



## **Kansas Board of Regents 2024 Faculty of the Year Recipients**

### **Fort Hays State University Tenure-Track Faculty Nomination**

#### **Dr. Phillip Allen Olt**

Dr. Phillip Allen Olt is Associate Professor of Higher Education and Educational Research at Fort Hays State University (FHSU). He also serves as the Program Coordinator for the Master of Science in Education (MSE) in JROTC Instructor Preparation and the MSE in Higher Education Student Affairs.

Dr. Olt earned his Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Educational Administration with a focus on Adult and Postsecondary Education from the University of Wyoming in 2018. He earned a Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Educational Leadership from the University of West Florida in 2008, and the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in History, summa cum laude, from the University of West Florida, and an Associate of Arts (A.A.) in General Studies, summa cum laude, from the University of Alaska Anchorage.

At FHSU, Dr. Olt is deeply involved in teaching and mentoring students. He teaches a variety of courses, including Educational Research, Student Personnel in Higher Education, and Diversity in Higher Education, both online and face-to-face. His research interests focus on special populations in higher education, the interaction between distance students and institutional employees, and innovative qualitative research methodologies.

Dr. Olt's contributions to the academic community are significant. He has published numerous articles and book chapters, and his work has been featured in journals such as the Journal of Veterans Studies and the Qualitative Research Journal. His dedication to advancing higher education and supporting student success is evident through his active participation in professional organizations and his continuous efforts to improve educational practices.

Dr. Phillip Allen Olt's expertise, combined with his commitment to education and research, makes him a highly respected and influential figure in the field of higher education.

### **Fort Hays State University Tenured Faculty Nomination**

#### **Dr. Samuel Robert Byer**

Dr. Samuel Robert Byer is Assistant Professor in the Department of History and Philosophy at Fort Hays State University (FHSU). Dr. Byer earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Oklahoma in 2017, following his M.A. in Philosophy from the same institution in 2012. He

also holds dual B.A. degrees in Philosophy and English from Fort Hays State University, where he graduated magna cum laude in 2007.

Since joining FHSU in 2017, Dr. Byer has made significant contributions to both teaching and leadership. He teaches a variety of courses in Philosophy and general education, including Bioethics, Critical Thinking, and Ethics. His innovative approach to curriculum development includes co-teaching courses like Ethics, Grassroots Leadership, and Justice.

Dr. Byer's leadership roles at FHSU are noteworthy. He served as Faculty Senate President from 2022 to 2023 and as Vice President from 2021 to 2022. During his tenure, he emphasized shared governance and created an environment of participation and dialogue. His commitment to community engagement is evident through initiatives like "Ask-A-Philosopher" and providing ethics training for local professionals.

His research and scholarly activities are extensive. Dr. Byer has published works in Comparative Philosophy and CLIO, and has presented at various philosophical societies and conferences. His excellence in teaching has been recognized with the 2018 Award for Outstanding Instructor in an Honors College Course at FHSU.

Dr. Samuel Robert Byer's dedication to education, research, and service makes him a highly respected and influential figure in the academic community at Fort Hays State University.

### **Pittsburg State University Tenure-Track Faculty**

#### **Dr. Kristen Livingston**

Dr. Kristen Livingston is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at Pittsburg State University (PSU). Through teaching and mentorship, she has been instrumental in shaping her students' lives.

Dr. Livingston earned her Ed.D. in Instructional Design and Performance Technology from Baker University. She previously completed her M.A. and B.S. in Communication at Pittsburg State University and holds an A.S. in General Studies from Independence Community College.

Her professional career is equally notable. Since 2016, she has been a pivotal member of PSU's faculty, where she teaches and supervises student internships, ensuring that her students gain practical, hands-on experience in their field. Before assuming her current role, she served as the Assistant Director of Student Diversity at PSU and also was on the faculty at Missouri Southern State University.

Dr. Livingston's contributions extend beyond the classroom. She is an active researcher with publications in respected journals like the Journal of Communication Pedagogy and has presented her work at various conferences. Her commitment to service is evident through her involvement in the PSU Faculty Senate, her past presidency of Phi Kappa Phi, and her advisory roles in multiple student organizations. She is also deeply engaged in community service and professional development.

Her excellence in teaching has been recognized with awards such as the Outstanding Teacher in Communication and the Phi Kappa Phi Literacy Grant Award. Colleagues and students alike commend her for fostering positive experiences and achieving significant accomplishments, such as her students winning an award the American Advertising Federation.

Dr. Livingston's dedication to education, research, and community service makes her a respected and influential figure in her field. She continually inspires those around her.

### **Pittsburg State University Tenured Faculty Nomination Dr. Christine Brodsky**

Dr. Christine Brodsky is an Associate Professor in the Department of Biology at Pittsburg State University (PSU). She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Missouri, an M.S. from the University of Delaware, and a B.S. from the University of Massachusetts—Amherst, all in Biology.

She has made significant contributions to both teaching and research. In the 2022-2023 academic year, Dr. Brodsky taught 356 students and generated 1,273 credit hours, demonstrating her dedication to student learning and engagement.

Her research is equally impressive, with seven peer-reviewed articles and one book chapter published. She has secured over \$770,000 in external grant funding, highlighting her ability to advance the field of biology through innovative research. Dr. Brodsky also plays a vital role in coordinating the Environmental Life Science program and serves as the Campus Coordinator of the Kansas Idea Network of Biomedical Research Excellence, which fosters research and educational opportunities in the biomedical sciences.

Dr. Brodsky's service to the university and community is commendable. She actively participates in various university committees and mentors students. She has guided 12 undergraduate students in their independent research projects, all of whom have presented their findings at professional conferences.

Her excellence in teaching and research has been recognized through multiple awards, reflecting an unwavering commitment to her students, her discipline, and her community. Dr. Christine Brodsky is a respected and influential figure in her field, and on her campus.

### **University of Kansas Tenure-Track Faculty Nomination Dr. Tera L. Fazzino**

Dr. Tera L. Fazzino is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Kansas (KU) and the Associate Director of the Cofrin Logan Center for Addiction Research and Treatment. Her work in the field of psychology, particularly focusing on hyperpalatable foods and their impact on health, has garnered widespread acclaim.

Dr. Fazzino earned her Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology from the University of Vermont in 2014, a Master of Arts (M.A.) in Clinical Practices in Psychology from the University of

Hartford in 2008, and a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Psychology from Winthrop University in 2006.

Dr. Fazzino has made substantial contributions to teaching and research at KU. She has redesigned and taught courses such as Eating and Weight Disorders, and has been a dedicated mentor to both undergraduate and graduate students, particularly those underrepresented in science. Her research has been widely published, with 19 journal articles to her name. She also has secured \$3 million in research funding. Her work has been featured in major media outlets like the Washington Post and NPR, highlighting the broader impact of her research on public health.

Dr. Fazzino's service to the academic and professional community is commendable. She serves on editorial boards and various university committees, contributing her expertise to advancing her field. Her role as Associate Director of the Cofrin Logan Center underscores her commitment to addressing critical issues in addiction and health.

Her dedication to research, teaching, and service makes Dr. Tera L. Fazzino a highly respected and influential figure in the field of psychology. Her contributions have profoundly impacted her students, colleagues, and the broader scientific community.

### **University of Kansas Tenured Faculty Nomination Dr. Taejoon Kim**

At the time of his nomination, Dr. Taejoon Kim was Professor at the University of Kansas (KU), renowned for his groundbreaking research in 6G networked systems, federated learning, and zero trust security. His work significantly advanced the field of wireless communications and information theory, earning him recognition and accolades from the academic and professional communities.

His excellence in research has been recognized with several awards, including the IEEE Communication Society Stephen O. Rice Prize and the KU School of Engineering Miller Professional Award for Research. These accolades reflect his exceptional contributions to advancing knowledge and technology in his areas of expertise.

Dr. Kim's dedication to mentoring is also noteworthy. He has supervised multiple Ph.D. students and postdoctoral researchers, fostering the next generation of scholars and innovators. His commitment to research and education makes him a highly respected and influential figure in the field of electrical and computer engineering.

Dr. Kim accepted a position with Arizona State University this summer.

### **University of Kansas Medical Center Tenured Faculty Dr. Catherine F. H. Siengsukon**

Dr. Catherine F. H. Siengsukon is a distinguished Professor and the Director of Research in the Department of Physical Therapy, Rehabilitation Science, & Athletic Training at the University of

Kansas Medical Center (KUMC). She is a leading expert in sleep health, with a prolific research career supported by continuous funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other prestigious agencies.

Dr. Siengsukon earned her Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Science from the University of Kansas Medical Center, where she was the first graduate to receive the Marnie and Bill Argersinger Award for Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation. She also holds a Master of Physical Therapy (MPT) and a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Biology from Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Missouri.

Her research has significantly advanced our understanding of the impact of sleep on health-related outcomes, particularly in individuals with neurological conditions. Dr. Siengsukon has published 67 peer-reviewed articles and presented her work at numerous national and international conferences. Her current research focuses on examining behavioral interventions to improve sleep in people with multiple sclerosis and post-concussion and seeking to understand if improving sleep may protect against chronic conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and diabetes.

In addition to her research excellence, Dr. Siengsukon is a dedicated educator. She serves as the course director for a neurologic rehabilitation course in the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program at KUMC, where she consistently receives outstanding evaluations from her students. Her commitment to teaching is further demonstrated by her role as a sought-after mentor for Ph.D. students and junior faculty.

Her dedication to her field and her students has not gone unnoticed. Dr. Siengsukon has been honored with the Society of Behavioral Sleep Medicine's Outstanding Advocate award, reflecting her commitment to advancing the field of sleep health and her advocacy for behavioral sleep medicine.

Dr. Siengsukon embodies the qualities of an outstanding faculty member through her exceptional research, teaching, and service. Her contributions have had a profound impact on her students, colleagues, and the broader scientific community.

## **University of Kansas Medical Center Tenure-Track Faculty**

### **Dr. Linda D'Silva**

Dr. Linda D'Silva is Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical Therapy, Rehabilitation Science, and Athletic Training at the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC). She is a board-certified specialist in neurologic physical therapy, committed to advancing the field through both her teaching and research.

Dr. D'Silva's began her academic journey in Mumbai, India, where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Physical Therapy from King Edward Memorial Hospital. She earned a Master's degree in Physical Therapy from the All India Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation before coming to the United States to complete her Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Science at the University of Kansas Medical Center in 2016.

Dr. D'Silva's primary teaching responsibilities include courses on interventions and modalities used in physical therapy practice, as well as ethics in physical therapy practice. She is also actively involved in research, particularly in understanding the role of the vestibular system in healthy aging and the impact of vestibular dysfunction on physical function. Her work aims to develop rehabilitation interventions to improve mobility and balance, especially in individuals with mild traumatic brain injury.

Dr. D'Silva's contributions to the academic and professional community are significant. She is a member of the Vestibular Special Interest Group and the Vestibular Hypofunction CPG Taskforce with the Academy of Neurologic Physical Therapy. Additionally, she directs the STABILITI lab, (Vestibular and Balance Rehabilitation Laboratory) where she leads projects related to vestibular and balance rehabilitation.

Her dedication to her field and her students is evident through her continuous efforts to advance clinical research in vestibular rehabilitation and her active participation in professional organizations. Dr. Linda D'Silva's expertise, combined with her commitment to education and research, makes her a highly respected and influential figure in the field of physical therapy.