

Scholastic Honors Convocation 2026

Welcome

Dr. Rajeev Dabke, 2025-2026 Educator of the Year
Dr. John Lester, Chief of Staff, Columbus State University
Dr. Dustin Anderson, Provost and Chief Academic Officer
Undrell Walker, President, Student Government Association

Announcement of Tower Day Award Winners

Dr. Kerri Taylor; Tower Day Coordinator

College of the Arts Awards

Department of Art

B.A. Studio Art Award.....Tabitha Wade
B.F.A. Studio Art Award..... Zoe Rasso
Art History Award.....Julia Wagers
Art Education Graduate Award.....Jeniyah Burton
Student of Excellence Award.....Kennedy Harper

Presented by Professor & Chair Jonathan Kline

Department of Communication

Communication Student of the Year Award.....Ava Reaves
Student of Excellence Award.....Huling Kriston

Presented by Professor & Chair Youngrak Park

Schwob School of Music

Presser Scholar (Senior Music Major Award).....Cole Zelman

Presented by Professor & Director Scott Harris

Department of Theatre & Dance

Theatre Arts Award.....Henry Covington
Theatre Arts: Performance Award..... Micaiah Byrd
Theatre Arts: Design & Technical Award.....Cameron Hunt-Clark
Theatre Arts: Education Award.....Caden Pope
Student of Excellence Award.....Charlie Hearn

Presented by Professor & Chair Larry Dooley

D. Abbott Turner College of Business & Technology

Department of Accounting & Finance

Accounting Award.....Pruthviraj Guduru
Finance Award.....Joseph Holder
Student of Excellence Award.....Jiane Rabara

Presented by Professor & Chair Gisung Moon

Department of Management & Marketing

Management Award.....Rebecca Darko
General Business Award.....Drew Ashton
Marketing Award.....Teigan Pepit
Management Information Systems Award.....Keir Etchison
Master of Business Administration Award..... Robert Jimerson
Master of Science in Organizational Leadership Award..... Rachel Jenkins
Student of Excellence Award.....Drew Ashton

Presented by Professor & Chair John Finley

TSYS School of Computer Science

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| B.S.in Computer Science: Software Systems Track Award..... | Nicholas A. Cleplensky |
| B.S.in Computer Science: Web Development Track Award..... | Camille Ahumada |
| B.S.in Computer Science: Games Programming Track Award..... | Conner Mathisen-Weitzel |
| B.S.in Information Technology Award..... | Jennifer Jackson |
| B.S.in Cybersecurity Track Award..... | Judson Whiteside |
| M.S.in Cybersecurity: Defense Award..... | Yogesh Botcha |
| M.S. in Applied Computer Science Award..... | Dheeraj Kolla |
| M.S.in Cybersecurity: Management Award..... | Rahul Raj |
| Student of Excellence Award..... | Elijah Starkey |

Presented by Professor & Chair Rania Hodhod

College of Education and Health Professions

Department of Teacher Education, Leadership and Counseling

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| School Counseling Graduate Award..... | Amelia McCardle |
| Clinical Mental Health Counseling Graduate Award..... | Asleigh Marion |
| Educational Leadership Graduate Award..... | Dently Crews |
| Educational Leadership – Higher Education Graduate Award..... | Amanda Linzy |
| Doctor of Education – Educational Leadership Track Award..... | Quinnisha Marion |
| Doctor of Education – Curriculum Track Award..... | Arpan Bosmia |
| Doctor of Education – Higher Education Administration Award..... | Rob Bandy |
| Elementary Education Undergraduate Award..... | Jaeshari Williams |
| Elementary Education Graduate Award..... | Ashley Herbolich |
| Middle Grades Education Graduate Award..... | Katia Simon |
| English Education Undergraduate Award..... | Lennox Dodd |
| English Education Graduate Award..... | Hannah Lemay |
| Secondary Mathematics Education Graduate Award..... | Jami Welch |
| UTeach Mathematics Education Undergraduate Award..... | Brian Ganzler |
| UTeach Science Education Undergraduate Award..... | Kevin Kelly |
| Secondary Science Education Graduate Award..... | Elieth Fox |
| History Education Undergraduate Award..... | Brandon Barfield |
| Social Science Education Graduate Award..... | Sean Jackson |
| Special Education Undergraduate Award..... | Samantha Bell |
| Special Education Graduate Award..... | Angelia Thomas |
| Teacher Leadership Graduate Award..... | Calli Shadix |
| Student of Excellence Award..... | Quinnisha Marion |

Presented by Professor & Chair Deniz Peker

Department of Kinesiology and Health Sciences

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|---|----------------------|
| Health & Physical Education Graduate Student Award..... | Callie Waddell |
| Public Health Graduate Award..... | Michelle Northcut |
| Student of Excellence Award - Health Science..... | Michaela Hunt Dumlao |
| Student of Excellence Award –Kinesiology..... | Jessie Rosinbaum |
| Kinesiology Graduate Award..... | Nicole Mata-Lopez |

Presented by Professor & Chair Clayton Nicks

School of Nursing

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| Outstanding Nursing B.S.N. Award..... | Julie Morris |
| Outstanding Nursing M.S.N. Award..... | Cecilia Kinder |
| Outstanding Nursing R.N.-B.S.N. Award..... | Alexa Shiver |
| Outstanding Nursing F.N.P. Award..... | Taylor Brock |
| Student of Excellence Award..... | Emily Robinson |

Presented by Professor & Director Tamara Condrey

College of Letters and Sciences

Department of English

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| Literature Award..... | Savannah Flowers |
| Professional Writing Award..... | Devin Williams |
| Creative Writing Award..... | Emma Silverstein |
| Student of Excellence Award..... | Elizabeth Woods |

Presented by Professor & Chair Shannon Godlove

Department of History, Geography, & Philosophy

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| Philosophy Award..... | Malachi Brown |
| Student of Excellence Award (History) | Rico Mora |
| Student of Excellence Award (Geography)..... | William Brock |

Presented by Associate Professor & Chair Gary Sprayberry

Department of Society, Culture, & Languages

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| Outstanding French Track Award..... | Elizabeth Woods |
| Outstanding Spanish Teacher Education Track Award..... | Litza Vazquez Hendrix |
| Outstanding Spanish Literature & Culture Track Award..... | Devante Corbin |
| Outstanding Student- General Sociology Track Award..... | Andrea Sims |
| Outstanding Student- Crime, Deviance, and Society Track..... | Russell Makepeace |
| Outstanding Student- Social Services Track..... | Eliana Scott |
| Student of Excellence Award (Modern Language & Culture) | Emma Curbelo |
| Student of Excellence Award (Sociology)..... | Rachel Turner |

Presented by Professor & Chair Joelle Bonamy

Department of Policy, Justice, & Public Safety

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| Outstanding Political Science Major Award..... | Alvah Pasley |
| Mario Mion Political Science Honors Scholarship Award..... | Zachary Gibson |
| Master of Public Administration Award..... | Dominique Ellis |
| Student of Excellence – Criminal Justice Award..... | Olivia Ryan |
| Student of Excellence Award..... | Tymere Britt |

Presented by Professor & Asst. Professor Tianyu Chen

Department of Biology

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| Cellular & Molecular Biology Award..... | Brezana Elliott |
| Biology Education Award..... | Kevin Kelly |
| George Stanton Biology Award..... | Fiza Khan |
| Organismic Biology Award..... | Shelley Le |
| Ecological & Evolutionary Biology Award..... | Taylor Wicklund |
| Student of Excellence Award..... | Fiza Khan |
| Graduate Student of Excellence..... | David Rai |

Presented by Professor & Chair Clifton Ruehl

Department of Chemistry

Excellence in Chemistry Research Award.....Devon Cushing
Student of Excellence Award.....Tara Clarkson

Presented by Professor & Chair Floyd Jackson

Department of Earth and Space Sciences

Geology Award.....Courtney Lamborn
Astronomy Award.....Liam Aycock
Physics Award.....Liam Aycock
Environmental Science Award.....Ariel Oden
Robotics Student Award.....Owen Hartshorn
Student of Excellence Award- Earth and Space Sciences.....Troii Hudson
Student of Excellence Award-MS NS Environmental Sciences Track.....Mary Claire Streat
Student of Excellence Award-MS NS Geosciences Track.....Ivy Do
Student of Excellence Award-MS Robotics Engineering.....Melissa Carroll

Presented by Professor & Chair Troy Keller

Department of Mathematics

Outstanding Mathematics Student Award.....Kyler Wehrenberg
Calculus Award.....Shah Kriyansh
Student of Excellence Award (Mathematics).....Jacob Zasada
Student of Excellence Award (Data Science)Jonathan Parker
Student of Excellence Award (Applied Mathematics) David Pifer

Presented by Professor & Chair Brian Muse

Department of Psychology

Psychology Academic Achievement AwardBrandi Weaver
Psychology Research Award.....Mary Ann Welter-O'Connor
Student of Excellence AwardDana Chatman

Presented by Associate Professor & Chair Jeremy Newton

Department of Military Science

Military Science Award.....Max Carlisle
ROTC Cadet Excellence Award.....Justin Richman

**Presented by the Senior Military Science Instructor, Master Sergeant Michael Shanks &
Lt. Col. Dale Cox**

Honors College Awards

Interdisciplinary Studies Award..... Cole Zelman
Scholarly Activities in Fine and Performing Arts Award..... Zoe Rasso
Scholarly Activities in Humanities Award.....Chloe Curbelo
Scholarly Activities in Professional Studies Award.....Erin Fowler
Scholarly Activities in Science Award.....Jessica Ceqarra Arraiz
Scholarly Activities in Social Science Award..... Blys Brinkley

Presented by Professor & Dean Cindy Ticknor

Honors Cord Presentation

Micaiah Byrd
Jessica Cegarra-Arraiz
Savannah Flowers
Cole Zelman
Erin Fowler
Charlie Hearn
Carolina Maldonado
Zoe Rasso
Cynthia Short
Elizabeth Woods
Chloe Curbelo
Lily Conner
Amiya Smith

Presented by Professor & Dean Cindy Ticknor
and Dr. Dustin Anderson

Honors Societies Recognition

Recognition of Honors and Academic Societies

Honoris Causa Phi Kappa Phi

Members are asked to stand as each society is recognized.

University Awards

Academic Recognition Award..... Dr. Dustin Anderson

Educator of the Year Award..... Undrell Walker, President
Student Government Association
& Dr. Rajeev Dabke

Faculty Cup Award.....Dr. Dustin Anderson
Provost and Chief Academic Officer

Closing Remarks.....Dr. Rajeev Dabke

You are invited to a reception immediately following the ceremony.

Special Thanks for Your Contribution:

Scholastic Honors Convocation Committee:

Reba Wissner, Rania Hodhod, Bryan Banks,
Kim Gill, Clayton Nicks, Lisa Nixon
Columbus State University Student Government Association
Columbus State University Office of Student Affairs

Dr. Seon Jeon, Language and Linguistics

Dr. Seon Jeon approaches teaching as a space for dialogue, reflection, and connection. She uses language as a way for students to explore identity, culture, and communication, encouraging them to think more deeply about how language shapes human experience. Her classroom emphasizes interaction and trust, where students are invited to share perspectives and engage with ideas through discussion. Drawing from her experiences across languages and cultures, she incorporates global perspectives that challenge students to think beyond their immediate context. She values creating an environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves while also being pushed to develop stronger critical thinking and communication skills.

Dr. Nehal Shukla, Mathematics

Dr. Nehal Shukla's teaching focuses on changing how students experience mathematics by making learning more active, accessible, and engaging. She incorporates approaches such as collaborative work, applied problem solving, and flipped instruction to move students beyond memorization and into deeper understanding. Recognizing that many students come into mathematics with hesitation, she works intentionally to build confidence and resilience, encouraging students to view challenges as part of the learning process. She also integrates tools such as MATLAB, LaTeX, and Excel to strengthen both conceptual understanding and practical skills. Her commitment to accessibility is reflected in her work with open educational resources, helping reduce barriers while supporting long-term student success.

Professor Joshua May, Performing Arts

Professor Joshua May is a performing arts educator at Columbus State University whose teaching is built around the idea that students learn best through active creation. He leads students through the full production process, from early concept and analysis to performance, helping them understand both the artistic and technical demands of the field. His courses emphasize collaboration, critical thinking, and adaptability, preparing students to navigate the realities of professional creative environments. Drawing from his work in directing and mentorship, he integrates real world experiences such as internships, portfolio development, and production work into his teaching. He also places strong value on reflection and growth, encouraging students to learn from both successful and unsuccessful outcomes. By creating a space that mirrors professional practice while remaining supportive, Professor May helps students build confidence, take ownership of their work, and develop a clear artistic voice.

Dr. Eugen Ionascu, Mathematics

Dr. Eugen Ionascu brings a thoughtful and structured approach to teaching mathematics, grounded in both content mastery and an understanding of how students learn. He emphasizes clarity and depth, often using detailed explanations, real world examples, and connections to history and philosophy to make complex ideas more approachable. His teaching encourages students to actively engage with material through discussion and problem solving rather than passive learning. He also believes in the importance of developing discipline and consistency in studying mathematics, helping students build habits that lead to long term understanding. Through this approach, he not only strengthens students' technical skills but also helps them develop a greater appreciation for the subject.

Professor Molly Classen, Performing Arts

Professor Molly Classen's teaching is centered on collaboration, experimentation, and the process of discovery within the arts. She works closely with students in directing and production-based courses, where learning happens through doing, reflecting, and refining. Her classroom is designed to be both supportive and challenging, encouraging students to take creative risks while developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. She integrates research, analysis, and performance, often connecting student work to real world contexts and professional expectations. Through mentorship and hands on experience, she helps students build confidence in their creative voice while also preparing them to work effectively in collaborative artistic environments.

Faculty Cup Award

2025-2026 Nominees

Zoe Rasso

Zoe Rasso is a senior BFA Painting major who will graduate with Honors in May 2026, maintaining a perfect 4.0 GPA. A four-year member of the Honors College, her studies have been enriched through international experiences in Japan and Italy. Zoe brings a rare balance of artistic excellence, leadership, and professionalism through extensive internships in printmaking, studio practice, and archival work, as well as her roles as Student Assistant to the Dean of the College of the Arts and Art Department Student Assistant. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including the International Printmaking Exhibition and the Columbus State Juried Art Exhibition. A committed community partner and student leader, Zoe is a multi-year recipient of Friends of Art scholarships and numerous juried awards, reflecting a career defined by consistency, collaboration, and creative distinction.

FIZA KHAN

Fiza is an accomplished scholar and servant leader whose undergraduate career reflects outstanding academic excellence, leadership, and service. She graduated with a 4.0 GPA as a Presidential Scholar, earning continuous placement on the President's List and recognition through Phi Kappa Phi. She was selected as Columbus State University's recipient of the University System of Georgia Academic Recognition Day Award, honoring the top undergraduate student in the institution. Fiza held numerous leadership roles, including Vice President of Honoris Causa in the Honors College, member of the Presidential Envoy Program, and student representative on the Provost Search Committee. Through the Servant Leadership Program, she completed over 500 hours of community service and led initiatives such as *Read Across Columbus*, a citywide literacy outreach program. Her professional and academic mentorship includes service as a PLTL Biology leader and Lead Medical Scribe, where she trains new team members. In recognition of her academic achievement and commitment to medicine, Fiza has been accepted to Mercer University School of Medicine, where she will matriculate in Fall 2026.

Elizabeth Woods

Elizabeth Woods is a distinguished student leader and scholar who has served as Editor-in-Chief of *The Arden*, Columbus State University's student literary journal, in 2024 and 2026, and as co-editor in 2025. Under her leadership, *The Arden* earned two second-place awards at the Southern Literary Festival, with several selected works also receiving top honors, including First Place in Short Story and Expository Essay. A double major, Elizabeth has earned the highest academic awards in both disciplines, receiving the Outstanding Student in the French Track Award (2025) and the English Student of Excellence Award (2026). Deeply committed to service, she volunteers weekly at Trinity Episcopal Church and participates in community outreach through Honoris Causa. Through her leadership, scholarship, and service, Elizabeth exemplifies academic excellence and dedication to uplifting others.

Chloe Curbelo

Chloe is an accomplished scholar and emerging leader whose work reflects strong academic achievement, historical inquiry, and service. She is a member of Phi Alpha Theta, the National History Honor Society, and the Honors College, graduating *magna cum laude* and earning the prestigious Boren Scholarship. During her time at CSU, Chloe demonstrated leadership as co-manager and editor of the podcast series *Who Cares About Marquis de Lafayette* and as a recipient of a Servant Leadership Grant. She also contributed to a student-led historical research project examining the life and legacy of Dr. Ronald B. Daniel, helping to produce a published biography and digital exhibit highlighting his advocacy for educational equity in Columbus. In recognition of her academic excellence and dedication, Chloe has been accepted into the Asian Studies M.A. program at the University of California, Berkeley.