

November 2026

Education Elevated

From The College

“Fall has always been my favorite season. The time when everything bursts with its last beauty, as if nature had been saving up all year for the grand finale”
— Lauren DeStefano

The semester starts to feel a little bit short as we enter November, and with everything going on, the weeks seem to be flying by! Part of what has made it

so busy has been all of the activity. We had a wonderful Pop-Up Fall Fest in October, followed by some great work with our EPP Data Day and capped off with our Alumni Hall of Fame wall dedication and induction of five new members.

We also have had the wonderful opportunity to congratulate two of our senior faculty, including Beverly Cross for being named one of Memphis' Super Women in Business and Chrisann Schiro-Geist for receiving the Patricia McCollom/FLCPRR Research Award at the annual International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals (IARP) conference.

Things don't slow down this coming month, and I am truly appreciative of everyone who is contributing to the College's continuing movement forward. We have a great group working on the development of our Faculty Advisory Council, we have our first meetings scheduled for our Undergraduate and Graduate Student Advisory Boards, we have our end-of-year Honors Banquet scheduled, and we are fitting in some much-needed faculty development programs on how to effectively use Cayuse.

Shortly after the first of the new year, we will have some exciting news on new major scholarships, and we are looking forward to seeing everyone at our annual holiday reception on December 1 in the UC.

Our doors are always open here in the Dean's Office, and please know how thankful I am for all of you and the important work you do.

Michael T. Miller
Dean, College of Education

What's Going On This Month

Nov. 5

Research Series: System Smarts Using CAYUSE

Submission basics for faculty

11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. | Ball Hall 209
Lunch provided

Nov. 6

Promotion/Tenure Research Statement Writing Session

Join the UofM Mentorship Network for help preparing your research statement for promotion and tenure review.

9–10:30 a.m. | Virtual only

RSVP by noon Nov. 3.

Nov. 12

Research Series: CAYUSE/IRB How-To with Kellie Watson

Setting up CAYUSE records for IRB submissions. Open to COE faculty and graduate students.

Noon–1 p.m. | Ball Hall 209 | Lunch provided
RSVP by Nov. 5.

Nov. 19

Building Community Partnerships: Concord Academy and UofM COE

Open to interested COE faculty.

Noon–1 p.m. | Ball Hall 209 | In person
Lunch Provided

RSVP to Chris Mueller by Nov. 5.

Nov. 25-29

Thanksgiving Holidays
Enjoy Your Break

Research & Scholarship



Cook's Research Highlights Literacy Learning at Home

Dr. Crystal D. Cook's research on literacy practices in the homes of English Learners is featured in the Association for Literacy



Ezema Explores Nigerian Students' Expectations for Future Work

Gabriel Ezema's article in the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* examines how Nigerian college students understand future

Educators and Researchers' Fall 2026 newsletter. Her 2024 study explored how three West Tennessee families supported literacy through everyday routines, encouraging educators to recognize and build on the learning already happening at home.

Cook was also selected to present at ALER's Nov. 5–7 conference in St. Petersburg, Florida.

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decent work and the personal and structural factors shaping their expectations.

Drawing on Psychology of Working Theory, the study expands vocational psychology research beyond predominantly Western contexts.

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Exploring Research Confidence Among First-Generation Students

College of Education researchers Eli Jones and Leigh Harrell-Williams, along with current and former students and collaborators, recently published a study examining how undergraduate research experiences shape students' confidence in conducting research, particularly among first-generation students.

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CREP Receives $132,499 Award to Continue Virginia Evaluation Work

The Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP) has received a $132,499 award from the Virginia Department of Education to continue evaluating Virginia's afterschool and summer learning programs. The award marks the 22nd contract between CREP and VDOE.

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SAMHSA Awards UofM $297,688 to Launch TREAT Program

The University of Memphis has received a $297,688 first-year award from SAMHSA to launch the TREAT Program, led by College of Education faculty member Frances Ellmo, PhD.

The three-year project will prepare graduate students in counseling, nursing and social work to provide trauma-informed, evidence-based care for individuals with substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders.

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Community Highlights



From the Court to the Classroom: Early Smith’s Journey to TigerLIFE

After surviving a life-threatening emergency and spending weeks in a hospital unconscious, Early Smith woke up to a new reality that included a wheelchair and daily challenges, but Smith’s playbook never included giving up.

His experience helping others, along with his personal understanding of adjusting when life changes, shapes his work as a third-semester instructor with TigerLIFE.

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Celebrating Our October Residency Award Winners

The University of Memphis College of Education's Office of Teacher Education and Clinical Practice recognized Isabel Parobek and Michael Moore as its October 2026 Student Teachers of the Month, Leigh Collins as Mentor Teacher of the Month and Jennifer Bubrig as Supervisor of the Month.

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TigerLIFE Employees and Interns Receive Tiger Spotlight Awards

Congratulations to Oliver Duren, Calya Brexley, Sarah Tune, Adriyana Hester and Kale Breisch on receiving Tiger Spotlight Awards! Join us in celebrating their contributions to TigerLIFE.



Cindy Muzzi Named Inaugural Staff Member of the Month

Congratulations to Cindy Muzzi, assistant director of the Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP), the College of Education's inaugural Staff Member of the Month! Muzzi was selected by the Staff Leadership Council as the first honoree in this new recognition program. Join us in thanking Cindy for her contributions to CREP and the College!

Alumni Spotlight

Dr. Mary Ellen Jukoski



Mary Ellen Jukoski Reflects on Her Path to College Leadership

For Dr. Mary Ellen Jukoski (’83), mentorship, community and hands-on experience at UofM helped lay the foundation for a career in higher education leadership. In our November Alumni Spotlight, she shares those memories and her advice for today’s students.

Read her story

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