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# **SEC Academic Leadership Development Program Liaisons**

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# University of Alabama - Liaison



## **Patricia (Patty) Sobecky**

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Dr. Patricia (Patty) Sobecky is Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and a Professor of Biological Sciences at the University of Alabama. Previous administrative roles include serving as Chair of the Department of Biological Sciences and as the founding Executive Director of the University of Alabama Water Institute. She is an AAAS Fellow, was selected as a Jefferson Science Fellow and has authored more than 65 scientific publications. Dr. Sobecky was editor of the international journal *FEMS Microbiology Ecology* and chief scientist for oceanographic research cruises in the Gulf of Mexico.

Dr. Sobecky earned a Ph.D. in Microbiology from the University of Georgia in 1993, and from 1993 to 1997, she was a postdoctoral fellow in the Center for Molecular Genetics at the University of California, San Diego. Her research interests are in the area of environmental microbiology, applying microbial processes to address societal issues related to water and soil quality. She was on faculty at the Georgia Institute of Technology and came to Alabama in 2009. She was an SEC ALDP fellow in the 2012-13 cohort.

# University of Arkansas - Liaison



**Kathryn (Kathy) Sloan**  
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Dr. Kathryn (Kathy) Sloan is Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Professor of History at the University of Arkansas. Dr. Sloan has served in many capacities, including as Associate Dean in the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, as chair of the Department of History, and as Director of Graduate Studies and Associate Chair in the department. She was instrumental in launching the IDEALS (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access, Leadership Development & Strategic Supports) Institute on the Arkansas campus and helped develop the Arkansas Humanities Center. She was awarded the Chancellor's Innovation & Collaboration Grant in 2018.

Dr. Sloan is the author of three books on Latin American history, most recently *Suicide and the Social Imaginary in Modern Mexico*. She has been awarded the Arnold Hirsch Award for Best Scholarly Article in Urban History by the Urban History Association, and serves as a reviewer for the U.S. Department of Education's Fulbright and area studies fellowships. Dr. Sloan received the 2012 Fulbright College Outstanding Advisor Award and the 2011 John E. King Award for Outstanding Service. Dr. Sloan was an SEC ALDP fellow in the 2014-15 cohort.

# Auburn University - Liaison



## **Andrew (Andy) Gillespie**

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Dr. Andrew (Andy) Gillespie is Assistant Provost for International Programs at Auburn University and serves as the Senior International Officer, overseeing programs in international student and scholars services, study abroad, internationalizing the curriculum, international alumni, international student insurance, instruction in non-traditional languages, strategic partnerships overseas, and internationalizing recruitment, development, research and outreach. His additional responsibilities include international alumni development, international student recruiting and admissions, development of international campuses and on-campus curriculum internationalization. Dr. Gillespie is also a Professor of Natural Resources in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. He received a joint B.S. from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and Syracuse University, an M.S. from the University of New Hampshire, and his Ph.D. from Purdue University.

Dr. Gillespie came to Auburn in 2010, after 20 years at Purdue University on the faculty in the College of Agriculture and in academic administration, overseeing international programming and strategic planning as associate dean. A Fulbright Scholar, Dr. Gillespie was trained as a soil chemist and plant physiologist, and his research is in food and fiber production systems of indigenous peoples and their relation to temperate and tropical production systems in developed countries.

# University of Florida - Liaison



## **Chris J. Hass**

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Dr. Chris J. Hass is Associate Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs at the University of Florida. In this role, he serves as a member of the provost's administrative team, managing the tenure and promotion process, providing leadership for university-level faculty development efforts, managing faculty personnel issues, including policy and processes, and serving as the Office of the Provost's representative for university governance.

Dr. Hass is a graduate of the University of Florida, and before returning to UF he held academic positions at Columbia University and the Georgia Institute of Technology. He is a Professor in the Department of Applied Physiology and Kinesiology and faculty within the Fixel Center for Neurological Diseases. He is a Fellow of the National Academy of Kinesiology, the American College of Sports Medicine, and the American Society of Biomechanics. Dr. Hass has authored more than 150 peer reviewed publications. He has held leadership positions in the American Society of Biomechanics and the American College of Sports Medicine.

# University of Georgia - Liaison



## **Sarah F. Covert**

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Dr. Sarah F. Covert is Interim Associate Provost for Academic Programs at the University of Georgia. In this role, she oversees faculty recognition awards originating in the Provost's Office and works with campus units on lecture series and visiting speakers. In addition, she oversees other leadership programs such as the Women's Leadership Fellows Program and Current Administrators Training. Dr. Covert has served in a number of leadership roles at UGA, most recently as Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs for five years, and she was a faculty member in the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources for nearly 30 years.

Dr. Covert came to UGA in 1993 after completing a National Science Foundation postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Arizona. She garnered nearly \$6 million in external funding for her research on economically and ecologically significant fungal pathogens. Her journal articles have been cited more than 7,400 times, and she holds a patent for transgenic plants that have a high tolerance to drought and extreme light conditions. Dr. Covert was an SEC ALDP fellow in the 2013-14 cohort.

# University of Kentucky - Liaison



## **G.T. Lineberry**

Associate Provost for Faculty Advancement

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Dr. G.T. Lineberry is Associate Provost for Faculty Advancement and Professor of Mining Engineering at the University of Kentucky. As associate provost he is responsible for all matters relating to the full span of the career of UK faculty members. He has been on the mining engineering faculty at Kentucky for more than 35 years after earning and a Ph.D. in Mining Engineering from West Virginia University in 1982.

In his career Dr. Lineberry has worked internships, a summer appointment, and a sabbatical with Consol, the Army Research Institute, and the former U.S. Bureau of Mines, respectively. His research interests are in engineering education, mine excavating and bulk materials handling, and occupational health and safety. He has authored or co-authored approximately 70 journal articles, conference papers, books, book chapters, and government documents and has given more than 140 conference presentations, seminars and invited lectures.

Dr. Lineberry received the Stefanko Best Paper Award (Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration, Coal Division), the Pittsburgh Coal Mining Institute of America Educational Excellence Award, a Life Member of SME, was instrumental in establishing the cooperative engineering programs in Paducah, Kentucky, and the joint engineering programs in Bowling Green, Kentucky and he is a three-time winner of the UK Departmental Tau Beta Pi Outstanding Teacher award, most recently in 2013. He is the founder of Mu Nu Gamma, an honorary society for mining engineering students.

# Louisiana State University - Liaison



## **Jason Hicks**

Provost's Fellow

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Dr. Jason Hicks is a Provost's Fellow in the Office of Academic Affairs at Louisiana State University where his responsibilities include administering academic policy relevant to personnel actions, professional development of faculty and administrators, university promotion and tenure processes and implementation of faculty activity software.

He was previously Associate Dean in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, managing personnel matters for faculty and staff such as promotion and tenure, sabbatical applications, faculty and staff development programs, and consulting with department chairs and program directors on academic policy. Dr. Hicks has other administrative appointments that include serving as Chair of the Psychology Department, overseeing both the graduate and the undergraduate psychology degree programs and being the respective director of these programs.

Dr. Hicks earned his Ph.D. in Cognitive/Experimental Psychology from the University of Georgia, and he has regularly published articles or book chapters in outlets such as *Memory & Cognition*, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* and the *Journal of Memory and Language*. He is a fellow of the American Psychological Association, a member of the Association for Psychological Science and a fellow of the Psychonomic Society. Dr. Hicks was also an SEC ALDP fellow in the 2015-16 cohort.

# University of Mississippi - Liaison



## **Virginia (Ginny) Rougon Chavis**

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Virginia (Ginny) Rougon Chavis is Acting Associate Provost and a Professor of Art at the University of Mississippi. In the provost's office, she assists with an array of administrative matters related to the academic budget, classroom space, student retention and human resources. She is also a part of the Sally McDonald Barksdale Honors College where she serves on the Admissions Committee, Scholarship Committee, and is a member of the Honors Council. Previously, she served as Chair of the Department of Art and History for seven years.

Chavis earned her M.F.A. in Graphic Design from the Savannah College of Art & Design, and she is a designer, artist and educator with years of experience teaching graphic design, letterpress and the creative process. She presents her letterpress and mixed-media works nationally and internationally, as well as working with clients who commission for design work. She has been awarded several grants, exhibitions, workshops and was an Artist in Residence in Marnay-sur-Seine, France. Chavis was named the university's Faculty Advisor of the Year and the NACADA Southeast Regional Faculty Advisor of the Year. Chavis was also an SEC ALDP fellow in the 2014-15 cohort.

# Mississippi State University - Liaison



## **Peter L. Ryan**

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Dr. Peter L. Ryan is Executive Vice Provost at Mississippi State University where his responsibilities include management of international academic agreements and study abroad policies, coordination of the self-study review process for academic departments and supervision of new faculty development. Dr. Ryan earned his Ph.D. from the Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph, Canada, and he is also Dean of the Graduate School.

Dr. Ryan is a Professor in the Departments of Animal and Dairy Sciences and Pathology and Population Medicine. He has served as Coordinator of the Animal Physiology Graduate Program since 2000. His research is in the area of reproductive physiology with a major focus on uterine pathogenesis and pre-term delivery using domestic animals as models for the human condition. His research has been supported by the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, U.S. Department of Agriculture and other public and private sources.

Dr. Ryan is co-Director of the Facilities for Organismal and Cellular Imaging that utilizes bioluminescent, fluorescent, ultrasound and digital thermal imaging technologies to investigate physiological events in living systems. In August 2009, he joined the Office of the Provost as the Associate Vice President Intern for Academic Affairs and was appointed Interim Associate Provost in April 2010.

# University of Missouri - Liaison



## **Matthew P. Martens**

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Dr. Matthew P. Martens is Senior Vice Provost at the University of Missouri. In this role, he oversees policies and processes related to academic programs, supervises several units within the Office of the Provost and provides direct assistance to the provost by supporting the review and evaluation of deans, representing the provost in meetings or at events, and triaging meeting requests. Prior administrative appointments include serving as Associate Division Dean and Division Director in the College of Education at Missouri.

He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Boston College in 1995, a Master of Arts degree from the University of North Carolina in 1997, and a Ph.D. from the University of Missouri in 2002. His primary research interest is in the area of health psychology, particularly addictive behaviors. He has been either a principal or co-investigator on multiple federally and foundation-funded studies examining the efficacy of brief motivational interventions at reducing at-risk alcohol use and harmful gambling behaviors. Dr. Martens was an SEC ALDP fellow in the 2014-15 cohort.

# University of South Carolina - Liaison



## **Cheryl Addy**

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Dr. Cheryl Addy is Vice Provost and Dean of Faculty at the University of South Carolina. Her responsibilities include oversight of faculty affairs and direction of faculty leadership development opportunities and grant programs. Prior to this appointment, she chaired and served on numerous university committees and councils, including the Graduate Council, Space Reservation Policy Task Force, Carolina Core (general education) Committee, Academic Program Liaisons Committee and Interprofessional Education for the Health Sciences Steering Committee.

Dr. Addy is a Professor of Biostatistics in the Arnold School of Public Health and has served in various administrative positions, including graduate program director and chair at the department level, and most recently, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the school level. She has more than 100 publications in peer-reviewed journals, including the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, *Journal of the American Public Health Association* and *Epidemiology*. Dr. Addy's more recent activities include several randomized trials to evaluate interventions to increase physical activity behaviors and to improve nutrition behaviors in diverse populations ranging from preschool children to older adults. She is also active within the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health and is a trained accreditation site visit chair for the Council on Education for Public Health.

# University of Tennessee - Liaison



## **Diane Kelly**

Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

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Dr. Diane Kelly is Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and a Professor at the University of Tennessee where she oversees recruitment, retention, evaluation and professional development of all faculty. Prior to serving in the office of the provost, she was Director at the School of Information Sciences, and she guided the school through creation of a new bachelor's degree in information sciences.

Dr. Kelly earned her Ph.D. from Rutgers University, and she has received several awards for both her research and teaching, including the ASIST Research Award, British Computer Society's IRSG Karen Spärck Jones Award, Best JASIST Paper of the Decade (2000s) and the ASIST/Thomson Reuters Outstanding Information Science Teacher Award. Dr. Kelly is chair-elect of the iSchools organization, past chair of the Association for Computing Machinery's Special Interest Group in Information Retrieval (SIGIR), co-editor in chief of *Foundations and Trends in Information Retrieval* and associate editor of *ACM Transactions on Information Systems*.

# Texas A&M University - Liaison



## **Heather Lench**

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Dr. Heather Lench is Senior Associate Vice President for Faculty Affairs at Texas A&M University, named to the newly created position in March 2022. As the senior associate vice president, she helps support faculty across their careers at the university. She has experience in strategic planning and initiatives, faculty hiring and retention, evaluation processes, mentoring programs, and data informed decision making. Dr. Lench has previously served as department head and associate head, among other administrative roles.

Dr. Lench is a Professor in Psychological and Brain Sciences, and her research focuses on how emotions and intuitions powerfully impact people's thinking and behavior. She has more than 70 publications, and she has received both federal and foundation support. Dr. Lench has been highlighted in outlets including NPR, BBC, and Wired. She received the American Psychological Association New Investigator Award, and she is currently a Society of Personality and Social Psychology fellow. Dr. Lench earned her undergraduate degree from Florida State University, a master's from California State University, Fresno, and a Ph.D. from the University of California, Irvine.

# Vanderbilt University - Liaison



## **Jermaine Soto**

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Jermaine Soto is Director of Faculty Development, and he leads the Vanderbilt University Office of Faculty Affairs' efforts in promoting data-driven and holistic initiatives to improve faculty recruitment and development. In the new position, Soto curates the most impactful resources that support the faculty lifecycle and career pathways. Specific areas within his portfolio include leading and guiding all faculty and academic leadership development initiatives, leading all internal faculty awards processes and guiding the university in its inclusive faculty search efforts.

Soto works closely with the Office of Inclusive Excellence and the Office of Research to support their faculty development programs while convening various committees, working groups and advisory groups to outline the best approaches to meeting faculty development needs. Previously he was Director of Operations for the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Soto holds an undergraduate degree in English from Cornell University and a master's degree in Cultural Foundations of Education from Syracuse University. He is a candidate for the Ph.D. in Cultural Foundations of Education at Syracuse. He has been a lecturer, researcher and facilitator for the Intergroup Dialogue Program. He also served as a consultant for the New York State Migrant Education Program, where he developed a series of training modules on self-advocacy.