

THE MATCHUP

Welcome back, UCF alumni! The Knights celebrate Homecoming and welcome West Virginia University to Acrisure Bounce House.

UCF and WVU are leading public research universities whose faculty members' discoveries are advancing technology to shape the future of healthcare, space exploration, robotics and more.



ORLANDO, FLORIDA

18,000+

New UCF Graduates Each Year,
With 85% Staying in Florida

107,000+

Alumni Connecting With UCF by
Volunteering, Donating, Mentoring
Students and More in FY 2024-25

400,000+

UCF Alumni, Most of Whom
Live and Work in Florida,
Fueling the State's Prosperity



MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA

No. 1

Best Four-Year College in
West Virginia for Future Earnings
(U.S. Department of Education
College Scorecard)

1 of 5

Flagship, R1, Land-Grant,
Community-Engaged Universities
in the Nation

210,000+

World Alumni,
A Lifelong Mountaineer Network

FEATURED FACULTY

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

TOM NEDOROST

Senior Lecturer, Computer Science

Nedorost **advises Hack@UCF, the student cyber defense team that has won six national titles**, more than any other university. Under his mentorship, Hack@UCF alumni have advanced to careers with leading employers such as Lockheed Martin, L3Harris, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman and Microsoft. Nedorost, a UCF graduate, is one of many talented faculty members [preparing students to thrive in cybersecurity](#).

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

CHRISTOPHER RAMEZAN

*Assistant Professor of Cybersecurity,
Executive Director of Cyber-Resilience
Resource Center*

Ramezan isn't just teaching the fundamentals of cybersecurity — he's tackling today's national issues to help keep the world safe. And, with an Olympic-level [competitive cybersecurity team](#), he is letting the world know WVU is **training the next generation of cyber defense**.

POINTS OF INTEREST

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



“Cancer Assassin” Aims to Stop Spread of Cancer Cells

“Cancer assassin” Annette Khaled, who leads the College of Medicine’s cancer research, is collaborating with engineering colleagues to determine how to best deliver in the body [a peptide that can stop the spread of cancer cells](#).

She received more than \$2 million from the U.S. Department of Defense, in partnership with the Orlando Veterans Affairs Healthcare System, and the Casey DeSantis Cancer Research Program’s Florida Cancer Innovation Fund. Those grants, plus longtime support from the Orlando Sports Foundation, are helping her advance the understanding of how and why cancer cells spread.

Shining Knights: Five Earn UCF’s Top Alumni Honor

UCF congratulates [winners of the Shining Knights Alumni Awards](#). The Distinguished Alumni Award, the highest honor bestowed upon a UCF graduate, recognized **Kenneth Dixon ’75, Jason Eichenholz ’95MS ’98PhD, Cathleen Wheatley ’17DNP, Kevin Wydra ’92** and **Christine Wydra ’93**.

A visionary leader, Dixon has generously supported the Kenneth G. Dixon School of Accounting, UCF Athletics and students’ career development. Eichenholz is an entrepreneur, executive, philanthropist and pioneer in optics dedicated to serving others. As a healthcare system president, Wheatley leads with excellence while championing nursing education. And for more than three decades, the Wydras have enriched UCF through leadership, generosity and vision.

ucf.edu/news

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY



Photo Credit: WVU Photo/Matt Sunday

Meet New President Michael T. Benson

Michael T. Benson never planned on trading beach breezes for the hills of Morgantown, but life — and leadership — has a way of pulling people toward places where they’re most needed.

Diving into his new role as the [27th president of West Virginia University](#), Benson stands at the helm of an institution full of promise. His path to the Mountain State spanned four university presidencies stretching from Utah to Kentucky to South Carolina, where he most recently led Coastal Carolina University.

Benson is tapping into the “Let’s Go!” spirit to lead West Virginia’s flagship, R1, land-grant institution boldly into the future. He has enthusiastically embraced Mountaineer Nation, made up of the many gold and blue faithful who have welcomed him home.

Discovering Long-Awaited Mystery Fungus

Making a discovery with the potential for **innovative applications in pharmaceutical development**, a microbiology student has found a long sought-after fungus that produces effects similar to the semisynthetic drug LSD, which is used to treat conditions like depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and addiction.

Corinne Hazel, an environmental microbiology major and Goldwater Scholar, discovered the [new species of fungus](#) growing in morning glory plants and named it *Periglandula clandestina* for its ability to have eluded investigators for decades.

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