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From administrators to animals, here's who you need to know at Duke

7-9 minutes

If you're just arriving on campus, the thousands of faces you see (in person or virtually) may be a bit intimidating. But The Chronicle is here to help. Here are some of the University's biggest stars to be on the lookout for as you get adjusted to campus life.

Portions of this story were adapted from "[Who to know at Duke: Administrators, students, staff and more](#)," by Nathan Luzum.



Vincent Price

President Vincent Price is entering his fourth academic year at Duke's helm. Price's tenure has seen the [removal](#) of a statue of Robert E. Lee at the entrance of the Duke Chapel, an [increase](#) of the University minimum wage to \$15 per hour and the [renaming](#) of the Carr Building to the Classroom Building.

In the past, Price has been spotted strolling across campus with his dogs Scout, a golden doodle, and Cricket, a labradoodle.

Coach K

Coach Mike Krzyzewski has been the head coach of the men's basketball team since 1980, leading the Blue Devils to five NCAA championships and 12 Final Fours. He has also coached the U.S. men's basketball team for the Olympics.

K-Ville is the area outside Cameron Indoor Stadium where undergraduate students camp out for games, including tenting for weeks for a spot in the highly anticipated game against the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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In January, Coach K [screamed](#) at the Duke student section for a chant that he thought was inappropriate. However, he made amends by holding a [surprise meeting](#) for tenters the next day, where he and explained his actions.

Tallman Trask III

If you receive a check from Duke for a research grant or summer internship funding, it may be signed by Executive Vice President Tallman Trask. Trask has been Duke's chief financial officer since 1995, and he has [deferred](#) his planned [retirement](#) due to the pandemic. Trask led the [overhaul](#) of the BC Plaza area—now known as the Campus Center—which was designed to be the center of student life.

Trask was also Duke's liaison to GoTriangle in the negotiations to build the [Durham-Orange County Light Rail](#), which Trask and Duke [declined to endorse](#) in Spring 2019 due to concerns about electromagnetic interference at Duke Hospital, among other reasons.

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Mary Pat McMahon

The upcoming academic year will be Mary Pat McMahon's [second year](#) as Duke's vice provost and vice president for student affairs. Formerly the vice president of student affairs at Tufts University, McMahon oversaw a reorganization of Tufts' undergraduate residential life and curriculum.

Gary Bennett

Gary Bennett is vice provost for undergraduate education and a professor in the department of psychology and neuroscience. He's been involved in important conversations during the coronavirus pandemic, including about [grading policy](#).

Dean Sue

Sue Wasiolek is senior advisor to McMahon and Gary Bennett, vice provost for undergraduate education. Until January, however, Wasiolek was the dean of students, when she became popularly known as Dean Sue.

After working in Duke Student Affairs for nearly 40 years, Wasiolek saw recent popularity for [sitting atop a bench](#) in February after a [legendary victory](#) against UNC. Students wanted to burn the bench, but Duke didn't have a permit that night. Blue Devils surrounded Wasiolek, chanting, offering her alcohol and approaching her with lighters and a small blowtorch.

John Blackshear

Dean Blackshear took over as [dean of students](#) and associate vice president of student affairs in June. In the past, he has served as senior associate dean for academic planning, clinical director of the

Academic Resource Center, student ombudsman and a psychologist for Counseling and Psychological Services.

He may be most beloved for his role as the faculty-in-residence in Trinity Dorm on East Campus. Former Trinity residents spoke fondly about Blackshear family's "open door" in a [profile](#).

Sandy Darity

The Samuel DuBois Cook professor of public policy is known for his study of inequality and reparations. Politico [recognized](#) him as one of the top 50 political thinkers in 2017, and he has served as editor-in-chief for the International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences.

In summer 2019, Darity was asked to testify before the House Judiciary Subcommittee regarding his reparations research, and submitted [written testimony](#).

James Coleman Jr.

The John S. Bradway professor of the practice of law leads [Duke's Wrongful Convictions Clinic](#), which has helped free seven wrongfully convicted men since its founding in 2007.

In June 2019, Coleman successfully helped reunite [Charles Ray Finch](#) with his family after 43 years in prison. Coleman had served as Finch's lawyer since 2001.

Robert Lefkowitz

The James B. Duke professor of medicine was honored as one of the recipients of the 2012 [Nobel Prize in Chemistry](#). Lefkowitz is credited with discovering G protein-coupled receptors, important components in biological signaling pathways with a role in everything from vision to cancer.

Chandra Guinn

Chandra Guinn has served as the director of Duke's Mary Lou Williams Center for Black Culture since 2005. She has taught classes at both Duke and UNC in the departments of sociology and African and African American studies.

Tommy Hessel

Senior [Tommy Hessel](#) serves as this year's president of Duke Student Government and aims to foster a collaborative campus environment and break down barriers among student groups.

Hessel's election victory in March came after a [chaotic election](#) marked by a software error and multiple petitions filed with the Duke Student Government judiciary.

Nugget

A golden retriever who makes appearances all over Duke's campuses, Nugget provides stressed students with a respite from their hectic schedules. Her owner, Keith Upchurch, Trinity '72, gets to know many Duke students over their four years on campus.

Social distancing guidelines may mean fewer people can crowd around the pair as in typical years, but Upchurch also has a mailing list where he sends photos of Nugget from time to time.

Peaches

Peaches, a calico cat with her own Facebook group of fans, [lives in a heated home](#) near Keohane Quad on West Campus. To the untrained eye, other campus cats—such as Mamabeau, another calico cat—may appear to be Peaches, but don't be deceived.

You might hear of a student-created rivalry between fans of Nugget and Peaches, but there's no reason you have to pick sides.

