

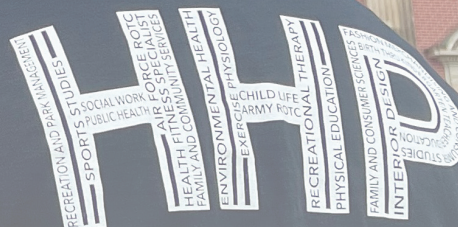
#The HHP

FALL 2023

Experience

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

Experiential learning
comes to life, has no
barriers in HHP



COLLEGE OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN PERFORMANCE
[hhp.ecu.edu/thehpxperience](http://ecu.edu/thehpxperience)

Student Mark Lore visits Neues Palais
in Potsdam, Germany, during a study
abroad experience.



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From the Dean

It is hard to believe we are several weeks into the fall semester already. While we always try to express our thankfulness, as we enter what is often referred to as the “season” of gratitude, we want to reaffirm how much we appreciate you for being a part of our **community** and **#TheHHPExperience**. This fall we welcomed alumni and friends to campus for social events, guest speaking occasions, advisory board activities, and so much more. The energy on campus continues to be inspiring, and your participation in activities added even more to the excitement. I encourage you to check out this [video](#) that provides insight into ECU’s Strategic Plan “refresh” and provides insight into the direction HHP will take as we continue to make very positive contributions aligned with the mission and strategic objectives of the university. At the college level, one of our main priorities will be access to high-impact educational experiences (fieldwork, internships, community-based learning, undergraduate research, writing-intensive courses, global learning, study abroad, common intellectual experiences, and more). We will strive to make even more of those practices available to more students without creating or increasing student debt. Alumni and community organizations will be critical partners in our success and we, in turn, will provide alumni employers and communities with well-prepared professionals and opportunities for collaborations (in research, innovation, and service). In the spring semester we will host an Experiential Learning Expo that will provide students the opportunity to share their experiences and to interact with leaders of laboratories, centers, programs, and industry to learn about future opportunities for hands-on learning.



Some HHP numbers that may be of interest to you:

- Students in HHP’s academic programs: 3,681 (965 Bachelor’s Degrees awarded 2022-23)
- Full-time Faculty: 128
- Grants and Contracts Awarded to HHP (2022-23): \$13,766,450.00 (second only to the Brody School of Medicine)

As HHP enters a time of **recruitment for a new Dean of the College**, we continue to be well-positioned to meet or exceed the expectations of our internal and external constituencies. The commitment of our alumni and friends continues to match the positive energy of our students, staff, and faculty, and that will serve us well in the recruitment effort and in working with our leader in the long-term.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacey Altman".

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](#).



Breakfast is enjoyed outside the Rivers Building before watching the 2023 ECU Homecoming Parade. (Photo by Mack Keenan)

The HHP Homecoming Breakfast on Oct. 21 was another successful event! We loved seeing so many smiling faces on campus to enjoy food, the parade and conversations together. Look out for more information upcoming about our annual ECU baseball alumni HHP alumni tailgate in April!

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

Last fiscal year, HHP received more external funding awards than any other college at ECU except the Brody School of Medicine. Our research team has reorganized to capitalize on that success. We now have a research development manager, Kerry Sewell, to provide a single point of contact for potential partners who wish to engage with research. Sewell joined HHP from Laupus Health Sciences Library, where she was research librarian for the health sciences.

HHP ADVISING

In continuation to the college's dedication to student success, the College of Health and Human Performance academic advisors proudly welcomed more than 500 incoming HHP freshmen during summer orientation sessions. We are also continuing our recruitment and retention efforts through major virtual academic nights, ECU's Open House and having high school groups visit our campus to learn more about HHP majors. Our center has also had an active presence at national events. In October, Rachel Hodges and Kelsey Webster represented us at the National Academic Advising Association conference, ensuring we stay updated with the latest advising methodologies and practices. Mandy Dockendorf and Sharon McNair attended the Southeastern Association of Advisors for Health Professions conference in May, further emphasizing the department's commitment to continuous learning and networking in the broader academic community.

NEWS AND NOTES

Dr. Stephanie Richards and others in Health Education and Promotion led a multi-institutional, collaborative [STEM summer immersion program](#) that produced impactful results.

[More therapists, more care](#) has benefited students studying medical family therapy and social work, and patients throughout eastern North Carolina.



Alex Hernandez is a medical family therapy doctoral student who sees patients as part of integrated care services. (Photo by Rhett Butler)

Alum McKenzie Bradley, an account executive in the golf division at Perry Ellis International, shared her [knowledge and expertise to eager IDMR students](#) during a special visit to Dr. Runying Chen's class.

Throughout many celebrations of [Air Force ROTC's 75th anniversary](#), the initial crowdfunding goal was surpassed to support Detachment 600.

Postdoctoral fellow Alex Claiborne and others have assisted Dr. Linda May in furthering research about babies with strong hearts and healthy cells are [benefits directly related to prenatal exercise by their mother](#).

HHP courses received the distinction of the [Quality Matters Certification Mark](#), including university required courses KINE 1000 and HLTH 100, and RCTX 4263, a core class in the recreational therapy program.

Mallory Savidge is a two-time ECU graduate from the School of Social Work and was featured in an [HHP alumni profile](#).

Unique collaborations continue with Army ROTC and Kinesiology, including Dr. Christine Habeeb [jumping with the Golden Knights](#).



Dr. Christine Habeeb smiles as she jumps with the Golden Knights. (Contributed photo)

ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

Justin Sharpe was featured by the main ECU social media account **during Homecoming Week**. He received his B.S. in Public Health in 2012 and Master of Public Health in 2014.

Michele Latimer was named **college/university athletic trainer of the year** by the Athletic Trainers' Association of Florida. Latimer, who graduated Summa Cum Laude from ECU with a B.S. in athletic training, is assistant director of athletic medicine/director of Olympic sports at the University of South Florida.

Melanie Melton, an alum of family and community services, authored an article published nationally in *Family Therapy Magazine*. The article was titled, *"Helping Black Women Heal Through a Womanist Mental Health and Healing Framework."*

Master of Kinesiology alum Lily Faulconer was **recognized by Business North Carolina** among under-40 N.C. leaders making dynamic local impacts.

A National Football League game between the Atlanta Falcons and Carolina Panthers on Sept. 10 in Atlanta brought together ECU HHP alums Kevin King, head athletic trainer for the Panthers, and Lovie Tabron, a player engagement specialist for the Falcons.

A groundbreaking was held for the **Alice F. Keene District Park Community Recreation Center**. Keene is recreation projects coordinator for the planning department in Pitt County and member of the HHP Dean's Advancement Council.

Cassidy Goff, who graduated during Spring 2023 in birth through

kindergarten education, was named ECU College of Education 2022-23 Student Teacher of the Year for excellence in internship in birth-kindergarten education.

Public health alum and two-time ECU graduate Dr. Megan Williams earned her PhD from the University of Alabama earlier this year and began her career at Texas A&M as an instructional assistant professor in the School of Public Health.

Dr. Priscila Norris, a psychotherapist, clinical supervisor and educator, and ECU Master of Social Work alum, obtained her Doctorate in Social Work from the University of Kentucky.

Robert Heddrick (RCSC '05), Joel Banjo-Johnson (AFROTC '09) and Dr. Nadia Jones (HDFS '06) were among new members named to the ECU Alumni Association **board of directors**.

Jamie Reed, athletic training '82, was part of a major milestone when the Texas Rangers won their first-ever World Series in Major League Baseball. Reed is senior director of medical operations for the Rangers.



HHP alums Kevin King and Lovie Tabron during an Atlanta Falcons-Carolina Panthers game. (Contributed photo)

UNIT UPDATES

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH EDUCATION AND PROMOTION (HEP)

Chair - Dr. Michele Wallen; Administrative Support Associate - Wendy Allen.

The start of a new academic year is a time of renewed energy and momentum, and that was certainly the case for HEP students and faculty. There is a lot that is new and exciting. Drs. Sarah Maness and Lori Ann Eldridge joined the HEP faculty this fall and quickly made a positive impact in teaching, research, and service. Maness was recently selected for participation in the 2023-24 American Academy of Health Behavior's Research Scholars and Mentors Program, which serves as a research home for health behavior scholars whose primary commitment is to excellence in research and the application of research to practice to improve the public's health. Eldridge received a \$300,000 federal grant titled, "Expanding naloxone access in rural communities in North Carolina," which will examine the use of public health vending machines to make naloxone more widely available in rural communities and reduce morbidity and mortality among individuals at risk of opioid overdose.

Also new this fall, the department opened a Reproductive Health and Sexuality Education Certificate program that is designed to meet the educational needs of public health professionals currently working in reproductive and sexual health related-related fields across a variety of organizations, such as state health departments, federally qualified health centers, community clinics, and non-profit organizations. This certificate will provide a strong foundation in reproductive and sexual health that will be



From left, Joseph Lee, Jamie Bloss and Leslie Cofie show an internet survey for farmworkers on an iPad. (Contributed photo)

UNIT UPDATES

advantageous for job-seekers in fields such as sociology, social work, psychology, and child and family life education in providing education and services to children, youth, women, families, and communities.

We finished the last academic year with 41 externally funded awards totaling \$5,624,747, which was another record-breaking year. Those awards are funding novel research and service projects in eastern North Carolina and beyond that are improving health literacy, health equity, school climate for students, health education, access to public health pathways in graduate school, environmental safety, and digital equity for communities we serve. Funded projects provide opportunities to involve students in lab and field-based research, support the dissemination of evidence-based practices to practitioners in the field, and improve the lives of many people. Faculty have also partnered with several alumni in the implementation of research and service projects, and it is affirming to see professional preparation and practice come full circle. This exciting work is assisting to fulfill ECU's mission to discover new knowledge and innovations, to support a thriving future for eastern North Carolina and beyond, and to transform health care, promote wellness, and reduce health disparities.

In closing, we recently sent nine students, three research staff, and six faculty members to the American Public Health Association annual meeting in Atlanta, which created exciting opportunities to connect with alumni and friends of the department. If we missed you in Atlanta, we hope to see you again in the spring at the HHP baseball tailgate.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY SCIENCE (HDFS)

Chair - Dr. Sharon Ballard; Administrative Support Associate - Susan Congleton.

Faculty in the department continue to transform the region with their grant-funded research totaling more than \$3 million annually. Not only are faculty improving lives for children and families through these grant-funded projects, they are involving students in initiatives. External funding secured by HDFS faculty currently employs 16 students who are gaining valuable career skills and making a positive impact through activities such as providing behavioral and mental health services through Greene County Health Care, delivering relationship education to incarcerated individuals in the Pitt County Detention Center, caring for children in the new evening drop-off childcare (DOCC) program, or engaging in research activities.

In addition to these grant-funded experiences, HDFS faculty have guided students in other high-impact experiential activities such as serving as camp counselors for **Camp WholeHeart**, traveling on summer study abroad programs around the world, engaging in community service through student organizations, and completing practicums and internships in a variety of school and community settings. For example, students in the Marriage and Family Therapy master's program have the unique opportunity to practice

and hone their skills as therapists in the ECU Family Therapy Clinic under the direct supervision of MFT faculty. These student therapists provide much-needed therapy services to the members of the broader community, including ECU students. Funding from ECU Health Foundation and the Pitt County Coalition on Substance Use increases access to therapy by covering the cost of therapy sessions for eligible community members, and the Hannah Bailey and Jackie Mastromauro Fund covers six free therapy sessions for ECU students. Students also are embracing professional development opportunities to give research presentations at state and national conferences, such as the National Council on Family Relations, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Collaborative Family Healthcare Association, and Institute on Violence, Abuse, and Trauma. By the end of this semester, 11 HDFS graduate students, two undergraduate students, and three recent alumni will have given 15 presentations with HDFS faculty.

Research shows that high-impact educational practices such as those described here lead to increased rates of student retention, persistence, and overall learning success. HDFS faculty are committed to providing our students with these rich opportunities that lead to academic success and career skills, while also contributing to the well-being of children and families throughout the community.

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR DESIGN AND MERCHANDISING (IDMR)

Chair - Dr. Amanda Muhammad.

Faculty in IDMR have been hard at work revising the current curriculum to reflect the changing industry, needs of students and accrediting body. Students enjoyed valuable learning experiences outside of the classroom recently, including to the Raleigh branch of Johnnie-O, a lifestyle apparel brand fusing a Southern California vibe with East Coast tradition. Thanks to faculty and Chris Knott of the fashion merchandising advisory board for facilitating this visit. Also, interior design students attended the High Point Furniture Market. Students accompanied Jesus Neives Dalmau during his visit to the mart as a practicing interior designer, which



ECU Chancellor Dr. Philip Rogers visits with students in associate professor Charles Gustina's interior design fund lab course. (Photo by Rhett Butler)

UNIT UPDATES

allowed students to see practically how he incorporates market visits into his professional activities.

Matthew Simpkins, an interior design student, was nominated as an International Furnishings and Design Association's Carolina Chapter Luminary Event "Rising Star" for North Carolina and South Carolina.

AIR FORCE ROTC (DET. 600)

Commander: Lt. Col. – William Dye;

Admin Support Associate – Cary Ann Reeves.

Many fall celebrations for Detachment 600 centered around the 75th anniversary of the unit. Air Force ROTC Detachment 600 opened in 1948, one year after the United States Air Force was established as a separate service. Hundreds of people attended the Air Force ROTC ball and/or panel discussion in September in conjunction with the ECU main campus library exhibition, "75 Years of Detachment 600: East Carolina's Air Force ROTC." HHP, University Advancement and the ECU Alumni Association helped meet the initial goal in raising **more than \$7,000 to support cadets**.

Ten seniors received the jobs they will go into after commissioning. We have three cadets who will commission during the Dec. 16 Air Force Commissioning Ceremony. The unit hosted two Company Grade Officer career days – one was virtual with eight officers from various bases around the globe, and one in-person when 10 officers from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base came to speak with the cadets and offered insight into their respective career fields.



Cadets look at photos in a library exhibition highlighting 75 years of Detachment 600. (Photo by Rhett Butler)

DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY (KINE)

Chair – Dr. JK Yun;

Administrative Support Associate – Elaine Hughes.

Report will be provided in next newsletter.



Current graduate student Lydia Pinto was honored as a Past-Presidents' Conference Scholarship recipient at the North Carolina Recreational Therapy Association's annual conference. (ECU News photo)

DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION SCIENCES (RCSC)

Chair – Dr. Clifton Watts;

Administrative Support Associate – Kim Walters.

RCSC has offered several opportunities for experiential education and engagement in the field. These occur through study abroad opportunities, internships, and special classes that offer field-based learning.

Dr. David Loy and Lauren Harrell led a group of 15 students on a great volunteer experience at the 2023 **Special Olympics World Games in Berlin**. A study abroad experience to South Korea led by Drs. AJ An (Kinesiology) and Jaehyun Kim (RCSC) is planned for summer 2024. For the 17th year, Dr. Hans Vogelsong taught the Great Smoky Mountains Outdoor Field experience. To prepare for this experience, 18 students participated in weekly classes for the first half of the semester, orienting them to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and The National Park Service. Students then embark on a week-long trip to the park where they stay at the Tremont Institute, which is a residential environmental education center within the park. They learn about current issues facing the park and how the Park Service tries to balance the desires of visitors to the most highly visited National Park in the country with protecting the natural resources of one of the most biodiverse regions on the planet.

Highlighting student success, Lydia Pinto, an RCSC alumna and current graduate student, was a Past-Presidents' Conference Scholarship recipient at the 2023 North Carolina Recreational Therapy Association's annual conference in October. Also, Mackenzie Dolecheck, a recent graduate student and recipient of the 2022 NCRTA research grant, presented her thesis research at the 2023 NCRTA conference. Sixty-five RCSC students completed internships this year, translating to 35,360 hours serving agencies across North Carolina and the Southeast. The internship is a culminating field-based experience for students in our recreational therapy and recreation & park management majors whereby students implement the skills they learn through service-based, field-based, and classroom experiences throughout their course of study.



Students, staff and faculty interact during a School of Social Work ice cream social in August. (Photo by Ronnie Woodward)

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK (SOSW)

Director - Dr. Kirk Foster; Administrative Support Associate- Brittany Bates.

The ECU School of Social Work has a busy and exciting academic year ahead. In June 2023, we submitted our reaccreditation self-study to the Council on Social Work Education. This comprehensive review of our BSW and MSW programs challenged faculty and staff to ask critical questions about what we do and what we teach, and how we do and teach it. The self-study was a time for reflection and a lot of writing - more than 1,600 single-spaced pages of writing. Our team worked tirelessly on this project, and we took away important findings that will be incorporated into curricular redesign.

Our School is known for providing free continuing education to the social work practice community, an important resource for maintaining social work licensure. Many thanks to Margaret Mayo in our Office of Field Education for organizing and hosting our Professional Development Lecture Series. We have expanded our offerings this year through the Lunch & Learn Series and the Carolyn Freeze Baynes Memorial Lecture Series in Social Justice. The L&L lectures share important

scholarship on social work practice and pedagogy, bringing together faculty, staff, and students from across ECU and beyond. This year we welcome faculty and doctoral students from outside ECU as guest lecturers. The Baynes Lecture series will launch Feb. 1, 2024, and focus specifically on aspects of social justice and feature nationally renowned scholars. Lectures are open to all, whether near or far, and we hope you will join us.

ARMY ROTC (Pirate Battalion)

Commander: Lt. Col - Josh Aeschliman; Administrative support associate - Cary Ann Reeves.

ECU Army ROTC kicked off the Fall 2023 semester with the opening of the Joint ROTC Living Learning Center. This has been a huge success as freshmen have been able to relate with their floor mates and help each other along this new path of being in the military. A part of the LLC are the seven high school ROTC National Scholarship winners who joined the Pirate Battalion. Eleven cadets attended the annual Ranger Challenge competition at Fort Barfoot, Va. The best among the entire program's population of more than 130 cadets represented ECU against 38 other regional colleges and universities. The cadets were challenged physically and mentally as they were assessed on several critical Army skills, including providing combat first aid, throwing grenades, radio communications, weapons assembly and M17 pistol marksmanship. The course spanned approximately 11 miles and once complete with all stations, the team had to move another 6 miles on foot carrying a 35-pound rucksack for time. ECU's team placed 13th out of 39 schools.

FACULTY/STAFF NEWS

Jocelyn Ruffin, instructor in birth-kindergarten education (HDFS), earned an educational specialist post-masters degree in curriculum and instruction from Liberty University. This additional degree supports Ruffin's work as the curriculum support specialist for the Nancy W. Darden Child Development Center, a position she holds in addition to instructor in the BK program.

Dr. Stacy Warner, ECU sport management coordinator and professor in kinesiology, was named ECU's 2023 recipient of the Achievement in International Service and Engagement Award. Acknowledgement from ECU Global Affairs included: "The activities you are engaging in as a teacher, researcher, and leader are critical to building ECU's national and international reputation. Our students, our constituents in eastern North Carolina, communities abroad, and the scientific and academic community worldwide benefit substantially from your endeavors."

The National Council on Family Relations named **Dr. Eboni Baugh** as its 2023 recipient of the **Ernest G. Osborne Award**, acknowledging her excellence in teaching and distinguished contributions to families through her pedagogy. The NCFR lauded Baugh, an associate professor in human development and family science, for the innovative ways in which she challenges and motivates her students and fosters their learning so they can apply what they are learning to their future work with families.

Eight students assisted **Dr. Eric Soule** (Department of Health Education and Promotion) and other ECU faculty members in their research on the use of e-cigarettes in vehicles. Their studies led to **published articles in Tobacco Control and Drug and Alcohol Dependence**.



Student Ericka Biagioni conducts lab research as part of a project with Dr. Nicholas Broskey in the Department of Kinesiology.

FACULTY/STAFF NEWS

The next **National Biomechanics Day**, an annual event led by our **Dr. Paul DeVita**, has been set for April 3, 2024. This is a unified and synchronized celebration of biomechanics among all participating laboratories, including demonstrating biomechanics to high school students and teachers and parents, too.

Dr. Leslie Cofie won the Dr. Mike and Sherri Felts Regional Impact Research Award. Cofie is an assistant professor in Health Education and Promotion.

Graduate assistants in lifestyle physical activity and fitness were joined by program director **Dr. Amber McEachern** in attending an instructional physical activity program summit held at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. ECU's representatives highlighted their work contributing to the growth and development of KINE lifestyle physical activity and fitness courses.

In conjunction with a five-year, nearly \$6 million NIH award secured by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Rural Health, **Drs. Joseph Lee and Leslie Cofie** are **leaders on an inter-institutional research team** focused on advancing health equity by promoting digital inclusion for agricultural workers and their families in North Carolina.

Dr. JK Yun, KINE chair, was inducted as Fellow #643 in the **class of 2023 into the National Academy of Kinesiology**. Yun joined current ECU faculty Drs. Paul DeVita (#518) and Joe Houmard (#467) as members.

Dr. Melanie Sartore-Baldwin won the 2023 Governor's Volunteer Service Award. Sartore-Baldwin leads the Mutt Strutters Dog Walking Enrichment Program with Pitt County Animal Services.

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 and woodwardr21@ecu.edu.



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