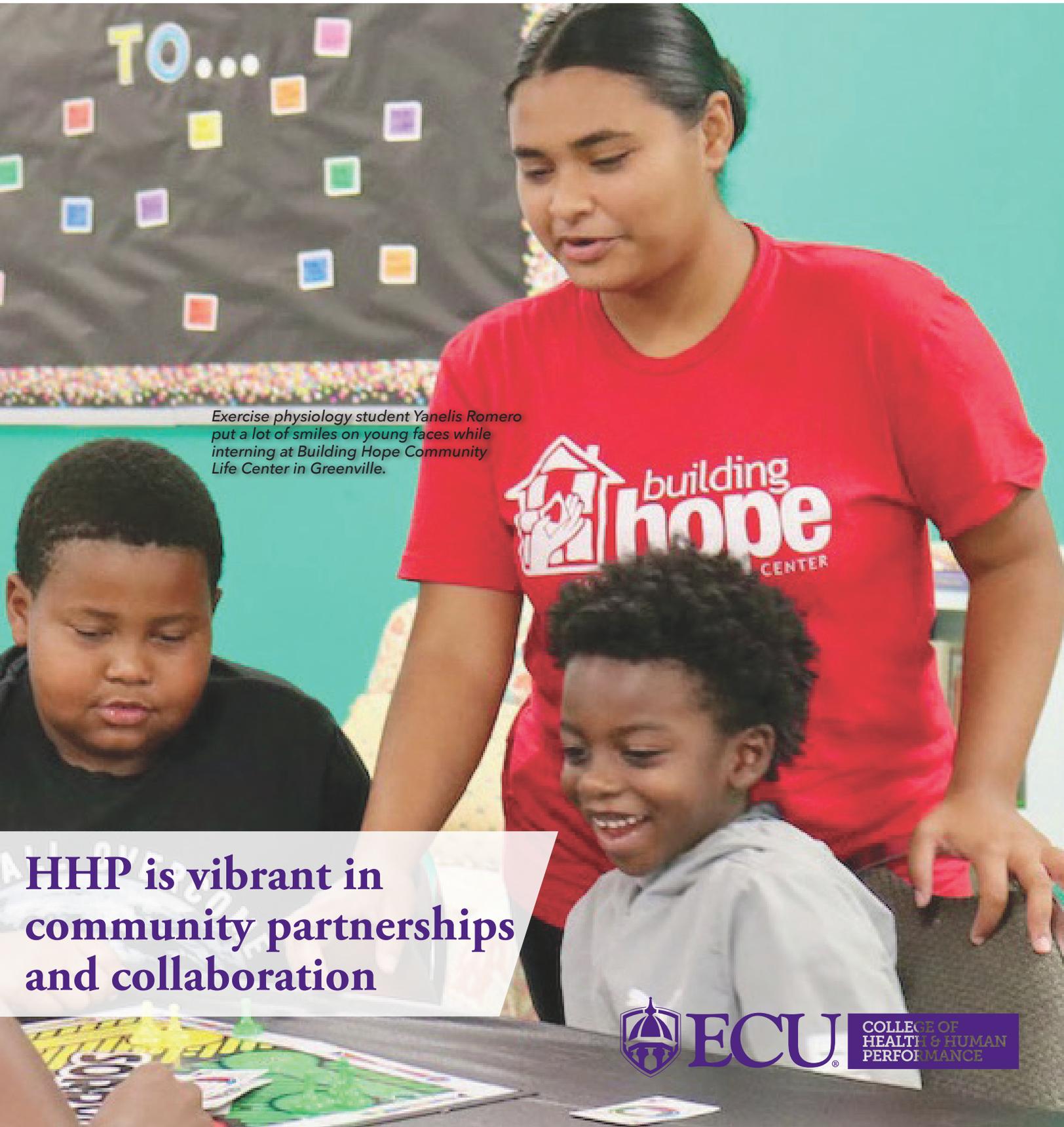


# #The **HHP** Experience

A newsletter for alumni and friends from the College of Health and Human Performance



*Exercise physiology student Yanelis Romero put a lot of smiles on young faces while interning at Building Hope Community Life Center in Greenville.*

**HHP is vibrant in community partnerships and collaboration**



**ECU**

**COLLEGE OF HEALTH & HUMAN PERFORMANCE**

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## *From the Dean*

Months ago when I was first welcomed in by the ECU College of Health and Human Performance, I could sense I was stepping in to something truly special. As I've had the opportunity to reflect and look back at the fall semester that is nearly complete and has been successful in many ways, my sense was confirmed. Because of the dedication shown by its people – students, staff, faculty, alumni, community partners and advocates – HHP can thrive in a unique environment of support, creativity and productivity. When walking through our facilities, you see students collaborating with each other and with faculty on impact-driven projects that truly make a difference in the communities where we live.



*Dr. Nicole Bromfield delivers remarks during an ROTC Commissioning Ceremony earlier this year.*

For your role in the HHP community as alums, friends and supporters of our college, I want to thank you. Our alumni network is one of our greatest assets. I've had the privilege to speak to some of you as leaders representing HHP in your field. Some of you have connected directly to our students this semester via classroom visits or internships. One of my favorite parts of leading this college has been meeting with students who have enjoyed study abroad or completed internships. I remember a student telling me about her experience working with child and family services in a rural community and how it helped shape her career path and deepened her connection to her field of study. Stories like that fill me with pride and support that in HHP, we are more than just a collection of individuals and programs. We are a connected community.

Speaking of students, I am excited to celebrate our graduating seniors on Dec. 13. This is a life-changing accomplishment that we will celebrate to the fullest extent. So if you know of a graduate or see a graduate, tell them congratulations!

Thank you again for all that you do for HHP and I hope you view this newsletter as one of the many ways to stay connected with us.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nicole Bromfield  
Dean, College of Health and Human Performance

# HHP ENGAGEMENT

We are extremely proud of our strong HHP alumni base and we love to hear from our alums. Visit <https://hhp.ecu.edu/alumni/> to update your contact info and explore different ways to remain connected and continue your Pirate pride and passion. A great way to do that is by joining the official HHP alumni Facebook group or LinkedIn group.



Dr. Jerry McGee visits with students in the Belk Building on Sept. 27, 2024.

# HHP RESEARCH

On Oct. 30 we held an appreciation and celebration for a fond farewell to Dr. Joseph Lee, who recently left the university for a new professional opportunity. During his time at ECU of nearly a decade of dedicated service as a faculty member and associate dean for research, Lee lifted the profile of HHP research exponentially and had a knack for motivating colleagues and promoting the inclusion of student support on grants. He restructured our Office of Research Development and Administration to help establish a proper foundation for HHP research development services. As we thank Dr. Joseph Lee for his service as HHP associate dean for research, we want to also welcome Dr. Michele Wallen into the interim role. Wallen's work and leadership in the **School Health Training Center** has advanced school health across the state and beyond, brought millions of dollars of external funding to



Dr. Joseph Lee chats with guests at HHP's appreciation & celebration event of Lee at ECU.

ECU, and has helped schools better serve tens of thousands of students. As faculty in health education and promotion know, she is a strong mentor and advocate for faculty and staff, for fair decisions, and for transparency. HHP's research enterprise will be in good hands with Dr. Michele Wallen.

# HHP ADVISING

The College of Health & Human Performance Advising Center team has been hard at work this year welcoming in new students and helping shape the next generation of HHP graduates. During the 2023-24 academic year, nearly 2,000 of our HHP majors earned academic honors by achieving recognition on the Chancellor's list, Dean's list, or Honor Roll. Beyond meeting with students and guiding them on their

# NEWS AND NOTES

Faculty member Molly Tripp faced unexpected challenges and credited the active moms study for contributing to **her and her baby's health** and an early, successful delivery.



Molly Tripp holds her son, Owen, in the ECU Fitness, Instruction, Testing and Training Facility.

Tori Du Sablon earned her Bachelor of Science in biochemistry degree earlier this year as the **first COMPASS participant graduate** as COMPASS, D.O.C.C. services continue to grow for student-parents.

Senior Emma Dillon **said her dream job** would be to manage merchandise inventory for a department store or to handle marketing for a startup fashion company.

The joint Army/Air Force ROTC **Living Learning Community** has been a success since opening last year and a way for cadets to build unique bonds.

As featured on this newsletter's cover, Yanelis Romero **gained new skills and direction** as an intern in the ECU SECU Public Fellows Internship program.



David Loy, Lydia Pinto and Casey Weidner joined by others at the USA Welcome Experience in Paris.

WNCT highlighted the experience gained by professor Dr. David Loy and students Casey Weidner and Lydia Pinto **at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games**.

Dr. Abby Schwartz described **'an excellent turnout'** in a collaboration with Joyner Library and community partners for an Alzheimer's and dementia resources fair in the library.

Cameron Smitherman, on National Guard deployment, was featured by ECU in **various ways Pirates assisted** in western North Carolina in Hurricane Helene relief.



Cameron Smitherman stands near a helicopter loaded with relief supplies.

academic paths, our academic advisors have also been actively recruiting prospective students to our college, helping them discover the diverse opportunities within HHP. This includes traveling with campus partners to events as well as collaborating with community colleges and area high schools. We appreciate your support and are so proud of our HHP students and their commitment to excellence and their passion for making a positive impact in their communities.

## GRADUATION NOTES

We are excited to celebrate the ECU Class of 2024 on Dec. 13 with commencement ceremonies. Our college ceremonies will be held at the Main Campus Student Center at 4 p.m. with health education and promotion, human development and family science, social work, followed by the 7 p.m. ceremony for interior design and merchandising, kinesiology, recreation sciences. In addition to outstanding graduate winners and all graduates to be recognized at these ceremonies, the [ecu.edu homepage](https://ecu.edu) and ECU social media accounts will feature Marcos Ardon Lobos (recreation sciences) and Jayson Arnold (health education and promotion) during commencement week for their nomination by our faculty and ECU Communications selection for a fall 2024 graduate profile.



Michael Daniels with the School of Social Work high-fives graduates during the HHP spring 2024 ceremony.

## ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

**Shayla Sanders**, May 2024 graduate, made her debut at the 152nd American Public Health Association and Expo as a first authored presenter and hosted a roundtable discussion well received by audiences. This research was mentored by Drs. Lei Xu and Leslie Cofie. Session name: Identity as a Social Determinant of Mental Health: Perspectives on Disparities, Inequities, and Intersectionality. Abstract name: Depression and anxiety among undergraduate students in the time of COVID-19: The role of subjective social status and hopelessness.

**Tara Dower**, a sports studies graduate, completed a remarkable and record-breaking accomplishment in endurance sports in September when she crossed 14 states and 2,197 miles in 40 days, 18 hours, and 5 minutes.

The ECU Alumni Association named **Danny Rice** (social work) and **Alice Keene** (recreation sciences) among this year's Outstanding Alumni Award winners. These awards highlighted the impact Keene has had for recreation opportunities in Pitt County and North Carolina, including post-retirement her role as recreation projects coordinator for Pitt County, and that Rice has dedicated his career to serving and leading. Rice and his staff provided services to people with disabilities and their families across 32 counties.

Read more about **Dr. Jerry McGee's fall visit to ECU and HHP**, which included McGee touring HHP facilities and meeting with students, dean Dr. Nicole Bromfield and director of outreach Mack Keenan, and he said he enjoyed walking around campus with his wife, Marcella.

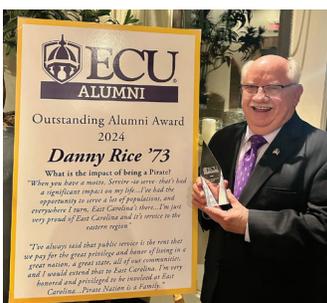
BSW and MSW alumnus, **Breanna Culler**, spoke to senior BSW students during their Pre-Field Capstone course. She provided great insight and information with students and shared her experiences as a Macro Social Worker.

The ECU Graduate School did an alum spotlight on **Haiden Hice**, graduate of human development and family science.

**Spencer Elliott** (ECU master's degree in exercise and sports science) is vice chair for the dean's advancement council and loves supporting HHP students through our student professional development fund, guaranteeing their success and professional development in their respective industries.

**Alex Langley** (M.S. in recreation and leisure facilities and services administration) is chair of the HHP dean's advancement council and champions community building through sport and recreation, physical activity and local parks, while also supporting student success initiatives and scholarships in these areas.

Two-time ECU School of Social Work alum **Kashayia Coltrane**, who works at Pride in North Carolina mental health services, delivered remarks at the 2024 East Carolina University College of Health and Human Performance Scholarship Social event.



# UNIT UPDATES

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH EDUCATION AND PROMOTION (HEP)

Chair - Dr. Michele Wallen

Administrative Support Associate - Wendy Allen

We are excited this semester to welcome two new faculty members to the department. Dr. Laura Merrell, associate professor, joined us from James Madison University and her research focuses on maternal health, sexual and reproductive health, and health literacy. Dr. Avian White, assistant professor, transitioned from a teaching instructor position to a tenure-track position within the department. Her research is centered on maternal health, community-engaged research, and health promotion.

Our student organizations continue to make an impact in service to both the campus and the broader community. A key highlight this fall was an event facilitated by Team Awareness Combatting Overdose (TACO), led by student members and faculty mentors Paige Irons and Dr. Lori Ann Eldridge. This event focused on overdose prevention education, harm-reduction strategies and Narcan training, with the distribution of safety kits to participants. TACO also helped secure a groundbreaking initiative to bring harm reduction into Greenville's nightlife by equipping downtown partners with overdose safety kits, which includes naloxone (a life-saving medication used to reverse opioid overdoses). This collaboration aims to combat drug overdoses among young adults by promoting peer-to-peer support and access to neutral, scientific information about substance use. We are excited to share that Will Murray (MSEH/MPH dual degree student) won first place in the Student Research Competition sponsored by the Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs (AEHAP). The research presentation, titled "Compact Wind Tunnel for Testing Formulated Products Against Mosquitoes," earned him a \$750 cash award and a \$1,750 travel allowance to present at the National Environmental Health Association Annual Education Conference in Pittsburgh this summer.

HEP staff and faculty continue to excel, which is highlighted and well represented in this newsletter in the faculty/staff news section. During the summer, Dr. Stephanie Richards hosted the second Annual NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation STEM Summer Research Poster Symposium in the Life Sciences & Biotechnology Building. The event marked the culmination of the GSK Summer Research Immersion Program, which brought together 12 undergraduate students from five North Carolina universities to engage in research and professional development in Biology, Environmental Health, and Public Health.

We are thrilled to announce that the B.S. in Environmental Health and M.S. Environmental Health programs received reaccreditation from the National Environmental Health Science & Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) for another 6 years. This marks a significant milestone: 50 years of accreditation for the BSEH program.

We are proud of the continued accomplishments and impact of our faculty, students, and programs.

## DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY SCIENCE (HDFS)

Chair - Dr. Sharon Ballard

Administrative Support Associate - Latoya Purvis

The department is off to a strong start this year. First, we were pleased to welcome Dr. Andrea Trejo to the faculty. Trejo recently completed her Ph.D. at the University of Georgia and will primarily support the Marriage and Family Therapy and Medical Family Therapy programs. We also welcomed Dr. Chengfei Jiao, who is a post-doctoral scholar. Jiao recently graduated from Florida State University and will be working with Dr. Kayla Fitzke on a variety of research projects during the next two years.

On Sept. 7, we celebrated 35 years of the Marriage and Family Therapy MS program and 20 years for the Medical Family Therapy PhD program. The ticketed event was held at the Murphy Center and was attended by alumni, faculty, and friends of the MFT/MedFT programs. It also was an opportunity to honor Dr. Jennifer Hodgson for her contributions of more than 22 years to the MFT/MedFT programs, to HDFS and to ECU. She has left ECU, but continues to work within Medical Family Therapy to improve health and healthcare systems across the country. A new scholarship in honor of Hodgson has been established to support future clinicians and researchers. Online opportunities are still available to support and contribute to the fund.



Leaders of the ECU marriage and family therapy and medical family therapy anniversary celebration gather in Harvey Hall for a photo.

HDFS is excited to be part of Project Kitty Hawk, which is a new online accelerated degree option geared toward adult learners. Project Kitty Hawk has started with four degree programs and HDFS was tapped to develop and implement the HDFS minor in support of these programs. Work started in the summer to develop the seven courses that comprise the minor with the first two courses offered this fall. We are pleased to be part of this educational initiative. We have been thrilled to partner with the ECU Innovative Early College in a couple of innovative ways. Dr. Bernice Dodor has been implementing the Invest in Girls program in which she teaches female early college students about finance and economic education. The Nancy W. Darden Child Development Center also has welcomed a group of early college students who spend time interacting and playing with the children as part of an afterschool extra-curricular volunteer opportunity. We look forward to other ways to collaborate with these students in the future!

As we continue to focus on student success, we are now offering the B.S. in Family and Community Services online as well as in person. The FCS program offers two concentrations

# UNIT UPDATES

– Family Science and Child Development – and both are offered online. Birth-Kindergarten Teacher Education and Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher Education continue to be offered in online and campus-based formats. Not only do online delivery options provide students a flexible option for achieving academic success, but they allow us to reach students in even the remotest areas of North Carolina, including the mountains of western North Carolina. Our hearts have gone out to those in the mountains who were so severely impacted by Hurricane Helene, and we contributed in a variety of ways. Along with reaching out and supporting students who live in or have loved ones in affected areas, the Early Childhood Student Organization collected hygiene products for early childhood students at Western Carolina University. The Darden Center collected supplies and Tawni Mosley, director of the NDCDC, delivered two carloads of supplies to a local church for transport to western N.C. The NDCDC is collecting children's books for a childcare center that lost many of their books and materials. Finally, the Family Therapy Clinic is offering free virtual therapy services for couples and families in impacted areas. We will continue to seek ways to support our western neighbors.

## DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR DESIGN AND MERCHANDISING (IDMR)

Chair – Dr. Amanda Muhammad  
Administrative Support Associate – Nadia Thompson

The [Professionally Purple Closet](#) continues to expand in campus partnerships and as a dedicated resource designed to empower students for professional success. Some of our faculty accomplishments also are highlighted in this newsletter in the faculty/staff news section.

We have some exciting student accomplishments to highlight. Kylie Kresho, a student ambassador president representing ECU with the National Retail Federation Student Association, led a shoe drive that collected more than 500 pairs of shoes to benefit Sole4Soles, a nonprofit organization helping communities impacted by natural disasters, war violence or poverty. Kresho worked with Dr. Marina Alexander in the department and several community members, businesses and IDMR board members. The 512

pairs put Kresho in first place nationally for shoes collected for the drive. The International Furnishings and Design Association-Carolinas Chapter named Kirandeep Khara, an interior design major, a “Rising Star” design student. Khara represented ECU and HHP at the Rising Star and Night of Luminaries Event in High Point. Emma Dillon, a senior in our Fashion Merchandising program, worked as Dr. Amanda Muhammad’s undergraduate



National Retail Federation Student Association ambassador Kylie Kresho stands with some of the shoes she collected to benefit Sole4Soles.

research assistant in the summer and her literature review was accepted for publication in *The Lookout: Journal of Undergraduate Research & Creative Activity Journal* at ECU. Her piece, “The Power of Professional Dress: Competence, Confidence, and Generational Shifts,” explores themes connected to the Professionally Purple Closet and highlights the significance of professional attire across generations. This is a tremendous accomplishment, and we are so proud of her for reaching this milestone!

## AIR FORCE ROTC (DET. 600)

Commander: Lt. Col. – William Dye  
Administrative Support Associate – Cary Ann Reeves

Air Force ROTC Detachment 600 hit another milestone with fall enrollment increasing by 50%. This came one year after ECU celebrated 75 years of its Air Force ROTC unit in 2023. We will commission Dayton McDonald, a construction management major, as Second Lieutenant in December. Current cadets had a great time meeting and talking with alumni at the annual ECU/Det. 600 alumni homecoming weekend potluck event. Also, Det. 600 participated in the annual “Patriot Games” competition with six other in-state AFROTC detachments and ECU finished second overall.

In alumni news, Colonel George R. Farfour, a retired Air Force colonel who was commissioned in May 1989 as a distinguished graduate of Air Force ROTC at ECU, was recently inducted into ECU’s Distinguished Military Service Society. The 2024 inductees were Farfour, Congressman Don Davis (a former assistant professor of Aerospace Studies at ECU/AFROTC), Lieutenant Commander Eric Green (an HHP alum from the M.S. in environmental health program), and Colonel Rod Mallette.



The 2024 inductees into the ECU Distinguished Military Service Society included HHP representatives Congressman Don Davis, Colonel George Farfour and Lieutenant Commander Eric Green.

## DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY (KINE)

Chair – Dr. Anthony Kulas  
Administrative Support Associate – Paulina Diaguero-Ramos

Following up on a busy summer when faculty and students presented research at several national and international conferences, the department enthusiastically hit the ground running this fall with a newly revised degree program, a new minor, and also added a few new faces. The B.S. in exercise physiology degree program was revised and now includes two concentrations: Applied exercise physiology and pre-health professions. We also introduced a minor in strength and conditioning, which, when combined with the B.S. in exercise physiology, will allow graduating seniors the ability to sit for the Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist exam. Paulina Diaguero joined us as our administrative support associate in June and has flourished in her role. Anna



*Katie Vierno, a junior exercise physiology major from Rolesville, enjoys a pleasant day on the mall while doing classwork on Oct. 29.*

Gold and Jenna Bilancia joined the department and are doing a great job supporting students in the B.S. in exercise physiology degree program through their teaching. Dr. Joe Stock joined us as an assistant professor with a research emphasis on investigating how acute and chronic lifestyle interventions, such as diet and exercise, affects cardiovascular health in aging and at-risk populations. Stock and his

research emphasis will be a great complement to the Human Performance Lab (HPL) and its faculty.

Kinesiology faculty continue to be research productive, be recognized for their research expertise, and are deeply committed to providing students enrolled in our undergraduate, masters, and doctoral programs excellent research experiences. In fiscal year 2024, the department secured \$3,715,627 in external grants. This fall, in recognition of their expertise and impactful research, Dr. Nicholas Broskey was named co-interim director of the East Carolina Diabetes and Obesity Institute (ECDOI) and Dr. Tom Raedeke was recipient of ECU's Achievement in International Research and Creative Activity Award. Our students have also benefited from the unit's strong research emphasis. Thanks to the mentorship from our faculty, 10 students were awarded Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (URCA) grants to support their research initiatives. The research productivity, expertise, and student-focused mindset of our faculty continues to benefit our students who are engaged in research experiences working in the department's labs, the Human Performance Lab, and ECDOI.

Department of Kinesiology faculty and students also remain steadfast in their commitment to having a positive impact on the surrounding community. The HPL continues to support the community through its cardiovascular health assessment program. Through an award supported by Blue Cross Blue Shield North Carolina, Drs. Linda May, Bhibha Das, and Avian White (Health Education and Promotion) offered "Birth and Bloom," which presented health education and physical activity programming to pregnant women in the community. Das also partnered with Dr. Lauren Sastre (Department of Nutrition) to promote physical activity literacy for individuals in need from underserved regions of eastern North Carolina as part of the Farm2Clinic program. In October, Ph.D. in bioenergetics and exercise science candidates Coni Heinemann and Mackenzie Hoey represented kinesiology at the STEM EXPO, hosted by A Time for Science in Greenville, where they showcased to more than 400 attendees how we use technology to study human movement. Overall, the department's commitment to serving the community is strong and continually growing.

In closing, the Department of Kinesiology remains committed to: providing high-quality education and experiences to its students, producing impactful and high-quality research, and serving the surrounding community.

## **DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION SCIENCES (RCSC)**

*Chair - Dr. Clifton Watts*

*Administrative Support Associate - Kim Walters*

The Department of Recreation Sciences has expanded to include sport management as a concentration at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Drs. Melanie Sartore-Baldwin, Stacy Warner, and Andrea Buenaño moved from the former sport studies program in kinesiology, and are joined by two new hires, Dr. Olzhas "Ollie" Taniyev and Becca Grizzard within sport management. The sport management program fits well within the department and has spurred several new collaborative relationships with faculty from recreation and park management and recreational therapy.

The recreational therapy program will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in February. The occasion will be honored in conjunction with the North Carolina Recreational Therapy Association's Student-Professionals Issues Forum (SPIF) to be held Feb. 21-22 on the campus of ECU. Friends and alumni of the department are encouraged to attend. Please contact Dr. Cari Autry (autryca18@ecu.edu) for more information.

Dr. Lindsey Oakes has been participating in the 2024-25 cohort of the Engagement and Outreach Scholars Academy. Her community partner for engaged research is Pitt Community College's Career Academy, which is a postsecondary education program that serves and supports students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD). Oakes led a photovoice project with six young adults with IDD from Career Academy to empower these self-advocates as co-researchers, identify needed areas of change, and increase inclusion within local community recreation opportunities. With assistance from Oakes, her graduate assistant Casey Weidner, and four honors students who are a part of the Student Engagement and Outreach Scholars Academy, the self-advocates hosted a community exhibition in November to engage the community with their work, ideas, and action steps. Dr. David Loy was elected and is serving as president of the National Academy of Recreational Therapists (NART). NART is an honorific society comprised of members chosen by existing "fellows" for their research and practice contributions that advances the field of recreational therapy.



*Dr. David Loy was elected as president of the National Academy of Recreational Therapists.*

The mission of NART is to provide a clearinghouse for an exchange of ideas to provide professional mentorship for the advancement of recreational therapy.

Students from the Recreation and Sport Event Programming class assisted with the "Festival of Fright" hosted by the Greenville Recreation and Parks Department. The event was evaluated by the department's Research Methods and Techniques class. More than 100 students provided volunteer hours in support of the event.

## SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK (SOSW)

Interim Director - Dr. AJ An

Administrative Support Associate- Brittany Bates

The ECU School of Social Work has stepped into another inspiring academic year with excitement, anticipation, and a renewed sense of purpose. In the past 2 years, our faculty, staff, and students have been involved in the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) reaccreditation process. Their hard work paid off in that ECU Baccalaureate and Master's Social Work Programs are accredited by the CSWE for the next 8 years. Also of note, the website [northcarolinasocialwork.edu](http://northcarolinasocialwork.edu) rated ECU among having the most affordable Master of Social Work programs in the state. Details for the selection included highlighting that ECU places an emphasis on on-the-ground experience and field work hours.

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS)-Division of Social Services announced the redesign of the Child Welfare Education Collaborative (CWEC). ECU School of Social Work was selected for the Spring 2025 Stipend Innovation Zone. The stipend will cover tuition and fees for CWEC students. In lieu of repayment, students commit to working in a county DSS for a specified time. The Office of Field Education continues offering professional lecture series this year virtually to enhance student learning on current issues in social work practices and to build a community of practice (CoP). Once a month an esteemed practitioner or clinical social worker provides a lecture on Wednesdays, 12-2 p.m.

We celebrate Dr. Abby Schwartz and her role with the Office of Healthy Aging, research affiliates and selection for the Carolyn Freeze Baynes Distinguished Professorship. Dr. Kathrin Rothermich delivered a lecture on "Parkinson's Disease and Its Impact on Social Connections: A Community Guide" and Dr. Jaehyun Kim provided a lecture on "Innovative Technology-Based Interventions to Improve Health Outcomes in Older Adults." Highlighting student success, two BSW students received the URCA award for the project "Exploring Student Perceptions of Older Adults: A Photo and Reflection Assignment" and will be mentored by Drs. Mi Hwa Lee and Schwartz.



Dr. Abby Schwartz, left, helped lead an Alzheimer's and dementia resource fair October 3 in Joyner Library.

Two new faculty were welcomed –Kylene Dibble, senior teaching instructor who serves as BSW program director, and Natasha Smith, assistant professor. Dr. Reeve Kennedy had multiple publications, as recently as "Trends in traditional bullying and cyberbullying victimization by race and ethnicity in the United States: A Meta-regression. Aggression and Violent Behavior," and Dr. Rong Bai secured research grants (\$37,500) thanks to multiple projects and involvement. The School of Social Work also congratulates Dr. Mary Jackson and expresses our sincere gratitude for her 30 years of dedicated

service at ECU. In recognition of her years of commitment and contributions, she was appointed Professor Emeritus, effective Nov. 1.

## ARMY ROTC (Pirate Battalion)

Commander: Lt. Col. - Scott Nusom

Administrative Support Associate - Cary Ann Reeves

The Army ROTC program has experienced an exciting period of growth and achievement, welcoming 150 cadets into our ranks earlier this semester. The program bid farewell to two valued leaders, Lt. Col. Josh Aeschliman and Sgt. 1st Class Jared Deweese, and introduced new leadership with professor of military science, Lt. Col. Scott Nusom, and senior military science instructor, Master Sgt. Heath Weisiger. The Pirate Battalion also welcomed back four dedicated faculty and staff members who have continuously contributed to the excellence of ECU ROTC, ensuring a seamless transition and renewed momentum for the program's mission: to educate, train, and commission leaders of character for all three components of the U.S. Army.

Our cadets distinguished themselves both on and off campus. Seven cadets earned national scholarships, recognizing their outstanding commitment to academics and leadership. Additionally, our cadets supported the ECU Cannon Crew during football games and proudly provided color guard services for football, basketball and volleyball, embodying Pirate spirit at every event. Our semester field training exercise took place at Camp Butner over a rigorous three-day period. The training provided essential preparation for our third-year cadets as they get ready for their capstone training event this summer. It also introduced our first- and second-year cadets to field training, where they began developing foundational skills. The entire exercise was planned and run by our fourth-year cadets with cadre support, giving them an invaluable leadership experience. On Oct. 14, cadets and one cadre member traveled to Washington, D.C., to compete in the Army 10-Miler, representing our program with resilience and endurance. Later that month, six cadets serving with the North Carolina National Guard deployed to western North Carolina to support relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Our cadets also strengthened partnerships with local Junior ROTC programs by supporting two Junior ROTC competitions in eastern North Carolina, fostering mentorship and future recruiting opportunities.

December marks the 20th Annual Dash for Cash, a cherished event that honors East Carolina alumnus and North Carolina Army National Guard Capt. Christopher Cash, who was killed in action in Iraq in 2004. The event raised scholarship funds for ECU, Army and Air Force ROTC programs, and other educational foundations across North Carolina. We were proud to participate in this fundraiser and to remember Captain Cash's legacy. This semester will conclude with our Commissioning Ceremony, where we celebrate the commissioning of 16 new second lieutenants into the U.S. Army. The event will be honored by our guest speaker, Dr. Margaret Wilmoth, Major General (Retired), an esteemed professor at UNC Chapel Hill and retired Army Nurse. Her reflections on service and leadership inspire all. Looking forward, the Pirate Battalion is excited for the spring semester, building on our successes and partnerships across ECU. Go Pirates!

# FACULTY/STAFF NEWS

**HHP announced these professorships:** Dr. Stacy Warner, a scholar in the disciplines of sport studies and sport management, for the esteemed Dr. Leroy T. Walker Professorship; Dr. Abby Schwartz, a scholar in the disciplines of social work and gerontology, as Carolyn Freeze Baynes Distinguished Scholar; and Dr. Archana V. Hegde, a scholar in the disciplines of human development and early childhood education, for the esteemed Nancy W. Darden Distinguished Professorship.

**Dr. Sarah Maness** (HEP) became the first from HHP awarded to the Fulbright Specialist Program for her project titled, "Psychological Measures to Respond to Events of Violence." This collaboration will begin in Ecuador in January at Jawith Escuela Superior Politecnica Del Litoral University, giving Maness the opportunity to use her research knowledge and expertise in gun violence prevention to help provide tools and specialized training for the ESPOL community to deal with crises calmly and effectively.

**Dr. Tom Raedeke** (KINE) was selected and recognized Nov. 19 as the 2024 recipient of the Achievement in International Research and Creative Activity Award. The annual Research & Scholarship Awards recognize excellence among artists, scholars, researchers and inventors at East Carolina University.

**Dr. Jake Jensen** (HDFS) was named president elect (2024-25) and subsequent president (2026-27) of the North Carolina Association of Marriage and Family Therapy. In this position, Jensen will work closely with therapists across the state to expand opportunities for students and new professionals, advocate for legislation that promotes healthy family functioning, and provide training and networking opportunities for clinicians across North Carolina.

**Dr. Tiffany Blanchflower** (IDMR) was awarded the FY25 Faculty Support and Reassignment Award for Research and Creative Activity. Blanchflower also was accepted to be a part of our NC DOC CORE research team and to develop a Destination Marketing Plan and Social Media Toolkit for the town of Roseboro.

**Dr. Stacy Warner** (RCSC) received an ECU Faculty Support and Reassignment Award for Research and Creative Activity to finalize the text, "Building Community via Sport: A Better Together Society." The book is slated to be published by the ECU Sport and Community Development Lab and distributed by UNC Press in 2025. This book is dedicated to memory of three of HHP's legendary community builders and educators: Dr. Nelson "Coop" Cooper, Dr. Jimmie Grimsley and Eva Price.

**Dr. Angela Lamson** (HDFS) was instrumental, through the success of the longtime engaged collaboration with Contentnea Health, in ECU recognized nationally for extraordinary commitment to community engagement, innovation and economic prosperity includes winning the

prestigious 2024 C. Peter Magrath Community Engagement Scholarship Award. This partnership ensures that all patients served in the system have access to mental and social health services at the same time as the patients' primary care visits. It reaches and benefits widely in eastern North Carolina, delivering evidence-based treatments for reducing suicidal ideation and managing symptoms of anxiety, while also considering patients' physical health when living with hypertension, asthma or diabetes.

**Dr. Nicholas Broskey** (KINE) was named interim co-director of the East Carolina Diabetes and Obesity Institute. The ECDOI was established in 2005 as a UNC system designated institute that works to develop, promote, facilitate and support interdisciplinary basic and clinical research in disorders of metabolism, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity and cancer.

ECU's Office for Faculty Excellence recognized **Dr. Jo Anne Balanay** (HEP) with an ECU Scholar Teacher Award for her effective integration of research into teaching. Balanay is known as a national leader in research to caution and protect outdoor workers in high-heat environments.

The Office of Healthy Aging welcomed **Dr. Mi Hwa Lee**, associate professor of social work, as the Faculty Fellow for OHA. Lee has focused research on cancer screening disparities within Asian American immigrant populations.

Univeritas Airlangga of Surabaya, Indonesia, honored **Dr. Craig Becker** (HEP) for presenting and moderating at their Happy & Healthy Symposium, "Edutainment for Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being." Becker gave a keynote speech and moderated multiple research presentations at the symposium, saying he introduced the concept of salutogenesis to people in Indonesia, and they were very receptive. Becker hopes it will lead to collaborations and progress in promoting health.

**Dr. Anu Hegde** (HDFS) is co-author on an article that recently won the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior's 2024 Best GEM (Great Educational Material) Award.

**Kelli Russell** (HEP) earned the Robert L. Jones Outstanding Teaching Award, for exemplifying characteristics of effective teaching outlined in the ECU faculty manual.

**Dr. Linda May** (KINE) was nominated as chair of the American College of Sports Medicine's Pregnancy and Postpartum Special Interest Group.

Thanks to the support of the Blue Cross Blue Shield NC Community Foundation, HHP Professors **Drs. Bhibha Das** (KINE), **Linda May** (KINE) and



HHP faculty members and student researchers lead a class at local C.M. Eppes School.

## FACULTY/STAFF NEWS, *continued*

**Avian White** (HEP) and their student research assistants recently led a physical activity class at C.M. Eppes Middle School.

**Rose Haddock** (HEP) won the Board of Governors Distinguished Professor for Teaching Award, in recognition of full-time faculty who have taught at ECU for three or more years and who demonstrate exceptional teaching ability.

**Dr. Lei Xu** (HEP) hosted a group discussion at the 152nd American Public Health Association and Expo and led a presentation, titled Mental health problems and access to mental healthcare among children before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic: results from a national survey.

**Jocelyn Ruffin** (HDFS) presented in New Orleans at the Division for Early Childhood's 40th Annual International Conference on Young Children with Disabilities and Their Families.

**Dr. Stephanie Richards** (HEP) received a National Institutes of Health (NIH) R15 grant (3 years) funded at \$414,370 and titled, "Socioeconomic impacts of La Crosse encephalitis in western North Carolina." Richards also was recognized by the ECU Office of Licensing and Commercialization in October as an "Innovator of the Month" for the wind tunnel invention for insecticide exposure and testing. This collaborative project and invention developed a compact wind tunnel that is specifically designed to accommodate mosquito cages and configured to rapidly test a wide variety of insecticides.

**Dr. Deeonna Farr** (HEP) presented at the Advancing Equity in Diagnostic Excellence to Reduce Health Disparities workshop hosted by the National Academies of Science Engineering and Medicine in Washington, D.C.

**Dr. Lindsey Oakes** (RCSC) won a UNC Greensboro School of Health and Human Sciences 2024 Pacesetter Award. Pacesetter awards honor outstanding alumni from UNCG-HHS who have attained local, state or regional recognition through their achievements in scholarship, leadership or service, during their career or through civic involvement.

**The ECU Consortium for Trauma and Resiliency Research** team, led by HHP faculty Drs. Jennifer Matthews and Erin Roberts, held community planning events aimed to collaborate and connect local families to resources, to make Pitt County safer for children and assist in advancing citizens to be better informed using trauma-based therapy and other resources.

**HHP received three awards** from the National Institutes of Health Division of Loan Repayment for this cycle: Dr. Leslie Cofie LRP renewal from the National Cancer Institute; Dr. Lindsey Oakes LRP from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development; Dr. Lori Ann Eldridge LRP from the National Institute on Drug Abuse.



ROTC cadets work together via leadership and teamwork to complete a rappel tower exercise.

## Stay Connected

As Mack Keenan, HHP's director of outreach, and Ronnie Woodward, public communications specialist for HHP, lead our communications and outreach efforts, we encourage you to connect with them as they highlight and share what great news or updates you might have. They can be reached at [cravenma21@ecu.edu](mailto:cravenma21@ecu.edu) and [woodwardr21@ecu.edu](mailto:woodwardr21@ecu.edu).

  
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