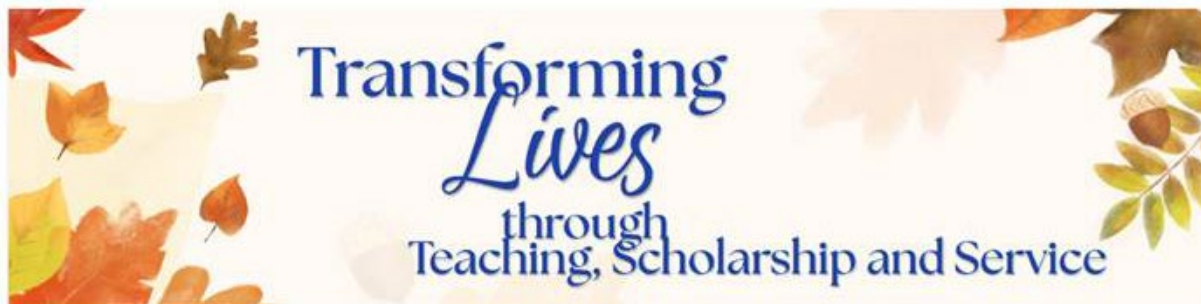

Clayton State University

Academic Insights & Impact

Fall 2026



Message from Dr. Jill Drake, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs



Welcome to a new academic year! I hope you had an opportunity to rest, reflect, and prepare for the exciting work ahead. As we open our doors to returning and new students, I want to express my sincere gratitude for your dedication, resilience, and commitment to academic excellence.

Each new academic year brings fresh opportunities to inspire learning, advance scholarship, strengthen student success, and deepen our impact on the communities we serve. The achievements of our institution are made possible through your hard work, innovation, and unwavering focus on our students. Together, we continue to create an environment where learning thrives, discoveries are made, and meaningful connections are built.

This year, we remain committed to fostering academic excellence, supporting student achievement, and advancing initiatives that enhance teaching, learning, research, and engagement across our campus. I encourage each of you to embrace the opportunities before us, collaborate across disciplines, and continue contributing to a culture of excellence and continuous improvement.

I am also pleased to introduce this first edition of ***Academic Insights and Impact***, a new quarterly newsletter for the Division of Academic Affairs. This publication will serve as a platform for sharing important updates, highlighting innovative programs and initiatives, recognizing faculty and staff

achievements, and keeping our academic community informed about opportunities and developments across the division. I am also excited about providing you a new opportunity to apply for **Laker Faculty Research & Development Grants** each semester, the details for which are outlined in a later section.

As we embark on this new academic year, let us continue working together to support our students, advance our mission, and build upon the strong foundation we have established. I look forward to all that we will accomplish together in the months ahead.

Thank you for your continued dedication and service. I wish you a successful, productive, and rewarding academic year.

Warm regards,

Dr. Jill Drake

POINTS OF PRIDE

Dr. Rosario Vickery Awarded State Professor of the Year for Spanish Language Education

Dr. Rosario Vickery has been named 2026 Professor of the Year by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, Georgia Chapter (aatsp-ga.org). Since its inception in 1917, the AATSP has promoted the study and teaching of Hispanic, Luso-Brazilian, and other related languages, literatures, and cultures at all levels.

[READ MORE](#)



Dr. Sonya Gaither Elected Chair of USG Libraries Committee

Dr. Sonya S. Gaither elected to serve as the AY 26 -27 Chair for the USG Chief Academic Officer Group for Academic Libraries Committee (formerly Regents



on Academic Committee on Libraries). This duty also includes chairing the GALILEO Steering Committee. Library Deans and Directors as well as their public, private, and K-12 library partners will focus on updating the GALILEO Strategic Plan among other tasks this upcoming year.

While attending the Education 2.0 Conference in Las Vegas, NV (April 2026), Dr. Gaither participated as a panel member during the opening session. She participated in the panel discussion, "The Changing Definition of College Readiness in a Digital World," where she shared insights on Clayton State University's newly approved AI policy and the library's collaborative efforts with faculty to promote responsible AI use in higher education. She highlighted initiatives that equip students with the skills to use AI-assisted research tools and library databases ethically, emphasizing the importance of evaluating information critically and providing proper attribution for scholarly sources when using AI-enhanced search technologies. Additionally, Sonya was a recipient of the "2026 Visionaries Leaders Award" for her 30+ years of teaching, leadership, and service in academic librarianship and higher education.

Clayton State's Strong Representation at Mu Phi Epsilon International Convention

Report from the Mu Phi Epsilon International Convention (23-25 July) in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where Clayton State was one of the best-represented universities in the country at this triennial gathering for members of the international professional fraternity for women and men in the field of music.

Retiring Director of Vocal Studies and Opera Kurt-Alexander Zeller presided over his final convention as International President and retired from that position also at the close of the convention.

Senior Lecturer of Music Francisca Maxwell gave a presentation tomorrow on "Teamwork and Leadership in Music."

Adjunct Instructor of Music Education Arietha Lockhart served as Head Steward for the fraternal ceremonies and also co-



chair of the Artists, Composers, Musicologists and Educators committee.

Staff Accompanist Grant Jones served as official Convention Accompanist—as usual, winning applause, admiration, and astonishment.

Current BM in Music Education major Lauren Faulkner distinguished herself in business and committee meetings as the official representative of Clayton State University's *Delta Psi* Chapter of Mu Phi Epsilon.

And finally, December 2025 BA in Music graduate, Kayla Hart, presented a concert as a prize-winner in the first-ever Young Artist Concert sponsored by the Mu Phi Epsilon Foundation and brought down the house.



College of Business Faculty Complete HyFlex Teaching Certification

The CELT recently announced the summer 2026 cohort of educators newly certified in Hyflex teaching practices. The 8-week course certification course explores strategies for designing and facilitating learning experiences that support students participating **face-to-face, online synchronously, and online asynchronously** focusing on intentional course design, meaningful interaction, and purposeful use of technology to help ensure that students remain connected, engaged, and supported regardless of how they participate. Congratulations to **Dr. Khamis Bilbeisi, Dr. Xueyu Cheng, Dr. Chris Edwards, Dr. Joie Hain, Dr. Craig Hill, Mr. Brian Hunt, Dr. Keith Miller, and Dr. CR Narayanaswamy.**

DESIGN ONCE. TEACH EVERYWHERE. ENGAGE ALL.

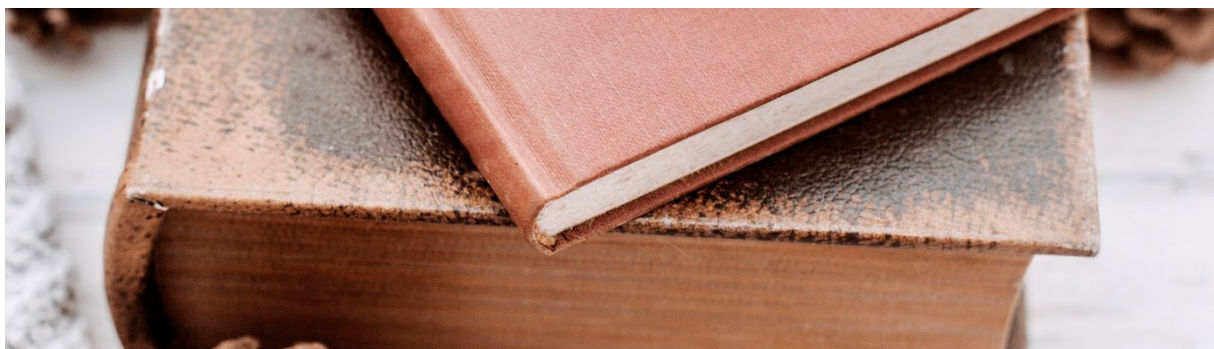


Congratulations...

To all faculty and staff who were selected for these leadership training cohorts for this year including the following representatives from Academic Affairs:

USG Great From the Middle program - Andrea Clark (Registrar), Martha Fairley (CELT), and Dr. Chris Edwards (CoB)

Laker Lead program - Dr. Thomas Araya (International Programs, Taralyn Keese (Social Sciences), and Adam Kubik (Library Services)



Recent Faculty Publications, Presentations, and Awarded Grants

PUBLICATIONS

Tate, A., & Coleman, A. N. (2026). "Constituting Self-Government: Thomas Burke, the Coming of the Revolution in North Carolina, and the Background to the Articles of Confederation." *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 115(part 2), 179-200.

Johnson, E. J., Gosciny, R., & Uderzo, A. (2026). In Sarah Brunstad (Ed.), *Asterix Collector Vol. 7: Asterix and the Big Fight* (vol. 7, pp. 72). Miami, Florida: Papercutz.

Fuentes, J., **Werther**, E., Mora-Ozuna, C., Flores, G., & Delgado-Romero, E. A. (2026). Enseñame a volar: Supervisión y mentoría of bilingual trainees... *Forging caminos: Pathways to becoming a bilingual mental health professional*. American Psychological Association.

Bergen, J., & Stanelle, K. (2026). Pathophysiology as a predictor of success in a prelicensure undergraduate nursing program. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 66(X), 4.

Christensen, B. J. (2026). The Future of LIS Education & the Role of ALISE. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, 67(3).

Keoseng, A., Martinez-Villavicencio, M., Redley, J., **Edmunds, C. E.**, **Melvin, P. D.**, & **Padin-Irizarry, V.** (2026). *Characterization and Antimicrobial Resistance Profiling of Freshwater Bacterial Isolates from Reynolds Nature Preserve*. Morrow, Georgia: Proceedings of College of STEM Symposium.

PRESENTATIONS

Tate, A. (July 15, 2026). *Teaching the Civil Rights Movement of the 20th Century with Documents*, Clayton County Public Schools Social Studies Workshop, held in Forest Park High School, Forest Park, Georgia.

Hayduk, I., & Toussaint-Cameau, M. (July 3, 2026). *Local mass Layoffs and Entrepreneurial Response*, Western Economic Association Conference, held in Denver, Colorado.

Southard, S., & **Norman, M. V.** (July 30, 2026). *Bridging Social Capital Gaps for First-Generation Students: A Framework for Shifting Faculty Mentors to Faculty Sponsors*, Academy of Business Research Online Conference 2026.

Bergen, J. (August 5, 2026). *Kaplan Decision Tree*, Jumpstart Fall 2026, held in Morrow City Hall.

Boudell, J. A. (July 25, 2026). *The Augmented Scientist: Human-AI Collaboration in Scientific Discovery.*, National Symposium on Effective & Ethical AI, held in Baltimore, MD.

Bergen, J., & **Hollis, A. L.** (August 1, 2026). *From Attrition to Retention: A Dosage Calculation Remediation Model for Undergraduate Nursing Students*, Georgia Association of Nursing Education Conference - Abstract submitted, held in Augusta, Georgia.

GRANTS

Gurkas, P. (2026) "The Strategic Plan Innovation Grant," Clayton State University (\$3,000.00).

Padin-Irizarry, V., & **Edmunds, C.** (2026) "Characterizing and Sequencing Environmental Bacteria to Investigate Antimicrobial Resistance," Clayton State University (\$2,000.00).



**PERSONNEL UPDATES AND
ANNOUNCEMENTS**



Welcome Dr. Carlos “Chip” Panahon

Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

*"After careful deliberation and close consultation with campus stakeholders throughout the search process, we are pleased to welcome Dr. Carlos ‘Chip’ Panahon to Clayton State University as our next Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences," said **Dr. Jill Drake, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs**. "Dr. Panahon brings a wealth of experience in higher education and possesses the leadership skills necessary to build upon the College of Arts and Sciences' legacy of excellence and lead it into the future with strength and a firm commitment to our shared values and mission. His commitment to academic excellence and student success, combined with a bold vision for the future of the College of Arts and Sciences, will serve our students, faculty, staff, and community well. I am delighted that he has agreed to join our community and look forward to the impact he will make on Laker Nation."*

Currently in the role of tenured full professor in the Department of Psychology at Minnesota State University, Mankato, Dr. Panahon also has served as Interim Associate Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, where he provided strategic leadership during the merger of two colleges and helped shape a unified vision focused on preparing students for success in a rapidly changing society.

Dr. Panahon will join the Clayton State University community on January 1, 2027, and we look forward to the leadership, expertise, and vision he will bring to the College of Arts and Sciences and to Laker Nation.



Jeff Jacobs Joins Provost Office

Mr. Jeff Jacobs has joined the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs as *Assistant to the Provost for Strategic Communication and Project Management*, as of July 1.

Mr. Jacobs has served the University for over 30 years and has held a variety of positions in Student Affairs including: Interim Vice President of Student Affairs, Dean of Students (emeritus), Director of Housing, and Director of Student Life and Orientation.

We welcome Mr. Jacobs in this new role in Academic Affairs as we continue advancing the Division's mission and strategic priorities to drive and support student success.

NEW!

Laker Faculty Research & Development Grants

APPLY NOW (deadline Sept. 30)

The Office of Provost is pleased to support the research, teaching, and other professional activities of faculty to advance in their disciplinary scholarship, improve pedagogical approaches, or enhance and disseminate their knowledge or expertise in their fields.

There are three (3) types of Faculty Research & Development Grants (up to **\$2,500** each):

- **Faculty Research**—funding for scholarly or creative projects led by faculty, aimed at generating new knowledge, advancing a discipline, or producing publishable or presentable academic work.
- **Innovating Teaching Practice**—funding for faculty to develop, test, or implement new instructional methods, technologies, or course designs that improve student learning, engagement, or classroom effectiveness.
- **Professional Development**—funding for faculty to travel to meetings, workshops or conferences to enhance their academic, teaching, or service roles. (priority given to faculty who are presenting)

Calls for proposal requests will occur every fall and spring semester. Proposal requests will be reviewed and evaluated by the Faculty Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate.

[READ MORE and APPLY](#)



PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

YOU'RE INVITED

CLAYTON
STATE
UNIVERSITY

3rd Annual social mobility SUMMIT

"Lifting Lives Through Learning"

Join Clayton State University for a day of insight, collaboration,
and innovation focused on advancing social mobility through education.

 **September 25, 2026**

 **8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

 **Student Activities Center**

Register Now clayton.edu/social-mobility/summit

CLAYTON
STATE
UNIVERSITY

Film, Communication, and Performing Arts

Mother Nature's Music

The Clayton State University Chorale
Dr. Tom FitzStephens, Conductor

Oct 20th, 2026
7:30pm
Spivey Hall
Admission: Free

*An exploration of nature
in choral repertoire*



Individuals requiring disability-related accommodations to participate in a Clayton State University-sponsored event or program should contact Disability Services at (678) 466-5445 or DisabilityServices@clayton.edu.



HOME GAME THEMES

CLAYTON STATE CLUB FOOTBALL

Aug. 29 Lighthouse College
6:00 PM SEASON KICKOFF!

Sep. 26 Westgate Christian University
1:00 PM BLUE OUT

Sep. 05 North Carolina Gorillas
6:00 PM ORANGE CRUSH

Oct. 10 South Carolina Central
2:00 PM FAMILY & PARENTS WEEKEND

Sep. 12 Talladega College
6:00 PM ALUMNI WEEKEND

Nov. 7 Tennessee Valley
2:00 PM FACULTY & STAFF DAY

ALL HOME GAMES WILL BE PLAYED AT MORROW HIGH SCHOOL STADIUM
4930 STEELE RD, ELLENWOOD GA. 30294

Join Us for Clayton State Football Faculty/Staff Day
on Saturday, November 7, 2:00 p.m.!

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Empowering creators to build communities.