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CAMPUS NEWS

## Nine named SUNY Distinguished Professors



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### UBNOW STAFF

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Nine UB faculty members have been named SUNY Distinguished Professors, the highest faculty rank in the SUNY system.

Ralph H.B. Benedict, Ann Bisantz, Deborah Duen Ling Chung, Craig Colder, Michael Duffey, Jeffrey Lackner, Amanda Nickerson, Sanjay Sethi and Eva Zurek were appointed to the distinguished professor ranks by the SUNY Board of Trustees at its meeting on April 16.

The rank of distinguished professor is an order above full professorship and has three co-equal designations: distinguished professor, distinguished service professor and distinguished teaching professor.

Duffey was named a Distinguished Teaching Professor in recognition of his commitment to teaching. According to SUNY, the candidate's teaching mastery must be "consistently demonstrated over multiple years" and "must contribute to the discipline and to the University, the State of New York or the nation by the use of innovative pedagogy and the sustained application of intellectual skills drawing from the candidate's scholarly and research interests."

All the other faculty members were named Distinguished Professors in recognition of their international prominence and distinguished reputations within their chosen fields. According to SUNY, "this distinction is attained through significant contributions to the research literature or through artistic performance or achievement in the case of the arts. The candidate's work must be of such character that the individual's presence will tend to elevate the standards of scholarship of colleagues both within and beyond these persons' academic fields."

UB's newest SUNY Distinguished Professors:



**Ralph H. B. Benedict**, professor of neurology in the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, is a pioneer in the understanding of cognitive disorders, and treatment the treatment thereof, in people with multiple sclerosis (MS). Benedict is one of the top investigators worldwide in standardized neuropsychological testing and quantitative brain imaging used in assessing cognitive dysfunction in MS and other neurological diseases. His research employs behavioral psychometrics and clinical trials to understand how cerebral disease affects personality, cognition and psychiatric stability. His research on the psychological, behavioral and cognitive attributes of MS has also shaped the field of neuropsychology more generally.

A fellow of the American Psychological Association, Benedict received the Consortium of MS Center's 2019 Fred Foley Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to advancing research in the understanding and clinical treatment of MS, and UB's 2022 Exceptional Scholar Award for sustained professional achievement. He received a SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities in 2015 and the Stockton Kimball Award — the Jacobs School's highest honor — in 2021.



**Ann Bisantz**, professor of industrial and systems engineering, is a pioneer in the fields of human factors engineering and cognitive engineering, which uses cognitive psychology and systems engineering methods to support or improve user cognitive processes and system safety. Her research works to understand aspects of human trust in automated systems, particularly those in complex human technology work environments, including health care, military systems, transportation and emergency management.

She examines new techniques for displaying complex and uncertain information to decision makers, including supporting the transition from legacy or manual information systems to more integrated, supportive IT systems.

A fellow of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society (HFES), Bisantz has also received the HFES' Paul M. Fitts Education Award for exceptional contributions to the education and training of HFE specialists and its Mentor of the Year award. She received a 2015 Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities. In addition to her role on the faculty, she serves as dean of undergraduate education at UB.

**Deborah Duen Ling Chung**, professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering, is internationally renowned for transformative contributions to materials science and engineering. Her groundbreaking invention of smart concrete propelled the field of smart materials and structures. In addition, she changed the thermal interface materials design from thermal-conductivity based to conformability based. Moreover, she transformed the design of electromagnetic interference shielding materials from relying on electrical conductivity to interface/surface area design.

A 2022 Stanford University study ranked Chung 13th out of more than 316,000 materials researchers (living and dead), 10th among those living and first among female materials researchers; Stanford's 2021 study ranked her first in the world in the field of building and construction.



A fellow of ASM International and the American Carbon Society, Chung was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Science in 2023. She received a 2003 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities, and will receive the UB President's Medal during the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences' undergraduate commencement ceremony on May 18.



**Craig Colder**, professor of psychology, is a world-renowned authority on adolescent alcohol and drug use and abuse whose work has shaped the fields' understanding of early precursors of the initiation and escalation of substance use. His groundbreaking longitudinal studies on the development of substance use span childhood to adulthood and have established the psychological and ecological predictors of substance abuse, including the role of parent alcoholism, parenting, peer influences, temperamental factors, maternal depression and adolescent social competence.

He developed and validated tools for assessing the consequences of alcohol use in young adulthood and childhood temperament that have been translated into six languages. His recent work extends into related topics, including cigarette smoking and cessation, vaping and parenting approaches that can help reduce the harms of adolescent drinking.

In 2002, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation named Colder a Tobacco Etiology Research Network Scholar. A fellow of the Association for Psychological Science, he received a 2022 Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities.



**Michael E. Duffey**, professor of physiology and biophysics in the Jacobs School, has demonstrated excellence in teaching, curricular development, student mentoring and academic scholarship. His extensive contributions to graduate and medical curricula include redesigning the medical school's curriculum into an integrated curriculum with organ system-based modules for first- and second-year medical students. He developed and is module leader for the course "Gastrointestinal Systems," which integrates metabolism, genetics and nutrition in both health and disease.

Duffey co-founded the interdisciplinary graduate program in biomedical sciences, a revolutionary umbrella curriculum that unified six graduate basic science programs and has served as a model for other institutions. As director for physiology graduate studies, he developed and revised the physiology and biophysics curriculum.

Duffey is also the recipient of a SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2019.



**Jeffrey M. Lackner**, professor of medicine, is an international expert in the field of cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) for the treatment of gastrointestinal and chronic pain disorders such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).. The behavioral self-treatment he developed at UB is regarded as one of the most effective treatments of any type (drugs, dietary) for IBS. He validated a four-stage pain processing model for understanding how specific aspects of pain interact to influence symptom burden, and his team was the first worldwide to use brain imaging techniques to characterize the neural correlates of CBT's improvements in GI symptoms. Lackner's work on nonpharmacological approaches to chronic pain has dramatically changed clinical practice guidelines in the U.S., Europe, and Asia.

A fellow of the American Gastroenterological Association, the Academy of Behavioral Medicine Research, the Association for Psychological Science, the American Psychological Association, and the Society of Behavioral Medicine, Lackner received a 2016 Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities.



**Amanda Nickerson**, professor of counseling, school and educational psychology in the Graduate School of Education, has made significant and sustained contributions to the field of school psychology. Inaugural director of the Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention, she focuses her work on understanding, preventing and intervening in school crises, with an emphasis on addressing interpersonal violence, such as aggression, bullying and abuse, and on promoting safety and mental health.

She developed and validated the Bystander Intervention Model in Bullying and Sexual Harassment Measure, and created and is currently evaluating NAB IT! (Norms and Bystander Intervention Training). She is an author of the PREPuRE School Crisis Prevention and Intervention Training, which has improved interventional attitudes and knowledge of thousands of school personnel.

A fellow of the American Psychological Association, Nickerson received UB's Exceptional Scholar Award for Sustained Achievement in 2018 and the UB President's Medal in 2019.



**Sanjay Sethi**, professor of medicine and assistant vice president for health sciences in the Jacobs School, is an internationally regarded pulmonologist with a primary clinical and research interest in Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), the third leading cause of death worldwide. Sethi has been recognized as one of the top five COPD specialists since 2013 by Expertscape. He examines whether new bacterial strains are causative of COPD exacerbations, the role of innate immunity, inflammation without infection and important bacterial strains in the respiratory tract in acute exacerbations of COPD.

His contributions have fundamentally altered our understanding of bacteria and the microbiomes role in COPD and have had a profound impact on the treatment of COPD and respiratory infections. He is the recipient of a 2020

Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities.



**Eva Zurek**, professor of chemistry, is a "star" in theoretical condensed matter physics and computational materials chemistry. Existing at the intersection of theoretical physics, engineering, materials science, chemistry, earth and planetary sciences, Zurek's research is based on calculations of chemical and physical properties of molecules and materials. Her discoveries have been central to the computational design of new superconducting H-rich phases at high pressure.

She designed and developed an open-source evolutionary algorithm for crystal structure prediction, which is widely used to predict new materials for use in novel technologies, including superconductors, super-hard materials and classes of nanomaterials. Her research also holds paradigm-shifting implications for understanding extreme

environments in nature — from the depth of planets in the solar system to the new planets being discovered with potentially quite different compositions and chemistry.

A fellow of the American Physical Society, Zurek received a 2021 Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities.