

## **2024 Distinguished Mentor of the Year Winner**

Faculty who serve as model mentors to their undergraduate research students are eligible to receive the Distinguished Mentor of the Year: Excellence in Undergraduate Research and Inquiry award. Each year, one university-wide award will be given based on the undergraduate research engagement in the previous year. The Distinguished Mentor of the Year will be recognized with a \$2,500 award at the annual Honors Convocation.

### **Dr. Mahyar Nouri-Shirazi**

Professor of Immunology

Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine

Dr. Nouri-Shirazi is an immunologist with an interest in immunotherapy and vaccines. He has made significant contributions to the field of cancer immunotherapy by designing dendritic cell (DC)-based vaccines for patients with cancer. His lab has also explored the possibility of refining current and future vaccines using Toll-like receptor (TLR) agonists to enhance humoral and cellular immune responses. Currently, Dr. Nouri-Shirazi's research program focuses on enhancing vaccine efficacy by addressing the herd effect and reducing vaccine failure rates, particularly among individuals with compromised immune systems. Recently, his team has developed methodologies to investigate alterations in the quality and quantity of preexisting immunity to childhood vaccinations and new vaccines in immunocompromised individuals, paving the way for tailored vaccination strategies.

Since joining FAU, Dr. Nouri-Shirazi has actively involved undergraduate students in research and inquiry at FAU and played a key role in inspiring undergraduate students to explore the realms of discovery and innovation. By imparting knowledge, guidance, and support, Dr. Nouri-Shirazi has been a catalyst in the success of undergraduate students as they transition to the subsequent phases of their careers. Notably, his undergraduate mentees have received OURI Undergraduate Research grants, OURI-SURF grant, and travel grants. They have also played integral roles in authoring and co-authoring numerous abstracts, publishing papers, and showcasing their research at various local, national, and international conferences, earning many awards, including an NPR radio interview.

Dr. Nouri-Shirazi expresses gratitude to the Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry for consistently providing opportunities that empower undergraduate students and faculty mentors to achieve their academic and professional goals.