



# Hello June



JSU will be closed on June 19, 2023 in observance of Juneteenth.

We are a few weeks into the Summer 2023 semester, here's some graduate school tips to make sure you have a great semester!

- Get organized and familiarize yourself with assignments
- Set strong and achievable goals
- Reach out to mentors or advisors for support
- Make a plan for balancing work, school, and life
- Connect with classmates

Have exciting graduate information or news to share? Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to submit.



## ASK GRADUATE STUDIES

We want to hear from you! Submit your question(s) using the form below. Each question will be answered in the July 2023 Newsletter.

[Ask Graduate Studies Form](#)

## Congratulations to JSU's School of Nursing!

*RegisteredNursing.org* released its annual list of **Best Public Health Nurse Programs** and JSU's Public Health Nurse Program has been ranked number one in the nation for 2023.



WBRC Fox 6 News recently did a special on this prestigious accomplishment. To check it out, [click here](#).

### Graduate Student Spotlight

## ALBA CONEJERO I GUTIERREZ



"I am very proud of my journey at JSU so far. It started in 2017 when I had the opportunity to join JSU with a tennis scholarship and start my undergraduate career. After completing my undergraduate degree, I joined the MFA program. During the program, I discovered my passion for teaching, and now I teach a design foundation class in the Art Department as a Graduate Teaching Assistant. I enjoy spending time with my students and sharing my love for design with students. In addition to teaching, I have been working on designing and making my line of designer toys through my studio, "Meros Collectible Toys." I am grateful for everyone who has supported me during my journey at JSU, especially my former tennis coach, Andre Amores, the Marketing Services Team, and my professors in the Art Department. Joining the MFA has been an awesome and fulfilling experience, and I am extremely grateful to be a part of it."

### Graduate Student Spotlight

## BRITTANI MYERS

"My journey at JSU began in 2017 when I transferred from Snead State Community College into the Department of Art and Design. After graduating in the Fall of 2020 with my BFA, I spent two years in the field working as an in-house graphic designer. In 2022, I returned to the MFA program. My first semester I began experimenting with 3D modeling and creating augmented reality experiences. I've since fallen in love with the process and field of extended reality design and interactive arts. My research interests going forward revolve around this and its potential in entertainment, education, and training. The support and guidance I've received from the MFA faculty as I navigate this new medium has been invaluable. Since joining the program, I've created work that has gone on to win numerous design and illustration awards and been given the opportunity to speak about my work and research. The experience so far has been incredibly rewarding and I look forward to future semesters."





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## Graduate Faculty Spotlight

**Ms. Jamie Runnells,**  
*Master of Fine Arts (MFA)*  
*Visual Communication Design Coordinator,*  
*Department of Art + Design*

"When I arrived at JSU in 2013, the Dean at the time asked if I would head up the just formed MFA program and shepherd it through both the ACHE final approval and NASAD accreditation processes. I had taught and developed curricula at the undergraduate level at Mississippi State University for over ten years, so I embraced the new challenge of working with a graduate level program.

As the MFA Coordinator, I head up the MFA Committee, composed of Art + Design faculty: Professor Chad Anderson, Associate Professor Christian Dunn, Assistant Professor Dr. Tray Ridlen (and Professor Seth Johnson up until his recent appointment to Associate Dean). My colleagues and I make program and curricula decisions, review applicants, conduct semester reviews for MFA students, and serve on the MFA Thesis committees. I am fortunate to work with such an excellent group of colleagues who are really invested in student success. Additionally, I can't overstate how much I enjoy working with the MFA students at JSU--they are such a dedicated and talented group and have worked hard to foster a collaborative community. Our students have long been recognized with regional and national juried awards and have been selected to present at national peer reviewed conferences. In the past year or so though, our small but mighty group of students have had tremendous success, winning over 45 National awards including two works being shortlisted for the **The One Club's Young Ones Award** (a very prestigious international competition--winners announced on May 15). Many of our students choose to pursue a graduate degree because they are interested in teaching. The 60-hour MFA is the terminal degree for fine art and visual communication and allows graduates to teach at the college level. As such, our program offers exposure to teaching a variety of avenues, from Graduate Teaching Assistantships to a pedagogy course, and opportunities to lead undergraduate lessons, critiques and workshops. Ironically, when I decided to pursue a graduate degree, I had no intentions of teaching. Upon completing my MDes (Master's of Design) at Edinburgh College of Art, in Edinburgh, Scotland, I landed a job at a small magazine. I worked for the publication for a short time before the opportunity to teach at Mississippi State University came along, and here I am twenty plus years later, still teaching! I enjoy many aspects of teaching, but the best part of my job is the exchange of creative energy that happens in the classroom. I love when I am inspired by students and I hope they are in turn, inspired by me."



The Master of Fine Arts in Visual Communication Design is housed within the College of Arts and Humanities.

This 60-hour program aims to revolutionize the traditional graphic design educational model into one that addresses current social, cultural, and technological issues.

