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OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

College of Health Sciences

Engaging Learners • Making Discoveries • Improving Health

Thursday, April 4, 2024

Dr. Danika Pfeiffer receives ASHFoundation research grant to study developmental language disorders in preschoolers



Danika Pfeiffer, PhD, began her Monarch journey in Old Dominion University's speech-language pathology and audiology program in fall 2023, and hit the ground running at an Olympic Marathon speed. Just a few months into her Monarch journey, she received the American Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation (ASHFoundation) new investigators research grant, an award of \$10,000. Dr. Pfeiffer's project, titled "Emergent Writing Profiles of Preschoolers with Developmental Language Disorder," is aimed at understanding language disorders which cannot be explained by medical conditions.

To assist her in this research, Dr. Pfeiffer recruited first-year graduate student Alexis Clark. Alexis, who completed her undergraduate degree at North Carolina A&T, brings a passion for working with preschoolers and a strong desire to contribute to research in the field of speech-language pathology. Alexis aspires to help those who struggle to advocate for themselves and hopes the findings of this research will fill a gap in the current understanding of developmental language disorders for this age group. Currently collaborating with Dr. Pfeiffer on writing the abstract, Alexis sees this opportunity as a stepping stone towards her long-term goal of balancing practice and research.

Together, Dr. Pfeiffer and Alexis are recruiting 20 sites around Hampton Roads, including preschools, speech therapy centers, and daycares, to conduct testing sessions on 4 and 5-year-olds assessing language, early literacy, hearing, and cognition. Using play-based methods, these assessments aim to evaluate children's writing skills, including their ability to write their name, recognize letters, and write words. Their objective is to develop profiles of children with language disorders, ultimately enhancing evaluation tools for speech-language therapists. This study will continue until December, at which point they will present their findings at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) conference.

In addition to their ongoing research, as well as teaching classes, Dr. Pfeiffer was also chosen for ASHA's Lessons for Success program, where she will receive intensive grant writing training. This opportunity aligns with her commitment to expanding her research endeavors and contributing to the field of pediatric speech therapy.

Dr. Pfeiffer's leadership and Alexis's enthusiasm epitomize the spirit of excellence within ODU's speech-language pathology program, promising advancements that will benefit both current and future generations.

ODU School of Dental Hygiene Shines Bright at ADEA Annual Session



The School of Dental Hygiene has once again demonstrated its excellence on the national stage, as several faculty members showcased their expertise and dedication at the American Dental Education Association's Annual Session in New Orleans, LA. Among them, two outstanding individuals, Jessica Suedbeck and Sam Vest, were recognized for their remarkable contributions.

Jessica Suedbeck, assistant professor and senior clinic coordinator, was recognized with the prestigious ADEAGies Foundation Junior Faculty Achievement in Allied Oral Health Education award, a testament to her exemplary work and leadership.

Sam Vest, lecturer in the ODU School of Dental Hygiene, was recognized by the PRIDE (Promoting Respect for Identity Dignity and Expression) Section with an Award for Service and Leadership. They were recognized for their efforts in diversity and inclusion, specifically as it relates to LGBTQ+ populations.

Ann Bruhn, chair and associate professor, served as the chair elect for the Council of Allied Program

Directors, and is now the chair of this group. Professor Bruhn also presented a research poster on the Dental Summer Health Institute, and was an author on another poster.

Brenda Bradshaw, assistant professor and entry-level program director, served as the chair elect of the Graduate Dental Hygiene Education Special Interest Group and has now moved into the chair position.

Dr. Denise McKinney, associate professor and graduate program director, served as a delegate for the Council of Allied Program Directors, member of the ADEA Annual Session Planning Committee, and presented a poster at the ADEA International Women Leadership Conference. She was an author for another poster that was presented.

Emily Ludwig, assistant professor, served as the secretary for the Section on Dental Hygiene Education and is now stepping into the chair elect position for the section.

Jessica Suedbeck also served as the secretary for the Dental Hygiene Clinic Coordinators Special Interest Group and has now moved into the chair elect position. She presented a poster on the Simulated Patient Experience and student perceptions research related to that experience.

Congratulations to Jessica Suedbeck, Sam Vest, and all dental hygiene faculty representatives for their outstanding contributions to the field of dental hygiene education. Your achievements bring pride to our college and reinforce our commitment to shaping the future of healthcare professionals.

Angela Wilson Honored with Diversity Champion Award



Angela Wilson, clinical assistant professor in the ODU College of Health Sciences, has been honored with a 2024 Diversity Champion Award.

Since joining ODU in 2017, Wilson has actively promoted awareness of disadvantaged and underrepresented students by highlighting months such as Black History Month, American Indian Heritage Month, and LGBTQ+ Month.

She served on the Interprofessional Education (IPE) Committee from 2018 to 2023, facilitating collaboration among students from diverse health science programs. Notably, she integrated transgender medicine into the MLS 210 curriculum, broadening perspectives and addressing critical topics.

In Spring 2022, Wilson introduced a directed study course (MLS 497) exploring the Cuban healthcare model. She invited guest speaker Dr. Alden Chesney to share insights into Cuban laboratory medicine, enriching students' understanding.

Rachel Childs, program director for Medical Laboratory Sciences, stated, "Since Angela Wilson began her career at ODU, her philosophy has always surrounded diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging." Childs emphasized Wilson's dedication to DEI efforts, citing her involvement in national conferences

and research on experiential learning models for IPE.

Wilson's commitment to DEI initiatives, innovative teaching methodologies, and collaborative spirit make her a deserving recipient of the 2024 Diversity Champion Award. Her contributions are an inspiration to the College and beyond

Brittany Samulski, DPT, PhD, appointed to ACAPT Task Force on Research in Physical Therapy Education



Dr. Brittany Samulski, assistant professor in the physical therapy program, has been appointed to the American Council of Academic Physical Therapy (ACAPT) Institute of Scholarly Inquiry (ISI) Task Force on Establishing and Sustaining a Culture of Research in Academic Physical Therapy.

The task force, comprising 12 distinguished members selected by ACAPT leadership, aims to develop an aspirational vision statement for research and scholarship in Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) educational programs. Their work will include conducting a needs assessment, gap analysis, and identifying structures and resources necessary for academic programs to adapt and sustain a culture of research effectively.

In her role on the task force, Dr. Samulski will play a crucial part in shaping the future landscape of physical therapy education. Her expertise and dedication to advancing research in the field make her an invaluable asset to this initiative.

Dr. Samulski expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to represent ODU on a national stage, emphasizing the significance of this role in influencing the direction of academic physical therapy and the profession as a whole.

ODU College of Health Sciences students impress at Undergraduate Research Symposium



The ODU College of Health Sciences (COHS) had nine undergraduates present seven posters at the [Undergraduate Research Symposium](#) with their COHS mentors. All of the faculty mentors are part of the NIH R15 Incubator Program in COHS, and their students were funded by the Synergizing Undergraduate Research Experiences to Strengthen External Proposals (SURE-STEP) Program, which is a partnership with, and funded by, the Perry Honors College to support the hiring of an undergraduate RA to join the research team of a faculty member in our R15 Incubator Program.

- Julia Bohlman (Exercise Science), mentored by Ashwini Kulkarni (Rehab Sciences)
- Dakota Smith (Exercise Science), mentored by Brittany Samulski (Rehab Sciences)
- Paige Jannereth (Biology), mentored by Heather Hamilton (Rehab Sciences)
- Eleanor Brodine (Speech Language Pathology), mentored by Danika Pfeiffer (Speech Language Pathology)
- Madison Hastain (Speech Language Pathology) & Anna Marie Amonoo-Harrison (Speech Language Pathology), mentored by Rachel Johnson (Speech Language Pathology)
- Katie Pastore (Public Health), mentored by Denise McKinney (Dental Hygiene)
- Tonya Scroggins (MLS) & Amy Vinarao (MLS), mentored by Leryn Reynolds (Kinesiology)

ODU Hosts Wellness Event for Nexcom Navy Employees



On Tuesday, March 12th, the Old Dominion University (ODU) exercise science program welcomed 31 Nexcom Navy employees for a comprehensive wellness assessment event. Organized by Leryn Reynolds and Kyle Davis, the event aimed to promote employee health and well-being.

The event, held at the Student Recreation Center (SRC), saw the collaboration of 10 undergraduates from the EXSC 431 course and the Exercise Science Club, along with three graduate students. These students played a vital role in conducting various assessments, including resting blood pressure, heart rate, body composition, blood glucose and cholesterol, muscle strength, flexibility, balance, and cardiorespiratory fitness. Additionally, participants completed a wellness questionnaire to provide a comprehensive overview of their health status.

Under the guidance of Davis, students from the EXSC 431 course actively participated in conducting measurements, while members of the Exercise Science Club assisted in data entry and the creation of personalized wellness profiles for each participant.

Following the initial assessments, on March 15th, a team comprising Davis and Reynolds, along with Ph.D. candidates Taskina Akhter and Joel Harden, visited the Navy base to deliver the wellness profiles to the Nexcom employees. They also conducted a lecture focusing on wellness, health behaviors, and provided guidance on behavior change contracts.

This collaboration highlights the ODU College of Health Sciences' dedication to promoting community health and well-being through hands on education.

Mark Christian N. Managuio Named 2024 Recipient of Mel Williams Scholarship



In honor of the late Dr. Mel Williams, a distinguished figure in the field of exercise science and a beloved member of the Old Dominion University community, the Melvin H. Williams Endowed Scholarship continues to recognize excellence in Exercise Science. Initiated by Dr. Williams in 2008, this scholarship commemorates his legacy as a scholar, mentor, and athlete.

Dr. Mel Williams established the Melvin H. Williams Endowed Scholarship in 2008 to support rising seniors in Exercise Science. This scholarship reflects Dr. Williams' dedication to academic excellence and personal fitness, empowering future leaders in the field.

Mark Christian N. Managuio, a senior passionate about Exercise Science, embodies the qualities valued by Dr. Williams. With a strong academic record and commitment to service, Mark's engagement in extracurricular activities and community service reflects his determination to make a meaningful impact.

Mark's journey at Old Dominion University emphasizes embracing the learning process and involvement in initiatives like Biomechanics Day. His dedication to personal growth and community engagement aligns with Dr. Williams' legacy.

Tenure and Promotion Celebration

During Old Dominion University's recent tenure and promotion celebration, four outstanding faculty members from the ODU College of Health Sciences were recognized. These individuals have demonstrated excellence in scholarship, leadership, and service to their university and respective fields:

- Julie Cavallario, Rehabilitation Sciences
- Ryan McCann, Rehabilitation Sciences
- Patricia Laverdure, Rehabilitation Sciences
- Denise McKinney, Dental Hygiene

Featured Photo: Graduate Fair



Representing the College of Health Sciences at the ODU Graduate School Fair
L to R: Ryan McCann, Patty Laverdure, Stacie Raymer, Mira Mariano, Denise McKinney

Recent Publications

[Differences in pre-season balance among student athletes based on level of contact, age, and sex](#) Christopher K. Rhea

Data from over 9,000 athletes showed that different postural control was observed when the type of sport, age, and sex was taken into consideration. This suggests that these factors should be taken into consideration when deriving normative postural control data.

[Understanding the effects of a sudden directional shift in somatosensory feedback and increasing task complexity on postural adaptation in individuals with and without chronic ankle instability](#) Christopher K. Rhea

Postural adaptation in individuals with and without chronic ankle instability (CAI) depends on task and environmental constraints. Faster postural adaptation in to sudden perturbations may indicate a centrally mediated change in neuromuscular control in CAI.

Call for Stories, Publications

The College of Health Sciences will be listing recent faculty publications. If you've published a paper this semester, [click here to share your publications](#).

Share your stories about:

- Research
- Grants
- Teaching success
- Awards and honors
- Student success
- Alumni success
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Students getting experience in the field
- Community service
- Upcoming events
- Anything else that shows how unique our programs are and how great it is to be a Monarch!
- If you are featured in the media, please share that as well.

Deadline to be featured in the next newsletter is April 19, but the "call for stories" is constant. Please share your story ideas with Erica Howell at ehowell@odu.edu.

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ODU College of Health Sciences | 4608 Hampton Blvd, Norfolk, VA 23529

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