

Regents' Creative Activity Award – Community College
Stephanie Espinoza Villamor – CSN

Stephanie Espinoza Villamor (she/her) is an eLearning Librarian at the College of Southern Nevada who has helped CSN students with research and information needs since 2012. She holds a Master's degree in Library and Information Science from San Jose State University and worked in positions ranging from magazine editor and public library assistant to instruction librarian. Villamor now leads several CSN committees, and often volunteers to speak on and write about both library and diversity topics. She has chaired the CSN Women's Alliance Diversity Committee (2017-2018) and regularly presents at the annual NSHE Southern Nevada Diversity Summit. In 2017 Villamor spoke on a marketing panel at the American Library Association annual conference, and more recently co-authored the upcoming book *Practical Marketing for the Academic Library*, set to release in June 2022. Outside the library, Villamor takes part in many creative endeavors, including creative writing for adults and children. Her short story "Artificial" won first place in the international 2020 Insecure Writer's Support Group annual anthology contest and was published in the science fiction anthology *Dark Matter: Artificial* (May 2021). Her stories, inspired by her supportive family, Hispanic heritage, and societal issues, have also been published in local magazines and anthologies. She hopes to publish a middle grade novel that addresses cultural diversity and neurodiversity in the future. Villamor volunteers for the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators Nevada chapter, leading a middle grade/young adult critique group and co-leading their Equity and Inclusion Team. Overall, she calls herself a "librarian/writer/mom" who is especially grateful for family, family photo shoots, Disney movies, and coffee. She lives in Henderson, Nevada with her husband and young sons—one born June 2019 and one just born December 2021!

Regents' Creative Activity Award – University / State College
Michael Branch – UNR

Michael Branch is University Foundation Professor at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR). He was co-founder of the UNR Graduate Program in Literature and Environment, co-founder of the international Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE), and co-founder and series co-editor of the University of Virginia Press book series *Under the Sign of Nature* (44 titles to date). He has published 9 books and more than 300 essays and reviews, and has given more than 400 readings and workshops. Mike's creative nonfiction includes pieces that have received Honorable Mention for the Pushcart Prize (twice) and been recognized as Notable Essays in *The Best American Essays* (three times), *The Best American Science and Nature Writing*, and *The Best American Nonrequired Reading* (a humor anthology). His creative work has appeared in numerous book-length collections, and in many other venues, including *CNN*, *Slate*, *Outside*, *Pacific Standard*, *Bustle*, *Utne Reader*, *Reader's Digest*, *Orion*, *Ecotone*, *National Parks*, *Terrain*, *The Scientist*, *High Country News*, *Places Journal*, *Whole Terrain*, *Red Rock Review*, *About Place*, and *Hawk and Handsaw*. Mike's "Nevada Trilogy" consists of three books of creative nonfiction concerned with Great Basin Desert landscapes: *Raising Wild* (2016), *Rants from the Hill* (2017), and *How to Cuss in Western* (2018) (all published by Roost Books and distributed by Penguin Random House). His new book of creative nonfiction, *On the Trail of the Jackalope*, will be released on March 1, 2022 (published by Pegasus Books and distributed by Simon & Schuster). He is the recipient of the Ellen Meloy Desert Writers Award, the Nevada Writers Hall of Fame Silver Pen Award, the Western Literature Association Frederick Manfred Creative Writing Award, the Willa Pilla Prize for Humor Writing, and the Montana Prize for Humor Writing. Please visit his website at <https://michaelbranchwriter.com/>

Regents' Teaching Award – Community College
Rebecca Bevans – WNC

Dr. Bevans came to Western Nevada College as an adjunct faculty member in 2007, after earning her Master's degree in Human Behavior and while earning her Doctorate in Cognitive Neuroscience from the University of Nevada Reno. In 2017 she won the Adjunct Faculty of the Year Award from the Associated Students of Western Nevada, an honor that she cherishes. Also in 2017, Dr. Bevans began teaching full time at WNC and was awarded tenure in 2021. She currently teaches psychology courses such as Introduction to Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Child Development, Psychology of Adolescence, and Social Psychology. Dr. Bevans loves teaching and feels privileged to be able to do what she loves, but teaching in the classroom is not all that Dr. Bevans does.

Dr. Bevans is very active on campus and is the faculty advisor for two WNC clubs. The first is the Psychology Club where she assists the club in bringing professionals to campus to talk about topics in psychology. In 2019 she brought former NHL goalie Clint Malarchuk to campus to talk to the community about mental health issues. The second club she advises is The Nerd Herd, the WNC homeschool student club. She is also the Homeschool Coordinator, helping homeschoolers and their parents successfully navigate through their WNC experience. While she has been the Homeschool Coordinator, the homeschool student enrollment has increased by 43%.

Dr. Bevans is also very active off campus. She volunteers in her community. Currently she is the Vice President of the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum and participates yearly at Sassabration, a local diversity celebration. She also spends some of her time advocating for the education of the harmful effects of artificial food dyes for children. In 2016 she delivered a TEDx talk on the subject that has garnered nearly 100,000 views. Forbes magazine and NPR both featured Dr. Bevans in 2019 in news articles, and she continues to seek unique opportunities to learn and educate in the classroom and beyond.

Regents' Teaching Award – University / State College / DRI - Not Tenured
Heather Lang-Cassera - NSC

Heather Lang-Cassera, Clark County, Nevada, Poet Laureate Emeritus (2019-2021), serves Nevada State College as a Lecturer teaching Asian American Literature, College Success, Composition, and Creative Writing, among other courses. She codeveloped the college's new Creative Writing minor and serves as a faculty advisor for both *300 Days of Sun*, the college's literary magazine, and the Blue Sage Writer's Guild, the creative writing club. Off campus, Heather's poetry has been etched into a downtown sidewalk by the City of Las Vegas, and the writing of her recent book, *Gathering Broken Light*, was supported, in part, by a Nevada Arts Council Project Grant for Artists. She is a co-founder of and editor with the 501(c)(3) small press, Tolsun Books. As an educator, including a teaching artist, Heather has demonstrated her commitment to connecting students with on-campus and off-campus experiential-learning opportunities, including through the curation of *300 Days of Sun*, which publishes emerging and professional local and international authors, through Poet Laureate programming, including collaborations with local arts and cultural organizations, through the co-development and piloting of an Immerse and Reflect assignment, the major end-of-semester College Success project, and through ongoing discussion about the importance of internships and other discipline-specific hands-on learning. Regardless of the course at hand, Heather is passionate about teaching students how to learn and how to retain knowledge through study techniques and metacognitive practices. Her pedagogical approach is founded on compassionate and purposeful communication, including course design and assignment feedback.

Regents' Teaching Award – Universities / State College / DRI - Tenured/TenuredTrack
Matthew Leone - UNR

Dr. Matthew Leone currently serves as an Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the department of Criminal Justice. He is the recipient of the F. Donald Tibbitts Teaching Excellence Award in 2021, the Alan Bible Excellence in Teaching Award in 2016, the CLA Dean's Award for Teaching in 2011, and has been honored as a Senior Scholar Mentor. Dr. Leone is a compassionate, creative, and innovative teacher who challenges students with high standards and inspires and supports students in meeting those standards. He teaches undergraduate and graduate level criminal justice courses using a variety of active learning techniques to engage students in discussion and to generate multidisciplinary views on a wide array of issues. His courses brings theory and complex concepts to life through examination of crime cases as they move from theory to theory. His courses are popular and consistently receive high student evaluations. Dr. Leone cares deeply about student success and his sensitivity to individual situations during the pandemic helped students succeed in difficult and challenging times. Dr. Leone was instrumental in developing the Master of Criminal Justice graduate program. He recently created a graduate certificate to increase access and broaden participation in advanced study in criminal justice. As Director of Graduate Studies, he advises students for quality educational experiences and helps students to graduate in a timely manner. His mentorship extends beyond the classroom to skills development for the workforce and through advice on internships, graduate or professional school, and careers. He is an outstanding teacher and his dedication to student learning and student success has made a lasting positive impact on many.

Regents' Academic Advisor - Community Colleges
Courtney Schachter - TMCC

Courtney Schachter is a professional Academic Advisor at Truckee Meadows Community College. Her coordinating areas include advising military-connected students, evaluating and articulating credit from military transcripts, and liaison to the Life Sciences, Allied Health, and Public Safety academic division.

Originally from Michigan, Courtney started working in higher education as a student worker at Northern Michigan University. She graduated from Northern Michigan University with a Bachelor of Science in Community Health Education in 2007. Recognizing the impact that post-secondary education can have on a student's life and having a strong desire to work with students on a college campus, Courtney decided to pursue a Master of Education in Administration of Higher Education at Suffolk University in Boston Massachusetts.

After graduating in 2009 with her master degree, she continued to work in the Boston-area at Suffolk University as a Student Success Program Coordinator, where she worked with academically at-risk and conditionally admitted students. She also spent a year as a professional Academic Advisor within Northeastern University's D'Amore McKim School of Business.

Courtney relocated to the Reno-area in 2015 to be closer to family and is grateful to have the opportunity to continue working in higher education and be part of the TMCC community. She is a strong believer that achieving post-secondary education can have a significant impact on a student's life, both professionally and personally. Outside of work Courtney enjoys running, yoga, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, and walking her puggle (pug/beagle mix).

Regents' Academic Advisor Award – Undergraduate -University / State College
Le Quanda Cole – UNLV

Le Quanda Cole is the Director of the UNLV/CSN transfer program and a Ph.D. student in the Interaction and Media Sciences program in the Teaching & Learning Department at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Her research focuses on a cross-disciplinary exploration of positive identity formation within the pre and post-transfer student population. Her work aims to extend Erikson's (1968) theory of identity by exploring the relationship between perceived identity, personality traits, and behavior expressed via digital technologies. Le Quanda's other areas of interest are digital literacy, Transformative Social Emotional Learning (TSEL), and digital learning environments. She co-authored "Time to Acclimate: Examining the Influence of Cognitive Ability on Situating to a Video Game," which won the best paper award for Cognition and Exploratory Learning in the Digital Age (CELDA). Le Quanda advocates for transfer students through professional presentations, such as "Embrace Your Inner Transfer Agent" and "A Holistic Approach to Creating a Positive Transfer Culture Remotely." She helped establish and serves as the Rebel Transfer Student Organization (RTSO) co-advisor. She recently accepted the 2021 Outstanding Administrator of Academic Advising. Le Quanda plans to accept the 2022 Rising Star award and present "Walk in Their Shoes, Hurt Your Feet: Understand What Prevents Students From Successfully Transferring To University" at the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students conference in February.

Dr. Wilfredo de Ráfols joined the department of World Languages and Literatures at the University of Nevada, Reno in 1993 as a specialist in 19th and 20th Century Spanish Literature, teaching many of the upper division undergraduate and graduate Spanish literature courses. In addition to his teaching, he has held the position of Director of the Spanish Graduate program from 1996-2005 and 2017-present. He has a long, continuous, and distinguished record of service to the department and University. One area where he has been truly active and has many significant contributions is in the area of academic advising. Each year, he informally advises hundreds of undergraduate students each year and is the one faculty member who recruits the majority of them into the Spanish minor and major programs by his ability to connect with students. As the current Spanish Graduate Program Director and advisor, he has carried out extensive mentoring of all graduate students in the program, averaging 15-19 students per year. He makes himself available to students seven days a week to provide guidance on the graduate program application process, guide them through their program and provides personal encouragement, provides annual program assessment reports, and consults routinely with M.A. committee chairs to discuss student progress. Over the years, numerous students have been profoundly affected by his attention to their academic success. He has received numerous awards and recognition for his attention to students, including, The College of Liberal Arts Dean's Award for Outstanding Graduate Mentor, the Outstanding Undergraduate Student Mentor Award, the Presidential Award for Outstanding Service, and a Certificate of Recognition from the Office of the Governor. Dr. de Ráfols is a great professor, scholar, mentor and colleague. His personal attention and quality mentorship to students makes him a deserved recipient of the Regents' Graduate Academic Advisor Award.

Regents' Researcher Award – Distinguished
Steven C. Hayes

Dr. Steven C. Hayes is Nevada Foundation Professor in the Behavior Analysis program at the Department of Psychology at the University of Nevada, Reno. An author of 46 books and over 650 scientific articles, his career has focused on an analysis of the nature of human language and cognition and its application to the understanding and alleviation of human suffering. A UNR faculty member since 1986, he is the developer of Relational Frame Theory (RFT), an account of human higher cognition that is used around the world in language acquisition and education. He originated Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), a popular evidence-based form of behavior change based on RFT that uses acceptance, mindfulness, and values-based methods to create more psychological flexibility. More than 850 randomized control trials and thousands of studies of other kinds have been conducted on ACT and it has been recognized as a useful evidence-based intervention by scientific review councils around the world. ACT self-help has been studied by the World Health Organization with South Sudanese and Syrian refugees and its positive impact has recently led WHO to distribute ACT in 18 different languages for a range of issues, including dealing with the stress of the COVID pandemic. A public educator about psychological science and its application, his blogs and TEDx talks have been read or viewed by more than three million people. His popular book *Get Out of Your Mind and Into Your Life* was featured in *Time Magazine* among several other major media outlets and for a time was the best-selling self-help book in the United States, and his new popular book, *A Liberated Mind*, has been released to wide acclaim. Dr. Hayes served a 5-year term on the National Advisory Council for Drug Abuse in the National Institutes of Health and is a Fellow several scientific societies including the American Association for the Advancement of Science. A recipient of approximately \$13 million dollars in grant funding while at UNR, Dr. Hayes is the most cited scholar in any area in the state of Nevada and Google Scholar data ranks him among the top 1,100 most cited scholars in the world. A dedicated educator, he has so far graduated 45 Ph.D.s under his supervision, the most ever for an NSHE faculty member. His work has been recognized by several scientific awards including the Impact of Science on Application award from the Society for the Advancement of Behavior Analysis, and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapy.

Regents' Researcher Award – Mid-Career
Jamie Voyles

Dr. Jamie Voyles is an Associate Professor in the Department of Biology and the Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation Biology (EECB) Program. As a disease ecologist, her research program is highly interdisciplinary, bridging multiple biological subdisciplines to resolve key questions concerning emerging infectious diseases (EIDs) in wildlife. Her motivation is to unravel the factors driving infectious disease dynamics – asking questions such as “How do epidemics end?” – and to anticipate how global change will alter disease systems and shape our natural world. She has a broad background education in integrative physiology (MS, University of Colorado), public health and infectious disease (PhD, James Cook University), with additional postdoctoral training in microbiology and host immune defenses (University of Idaho, University of California, Berkeley). Her research program is supported by numerous federal, state, and private grants, including awards from the National Science Foundation (e.g., Lead PI for CAREER and DEB awards and Co-Director of a Biological Integration Institutes award), U.S. Department of Defense, National Geographic, Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund, Ellen DeGeneres Conservation Fund, and others. Her work is at the forefront of this field, highlighted in numerous public media outlets (e.g., *BBC*, *The NY Times*, *Wired*, *The Atlantic*) and producing publications in top tier journals such as *Science*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, and others. She serves on multiple scientific advisory boards for wildlife conservation programs and works with management agencies responding to disease threats. She is also deeply committed to mentorship, training, and developing inclusive programs for students from underrepresented communities in STEM fields. As such, her research program has established a strong track record for being highly creative and collaborative, and for building innovative partnerships in research, teaching, and academic service.

Regents' Rising Researcher
Katherine Durante – NSC

Katherine A. Durante, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the History, Law, and Society Department at Nevada State College where she teaches in the Criminal Justice and Social Justice programs. She holds a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Criminology from John Carroll University, a master's degree in Sociology from Cleveland State University, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Cincinnati, earned in 2017.

Dr. Durante employs quantitative methods to examine issues related to racial/ethnic inequality and imprisonment. She primarily researches and publishes in two areas: racial/ethnic disparities in sentencing and the impacts of incarceration on the family. In addition, she is currently mentoring undergraduate student researchers to study employment opportunities in Southern Nevada for DACA students and others who wish to pursue careers in criminal justice and adjacent fields, outside of law enforcement. She takes a critical approach to her scholarship and teaching.

She has experience designing and teaching a variety of courses, most of which have been taught in 3 modalities: in person, hybrid, and online asynchronous. She regularly teaches the following courses at NSC: *Introduction to the Administration of Justice*; *Social Justice*; *Quantitative Applications in Criminal Justice*; *Social Inequality and Crime*; and *Seminar in Criminal Justice* (senior thesis/capstone). She earned the 2020 *Teaching Excellence* award in the Social Sciences Department at NSC and has completed 2 certifications in online teaching, has earned 2 certificates related to working with diverse populations, and is actively involved with both the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence and the Anti-Racist Pedagogy Collective.

Regents' Rising Researcher Award
Benjamin Hatchett – DRI

Benjamin Hatchett was inspired to study Earth science from an early age. He selected the University of Nevada to pursue his education adjacent to the Sierra Nevada. Since graduating with a B.S. (2008), M.S. (2012), and Ph.D (2016), he has worked at DRI as a Postdoctoral Fellow under the mentorship of Professors Michael Kaplan and Craig Smith and then as an Assistant Research Professor within the Division of Atmospheric Sciences. The varied aspects of Earth sciences across time and space scales and covering diverse landscapes worldwide has been a consistent focus of his research. He has worked on Great Basin paleoclimate and paleohydrologic reconstructions spanning the past 21,000 years; atmospheric modeling of downslope winds (e.g., Santa Ana winds) primarily in California but also globally; observation, analysis, and prediction of western U.S. natural hazards including wildfire, drought, landslides, and avalanches; strategies to improve communication of weather forecasts in the U.S.; impacts of environmental extremes on human mobility; and projections of 21st century climate from urban to continental scales with a specific focus on montane environments. So far, he has contributed to 34 journal articles and 24 other publications. Dr. Hatchett has worked with numerous research teams, partners, and stakeholders on projects funded by agencies such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Science Foundation, the Resources Legacy Fund, the Tides Foundation, and the California Department of Water Resources.

Regents' Rising Researcher Award
Allyson Hindle – UNLV

Dr. Allyson Hindle is an Assistant Professor in the School of Life Sciences at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. She is a comparative physiologist who studies cardiovascular regulation and low-oxygen tolerance of diving marine mammals and hibernators. The goal of this work is to define physiological limits for wild species and to uncover new strategies for human critical care. Her interest in human health and performance in extreme environments has led to co-founding an early-stage health technology company with the mission to improve healthcare in remote locations and crewed spaceflight. She has participated in numerous field projects to study marine mammals in both Antarctica and the North Pacific, but also works to develop in vitro and genomic-based approaches that enable further study of geographically remote animals in the laboratory. Originally from Canada, Allyson has degrees in Zoology from the University of Manitoba, and a PhD from Texas A&M University.

Since her arrival at UNLV, Dr. Hindle has successfully competed for 5 new research grants, two of which support field research in Antarctica over the next 4 years to study the physiology and genetics of Weddell seals. She was recently awarded a grant from NASA's Translational Research Institute for Space Health to study the link between hibernation and the preservation of cellular health to enable long duration space missions. In addition to her research awards, she co-leads a Research Coordination Network aiming to bring together trainees and established scientists working on integrative biological questions spanning genomics to physiology to population resilience in vertebrates. She serves on national advisory committees to the American Physiology Society and the National Science Foundation (Office of Polar Programs). Her expertise is also recognized through her appointment as an associate editor to 2 scientific journals, including the handling editor for comparative physiology papers at the American Journal of Physiology – Regulatory, Integrative and Comparative Physiology. She has co-authored 13 scientific papers since 2019.

Regents' Rising Researcher Award
Elizabeth Koebele – UNR

Dr. Elizabeth Koebele is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Nevada, Reno. She uses interdisciplinary approaches to understand and improve environmental governance, particularly in situations of political conflict and scientific uncertainty. Currently, she is working on issues of collaborative environmental governance, water resources management, and natural hazards/disaster policy. She teaches courses on the policy process and environmental/climate policy at the graduate and undergraduate level.

She received dual B.A.s in English literature and secondary education from Barrett, the Honors College at Arizona State University, where she was a first-generation college student. Dr. Koebele went on to teach junior high language arts in Arizona before returning to graduate school at the University of Colorado Boulder. There, she received her M.S. and Ph.D. in environmental studies, with a focus on environmental policy. She joined UNR in Fall 2017. Dr. Koebele has published over twenty-six peer-reviewed articles on sustainable urban water management, environmental regulatory policy, disasters and hazards policy related to wildfire and flooding, and public policy theory. Her work has appeared in academic journals such as *Policy Studies Journal*, *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*, *Water Resources Research*, and *Global Environmental Change*. Involved in over \$7.5 million in external funding, she is co-Principal Investigator on a grant from the National Science Foundation to further her research on sustainable urban water management, co-PI on an NSF grant to study COVID-19 response policy, and has been named Co-Director on a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to better understand how water governance institutions in the American West should be adapted in response to a changing climate, with a specific focus on water for agricultural systems in Nevada, Colorado, and Arizona. In 2019, she was named by Nature as an Early Career Researcher. She won the 2020 UNR College of Liberal Arts Mousel-Feltner Award for Excellence in Research and/or Creative Activity. In 2021, she won a US National Science Foundation CAREER grant, and was named as an author of the fifth US National Climate Assessment report.

Regents' Rising Researcher Award
Feng Yan – UNR

Dr. Feng Yan is an Assistant Professor in the Computer Science and Engineering Department and the director of the Intelligent Data and Systems Lab at University of Nevada, Reno. He received both his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Computer Science from the College of William and Mary and worked at Microsoft Research and HP Labs. His research focuses on big data, machine learning, and cross-disciplinary topics.

Since joining UNR in 2016, Dr. Yan has received a total of more than \$4M external funding with more than \$2.6M as PI/UNR-PI. He is the recipient of the prestigious NSF CAREER Award, NSF BIGDATA Award, NSF CRII Award, and NSF AI Institute Planning Award. Dr. Yan has advised/advising 10 PhD students, 8 MS students, 24 undergraduates, 2 K-12 students, and 4 intern students. Dr. Yan and his team have published more than 72 peer-reviewed articles with most of them in the most prestigious venues in computer science. Dr. Yan and his students are recipients of the Best Student Paper Award of IEEE CLOUD 2018, the Best Paper Award of CLOUD 2019, and the Best Student Paper Award of ITNG 2021.

Dr. Yan's machine learning compression work has been accepted by NIPS'17 as an Oral paper (40 out of 3240 submissions) and received more than 564 citations in 3.5 years. His research on cloud machine learning has been adopted by the Microsoft Azure machine learning services, benefiting millions of users world-wide. His cross-disciplinary research on wildfire does not only make important contributions to science and engineering but has also greatly benefited society and our local community in Nevada.

Dr. Yan is the co-founder and co-director of the UNR Big Data Minor program. Dr. Yan served as committee members in more than 40 technical programs and reviewed more than 300 research articles. He is the Social Media Chair of ACM SIGMETRICS and the Secretary of IEEE Northern Nevada Section.