

## FACULTY FORWARD

## NEWSLETTER

FALL 2025

This fall, faculty came together to learn, strengthen connections, enhance well-being, and grow through a variety of workshops, virtual cafés, and wellness activities. From thoughtful conversations about policy changes in higher education to engaging sessions focused on mental health, sleep, and stress relief, the semester created space for reflection, renewal, and learning. Faculty exchanged ideas, built new relationships, and found meaningful ways to support one another both personally and professionally. Our semester is closing with a sense of gratitude and energy, setting a positive foundation for continued growth and collaboration in the spring.



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## Our Team

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# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



As we close out the Fall semester, I want to take a moment to express my deep appreciation for each member of our faculty community. I believe that our faculty are the heart of this institution, and the work you do every day shapes the lives of our students, strengthens our programs, increases our knowledge, and elevates the mission of ODU.

In the Office of Faculty Recruitment and Retention, our focus has continued to evolve as we look more holistically at what it means to support faculty. This fall, we have embraced a broader vision of faculty well-being, one that honors all the dimensions of our lives.

Through initiatives centered on the people, the places we inhabit, and the planet we share, we are committed to fostering environments where faculty can flourish personally and professionally.

Throughout the semester, I have had the privilege of leading and supporting a range of programs, workshops, mentorship efforts, partnerships, and wellness activities. With recruitment support, onboarding efforts, faculty highlights, virtual cafés, workshops, outdoor wellness experiences, JEDI collaborations, and other ongoing initiatives, my work continues to be guided by a simple truth: faculty well-being is institutional well-being.

As we prepare for the months ahead, I remain committed to strengthening our support systems, fostering meaningful collaboration, and building a more connected, inclusive, and sustainable faculty community. Thank you for the work you do, the care you bring to your roles, and the inspiration you provide every day.

Wishing you all a restorative and joyful holiday season. I look forward to continuing this important work together.

*Dr. Shanda Jenkins*  
Director of Faculty Recruitment & Retention

# FACULTY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES



## Welcome Back Virtual Café

Shanda Jenkins and Alison Lietzenmayer hosted the Welcome Back Virtual Café, kicking off a semester focused on faculty well-being and connection. The session offered space for faculty to reconnect with colleagues, welcome new members of the community, and learn about upcoming opportunities and events throughout the semester.

## Thriving in Academia: Strengthening Faculty Well-Being

Dr. Shanda Jenkins opened the semester with the workshop Thriving in Academia: Strengthening Faculty Well-Being, which examined current research and shared evidence-based strategies to enhance well-being. The session underscored the vital connection between faculty well-being and success throughout the academic year. Participants reflected on their own experiences, identified challenges, and discussed practical ways to strengthen personal and collective well-being. Faculty left with greater awareness and clear, actionable steps to support themselves and their colleagues.



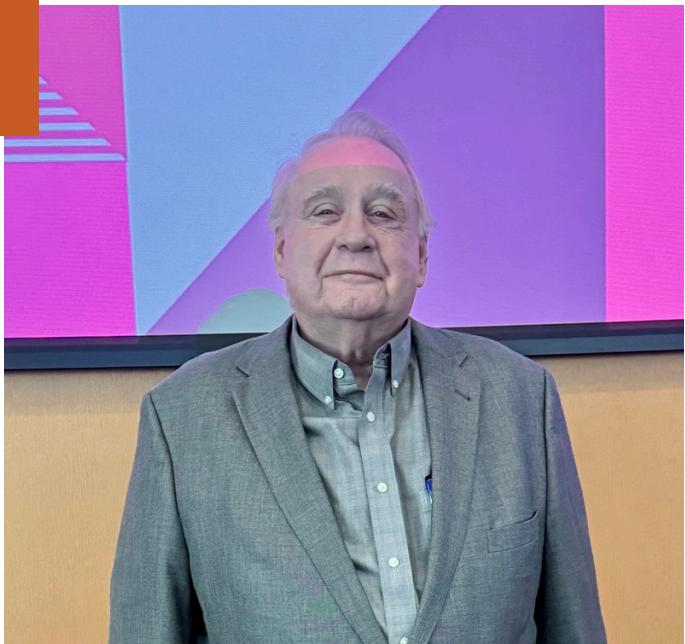
# Shifting Ground: Navigating Policy Changes in Higher Education

Dr. Dennis Gregory led the workshop *Shifting Ground: Navigating Policy Changes in Higher Education*, offering insight into how current and emerging policies are shaping higher education at the national, state, and university levels. Through his presentation and discussion, participants gained a deeper understanding of the ripple effects of policy changes and considered practical ways to prepare, adapt, and thrive in an evolving academic landscape.



## Virtual Café: Shifting Ground

The Virtual Café: Shifting Ground built on the discussion from Dr. Dennis Gregory's earlier workshop on navigating policy changes in higher education. Dr. Gregory began with a brief overview of key points, then opened the floor for faculty to share questions, reflections, and ideas for moving forward in a changing higher education landscape. The conversation fostered thoughtful dialogue and connection among faculty.





## Everyday Mental Health: A Rhythm of Refresh, Revive, and Renew

The semester's focus on faculty well-being continued with *Everyday Mental Health: A Rhythm of Refresh, Revive, and Renew* for Faculty, facilitated by Dr. Brittany G. Suggs, a licensed professional counselor, clinical supervisor, and faculty member in the Department of Counseling and Human Services. Participants engaged in evidence-based activities, created personalized wellness plans, and explored ways to foster balance, community, and renewal. Faculty left equipped with practical strategies and practices to support their well-being throughout the year.

### Rest to Rise: Understanding and Improving Your Sleep

In the workshop *Rest to Rise: Understanding and Improving Your Sleep*, Dr. Shanda Jenkins, a licensed and registered Polysomnographic Technologist, shared essential information on why sleep matters, what happens during the stages of sleep, and knowledge about common sleep disorders and treatments. Faculty left with sleep hygiene tips to support healthier sleep habits and strengthen their overall well being.

### Virtual Café: Rest to Rise

The semester concluded with the *Virtual Café: Rest to Rise*, where faculty continued the conversation on healthy sleep and overall well-being. Building on themes from the *Rest to Rise* workshop, the session offered space to ask questions, gain insights, reflect on the semester's highlights, and celebrate the connections formed through this semester's focus on faculty well-being.



# Fall Hike at First Landing State Park

The Fall Hike at First Landing State Park marked our first-ever Faculty Outdoor Adventure. Led by a guide from the Outdoor Adventure Program at the Student Recreation and Well-Being Center, faculty enjoyed a refreshing morning hike along the three-mile trail. The experience was filled with laughter, conversation, and connection as participants took in the natural beauty of the park and strengthened their sense of community.



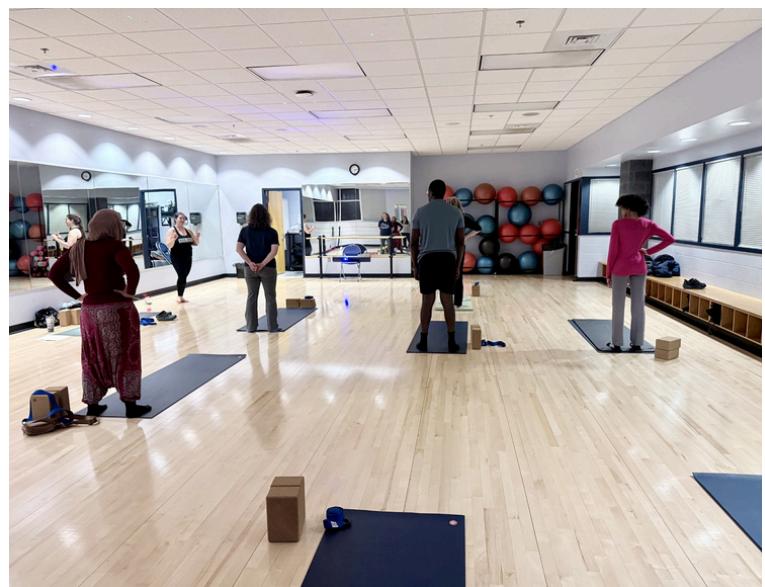
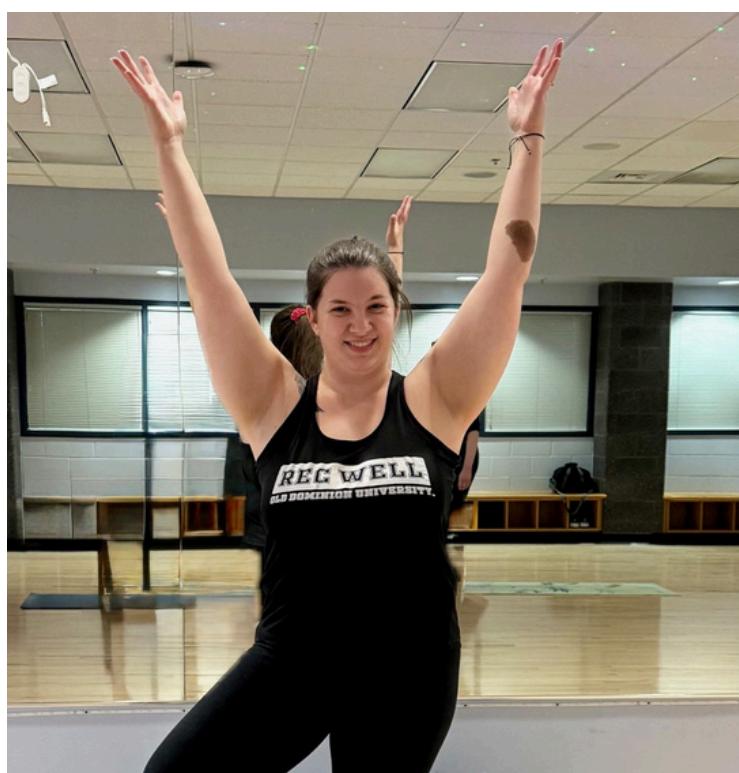
# Stretch & Connect

The semester's first wellness activity, Stretch & Connect, was led by Dr. Chrissy Blanchard-Alworth, a licensed yoga instructor and lecturer in Human Movement Sciences and Special Education. The session focused on gentle stretching, releasing tension, and fostering connection in a supportive and welcoming space. Faculty left feeling relaxed, refreshed, and renewed.



## Restore & Recharge: Faculty Yoga

Restore & Recharge: Faculty Yoga was guided by a certified instructor from the Student Recreation and Well-Being Center and offered faculty an opportunity to unwind with colleagues while focusing on balance, stress relief, and overall well-being. The session provided a calming space to unwind, breathe, come together, and restore our energy at the end of a busy day.



# OTHER FALL ENGAGEMENTS



## New Faculty Orientation

The Division of Academic Affairs hosted this semester's New Faculty Orientation, with the Office of Faculty Recruitment and Retention actively participating in welcoming newly hired faculty to Old Dominion University. This year's program introduced essential campus resources, highlighted opportunities for community and support, and helped new faculty begin the year with confidence. Participants engaged with colleagues across colleges, learned about the services available to them, and began forming meaningful connections as they prepared for their first semester at ODU.

## SREB Institute on Teaching and Mentoring

Shanda Jenkins attended the SREB Institute on Teaching and Mentoring, a national conference that supports doctoral scholars as they prepare for faculty careers. During the institute, she connected with emerging scholars from across the country to support efforts to recruit future faculty and strengthen outreach to those interested in academic careers.



# Monarch Humanities Internship Academy

Over Summer 2025, Dr. Shanda Jenkins supported the Monarch Humanities Internship Academy (MHIA) Faculty Development series led by Ms. Alison Lietzenmayer, with a grounded look at why equity must sit at the center of any scalable WBL strategy. Drawing on research, Dr. Jenkins identified how barriers like transportation, work schedules, technology access, or even confidence shape student readiness long before placement. This session encouraged faculty to examine their own assignments through a lens of universal access: anticipating likely obstacles, identifying institutional supports, and reflecting on where unexamined assumptions might unintentionally exclude students. Through the guided session, faculty mapped out small, discipline-friendly ways to build belonging, flexibility, and low-stakes preparation into their courses. Dr. Jenkins's contribution strengthened the grant's commitment to making WBL accessible and meaningful, while reinforcing the NACE Equity and Inclusion competency as a core element of career readiness rather than an optional add-on.



## Faculty Support

Throughout the Fall semester, Shanda Jenkins, Director of Faculty Recruitment and Retention, Annette Finley-Croswright, Director of the Center for Faculty Development, Remica Bingham-Risher, Director of the Quality Enhancement Plan, and Jay O'Toole, Provost's Fellow for Faculty Development, have been working together to advance Faculty Support. Their collaboration has centered on coordinating initiatives, aligning resources, and strengthening connections that support faculty across the university.

# NEW FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

This year's New Faculty Highlights showcase thirteen outstanding educators and researchers who bring new energy, insight, and innovation to Old Dominion University. Their contributions strengthen our academic community and reflect our shared commitment to faculty success and student excellence. You can read their full highlights here:

<https://www.odu.edu/acadaffairs/faculty-recruitment/faculty-highlights>.

**Agyare Asante**  
Lecturer in Engineering Technology



**Chrissy Blanchard-Alworth**  
Lecturer in Human Movement Studies



**Rebecca Gilmore**  
Adjunct in Diehn School of Music



**Laura Grieneisen**  
Assistant Professor in Biological Sciences



**Ethan Guagliardo**  
Senior Lecturer in English



**Jae Lee**  
Assistant Professor in Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering



**Abby Lemmon**  
Clinical Assistant Professor in Rehabilitation Sciences

**Mahmoud Nazzal**  
Assistant Professor in Computer Science and Cybersecurity



**Ertunga Ozelkan**  
Professor in Engineering Management & Systems Engineering

**R.J. Risueño**  
Assistant Professor in Speech-Language-Pathology

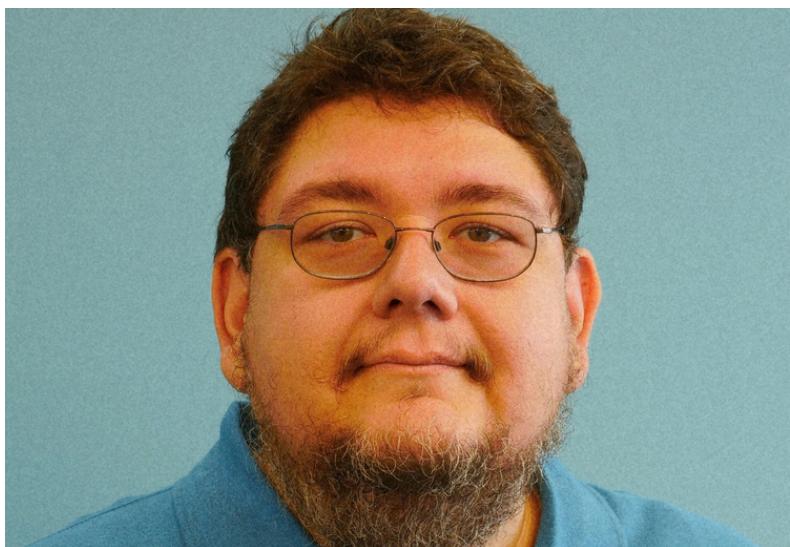


**Samantha Scarneo-Miller**  
Clinical Assistant Professor in  
Rehabilitation Sciences

**Sangita Seaburg**  
Lecturer in Ellmer School of Nursing



**Mitchell Wilson**  
Senior Lecturer in Mathematics &  
Statistics



We are delighted to welcome our new faculty to the Monarch community and thank them for sharing their time and stories with us. Each brings unique experiences, expertise, and enthusiasm that strengthen Old Dominion University. If you are a new faculty member and would like to be featured in an upcoming New Faculty Highlight, please complete our short form here: <https://bit.ly/NewFacultyHighlights>.



# NEW YEAR, NEW CHAPTERS

## Celebrating Annette Finley-Croswhite



We are grateful to Dr. Annette Finley-Croswhite for her dedicated service as Director of the Center for Faculty Development (CFD) since 2018. Her leadership and steady support have significantly strengthened faculty development across the university. Dr. Shanda Jenkins reflected, "I have had the privilege of working closely with Annette for nearly four years, including our shared efforts on the ADVANCE grant to support faculty success and improve departmental climate. Her collegiality, honesty, and unwavering willingness to help have been invaluable to me."

Annette brought decades of institutional knowledge, along with a kind spirit, a vibrant personality, and stories that can light up any room to her role in the CFD. Even in challenging times, she remains positive, present, and prepared to lend her voice and expertise. As she returns to her faculty position in the Department of History, we wish her the very best. She deserves this time to focus on her scholarship and herself. Her presence will be missed.

## Congratulations to Remica Bingham-Risher

Please join us in congratulating Remica Bingham-Risher on her appointment as the new Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Excellence and Engagement. Dr. Shanda Jenkins shared, "I am truly excited to work alongside her as we help to envision the new Center for Faculty Excellence and strengthen the ecosystem of faculty support at ODU. Her creativity, collaborative spirit, and deep commitment to faculty thriving make her ideal for this transformative work. I look forward to partnering with her and the CFE team as we build innovative, holistic programming that will empower our faculty to excel in their scholarship, teaching, service, and overall well-being."





## Wishing the Best for Quinn Jackson

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to our former Graduate Assistant, Quinn Jackson, on successfully advancing to candidacy. This milestone reflects his hard work, dedication, and academic excellence. We are grateful for the time, energy, and talent he contributed to our office, and we wish him the very best as he prepares his dissertation and moves toward his defense. May his next steps bring continued growth, achievement, and success.

## Welcoming Sofia Calicchio

We are delighted to welcome Sofia Calicchio to the Office of Faculty Recruitment and Retention as our new Graduate Assistant beginning in January. Sofia has been serving Old Dominion University as the Assistant Director for Intercultural Education and Connections, and she will now be stepping into this new role as she enters the PhD program in Higher Education. The office is truly excited to work with her and to support her as she starts this next chapter.



# WHAT'S NEXT?

We are excited about what we have planned for the upcoming Spring semester! Continuing our focus on faculty well-being, we will offer opportunities to connect, recharge, and grow together.

Our programming will include sessions on navigating challenging conversations and managing conflict, along with new ways to strengthen connections across campus. Faculty will have the chance to hear from and connect with Employee Resource Group (ERG) leaders, enjoy Coffee Breaks designed for informal networking, and continue to unwind through movement and other well-being activities.

To celebrate the many talents within our faculty community, we are thrilled to announce our first-ever Faculty Talent Show, taking place in March 2026! Whether you sing, dance, play an instrument, perform poetry, or have a hidden talent to share, this event will be a chance to showcase your creativity and enjoy yourself.

Please sign up to participate here: <https://bit.ly/FacultyTalentSignUp>

Stay tuned for dates and details on these and other events in the coming months. We look forward to another meaningful semester centered on faculty connection, creativity, and well-being.

*Out of the Classroom and Into the Spotlight!*

**Faculty Talent  
Show!**

# CONNECT WITH US

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We always enjoy hearing from faculty across campus. If you have ideas for future programming, would like to get involved in upcoming initiatives, or have any questions, please reach out to us at [facultyforward@odu.edu](mailto:facultyforward@odu.edu).

Visit Us!

Faculty are always welcome to stop by 2102 Dragas Hall to connect with our team, learn more about upcoming programs, or share ideas for supporting faculty success and well-being. Whether you are dropping in to say hello or to discuss an initiative, we are always glad to see you.



**Shanda Jenkins**

Director



**Allison Barber**

Administrative Assistant



**Alison Lietzenmayer**

Faculty Volunteer



Happy Holidays  
from the  
Office of Faculty  
Recruitment &  
Retention!