

# #The **HHP** Experience

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



**Experiential learning is as enjoyable and impactful as ever in HHP**

*Morgan Johnson, a Master of Science in environmental health student and ECU softball player, is all smiles while conducting lab research in the Belk Building.*

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## *From the Dean*

It is with mixed emotions that I write to you, our faithful alumni, a last time as interim dean of HHP and a faculty member at ECU. While there is certainly a sadness, I have a wonderful sense of nostalgia and gratitude as I reminisce about the great moments we've shared during our journeys. The ways in which you serve your communities and excel in your professions continues to inspire me, your fellow alumni, faculty, staff, current students and future Pirates. I feel fortunate to have worked with and for the talented and committed people associated with HHP, ECU, and eastern North Carolina. I hope you experience the same enjoyment and pride as you read about the successes of our people and programs through this newsletter. Reestablishing distribution of this newsletter has been important to our team and your response has been outstanding...thank you!



Since we chatted via the [last newsletter](#), we've had the opportunity to host alumni gatherings and/or to visit with you in your places of employment/hometowns. These occasions have been chock full of camaraderie and information sharing. The helpful industry and community insights have already positively influenced our curriculum and operations. Additionally, we learned more about what impact you're making and what we, as your alma mater, can do to benefit you as you pursue your goals. In the near future, we will be working to respond to that feedback.

Speaking of the near future, on July 1, [Dr. Nicole Bromfield will take the wheel](#), with her "eyes" set on what she figuratively referred to as our "north star." We are confident that she will deftly navigate the opportunities and challenges along our course toward even greater achievements in student success, public service, and regional transformation. We are counting on you to do all you can to support Dr. Bromfield and as she welcomes your involvement.

I encourage you to continue sharing updates and engaging with us when and in ways that speak to your heart. The "Pirates Supporting Pirates" spirit that makes [#TheHHPExperience](#) so very uplifting has truly been amazing year after year. Please keep <https://hhp.ecu.edu/alumni/> among the sites you visit regularly.

I hope our paths will cross again soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacey Altman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Stacey Altman  
Interim 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](#).



HHP alumni enjoy the sun and company during the 2024 HHP alumni and friends baseball tailgate held April 13 outside the Belk Building.

This year's HHP alumni and friends baseball tailgate was held April 13 and it was another successful event! We loved seeing so many families, current students, staff, faculty and alums mingle at the Belk Building and then cheer on the Pirates against in-state rival Charlotte! This is one of our most enjoyable events annually, and

we can't wait to welcome back all alums and friends to the Rivers Building on main campus in October for the annual HHP Homecoming Breakfast.

Further your engagement by considering joining the [HHP Dean's Advancement Council](#). This council provides an opportunity for alumni and friends to actively assist the College through advocacy, consultation and support for the continuing development of HHP's many undergraduate and graduate programs.

# HHP RESEARCH

Our active award fund balance was just more than \$24 million in funding at the beginning of April. To keep supporting our research, we launched a series of Research Collaborator Discovery events across the spring semester to bring faculty from inside and outside of HHP together around timely topics. We continue to build an HHP Research and Evaluation Partnerships service that will have a single point of contact for government and community partner representatives to find the right researchers for partnerships on grants. Watch out for more in the coming semester as that process goes public.

# HHP ADVISING

Building on the college's commitment to fostering student achievement, the academic advisors at the College of Health and Human Performance have been proactively engaging with students, focusing on initiatives aimed at recruitment and retention. As we've progressed into the spring 2024 term, we're proud to announce that more than 1,700 student meetings have been scheduled for discussions with an academic advisor. Furthermore, our center has played a pivotal role in various recruitment activities, such as the spring Pirates Aboard Open House, where we had the pleasure of welcoming more than 2,000 prospective Pirates to our campus, and virtual academic nights to learn more about HHP and our majors. This effort reflects our ongoing mission to support our students' academic journeys and celebrate their future successes.

# NEWS AND NOTES

Kerry Sewell and Dr. Joseph Lee led a networking forum that [included nearly 100 researchers](#), including faculty and some students, and the North Carolina Office of Strategic Partnerships.

Dr. Eboni Baugh was featured in a [Faculty Profile](#) as part of HHP Showcase Month in January.

Interior Design and Merchandising student Lucy Maack accepted an offer to be an intern of the production team for the [Kohl's early talent program](#), receiving the phone call offer from ECU 2020 alum Becca Keller.

The Air Force ROTC unit [received a Congressional Record](#) presentation by U.S. Rep. Don Davis' office. This stemmed from September 2023 when Davis shared information about the ECU AFROTC 75th anniversary on the Congressional floor.



HHP interim dean Dr. Stacey Altman joined by Lt. Col. William Dye and Air Force ROTC cadets at the Congressional Record presentation.

Exercise physiology major Kendall Nelson presented her research about migraines [at Harvard University](#) for the prestigious National Collegiate Research Conference.



HHP student Andrew Hairston is a professional cyclist for the U.S. Virgin Islands. (Contributed photo)

WNCT has covered stories recently with multiple Recreation Sciences angles, including an advocacy film screening led by Dr. Lindsey Oakes and an inspirational feature on [student Andrew Hairston](#).

[The Krissy Richardson Memorial Scholarship](#) was established to enhance the student experience and honor the memory of social work graduate Kristian "Krissy" Monet Richardson.

Army ROTC habits helped student Josh Harrelson in his [role as "coach"](#) among peers at Super Bowl LVIII in Las Vegas.

# GRADUATION NOTES

We are excited to celebrate the ECU Class of 2024 on May 3 with commencement ceremonies. Our college ceremonies will be held in Minges Coliseum at 1 p.m. with Health Education & Promotion, Interior Design & Merchandising, School of Social Work, followed by the 4 p.m. ceremony for Kinesiology, Recreation Sciences, Human Development & Family Science graduates.

Outstanding spring graduates to be recognized by their major are: Birth-Kindergarten Education: Elin Shearin; Child Life: Claire Manning; Family & Community Services, Child Development: Samantha Daino and Penny Glover; Human Development & Family Science: Madison Harmon; Family & Consumer Sciences Education: Catylyn Craven; Marriage & Family Therapy: Katey Wheeler and Taylor Young; Recreation and Park Management: Anna Fucello; Recreational Therapy: Morgan Bilodeau; Physical Education: Liz Taylor; Health Fitness Specialist: Joseph Ratte and Ashby Dickerson; Exercise Physiology, Exercise as Medicine: Grace Biancofiore; Exercise Physiology, Clinical Exercise Physiology: Samantha Nixon; Sports Studies: Darius Lawton; Bachelor of Social Work: Nylia Jeffreys and Rachel Harris; Public Health, Pre-Health Professions: Luke W. Boldt; Public Health, Community Health: Tyler West; Public Health, Worksite Health: Oliver Croom; Environmental Health: Aaron Zimmerman; Interior Design: Devin Scioletti; Fashion Merchandising and Consumer Studies: Jessica Johnston.

## ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

A special thank you and recognition for alumni who we have visited with this year and held productive, meaningful conversations and in-person meetings. This included with NC SHAPE, Christine Farris, Shelbi Weatherman, Heather Smith, Scott Lane, Kristi Forbes, Jessica Adams, Pat Richardson, Alison Katschkowsky, John Taylor, Nelda Howell and at our other alumni events and the HHP baseball tailgate. These meet-ups are centered around impact, student support and #TheHHPEXperience.

Our 2024 HHP Celebration of Philanthropy and Service event was held earlier this month. The program included recognition of HHP outstanding alumni Dr. Francisco Limon (Human Development and Family Science), Don Octigan (Recreation Sciences) and JaNell Octigan (Health Education and Promotion). [A virtual program](#) is available to view in full celebration.

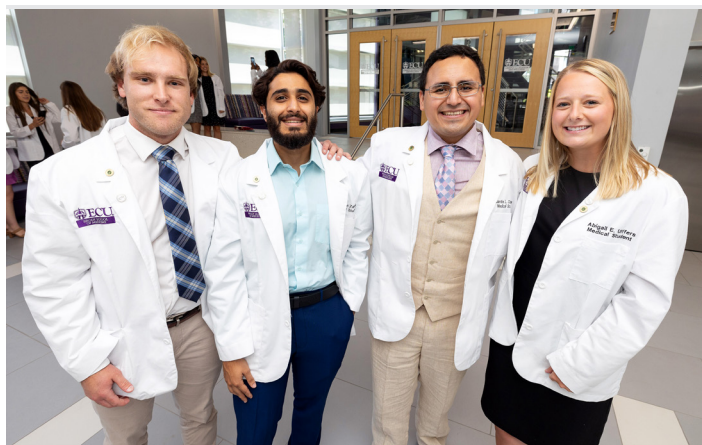
Erika S. Taylor, LMFT, a '17 graduate of ECU's MFT MS program and current HHP Advancement Council member, became one of the first mental health providers in Pitt County to receive certification as a Perinatal Mental Health Provider (PMH-C). This advanced certification qualifies Taylor to evaluate, treat and diagnose peripartum mental health disorders and provide specialized support and care to birthing individuals and their families.

Master of Social Work alum Glenn Osborne earned a [lifetime achievement award](#) from the National Association of Social Workers North Carolina Chapter.

Athletic training alumna, Myranda Fields Crump, was recognized as the NC Athletic Directors Association's Athletic Trainer of the Year. She is the athletic trainer at Carborro High School and consistently demonstrates a commitment to best practices, leadership, and professionalism.

Michael Denning and Michael Wright, two BS in Public Health alums, were named to the North Carolina Medical Society Kanof Institute of Physician Leadership's 2024 Future Clinician Leaders College (FCLC).

Former NFL linebacker George Koonce was honored in Milwaukee with a [Black excellence award for extraordinary achievement](#). After his playing career, Koonce returned to



*The Class of 2027 Brody Scholars included HHP alums Christian Smallwood, left, and Abby Ulfers, right.*

school to earn his Master of Science in sport management at ECU.

Tamyra Jovel, an ECU Master of Social Work alum and retired Army First Sergeant, participated in a virtual inter-university careers in aging alumni panel. In addition to the MSW, Jovel received her Educational Certification in Gerontology (now called the Gerontology Certificate) from ECU.

February was Recreational Therapy Month. We did alumni spotlights on [Dr. Gena Bell Vargas, Victoria Crouch and Susan Keel Anderson](#).

MS Kinesiology 2023 alum Jake Kuchmaner was part of HHP's team that went and presented at the [Major League Baseball Winter meetings](#) last December.

HHP alums [Christian Smallwood](#) and [Abby Ulfers](#) were named part of the Class of 2027 Brody Fellow and Brody Scholars program.

Rings were made for past and current Hall of Fame inductees at the North Carolina Athletic Trainers' Association spring symposium and 50th anniversary gala. Dr. Katie Flanagan, a professor in the Department of Health Education and Promotion who also will serve as HHP's flag-bearer at ECU commencement May 3, was honored and joined by fellow ECU athletic training alums Mike Guerrero, Eric Hall, Kevin King and Jim Bazluki.

# UNIT UPDATES

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH EDUCATION AND PROMOTION (HEP)

*Chair - Dr. Michele Wallen*

*Administrative Support Associate - Wendy Allen*

As the landscape of public health continues to rapidly evolve, it is imperative for pre-professionals to cultivate strong connections and networks within the discipline. Professional networking skills not only enhance career prospects, but also facilitate collaboration, knowledge sharing and the exchange of best practices. By building robust professional networks, public health practitioners can stay informed about the latest research, trends and opportunities, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for individuals and communities alike. This year, HEP faculty focused on the significance of professional networking in public health and provided strategies and opportunities for students to develop and practice those skills.

The spring started with a meeting of HEP student organizations (MCH-STEP, TACO, Her+, HEP Ambassadors, PEP and ESG) to develop and practice their elevator speeches. Following this event, students were invited to attend a professional networking seminar provided by Suzanne Vincent, ECU Career Services, and Tina Marie Devlin. Students refined their LinkedIn accounts, developed business cards, practiced their power greetings, planned for professional dress and planned what to do before, during and after a conference. The Maternal Child Health Scholars, Training, and Enrichment Program led a speed networking event for students, faculty and community members. As a result of this event, connections were made for potential internships and research collaborations, and students received constructive feedback on their elevator speeches from practitioners in attendance. After providing a series of professional networking education and practice events, the department sent 37 students to local (Eastern AHEC Rural Health Symposium), state (NC SOPHE) and national conferences (APHA, ASPPH). Attending professional conferences is highly beneficial for students. They offer valuable opportunities to gain knowledge, network with professionals, and stay updated on the latest advancements in the field. By participating in conferences, students enhanced their understanding of public health issues and explored potential career paths. Additionally, conference attendance provided a platform for several public health and environmental health students to present research findings and engage in discussions with researchers, students and practitioners. HEP faculty appreciate the participation of all alumni and community members who have assisted in the development and mentorship of our students during these experiences.

The Department of Health Education and Promotion congratulates two of our longest serving faculty members. Karen Vail-Smith (40 years) and Mrs. Sue Raedeke (30 years) were recognized at the ECU State Service and Treasured Pirates Award Ceremony for their outstanding and longstanding service to ECU. We are thankful for these two extraordinary faculty members who have invested so much in our programs and our students for the last 30-plus years.



Brianna Webb, coordinator of COMPASS and DOCC, receives a cup of lemonade as part of the Preschool 4 class lemonade stand to benefit Purple Pantry event held at the Nancy Darden Child Development Center on April 4. (ECU News photo)

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

*Chair - Dr. Sharon Ballard*

*Administrative Support Associate - Latoya Purvis*

The department has had another fantastic year! We were thrilled to host a postdoctoral scholar, Dr. Steph Cooke, this year. In addition to conducting research, Cooke taught a class each semester and did some clinical work at our Family Therapy Clinic. It has been a joy to have Cooke as part of the HDFS family! We also welcomed two new faculty members: Dr. Kayla Reed Fitzke and Alana Freeman. They both have done a fantastic job settling into their roles this year and have already proven to be invaluable to the department. For Freeman, being hired as an instructor in HDFS was a chance to come home as she holds two degrees from the department (FCS-'07; CDFR MS - '08). In fact, she is just one example of our own graduates coming back to teach or work within the department. Out of 25 full-time faculty in HDFS, seven are HDFS alumni! In addition to Freeman, the list of alumni faculty includes: Jocelyn Ruffin (CL - '04), Susannah Berry (FCS- '04; CDFR MS - '07), Ashley Norris (BK-'06; CDFR MS - '08), Eboni Baugh (MFT-'00), Jacquelyn Mallette (CDFR MS - '08) and Carrie Bergeson (FCS-'12; CDFR MS-'16). We also have several regular part-time instructors such as Laurie Zepezauer (MAED BK-'19), Jill Kime (BK - '10) and Elizabeth Banks (MFT - '05), who received a least one degree in the department as well as our professional adviser Brandi Harris (FCS-'08). It is inspiring for our current students to learn that their instructors once sat where they are sitting and to learn first-hand of the pathways and opportunities their HDFS degree provides.

In addition to faculty, we have hired our own graduates to work in our grant-funded projects. Brianna Webb (FCS-'22) is the project director for the COMPASS program, which is a federally funded program that supports ECU students who are parents. Five of the nine teachers in the Nancy W. Darden Child Development Center are HDFS alumni and 10 of the 27 staff for the Early Educator Support (EES) program, which provides mentoring and evaluating for Birth-Kindergarten teachers in nonpublic school settings, earned at least one degree from us or are currently enrolled in one of our degree programs. In addition to coming back to work for ECU and

# UNIT UPDATES

HDFS, HDFS alumni are returning and giving back in multiple ways! For example, Pamela Romito graduated with her Family & Community Services degree in 2015 and then went on to a graduate program at John Hopkins in Counselor Education. She now works as a high school counselor at a Baltimore area high school. As she planned college tours for her students, she said she wanted to bring her students to “the best place on earth - good ol’ East Carolina University.” She and a group of her students will be on campus to tour and learn about the various programs and academic supports available.

Other examples include Emily Edmondson, a Child Life alumnus, who returned to campus this fall to talk with Child Life students about her experiences as a Certified Child Life Specialist, and Jessica McCall (MFT ‘15) who was one of several Marriage & Family Therapy alumni who spoke to current MFT students about career opportunities in MFT. Many of our alumni also supervise our interns, such as Akira Hall (BK- ‘19) who is a kindergarten teacher at the ECU Community School who is working with her second BK intern. In fact, more than half of the clinical teachers who work with our Birth-Kindergarten and Family & Consumer Sciences interns are graduates of our programs! These are just a few of the many examples of HDFS alumni engaging with our students this year.

The return of HDFS alumni, whether as a faculty member or other employee, as a volunteer to engage with students, as a community partner, or as an internship supervisors, is a testament to the quality programs and faculty in HDFS! It is heartwarming to see the generativity of alumni paying it forward! Please let me, Dr. Sharon Ballard, know if you are interested in connecting, visiting, or otherwise engaging with current HDFS students.



Students test fabric options in the Department of Interior Design and Merchandising in the Rivers Building.

## DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR DESIGN AND MERCHANDISING (IDMR)

*Chair - Dr. Amanda Muhammad*

*Administrative Support Associate - Nadia Thompson*

Our goal in Interior Design and Merchandising is to ensure our students receive a top-notch education that prepares them for success in their future careers. The students in Merchandising are working hard to continue operating the

Professionally Purple Closet, which is available for all ECU students who may need interview attire or professional clothing for field placements, internships or conferences. This includes Thrifty Thursday events that were held outside the Rivers Building. Additionally, “Glitz and Glam” was the theme of this year’s Apparel and Interior Merchandising Organization student-led fashion show.

Two professors from IDMR attended conferences recently and gave speeches. Dr. Marina Alexander presented at the ACRA/AMA Conference at Western Michigan University. Her presentation was about leadership capability building in college courses. Dr. Tiffany Blanchflower also presented her research at two separate conferences about GENZ and Millennials’ perceptions of retailers’ diversity, equity and inclusion practices. We are so proud of their accomplishments and wish them both sincere congratulations. We are so proud of the IDMR faculty and students for their continued effort in the growth of this department.

## AIR FORCE ROTC (DET. 600)

*Commander: Lt. Col. - William Dye*

*Admin Support Associate - Cary Ann Reeves*

This spring has been busy for Det. 600. In May, we are set to commission eight new Second Lieutenants. We also had 13 cadets selected to attend Field Training this summer.

We hosted an African American panel and traveled to the International Civil Rights Museum for 29 cadets in celebration of Black History Month. The purpose of this was to signify the importance of the Civil Rights movement, engage in discussion for leading diverse environments and the importance of promoting diversity in the workplace. Maj. Johnson, one of our assistant professors in aerospace studies, also led a 13-person team consisting of four university departments and launched the annual university International Women’s Day event. The event was comprised of four panels, a keynote speaker, a student networking session and a women’s initiative launch with 202 registrants, highlighting the international theme of “Inspiring Inclusion.” For her efforts and dedication, Maj. Johnson was the 2024 ECU Creed Award recipient for diversity, recognizing educational excellence with integrity, diversity, responsibility and citizenship.

The Detachment conducted seven recruiting events, including at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, garnering interest of 22 enlisted Airmen, one crosstown university open house and three JROTC visits reaching 252 potential candidate and increasing awareness and the recruiting footprint of Det. 600.

## DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY (KINE)

*Chair - Dr. Anthony Kulas*

*Administrative Support Associate - Elaine Hughes*

Our KINE faculty continue to provide high-impact experiences for students that extend beyond the classroom. Dr. Stacy Warner and a group of Sport Management students attended the Super Bowl this year and worked with stadium fan services during the game. Dr. Andrea Buenano was also central in preparing for this experience. Supported by

# UNIT UPDATES

funding from the ECU Student Government Association and the Kinesiology Fund for Excellence, the unit was able to send 20 undergraduate and graduate students along with two faculty to the Southeast American College of Sports Medicine (SEACSM) symposium in Greenville, S.C., to present research, attend conference proceedings and network with other institutional peers. Physical Education faculty and nine students attended the NCSape conference in Winston-Salem this past November. This year, senior PE students completed 14 professional internships across three counties as they finished their professional training to become the next class of Pirate PE Educators!

Kinesiology faculty are highly research productive and continue to be recognized for their outstanding work. Assistant professor, Dr. Nick Broskey, received funding from the National Institutes of Health for his R01 grant titled "Effect of Maternal Exercise in Women with Obesity on Offspring Mesenchymal Stem Cell Metabolism." The total funding is \$2,546,260 over a five-year period for this award. Based on their grants from the Department of Defense, U.S. Senator Ted Budd met with Drs. Nick Murray and Zac Domire and toured their research labs to learn more about the research they do to support our military. Assistant professor Dr. Christine Habeeb also recently was awarded with the ECU 5-Year Research & Creative Activity Award for her outstanding research. All of these faculty research successes have direct positive impacts for our undergraduate, masters and doctoral students. Faculty grant-funded research provides students with immersive research experiences. In addition, due to the excellent faculty mentorship combined with students who are highly energetic and dedicated, KINE undergraduate students have secured seven undergraduate research creative activity (URCA) awards and two HHP research awards to support research projects this academic year.

In addition to our faculty providing student opportunities in research, faculty also are engaged in service and encourage students to be engaged as well. Dr. Melanie Sartore-Baldwin recently was recognized with the Governors Volunteer Service Award for her work with the Pitt County Animal Shelter. Students enrolled in Sartore-Baldwin's section of **KINE 1010 Fitness Walking** also work with the animal shelter by walking dogs. For the past 10 years, these students have gained a unique experience dealing with real world problems while providing dogs (and their human walkers!) with the physical and mental health benefits of exercise.

Overall, the faculty in the Department of Kinesiology are committed to providing students with invaluable opportunities in and outside of the classroom, through engaged research activities and through service.

## DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION SCIENCES (RCSC)

*Chair - Dr. Clifton Watts*

*Administrative Support Associate - Kim Walters*

The department continues to involve students in engaged scholarship, service and professional development experiences. Opportunities include research projects, service



Students work together in the Human Performance Lab.

learning by students in classes, community engagement events and workshops featuring current professionals in the field.

Morgan Laketa is completing her Master's Thesis under the supervision of Dr. Jeffrey Skibins. Laketa's project was funded by the North Carolina Zoo. Her project had two focus areas. The first was an evaluation of a mobile app, developed by the zoo, to assist blind and vision-impaired visitors to better experience and explore the zoo. The second focus area was measuring the impact of a zoo experience on visitors' pro-conservation behaviors. Upon graduation, Laketa is hoping to pursue a Ph.D. in conservation psychology.

Dr. Lindsey Oakes planned and hosted "The R-Word" film screening and panel discussion. This was **a powerful event** that promoted awareness of the importance of language, perceptions of, and actions toward individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD). In addition to the film, a panel provided local perspectives from self-advocates with IDD, family members of individuals with IDD and a local business owner that employs individuals with IDD. The event featured several community partners that serve and/or support individuals with IDD.

Students in the Recreation and Event programming class (RCSC 3003) worked with community partners to complete their professional engagement hours. Students assisted on the Run and Plunge event hosted by Greenville Recreation and Parks, the Egg Rush with Greenville Recreation & Parks, Pitt County Special Olympics with Greenville Recreation and Parks and the Autism Society Run/Walk with the Eastern North Carolina Autism Society. In all, students provided more than 400 hours of service to these events.

Whenever possible, RCSC faculty open their classes to industry experts and current practitioners. Rebecca Burnworth invited Amy Albritton, LRTA, Crystal Hardy, LRT, and Kasey Shue, LRT, who came from ECU Medical Health to speak to the Clinical Application of Recreational Therapy (RT) Skills course (RCTX 4255). Topics included RT in a behavioral health setting, transfer skills, moving RT clients from one position to another, and RT in a community setting. Experiences like these prepare our students for the profession and contribute to the exceptional passage rate (ranging between 95-100%) of ECU RT graduates.



Social Work students who work in Joyner Library created this book display in the library during March for national Social Work Month.

## SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK (SOSW)

Interim Director - Dr. AJ An

Administrative Support Associate- Brittany Bates

We've had a busy and productive academic year, including launching the Carolyn Freeze Baynes Memorial Lecture Series on Social Justice. Three nationally renowned scholars - Dr. Amy Castro, Dr. Barbara Harris Combs, Dr. Lisa Reyes Mason - delivered a virtual presentation on advancing racial, economic and environmental justice. Lectures were open to the public so many people outside the ECU community could join in the series. This resulted in 280 attendees in total for Baynes lecture series.

Our school also has been in the Reaffirmation Process for Baccalaureate and Master's Social Work Program Accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education. On Feb. 15-16, site visitors from CSWE came and reviewed our BSW and MSW programs. We also submitted our responses to CSWE in March. We expect to receive a reaffirmation decision in June.

The Office of Field Education continues its support to our BSW and MSW students in training and mentoring to become a well-rounded social work professional. Our school is one of the university partners for the Child Welfare Education Collaborative in NCDHHS-DSS and will continue our partnership next year.

Among our faculty, Dr. Abby Schwartz, associate professor/BSW program director/ Office of Healthy Aging director, was recently elected as president of the Southern Gerontological Society and her role begins July 1. Additionally, she was nominated as a [Victor W. Marshall Fellow](#) in Applied Gerontology, and won an ECU Trendsetter Award

this year.

Highlighting student success, BSW graduate Nylia Jeffreys (May '24) won the National Association of Social Workers Equity and Inclusion Student Award. MSW student, Kashayia Coltrane, presented at the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education International Symposium, along with Dr. W. Dennis McCunney, Bilal Muhammed and Iyaira Williams in March.

## ARMY ROTC (Pirate Battalion)

Commander: Lt. Col - Josh Aeschliman

Administrative support associate - Cary Ann Reeves.

ECU Army ROTC is preparing for the culminating training event for the year with a trip to Fort Barfoot, Virginia, for the Joint Field Training Exercise with Virginia State University. This event provides opportunities for cadets to integrate with another school's cadets while conducting land navigation and tactical simulation lanes, testing both their skills and their leadership. We are also preparing for the commissioning of 26 Second Lieutenants, taking our total for this school year to 32 new Army leaders. Our 33 juniors prepare for individual Cadet Summer Training at Fort Knox, Kentucky, this summer with the majority of them receiving follow-on training at Air Assault School, Mountain Warfare School and internships around the world.

The program has put a lot of effort into recruiting efforts for ROTC and the Army. These efforts have led to additional training opportunities for our cadets and a projected increase in enrollment for the fall semester. The Pirate Battalion remains strong, producing Army leaders and is proud to call HHP and ECU home!



With Army ROTC and Air Force ROTC combined, 40 cadets are being commissioned to Second Lieutenant this school year.



# FACULTY/STAFF NEWS

**Dr. Angela Lamson** with HDFS and ECU interim assistant vice chancellor for economic and community engagement, was one of two selected as this year's winners of the 2024 Distinguished Graduate Faculty Mentor Award. Drs. Lamson and Christy Howard were selected and recognized for their success in mentoring graduate students in their intellectual growth, helping them develop independent research interests and fostering development of their communication skills, interpersonal skills, research skills and professional skills. Lamson also was dissertation director for Dr. Cori Davis, who won ECU's Doctoral Dissertation Award in Social Sciences, Business & Education for Recruitment, Retention, and Intersectionality: Recognizing the Voice of Historically Marginalized and Systemically Oppressed Medical Residents."

A multidisciplinary effort within the Department of Kinesiology and College of Health and Human Performance – the 2024 ECU and Special Olympics Unified Youth Exchange project – recently sent our representatives to Peru for the outbound exchange. ECU's faculty team was led by principal investigator Dr. Stacy Warner and included Drs. AJ An, Eboni Baugh, Andrea Buenaño, Christine Habeeb and David Loy. This was intended to share and exchange ideas on how to make sport more inclusive in both countries, [with an agenda](#) that utilized a mixture of interactive activities, talks from Peruvian sport leaders, connections with local organizations and reflection opportunities to nurture skill-building and cross-cultural dialogue.

**Dr. Damon Rappleyea**, an HDFS associate professor and former longtime director for the Marriage and Family Therapy Master's Degree Program, earned a Treasured Pirate Award from the university. The Treasured Pirate program annually recognizes the hard work of exemplary ECU employees and shines a light on the unique and special contributions of each award winner. Rappleyea also was recipient of the North Carolina Association of Marriage and Family Therapy Training Award.

**Dr. Clif Watts**, associate professor and chair of the Department of Recreation Sciences, was selected for a 2024 Innovation in Teaching Award from The Academy of Leisure Sciences. The foundation of Watts' award came from his efforts with e-books, class materials and class efficiencies and innovations in RCSC 2601.

**Dr. Ed Gomez**, RCSC professor, was selected as a The Academy of Leisure Sciences Fellow. New TALS Fellows are nominated by a formal letter from a current Fellow and when formally selected, honored as outstanding performers and recognized leaders in the leisure profession with a minimum of 10 years of experience.

**Dr. Christine Habeeb**, who has earned KINE associate professor designation, won ECU's prestigious Five-year Research & Creativity Award. [Habeeb was honored](#) at the annual Research & Scholarship Awards to recognize excellence among university artists, scholars, researchers and inventors.

**Dr. Stephanie Richards** led and was joined in others in HEP to have a paper published in [Pest Management Science](#). A novel compact wind tunnel was developed as a mitigation tool that can be used to apply insecticide formulated products used in mosquito control. There is a pending patent and this innovation aims to solve the problems and costs associated with current testing approaches.

**Dr. Bhibha Das**, associate professor in the Department of Kinesiology, and **Dr. Sharon Ballard**, chair of the Department of Human Development and Family Science, were selected as panelists for the third annual [Women Leaders at ECU](#) panel event held at the Main Campus Student Center in March.

**Drs. Alan Taylor and Eboni Baugh (HDFS)**, and **Dr. David Loy** in Recreation Sciences, were all awarded full professorships through the university. Also, **Susannah Berry** and **Ashley Norris** each received an advancement in title to "Teaching Assistant Professor" effective August 2024.

**Jocelyn Ruffin**, instructor in birth-kindergarten education, (HDFS) was recognized as an "Emerging Special Education Leader of Color" by the Council of Exceptional Children.

**Dr. Sharon Ballard** was recognized for leadership as part of colleague-nominated ECU Centennial Awards for Excellence for "going the extra mile every day to make a difference" on campus in the areas of leadership, service or spirit.

**Wendy Beachum** was nominated and approved to receive East Carolina University Staff Emeritus recognition.

**Dr. Stacey Altman and professor Melanie Sartore-Baldwin** were nominees for ECU's James R. Talton Jr. Leadership Award presented to a faculty member, staff member or administrator in recognition of their demonstration of outstanding servant leadership.



The 2024 ECU and Special Olympics Unified Youth Exchange project in Peru included HHP student and faculty representatives participating in a basketball clinic.

# 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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