

2023-2024 PRESIDENT'S AWARDS

The 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education provided for the establishment of a statewide awards program to recognize exemplary online teaching faculty in the State University System. A President's Award system was established at each university to annually identify one outstanding faculty member based on evidence of a sustained body of outstanding online teaching practice. The 2023-2024 President's Award winners are listed below.



Dr. Franzetta D. Fitz

Assistant Provost, Digital & Online Education

Dr. Franzetta Fitz has been leading the Online Education initiative at Florida A&M University for more than 15 years. Her accomplishments include: the development of new pathways in FAMU Online for non-traditional students, a special Online Education outreach program during the Florida Blue Football Classic, and collaboration with Information Technology Services to showcase FAMU's Online Education Programs.



Dr. Korey D. Sorge

Scientist, Department of Physics, College of Science

Dr. Korey Sorge's innovative approach to online physics courses has cultivated a learning environment more conducive to success for students with math anxiety, fostering a genuine appreciation for physics. His pedagogical approach to course design leverages the unique attributes of online learning, benefiting both physics courses and labs.



Dr. Charles Xiaoxue Wang

Professor, College of Education

Dr. Charles Wang is always asking how his online teaching can be better for the learners and his students report that they appreciate his availability, support, flexibility, and expert knowledge in the field. Dr. Wang's tireless efforts, creativity, and genuine care for student success serve as an example of what is possible for online teaching.



Dr. Melody Whiddon Willoughby

Associate Professor, Counseling, Recreation & School Psychology, School of Education and Human Development

Dr. Melody Whiddon Willoughby focuses her research on children's emotional development, parent-child attachment, and innovative online teaching methodologies. Her dedication to excellence is highlighted by her impressive credentials, including ten Quality Matters certifications, three High-Quality Certifications, and numerous courses currently undergoing rigorous review. Dr. Whiddon Willoughby's steadfast commitment to creating high-caliber online courses reflects her unwavering pursuit of quality education.



Dr. Megan Buning

Teaching Faculty in the College of Education Interdisciplinary Center for Athletic Coaching (FSU COACH)

Dr. Megan Buning is recognized for her careful attention to student-centered, quality course design and her ability to effectively engage and connect with her online learners. By utilizing innovative technologies to facilitate class discussions and student engagement, Dr. Buning excels at promoting active learning environments that directly result in the success of her online students.



Dr. Stacey DiLiberto

Lecturer, Department of Philosophy

Dr. Stacey DiLiberto received the 2023 Dziuban Award for Excellence in Online Teaching for demonstrating innovation and excellence in online teaching in her course: Encountering the Humanities. This course incorporates a "Monsters and Mad Scientists" theme utilizing historical monsters, mythological figures, science/environmental creatures, literary creations, and cultural figures. Since humanities is the study of art, literature, and music, Dr. DiLiberto's use of theming makes the course interdisciplinary and appealing to students.



Dr. Amanpreet Kapoor

Instructional Assistant Professor, Department of Engineering Education, Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering

Dr. Amanpreet Kapoor is renowned for his innovative online course design, employing diverse strategies like gamification to enhance learning outcomes and student satisfaction. Beyond teaching, he addresses educational inequities, contributes scholarly articles, and works on projects at the Engaging Learning Lab to improve computing graduates' employability.



Dr. Maria A. Fernandez Cifuentes

Associate Professor of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

Dr. Maria Fernandez Cifuentes is committed to innovative teaching and scholarly engagement with evidence-based practices. She champions the development of student-created digital Open Educational Resources, blending community learning with undergraduate research and fostering an equitable knowledge ecosystem that improves learning outcomes and reduces textbook costs. Dr. Fernandez Cifuentes has also served as a Quality Matters Certified Peer reviewer for local and national course reviews since 2016.



Dr. Erika Martinez

Senior Instructor, Department of Economics

Dr. Erika Martinez was recognized by the USF Faculty for demonstrating the impact of well-designed, high-quality digital course materials in Microeconomics, with compelling evidence of innovative approaches to online teaching. Her course encourages active participation, critical thinking, and collaborative problem-solving. Dr. Martinez uses learning analytics to assess student engagement, embraces generative AI, and has developed guidelines for students to use AI responsibly in their work.



Lauren Rex

Lecturer, Department of Mathematics and Statistics

Lauren Rex's online statistics course is student-centered, straightforward, and tech-integrated. She provides personalized support to students, and her dedication to facilitating successful online learning experiences makes her an inspiration to fellow educators. Mrs. Rex is active on campus and serves on the Student Engagement Faculty Advisory Board and as a faculty liaison for the STEM Living Learning Community.