315	339	364	355
Master's	119	117	131	190	155
Education Specialist	35	28	28	49	37
Doctorate	7	9	4	8	8
Certificates	3	3	16	21	21

Snapshot: Spring 2024 Degrees Conferred



SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarship	Amount	# of Awards	Recipient(s)
Alpha Delta Kappa Biennial Scholarship	\$1,000	1	Juliette Passalacqua
Anna Grace Bandy Endowed Scholarship	\$250	2	Kobe Jones
Anna Grace Bandy Endowed Scholarship	\$500	1	Kyra Wright
Avo Anderson Memorial Endowed Education Scholarship	\$1,000	14	Gopi Patel, Macey Pickle, Chole Skelton, Kensea Skelton, Jamaal Thompson, Gloria Uduehi, Jayden Baker, Shelby Beasley, Kendall Bell, Brant Billen, Sydnee Collins, Rebekah Garber, Bailey Gilliam, Itohan Ogbomo
Avo Anderson Memorial Endowed Education Scholarship	\$500	3	Landon Mallo, Miles Ondap, Ashley Yearwood
Avo Anderson Memorial Endowed Education Scholarship	\$300	1	Caden Nash
Bill and Suzanne Worrell Endowed Scholarship	\$750	1	Seth Sausville
Charles E. and Ruth L. Golden Endowed Scholarship in Education	\$1,250	2	Sierra Williams, Kyra Wright
Colonel Jim and Frances Larkins and Jackie Middleton Educational Endowed Scholarship	\$500	2	Zoe Goetz, Michael Hall
Cox/Carnes Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$2,500	1	Emmylea McCoy
Cumberland County Scholarship	\$2,500	1	Rachael Sexton
Dinah Pistole Bivens Endowed Scholarship	\$2,000	2	Katie Ashburn, Breanna Hall
Dinah Pistole Bivens Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	1	Kobe Jones
Dolores D. Nichols Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$2,000	2	Kylee Hancock, Mary Jo LaBarge
Dr. Betty Roe Scholarship	\$750	1	Cassie Brown
Dr. Debbie McCormick Praxis Exam Fund	\$180	1	Sarah Gibson

Dr. Debbie McCormick Praxis Exam Fund	\$156	5	Katherine Anderson, Kendall Bell, Madalyn Harris, Ayla Hoy, Destiny Morrison
Dr. Debbie McCormick Praxis Exam Fund	\$130	1	Destiny Morrison
Drs. Leo & Gloria McGee Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	3	Kennedi Coleman, Talya Moore, Natalia Taylor
Dr. Mark & Mrs. Elaine Heinrich Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	2	John Jones, Ashlee Sherrell
Edythe Tipton Scholarship	\$1,000	1	Kimari Bass
Elinor P. Ross Phi Delta Kappa Scholarship Endowment	\$500	1	Meghan Sliger
Elinor P. Ross Phi Delta Kappa Scholarship Endowment	\$250	1	Vincent Okot
Elizabeth Bell Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	2	Meghan Sliger, Chelsey Stanton
Elsie Jobe & Jewell Nolen Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$600	2	Sydney Haggard, Anthony Phillips
Energy, Technology & Environmental Business Association (ETEBA) Annual STEM Scholarship	\$500	2	Emma Buckner, Andrea Dittmer
Ernestine Martin Murphy Memorial Scholarship	\$500	2	John Jones, Chloe Reynolds
Essie Dee Gragg Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	1	Sherry Denby
Esther Lee Welch Endowed Elementary Education Scholarship	\$1,384	1	Shelby Beasley
Esther Lee Welch Endowed Elementary Education Scholarship	\$500	1	Natalie Leonard
Faye Bohannon Rodgers Endowed Scholarship	\$600	2	Shelby Beasley, Bethany Borges
Flippen Endowed Scholarship in Physical Education	\$1,000	2	Carleigh Cook, Stevie King

Frances "Cissy" Chambers Endowed Scholarship in Education	\$1,000	3	Gopi Patel, Natalee Sturgill, Olga Williams
Frances "Cissy" Chambers Endowed Scholarship in Education	\$500	1	Taylor Kelso
General Education Foundation Award	\$3,000	1	Gopi Patel
General Education Foundation Award	\$1,500	1	John Jones
General Education Foundation Award	\$1,000	1	Maci Eilers
General Education Foundation Award	\$65	1	Jamaal Thompson
Glennis W. Scott Endowed Scholarship	\$3,000	11	Allan Buchanan, Logan Duckworth, Alex Geary, Buchanan Honeycutt, Jayden Jenkins, Brandon Noonan, Camden Norris, Zachary Pham, Dustin Pitcock, Jonathan Wilkerson, Christopher Wolk
Glennis W. Scott Endowed Scholarship	\$1,500	1	Jared Smith
Greer Endowed Education Scholarship	\$600	2	Katelyn Chambers, Hailee Randall
Greer Endowed Education Scholarship	\$300	1	Amira Senter
Hazel Wheeler Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$1,500	4	Sara Conatser, Sawyer Gunter, Sayde Taylor, Kelsey Westfelt
Heitzman Family Endowed Scholarship	\$600	2	Noah Oaks, Kaylah Vorhees
Hubert & Shirley Chaffin Endowed Scholarship	\$500	1	Brianna Moore
Hubert & Shirley Chaffin Endowed Scholarship	\$250	1	Jennifer Franz
James & Alice Kennon Endowed Early Childhood Education Scholarship	\$2,500	1	Bethany Borges
James Davis & Lou Ann Watts Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	1	Makenzie Burgin
James R. & Mevolyn D. Haston Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	1	Faith Wright
James R. & Mevolyn D. Haston Endowed Scholarship	\$500	1	Megan Houston-Lane

James R. Dotson Memorial Scholarship of Kappa Delta Pi	\$1,000	1	Maci Eilers
Jane DuBois Young Scholarship	\$1,000	2	Julie Matheney, Adele Young
Jane DuBois Young Scholarship	\$285	1	Maci Eilers
Jessica A. Kelley Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$3,000	1	Maggie Conley
Jim & Barbara Greeson Endowed Scholarship	\$600	2	Bailey Gilliam, Maggie Wright
John & Doris Clayton Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	13	Autumn Barsumian, Emily Bramblett, Campion Coombe, Kaitlin Davis, Joanna Foster, Laura Frank, Kara Fulkerson, Emma Hyde, Robert Moore, Juliette Passalacqua, Sawyer Radford, Jackson Walker, Sierra Wilder
John & Doris Clayton Endowed Scholarship	\$500	2	Jonathan Kelso, Taylor Kelso
Johnny & Dorothy "Dot" Miller Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	2	Mason Holley, Erin Krismantis
Keeble Belle Endowed Memorial Scholarship	\$1,000	3	Katherine Anderson, Kaylee Powers, Katie Warren
Larry & Allene Peach Endowed Scholarship in Early Childhood Education	\$1,000	2	Corrin Howard, Kaylee Powers
Linda S. Swisher Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	4	Hannah Hood, Matthew Hyde, Janey Quire, Hailey Woodard
Lorene Cook Neal Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	2	Rebecca Moore, Destiny Rich
Luther & Lora Maye Smith Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	1	John Montooth
Marcia Swallows Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	1	Amanda Warren
Marilyn Morton Endowed Scholarship	\$500	2	Katherine Anderson, Catey Knox
Mary & A.E. Quattlebaum Endowed Education Fellowship	\$1,500	2	Bridget Pugh, Hannah Willis
Monika & Henry Bowman Endowed Education Scholarship	\$1,500	1	Tayviona Harris

Mozelle Spain Medley Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$,1000	6	Shelby Beasley, Emily Bentley, Cassie Dykes, Caitlyn Keller, Hayden Pettit, Donovan Sullivan
Mozelle Spain Medley Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$500	1	Rylee Hertter
Odom Family STEM Scholarship	\$2,000	5	Alexander Armour, Jake Ashburn, Ashley Barrow, Pooja Patel, Woogenscky Placide
Patricia A. Malone Endowed Education Support Grant	\$1,700	1	Tina Cesnik
Patricia A. Malone Endowed Education Support Grant	\$526.79	1	John Jones
Patricia A. Malone Endowed Education Support Grant	\$200	1	Cheyenne Brown
Phi Delta Kappa Harvey & Anne Neufeldt Endowed Educational Service Scholarship	\$1,000	1	Audrianna Boles
Quill Evan Cope Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	1	Sophia Enriquez
R.K. & Marcia Fletcher Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	1	Davie Harbin
R.K. & Marcia Fletcher Endowed Scholarship	\$500	2	Elijah Wilson, Ashley Yearwood
Ralph Lexie Freeman & Edith Carlock Freeman Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$500	1	Summer Walker
Rand Residency in Education Award	\$1,000	1	Nicole Hunsaker
Ray & Linda Morris Scholarship	\$11,250	3	Zachary Childress, Nathan Price, Lydia Warren
Ray & Linda Morris Scholarship	\$5,625	1	Eli Parker
Raymond Bull Brown Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	2	Lily Nabors, Brooks Pugh
Raymond Bull Brown Endowed Scholarship	\$500	1	Courtney Hitchcock
Raymond Drost Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	1	Loleita Cruz
Richard L. Hein Memorial Scholarship	\$1,000	2	Eli Woodard, Shelby Zacharias
Richard L. Hein Memorial Scholarship	\$500	1	Emma Buckner
Richard Troelstrup Psychology Award & Scholarship	\$100	2	Sophia Crips, Nicholas Woods

Rosemary Piepmeir Deberry Scholarship	\$800	1	Reginald Brown
Ross Graduate Reading Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	2	Gabriella Bulahan, Rosemarie Smith
Ross Undergraduate Reading Endowed Scholarship	\$2,000	1	Leigha Mozingo
Rozelle Huddleston Nash Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$500	1	Annie Jackson
Rozelle Huddleston Nash Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$250	1	Maria Augustin Baltazar
Sharon Spears Borden Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	5	Carrie Brown, Jenna Cate Buckner, Megan Houston-Lane, Leah Husson, Ashley Looper
Steven & Deanna Close Endowed Scholarship	\$1,500	1	Ethan Smith
Steven & Deanna Close Endowed Scholarship	\$500	2	Elizabeth Fishback, Laderian Harris
T.J. & Lottie Farr Endowed Scholarship	\$1,000	2	Jackson Baker, Eli Langford
Terracon Foundation Annual STEAM Scholarship for Diversity & Inclusion	\$416.66	4	Michael Cates, Andrea Dittmer, Corshell Peoples, Shanghtin Tawng
Tommy Burks Memorial Endowed Scholarship	\$350	1	Carter Apple
Tommy Moffitt Strength & Conditioning Scholarship	\$500	1	Hunter Barnhart
Verna B. MacKay Endowed Scholarship	\$700	3	Jonathan Aldrich, Jean Peters, Hayden Pettit
W. Doyle & Melford Stone Smith Endowed Scholarship	\$3,000	1	Jacklyn Kleparek
Wanda Howard Education Scholarship	\$500	3	Margaret Buckner, Sydney Haggard, Kristopher Jones
White County Retired Teachers Endowed Scholarship	\$600	1	Sierra Williams

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



B.S. in Exercise Science
Concentration: Pre-Physical Therapy
Class of 2026

A Heart for Healing: Gopi Patel's Path to Physical Therapy

For Gopi Patel, the decision to study exercise science with a concentration in pre-physical therapy at Tennessee Tech University was deeply personal. Inspired by her parents—who

worked tirelessly to provide for their family but now struggle with joint and back pain—Gopi found her purpose in a profession that would allow her to give back.

“This career is a way for me to help them in the best way I can and help others struggling with similar problems,” she said.

Tennessee Tech was an easy choice, thanks to a supportive sibling already enrolled and a campus environment that felt like home. “I loved that it was close to home and the environment of Tech,” she shared. “The campus is the perfect size, and everything is within walking distance. It’s also incredibly affordable.”

Beyond the classroom, Gopi has gained invaluable hands-on experience working as a certified nursing assistant at Cumberland Medical Center in her hometown of Crossville, where she primarily supports geriatric patients. She plans to shadow a physical therapist to deepen her understanding of the field before pursuing her doctorate in physical therapy.

Gopi is also actively involved on campus as a Trailblazer, a student ambassador role that lets her connect with prospective students during VIP campus tours, high school visits, and events like Preview Day and Spring Showcase.

“My time at Tech has helped me grow professionally and personally,” she said. “I’ve become more confident, learned to manage my time well, and found a group of people I truly connect with.”

As she prepares for the next step in her journey, Gopi Patel is a shining example of the impact determination, support, and opportunity can have on a student’s life—and on the lives she will one day touch.

ALUMNA SPOTLIGHT



B.S. in Elementary Education

M.A. & Ed.S. in Counselor Education

High School Counselor | Cookeville High School

A Pebble in the Stream: Lori Strode's Journey of Impact

When Lori Strode began her college journey at Tennessee Tech University, her path was anything but certain. Overwhelmed by family illness, academic challenges, and uncertainty about her future, she found herself on the verge of leaving school entirely. A single conversation in the academic office—a woman who listened, believed in her, and helped her find a way forward—changed everything.

"You don't know when you are that pebble for someone," Lori says. "That person or that interaction that sends someone on a new path."

Lori went on to earn her degree in elementary education and began teaching math and language arts to fifth and seventh graders. While she loved the classroom, she quickly realized her true calling lay in offering students the same support she had once received—outside the classroom.

"I saw how many emotional needs couldn't be addressed within the school day," she recalls. "I wanted to be someone who helped guide them through that."

Lori returned to Tech to earn both her master's and education specialist degrees in counselor education, preparing for a new role that would let her meet students where they are—emotionally, mentally, and academically. Today, she serves as a counselor for juniors and seniors at Cookeville High School, a role she's held since 2015. "Tennessee Tech prepared me in every way to be a counselor," she says. "Not just through academics, but through the lifelong relationships I built there."

Lori was recently honored by Cookeville IMPACT, which recognized her for making significant contributions to the African American community in Putnam County. Despite the recognition, Lori remains humble.

Even on the hard days, Lori stays focused on the joy of watching students overcome adversity.

Her advice to students?

"Do something. Take a step. You don't need all the answers. The path will open up in ways you can't even imagine. So, keep moving. Keep going. And just don't give up."

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



Instructor of Educational Quantitative Research | Founder of Mad Topics: Kinsey Simone

In April 2024, over 100 students, educators, mental health professionals, and community members gathered at Tennessee Tech University—and many more joined via livestream—for the inaugural Mad Topics Panel Symposium on Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in Education.

For Dr. Kinsey Simone, the event marked the realization of a deeply personal and professional dream. A faculty member in the College of Education, Dr. Simone is not only an instructor of educational quantitative research—she's also the founder of Mad Topics, a growing initiative focused on reducing stigma toward invisible disorders and expanding mental health literacy within educational spaces.

Diagnosed with OCD as a child, Dr. Simone brings both lived experience and academic rigor to her mission. “I am not alone,” shared one attendee after the panel—an echo of the connection and understanding that Mad Topics seeks to foster.

The 2024 panel featured a lineup of experts who explored mental health challenges in education from both clinical and lived-experience perspectives. Alongside Dr. Simone, speakers included:

- Dr. David T. Culkin, author of *OCD and Marriage* and national voice on OCD
- Dr. Leann Taylor, senior lecturer and advocate with lived experience of ADHD
- Dr. Edward Beason, specialist in disability stigma and classroom inclusion
- Dr. Amy Callender, school psychologist and expert in diagnosing and supporting students with ADHD and OCD

The momentum from this first symposium doesn't stop here. Dr. Simone and several panelists are now leading IRB-approved research into the effectiveness of Mad Topics interventions in promoting community mental health awareness and reducing stigma.

Dr. Simone envisions Mad Topics as a long-term platform—one that will continue to tackle complex, often misunderstood mental health issues in education through honest, inclusive, and informed dialogue. “The most powerful change begins with understanding,” she says. “Mad Topics is about giving voice to experiences that are too often silenced, and equipping educators to see and support their students fully.”

FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENT AWARDS

2024 College of Education & Teacher Appreciation Awards Recipients

Faculty, Advisor, and Staff



Bobbi Severt
Teaching



Tony Michael
Research



Kinsey Simone
Service



Kyle Shanks
Team Player



Ashley Akenson
Outstanding Advisor



Olivia Newman
Outstanding Staff



May Ann Pyle
Alumna of the Year

Graduate Students Awards



Katie Mixon
Future Educator



Ashley Looper
Leadership



Lara Strate
Service



Tina Cesnik
Go-Getter



McKenna Day
Professionalism

Undergraduate Students Awards



Lauren Matlock
Future Educator



Hannah Stephens
Leadership



William Mayfield
Service



Abbigail McCulley
Go-Getter



Emily Hargis
Professionalism

David L. Larimore Excellence in Research Award

Gretchen Grenz, Special Education
Pleasant Hill Elementary School

Current P-12 Educators



Karen Trentham
ADMINISTRATOR



Sara Wiggins
ART EDUCATOR



Lacey Clark
EARLY CHILDHOOD



Sam Matson
HIGH SCHOOL



Andrea Batson
LIBRARIAN



Rhonda Girdley
ELEMENTARY ED



Sierra Smith
MIDDLE SCHOOL



Christy Lee
PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Robin Hull
SCHOOL COUNSELOR



Raejean Landis
SPECIAL ED



Kayleigh Hudson
TEACHING AS PROFESSION



Brian Webster
MUSIC



Alice Brown
ENGLISH/SECOND LANGUAGE

Alumna of the Year



Mary Ann Pyle, '87 elementary education and '89 M.A., says the education she received from Tennessee Tech – specifically, technology in teaching – gave her a competitive edge in her career. Now, she and her husband Robert want to provide the same opportunity for future educators through the Pyle Technology in Education Fund, which will support technology efforts in Tech's College of Education.

"I hope this gift helps students gain the skills they need for their first job," Pyle said. "And I hope they gain confidence using technology in the classroom."

Pyle attended Tech from 1983 to 1989 and says College of Education faculty Carl Owens, James Akenson, Gene Talbert and Richard Fletcher stressed the importance of incorporating technology into lessons whenever possible.

Pyle recalls that when she interviewed for her first job in Metro Davidson Nashville, the principal was intrigued by her experience with Macintosh computers. Pyle says she firmly believes her knowledge of technology was one of the reasons she was hired.

She also says the education and experiences she gained at Tech – both in the classroom and as a graduate assistant helping with summer camps and computer labs – allowed her to have a robust career in teaching and technology. She taught in Metro Nashville for six years, then for Adams 12 Five Star Schools in Colorado, and was a Sun Microsystems teacher trainer throughout her school assignment in Adams 12. She also served on fundraising committees and technology committees.

FACULTY AREAS OF RESEARCH & EXPERTISE

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION	
Akensson, Ashley Director, Graduate Programs	Program planning & evaluation • Mindfulness • Transformative learning • Learning transfer • Quantitative & qualitative research methods
Shanks, Kyle Assessment Director	Higher education assessment • Teacher education assessment • Data visualization
Smith, Matthew Interim Associate Dean	School Leadership • School & Community Partnerships • Career & Technical Education • Julius Rosenwald Schools • Character Education
Zagumny, Lisa L. Dean	Critical discourse analysis • History of teacher education • Posthumanism • School textbooks • Social construction of identity
DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING and PSYCHOLOGY	
Burgin, Chris Professor	Happiness • Meaningful goals • Gratitude • Hope • Optimism • Awe
Edwards, Derrick Assistant Professor	Emergency responder health • Burnout • Post-traumatic stress disorder
Henniger, Nicole Associate Professor	Social emotions (envy, jealousy, shame, guilt) • Applications of social emotion research (in patient-physician interactions, behavioral health, organ donation, stigma towards substance use and abuse)
Hensley, James (Doug)	Child development • ADHD • Counseling • Teaching large classes
Hermann-Turner, Katherine Associate Professor	Qualitative research • Counselor education • Relational-Cultural Theory • Perinatal counseling • Motherhood developmental models • Working mothers post-COVID • Grandparent alienation • Gifted education • Family systems counseling
Kazanas, Stephanie Associate Professor	Human memory • Cognition and emotion • Evolutionary psychology Bilingualism • Critical thinking
Loffis, Mark Professor	Suicide • Alexithymia • Addiction Counseling • Psychological & Mental Health Assessment • Rural Mental Health Needs • Ethics • Parenting skills for fathers • Adverse & Positive Childhood Experiences • Couples counseling • Spirituality in Counseling
Luo, Ye (Agnes) Assistant Professor	Instrument Development • Translation & Validation • Review & Meta-Analysis • Asian Racial & Cultural Identities • Bilingual & Multicultural Counseling • Technology Use in Counseling

Michael, Tony Associate Professor	Instrument Development & Scale Construction • Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling • Patterns of Relating and Attachment Styles • Counseling and Play Therapy • Supervision and Mentoring • Program Administration and Evaluation
Wiley, Jonathan Assistant Professor	Doctoral teaching preparation • Rural counseling issues • Federal-level mental health policy • Geographical disparities in mental health service delivery • Humanistic models of counseling, teaching, and learning • Qualitative methodologies • Phenomenological methodologies
Wood, Katherine Assistant Professor	Grief and loss • School counseling • School counselor training in grief and loss • Instrument development • Multilingual Learner (MLL) in K-12 settings
DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION	
Akenson, James Professor	History & Assumptions of Elementary & Secondary Social Studies • Applications of Country Music to the K-12 Curriculum • Big Data & Country Music: Applications for Research & Teaching Issues, History, & Assumptions of Education
Anderson, Luke Instructor	Secondary education • English education • Representation in curricula • Educational policy • Teacher stressors and burnout • Queer theory • LGBTQIA+ topics
Anthony, Holly Professor	Mathematics education • STEM education • Teacher preparation • Adult learning • Ongoing, sustainable professional development of teachers • Teaching and learning • Qualitative research in higher education
Baker, Jane Professor	Early literacy • Early numeracy writing instruction • Early childhood education • Early childhood special education • Family collaboration • STEM outreach • Inclusive practices
Beach, Jason Professor	Augmented/Virtual/Mixed Reality • Metaverse • Assistive Technologies • Adult Education • STEM • TPACK • Instructional Design • Computer Science Education K-12
Beach, Natalie Lecturer	Autism • Co-teaching • Special Education in the General Education Classroom
Braisted, Lindsey Instructor	Literacy • ESL • Trauma Informed Instruction • Adolescent Education • Culturally Inclusive Classrooms
Callender, Amy Assistant Professor	Educational and medical journey for families of children with disabilities • Functional skills instruction in the school setting and inclusion practices for students with moderate to severe disabilities • Education for individuals with disabilities in other countries • Transition and employment services for adults with disabilities • Early Intervention evaluation process

Chitiyo, George Professor	Economics of higher education • Psychosocial aspects of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa • Quantitative research and evaluation methods • Chess in Education • Program Evaluation
Comer, Melissa Professor	Research interests: Appalachian culture and language patterns, looping in education, literacy, teacher education / Areas of expertise: Teacher education, literacy, English education
Fidan, Perihan Lecturer	Elementary education • Data assessment • Field experience and applied educational assessment • Pre-service teacher education • Educational collaborations between schools and community institutions • STEM education in K–12 grades • Multicultural education
Gleasant, Cory Assistant Professor	Computer science education for K-12 and teacher prep • Computational thinking • Programming microworlds • XR technologies • Mathematics education • K-12 educational technologies • STEM curriculum design
Grimes, Ka Rene Lecturer	Specific Learning Disabilities (Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia) • High Incidence Disabilities • Math Cognition Executive Function • Mental Health Risks Associated with Learning Difficulties • Autism • Data Mining/Learning Analytics of Educational Software • Special Education/ Teacher Education • Self-Determination Theory • Universal Design for Learning • Research Methods: Qualitative, Quantitatively Experimental Designs, Secondary Analysis, Mixed-Methods, and Single Case Design
Howard, Julie Associate Professor	Libraries • Library Sciences • Young Adult Literature • Technology • Artificial Intelligence
Isbell, Janet Professor	Poverty • Literacy • Qualitative research • Book censorship • Equity and Social Justice • Rural Education and communities
Jones, Angela Senior Lecturer	Teacher evaluation • Elementary education • Science of reading • Literacy instruction
Kennedy, Krystal Assistant Professor	Applied behavior analysis • Autism • Positive behavior supports • School bus interventions • Single-case design research methods • Establishing international behavior analysis supports
Koester, Cale Senior Lecturer	Digital Media Project Based Learning • Comparative and Cross-cultural Education • Coding and Computational Thinking in K12
Laffoon, Alicia Senior Lecturer	Inquiry based social studies practices • Visual literacy
Lastres, Marlana Lecturer	Childhood Trauma • Child Abuse & Neglect • ACEs • Gender Microaggressions • Women in Academia • At-Risk Populations • Program Planning & Evaluation • Qualitative & Quantitative Methods • DEI Concepts/Framework
McMillan, Elizabeth Lecturer	Elementary literacy best practices • Literacy curriculum • Educator prep programs
Marcum, Rebekah Senior Lecturer	Influence of religious identity on teacher identities • Tolerance and diversity in early childhood education • Narrative inquiry • STEM and nature experiences for individuals with disabilities

Meadows, Jennifer Associate Professor	Connecting real-world research to STEM classrooms • Informal STEM education • Elementary Mathematics Teacher Preparation
Moore, Kelly Senior Lecturer	Science education • STEM • Makerspace technology
Ogbomo, Queen Associate Professor	Study Abroad (Gaining global Cultural Perspectives) • STEM Education. Online/ Distance Education • Grant Writing • Mathematics & Movement • The Relevance of Multicultural Education in Elementary Schools • Teaching for Social Justice • Poverty simulation activities on the attitudes of pre-service teachers • Culturally relevant pedagogy • Preservice and in-service teacher professional development • Recruitment and retention of teachers of color
Park, Eunsung Assistant Professor	Learning analytics and applications • Adaptive learning • Distance education • Computational thinking and debugging
Pennycuff-Trent, Kristen Professor	Emergent literacy • Science and literacy • Academic language • Children's and Young adult literature • Grant writing • Professional development for educators
Richards, Stephanie Assistant Professor	K-12 administration including the principalship and the superintendency • Diversity • Recruitment and retention of teachers • Practical application of pedagogy • Poverty • Bullying • School violence • Working with at risk students • Reader's theatre • Social Studies • Recruitment of underrepresented students into education • Using simulations in the classroom • Supervision of teachers • Supervision of students in field applications • Methods of teaching
Silber-Furman, Dorota Lecturer	Linguistically and culturally diverse populations • ELL/ESOL education and literacy • International education • Culturally relevant practices • Multicultural education
Simone, Kinsey Instructor	Predictors of student expectation fulfillment • Instrumental motivation and academic aspirations • Rural depopulation and outmigration • Societal stigmas towards and perceptions of obsessive-compulsive disorder • OCD • Qualitative and quantitative methodologies, including statistical software such as AM Software, R Software, IBM SPSS, and JASP • Program evaluation • Experimental designs • Factor analysis • Univariate and multivariate analyses of variance • Logistic regression • Linear regression and categorical data analysis
Smith-Andrews, Sandi JW Associate Professor	• Educational Technology • Online Learning • Remote Learning • Immersive Technologies • Internet Applications • Leadership/Shared Governance
Spears, Amber Associate Professor	Early/Foundational Literacy • Summer Literacy Programs • Community literacy
Suters, Leslie Professor	Integrated STEM education • Disciplinary computational thinking • Science education • Math education • Literacy integration
Wehrmann, Sara Lecturer	Culturally responsive leadership • Multicultural education • Social Justice

Welch, Callie Lecturer	Co-teaching and inclusion • IEPs • SPED Laws • Classroom management • Rural education • Trauma informed practices • Social-emotional learning • Behavior interventions • Teacher satisfaction and retention
Wendt, Jeremy Professor	Educational technology • P-16 online learning and design • Virtual reality • social media • STEM education
Wendt, Stephanie Professor	Elementary education • Science education • Scientific literacy and 3-Dimensional learning • Learning theory
DEPARTMENT OF EXERCISE SCIENCE	
Killman, Christy Professor	Link between activity and brain development • Mentoring for success
Korgaokar, Ajit Associate Professor	Blood flow restriction training for activation • Recovery • Sports Performance
Mann, David Assistant Professor	Physical education pedagogy • Behavioral aspects of physical activity • Motor learning • Coaching • Wellness
Phillips, Michael Professor	Cancer wellness programs and their effects on quality of life and fatigue on cancer patients • Zone 2 Training and its effects on overall fitness • Church culture and health behaviors
Potter, Darek Assistant Professor	Rural populations • STEM education • Exercise science
Ray, Brittany Lecturer	Sleep - Does the amount of sleep affect/effect our cognitive and motor abilities. • Mental Health Disorders and their effect on motor abilities
Severt, Bobbi Assistant Professor	Athletic training education - advantages and disadvantages to a degree change • Concussions • Return to learn, rural vs urban athlete experiences • Women in athletic training - experiences and perspectives
Smith, John Instructor	Corporate financial takeover of college sports
Smith, Scott Associate Professor	Interscholastic Athletics • Interscholastic Athletic Administration • Sport Fundraising & Revenue Generation
Wynn, Beau Assistant Professor	Mobility and Flexibility • Physical Activity and Cognitive Functioning • Recovery Methods in Training • Physical Education • Fitness and Wellness, and Pedagogy
OAKLEY STEM CENTER	
Galindo, Carlos Coordinator	Multicultural marketing implementation in the U.S. • Advertising strategies targeting the Latino communities in the U.S. • Public relations "effects"

Intellectual Contributions

January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024

Anderson, S. Luke (2024). The day the Department of Education invaded my classroom: An autoethnographic account. *Journal of Autoethnography*, 5(4), 558–567.

Anderson, S. Luke (2024). 'What's wrong with me?': An autoethnographic exploration of teacher stressors and burnout. *Teachers and Teaching*.

Anderson, S. Luke (2024). Understanding teacher perceptions of LGBTQ+ representation through portraiture. *Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Education: School-University-Community Research*. Information Age Publishing.

Anderson Walker, S. B., Diambra, J. F., Betsy, J., Blueford, J., Kim, H., Cain, L. A scoping review of counselors' personal grief experiences and their impact on professional identity development. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling*.

Arce-Trigatti, A., Arce, P. E., Sanders, J. R. (2024). The Renaissance Foundry: A Self-Guided Instrument for Faculty Development in Holistic-Centered Learning. *Faculty Development on a Shoestring Budget* (pp. 89-111). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc. <https://www.infoagepub.com/products/Faculty-Development-on-a-Shoestring>

Arce-Trigatti, A., Gaulden, S. (2024). Cue Logs and Equity: A Poverty Activity Redesign in the Age of COVID-19. *Online, Open, and Equitable Education: Lessons from Teaching and Learning during the Global Pandemic* (pp. 84-107). Elon, North Carolina: Elon University Center for Engaged Learning. <https://www.centerforengagedlearning.org/books/online-open-and-equitable-education/section-1/chapter-4/>

Arce-Trigatti, A., Silber-Furman, D., Anderson, S. L., Willis, H. (2024). What Do We Mean by That? Interrogating Familiar Expressions in Education. *Interrogating the Digital Divide – Panacea or Panic in the Classroom*. Myers Education Press.

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<https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12716>

Chitiyo, G., Zagumny, L. (2024). Using Chess as an Instructional Tool: Teachers' Experiences and Challenges. *Main Issues of Pedagogy & Psychology*, 11(2), 91-99.
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Comer, M. J., Trent, K. P. (2024). "I Wrote the Book I Wanted to Write": Chatting with Young Adult Novelist Vince Vawter. *Tennessee Literacy Journal: Experience the Adventure*, 5(1), 10-11.

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Kelley, J., Haynes, A., **Arce-Trigatti, A.** (2024). Gandhi: Toward a Vision of Nonviolence, Peace, and Justice. *The Palgrave Handbook of Educational Thinkers* (pp. 841-853). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25134-4_89

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- Machingura, M., **Chitiyo, G.**, Glover, S. (2024). Transcriptome and physiological analyses reveal the response of *Arabidopsis thaliana* to poly (aspartic acid). *Plant Stress*, 12.
- Meadows, J. R., Baker, J. E.**, Dzenga, N., Hinkel, S., Wilson, C. (2024). Planning an informal STEM event? Try the assets-based approach to planning and research for informal STEM events. *Journal of Research in Science, Mathematics and Technology Education*, 7(1), 1-16.
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- Oyanader Sandoval, S., **Arce-Trigatti, A.**, Arce, P. E., Sanders, J. R. (2024). The Holistic F.U.E.L. Program: A Renaissance Foundry-Designed Mentoring Approach for Diverse

and Historically Excluded Populations. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, 33(4), 37-59. <https://celt.miamioh.edu/ojs/index.php/JECT/article/view/148>

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- Wood, K. M.**, McMahon, H. George (2024). Supporting students who are grieving: Interventions and practices for school counselors. *Professional School Counseling Journal*, 28(1b).
- Wynn, K.** (2024). In C. L. Killman (Ed.), *PHED 1002 - Physical Fitness Test*. LAD Custom Publishing.
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2024 RESEARCH & CREATIVE INQUIRY DAY

Department of Counseling & Psychology

Graduate Students

- Tammy Knipp – Strive vs. Thrive: The Power of One Care Adult in Foster Youths' Trajectory to Success
- Mason Hale – Conceptualizing the Play Therapy Dimensional Model with the Multidimensional Grief Theory

Undergraduate Students

- Nicholas Wilford – Existential Freedom
- Nick Woods – Existential Meaninglessness Phenomenology

Psychology – PreMed

Undergraduate Students

- Kevin Ho – Scale Development Within Existential Phenomenological Research: Existential Identity

Counselor Education & Supervision

Graduate Students

- Lara Strate – The Relationship Between Alexithymia and Highly Sensitive Persons: A Literature Review
- Mason Hale – Promoting Campus Wellness Through the Lens of Mental Health Counselors
- Ravi Patel – Equipping Collegiate Clinicians: Treating the Effects of Transgenerational Trauma from Natural Disasters
- Jennifer [Paige] Seymour – The Intersection of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Internet Gaming Disorder



Department of Curriculum & Instruction

Applied Behavior Analysis

Graduate Students

- Gracie Conlon – Existential Isolation
- Eseoghene Oderhohwo- Special Education Teachers' Perceptions of the Importance of Early Interventions for Students with Exceptional Needs

Undergraduate Students

- Joshua Thomas – Existential Death

Early Childhood Education

Graduate Students

- Nyasha Dzenga – Understanding the Perceptions of Elementary Educators Regarding their Ability to Educate Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder within Mainstream Classroom Environments

Exceptional Learning

Graduate Students

- Gideon Eduah – Relationship Between Students' Test-Taking Motivation and Performance on Critical Thinking Assessment (CAT)

Exceptional Learning – Literacy

Graduate Students

- Hanna Willis – Interpreting Student Perspectives: A Qualitative Case Study on Self-Advocacy Development for a Student with a Physical Disability Participating in Academic Coaching in Higher Education

Exceptional Learning – Program, Planning & Evaluation

Graduate Students

- Brandi Kriebel – Preservice Teachers' Confidence to Teach Students of Diverse Backgrounds: Differences by Student Major and Sex

Exceptional Learning – School Aged Children Adult Population (ABAS)

Graduate Student

- Vandyck Adade-Yeboah – Experiences of Tennessee Tech International Students on their Ability to Manage Anxiety while Studying



Department of Exercise Science

Physical Therapy Concentration

Undergraduate Student

- Omari Nesmith – An Introduction to Plyometric Training
- Eva Kilgore – Sports Specialization

Exercise Science – Pre-Occupational Therapy

Undergraduate Student

- Olivia Bradford – Vibration Plates: The Benefit of Motor Development in Children with Cerebral Palsy

Higher Education Ph.D. Program

Director: Dr. Ashley B. Akenson

The Higher Education Ph.D. Program experienced significant growth and development throughout 2024. With a strategic focus on expansion, quality improvement, and student success, the program has continued to position itself as a rigorous and responsive academic offering for higher education professionals.

Admissions & Enrollment

In Spring 2024, three applications were received, and all three students were admitted – two were Tennessee Tech employees and one was an external applicant. However, there was one attrition due to work demands.

In Fall 2024, twenty applications were received, and eighteen students were admitted, including five Tennessee Tech employees and eleven external applicants. Of those admitted, three students left the program (1 family-related, 1 work-related, 1 academic dismissal). Additionally, two admitted students never enrolled.

As of December 2024, the total student enrollment stands at 26 students.

Faculty & Curriculum Development

- First Full-Time Hire: Began August 2024
- Curricular Enhancements:
 - Debuted 2 new courses
 - 4 additional courses in development for Spring and Summer 2025 offerings

Student Achievements

- Conference Success:
 - 100% of students who submitted proposals (as part of their comprehensive portfolio requirement) were accepted to present at their respective academic conferences.
- Student Demographics (2024 Cohort):
 - 37% Tennessee Tech employees
 - 63% professionals from other sectors

Program Improvements & Future Directions

Based on extensive student feedback, the program will prioritize the following improvements in 2025:

- Course Revisions: Collaborative efforts to revise current courses for clarity, rigor, and cohesion.
- Curriculum Refinement: Introduction of clearer prerequisite structures to better align course progression.
- Dissertation Support: Development of additional structures and resources to bolster student progress and success in the dissertation phase.

Assessment & Planning

- Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Plan:
 - Created and submitted the IE plan for 2024, incorporating available data from the program's first year of implementation.

Looking Ahead

The Higher Education Ph.D. Program made strong strides in 2024, with a notable increase in applications, a solid foundation in faculty hiring, and a commitment to academic excellence and continuous improvement. As we look ahead, the program is poised to deepen its impact on students and the broader field of higher education.



EXCEPTIONAL LEARNING PHD

Director: Dr. Ashley B. Akenson

Program Overview

The Education Leadership PhD (ELPhD) Program continues to demonstrate its commitment to scholarly excellence, professional impact, and global engagement. With concentrations in Critical Discourse & Literacies, Applied Behavior Analysis, Health Behaviors & Wellness Education, STEM Education, and Program Planning & Evaluation, the program prepares future leaders to influence educational systems through research, policy, and practice. The 2024 academic year was marked by exceptional student achievements, impactful faculty collaborations, and continued academic rigor.

Student Achievements

ELPhD students have exemplified scholarly leadership through competitive presentations, awards, and professional involvement:

- Hannah S. Willis, a Critical Discourse & Literacies concentration student and Exceptional Learning Ph.D. candidate, earned first place in the Graduate Division of the 2024 College of Education Research & Creative Inquiry Day. Her project, *"Interpreting Student Perspectives: A Qualitative Case Study on Self-Advocacy Development for a Student with a Physical Disability Participating in Academic Coaching in Higher Education,"* reflects the program's focus on inclusive education and student-centered research.
- Vandyck Adade-Yeboah, an Applied Behavior Analysis concentration student and Exceptional Learning Ph.D. candidate, was honored with the 2025 Association of Professional Behavior Analysts (APBA) Convention Poster Session Award for outstanding research dissemination in the field of behavior analysis.
- In a global outreach effort, Dr. Krystal J. Kennedy and Vandyck Adade-Yeboah co-led Applied Behavior Analysis Inclusion & Behavior Support trainings across three cities in Ghana in February 2024. Their work addressed behavioral support strategies for school-aged children, demonstrating the ELPhD program's commitment to international impact and culturally responsive practice.

Academic Excellence

Academic performance across the ELPhD program remains exemplary:

- Over 90% of students maintained an A average (3.5 GPA or higher) throughout their program, with a program-wide average GPA of 3.8 in key courses.
- IDEA course evaluations, a key metric for teaching and curriculum effectiveness, reflected consistently high satisfaction:
 - Summer 2024: 4.8
 - Fall 2024: 4.7
 - Spring 2025: 4.5
 - Academic Year Average: 4.7 (on a 5-point scale)

These scores affirm the program's success in delivering high-quality instruction and fostering robust learning outcomes.

Scholarly Engagement & Research

ELPhD students are active contributors to their professional fields:

- In 2024, students held memberships in 76 professional organizations and shared their work at 17 scholarly and professional conferences, including:
 - 4 Regional Presentations
 - 5 National Presentations
 - 8 International Presentations
- Five students successfully completed their dissertation prospectus, positioning themselves to contribute original research to the field of education leadership.

Graduation Milestones

The ELPhD program celebrated the graduation of four doctoral candidates in 2024:

- 2 from the Literacy concentration
- 1 from Health Behaviors & Wellness Education
- 1 from Program Planning & Evaluation

These graduates represent the program's interdisciplinary strength and commitment to preparing educational leaders across a range of contexts.

The 2024 academic year affirmed the ELPhD program's standing as a leader in doctoral education. Through award-winning scholarship, international collaboration, outstanding teaching, and robust student achievement, the program continues to fulfill its mission of advancing educational leadership through inquiry, innovation, and impact. We look forward to the continued growth and success of our students, faculty, and alumni in the coming year.



ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

Counseling and Psychology

Department Chair: Dr. Michael Hoane

Advancing Excellence in Counseling and Psychological Sciences

The Department of Counseling & Psychology is proud to reflect on an outstanding year of achievement, advocacy, research, and community service in 2024. Our programs continue to distinguish themselves through academic excellence, national accreditation, and student success.

Accreditation Milestones and Academic Excellence

We are thrilled to announce that as of February 2024, our M.A. in School Counseling and Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision programs have achieved full



CACREP accreditation. Additionally, the Clinical Mental Health Counseling M.A. program has received reaffirmation of its CACREP accreditation. This recognition affirms the rigor and quality of our curriculum and our commitment to preparing ethical, culturally responsive, and highly skilled counselors.

Further highlighting our program quality, counseling graduate students at Tennessee Tech surpassed national averages in 6 out of 6 work behaviors and

domains, and in 7 of 8 content areas. In the single content area where they did not exceed national benchmarks, the difference was statistically insignificant, underscoring the consistently high performance of our students.

Clinical Training and Community Service

A cornerstone of our counseling programs is real-world service through supervised internships. In 2024, our graduate interns in counseling collectively contributed over 4,000 hours of direct mental health services to the community. One partner site, The Grove, charges \$30 per hour for sessions conducted by our interns, translating to over \$120,000 in billable services delivered—without compensation to the students. This is a remarkable example of how our department both trains future clinicians and directly supports the mental health needs of our region. Our faculty members also commit significant time to supervising these interns, ensuring the quality and ethical standards of care while fostering professional development.

Research, Presentations, and National Recognition

Our students and faculty are actively engaged in cutting-edge research and scholarship:

- Six psychology students traveled with Dr. Nicole Henniger and Dr. Matthew J. Zagumny to the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Annual Convention in San Diego (Feb 8–10, 2024), where they presented studies on topics such as:

- Healthcare avoidance
- Academic burnout and perfectionism
- Childhood adversity and empathy
- Climate change messaging
- Opioid treatment attitudes

- Five undergraduate researchers presented their work at the Association of



Psychological Science (APS) Conference in San Francisco (May 2024). Supported by a \$4,060 award from Chapter 606, these presentations cover a wide range of psychological inquiries, including multitasking and memory, athletic identity and mental health, and social media's influence on emotional responses.

- Nicholas Woods, a psychology major, was awarded a 2023–2024 Summer Undergraduate Research

Grant by Psi Chi for his study on “Acknowledging substance abuse in episodic future thinking.”

- Under the guidance of Dr. Matthew Zagumny, five students from the Experimental Existential Psychology Lab conducted phenomenological research on the Big Five Existential Concerns—Death, Identity, Isolation, Freedom, and Meaning—through two CISE research grants totaling \$8,000. Principal Investigators G. Belle Conlon and Joshua Thomas presented findings at the CISE Showcase on August 29, 2024.

- Dr. Nicole Henniger presented internationally in Malaysia and Northern Ireland

Talk at ASB in Malaysia: *Guilt as a desirable response to health behavior communication: Studies of the effects of guilt on organ donation registration, physician visits, and COVID-19 prevention behaviors.* **Poster at**

ISRE in Northern Ireland: Henniger, N.E., Young, M., ** Budesá, Z., & Luke, C. *Specific social emotions predict Tennessee healthcare providers' responses to patients with Opioid Use Disorder.* Dr. Luo, Dr. Wiley, and Dr. Wood, along with several doctoral students,

presented at the Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES) Conference in Dallas. Topics included social justice, advocacy, and issues in counselor education.



Advocacy and Leadership



In 2024, our students also demonstrated leadership in professional advocacy. Katie Wood, accompanied by two M.S. and one doctoral student in School Counseling, traveled to the Tennessee State Capitol alongside SACAC representatives to advocate for stronger support and funding for school counseling services. Their voices are helping shape the future of school mental health policy in Tennessee. Additionally, the department hosted the annual Duck Day fundraiser in support of the Jessica Kelley Memorial Scholarship Fund, reinforcing our commitment to student support and remembrance.

Dissertation Recognition and Community Engagement

Mason Hale completed his dissertation: Examining the psychometric properties of the Attachment to God Inventory with a 12-step substance use recovery population (Chair: Dr. Michael). Our Supervision CE Event this year was another high point, with 24 community clinicians, faculty, and students in attendance. Four doctoral students and Dr. Loftis delivered inspiring presentations that offered 3 ACEP-approved continuing education hours to clinicians and 3 hours of supervision training for those pursuing licensure as supervisors.



Looking Ahead

The achievements of 2024 reflect the passion and persistence of our students, the mentorship of our faculty, and the strength of our community partnerships. As we look ahead, the Department of Counseling & Psychology remains committed to:

- Advancing research that informs practice and policy.
- Enhancing access to mental health services in the region.
- Preparing students to become competent, compassionate professionals.

We thank our faculty, staff, students, and partners for a transformative year and look forward to even greater impact in 2025.

Curriculum and Instruction

Department Chair: Dr. Jeremy Wendt

The Department of Curriculum & Instruction (C&I) experienced a transformative and impactful year in 2024. Through national leadership, innovative partnerships, international outreach, and community-driven service, C&I faculty and students have continued to model excellence in educator preparation, research, and public engagement.

Leadership and Professional Recognition

Faculty in the department assumed significant leadership roles across numerous professional organizations. Dr. Leslie Suters served as President of the Tennessee Science Teachers Association (TSTA), while Dr. Holly Anthony (pictured right) led the Tennessee Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators (TAMTE). Dr. Amber Spears (pictured bottom right) chaired the Literacy



Association of Tennessee (LAT), and Dr. Jennifer Meadows served as Vice-President of the Tennessee Mathematics Teachers' Association (TMTA). Dr. Kelly Moore concluded her term as President of the Tennessee Science Education Leaders Association (TNSELA), and Dr. Amy Callender (pictured left) completed her service as Immediate Past President of the Tennessee Council for Exceptional Children (TNCEC).

These appointments underscore the department's statewide and national influence on educational policy and practice.



Dr. Kristen Trent (pictured left) received the prestigious Hoyte Snow Literacy Leader Award in recognition of her sustained commitment to literacy instruction, curriculum development, and preservice teacher mentorship. Dr. Trent's leadership within LAT and contributions to professional publications and conferences exemplify the values of service and excellence in education.

Academic and Community Engagement

This year marked a significant partnership with CEEDAR (Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform). In February and October, the department hosted state and national CEEDAR representatives alongside educator preparation programs (EPPs) from across Tennessee. These gatherings focused on strategies to enhance teacher readiness and elevate the profession through collaborative policy and curriculum design.



As part of the Lead in Literacy (LIL) Network initiative in partnership with



Deans for Impact and SCORE, faculty hosted multiple strategic meetings and workshops. The department welcomed literacy expert Dr. Stephanie Stollar to review key literacy syllabi. Tech's literacy courses were rated in the top 95% nationally, affirming our commitment to high-quality, research-based instruction.

Faculty members Drs. Jeremy Wendt, Amber Spears, and Lindsey Braisted were featured in EdWeek for their efforts in aligning educator preparation with school district literacy goals. Dr. Wendt was also selected to serve on the Tennessee State Board of Education's Educator Preparation Advisory Council.

Innovative Teaching and Student Engagement

Faculty continued to inspire students through innovative courses and experiential learning. Dr. Kinsey Simone launched a service-learning class where students



presented original research projects to Putnam County Mayor Randy Porter and Cookeville City Mayor Laurin Wheaton. Dr. Simone also coordinated the inaugural Mad Topics Symposium, a powerful discussion on OCD and ADHD in education that reached over 120 attendees through in-person and

livestream formats. In March, Early Childhood Education practitioner students participated in the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth's Children's Advocacy Days. Their engagement in the "Bee the Change" campaign reinforced our students' roles as future advocates for children and families.

Global Outreach and Research



Assistant Professor Dr. Krystal Kennedy and Ph.D. student Vandyck Adade-Yeboah traveled to Ghana on a grant-funded professional development mission. Their training, "Creating Supportive Environments for All Abilities," served over 350 participants across Accra, Cape Coast, and Kumasi. This immersive

experience not only enriched global educational dialogue but also highlighted C&I's commitment to inclusivity, behavioral support, and universal design in education.



State and Local Partnerships

C&I continued to expand its reach across the Upper Cumberland and beyond. Drs. Brown and Wendt met with transfer students at Motlow and Chattanooga State campuses to support recruitment and retention. The department also played a pivotal role in the Upper Cumberland Literacy Association Summer Conference, attended by over 100 educators. Ongoing collaborations with Putnam County Schools have enhanced curriculum development, workforce alignment, and literacy initiatives throughout the region.

Luke Anderson represented the department on the State Board of Education's Educator Advisory Team, contributing to the review of English Language Arts standards. This participation is another example of how our faculty influence state-level decision-making.

Graduate Recruitment and Accreditation

As of Spring 2024, the department is working closely with 26 prospective graduate students to complete their applications for fall enrollment. In addition, Dr. Kennedy met with ABAI (Association for Behavior Analysis International) to begin the process of national tiered accreditation. Achieving this status will place our ABA program among the top in the region.

Looking Ahead

As we reflect on a successful year, the Department of Curriculum & Instruction remains deeply committed to preparing educators who are not only content experts but also compassionate, culturally responsive, and community-oriented leaders. We look forward to another year of collaboration, innovation, and impact across local, state, national, and international levels.



Exercise Science

Department Chair: Christy Killman

Wellness, Leadership and Service Through Movement Science

The Exercise Science Department continued to thrive in 2024, building on a foundation of academic excellence, community engagement, and professional leadership. With active student involvement, nationally recognized faculty, and dynamic recruitment efforts, our department continues to play a vital role in promoting health, physical literacy, and wellness both on campus and throughout the region.

Recruitment and Outreach: Making It Personal

In April 2024, our graduate assistants played a major role in the “It’s Personal” recruitment campaign by writing 271 personalized cards to prospective students. This initiative reflects the department’s commitment to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment from the very first point of contact. Such outreach strengthens our efforts to connect with future Exercise Science students and highlights the hands-on, student-centered culture that defines our programs.

At the National Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance Leaders (NAHPL) Summit in Baton Rouge, LA, held in May, eight faculty members and four students represented Tennessee Tech by:



- Presenting six different sessions on exercise science, health, wellness, safety, and physical literacy.
- Setting up a booth to share resources and program information.
- Hosting a social event to engage potential graduate students, generating significant interest in our Ph.D. in Higher Education.

Dr. Christy Killman’s nomination as chair-elect for NAHPL’s Future Professionals Council further amplifies our visibility and influence at the national level. This three-year leadership role will be instrumental in attracting new talent and reinforcing our department’s commitment to shaping the next generation of health and physical education professionals.

Faculty Highlights and Professional Recognition

Our faculty continue to lead in both innovation and service. Highlights include:

- Dr. David Mann was featured in regional media for launching a fly-fishing certification program supported by a competitive grant, adding a unique dimension to our experiential learning opportunities.

- Mrs. Christina Turnbow was named College/University Educator of the Year by the Tennessee Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (TAHPERD). She will be formally recognized at the organization's convention in October.
- Dr. Bobbi Severt was selected to serve on the Board of Certification for the Athletic Trainer. As an Item Writer for the My Challenge Questions Team, she will use AI-assisted tools to develop certification materials, reflecting her expertise in health sciences and web-based education platforms.
- Mr. Brad Westrick continues to inspire through both teaching and example. He:
 - Swam across the St. Clair River from Detroit to Canada, exemplifying physical endurance and commitment to wellness.
 - Organized his annual kayak experience for students in the Independence Program, a highlight of our inclusive physical activity offerings. After weeks of preparation in the Memorial Gymnasium pool, students tested their skills at Cane Creek and celebrated their accomplishments with a cookout.



Student Engagement and Service Learning

Our students remain at the heart of our department's success:

- In October, several Exercise Science majors volunteered with TOPSoccer, a community program that offers recreational soccer for individuals with intellectual, emotional, or physical disabilities. This service-learning opportunity gave students practical experience in adaptive physical activity while giving back to the Cookeville community.
- Liza Dennis, a teacher licensure candidate in physical education and health, was selected to represent Tennessee Tech and the state of Tennessee at the Southern Tier Future Professionals Leadership Development Conference in Johnson City, TN (Sept 26–28). As one of only two students chosen from each of the 13 southern states, Liza's selection speaks to her potential as a future leader

in physical education. A first-semester transfer student from UTK, she plans to pursue teaching and coaching.



Looking Ahead

As we reflect on 2024, we are proud of the milestones our department has achieved—through national presentations, professional honors, student leadership, and community impact. The Exercise Science Department remains committed to excellence in teaching, research, service, and student development. Looking forward, we aim to:

- Expand our graduate and doctoral program outreach.
- Strengthen partnerships that support experiential and inclusive learning.
- Continue advocating for wellness and physical literacy at the local, state, and national levels.

We thank our students, faculty, and community partners for their incredible work in 2024. Together, we are creating a culture of movement, health, and leadership.



CENTERS AND OFFICES

Child Development Lab

Director: Angie Smith

2024 has been a year of growth, opportunity, and meaningful partnerships for the Child Development Lab (CDL). As a university-based laboratory program, our mission remains focused on excellence in early childhood education and the preparation of future professionals. We are proud to share highlights from the year and our outlook for what's to come.

CDL's Educational Mission

As an integral part of the College of Education, the CDL supports the academic mission of Tennessee Tech by providing real-world learning environments for students majoring in:

- Early Childhood Education
- Early Childhood Special Education
- Child and Family Studies
- Music Therapy
- Nursing
- Psychology

Our lab setting gives university students practicum and teaching experience, while the children in our care benefit from age-appropriate, play-based, and socially rich learning environments. This dual-purpose mission enables us to serve both children and aspiring professionals at the highest standard.

New Partnership: TECTA Apprenticeship Program

One of the most exciting developments this year has been our growing partnership with the Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) Apprenticeship Program. The CDL has been selected as a host site to help train new early childhood professionals entering the field across the Upper Cumberland area. We are honored to be chosen for this important initiative and are currently working through final details with TECTA. We believe this partnership will become a cornerstone in developing the next generation of educators, enriching our lab environment while fulfilling a vital community need.



DHS Evaluation: Commitment to Quality

On August 29, 2024, the Child Development Lab underwent a comprehensive evaluation by the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS). We are thrilled to announce that we received an overall quality rating of 95 — a testament to the dedication of our staff, the richness of our curriculum, and the safe, nurturing

environment we provide. This rating underscores our commitment to best practices in early childhood education.

Regional Leadership and Advocacy

Angie Smith, CDL Director, continues to advocate for quality early childhood care in our region. In 2024, she was appointed to the Upper Cumberland UDD Steering Committee for Early Childhood Childcare. In this role, she collaborates with stakeholders including the Tennessee Quality Early Education (TQEE) group to develop regional strategies aimed at strengthening childcare systems and access. This leadership ensures that the CDL remains an active contributor to systemic improvements in early learning—not only within our walls, but across the broader community.



Inside the CDL: A Day in the Life

Children enrolled in the CDL enjoy a developmentally appropriate curriculum grounded in play and social interaction. Our classrooms are language-rich and carefully designed to foster exploration, creativity, and a love of learning. Our environment is enhanced by:

- Daily experiences guided by teaching and practicum students
- A balance of structured and free-choice activities
- Ongoing assessment to meet individual developmental needs

We value the diverse learning needs of each child and maintain an inclusive philosophy that embraces all learners.

Welcoming Families & Students

The CDL maintains an “open door policy” and encourages prospective families, students, and partners to schedule a tour, ask questions, and explore how we can support their goals. We work closely with each family and each student teacher to create a warm, respectful, and collaborative environment.

We are deeply grateful to our families, our university partners, and our dedicated staff for making 2024 such a rewarding and impactful year.

Looking Ahead

As we prepare for deeper engagement with the TECTA Apprenticeship Program in the coming year, we remain energized by the opportunities ahead. We are building a future where young learners, university students, and community partners grow together, supported by strong relationships and a shared commitment to educational excellence. Here's to another year of learning, growing, and thriving together!

Freedom School

Executive Director: Amber Spears

Empowering Young Minds for Lifelong Success



The Elinor Ross Freedom School continues to be a transformative force for students, families, and future educators alike. This six-week summer enrichment program is more than an academic initiative—it is a community movement rooted in literacy, leadership, and equity.

Founded to honor the legacy of Dr. Elinor Ross, this unique program provides free, research-based academic instruction to rising first through eighth-grade students in Putnam County and beyond. Known as “scholars,” participants benefit from

a dynamic curriculum, two nutritious meals and a snack daily, weekly field trips, and enrichment in STEM, art, music, and physical education—all at no cost to families.

Literacy at the Core

The core of the Freedom School is its high-impact literacy curriculum, featuring daily reading instruction, discussion-based learning that fosters critical thinking and texts focused on social justice, leadership, and personal empowerment. Studies have shown that programs like Freedom School combat summer learning loss, particularly among children reading below grade level. In fact, a 2017–2018 evaluation found that over 80% of participants maintained or improved their reading levels, with average gains of 10 months—a life-changing leap for many young learners.



Community Impact & Family Engagement

True to its mission, the Freedom School also centers family and community engagement. Parents are invited to participate in events, attend workshops, and share in their child’s summer learning journey. The program encourages civic



responsibility, character development, and a vision of education that extends beyond the classroom.

Looking Ahead

As the Elinor Ross Freedom School prepares for another impactful summer, its leadership remains committed to

continuous improvement, research-based practice, and expanding access to underserved communities. Through its holistic approach—one that nurtures academic, emotional, and social growth—the Elinor Ross Freedom School is shaping a brighter, more literate future for Tennessee’s youth.

Jeffers Learning Resources Center

Director: Jason Beach

Librarian: Genny Patterson

The Jeffers Learning Resource Center (JLRC) remains a cornerstone of innovation, support, and engagement. Throughout 2024, the JLRC has continued to uphold its mission to provide cutting-edge resources, foster experiential learning, and support future educators through a variety of services and technologies. This report highlights the JLRC's activities, accomplishments, and advancements over the past calendar year.



Facility Usage and Patron Engagement

During 2024, the JLRC sustained a steady weekly patron count of over 700 visitors, as monitored through our digital door count system. This consistent level of engagement underscores the JLRC's role as a hub of academic support and innovation for students and faculty alike. The JLRC hosted numerous large groups of prospective students, showcasing our spaces and the broader offerings of the College of Education and Human Sciences. These tours allowed visitors to experience our V.I.S.I.O.N. Lab, the Creation Studio, the newly added Innovation Station, and the JLRC Library—highlighting our integrated approach to education through immersive technology and resources.

Expansion of Educational Spaces and Experiences

V.I.S.I.O.N. Lab and Creation Studio

The V.I.S.I.O.N. (Virtual Immersive Smart Innovative Online Networked) Lab and the Creation Studio have seen increased traffic throughout 2024 as faculty from the College of Education integrated these resources into their curriculum. These immersive learning environments have become vital tools in foundational and special education courses, providing preservice teachers with their first hands-on exposure to emerging technologies in education.

The Creation Studio and V.I.S.I.O.N. Lab hosted over 30 individual course visits in 2024, further reinforcing the JLRC's role in preparing future educators with 21st-century skills.

Beyond class assignments, these areas remain open during JLRC operating hours, encouraging continued exploration and independent learning.

Innovation Station – A Transformative Addition



The most impactful development of the year has been the establishment of the **Innovation Station**, a creative, hands-on space where students engage in collaborative, real-world problem-solving activities. A centerpiece of this space is **Kai's Clan**, a robotics platform that blends coding, augmented reality, and team-based challenges. Participants code role-based avatars that interact on physical adventure mats enhanced by digital overlays, enabling engagement at both local and global levels. The Innovation Station's seamless integration with the V.I.S.I.O.N. Lab

and Creation Studio creates a robust, interconnected environment that empowers future educators to explore and adopt transformative teaching technologies.

Community Engagement and Outreach

In line with our mission to serve the broader educational community, the JLRC welcomed approximately thirteen high school groups from local and neighboring counties in 2024. These visits offered students and their families comprehensive tours of our technology-rich learning environments, including:

- Demonstrations of the Kai's Clan robotics platform
- Interactive experiences in the V.I.S.I.O.N. Lab
- Hands-on activities in the Creation Studio
- Exploration of our extensive library collections



These outreach efforts serve not only to inform but also to inspire prospective students about the opportunities that await them in the College of Education.

Resource Enhancements and Technology Updates

To maintain its status as a premier learning resource center, the JLRC invested in significant upgrades during 2024:

- V.I.S.I.O.N. Lab Upgrades: Enhanced with next-generation graphics and processing capabilities, enabling even more immersive VR experiences.
- Content Expansion: New academic concentrations have been added to our video library, including Exercise Science and Counseling and Psychology, ensuring the JLRC reflects the diversity of programs within the college.
- Digital Collection Growth: The addition of Epic School Plus now provides students and faculty with unlimited access to a digital library of over 40,000 titles, further broadening our reach and accessibility.

Looking Ahead

As we conclude an impactful year, the JLRC remains committed to its mission of empowering students and faculty with the tools, technologies, and experiences needed for success in today's educational landscape. With a focus on continued innovation, deeper academic integration, and enhanced outreach, we look forward to expanding our impact in 2025 and beyond.



Millard Oakley STEM Center

Director: Dr. Darek Potter

Inspiring Future Innovators Across the Upper Cumberland

In 2024, the Millard Oakley STEM Center continued its mission to provide transformative, inclusive STEM education experiences for students, educators, and the broader community. Through a robust lineup of outreach events, regional partnerships, professional development, and cutting-edge resource deployment, the STEM Center served as a hub of innovation and inspiration in Middle Tennessee and beyond.

STEM Outreach & Community Engagement Highlights

Fab Friday: Hidden Figures in STEM

Attendance: 129 students | 250 total participants

This event celebrated the unsung heroes of science and engineering. "STEM Figures Unveiled: Unleashing Hidden Potential" highlighted underrepresented scientists, particularly women and African American pioneers. Participants engaged in hands-on activities that honored the legacy and contributions of these trailblazers.



Cal Ripken STEM Room Ribbon Cutting

Livingston Middle School



In collaboration with the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation, TVA, and regional stakeholders, the STEM Center celebrated the opening of a new high-tech STEM classroom. This space offers enhanced STEM opportunities to middle school students in a rural community, bridging access and innovation.

Park View Elementary STEM Expedition

75 1st Grade Students

Young learners experienced a day of space science through immersive activities such as 3D astronomy films, rocket construction, a mobile planetarium, and coding Sphero robots. These experiences reinforced classroom learning through tactile and visual exploration.

Safari Saturday: Ice Age Explorers

300 Student Participants



Students and families engaged in thematic Ice Age activities, including paleontology, cave art creation, and animal tracking simulations. These activities fostered curiosity and interdisciplinary learning.

Smith County Middle School Science Fair

STEM Center staff supported Smith County Middle by serving as judges at their local Science fair. After evaluating projects, staff provided recommendations to help select fair winners and honorary mentions. Staff also encouraged educators and parents to have the students participate at the Cumberland Plateau Regional Science & Engineering Fair which is hosted by the STEM Center every year at Tennessee Tech. We are always excited to see these fairs grow in popularity each year, as more students showcase their creativity, critical thinking, and enthusiasm for STEM subjects.

STEM Expeditions

Throughout the year, schools from the Upper Cumberland region and beyond visited the STEM Center for hands-on STEM Expeditions. In 2024 alone, the program served 3,108 K–12 students. Each expedition is tailored to meet the specific needs of participating schools and grade levels.

Fab Friday: STEM-mendous Minions - Unleashing Scientific Mischief!

Attendance: 123 total participants



Participants stepped into the world of Mischievous Minions as they dove into hands-on experiments and engineering challenges that ignited their scientific curiosity and creativity. It was an event full of laughter, learning, and scientific discovery, where young minds embraced

the joy of STEM while unleashing their own mischievous scientific potential.

Safari Saturday: STEM Olympics

Attendance: 176 total participants

We combined the excitement of the Olympics with the engaging world of STEM! Students and families experienced a series of STEM challenges and activities that mirrored the spirit of the Olympics, while fostering teamwork, creativity, and a passion for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.



Fab Friday: Mad Science Mania - A Hauntingly Fun Exploration of STEM

This spook-tacular event was filled with hands-on experiments, eerie science demonstrations, and creepy-cool STEM activities. It was perfect for curious minds of all ages. This family-friendly event included thrills, chills, and plenty of mad science fun.



Safari Saturday: Money Maker\$pace

Attendance: 123 total participants

"Money Maker\$pace" was a collaborative event with the TN Tech College of Business and the Oakley STEM Center. This was a hands-on event for Pre-K through 3rd grade students to gain knowledge on financial literacy. Financial literacy is the foundation of your relationship with money, and it is a lifelong journey of learning!



Fab Friday: In Our STEM Era!

Attendance: 138 total participants

This was a Taylor-ific STEM extravaganza in which participants explored the world of science, technology, engineering, and math through fun, hands-on activities inspired by your favorite Taylor Swift songs and football favorites! They were able to "Shake It Off" with some earthquaking excitement, make "Sparks Fly" with physics fun, delve into the "Blank Space" with algorithmic ciphers, experience their "Wildest Dreams" with robotics and art, and for all the Kelce fans out there, they had some STEM gridiron fun too!



Teacher Development

Rural Reimagined AI Workshop

25 Educators

Educators explored the applications of generative AI in the classroom. Through guided professional development, teachers gained skills to integrate emerging technology into their instructional strategies, supporting innovation in rural education.

STEM Designation Workshops

106 Educators

The Oakley STEM Center collaborated with STEM designated schools to guide leadership teams in school districts to navigate Tennessee's STEM designation process.

Regional Events

Regional Science Olympiad

February 10, 2024 – Attendance: 320 students | 350 participants

The STEM Center hosted students from across Middle Tennessee in this rigorous STEM competition. Teams competed in hands-on science and engineering challenges, with winners advancing to the State Science Olympiad.

TN Middle School Math Contest

April 4, 2024 – 501 Students from 47 Schools and 17 Districts

This statewide event brought together Tennessee's brightest middle school mathematicians in a competitive environment designed to promote critical thinking and problem-solving.

66th Annual Regional Science & Engineering Fair



April 2024 – 153 Students | 112 Projects from 9 Counties

This year's Science & Engineering Fair brought together an impressive 140 students presenting 102 innovative projects from nine counties across the Upper Cumberland region. Participants competed for over \$15,000 in scholarships, aimed at encouraging and supporting the next generation of scientists and engineers.

STEM Center Innovations & Growth

Mobile Planetarium Launch

This portable educational tool brought immersive astronomy programming to over 900 students in 2024, with plans to continue to expand its use across the region.

zSpace Lending Library Expansion

As of 2024, fourteen zSpace augmented reality devices have been distributed to satellite hubs across the Upper Cumberland. These state-of-the-art learning tools help to expand AR-based learning opportunities for regional educators and students.

Summer & Fall STEM Engagements

- *Freedom School Program:* STEM Center staff worked with participants attending the Freedom School, facilitating hands-on STEM activities where the students learned engineering principles using Knex structures.
- *Wilson County Fair Exhibit:* Over 800 families interacted with STEM Center staff, exploring hands-on STEM activities that promoted informal science learning.
- *Fab Friday – Mad Science:* 137 students explored neuroscience with guidance from faculty and graduate students from Tennessee Tech's Counseling and Psychology department.

STEM Hub Collaboration

In 2024, the STEM Center hosted two Regional STEM Hub Meetings (one in the Spring and one in the Fall), which brought together K–12 Administrators, Industry Professionals & Educators. These workshops focus on exploring STEM needs in our region and fostering local partnerships that enhance the STEM education in our region. The regional meetings were attended by over 50 participants from 14 counties and included discussion with industry partners such as TVA and Cummins.

Grant Support

During 2024, the STEM Center secured a \$9,544,695 GEAR UP grant award from the U.S. Department of Education. The award represents the second largest grant award in Tennessee Tech's history and will provide student support in four school districts (Clay County, Overton County, Oneida Special, and Warren County) for a period of seven years.

Looking Ahead

As we reflect on a year of remarkable growth and impact, the Millard Oakley STEM Center remains committed to empowering educators, students, and communities through meaningful, standards-aligned STEM education. With expanded programming, innovative tools, and dedicated partners, 2025 promises to be another exciting chapter in our mission to inspire the next generation of thinkers, makers, and leaders.

Office of Teacher Education

Director: Dr. Amy Brown

Fostering Future Educators: A Year of Dedication and Impact

The Office of Teacher Education serves both College of Education & Human Sciences students and licensed professionals across Tennessee and beyond. Our mission is to cultivate well-prepared, compassionate, and highly qualified teaching professionals equipped with the skills to educate and lead future generations. We offer a range of accredited programs tailored to undergraduate and graduate students seeking initial licensure, additional endorsements, or alternative certification pathways. These programs support students teaching in PreK–12 environments across a variety of disciplines and allow post-baccalaureate candidates to pursue licensure.

OTE collaborates with faculty and partnering school districts to maintain high-quality standards and align with Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) guidelines.



Tennessee Tech is proud to remain the top producer of licensed teachers in the state.

Clinical & Field Experiences: Where Theory Meets Practice

A central pillar of our teacher preparation model is our commitment to real-world classroom experiences. These structured placements span every phase of the teacher education journey:

- Early Field Observations introduce students to classroom culture and pedagogy.
- Pre-Residency teaching allows candidates to begin practicing instructional strategies under the guidance of a mentor teacher.
- The culminating clinical experience integrates theory, first-hand interaction with professional educators, and in-depth skill development in diverse school settings.

These field-based experiences are essential in preparing candidates for the complexities of modern classrooms and ensuring they are to positively impact students.

Services and Support for Student Success

OTE provides comprehensive advising and program support to ensure candidates stay on track to graduation and licensure. Our staff is available to guide students through course planning, program admissions, licensure paperwork, and state testing requirements. We also collaborate with partner districts and schools to facilitate high-quality placements, mentor matching, and job-readiness resources.

In 2024, we continued to:

- Host licensure information sessions and educator panels.
- Expand field experience opportunities in both urban and rural settings.
- Ensure compliance with evolving TDOE standards and Praxis exam requirements.
- Offer one-on-one support for transfer, post-bac, and returning students.

Celebrating Excellence in Educator Preparation

From new licensure pathways to stronger community partnerships, 2024 has been a year of growth, innovation, and connection. The success of our students is deeply



rooted in the dedication of the Office of Teacher Education (OTE) staff, the leadership of Dr. Brown, and the passion of those who choose teaching as their calling. As we reflect on the year, we are reminded of the inspiring culture that makes Tennessee Tech's Office of Teacher Education a standout.

Looking Forward to 2025

The OTE team is excited to continue building on this year's successes. Plans are already underway to enhance our digital advising resources, expand early field experiences, and host additional professional development events for both students and mentor teachers. With a strong foundation and a shared purpose, we look forward to another impactful year in educator preparation.

Student Success Center

Interim Associate Dean & SSC Director: Dr. Matthew Smith

A Year of Growth, Innovation, and Student Engagement

The Student Success Center (SSC) in the College of Education (COEd) at Tennessee Tech University has experienced a dynamic and impactful year in 2024. With a renewed focus on recruitment, engagement, student support, and data-informed decision-making, our team has been working diligently to connect with future educators, improve student experiences, and ensure the success of every future Golden Eagle in education fields.

Recruitment and Tracking: Leveraging Technology for Long-Term Impact

A major stride forward this year has been our enhanced use of Slate, the university's CRM tool. Lizzie Burrows, our Recruitment & Marketing Specialist, has been retroactively entering data for all Fall 2024 visitors. This allows us to track the percentage of visitors who eventually apply and enroll. Many Teaching as Profession (TAP) groups include underclassmen, which historically required up to four years of tracking. Now, Slate streamlines that process—saving time and enhancing our data strategy for future planning.

VIP Visit Restructuring & Recruitment Events

Recognizing the importance of first impressions, our team has begun reimagining the VIP visit structure in collaboration with student ambassadors and the SSC team. A soft launch of updated VIP experiences is planned for Spring 2025. These visits will include enhanced exposure to our Joe L. Rowland Center (JLRC) and innovative educational technologies to distinguish our programs from peer institutions. Research has shown that prospective students often attend only one type of visit, making every encounter vital. In March, the SSC also completed a makeover of the 3rd floor advising space—now featuring new paint, lighting, and furniture to create a welcoming and student-friendly environment.

Campus Visits and Special Guests

We were thrilled to host a wide variety of student groups this year:

- Macon County TAP students returned for their dual credit exam—all 8 passed and received 2 hours of college credit. Many plan to apply to Tech this fall.
- 20 high school students from Knox County visited via the Emerald Youth College & Career Prep Program, many of whom expressed interest in our education pathways. Their visit included lunch and a session with Intercultural Affairs.
- White County TAP visited in April, with 10 students exploring our programs.
- So far this Fall 2024, we have hosted TAP groups from Macon County, Monterey, and Stone Memorial, totaling 61 high school students.



- Warren County TAP also visited, and we traveled to Smithville to speak with DeKalb County's after-school program.

These visits continue to be a key pipeline to enrollment and play a significant role in inspiring future educators.

State & National Engagement

We represented the college at the **National Educator Shortage Summit**, where we



learned from peer institutions about innovative strategies to attract future educators. We plan to return next year with action items already being considered.

In April, the College of Education exhibited at the Educators Rising National Conference in Washington, D.C., where over 1,300 high school students gathered. Our VISION Lab travel headset made a major impact—allowing students to experience a virtual

classroom customized to their subject interests. The technology was a hit with students and teachers alike, generating strong interest in both our undergraduate and graduate programs.



Career Fair and Community Partnerships

Our annual Career Fair on March 21 was a resounding success, co-hosted with the Center for Career Development. The event featured:

- 65 total tables (61 employer tables and 4 from Tech)
- Over 140 employers and 163 students
- Representation from 30 partner school districts, including superintendents from Putnam and White Counties
- Participation from districts in Tennessee, Georgia, and Texas, such as KIPP Nashville, Forsyth County (GA), Katy ISD (TX), and more
- 14 community organizations, including the TN Dept. of Children's Services, Youth Villages, and the McNabb Center

This event reaffirmed our role as a leader in preparing students for careers in education and human services.

Special Events & Student Highlights



Our “Donut Get Lost” first-year student tour was a heartwarming highlight. This year, the event honored alumnus Steve Bivens, a former art educator and TN House Representative. The Bivens family established a scholarship endowment in memory of Dinah Pistole Bivens. Over 100 students, faculty, and staff attended, including Provost Bruce and Susan Luna-Hazelwood. Students lined up to personally thank Mr. Bivens for his legacy.



A sentimental gift to the SSC also came this year when Daphne Jordan, a graduate psychology student, donated her grandfather's vintage Tech letter sweater. The story, featured in [Tech Times](#), was a touching reminder of the long-standing connection between families and Tennessee Tech.

Transfer and Preview Day Success

At the Transfer Tech to You event, SSC staff met with six potential students with interests in psychology, early childhood, and pre-athletic training. Our team also participated in Preview Day, where faculty, advisors, and student leaders engaged with families, answered questions, and provided campus tours. Counseling & Psychology students Lindi and Spencer even had a lighthearted moment asking President Oldham to sign a stress brain—which he gladly did and asked for their signatures in return.



Looking Ahead

The Student Success Center has built powerful momentum in 2024. Through strategic partnerships, dynamic recruitment efforts, student-centered spaces, and innovative technology, we continue to make a lasting impact on students' lives. We are proud to represent the College of Education at Tennessee Tech and are excited for the possibilities that 2025 holds.

Testing Center

Coordinator: Courtney Wynne

The College of Education Testing Center is designed to provide both computer-based and paper-based testing in a secure environment.

We are certified to provide the following exams:

- College Level Examination Program (CLEP) test
- Counseling & Psychology Comprehensive Exams (CPCE)
- Graduate Records Exam (GRE)
- Praxis
- Pearson VUE standardized tests

The College of Education Testing Center includes a test lab, a check-in/monitoring station, and a personal storage area.

- The lab has 21 candidate terminals. Each terminal is in a privacy desk made from sound-absorbing material.
- There is also an adjustable-height ADA compliant station available.
- The lab is monitored 24/7 via cameras as well as monitored in person during test set-up, exam periods, and clean up.

We strive to ensure that all tests are administered in an efficient, fair, and secure manner. We endeavor to provide a quality service that allows each candidate the opportunity to demonstrate his or her ability in the tested subject areas.



EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (ELC)

2023 – 2024 Committee Members:

Ashley Akenson
Amy Brown
Elizabeth Burrows
Charles Craig

Michael Hoane
Christy Killman
Darek Potter
Kyle Shanks

Matthew Smith
Jeremy Wendt

During this Academic Year, the council approved the following changes, additions or deletions

Course Additions

- CUED 2500, 3505, 4600, 4725
- ECED 3150
- ECSP 4874, 4900, 4925
- ELED 3142, 3155, 4875, 4900, 4925
- ESOL 6100, 6200
- FOED 2050, 3880
- READ 3320, 3325, 3330, 3335
- SEED 4850, 4900, 4925
- SPED 3015, 3025, 4155, 4875, 4900, 4925

Changes

- CUED 4800
- ELED 3152, 4142
- FOED 3010
- ECED 4240 (5240), 4260, 4261, 4270, 4280, 4290, 4500, 4240 (5240), 4290 (5290),
- ECSP 4500
- EDU 7430
- EXPW 200, 2002, 3001, 3006, 3011
- HEC 1030, 2020,
- Minors CSED, ECED/ECSP, Education, ELED, ESLP, FOED, Middle Grades, READ, SEED, SPED
- READ 3310, 3314

Deletions

Pre-PT Program

- EXPW 2200 Leadership in Exercise Science
- EXPW 3410 Motor Development

Name Changes

- Exceptional Learning Ph.D.: From Literacy to Critical Discourse and Literacy Studies
- Exercise Science: New Concentration title: Exercise Science

TEACHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE (TEC)

2023 – 2024 Committee Members:

Michael Allen
Michelle Bowman
Amy Brown
Edward Driggers
Lisa Henry
Donnie Holman
Christy Killman

Shirley Laird
Meredith Lewis
Landon Melton
Lauren Michel
Kayli Pardue
Elizabeth Ramsey
Alicia Senn

Kensea Skelton
Matthew Smith
Lane Ward
*Jeremy Wendt, Chair
Bubba Winningham
Lisa Zagumny

During this Academic Year, the committee approved changes, additions or deletions to the following classes/programs:

Changes

- CUED 4800
- ESOL 6100, 6200
- ECED 4230(5240), 4240(5340), 4260, 4261, 4270, 4280, 4290(5290)
- ELED 3152, 4142
- FOED 3010
- READ 3310, 3314

Changes due to new State of TN Residency Requirements

- Early Childhood Education, Pre – K – 3, B.S.
- Early Childhood Education, Birth – K, B.S.
- Early Childhood Practitioner, B.S.
- Elementary Education, B.S.
- Multidisciplinary Studies, English as a Second Language Concentration, B.S.
- Multidisciplinary Studies, Generalist, B.S.
- Multidisciplinary Studies, Computer Science Education Concentration, B.S.
- Multidisciplinary Studies, Middle School English, 6 – 8 Concentration, B.S.
- Multidisciplinary Studies, Middle School Math, 6-8 Concentration, B.S.
- Multidisciplinary Studies, Middle School Science, 6-8 Concentration, B.S.
- Multidisciplinary Studies, Middle School Social Studies, 6-8 Concentration, B.S.
- Special Education Practitioner, B.S.
- Special Education, Comprehensive/Interventionist Concentration, B.S.
- Special Education Interventionist for Secondary Education Concentration, B.S.
- Secondary Education, English Concentration, B.S. ED.
- Secondary Education, French Concentration, B.S. ED.
- Secondary Education, German Concentration, B.S. ED.
- Secondary Education, Mathematics Concentration, B.S. ED.
- Secondary Education, Non-Licensure Concentration, B.S.ED.
- Secondary Education, Spanish Concentration, B.S.ED.
- Secondary Education, Speech Communication & Theatre Concentration, B.S.ED.

- Secondary Education, Biology Concentration, B.S.ED. Secondary Education, Chemistry Concentration, B.S.ED.
- Secondary Education, Earth Science Concentration, B.S.ED.
- Secondary Education, Physics Concentration, B.S.ED.
- Secondary Education, Economics Concentration, B.S.ED.
- Secondary Education, Geography Concentration, B.S.ED.
- Secondary Education, History Concentration, B.S.ED.
- Secondary Education, Political Science Concentration, B.S.ED.

Additions

- CUED 3500, 3505, 4600, 4725
- ECED 3150, 4230(5240), 4290(5290), ECED 3150
- ECSP 4500, 4875, 4900, 4925
- ELED 3142, 3155, 4875, 4900, 4925
- EXPW 2720, 3330, 4840, 4883, 3660
- FOED 2050, 3860, 3880, READ 3320, 3325, 3330, 3335
- SEED 4850, 4900, 4925
- SPED 3015, 3025, 4155, 4875, 4900, 4925

Deletions

- EXPW 2150, 2200
- READ 3314

Concentration Name Changes

- Early Childhood/Special Education, Pre – K to PreK – 3
- Early Childhood Education, Integrated Birth – K to Birth – K

