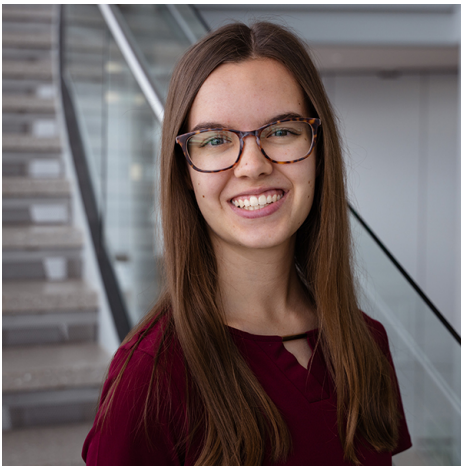


QANR Awards 2025-2026

Lynnette Harris

03/03/2026

QANR Awards 2025-2026



Clarissa Richins

Undergraduate Scholar of the Year

Clarissa Richins brings an uncommon blend of curiosity, compassion, and initiative to every project she takes on. Her Honors Capstone project centered on Harvest Extend—a USU Extension program that rescues surplus fruit and turns it into shelf-stable foods for hunger-relief organizations. Clarissa designed and led a rigorous study that strengthened the program's accessibility, impact, and sustainability. She also improved food-allergen safety in USU Dining Services, uncovering discrepancies in allergen information and making campus dining safer for everyone. Her Dietetics Capstone included personalized cooking lessons for college students that measurably improved

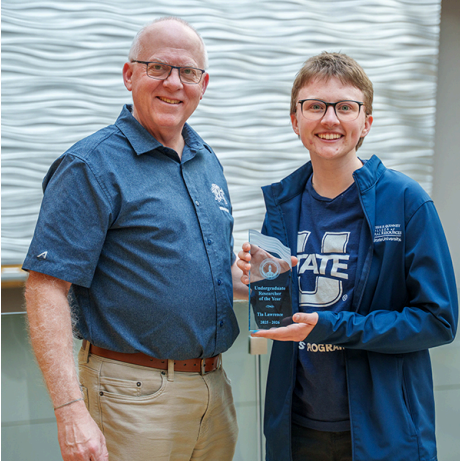
their confidence and knowledge. Her creativity, analytical skill, and commitment to community health and well-being make Clarissa Richins an exceptional Undergraduate Scholar of the Year.



Maryn Sadler

Legacy of Utah State

Maryn Sadler embodies the Aggie spirit at its very best—service-minded, community-oriented, and unwavering in her dedication to learning and Utah State. Her journey from 4-H youth leader to a driving force in the sheep and goat program reflects years of behind-the-scenes work that strengthens her department, supports her peers, and uplifts the broader agricultural community. She revitalized the Sheep and Goat Club, expanded its outreach, and became an indispensable contributor to Extension programs, research projects, and producer education across the state. Maryn's resilience through profound personal adversity last year only deepened her commitment to serving others. Her compassion, leadership, and perseverance make her a deeply deserving recipient of the Legacy of Utah State Award.



Tia Lawrence

Undergraduate Researcher of the Year

Tia Lawrence has distinguished herself as an exceptional undergraduate researcher in the Department of Plants, Soils and Climate. From designing experiments to securing research funding and presenting at Research on Capitol Hill, Tia has shown remarkable confidence, determination, and drive. Her research on invasive aquatic plants in Bear Lake has already informed management decisions and earned statewide recognition, including first place at the Western Society of Weed Science student competition. Tia's intellectual curiosity and commitment to community impact embody the very best of undergraduate research at USU, and the Quinney College is proud to recognize her as the Student Researcher of the Year.



Mohammad Kawsar Uddin

Master's Student Researcher of the Year

Mohammad Kawsar Uddin has distinguished himself as an exceptionally disciplined researcher whose work is enriched by his professional experience and has elevated the Master's program in Environmental Planning. Motivated by his experiences growing up in Bangladesh—where rapid urbanization and social inequities shaped daily life—he approaches planning as a way to create evidence-based solutions that improve people's lives. At USU, his primary research focuses on understanding the mobility barriers faced by individuals with disabilities. He also contributed to statewide planning efforts through a Utah Department of Transportation project on infrastructure for drones in urban environments. Kawsar's rigor, resilience, and commitment to equity make him a truly outstanding Master's Student Researcher of the Year.



David Evans

Doctoral Student Researcher of the Year

David Evans is an exceptional emerging scholar whose research explores how people form relationships with their environments and how those connections shape perception, behavior, and well-being. His doctoral work integrates psychological insight with geospatial analysis to understand the human visual experience of landscapes, using innovative eye-tracking methods in both real and virtual settings. David has published extensively, delivered numerous conference presentations, and contributed to national conversations on scenic conservation and renewable energy planning through collaborations with Argonne National Laboratory and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. His research excellence is matched by his commitment to teaching, mentoring, and building scholarly community. David's creativity, rigor, and interdisciplinary vision make him a deeply deserving Doctoral Student Researcher of the Year.



Patrick Kelly

Graduate Student Teacher of the Year

Patrick Kelly is an exceptional educator whose teaching is defined by curiosity, compassion, and a deep belief in the power of experiential learning. Over six years at USU, he has taught courses ranging from introductory environmental science to graduate-level interpretation and non-profit management, consistently creating classrooms where students feel supported, challenged, and inspired.

As one student's evaluation noted, "I am not exaggerating when I say this class definitely changed my life. It set me on a career path I didn't know I wanted and helped me gain knowledge I didn't know I loved." Students praise his hands-on approach, inclusive teaching style, and genuine investment in their success. Patrick continually refines his courses—experimenting with online and in-person formats, integrating real-world projects, and adapting instruction to meet diverse learning needs. His joy in teaching is unmistakable, and his student-centered philosophy has made a lasting impact across the Department of Environment and Society. Patrick is a deeply deserving Graduate Student Teacher of the Year.



Avery Truman

2025-2026 College Valedictorian

Avery Truman is passionate about Earth science, marine biology, astronomy, and especially enjoys learning about the intersections among them. She is currently managing editor of *The Utah Statesman* and has a double major in environmental studies and geography with a minor in unmanned aerial systems (aka, drones). She completed two exclusive internships with the NASA Goddard Space Flight center in Washington, D.C. where she interviewed experts and wrote about the Artemis Mission and the DAVINCI probe. Avery was then chosen from a pool of more than 9,000 applicants to be the Executive Communications Intern for the National Geographic Society, where she wrote on behalf of the society's CEO. Now a senior, she continues to portray consistent leadership while maintaining a 4.0 GPA. She believes that stories have the power to make real, tangible change.



Srisharan Shreedharan

Undergraduate Research Mentor of the Year

Dr. Srisharan Shreedharan is an expert in the physics of earthquakes whose research spans experimental, numerical, and data#science approaches. He has built one of the few experimental earthquake laboratories in the world—and has enthusiastically opened this state#of#the#art facility to undergraduate researchers. His mentorship and providing hands-on research opportunities has enriched experiences of students from multiple majors. Some have chosen to pursue a degree in geoscience after working in his lab and others are using skills they gained to secure new research opportunities across campus. Dr. Shreedharan’s patient guidance, technical rigor, and genuine excitement for discovery create transformative experiences for undergraduates and strengthen the department’s research community. He is a deeply deserving Undergraduate Research Mentor of the Year.

health, demonstrating the lasting impact of her mentorship — and why she has been selected as Undergraduate Research Mentor of the Year.



Carrie Durward

Undergraduate Research Mentor of the Year

In her 12 years at USU, Dr. Carrie Durward has mentored 36 undergraduate students, including 25 from her own department and 11 from other disciplines. Mentorship by Dr. Durward means students don’t just passively participate in her research; instead, it’s an opportunity for students to discover their own intellectual prowess. They develop research questions, apply for grants, present at national conferences, and complete projects that position them to begin careers in research. Dr. Durward’s students go on to graduate programs, medical school, and careers in community nutrition, healthcare, agriculture, and public

Aishwarya Chandrasekaran

Undergraduate Faculty Mentor of the Year

Dr. Aishwarya Chandrasekaran teaches courses at the intersections of remote sensing, AI, and society and her mentorship extends beyond the classroom to supervise students on applied geospatial projects. Aish is credited with resuscitating Utah State’s TERRA Geospatial Club that brings together students, faculty, and staff to share information and expertise, germinate ideas, and advance members’ geospatial knowledge and skills. In mentoring students in the club, she organizes guest lectures and poster competitions to enhance learning and professional development.

She has secured undergraduate grant funding to support student research, which has been showcased at a Utah Geographic Information Council conference. Additionally, she collaborates with USU’s Climate Adaptation Intern Program to support mapping needs for student research. The college is pleased to recognize Aishwarya Chandrasekaran as the Faculty Undergraduate Mentor of the Year.



Andreas “Baron” Wesemann

Undergraduate Faculty Mentor of the Year

Few people can talk about aviation with such contagious passion that you start wondering whether you should change careers—but “Baron” Wesemann does it effortlessly. A former Air Force pilot and lifelong educator, he believes aviation is powered by mentor relationships, and he lives that truth every day. Baron builds learning experiences, guides student leaders, creates courses that open doors for youth and college students, and invests deeply in every aspiring aviator who crosses his path—in a department with more than 700 students. Through guidance, learning experiences, and unwavering enthusiasm, he helps students turn dreams into flight plans. For these reasons and more, the Quinney College is proud to recognize “Baron” Wesemann as the Undergraduate Faculty Mentor of the Year.



Wei Zhang

Early Career Faculty Researcher of the Year

Dr. Wei Zhang brings extraordinary energy to understanding our changing climate and a commitment to explaining it clearly to colleagues and the public. In just four years at USU, he has secured more than \$9 million in research funding, published dozens of papers in high-impact journals that resulted in more than 4,000 citations, as his work informs agencies and communities. In 2024, he was among the Stanford/Elsevier World’s Top 2% Scientists. He leads nationally recognized projects, from urban heat-mapping with citizen scientists to major collaborations across federal agencies. Despite this momentum, he remains deeply committed to mentoring students and empowering them as researchers. His creativity, rigor, and public-minded approach make him an exceptional Quinney College Early Career Faculty Researcher of the Year.



Brian Gowen

Faculty Researcher of the Year

Dr. Brian Gowen is an internationally recognized virologist whose pioneering research has advanced protection against severe, often life-threatening viral diseases that pose global public health threats. His National Institutes of Health-funded work has increased the world’s scientific understanding of the processes that allow viruses to spread and cause disease in humans and animals, and been foundational in the development of antiviral therapies, vaccines, and host-targeted treatments. As Director of USU’s Institute for Antiviral Research, he has strengthened a nationally prominent research group that provides essential data in preclinical trials

that have led to treatments and methods of preventing the spread of emerging infectious diseases. He is also deeply committed to mentoring students and postdoctoral scholars, fostering the next generation of scientists. For his scientific excellence and leadership, Dr. Brian Gowen is honored as the Faculty Researcher of the Year.



Kezia Manlove

Faculty Researcher of the Year

Dr. Kezia Manlove's work is grounded in a belief that wildlife research should meaningfully serve both the animals we study and the stewards who care for them. She collaborates closely with state agencies, shaping research questions alongside her students so the results genuinely inform sound management decisions. With more than 80 publications and projects spanning mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep, CWD, and beyond, she still makes time to mentor students one-on-one and build inclusive partnerships nationwide. Her rigor, creativity, and integrity have earned deep trust across the wildlife community, making her an extraordinary researcher and an exceptional choice as the Quinney College's Faculty Researcher of the Year



Brett Hurst

Graduate Research Mentors of the Year

Dr. Brett Hurst has built a remarkable graduate mentoring environment, starting it under circumstances that might have overwhelmed many. He stepped into his role at USU's Institute for Antiviral Research just as COVID#19 emerged, and while the institute faced an intense surge of work to understand and combat a novel virus. Still, he created an environment where structure, support, and scientific curiosity thrive side by side. He sets clear expectations, models research integrity, and invests deeply in each student's professional growth. His mentees publish, present, and secure competitive placements across academia, government, and industry. Dr. Hurst's thoughtful guidance and commitment to developing future scientists make him an exceptional Graduate Research Mentor of the Year.



Kelly Bradbury

Research Mentor of the Year Award

Dr. Kelly Bradbury is an extraordinary graduate mentor whose steady dedication has shaped a supportive, unified, and highly successful graduate community in the Department of Geosciences. As Graduate Program Coordinator, she has taught the department's graduate seminar courses and also spearheaded a Graduate Onboarding class that offers new students early connection to faculty, resources, and each other—an innovation that has strengthened research progress, cohort cohesion, and student confidence. She checks in with students who are struggling, offers compassionate guidance, and works tirelessly to ensure they are treated fairly and supported through every stage of their programs. Dr. Bradbury's commitment to student well-being and academic success makes her a deeply deserving Graduate Research Mentor of the Year.



Chad Page

Early Career Teacher of the Year

Chad Page is an exceptional educator whose teaching is defined by providing dynamic hands-on learning, applied research, and deep student engagement. Whether teaching Introduction to Animal Science or leading Sheep Field Day, he integrates real-world livestock production, research trials, and industry challenges into the classroom, helping students connect theory to practice. His approachable, student-centered teaching style fosters confidence, curiosity, and career readiness for both majors and non-majors alike. His teaching goes beyond the campus as his Extension workshops, field days, and publications provide valuable education to livestock

producers whether from large operations or refugees learning to manage profitable small-scale goat herds.

Dr. Page exemplifies teaching excellence, and the Quinney College is pleased to recognize him as the Early Career Teacher of the Year.



Casey Coombs

Teacher of the Year

Casey Coombs is a thoughtful and innovative educator whose student-centered approach has transformed the Master of Public Health program. She creates engaging, high-quality learning experiences that connect classroom concepts to real-world public health challenges. As a mentor, she guides students through meaningful capstone projects that serve communities across the state. Her leadership with the Student Nutrition Access Center further expands hands-on opportunities and deepens student impact. Casey's teaching is marked by care, creativity, and a deep commitment to student growth. The Quinney College is pleased to recognize Casey Coombs as Teacher of the Year.



Katie Potter

Teacher of the Year recipient

Dr. Katie Potter is a passionate and inspiring educator whose enthusiasm for geoscience is contagious. Students love her classes, not only because she makes complex concepts engaging and accessible, but because she genuinely cares about their success. She connects classroom learning to real-world challenges, creating applied experiences that prepare students for careers in mining, critical minerals, and beyond. As director of the GeoProfessional program, she mentors students intentionally, guiding them toward internships and careers with outstanding success. Through her energy, innovation, and unwavering commitment to students, Katie has become one of the most influential teachers in the department. The Quinney College proudly recognizes Katie Potter as Teacher of the Year.



Martha Archuleta

Distinguished Professor of the Year

Dr. Martha Archuleta has built a remarkable career advancing dietetics, nutrition education, and community well-being, and she exemplifies the highest ideals of Utah State University. From her earliest faculty role, she has dedicated herself to supporting at-risk individuals and communities—including food-insecure families, individuals with diabetes, and children at risk of diet-related disease—through evidence-based nutrition programs. Her Extension leadership prior to joining the faculty at Utah State shaped statewide nutrition education efforts in New Mexico and produced programs that continue to support healthy lifestyles. At USU, she transformed the Master of Dietetics Administration program into a nationally recognized model for leadership training, mentoring nearly 300 graduate students whose projects have improved dietetics practice across the country. Her USU Extension work with refugee communities reflects her commitment to culturally responsive, accessible education that considers individual and community assets and barriers to good nutrition. Dr. Archuleta's lifelong contributions to teaching, research, and outreach make her deeply deserving of recognition as an S. J. & Jessie E. Quinney College Distinguished Professor.



Man-Keun Kim

International Professor of the Year

Dr. Man-Keun Kim is truly an international researcher. He collaborates closely with scholars in Australia, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, China, and Kenya and has published 14 journal articles since 2020. His research has global implications for sustainable agriculture and includes

topics such as community-supported agriculture, smart agriculture technologies, and agritourism.

Through the International Partnership in Agriculture, Climate, and Environment, Dr. Kim continues to provide students at Taiwan's National Chung Hsing University with hands-on research training in economics that empowers them to contribute to the global conversation on sustainability and food. The college is honored to recognize Dr. Kim's dedication to research across borders as its International Professor of the Year.



Dennis Newell

Faculty University Service Award

During a time of significant change, Dr. Dennis Newell has provided steady, thoughtful leadership as interim head of the Department of Geosciences. He has worked tirelessly to advocate for faculty, staff, and students, ensuring a smooth and successful move into the S.J. & Jessie E. Quinney College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Dennis is also consummate researcher and champions inclusivity for students through participation in the American Geophysical Union's Bridge Program and support of USU's Native American Summer Mentorship Program. He strengthens connections across colleges and through research and outreach activities that inspire young scientists. For his exceptional leadership and service, the college proudly recognizes Dennis Newell with the Faculty University Service Award.



Rose Judd-Murray

Faculty University Service Award

Rose Judd-Murray's service to Utah State University reflects both leadership and heart. Within her department and across the college, she strengthens curriculum, assessment, and faculty mentoring while fostering meaningful collaboration. As a Faculty Senate representative and contributor to the USU Teaching Academy, she champions teaching excellence and shared governance. She is also the founder of the Food Security and Hunger Solutions Symposium, fostering campus-wide and global collaboration to address food insecurity. For her lasting impact on students, faculty, and the broader community, the Quinney College is pleased to recognize Rose Judd-Murray with the Faculty University Service Award.



Claudia Radel

Cazier Lifetime Achievement Award

Dr. Claudia Radel joined the USU faculty in 2005. An expert in gender, environment, and international development, her research has focused on the intersections of human migration and environmental change. She has authored more than 60 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters and received numerous awards and recognitions for her significant scholarly contributions. She has served in numerous leadership roles, including associate dean and head of USU's Department Environment and Society. Widely recognized for her open-door approach to leadership and problem solving, colleagues note that her proactive leadership has been inclusive, empowering, and transparent during especially challenging times, marked by generosity of enthusiasm and energy. Her sustained contributions to scholarship, leadership, and mentorship make her a deserving recipient of the Cazier Lifetime Achievement Award.

engagement and completion. Faculty often say, "We'll ask Dawnetta," a testament to the trust she has earned. The Quinney College is pleased to recognize Dawnetta Mahnken with the Outstanding Service to Students Award.



Karma Wood

Outstanding Service to Faculty Award Winner

For nearly three decades, Karma Wood has been the steady, trusted presence behind the success of the Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences Department faculty. Supporting more than 30 faculty members, along with staff and students, she expertly manages the complex financial, travel, and administrative details that keep the department running smoothly. Known as the person who "knows everything," Karma combines deep institutional knowledge with patience, positivity, and genuine care for her colleagues. Her willingness to go above and beyond—always with a smile—allows faculty to focus on teaching, research, and outreach. The College proudly recognizes Karma Wood with the Outstanding Service to Faculty Award.



Dawnetta Mahnken

Outstanding Service to Students

Dawnetta Mahnken is a passionate advocate for students and a trusted partner to faculty in the Department of Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Sciences. She listens closely to students, understands their challenges, and works tirelessly to remove barriers to their success. From guiding major curriculum transitions to creating research and experiential learning opportunities, Dawnetta ensures students feel supported, informed, and connected. Her insight, initiative, and collaborative spirit have strengthened programs and increased student



Michael Stemkovski

Staff Researcher of the Year

Dr. Michael Stemkovski is an exceptional scholar in the Wildland Resources Department whose creativity and leadership have quickly elevated research at Utah State University. In just a few years, he developed the influential “ecological acclimation” framework, advancing how scientists understand ecosystem responses to climate change. His work is gaining national and international recognition, with 16 published papers and more than 950 citations. Equally impressive is Michael’s ability to bring people together. He has built a vibrant interdisciplinary network, mentored students, led workshops, and fosters a collaborative research culture. His impact on USU’s research community will be felt long after his postdoc appointment concludes, and the Quinney College is proud to honor him as its Staff Researcher of the Year.



Aaron Dyches

Employee of the Year

Aaron Dyches has devoted 18 years to helping Utah State students quite literally take flight. As Director of Flight Operations for the Aviation Technology Department, he is responsible for the success and safety of more than 500 student pilots while overseeing 50 aircraft, dozens of instructors and mechanics, and a complex web of Federal Aviation Administration and university regulations. Under Aaron’s leadership, the program has grown into one of the best collegiate flight training programs in the nation. He builds systems that ensure safety, fiscal responsibility, and opportunity, while personally mentoring students and supporting faculty and staff. For Aaron’s integrity, expertise, and unwavering commitment, the Quinney College is honored to recognize him as Employee of the Year.