

TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Thrives Here

Bucknell
UNIVERSITY





From the Provost

WENDY STERNBERG

Dear Colleagues,

At Bucknell University, teaching excellence is not only a liberal arts tradition — it is a commitment to adapting, innovating and meeting students where they are. As rapid shifts in student engagement and the use of AI present opportunities and challenges across the higher education landscape, our dedication to great teaching has never been more important or valuable.

At Bucknell, exceptional teaching is a high-impact, intentional practice that is deeply tied to an institutional focus that holds intellectual discovery and inspired pedagogy in equal esteem. All of our classes are taught by faculty whose curiosity and research motivate students to ask bold questions. Our undergraduate focus gives students unparalleled opportunities to work side-by-side with those faculty and make real contributions to vital scholarly conversations.

In the pages that follow, you'll meet Bucknell professors who embody our teacher-scholar model, and learn how their drive to explore the unknown translates to unique classroom and mentorship experiences for students. Most of all, you'll see how our faculty's commitment to teaching excellence advances Bucknell's mission of educating students for a lifetime of critical thinking and intellectual exploration, creative problem-solving and success.

Best wishes,



Wendy Sternberg



Professor

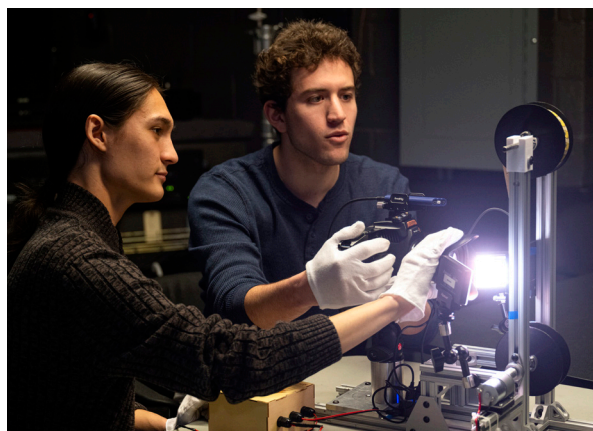
ERIC FADEN

Film/Media Studies | COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Blending Technology, Creativity and History

Professor Eric Faden's teaching philosophy blends theory with hands-on experience. "I've always been interested in having students study film while also actively making media or media-related projects," Faden says. This approach bridges academic study and creative practice, encouraging deep learning.

Faden's work on the Japanese Paper Film Project, which focuses on digitally preserving rare 1930s Japanese films made from paper, demonstrates his commitment to interdisciplinary research. By collaborating with students from fields including mechanical engineering and computer science, Faden creates an environment where diverse skill sets come together. "This research teaches students how to collaborate across disciplines," he says. "I also think it's important for students to work on 'weird' things — things that haven't been made yet. It allows them to step outside their comfort zones and stretch their legs."



INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING IN ACTION

Jackson Rubiano '27 (far left), a computer science major, discovered a unique opportunity to apply his skills in an unexpected field. As part of Professor Eric Faden's Japanese Paper Film Project, he traveled to Japan to examine film artifacts, and then, back on campus, he developed software to help digitize the films. Working with Professor Faden, he says, showed him the power of interdisciplinary collaboration. "Working with people from different fields taught me how diverse perspectives help tackle problems more effectively."

In recognition of his work, Professor Eric Faden received the 2025 Sumie Jones Prize for Project Leadership in Japan-centered Humanities from the Association for Asian Studies.



Professor

JACKIE VILLADSEN

Physics & Astronomy | COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Astronomical Discoveries In and Out of the Classroom

Professor Jackie Villadsen conducts research that unfolds at the galactic level. She recently uncovered evidence that an Earth-like planet 12 light-years away may have a magnetic field similar to Earth's. However, in the classroom, she is concerned with teaching her students the finer details that underlie grand discoveries.

"I create problems for my students that mirror calculations I do in my own research," says Villadsen, who also teaches them how to observe with a telescope and collect and analyze data. Her experience with telescope placement on the Hawaiian volcano of Mauna Kea has prompted her to include lessons on the ethics of astronomical observation. "It's important for students to think about the historical and social contexts of the work we do as scientists, and to understand how we build positive community partnerships," she says.

As a research mentor, Villadsen views research skills as crucial to helping students advance academically and professionally, even in fields outside of astronomy.



THE POWER OF MENTORSHIP

"Professor Villadsen's mentoring gave me a space where I could constantly grow. We set goals and objectives, created a to-do list with all tasks to be completed, formatted my research notebook, and had one-on-one meetings to evaluate my progress critically. This has taught me how to be a better strategist, as I now push myself and evaluate my decisions both academically and socially."

JORGE GHERSON '27

PHYSICS

Professor Jackie Villadsen teaches astronomy students the skills they need to make their own big discoveries.



Professor

ANNETTA GRANT

Markets, Innovation & Design | FREEMAN COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT

Equipping Students to Lead in a Changing Marketplace

Professor Annetta Grant is more than an expert in consumer behavior — she’s a teacher who challenges her students to think critically about the forces shaping their decisions. Grant’s research on home renovation culture, which has gained national recognition, uncovers how media influences consumer spending habits. A sought-after voice in her field, she has been featured in *The Atlantic*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and on NPR.

At Bucknell, Grant teaches Principles of Marketing; Markets, Innovation & Design; and Creative Destruction. She actively researches, analyzes and helps shape the conversation around industry trends. She challenges students to question assumptions, critically evaluate emerging patterns and apply data-driven insights to real-world challenges, equipping them with the skills and confidence to make a meaningful impact. “I love coaching students through their learning journey,” she says. “Helping them experiment, discover, make mistakes and grow is the most rewarding part of the job. Watching them continue to flourish a few years after graduation is incredible.”



CHALLENGED TO THINK DIFFERENTLY

Kate Ellis '25, a markets, innovation & design major, credits Professor Annetta Grant with playing an important role in her academic and personal growth. “Professor Grant has encouraged me to think critically and approach problems from new perspectives,” Ellis says. Grant’s high standards, Ellis explains, pushed her to work harder and think more strategically — lessons that continue to influence her approach to coursework.

In 2024, Professor Annetta Grant was named one of the “50 Best Undergraduate Business Professors” by *Poets&Quants*, selected from over 1,000 nominations.



Professor

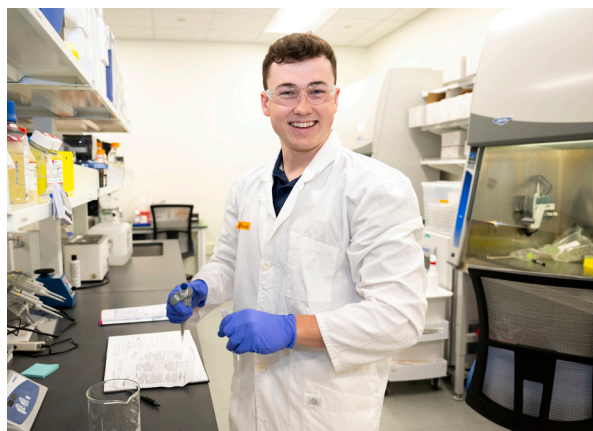
OLIVIA BOERMAN

Biomedical Engineering | COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Bringing the Lab to Life

In Professor Olivia Boerman's biomedical engineering lab, students conduct research that has the potential to revolutionize regenerative medicine. Supported by a National Science Foundation grant, Boerman's students are helping to uncover the science behind how ultrasound works, focusing on how it can reduce inflammation and stimulate the regeneration of healthy tissue.

Having benefited from hands-on research during her undergraduate years, Boerman is passionate about offering similar experiences to her students. "Teaching at Bucknell allows me to mentor students in the lab and create real-world research opportunities," she says. "The work I do informs my teaching, giving students a more relevant education. By bringing real-time insights into my lessons, I provide a hands-on learning approach that enhances their critical-thinking skills, deepens their understanding and prepares them to address complex biomedical engineering challenges."



BUILDING SKILLS WHILE ADVANCING SCIENCE

"After just two semesters at Bucknell, I joined Dr. Boerman's lab and made meaningful strides in research. She was an exceptional mentor, providing guidance while allowing me the freedom to set my own goals. The hands-on experience strengthened problem-solving skills and confidence — advantages that have been invaluable in my coursework and internships."

CONNOR KOZICK '26
BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

Professor Olivia Boerman is training the next generation of engineers to contribute solutions to health challenges.



Professor

JOE SCAPELLATO

Creative Writing | COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Professor Joe Scapellato contributes to Bucknell's thriving literary community.



Inspiring Literary Citizens

While writing is a solitary act, being a writer is a communal one. “My students learn about writing, editing and publishing, but we also talk a lot about what it means to exist in a writing community,” says Professor Joe Scapellato, director of the arts and director of the Stadler Center for Poetry & Literary Arts.

In his role as editor-in-chief of the nationally recognized literary magazine *West Branch*, Scapellato teaches a class in which students serve as magazine interns,

reading and discussing creative submissions from writers across the world. “They learn how to speak about literature while also developing an understanding of what the contemporary publishing industry looks like right now,” he says.

Beyond campus, Scapellato and Stadler Center Publicity and Outreach Manager Jessica Nirvana Ram devised a way for Bucknell students to learn how to teach writing by leading poetry workshops for students in the Lewisburg Area School District.

Professor

SAM GUTEKUNST

Mathematics, Computer Science | COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES, COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Professor Sam Gutekunst (left) teaches students to embrace failure as a key part of the learning process.



Where Theory Meets Practice

For Sam Gutekunst, the John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Assistant Professor of Data Science, there's more to a problem than solving it. "My job is to think about a problem for months, fail 1,000 times and keep trying until I find an idea that no one's seen before," says Gutekunst, whose expertise in operations research relies on using data science, math and computer science. "I teach my students that being good at something means being willing to try and fail and try again."

As a professor in both the College of Arts & Sciences and the College of Engineering, Gutekunst's research bridges theory and practice. He teaches students how to tackle complex theoretical problems and how to apply data science principles to real-world challenges, which included helping Bucknell restructure and refine its final exam schedule. "I love my research," he says. "But helping students is what I love about being a professor."

Professor

RAJESH KUMAR

Computer Science | COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Professor Rajesh Kumar, an expert in behavioral biometrics, inspires his students to tackle innovative projects, including analyzing typing patterns.



Deriving Insights from New Technologies

In his research, Professor Rajesh Kumar asks critical questions about the relationship between human behavior and technology. In the classroom, he seeks answers alongside his students. “I added a biometrics course to the department,” says Kumar, who has worked in the field for over a decade. “There are very few universities in the U.S., as well as across the globe, that teach that kind of course.”

His research in behavioral biometrics, which has examined how typing patterns can be analyzed to

uncover plagiarism, has inspired similar student research projects that are examining the same topic in the Korean and Vietnamese languages. That kind of inspiration is a two-way street.

“I have a student who already has a paper in the top biometrics conference on signature biometrics,” he says. “I had never worked in signature biometrics, but because he took it up as a research project, I learned about it, guided the student, and included it in the second iteration of my biometrics course.”

Professor NEIL BOYD

Management & Organizations | FREEMAN COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT

Students in Professor Neil Boyd's classes learn practical skills in management, research and community building.



Sharing a Vision for Thriving Communities

In his new book, *Building Community at Work*, Neil Boyd, the David J. '85 & Deborah West Professor in Management, explores how to create thriving workplace communities — a concept he integrates into his classroom instruction. The book blends theory with practical strategies to offer insights on building community within organizations.

Boyd applies these insights in courses like Management 101, where students launch their own real companies

while managing a local service project. Using a framework that balances efficiency, effectiveness and community, students explore how to nurture community within their companies.

“I believe the workplace should be a place where people’s personal and professional identities can flourish together,” he says. “My research and teaching are both driven by this goal of creating environments where people can truly thrive.”

Meet Bucknell

Learn more about our 350+ professors
and how we support outstanding faculty
scholarship and teaching.



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