

## 2016 Southeastern Conference (SEC) Faculty Achievement Award Winners

### University of Alabama



**Seth Panitch** is Professor of Theatre and Director of the Master of Fine Arts and Undergraduate Acting Programs at the University of Alabama. Panitch performs extensively on major national and international stages as an actor, and also works as a director and playwright. In 2008, he became the first U.S. director to helm a professional production in Cuba in nearly 50 years when he was invited by the Cuban Ministry of Culture to direct Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* at the Adolfo Llauro Theatre. Since then, Panitch has directed three other productions in Havana, casting his students alongside professional Cuban artists, creating the first joint Cuban/American Theatre Company in the process: *Company HavanaBama*. The Cuban National Office of Scenic Arts recognized Panitch with an Official Commendation of Excellence for his work in Cuban Theatre in 2013. [Read more about Panitch.](#)

### University of Arkansas



**Rodolfo M. Nayga, Jr.**, is Professor and Tyson Endowed Chair in Food Policy Economics at the University of Arkansas. Dr. Nayga's research interests include the economics of food consumption, policy and health. Given their focus on critical issues such as poverty, nutrition, obesity and novel food technologies, his research findings are critical for human welfare and have impacted both the policy and the scientific arenas. Dr. Nayga's work has provided crucial data on the causal effects of federal food programs and on policies related to health outcomes of various segments of the population, including children and historically disadvantaged groups. His research has been supported by more than \$16 million in research grants and contracts from the USDA, National Institutes of Health and others. Dr. Nayga has authored more than 200 journal articles and is currently Associate Editor of the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*. He served as a moderator at the 2014 SEC Symposium entitled *Prevention of Obesity: Overcoming A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Public Health Challenge*. [Read more about Dr. Nayga.](#)

### Auburn University



**Hanqin Tian** is the Solon and Martha Dixon Endowed Professor and Director of the International Center for Climate and Global Change Research at Auburn University. Dr. Tian's primary research interests focus on the patterns and processes of the terrestrial biosphere and its interactions with climate and humans. His research on the global carbon cycle and greenhouse gas emissions is at the leading edge of the field. Dr. Tian's research has resulted in more than 200 publications, many of which were published in the most prestigious journals in biogeosciences and global change, and including four papers in *Nature and Science*. As a Principal Investigator or co-Principal Investigator, he has received more than \$22 million in research grants from U.S. funding agencies, including NASA, the National Science Foundation and others. Dr. Tian was the first recipient of the Global Change Science Prize from the Ye Duzheng Foundation and Chinese Academy of Sciences. [Read more about Dr. Tian.](#)

## University of Florida



**Jose C. Principe** is the Distinguished Professor of Electrical Engineering, Bell South Professor and the Founder and Director of the Computational NeuroEngineering Laboratory at the University of Florida. Dr. Principe's area of expertise is in adaptive dynamical systems, computational intelligence and machine learning with applications to brain dynamics, computational neuroscience, epilepsy and brain machine interfaces (BMI). He is a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Annals of Biomedical Engineering and International Neural Network Society. Dr. Principe is the author of six books, 24 book chapters and 259 publications in refereed journals. He is also named in 20 patents and 12 more disclosures. He has delivered more than 150 lectures at some of the top international conferences and research institutions. [Read more about Dr. Principe.](#)

## University of Georgia



**Milton Masciadri** is Professor of Double Bass in the Hugh Hodgson School of Music at the University of Georgia. Dr. Masciadri performs on a 320-year-old Testore double bass and is a frequent recitalist and soloist with major symphony orchestras. His solo performances have taken place at many internationally renowned concert venues, including New York City's Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall and "La Fenice" Opera House in Venice. Dr. Masciadri has presented master classes at such musical institutions as the Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music and Paris Conservatoire, among others. In 2009, he received the title of Distinguished University Professor from Georgia, the first faculty member in the fine arts to be honored in 62 years. Dr. Masciadri also holds the title of "Accademico" of the Accademia Filarmonica in Bologna, Italy – Europe's oldest musical educational institution. [Read more about Dr. Masciadri.](#)

## University of Kentucky



**W. Brent Seales** is Professor and Chairman of the Department of Computer Science and Director of the Center for Visualization and Virtual Environments (Vis Center) at the University of Kentucky. Dr. Seales' research program centers on computer vision and visualization applied to challenges in the restoration of antiquities, surgical technology and data visualization. His research has been funded by Google, the National Science Foundation, the Mellon Foundation and the U.S. Army. Dr. Seales has received more than \$10 million in funding during the past ten years and is the author of more than 100 peer-reviewed publications. In 2015, Dr. Seales and his research team identified the oldest known copy of the book of Leviticus (other than the Dead Sea Scrolls), carbon dated to the fifth century C.E. Dr. Seales provided a reading of the text from purely non-invasive micro-CT scans. *Christianity Today* called his the most significant discovery in biblical archaeology in 2015. [Read more about Dr. Seales.](#)

## Louisiana State University



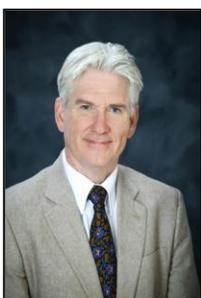
**Isiah M. Warner** is a Boyd Professor, Phillip W. West Professor of Chemistry and Howard Hughes Medical Institute Professor at Louisiana State University. Dr. Warner is considered to be one of the world's leading experts in analytical applications of fluorescence. In 1984, he received one of the first Presidential Young Investigator Awards from President Ronald Reagan. Dr. Warner's service to the international chemistry community includes chairing or serving on committees for the National Science Foundation, National Research Council and American Chemical Society, among others. As Chair of LSU's Department of Chemistry, he has worked to broaden the participation of underrepresented groups. Under Dr. Warner's leadership, LSU ranks first in the nation in the production of African Americans with doctorate degrees in chemistry and in the percentage of female doctoral graduates in chemistry. [Read more about Dr. Warner.](#)

## University of Mississippi



**Joey P. Granger** is the Billy S. Guyton Distinguished Professor at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Dr. Granger's laboratory has been continuously funded by research project grant and/or program project grant mechanisms from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute since 1985. Dr. Granger has been a member of the Council on High Blood Pressure Research for more than 30 years and has served on the Council Leadership Committee for the past 12 years. He has also served on scientific study sections for the American Heart Association, National Institutes of Health, NASA and the Veterans Administration. Dr. Granger has authored or co-authored more than 250 peer-reviewed publications, many of them in *Hypertension*. He is currently an Associate Editor of *Hypertension* and serves as co-Editor of the eBook series *Integrative System Physiology*. [Read more about Dr. Granger.](#)

## Mississippi State University



**T. Brent Funderburk** is the William L. Giles Distinguished Professor at Mississippi State University. Funderburk is a "bridge" artist who intertwines paradigms of studio work in watermedia painting, oil painting, drawing, mixed-media and multi-media processes. He has exhibited his mixed-media artwork in 32 solo exhibitions in museums and galleries across the U.S., and has exhibited in more than 70 regional, national and international peer-reviewed juried shows. In 2010, he was selected as the official artist of the USA International Ballet Competition. In 2015, Funderburk was internationally selected as one of 24 fine artists for inclusion in the *Creative Quarterly: The Journal of Art and Design's* "Top 100 Best Annual" list in 2015. In that same year, he served as a panelist at the SEC Symposium entitled *Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Driving a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Economy*. [Read more about Funderburk.](#)

## University of Missouri



**Glen T. Cameron** is a Professor and the Maxine Wilson Gregory Chair in Journalism Research in the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri. Cameron's research includes studies of public relations and new production, information processing of news and commercials, and tailored health news. He is co-author of the leading introductory text to public relations, *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics*. Cameron has served as Principal Investigator or core director on almost \$70 million in funded health and science communications projects. Other notable scholarly accomplishments include additional textbooks, as well as the development of the contingency theory of conflict in public relations. Cameron's invention disclosure for Treepple, a tailored health news and social media application, has been executed with MU and is becoming commercialized. [Read more about Dr. Cameron.](#)

## University of South Carolina



**Claudia Benitez-Nelson** is a College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor in the Marine Program at the University of South Carolina. Dr. Benitez-Nelson's research focuses on the biogeochemical cycling of phosphorus and carbon and how these elements are influenced by both natural and anthropogenic processes. She has authored or co-authored more than 90 papers, including lead author publications in the journals *Science* and *Nature*. Dr. Benitez-Nelson has continuously been supported by substantial, multi-year research and education grants from the National Science Foundation and NASA, among others. Her many research honors include the Early Career Award in Oceanography from the American Geophysical Union in 1996, Fulbright and Marie Curie Fellowships in 2008, and she was named a National Academy of Sciences/Humboldt Foundation Kavli Fellow in 2012. [Read more about Dr. Benitez-Nelson.](#)

## University of Tennessee



**Susan E. Riechert** is a Distinguished Service Professor and Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Tennessee. Dr. Riechert's work is at the interface between behavior, ecology and evolutionary biology with a central focus on the extent to which populations are at adaptive equilibria with respect to their physical and biotic environments. She is credited with publishing a series of papers that represent some of the first empirical tests of game theory using natural systems. Dr. Riechert has been the recipient of funding from the National Science Foundation on numerous occasions for her research on spiders. She has served as president of the American Arachnological Society and the Animal Behavior Society of America. Dr. Riechert's work has been published in the top journals in her field, including *Evolution*, *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*, and *Animal Behaviour*. [Read more about Dr. Riechert.](#)

## Texas A&M University



**Rafael Lara-Alecio** is Regents Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at Texas A&M University. Dr. Lara-Alecio has made significant contributions locally, nationally and internationally, including being the co-Editor of the *Handbook on Educational Theories*, which serves as the first comprehensive collection of many influential educational theories. He developed the Bilingual Educational Program, which has been included among the nation's best in the quality of scholarly products, recruitment, retention and mentoring of students; the number of faculty of color; and the impressive record of external funding. In 2015, the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics recognized the program as a "Bright Spot" in Hispanic education. Dr. Lara-Alecio's research and service extends to school districts across Texas, where he works to improve instruction, curriculum and interventions for English language learners. [Read more about Dr. Lara-Alecio.](#)

## Vanderbilt University



**Sankaran Mahadevan** is the John R. Murray, Sr., Professor of Engineering at Vanderbilt University. Dr. Mahadevan's research contributions are in risk, reliability and uncertainty analysis methods; materials durability; and structural health diagnosis and prognosis. He has developed these methods for a wide variety of civil, mechanical and aerospace systems and materials, and complex systems and processes (e.g., transportation networks, manufacturing supply chains, emergency response, and facility protection). Dr. Mahadevan's research has been funded by the National Science Foundation, Federal Aviation Administration and NASA, among others. He has developed and directs NSF-funded multidisciplinary graduate studies in reliability and risk engineering at Vanderbilt since 2001. Dr. Mahadevan's research has been documented in 500 technical publications, including two textbooks and 216 journal articles. [Read more about Dr. Mahadevan.](#)