



UNIVERSITY OF  
ARKANSAS®

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## College of Education and Health Professions

### 2024-2025 Annual Report

*This, and past reports, are available [here](#).*

**Prepared by:**

Matthew S. Ganio, Ph.D.  
Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs

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## Annual report

### Executive Summary

The [WE CARE vision](#) continued to serve as a blueprint for the College of Education and Health Professions' commitment to advance impactful research, expand service to Arkansas, and foster a caring culture. This commitment was signified by the [WE CARE Day Proclamation](#) signed by Fayetteville Mayor Lioneld Jordan on August 19, 2024, in honor of the college's faculty, staff, and students' work to improve people's everyday lives in Arkansas and beyond. The mayor read the proclamation at the fall kickoff meeting, and Dean Kate Mamiseishvili invited the college community, friends, and alumni to embrace the WE CARE vision to lead innovation with care. In the summer of 2024, the college also launched its "[WE CARE Everywhere](#)" campaign to share the WE CARE message worldwide. The WE CARE brand and strategic plan launch have reinvigorated the college, fostered high levels of engagement and energy among faculty and staff, and garnered increased recognition and external support.

The college's efforts to lead innovation with care were demonstrated by many significant accomplishments in the 2024-2025 academic year. The college was named the [49th best public graduate education program](#) by *U.S. News & World Report* in the 2025 Best Graduate Schools rankings. The *Princeton Review* ranked the [educational leadership doctoral program](#) as one of the country's best online Doctor of Education programs for 2025. The [Exercise is Medicine](#) program was awarded "Gold Status" by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), the highest honor awarded to schools working toward creating a culture of wellness on college campuses. [Tom Kippenbrock](#), professor of nursing, was inducted as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing. Bill McComas, distinguished professor of science education and Parks Family Endowed Professor; Kevin Murach, assistant professor of exercise science; Jonathan Wai, associate professor and 21st Century Endowed Chair in Education Policy; and Gema Zamarro, professor of education reform and 21st Century Endowed Chair in Teacher Quality, were recognized by Stanford University/Elsevier as among the [top 2% of researchers worldwide](#). These are just a few of many examples of the college leading innovation in education and healthcare at the national stage.

The college continued its remarkable success, securing external funding to support its research and outreach. In the 2025 fiscal year, faculty and staff generated \$26,515,083 million in external grants and contracts from 82 awards. Some examples of these awards include over \$5 million in external funding that [Early Care and Education Projects](#) (ECEP), an outreach unit in the college, received from various federal, state, and private sources to improve the quality of childcare providers across Arkansas. [Partners](#), another outreach unit in the college, received an additional \$1.8 million to further advance a \$10 million grant from the Arkansas Department of Human Services to support and stabilize children who are Medicaid recipients at risk of losing placement in their homes or schools due to challenging behaviors. [Page Dobbs](#), associate professor of public health, received \$500,096 from the Arkansas Attorney General to investigate social media influencers' messaging around smokeless tobacco and design better prevention strategies targeting youth. [Kevin Murach](#), associate professor of exercise science, received a \$713,000 Independent Scientist Award from the National Institutes of Health to expand research on how exercise affects muscle decline with age. [Tyrone Washington](#), professor of

exercise science, received a \$435,000 award from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study muscle recovery after traumatic injuries. The college's [special education program](#) received a five-year, \$6 million U.S. Department of Education training grant. The funding supports the training of 20 doctoral fellows at five universities who will become leaders in helping youth with disabilities and their families transition into adulthood, particularly in school administration or higher education roles.

Commitment to Arkansas excellence remains a centerpiece of the college's strategic plan. Students in the college are immersed in transformative experiential learning opportunities in real-world environments in service to Arkansas. In spring 2025, 1,744 students were engaged in internships and clinical experiences in 43 (57%) of 75 counties across Arkansas. The college also provides innovative professional development and training opportunities to bolster and upskill the education and healthcare workforce in Arkansas. In the 2024-2025 academic year, the college hosted more than 30 workforce development activities, engaging over 9,000 professionals to enhance their skills and expand their knowledge. The college's grant portfolio also overwhelmingly focuses on serving Arkansas. In the 2025 fiscal year, the college received over \$20.5 million in grants focused on our state. These grants are leveraged to provide services and expertise to state agencies, offer professional development to Arkansans in a variety of education and health fields, improve the lives of people with disabilities, and increase students' learning.

Among the signature achievements to expand the college's outreach and footprint in Arkansas was the [education policy conference](#) organized by the Department of Education Reform in December 2024, which featured a fireside chat with Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who used the platform to highlight key initiatives from her signature legislation, the LEARNS Act. Another highlight of the year was the college's IMPACT Arkansas Principal Fellows program receiving over \$3.4 million from the Walton Family Foundation and the Windgate Foundation to recruit and support 90 aspiring school leaders from rural, high-poverty schools across Arkansas. The college also continued WE CARE-A-VAN tours in the 2024-2025 academic year. Travelling nearly 750 miles, Dean Mamiseishvili and 12 faculty and staff members visited southeastern Arkansas, with stops in Pine Bluff, Monticello, Portland, and El Dorado during the [Fall 2024 WE CARE-A-VAN tour](#). On the [Spring 2025 WE CARE-A-VAN tour](#), 16 faculty and staff members travelled nearly 500 miles to visit partners and host events in Danville, Hot Springs, and Conway.

The college intensified its efforts to foster a caring culture and strengthen engagement internally among faculty, staff, and students, as well as externally with alumni, donors, partners, and friends. In the 2024-2025 academic year, [87 WE CARE Rounds of Applause](#) were awarded to exceptional faculty and staff members who went above and beyond to demonstrate extraordinary care for their colleagues, students, and community. The college also launched the [Alumni Mentoring Program](#) (AMP) to foster meaningful connections between alumni and current students. With 120 students and alumni interacting at various levels of engagement, the program provided crucial support and real-world insights to students preparing to begin their careers while strengthening alumni bonds to the college. The [Dean's Executive Advisory Board](#), which functions as an advocacy group for the college, met twice in [October 2024](#) and [March 2025](#) and collaborated with Dean Kate Mamiseishvili to develop long-range strategic priorities and identify partnership opportunities. For more information about the college's progress on the strategic priorities, visit [wecare.uark.edu](http://wecare.uark.edu).

## Academic News

- The College of Education and Health Professions was named the 49th best public graduate education program by U.S. News & World Report in the outlet's 2025 Best Graduate Schools rankings. Read more [here](#).
- The following programs underwent the 7-year state review:
  - Human Resource Development undergraduate, master's, and doctorate (HRDE BHRD, HRDE MHRD, HRDE EDD)
  - Public Health doctorate
  - Adult and Lifelong Learning master's and doctorate (ADLL MED, ADLL EDD)
- [In accordance with the University of Arkansas System](#) changes, all courses were converted from a 4-digit number to a 5-digit number.
- The B.S.E. in Educational Studies degree program began offering the Mixed Educational Environments concentration online.
- The Teacher Education programs modified their academic programs to include a year-long residency (i.e., student teaching), part of the [Learns Act](#).
- Recreation and Sport Management created an accelerated master's program that pairs with their undergraduate degree.
- The Public Health program earned accreditation from the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) for its Bachelor of Science degree in Public Health and its new Master of Public Health degree. Read more [here](#).
- **Lisa Bowers** and **Heather Young** taught a new course centered around Interprofessional Practice, "Introduction and Exposure to Interprofessional Practice". Read more [here](#).
- 36 new courses were created in COEHP throughout the year:
  - ATTR 53101: Clinical Anatomy for Athletic Trainers Lab
  - CATE 51006: Cohort Directed Field Experience
  - CIED 41903: Intermediate Math Methods
  - CIED 42003: Advanced Seminar
  - CIED 42906: Advanced Residency II
  - CIED 49003: Nature and Needs of the Gifted and Talented
  - CIED 49103: Curriculum Development in Gifted and Talented
  - CIED 51803: Advanced Elementary Education Seminar
  - CIED 54806: Advanced Teaching Residency II
  - NURS 50133: Writing for Scholarship
  - NURS 50234: Advanced Pathophysiology, Pharmacology, and Health Assessment for the Masters Prepared Nurse
  - NURS 51332: Advanced Health Assessment and Diagnostic Reasoning
  - NURS 52132: Genetics, Genomes, and Epigenetics of Human Health and Disease
  - NURS 56333: Diagnostic Reasoning II Growth and Development - Birth to Young Adult
  - NURS 56433: Primary Care Clinical Practicum I
  - NURS 57433: Primary Care Clinical Practicum II
  - NURS 58333: Diagnostic Reasoning IV Chronic Issues in Primary Care
  - NURS 58433: Primary Care Clinical Practicum III
  - NURS 52331: Advanced Health Assessment Practicum
  - NURS 57333: Diagnostic Reasoning III Primary and Preventive Care

- NURS 75432: Advanced Practice Registered Nursing (APRN) Residency: A Service-Learning Course
- NURS 64432: DNP Project Design Identification
- NURS 65443: DNP Project Design II
- NURS 72431: DNP Project Implementation Clinical Practicum
- NURS 73443: Full-scope DNP/Specialty Clinical Practicum I
- NURS 74433: Full-scope DNP/Specialty Clinical and Leadership Practicum II
- PBHL 57503: Evidence-Based Public Health
- SEED 32903: Secondary Education Residency
- SEED 42803: Residency Advanced Seminar
- SEED 42906: Secondary Education Advanced Residency
- SEED 52933: Teaching Residency
- SEED 54803: Advanced Teaching Residency
- SPED 41403: Teaching Communication Skills to Persons with Autism
- SPED 47803: Professional and Family Partnerships
- SPED 5520V: Residency in Special Education
- STEM 4280V: STEM Secondary Teacher Residency

## Personnel Changes

- The following individuals retired in the 2024-2025 academic year:
  - **Craig Edmonston**, Instructor of Recreation and Sport Management
  - **Anna Jarrett**, Associate Professor of Nursing
  - **Kit Kacirek**, Associate Professor of Adult and Lifelong Learning
  - **Cathy Lirgg**, Professor of Physical Education
  - **Bettie Miller**, Clinical Instructor of Nursing
  - **Merry Moiseichik**, Professor of Recreation and Sport Management
  - **Allison Scott**, Associate Professor of Nursing
  - **Kathy Throop**, Clinical Instructor of Nursing
- The following individuals began as full-time faculty in the 2024-2025 academic year:
  - **Divya Bhagianadh**, Assistant Professor of Public Health
  - **Jennifer Cowhy**, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership
  - **Anqi Deng**, Assistant Professor of Exercise Science
  - **Hannah Denker**, Research Assistant Professor of Education Reform
  - **Michael Hensley**, Assistant Professor of Practice of Educational Leadership
  - **Simeon Hinsey**, Teaching Assistant Professor of Recreation and Sport Management
  - **Jaclyn Johnson**, Clinical Instructor of Nursing
  - **Megan Kumpe**, Clinical Instructor of Nursing
  - **Nikki Madden**, Clinical Instructor of Nursing
  - **Josh B. McGee**, Associate Professor of Educational Policy
  - **Emma McMMain**, Assistant Professor of Educational Statistics and Research Methods
  - **Alyssa Parsley**, Clinical Instructor of Nursing
  - **Harry Patrinos**, Department Head of Education Reform and 21st Century Endowed Chair in Education Policy

- **Matthew Peck**, Assistant Professor of Counselor Education and Supervision
  - **Melissa Savage**, Assistant Professor of Special Education
  - **James Sinclair**, Assistant Professor of Special Education
  - **Cynthia Watson Parks**, Clinical Instructor of Communication Sciences and Disorders
  - **Taylor Weichman**, Instructor of Recreation and Sport Management and Coordinator of Outdoor Leadership
  - **Steve Wheeler**, Professor of Occupational Therapy and Department Head of Communication Disorders and Occupational Therapy
- 
- **Steve Wheeler** was named Department Head of Communication Disorders and Occupational Therapy
  - **Harry Patrinos** was named Department Head of Education Reform
  - **Suzanne Kucharczyk** was named Department Head of Curriculum and Instruction

## Student and Grant Numbers

The COEHP [enrollment](#), with 6,177 students in fall 2024, was similar to fall 2023 (n=6,199). COEHP was the third largest college behind Walton (9,854) and Fulbright (8,772).

Compared to fall 2023, in fall 2024, undergraduate enrollment decreased by 21 students (0.4%) and graduate enrollment decreased by 13 students (1.0%). 85% of COEHP students were enrolled in on-campus degree programs. 79% of students were enrolled in bachelor's programs, 10% were in master's programs, and 6% were in doctoral programs. The Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation (HHPR) had the largest number of undergraduate students (2,049); Counseling, Leadership and Research Methods (CLRM) had the most graduate students (348). Collectively, COEHP had more graduate students than any other college (1,232).

Pre-professional sub-plans, such as pre-med, pre-physical therapy, etc., were declared by 835 (99% increase from 2023) students in the college. Most were pre-physical therapy (244), followed by pre-med (236). There were six students in the Curriculum and Instruction (CIED) accelerated master's program and nine in the exercise science accelerated master's program. Collectively, there were 34 accelerated master's students, a 56% increase year-over-year. There were 501 honors students, with the largest proportion being exercise science (134). Of the four minors in COEHP, Outdoor Leadership had the largest enrollment (69), which is more than twice as many students as the previous year (33).

Health, Human Performance and Recreation (HHPR) had the largest student enrollment in the college (n=2,223) followed by the Eleanor Mann School of Nursing (EMSON; 1,713), Department of Curriculum and Instruction (CIED; 1,112), Department of Communication Disorders and Occupational Therapy (CDOT; 486), Department of Counseling, Leadership, and Research Methods (CLRM; 391), and Department of Education Reform (EDRE; 14).

COEHP received 82 externally funded awards totaling \$26,515,083 in the 2025 fiscal year. Grants of note in the college included:

- The Office of Innovation for Education partnered with the Arkansas Department of Education to receive \$3.6 million from the U.S. Department of Education to improve the assessment of K-12 students' learning.
- Dr. Page Dobbs received \$500,000 from the Arkansas Attorney General to study social media messages to youth about smokeless tobacco. Read more [here](#).
- Drs. Gema Zamarro and Josh McGee received \$850,000 from the Institute for Education Sciences to study K-12 teacher recruitment and retention in Arkansas. Read more [here](#).
- Dr. Tyrone Washington received \$433,793 from the National Institutes of Health to study muscle recovery following traumatic injuries. Read more [here](#).
- Early Care and Education Projects received \$408,000 from the Walton Family Foundation to improve language acquisition and brain development, and \$170,000 from Home Grown to improve the quality of in-home childcare in Arkansas. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

In addition, the college awarded 14 Team Up for Education and Health Funds awards—internal grants that support interdisciplinary teams of faculty and staff to address pressing problems in education and health.

The College of Education and Health Professions raised \$5,699,461.42 from 1,116 gifts for various programs and projects in fiscal year 2025.

## COEHP in the News

Over 45 faculty and administrative leaders from the College of Education and Health Professions convened to brainstorm and discuss the integration of interprofessional education across the college's diverse programs and departments. Read more [here](#).

The following faculty and alumni won the Arkansas Alumni Association awards. Read more [here](#):

Fred A. Bonner – Citation of Distinguished Alumni

Ashlie Junot Hilbun – Young Alumni Award

A.Y. "Al" Gordon – Honorary Alumni Award

John C. Pijanowski – Faculty Distinguished Achievement Award in Public Service

William F. "Bill" McComas – Faculty Distinguished Achievement Award in Research

Department of Curriculum and Instruction faculty **Sheida Raley, Suzanne Kucharczyk, Melissa Savage, and James Sinclair** received a \$6 million U.S. Department of Education grant for a project titled "Equipping Learning, Empowering Vision, Achieving Transitions, and Engaging Families [ELEVATE]". Read more [here](#).

The Arkansas School Counseling Association (ArSCA) awarded Taylor Bugh, a Master of Science in Counseling student, with the ArSCA Hugh Lovett Scholarship. Read more [here](#).

The University of Notre Dame honored Alissa Blair, an assistant professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, with the Michael Pressley Award for a Promising Scholar in the Education Field. Read more [here](#).

**Kristin Higgins** and **Suzanne Kucharczyk** were named fellows of the 2024 Southeastern Conference Academic Leadership Development Program. Read more [here](#).

**Rachel Glade**, clinical associate professor, was elected vice president of academic affairs of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) board. Read more [here](#).

**Sean Connors** and a former student teamed up for a unique comic book publication, 'From Gotham to Gatsby'. Read more [here](#).

Twelve students in the College of Education and Health Professions were named the inaugural “COEHP Highlighters” to work closely with the college's communications team to amplify ideas on social media, develop marketing projects, and brainstorm ideas for building connections with fellow students. Read more [here](#).

**Xi Lan**, a Ph.D. student, was recently awarded a fellowship through the Southern Regional Education Board's State Doctoral Scholars Program. Read more [here](#).

**Brandi Maples** won the Quarterly Financial Affairs Service and Innovation Award. Read more [here](#).

**Oluwatoyin Olatunde**, a Ph.D. candidate in public health, was hosted by the University at Buffalo for the Visiting Future Faculty Program (VITAL). Read more [here](#).

The U of A Speech and Hearing Clinic launched its first fall voice screening program. Read more [here](#).

**Amanda Sullivan** was inducted as a fellow of the U of A Teaching Academy. Read more [here](#).

**Brendon McDermott**, professor of exercise science and athletic training, received the Tony A. Mobley International Distinguished Alumni Award from Indiana University Bloomington. Read more [here](#).

The Dean's Circle of Care Award was given to **Gary Stark**. Read more [here](#).

The Clinic for Literacy partnered with the Pea Ridge National Military Park for a fourth-grade essay contest as part of Women's History Month. Read more [here](#).

**Amadou Fofana**, a second-year Recreation and Sport Management master's student, was selected to participate in the NCAA Emerging Leaders seminar. Read more [here](#).

Arkansas A+ received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to support the first year of the whole school arts integration, launching a three-year transformation process. Read more [here](#).

**Haley Shover**, a first-year communication sciences and disorders graduate student, was awarded the Arkansas Speech-Language Hearing Association's 2025 Betty Bass Scholarship. Read more [here](#).

The Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation hosted an inaugural Innovation Showcase to highlight the research of undergraduate and graduate students in its various programs, including exercise science, public health, and athletic training. Read more [here](#).

Professor **Bill F. McComas** received the 2025 SEC Faculty Achievement Award for the University of Arkansas. Read more [here](#).

**Vinson Carter** facilitated an event where area students contacted astronauts aboard the International Space Station. Read more [here](#).

**Sarah McKenzie**, executive director of the Office for Education Policy (OEP), and **Jonathan Wai**, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Endowed Chair in Education Policy, were jointly awarded the Arkansans for Gifted and Talented Award of Excellence. Read more [here](#).

**Kristi Perryman**, associate professor of counselor education, was named chair-elect for the national Association for Play Therapy's (APT) Board of Directors. Read more [here](#).

**Lindsay A. Lundeen**, assistant professor of counselor education, and Erin Popejoy, associate professor of counselor education, received the Best Practices in Research Award from the American Counseling Association. Read more [here](#).

The College of Education and Health Professions hosted the second annual Innovate for Healthcare and Education (I4HE) Academy. Read more [here](#).

**Glenda E. Hux**, assistant professor of occupational therapy, was elected to the National Academies of Practice as a Distinguished Fellow of the Occupational Therapy Academy. Read more [here](#).

The Princeton Review named the Educational Leadership doctoral program among the country's best online Doctor of Education programs. Read more [here](#).

The Chancellor's Commission on Women at the U of A recognized **Michelle Gray** as a Women's Advocates Honoree. Read more [here](#).

Arkansas Teacher Corps was recognized with the 2025 COEHP Service to Arkansas Award. Read more [here](#).

The Association for Play Therapy bestowed its Research Award to a team that included **Kristi L. Perryman**, associate professor of counselor education, for their article, "Psychophysiological Insights into Child-Centered Play Therapy for Trauma: A Case Study." Read more [here](#).

**Kristen Hartung**, a research advancement specialist, was recognized by the National Council of University Research Administrators with the Pam Whitlock Rising Star award. Read more [here](#).

## APPENDIX A: Awards, Honors, and Recognition

## College Faculty Awards

- Read more [here](#).
- **Elizabeth Lorah**, George Denny S.T.A.R. Award for Outstanding Service, Teaching, Advising, and Research
- **Gema Zamarro**, George Denny S.T.A.R. Award for Outstanding Service, Teaching, Advising, and Research
- **Sheida Raley**, Rising S.T.A.R. Award for Outstanding All-around New Faculty Member
- **Lyn Laye**, Empowerment Award
- **Claretha Hughes**, Faculty Career Award
- **Albert Cheng**, Impactful Scholarship Award
- **Kevin Brady**, Superior Service Award
- **David Christian**, Outstanding Mentoring and Advising Award
- **Stephanie Hicks**, Outstanding Teaching Award
- **Page Dobbs**, Outstanding Honors Faculty Award

## College Staff Awards

- Read more [here](#).
- **John Bacon**, Excellence in Mentorship
- **Jamie Powell**, Excellence in Mentorship
- **Denise Bignar**, Distinguished Staff Leader
- **Jenny Dura**, Excellence in Service
- **Kristen Hartung**, Emerging Staff Leader
- **Casey Kraichoke**, Excellence in Service

## College Alumni Awards

- Read more [here](#).
- Emerging Leader in Education Award
  - **Jeremy N. Butler**
- Emerging Leader in Health Award
  - **Brendan I. Cook**
- Distinguished Career in Education Award
  - **Maureen A. Hartford**
- Distinguished Career in Health Award
  - **Heather Coats**
- Distinguished Public Service Award
  - **Julia D. Phelps**

## Departmental Alumni Awards

- Read more [here](#).
- Department of Communication Disorders and Occupational Therapy
  - **Tracy Blair Pate**
- Department of Counseling, Leadership and Research Methods
  - **Reginald J. "Reggie" Miller**

- Department of Curriculum and Instruction
  - **Josh Vest**
- Department of Education Reform
  - **James “Lynn” Woodworth**
- Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation
  - **Nicole A. Wilkins**
- Eleanor Mann School of Nursing
  - **Kayla D. Scott-Arce**

## Student Awards and Recognition

### College Student Awards

- Read more [here](#).
- Henry G. and Stella Hotz Award for outstanding sophomore
  - **Keegan Butler**
- Henry G. and Stella Hotz Award for outstanding junior
  - **Zhiping Xu**
- Presidential Scholar
  - **Anna Matusiak**
- First-ranked Senior Scholars:
  - Jordan Anthony, Caroline Ausley, Aubrey Avlos, Evelyn Rose Bercher, Kathryn Bishop, Abigail Bordelon, Braden Branscum, Emma Grace Brown, Emily Chasteen, Raygan Davis, Alexandra Dierks, Savannah Green, Laura Hansen, Kristin Hartley, Kyleigh Hood, Lilly Humphreys, Caroline Kilo, Raigan Kramer, Georgia Lewis, Shelbie Merriweather, Julia Katelyn Molleston, Timmy Nguyen, Abigail O'Malley, Matthew Richardson, Jane Rounds, Margo SalaczPlantz, Ellie Schaeffer, Tsion Selassie, Hannah Spear, and Mary Wilhelm.
- Senior Scholars:
  - Tate Abbott, Joseph Anderson, Alondra Apodaca, Caroline Bertalotto, Alice Brandt, Addilin Brown, Faith Canterbury, Jordan Chancellor, Madison Cozad, Kandis Lyndsey Dodson, Deryck Flower, Halle Flynt, Natalie Gardner, Madelynn Greene, Hanna Kay Hilsabeck, AnnMarie Ippolito, Lauren Lisko, Emily McMennamy, Gavin Miller, Grace Ontiveros, Ashley Reiter, Carson Sanders, Janson Sanders, Julia Schlundt, Bryn Shirley, Lily Stone, Reagan Valenta, Scott Whittingham, and Joseph Ryan Wiltshire.

### COEHP Honors Symposium

- **Anna Claire Gardner**, B.S. in exercise science student, won the Best Research Project Award for her poster presentation, "Comparing Gait Patterns of Individuals with and without Cancer."
- **Ella Hollingshead**, B.S. in exercise science student, earned the Best Literature Review Project Award for her presentation titled "An Overview of Sport-Related Concussions in American Football: Biomechanics and Challenges to Prevention."

## Departmental Student Awards

### **Communication Disorders and Occupational Therapy:**

Marie Bruck, Kyra Sampaio Resende, and Kayla Michelle Roat.

### **Counseling, Leadership and Research Methods:**

Jiaying Chen, Smruthi Chintakunta, Blythe Eggleston, Savannah Endsley, Aubree Hughart-Thomas, Sarah Isaac, Callie Rose Jackson, Brittney Laney, Amy Maffei, Brenda Maxwell, Arieanna Len Minshew, Blythe B. Mullins, Elizabeth Vaccaro, Adela Vavrinova, and Natalie Piper Williams.

### **Curriculum and Instruction:**

Maria Angelica Alcala, Angelita Rodriguez Dobbs, William Jacob Dunn, Samantha Fitzsimmons, Anna Gilbert, Laney Hoggatt, Kyleigh Hood, Ivette Guadalupe Gonzales, Ashlee Hanson, Kelly Moreno, Linden Mountain, Juana Nájera, Holly Sheppard Riesco, DeShea L. Rigg, Carley Ryerson, Ashanti Salazar, Bradley Schaefer, Taylor Lynn Stiegler, Aly Sylvester, Isabella Thomas, and Sabine Volcy.

### **Education Reform:**

Kate Barnes and Daion L. Daniels.

### **Eleanor Mann School of Nursing:**

Jamie Nicole Bellers, Heather Hairston, Linda Jackson, Tim Kimball, Alicia Meza, Timmy Nguyen, Abigail O'Malley, and Hannah Seelye.

### **Health, Human Performance and Recreation:**

Abigail Bordelon, Katelyn Cantrell, David Dennis III, Zach Friedman, Ashlyn M. Jendro, Zander G. Lichosik, Kylie Brooke Lovett, Amy Modzelewski, Kara Elise Price, Sadie Thompson, and Tyler Wilson

## APPENDIX B: Chairs, Professorships, Distinguished Professorships, and University Professorships

Henry G. Hotz Endowed Chair  
Kate Mamiseishvili

Parks Family Endowed Professorship in Science and Technology Education  
Bill McComas

George M. and Boyce W. Billingsley Endowed Chair in Nursing  
Marilou Shreve

A.L. Chilton Foundation / Patti Bell Brown / Bonnie Bell Harding Endowed Faculty Fellowship in Special Education  
Suzanne Kucharczyk

Spencer D. Albright III Professorship in Rehabilitation  
Brent Thomas Williams

David and Jane Gearhart Faculty Fellowship in Higher Education Leadership  
Michael Hevel

21<sup>st</sup> Century Endowed Chair in Education Policy  
Jonathan Wai

21<sup>st</sup> Century Endowed Chair in Teacher Quality  
Gema Zamarro Rodriquez

21<sup>st</sup> Century Endowed Chair in Leadership  
Robert Maranto

21<sup>st</sup> Century Endowed Chair in School Choice  
Patrick Wolf

21<sup>st</sup> Century Endowed Chair in Education Policy  
Harry Patrinos

21<sup>st</sup> Century Endowed Chair in Education Accountability and Transparency  
Josh B. McGee

### **Distinguished Professors**

Michael Daugherty, Oklahoma State University

Bill McComas, University of Iowa

Patrick Wolf, Harvard University

## APPENDIX C: Departmental Reports

## Department of Communication Disorders and Occupational Therapy

The 2024-2025 academic year marked the second year for the department, which combines allied health programs in communication sciences and disorders and occupational therapy. The in-person degrees offered within the unit are the OTD professional doctorate and the B.S. and M.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSDI). An online post-master's certificate in Advanced School-Based Speech-Language Pathology is also offered by the department. Across degree programs, CDOT enrolled 117 undergraduate and 64 graduate CSDI students and 73 total OTD students across three cohorts. The department also operates the Speech and Hearing Clinic, which supports student clinical education and is a provider of speech-language therapy and audiology to the local community.

### **Significant achievements and changes of department:**

The following leadership roles were assumed or continued this year:

- Steven Wheeler, Ph.D., OTR/L Department Head
- Kandy Salter, OTD, OTR/L continued in the role of OTD Program Coordinator
- Rachel Glade, Ph.D., CCC-SLP continued role as CSDI Graduate Program Coordinator and COEHP Honors Director
- Lexi Woods transitioned into the role of CSDI Undergraduate Program Coordinator
- Jessica Danley, MS, CCC-SLP continued role as Clinical Education Coordinator and Director of the Speech and Hearing Clinic
- Danielle Acurio, OTD, OTR/L continued role of Fieldwork Coordinator
- Jennifer Muriithi, OTD, OTR/L continued role of Doctoral Capstone Coordinator
- Lisa Bowers, Ph.D., CCC-SLP continued role as campus Director of Service Learning

New faculty and staff:

- The CSDI program added one new faculty, Ms. Cynthia Watson, MS, CCC-SLP
- The department added one new administrative strategy profession III, Ms. Makenzie Kidd

Program Reviews and Accreditation

- The Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) program has maintained compliance with all ACOTE accreditation requirements in response to its annual report
- The CSDI program has maintained compliance with all CEA accreditation requirements in response to its annual report

### **Achievements in teaching, research, and public service, especially those of national, regional, or statewide significance:**

- Dr. Rachel Glade was elected to the role of Vice President of Academic Affairs for the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Board of Directors
- Dr. Christine Holyfield served as editor of the *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*
- Dr. Kandy Salter was selected to the position editor of the ADED NewsBrake, the official publication of the Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists
- Stephanie Hicks was the recipient of the Outstanding Teaching Award for the College of Education and Health Professions
- The CSDI Program hosted a Spring 2025 professional development event for ASHA CEUs that was attended by over 400 community partners

- Dr. Rachel Glade was the recipient of the Arkansas Speech and Hearing Association (ArkSHA) Award for Clinical Achievement at the 2025 ArkSHA Annual Conference
- Six OTD Program faculty and two OTD Program alumni combined to provide 10 poster presentations and one pre-conference institute at the American Occupational Therapy Conference and Expo in Philadelphia, PA
- Dr. Lisa Bowers led a presentation on interprofessional education and supporting collaborative practice at the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders Annual Conference in Atlanta, GA.
- Dr. Amanda Troillett presented on interprofessional collaboration at the American Occupational Therapy Association's Educational Summit in Charlotte, NC.
- Stephanie Hicks and Lexi Woods were among the presenters at the 2025 Arkansas Speech and Hearing Association Convention at the University of Central Arkansas
- Dr. Amanda Troillett completed the certificate program in Ayres Sensory Integration through the Collaborative for Leadership in Sensory Integration (CLASI)
- Dr. Glenda Hux was selected as a National Academies of Practice Distinguished Fellow (Occupational Therapy Academy)

**Achievements of students and alumni or former students:**

- CDOT recipients of the 2023-24 COEHP Outstanding Student Award: CDIS Undergraduate Marie Bruck; CDIS Master's Kyra Sampaio Resende; OTD Kayla Michelle Roat.
- The OTD program students showcased their doctoral capstone projects to students, faculty, clinical site mentors, family, and friends at the program's Capstone Symposium in Fall 2024.
- The year two OTD student cohort under the direction of Dr. Steven Wheeler showcased critically appraised topic posters at the UAMS Northwest Research Day event in Spring 2025.
- OTD Program alumni Dr. Sydney Rice and Dr. Sadie Jones gave presentations related to their occupational therapy doctoral capstone projects at the American Occupational Therapy Association Conference and Expo in Philadelphia, PA.
- The UA chapter of the National Student Speech, Language, Hearing Association earned 2024 Gold Chapter Honors from the national organization.
- Tracy Bair Pate, a CDIS alumnus and program coordinator for the Learning Center at Arkansas Children's Hospital, was recognized at the Spring 2025 COEHP Alumni Awards Ceremony.

**The numbers of grants, dollars, publications, student growth, new faculty, new administrators, and awards/honors:**

CDOT Faculty sought both internal and external grant funding in 2024-2025.

- Dr. Christine Holyfield served as PI for two research grants totaling \$874,000 as well as one educational training grant totaling \$1,250,000 over 5 years.
- Dr. Bernard Muriithi was the recipient of a K12mentored research career development scholar award (\$238,000) as the PI on a study to develop an occupational therapy intervention for type II diabetes in the Marshallese people of Northwest Arkansas.
- Dr. Steven Wheeler served as PI on two subawards totaling \$38,000 focusing on community-based recovery for individuals with traumatic brain injury.

- Dr. Lisa Bowers received an internal college grant for \$16,352 to support research on interprofessional education as well as \$5,500 in SURF and Honors funding for undergraduate research.
- Dr. Glenda Hux and Dr. Jill LaRosa received a \$9,500 internal college grant to study the health impacts of prolonged stress among caregivers.
- Dr. Glenda Hux and Bonnie King received an internal college award for \$9,900 to offer *We Care from the Inside Out* as the Spring 2026 Dean's Seminar.

Select Peer Reviewed Publications:

- Dr. Christine Holyfield was the first author on two published articles in journals with impact factors of 2.1 and 2.3 and served as co-author on seven additional peer reviewed publications
- Dr. Andrew Bowers was first author on two peer reviewed manuscripts and co-authored one additional article that focused on the neuroscience of stuttering.
- Dr. Lisa Bowers was first author on two peer reviewed articles on interprofessional collaboration and was co-author in two additional articles.
- Dr. Bernard Muriithi was first author on three peer reviewed publications on the topics of homelessness, the refugee experience, and the impacts of the COVID 19 on health.

## Department of Counseling, Leadership and Research Methods

The Department of Counseling, Leadership, and Research Methods (CLRM) continued its commitment to advancing knowledge and preparing highly qualified diverse professionals in both health and education fields in the 2024-2025 academic year. In Fall of 2024, the department consisted of six academic programs: Adult & Lifelong Learning (ADLL), Community College Leadership (CCLE), Counselor Education (CNED), Educational Statistics and Research Methods (ESRM), Higher Education (HIED) and Human Resource Development. In January of 2025, a seventh program, Educational Leadership (EDLE) was relocated to the Department of Counseling, Leadership, and Research Methods. CLRM awards 14 degrees: 1 undergraduate, 6 master's level, one educational specialist, and six doctoral level. CLRM currently has 29 full-time faculty with five additional faculty starting in the fall and one faculty search occurring in the fall. The department houses 13 graduate assistants, and four staff members. Our programs enroll roughly 491 degree-seeking students each academic year, including many graduate students (i.e., 187 doctoral, 5 specialists, 256 master's, and 43 bachelor's students in Fall 2024- Includes new EDLE program numbers).

Dr. Kristin Higgins remains in her role as department head. During the fall 2024 semester, two new faculty joined the department. One tenure-track assistant professor joined the Counselor Education and Supervision program, along with a tenure-track assistant professor in the Educational Statistics and Research Methods. In January of 2025, a new tenure-track assistant professor joined the Educational Leadership (EDLE) program which made the total number of faculty joining CLRM from EDLE six.

The strength of our department remained our faculty. CLRM faculty demonstrated an active commitment to their research agenda through many publications and presentations. Collectively, CLRM faculty published 73 articles, and four book chapters. They also collectively presented 122 conference presentations at the international, national, and state level. The department generated \$2,641,653 in external funding and had several large funded grants carry over from the previous years. Additionally, several CLRM faculty were awarded WE CARE summer research grants (11 funded projects) as well as additional internal WE CARE grants- 9 TEAM UP awards and two student success awards.

Several other significant faculty accomplishments occurred as well. Dr. John Pijanowski (EDLE) was awarded the University Alumni Service Award in fall of 2024 and most recently Dr. Brent Williams (CNED) was announced as the University Alumni Service Awardee to be celebrated in the fall of 2025. Dr. Claretha Hughes and Dr. Yuanlu Niu (both HRDE) were awarded the UofA innovator award and Dr. Lindsay Lundeen and Dr. Erin Popejoy (both CNED) were awarded the American Counseling Association Best Practices in Research Award. Dr. Brent Williams (CNED) was named with the Spencer Albright III professorship and Dr. Michael Hevel (HIED) was named with the Gearhart Faculty Fellowship title. Dr. Kristi Perryman (CNED) was awarded the Counselor Educator Award from the Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling and Dr. Mandel Samuels (HRDE) won an UofA outstanding mentor award. Dr. Ronna Turner (ESRM) won first place in the AERA psychometric division for the outstanding paper. Four faculty members also received college awards- Dr. Kevin Brady (Superior Service), Dr. David Christian (Outstanding Mentoring and Advising), Dr. Claretha Hughes (Faculty Career Award), and Dr. Chulyndria Laye (Empowerment Award).

## Department of Curriculum & Instruction

The Curriculum and Instruction Department (CIED) was comprised of 48 full-time faculty members (27 tenure track/21 non-tenure track), 25 staff members (4 CIED/18 Special Programs), 11 undergraduate degree programs, 11 graduate degree programs, 8 graduate certificates, and many non-degree educational pathways in fall 2024. Across degree programs CIED enrolled 790 undergraduate and 322 graduate students.

### Significant achievements and changes of department:

- As a result of the Spring 2025 state review, led by CIED faculty, Jennifer Beasley (CHED/Razorback Educator Development Hub) who coordinates teacher accreditation, The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education approved the University's Traditional Educator Preparation program for continued approval having met all standards. The state review included a site visit of 4 CIED programs.
- The Department of Curriculum and Instruction organized and led the [Teacher Advocacy Forum](#) in February of 2025 with leadership from Christine Ralston (Asst Dept Head/CHED), Suzanne Kucharczyk (Dept Head/SPED), Chris Goering (SEED), Christy Smith (CLRM), Josh McGee (EDRE), Kimberley Davis (UA-Pine Bluff), and Michael Tapee (Springdale Public Schools). Teachers, state leaders, higher education administrators, policymakers, leaders of educational professional organizations and advocacy groups and more gathered for a day-long exploration of the state of teaching in Arkansas. The day included a review of data related to Arkansas by Josh McGree and Gema Zamarro, research on the teacher workforce by Megan Boren and Laura Booker, a Teachers' Lounge panel of award winning teachers including Beau McCastlain, Ashley Post, Ruth Taylor, Jamie Streams, Missy Testerman, and Michael Tapee, a reflection and strategic planning protocol, and capturing of commitment to reimagining the teaching experience and workforce.
- Jennifer Beasley (CHED/Razorback Educator Development Hub) led faculty leaders across all programs and three colleges that lead to educator license through the process of submission of program revisions through the university and state systems to incorporate yearlong internships into each program of study leading to initial teacher licensure. In total 23 protocols were submitted and approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; 17 of these were from Curriculum and Instruction.
- The [Bessie Moore Center for Economic Education](#) was transitioned to the college and department. Sheri Deaton (CATE) was appointed director of the Center.
- The Educational Leadership program shifted departments from CIED to CLRM in January 2025.

### Achievements in teaching, research, and public service, especially those of national, regional, or statewide significance:

- CIED faculty continued to evidence strengths in teaching including a shared average annual summative evaluation score of 4.61 in 2024.
- The department held [community summer camps](#) led from faculty in Summer 2024: Augmentative and Alternative Communication Camp (Liz Lorah- SPED), Literacy Camp (Kristi Mascher- CHED), Middle Grades Storytelling Camp (Kristi Mascher & Robert Lalonde), and Young Writer's Camp (Vicki Collet - CHED).
- The [Annual ESL Symposium](#) was held on February 22, 2025 (virtually due to inclement weather) with a keynote by Lisa Dorner, professor at the University of Missouri-Columbia. The event was hosted by Janet Penner-Williams (TESL) and Alissa Blair (TESL).

- The department hosted a visit from colleagues and students from [University of Arkansas in Pine Bluff](#) organized by Karmen Bell (CHED) and JL Jennings (Razorback Educator Development Hub) and supported by Kristi Mascher, Cindy Covington, Michelle Childress, and Vinson Carter.
- [Alissa Blair](#) (TESL) was recognized by her alma mater, University of Notre Dame, with their Award for Promising Scholar in the Education Field.
- [Bill McComas](#) (SEED) was recognized among the top 2 percent of researchers in the world.
- [Sheri Deaton](#) (CATE) with faculty from School of Nursing developed professional modules and an educational website that provides teachers resources to educate their students about infant feeding practices based on research-based literature and use of age-appropriate materials.
- CIED faculty with the Literacy Clinic led a [state-wide writing contest](#) in partnership with Pea Ridge Military Park for 4<sup>th</sup> graders ahead of Women’s History Month.
- Sheida Raley (SPED) was invited to participate in the Consent and Decision Making strand of the 2024 National Goals in Research, Policy, and Practice meeting.
- The EMPOWER program team (Ashley Bradley, Amanda Wallace, Devin Boggs Riley, Katie Barger, and Evan Bennett) received the 2024-2025 Outstanding Contributions to Service-Learning Community Partner Award.
- Vinson Carter (STEM) led an opportunity for students from Springdale Public School’s Lakeside Junior High School and Sonora Elementary to learn to use a ham radio and culminated in an [experience with students’ contacting](#) the International Space Station.
- Vicki Collet (CHED) accepted a 3-year term as co-editor of the *Literacy Research and Instruction Journal*, an international refereed professional journal that publishes articles dealing with research and instruction in reading education and allied literacy fields.
- Melissa Savage, Suzanne Kucharczyk, Sheida Raley and James Sinclair (all SPED) are awarded a new, five-year, \$6 million [U.S. Department of Education training grant](#) that will allow faculty at five universities, including the U of A, to develop a doctoral consortium of approximately 20 scholars who will be leaders in supporting the transition to adulthood for youth with disabilities and their families in roles within either school administration or higher education.

#### **Achievements of students and alumni or former students:**

1. CIED Outstanding Students:
  - a. Linden Mountain, Career and Technical Education BSE
  - b. Angelita Rodriguez Dobbs, Childhood Education BSE
  - c. Kyleigh Hood, Elementary Education BSE
  - d. Ivette Guadalupe, Elementary Education BSE
  - e. Samantha “Sammi” Fitzsimmons Elementary Education MAT
  - f. Juana Najera, ELEVATE
  - g. Laney Hoggatt, Curriculum and Instruction MEd
  - h. Bradley Schaefer, Curriculum and Instruction EdS
  - i. Holly Riesco, Curriculum and Instruction PhD
  - j. Carley Ryerson, Educational Studies BSE
  - k. Ashlee Hanson, Educational Studies BSE
  - l. Taylor Stiegler, Educational Technology MEd
  - m. Isabella Thomas, Secondary Education BAT – Social Studies
  - n. Ashanti Salazar, Secondary Education BAT - English
  - o. Sabine Lancaster, Secondary Education BAT – Foreign Language
  - p. Kelly Moreno, Secondary Education MAT

- q. Sara “Aly” Sylvester, Special Education BSE
  - r. Maria “Angie” Alcala, Special Education Med
  - s. Anna Gilbert, STEM Elementary
  - t. William “Jacob” Dunn, STEM Secondary
  - u. DeShea Rigg, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages MEd
2. CIED Outstanding Alumni honor was awarded to Josh Vest, principal of Cooper Elementary who graduated from the department’s Master of Arts in Teaching program in May 2009. He began his career as an English teacher at Bentonville High School. In the classroom, he worked to establish a creative, student-centered learning environment. Vest was a three-year ARTeacher fellow, working with the U of A, Crystal Bridges and Walton Arts Center to expand arts integration in the classroom. His students’ work in arts integration was displayed at Crystal Bridges and the U.S. Department of Education.
  3. [Xi Lan](#), doctoral student, was awarded a fellowship through the Southern Regional Education Board’s State Doctoral Scholar’s Program.
  4. Pabi Das, doctoral student, was awarded the International Postgraduate Scholarship.
  5. Doctoral student Lexi Woodward was recognized by the International Literacy Association’s 30 under 30.

**The numbers of grants, dollars, publications, student growth, new faculty, new administrators, and awards/honors:**

*New External Funding:*

CIED faculty submitted 17 external grant proposals as principal investigators representing a total of \$8.5 million and 19% of the College’s proposals. CIED faculty were principal or co-principal investigators on 36% of the College’s external grant proposals totaling \$16.6 million. As of May 2025, \$3.5 million of external proposals were awarded in fiscal year 2025.

*Publications:*

CIED faculty produced 77 journal publications, 7 book chapters, and 15 books in 2024.

*Honors:*

1. *National:*
  - a. Liz Lorah (SPED) was selected by the Association for Behavioral Analysis International to the organization’s Science Board for a 3-year term.
2. *University:*
  - [Bill McComas](#) (SEED) was honored with the Southeastern Conference University of Arkansas Faculty Achievement Award
  - [Christine Ralston](#) (CHED), was selected to the UA ENGAGE Leadership Exploration Program’s 4<sup>th</sup> Cohort
  - [Suzanne Kucharczyk](#) (SPED) Department Head, was selected by the Provost’s Office as a 2024-2025 Southeastern Conference Academic Leadership Development Fellow
3. *College:*
  - a. The following CIED faculty received COEHP Outstanding Faculty Awards based on their work in 2024
    - i. Liz Lorah (SPED) – George Denny STAR Faculty Award
    - ii. Sheida Raley (SPED) – Rising Star Faculty Award
    - iii. Kevin Brady (EDLE) – Service Award



## Department of Education Reform

During 2024, the Department of Education Reform vigorously pursued its mission to advance education and economic development by focusing on the improvement of academic achievement in elementary, secondary, and higher education. Composed of 10 faculty (7 tenured or tenure-track), two full-time staff, and 14 doctoral students, the Department produces unbiased, data-driven research findings that directly inform policymakers at all levels of government, scholars, parents, teachers, administrators, and the public to positively influence the future of Arkansas and the nation's schools. Much of its research is carried out through its six initiatives:

- Arkansas Teacher Corps (ATC)
- Charassein: The Character Assessment Initiative
- Classical Education Research Lab
- Office for Education Policy (OEP)
- School Choice Demonstration Project (SCDP)
- Wai Lab

*Significant achievements:* Members of the Department produced 93 academic and research publications in 2024 including 34 peer-reviewed journal articles. They received 11 honorific awards, 9 by faculty and 2 by students, and obtained 6 new research grants totaling \$1.6 million. Faculty research was cited 5,429 times according to Google Scholar.

The college also hosted numerous conferences, symposia, and workshops to accelerate its outreach efforts. One of our most notable achievements was organizing the [education policy conference](#) held on December 11, 2024, in Little Rock. This event brought significant recognition to our Department, College, and University. The conference featured a fireside chat with Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who used the platform to highlight key initiatives from the first 22 months of her administration. She emphasized the LEARNS Act, a legislative effort she authored and championed to improve education outcomes across the state. Our department played a crucial role in shaping the details of this act and remains dedicated to supporting its implementation, particularly through ongoing evaluation efforts.

Five faculty members from the University of Arkansas Department of Education Reform—Maranto, McGee, Patrinos, Wolf, and Zamarro—were named among the top 200 most influential education scholars in the 2025 [Edu-Scholar Public Influence Rankings](#) by *Education Week*. Only 10 universities placed more scholars than the U of A on that prestigious annual ranking which is based on a variety of quantitative performance metrics.

*Achievements in teaching, research, and public service:* Faculty taught 15 courses, 11 for grade, during the academic year, with course evaluations averaging 4.6 for rating of the course and 4.7 for rating of the instructor.

Faculty awards included the International Mensa Award for Research Excellence (Dr. Wai), the COEHP Impactful Scholarship Award (Dr. Cheng), and the COEHP Rising STAR Award (Dr. Cheng). Dr. Zamarro received the George Denny S.T.A.R. Award for her outstanding research, teaching, mentoring, and service in education policy and teacher quality, including securing a \$10 million federal grant and earning national and international recognition.

Education Reform ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in the country among departments focused on Education Evaluation and Research, according to Education Analytics faculty productivity metrics.

Jon Wai and Gema Zamarro were both named among the [top 2% of researchers](#) in the world in the [Stanford University/Elsevier list](#) which recognizes leading researchers from a broad range of scientific fields whose work has had a significant global impact based on citations across their careers and during the past year. Dr. Patrinos ranks among the top 5% of economists on the RePEc (Research Papers in Economics) [platform](#), based on the impact of his publications and citations. He is ranked as the most-cited economist in Arkansas.

Members of the Department engaged in extensive public service during 2024. For example, Dr. McKenzie is a member of the Arkansas Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Steering Committee and oversees the Office of Education Policy and the Arkansas Teacher Corps. ATC trained its largest ever cohort in 2024, as well as retaining the greatest percentage of first-year fellows ever, such that ATC is supporting a total of 91 fellows in 47 schools and 25 school districts during the 2024-25 school year. Because of this success, The New Teacher Project's 2024 report "Moving Up" identified ATC as one of Arkansas's exemplary approaches to grow-your-own teacher recruitment.

The Office for Education Policy (OEP) increased its staff and influence in 2024-25. OEP partnered with Governor Sanders to evaluate the phone-free schools pilot, and with the Arkansas Department of Education to research professional development, 4 day school weeks, and chronic absenteeism. OEP is also working with Crystal Bridges to evaluate the Middle School Arts Integration partnership program, and with United WE to examine barriers to licensing for Early Childhood Education Centers in the State.

Dr. Maranto is editor of the *Journal of School Choice* and serves on the U.S. Civil Rights Commission Arkansas Advisory Committee, the governing boards of Achievement House Cyber Charter School, and the American Academy of Liberal Accreditation.

Dr. Wai is a Committee Member and Grant Reviewer for the Mensa Foundation and serves on Editorial Boards for the *Journal of Intelligence*, the *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, *Gifted Child Quarterly*, the *Journal of Expertise*, and *Intelligence*. Dr. Cheng is on the governing board of Anthem Classical Academy in Fayetteville.

Members of the Department were actively engaged in informing policymakers and stakeholders regarding effective educational interventions. They published 64 op-eds and blog posts, were interviewed on 30 podcasts and were mentioned in 255 media stories. Faculty have been cited prominently in the *New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, *the Wall Street Journal*, and *the Independent*. Dr. Wolf provided testimony or delivered presentations to state legislators in Nebraska and Texas. Dr. Wai regularly contributes op-eds on identifying and serving gifted students to *Forbes* magazine and advises the Northwest Arkansas Education Coop on gifted and talented programming. Dr. McKenzie annually announces the performance awards for Arkansas public schools based on value-added measurements. Drs. Zamarro and McGee have a deep and fruitful partnership with the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). They routinely produce research products in collaboration with ADE and that influence policy, such as teacher workforce reports.

*Achievements of students and alumni:* Kate Barnes completed her dissertation and received the EDRE Outstanding Graduate Student Award. Daion Daniels received the EDRE Best Conference Paper Award. Brian Kisida (2015) [was named a Carnegie Fellow](#). Andrew Camp completed his doctorate and is a Senior

Research Associate for the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University. Rian Djita completed his doctorate and is the Director of Research for the Association of Christian Schools International. Mattie Harris completed her doctorate and is a Legislative Staff Member in the United States Senate. Cassidy Klutts completed her doctorate and is the Assistant Director of Governance Support for K12 Education at Hillsdale College. Sarah Morris completed her doctorate and is a Research Liaison for the Pasadena ISD School District, part of the Houston Education Research Consortium at Rice University. The Departmental Outstanding Alumni Award went to James “Lynn” Woodworth.

*The numbers of grants, dollars, publications, student growth, faculty advancement, new administrators:* The Department received 6 new grants in 2024 totaling \$1.6 million. Drs. Zamarro and McGee received a grant of \$850,000 from the Institute of Education Sciences for the project, Education Research and Development Center on K-12 Teacher Recruitment and Retention Policy (part of a larger project worth \$10 million). Dr. McKenzie received a \$200,087 grant from Crystal Bridges in support of the Windgate Arts Integration Middle School Partnership Research Project.

The faculty of the Department published 34 refereed journal articles, 4 books, 7 book chapters, 48 reports or working papers, and 30 non-peer-reviewed journal articles or essays in 2024. Many of those publications were co-authored with graduate students as mentoring activities. Publications by the Department’s faculty received 5,429 Google Scholar cites in calendar year 2024 and early 2025. The Department will enroll five first-year doctoral students in the fall of 2025, all of whom received competitive fellowships from the Graduate School. A total of 17 doctoral students are expected to be in residence in the Department of Education Reform next academic year.

Three new faculty joined in 2024. Harry Anthony Patrinos joined as Department Head and 21st Century Endowed Chair in Education Policy. Hannah Denker joined as Research Assistant Professor and Denise Airola joined as Research Assistant Professor and Associate Director, Office for Education Policy. Dr. Sarah McKenzie was promoted from Research Assistant to Research Associate Professor of Education Reform, effective this fall. Dr. Wolf ended his interim term as Department Head and returned to his regular position as Distinguished Professor of Education Policy and 21st Century Endowed Chair in School Choice; he now serves as Director of Graduate Studies.

## Eleanor Mann School of Nursing

The Eleanor Mann School of Nursing continued its commitment to advance health and quality of life for Arkansans and beyond through cultivation of innovative and transformative nurse clinicians, educators, scientists, leaders, and policymakers. The school consists of six academic programs, awards three degrees, and has 33 full-time faculty, 7 staff members, 2 graduate assistants, and 3 research assistants, and roughly 77 part-time lecturers & clinical education specialists. During the academic year 2024-2025, the Eleanor Mann School of Nursing (EMSON) had 815 students in the undergraduate (n = 744) and graduate (n = 71) programs.

### Significant organizational changes:

The following leadership roles were assumed this year:

- Marilou Shreve, DNP, APRN, CPNP-PC Interim Executive Director FY 2024
- Kelsey Gilmet, MSN, promoted to Assistant Director for Prelicensure Programs
- Fernanda Zayas, MSN, promoted to Assistant Director for Online Undergraduate Programs
- Lori Murray, DNP, promoted to Assistant Director for Graduate Programs

New faculty:

- Megan Kumpe, MSN
- Jaclyn Johnson, MSN
- Nikki Madden, MSN
- Alyssa Parsley, MSN

### Significant program changes:

All programs have revised their curriculum to be consistent with the 2021 American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education Essentials.

1. The prelicensure program maintained current admission (192) and graduation (188) rates. The program is currently developing courses with the updated curriculum to start fall 2025 semester.
2. The RN to BSN enrollment (24) and graduation (25) rates. The program's updated curriculum started in fall 2024 semester. EMSON is partnering with Washington Regional Medical Center (WRMC) utilizing the ALIGN grant to address the nationwide nursing shortage to offer support LPN and RN employed at WRMC to complete their BSN. The grant is currently supporting 15 students.
3. The LPN to BSN program has had a decline in admissions (34) due to limiting enrollment to the state of Arkansas. Enrollment has been expanded to 4 additional states to include Texas, Missouri, Kansas, and Alabama. The program's updated curriculum rolled out in fall 2024 semester.
4. The MSN in Education has maintained current enrollment (19) rates. The updated curriculum is scheduled to start fall 2025 semester.
5. The DNP program has continued to see increased admissions (24) in the Family Nurse Practitioner track. Due to the continuing decline of student enrollment and market demands for nurse practitioners in acute and critical care settings, the Acute Care Gerontology Nurse

Practitioner (ACGNP) track in the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program closed for enrollment in the fall 2022 semester. Currently, the program has one student who is on target to graduate in the spring 2026 semester. The dual degree in nursing and business (DNP/Executive Master of Business Administration) enrolled its first student fall 2025 and admitted three students to start fall 2026.

**Significant faculty and staff achievements:**

Collectively, EMSON faculty published 9 peer reviewed journal articles and presented at 37 conferences at the international, national, regional, and state level. EMOSN was awarded a 1.19-million-dollar grant from the state of Arkansas to address the nursing shortage (ALIGN grant). EMSON faculty continue to manage previously awarded grants in the amount of just under 3 million dollars. Additionally, the EMSON faculty were awarded several WE CARE and other internal grants EMSON faculty and students collaborated with HHPR faculty in a community project to provide sports physicals to adolescents in rural areas of NWA. The graduate program partnered with the Arkansas Department of Health to increase awareness of poverty when providing health care. EMSON continued its partnership with Sigma Theta Tau to host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nursing Science Day (NSD). This year's NSD theme was The Science of Nursing Education.

Recognized for outstanding accomplishments. Dr. Tom Kippenbrock was inducted as a Fellow of American Academy of Nursing. Jan Emory will continue her work as a member of the Board of Directors with the National League for Nursing and the Commission on Nursing Education Accreditation. Hope Ballentine will continue her work as a TFSC co-director. The EMSON Outstanding Teaching Awards were given to David Hall, MSN received EMSON Outstanding Teaching Award and Brittany Hightower received Outstanding Clinical Teaching Award. Emily Richardson, Ph.D. was awarded the EMSON Outstanding Scholarship Award. Hope Ballentine received the EMSON Outstanding Service Award. Dani McCool completed the UARK Leaders Program.

## Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation

1. **Significant achievements and changes of programs/department, including progress related to strategic priorities, program reviews, accreditation, etc.**
  - a. The Public Health (PBHLBS) program experienced significant growth from fall 2023 to fall 2024. Currently, there are 563 PBHLBS students, representing an increase of more than 22% in the past year. New freshmen increased significantly in this program, compared to fall 2023, the freshman class increased by 37% (26 students). The MPH program completed their site visit from the Council on Education for Public Health and received accreditation for a 5-year period.
  - a. The Exercise Science (EXSCBS) program remains the largest program in the HHPR department with 957 undergraduate students. A new endowed scholarship (**Di Brezzo Endowed Scholarship in Exercise Science**) was started in HHPR in 2024 for the EXSC program, the first award will be given in fall 2025 to support undergraduate students.
  - b. The Outdoor Leadership (ODLR) minor, which started in Fall 2022 has sustained tremendous growth over the past year. The minor went from 33 students 2023 to more nearly 70 students 2024. Students in OLDR Minor are from various colleges including AFLS, ARCH, ARSC, EDUC, ENGR, and WCOB.
  - c. The Master's of Athletic Training (M.AT.) program has an outstanding 100% first-attempt pass rate on the BOC exam and 100% employment rate in May 2025. Additionally, the M.AT. program hosted the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Razorback Sport Medicine Symposium with full sponsorship from several organizations including COEHP WECARE Grant, Arkansas Children's Hospital, Wright's BBQ, and Henry Schein. The conference had record attendance and provided continuing education credits to athletic training and physical therapy clinicians.
  - d. Students of HHPR organized the inaugural HHPR Innovation Showcase in spring 2025. The event hosted nearly 300 students, faculty, staff, and community partners. More than 100 posters and ~12 podium presentation were completed.
2. **Achievements in teaching, research, and public service, especially those of national, regional, or statewide significance.**
  - a. **Dr. Erin Howie Hickey** completed a semester-long Fulbright Scholar Fellowship Western Australia. She collaborated with scientists to study physical activity in children. She is the first recipient in HHPR to receive this international fellowship.
  - b. **Dr. Amanda Sullivan** was selected to participate in the UARK Leaders program. This program was an immersive 6-month program that develops campus leaders through experience, exposure and education - preparing us to effectively lead people at the U of A and help the university reach its goals related to the three strategic pillars of student success, research excellence and employer of choice.

**3. Achievements of students and alumni or former students, especially those of national, regional, or statewide significance.**

- a. **Dr. Nicole Wilkins**, 2007 ATTR M.AT. graduate, received the 2025 HHPR Alumni Award.
- b. **Dr. Brendan Cook**, 2018 EXSC alumni, received the 2025 COEHP Emerging Leader in Health Award.

Outstanding HHPR Student Awards

Outstanding B.S./B.S.E. Students:

**Sadie Thompson – Exercise Science**  
**Katelyn Cantrell – Physical Education and Health**  
**Abigail Bordelon – Public Health**  
**Kara Price – Recreation and Sports Management**

Outstanding M.S./M.Ed./M.AT. Students:

**Zander Lichosik – Athletic Training**  
**Zachary Friedman – Exercise Science**  
**Amy Modzelewski – Physical Education and Health**  
**David Dennis – Public Health**  
**Tyler Wilson – Recreation and Sports Management**

Outstanding Ph.D. Students:

**Ashlyn Jendro – Exercise Science**  
**Kylie Lovett – Public Health**

University of Arkansas Seniors of Significance Award this year from HHPR:

- Max Brigance
- Jada Mack
- Charlotte McCormick
- Gavin Miller

**4. The numbers of grants, dollars, publications, student growth, new faculty, new administrators, and awards/honors.**

- **Total (new and ongoing) Research grants \$9.3M (\$4.3M new grants) which includes:**
  - 13 External Research Grants Awarded
    - Includes an NIH R01, R21, K01, and R44, along with a sub-award from a DOD grant.
- 86 Presentations in a variety of settings (state, regional, national, international)

- 94 Peer-Reviewed Publications
- Total number of HHPR students increased by 9%, from 2,036 to 2,223 total students. Relative to last academic year, at the undergraduate level, Public Health had the greatest relative increase (22%); the Master’s program in EXSC saw the greatest growth (29%) at the graduate level.
- HHPR had two new tenure-track faculty begin in Fall 2024 (Divya Bhgianadh, Ph.D. – PBHL; Anqi Deng, Ph.D. - EXSC). Additionally, two non-tenure track faculty were added to HHPR in Fall 2024 – Drs. Taylor Weichman (RESM) and Simeon Hinsey (RESM). HHPR completed searches for two tenure-track faculty and four non-tenure-track faculty.

### **Awards**

- HHPR Department Awards:
  - Outstanding Teaching – Mike Hoover
  - Outstanding Research – Erin Howie-Hickey
  - Outstanding Service – Luzita Vela
  - Outstanding Advising/Mentoring – Elizabeth Lindly
  - Overall Outstanding Faculty – Abigail Schmitt

## Appendix D: Offices, Institutes, Centers, and Labs Reports

## Adventure Therapy Lab

The Adventure Therapy Lab (ATL) had an exciting and productive 2024-2025 school year. Regarding research, Dr. David Christian, ATL Director, in collaboration with CNED recent alumni and current students published 2 AT related articles, has multiple AT related article under review, and has multiple research projects in process. During the 2024-2025 school Dr. Christian collaborated with Dr. Cian Brown (assistant professor of counseling at University of Oklahoma) and Drs. Michael Hoover and Taylor Weichman (instructors in the Outdoor Leadership minor) on a research project exploring how time spent in nature impacts college students cognitive functioning and mental health. As part of this project, the researchers conducted multiple brain scans in classrooms and natural spaces using a portable EEG device. In addition, Dr. Christian gave 3 refereed presentations on AT. One presentation focused on using the 5 Factor Wellness model to promote growth in AT was presented at the International Association of Counseling conference in Napoli, Italy. The second presentation was presented at the Therapeutic Adventure Professional Group (TAPG) conference in Estes Park, CO covering culturally appropriate supervision of AT practice. Dr. Christian's third presentation was a collaboration with current doctoral candidate, Nic Bellegarde, covering AT research conducted at a school in NWA, presented at the Association of Experiential Education's annual conference in Estes Park, CO. Dr. Christian continued to provide AT supervision to local Licensed Associate Counselors and serve as a consultant to various schools and in-patient mental health and substance abuse facilities in NWA. The ATL's Assistant Director, Nicolas Bellegarde, is currently completing data collection and analysis for his dissertation at Chicago Voyagers, an AT provider for inner city youth in Chicago. Regarding national service, Dr. Christian currently serves on the Certified Clinical Adventure Therapist Credentialing Committee developing supervision standards and on the Outdoor Research Collaborative (formerly the Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Research Council). CNED students working with the ATL continued to promote community engagement by conducting AT groups at a variety of elementary, middle, and high schools around NWA during the 2024-2025 school year. Dr. Christian and a group of CNED students facilitated Fall 2024 and orientation for the Office of International Students and Scholars and led a welcome event for students participating in the Research Experiences for Undergraduates during summer 2025. During the spring 2025 semester, Dr. Christian co-instructed a Dean's seminar with Dr. Michael Hoover where students learned about the powerful impact nature can have on mental health and wellbeing. Finally, Dr. Christian partnered with Dr. Merry Moiseichik in RESM to co-instruct Introduction to Adventure Therapy. During this course, CNED students collaborated with students enrolled in RESM 40302 to learn about adventure therapy and leadership, participating in various therapeutic adventure experiences around NWA and at the Buffalo National River.

*Point of Contact: David Christian - ddchrist@uark.edu*

## ARKANSAS A+

Arkansas A+ transforms education by integrating the arts (visual and performing) with curriculum and is committed to the continual growth and enhancement of A+ programming designed for Arkansas schools, teachers, and students. In the last year, Arkansas A+ (ARA+):

- Served **450+ educators** across **16 A+ schools and partner organizations** expanding the reach of arts-integrated practice to impact thousands of Arkansas students
- Facilitated **19 arts-integrated workshops** spread across **9 educational cooperatives**, reaching **161 teachers** from **53 school districts** with the potential to reach over **15,000 students**
- Launched A+ Whole-School Transformation with **2 new A+ Schools** in July 2024, kicking off their three-year journey with a multi-day summer institute
- Built relationships with administrators across the state, resulting in **4 new schools and organizations** set to begin A+ Transformation in summer 2025
- **Supported returning A+ schools** with year-round mentoring and continued professional development.

### Fueling Growth through Grants

Over the past year, ARA+ was awarded \$472,526 in grant funding, including \$405,511 from The Windgate Foundation. Additional awards included \$25,000 from the King Foundation, \$22,015 from the National Park Service (co-authored with Louisiana A+ Schools), and \$20,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts. In addition to these awards, the A+ team submitted four grant proposals totaling more than \$128,000. Decisions are still pending on three of those proposals, representing a potential \$103,625 in additional funding. ARA+ continues to actively pursue new grant opportunities to support and expand its work.

### A+ Whole-School Network Growth

LANDMARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Little Rock) began A+ Transformation with a summer institute held July 15–19, 2024 and has since demonstrated significant academic growth. Recognized as one of four *High-Growth Schools* in Pulaski County Special School District, Landmark ranks among the top three elementary schools in value-added growth. ATLAS assessment data from the first half of the 2024–25 school year shows strong gains across subjects: in English Language Arts (ELA), the percentage of students in the lowest proficiency level dropped from 55% to 39%, while those in higher levels doubled; in math, students in the lowest group declined from 73% to 45%, with mid- and high-level proficiency rising to 55%; and in science, the lowest level fell from 56% to 43%—demonstrating measurable improvement schoolwide.

GUY-PERKINS HIGH SCHOOL (Guy) committed to ARA+ in December 2024, and their multi-day summer institute was held August 5-7, 2024. Teachers explored the A+ Essentials and were given tools to begin integrating the arts. The addition of this high school takes A+ district-wide at Guy-Perkins School District.

GUY-PERKINS ELEMENTARY is in year two of A+ Transformation and was recognized by the Office for Education Policy as a *High-Growth School* based on 2023–24 ATLAS data:

- ELA Growth (Statewide): Ranked #6 with an 88% growth rate
- ELA Growth (Central Region): Ranked #5 with an 88% growth rate.

ARA+ staff exceeded their goal of recruiting three new A+ schools/organizations with commitments from Arkansas Arts Academy (Rogers), Hope School District, South Central Service Cooperative, and Watson

Elementary School (Little Rock). These schools/organizations will start A+ Transformation in July/August 2025.

**Strengthening Educational Service Co-op Partnerships Statewide**

ARA+ continues to build and sustain strong partnerships with educational service co-ops across the state. In summer 2024, ARA+ facilitated 16 workshops in collaboration with 9 co-ops, offering hands-on, arts-integrated professional development to educators. This summer, the program is expanding to offer 20 workshops—again partnering with 9 co-ops, including both returning collaborators and new allies. These ongoing relationships demonstrate ARA+'s commitment to deepening its reach and impact year after year, supporting creative teaching strategies that energize classrooms and boost student engagement.

*Point of Contact: Alyssa Wilson - alyssaw@uark.edu*

## Arkansas Policy Lab

### Bridging the Gap Between Research and Policy

Policymakers and practitioners often lack the data and evidence needed to make informed decisions. At the same time, researchers frequently express frustration that their work has limited real-world impact. Policy labs offer a promising solution to both challenges by fostering long-term partnerships between government and university researchers to collaboratively use data and evidence to address pressing needs.

The State of Arkansas faces complex challenges—particularly at the intersection of education and health—that require high-quality evidence and sustained collaboration to address. To meet this need, the **Arkansas Policy Lab** is being developed within the University of Arkansas’s **College of Education and Health Professions (COEHP)**. The Lab’s mission is to help Arkansans achieve better quality-of-life outcomes by delivering actionable, data-driven, evidence-based insights that improve policy and practice.

### Policy Lab Functions

To fulfill its mission, the Arkansas Policy Lab will:

- **Build lasting partnerships** with state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other key stakeholders
- **Identify priority challenges/opportunities** at the intersection of education and health
- **Develop and manage data infrastructure** that links data across systems and makes it usable for research, analytics, and visualization
- **Leverage faculty expertise** to conduct rigorous, policy-relevant research
- **Facilitate continuous improvement** by using data and evidence to guide practice
- **Translate research into action** through policy briefs, presentations, and technical support

### FY2025 Activities and Progress

In FY2025, the Arkansas Policy Lab (the Lab) has focused on expanding data access, strengthening strategic partnerships, and deepening its engagement with priority policy issues. Key activities include:

- **Expanding Data Infrastructure**  
In collaboration with the Office for Education Policy (OEP), the Lab established a broad five-year data sharing agreement with the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). This agreement significantly enhances access to longitudinal data across the **PK–20 education continuum** and supports long-term research and policy analysis.
- **Accessing Priority Datasets**  
The Lab has secured access to several new datasets aligned with state priorities, including data related to **early childhood education (Pre-K)** and **Education Freedom Accounts (EFA)**. These resources will support research into program implementation and student outcomes.

- **Deepening State Partnerships**  
The Lab continues to strengthen its collaboration with ADE, particularly on **teacher workforce research and strategy**. This includes ongoing work related to **teacher licensure, merit pay**, and the **Educator Preparation Program State Review**, providing technical assistance and actionable evidence to inform policy decisions.
- **Evaluating and Improving New Programs**  
In partnership with the **Office of School Choice and Parental Empowerment**, the Lab is investigating usage patterns and the impacts of Arkansas’s **Education Freedom Accounts (EFA)** program. This research aims to generate critical insights into how families engage with the program and inform efforts to improve access and effectiveness.
- **Engaging in Statewide Policy Leadership**  
Lab Director Josh McGee is serving as **Chair of the Arkansas Education Funding Task Force** and as a member of the **School Leadership Task Force**, contributing data-driven insights to guide statewide education policy reform.
- **Building Health Partnerships**  
The Lab is working to establish a formal partnership with the **Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI)**. This collaboration would enable secure access to health data and open new pathways for research at the intersection of health and education.
- **Securing New Funding**  
The Lab has submitted multiple **grant proposals** and successfully secured **new funding** to support its core operations and strategic growth.
- **Investing in Talent and Capacity**  
To support its expanding portfolio of projects, the Lab is actively working to **hire new research faculty and staff**, laying the foundation for a strong and sustainable team.

*Point of Contact: Josh McGee – jbm04@uark.edu*

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## Arkansas Transition Research Advocacy Community (AR-TRAC) Lab



The 2024-2025 academic year marked the first full year of operation for the Arkansas Transition Research, Advocacy, and Community Engagement (AR-TRAC) Lab. The Lab was created to serve as a collaborative hub for scholars, students, practitioners, and community members working to improve postsecondary outcomes for people with disabilities across Arkansas and beyond. ARTRAC Lab's purpose is to advance inclusive, equitable, and community-driven transition practices by integrating research, advocacy, and partnership into the training of future leaders and the development of sustainable solutions.

### **Significant Achievements and Strategic Progress**

- Developed the AR-TRAC Lab's mission, vision, and strategic goals, with a focus on inclusive research, advocacy, and sustainable community partnerships.
- Established a collaborative leadership structure that includes Co-Directors for Research, Community Engagement, Advocacy, and Higher Education Partnerships.
- Designed and developed a professional website ([www.transition.uark.edu](http://www.transition.uark.edu)), currently undergoing internal review for accessibility and usability with a planned launch in Fall 2025.
- Initiated the planning of a Community Engagement Board, drawing on best practices from participatory and community-based research models.

### **Teaching, Leadership Preparation, and Doctoral Training**

- Successfully recruited and onboarded three doctoral scholars through a \$6.5 million multisite federally-funded OSEP leadership grant and another doctoral scholar through a \$2.4 million OSEP leadership grant in partnership with the University of Oklahoma.
- Conducted nationwide recruitment activities for doctoral students, including a virtual information session attended by more than 70 prospective applicants and on-campus visits.
- Designed and proposed a new doctoral seminar in secondary transition, integrating two OSEP leadership grants focused on secondary transition and collaborating with broader Curriculum and Instruction Department Ph.D. faculty and scholars.

### **Research, Funding, and Public Engagement**

- Research productivity continued under two federally-funded grants, an NIH-funded project focused on physical activity for adults with intellectual disability and an RSA-funded project centered on improving the transition-to-adulthood for youth with disabilities in Arkansas.
- Initiated a comprehensive literature review on theoretical frameworks in secondary transition research, with a peer-reviewed manuscript planned for 2025-2026.
- Partnered with Fayetteville High School to support on-campus employment for students with disabilities as well as professional development for special educators.
- Developed a professional development menu for Arkansas districts and co-ops.

The AR-TRAC Lab's momentum this year reflects a growing demand for inclusive research and partnership in transition services. We look forward to expanding our impact through deeper community partnerships, sustained research output, and continued leadership development.

*Point of Contact – Sheida Raley ([sheida@uark.edu](mailto:sheida@uark.edu))*

## Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Research Laboratory

The Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) research lab is dedicated to contributing research that improves communication outcomes for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who do not have functional speech and are learning language. The 2024-2025 year in the AAC research lab was another year focused on such research contributions. Work continued under a federally funded research grant (Holyfield is PI of subaward) to evaluate technology to support literacy outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities who use or would benefit from AAC. Lab faculty also submitted three grants for consideration for federal funding. Further, lab faculty published a total of 15 peer-reviewed papers, with more made available early online, in press, or in preparation. The publications all provided insights toward enhancing opportunities for supporting communication and self-determination from individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Lab faculty conceptualize self-determination as an essential component for effective communication because self-determined people are empowered to express their own goals, strengths, support needs, and preferences with autonomy and agency.

The AAC research lab is also committed to training highly effective professionals to improve communication outcomes for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. In the 2024-2025 year, work continued under a federally funded training grant (Holyfield is PI) to prepare speech-language pathologists to provide high quality AAC services in schools. Five Communication Sciences and Disorders graduate students were trained under the training grant. Five Communication Sciences and Disorders undergraduate honors students also participated in lab activities. Additionally, two doctorate students in Curriculum & Instruction, and three graduate students in Special Education participated in lab research.

The AAC research lab also continued to act upon its commitment to serve the local community by hosting another year of inclusive summer camp for eight children with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who use AAC as well as neurotypical children. The camp was made possible through WE CARE funding. Inclusive summer camp activities were documented in an episode of KUAF's Ozark's at Large.

*Points of Contact - Christine Holyfield (ceholyfi@uark.edu) and Liz Lorah (lorah@uark.edu)*

## Autism Support Program (ASP)

The University of Arkansas' Autism Support Program has just completed its 13<sup>th</sup> year. There were 19 students enrolled in the spring semester, one of whom graduated in the spring of 2024. Eleven of the remaining students returned to the ASP in the fall semester and we added five new students, giving us a total of 16 students enrolled in the fall semester. At this level of enrollment and with the extra fee students pay for our services, the ASP covers all expenses and generates a surplus that is held in reserve for the future.

The ASP employed 1 full-time director and a variety of part-time Academic Coaches and Peer Mentors during 2024. The responsibilities of director include hiring, training, and supervising all employees, recruiting new students and evaluating all applicants, serving as case manager for all students which includes designing their coaching and mentoring schedules, meeting with each student multiple times every week to discuss academics, professional goals, social issues, etc., communicating with students' parents as needed, and providing support for the faculty who teach their classes.

The director has continued to cultivate relationships with organizations who serve as liaisons between companies open to hiring a neurodiverse workforce and prospective employees who have autism (Lime Connect, SourceAble, Integrate, and Mentra). The director remains an active member of the College Autism Network's consortium of directors of university autism programs and participates in their meetings and idea sharing sessions.

In the fall of 2024, the director served as a panelist at the UAMS Neurodiversity Conference: Bridging Healthcare Gaps into Adulthood where she presented information about serving the needs of adults with ASD as well as specific information about the Autism Support Program. Also in the fall of 2024, the director and colleagues began a project to design a training program for Testing Center staff to help them better serve students with disabilities.

*Point of Contact: Aleza Greene - [asgreene@uark.edu](mailto:asgreene@uark.edu)*

## Boyer Center for Student Services

2024-2025 academic year marked the seventh year in the College with centralized undergraduate recruitment, advising, career counseling, and student services. The Boyer Center serves students from orientation through graduation. Offices are located in the CORD for on campus undergraduate advising and in GRAD for online student advising.

We welcomed 7 new staff to the advising team, replacing staff members who have left the unit and one of these positions is a new line. In the fall semester we welcomed Abigail Askenasy, Ben Bury, and Abi Powlowski into the on-campus team and Leslie Shaw into the online team, replacing Laura Harrison who was promoted to Assistant Director of Advising. We also welcome a new administrative assistant, Kimberly Miller. The spring semester saw us welcome Avery Hendrickson and Hailey Rissinger to the advising team. This year we enjoyed being fully staffed for the majority of the academic year and saw some of the largest numbers of advising appointments – just over 10,000 for the academic year.

Summer 2024 saw another large freshman class with just over 1,100 new students. This is about the same numbers as we saw the previous year. Our advising team supported students on campus for the 6 weeks of orientation. We continued to hear good feedback from the orientation experience, and most concerns continue to focus on students being on their own, without their parents in the advising portion. Additionally, during orientation we were short staffed, but the team came together to support those students during NSO.

This 2024-2025 academic year we continued to offer both virtual and in-person advising sessions. There was a total of over 9,000 scheduled advising appointments for the academic year with an additional 900 walk-in appointments during our peak advising times the first week of the semester and advance registration. This year, we saw a growth in in-person appointments and steady use of online/virtual appointment types. We see students still utilize virtual advising appointments done through Microsoft Teams. The virtual appointments are not only used for the online students but also during orientation and when students are not on campus between semesters. This option provides flexibility and a secondary method to connect with students if they do not want to come in person but can be able to talk with an advisor.

Another area that we are working on bolstering is our academic initiatives. We had our third year of A-week, where we partnered with Student Affairs and held our first “open house” for new students. This was a great event where we had roughly 250 students come dropping in for an A-week event for an open-house event. We had faculty and students from each of our departments there. We also included out partnerships with Study Abroad and COEHP Honors to have a table during this event. Having a tradition of students signing a poster that is hung in the CORD has also been a great way to welcome each freshman class.

We continued the partnership with HHPR and the override process for HHPR classes. It is a collaborative process between the BCSS office and the HHPR department. This continues to be a moving target but with the data the department has been more informed on program needs and we look to continue to hone this process.

Other initiatives we continue this 2024-2025 academic year:

- Next Steps Meetings – for students who were not admitted to nursing school.
- Drop-in advising for Study Abroad
- Drop-in advising for Accelerated Master’s programs
- Student Success Coaching for students on academic probation 127 students this year

Lastly, we continue to add and lose staff members to our BCSS team. While people move on for many reasons, we have worked hard to strengthen the search process to help hire people who want to work with our students. We anticipate there always being a hiring search but have a core group of individuals to help with the process.

Staff members who were recognized for We Care round of applause:

- **Laura Harrison** – Transfer Student connections – September 2024
- **Celeste Fishback** – August Orientation support with new hires – September 2024
- **Erica Langley** – working with nursing faculty and pre-nursing advisors on upcoming curriculum changes – September 2024
- **Elizabeth McKinley** – Demonstrating remarkable insight and drive to improve campus wide advising – Feb. 2025
- **Paryn Browning & Nereyda Zuniga** - training new advisors - April 2025
- **Celeste Fishback** – Supporting University Students in Special Education program – April 2025
- **Celeste Fishback & Abi Powlowski** – for collaboration with Elementary and Childhood education program admission – April 2025

New Staff members, hired in BCSS:

- Abby Askenasy, Academic Advisor – Health Team
- Ben Bury, Academic Advisor – Health Team
- Avery Hendrickson, Academic Advisor - Health Team
- Kimberly Miller, Administrative Assistant
- Abi Powlowski, Academic Advisor – Education team
- Hailey Rissinger, Academic Advisor – Health Team
- Leslie Shaw, Academic Advisor – Online Team

Awarded graduation numbers from 2024-2025:

- Summer 2024: 111
  - Fall 2024: 320
  - Spring 2025: 635
- Total 1066**

*Point of Contact: Elizabeth McKinley- [elmckinl@uark.edu](mailto:elmckinl@uark.edu) & Denise Bignar – [dbignar@uark.edu](mailto:dbignar@uark.edu)*

## Cachexia Research Laboratory

The Cachexia Research Laboratory (CRL)'s primary research focus is to unveil mechanisms leading to the onset of cancer cachexia, a debilitating wasting syndrome present in up to 80% of cancer patients and responsible for 20-40% of cancer-related deaths, depending on cancer type. We seek to do this while training postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, and undergraduate students in the use of molecular biology techniques to understand pathophysiological conditions and become future leaders of our field. The CRL works closely with the Exercise Muscle Biology Laboratory (EMBL) under Dr. Tyrone Washington and most of the listed accomplishments are in joint efforts with the EMBL. The CRL began work in the Fall of 2013 and through the end of CY 2024 we have published 49 peer-reviewed original research articles, 8 review articles, and 2 editorials. Since our beginning, 5 PhD students have completed their dissertations in our laboratory and have all moved on to prestigious postdoctoral fellowships, with three either currently transitioning into roles as Principal Investigators or having made this transition themselves. We have additionally trained 2 postdoctoral fellows. The CRL has been consistently funded through funding bodies including the Arkansas Bioscience Institute and the National Institutes of Health.

During the 2024 calendar year the CRL has had a number of accomplishments as a group and among our laboratory members. We have been a part of 5 accepted original research publications and 1 published review article, trainees in the laboratory have received 2 awards for their research, Dr. Greene gave 6 invited presentations, and trainees presented several abstracts at international conferences (17<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Cachexia, Sarcopenia and Muscle Wasting; and the International Biochemistry of Exercise Conference among them). Among invited presentations Dr. Greene served as the Texas Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine Fall 2024 lecture tour speaker. Additionally, Dr. Greene continues to serve as Chair of the University of Arkansas Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee, served on 5 NIH study section grant review panels, and serves as Associate Editor at the *Journal of Cachexia, Sarcopenia and Muscle* and at *Sports Medicine and Health Sciences*. The CRL has maintained funding through this time from our ongoing NIH R01 award from the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases and the Arkansas Bioscience Institute.

*Point of Contact: Nic Greene - [npgreene@uark.edu](mailto:npgreene@uark.edu)*

## Center for Children & Youth

2024-25 was a successful year for the Center for Children & Youth (CCY), as the initiative continued to forward its ongoing mission to provide learning opportunities to students and educators in the areas of arts, literacy, and pro-social development.

This year saw the publication of *Joyful Literacies in Secondary English Language Arts (2025)* by Holly Sheppard Riesco, Kathryn Hackett-Hill, Dr. Christian Goering (CCY Faculty Director) and Megan Yates Grizzle. Published by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the book highlights the transformative power of joyful pedagogy and “deep fun” in the ELA classroom. Both Hackett-Hill and Yates Grizzle are alums/participants in CCY’s ARTeacher Fellowship program.

The ARTeacher Fellowship continues to be a flagship program for CCY, building teacher expertise in secondary arts integration through a yearlong intensive professional development cycle. In November, CCY Director Hung Pham accompanied Fellows Jean Hoffheimer Warren and Nichole Paquet-Smith to Boston to present two arts-based sessions at the NCTE National Convention. Presenting on mixed-media art and the Japanese art of *kintsugi*, both sessions were extremely well-attended and well-received, with the *kintsugi* presentation drawing nearly 100 participants and garnering requests for future collaboration. Financial support to attend the NCTE National Convention was provided through a \$9,600 Arts in Education grant from the Arkansas Arts Council.

In addition, ARTeacher Fellow Jessica Culver was selected to present at the National Council for the Social Studies, also in Boston. Culver was also honored as History Teacher of the Year for Arkansas by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

In June, CCY held its first ARTeacher Writing Workshop, addressing the burgeoning interest of Fellows to add their voices to the professional and scholarly discourse on education. Led by alum Hackett-Hill, who has published several articles in leading journals, the retreat provided logistical and creative support for the thirteen attendees seeking first-time publication.

2025 also saw the completion of the 2-year, \$20,000 Women’s Giving Circle grant awarded to CCY in conjunction with the UA Faulkner Performing Arts Center. The grant funded FPAC’s ArtSpark! arts-based summer camps for youth, as well as two days of teacher professional development in arts integration. The collaboration with FPAC exemplifies CCY’s many fruitful partnerships with UA campus entities, including collaborations with the World Languages and Digital Humanities Studio; School of Art; Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation; and Multicultural Center.

Finally, CCY successfully completed its formal review by UA’s Division of Research and Innovation and was renewed for the full five years. The reviewers commented, “It was a pleasure to read about the center’s continued success – excellent report,” attesting to CCY’s longstanding record of achievements.

*Point of Contact: Hung Pham - ccy@uark.edu*

## Center for Public Health and Technology

The Center for Public Health and Technology (CPHT) specializes in research that increases understanding of how technologies (i.e., online, digital, social, wearable, among others) promote positive health behaviors and reduce disease burden, as well as examine the challenges associated with technology including the propagation of misinformation and promotion of harmful health behaviors. Center research incorporates a range of health and social issues and cultivates mixed methods, including descriptive, experimental, and interventional approaches.

Over this past year, center activities focused on branding, outreach, and research expansion. The CPHT hosted a speaker as a part of the third annual **Scholar Speaker Series**. In collaboration with the University of Arkansas Humanities Center, and the Medical Humanities, the CPHT hosted **Dr. Alfredo Morabio, MD, PhD**, Professor of Clinical Epidemiology at Columbia University Irving Medical Center and Editor of the *American Journal of Public Health*. As a part of his visit, he met with students and faculty, and he presented a seminar entitled, “The Public Health Approach: Population Thinking From the Black Death to Covid-19” on October 17, 2024.

**Research:** In 2024-2025, CPHT affiliate members **retained three external grants** from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Denver Health and Hospital Authority (PI). These included NIH K01 award (*Loopholes, Enforcement Challenges, and Tobacco Industry Interference with Tobacco Control Policies*; PI: Dobbs), and an NIH R21 (*An examination of Concomitant Non-Medical use of Gabapentin and Opioids*; PI: Buttram). The affiliate faculty also **secured three new external grants**, two from the Arkansas Biosciences Institute (ABI) and the Arkansas Attorney General’s Office (AG) that will begin in 2025. These include an two ABI awards including “*Non-medical supplemental benefits through Medicare Advantage plans: impact on health outcomes and End-of-Life outcomes for older adults in Arkansas: evidence from the Arkansas All Payers Claims database*” (Bhagianadh), “*Using Generative AI Models to Identify Tobacco Addiction and Create Intervention Messages on Social Media Platforms*” (PI: Luu), and an AG grant “*Youth Voices in Action: Investigating Social Media Influencers’ Messages about Smokeless Tobacco*” (PI: Dobbs). Center members published more than **50 peer-reviewed papers** and presented **40+ research presentations** at scientific conferences including the American Public Health Association, American Academy of Health Behavior, European Conference on Addictive Behaviors and Dependencies, International Society of Addiction Medicine, AIDS Impact, Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco, and the International Communication Association. Center faculty were also invited to speak at the Northwest Arkansas Substance Use Prevention Conference and the Dean’s External Advisory Board. CPHT also had several **media features**, including the Arkansas Democrat Gazette, the Cambridge Health Alliance, KUAF public radio, and local news stations including Channel 5 News.

**Service:** The CPHT prioritizes community engagement at all phases of research and explores opportunities for community-based research approaches. The CPHT connects community partners with public health experts and resources, both internal and external to the University. In 2024-2025, we maintained a partnership Community Clinic, a federally qualified health center (FQHC) located in Springdale, Arkansas, and we expanded our network to include Education Accelerated by Science and Technology (EAST) Initiative. Dr. Page Dobbs and undergraduate students from her lab worked with youth research committee with three EAST schools across the state, and a graduate representative presented at the annual EAST conference in Hot Springs as a part of a WE CARE Team Up grant. Dobbs and her partnering schools present findings from their work in Hot Springs in March 2023 at the Annual EAST Conference attended by over 3,500 students and 240+ schools.

**Awards/Honors:** In addition to accomplishments in research and service, the CPHT would also like to recognize Dr. Khoa Luu, who was promoted to Associate Professor. Further, several affiliate students and students mentored by faculty members received awards, including Kylie Lovett (Outstanding PhD Oral Presentation), Reagan Anderes (Outstanding Poster Presentation), and Charlie McCormick (Outstanding Poster Presentation) at the inaugural HHPR Research Day.

*Point of Contact:* Page Dobbs, pdobbs@uark.edu

## The Classical Education Research Lab

The Classical Education Research Lab under the direction of Dr. Albert Cheng and located within the Department of Education Reform turned three years old and continues to conduct scholarship to support teachers and leaders in the classical education movement. At the end of this academic year, Dr. Cheng was awarded the College of Education and Health Profession's Impactful Research Award in recognition for his scholarly contributions to the study of classical education. One research study about teaching mathematics classically was the topic of a session at the Society for Classical Learning's 2025 Summer Conference. Dr. Cheng presented the research findings and moderated a panel discussion with collaborators Dr. Jonathan Gregg, Professor of Education at Hillsdale College, and Dr. Josh Wilkerson and Sandra Schinetsky, math teachers at the Regents School of Austin and directors of Restoring Mathematics. This past fall, the Lab welcomed Samuel Musser and Qian Tang who started the doctoral program in education policy offered by the Department of Education Reform. Another student, Kunyou Guan, will join the Lab and begin her doctoral studies this coming fall. These students together with Dr. Cheng are embarking on a number of significant research projects, including an experimental evaluation of Great Hearts Academies—one of the largest and oldest classical charter school networks in the United States—and a study of how students who were classically educated in the past now fare as adults. The latter project is being conducted with the help of a \$150,000 grant from the Society for Classical Learning. While the Lab welcomed these new students, it bid farewell to Dr. Sean Hadley who completed his two-year postdoctoral fellowship with Lab. Dr. Hadley has accepted an upper school principal position at Trinitas Christian School. As Dr. Hadley fulfills new leadership responsibilities, he will continue to be active in conducting research to provide professional support to other teachers and leaders in classical schools.

*Point of Contact: Albert Cheng - [axc070@uark.edu](mailto:axc070@uark.edu)*

## Clinic for Literacy (UACL)

The University of Arkansas Clinic for Literacy (UACL) continued to expand its impact through programming and scholarship during the 2024-2025 academic year. A total of 7 national conference presentations and 2 publications were accepted to highlight the programming work of the clinic. Additionally, over \$173,600 was awarded through college and state grants.

The UACL continued its support of tutoring in literacy methods coursework for elementary education candidates enrolled in both the 4-year and 5-year licensure pathways. It expanded this model into new courses, resulting in 9 school partnerships and approximately 618 local elementary students tutored during this mutually-beneficial initiative that provided 198 high-quality preparation experiences for teacher candidates. This initiative was financed through the state's High Impact Tutoring literacy grant, supplying tutoring training, curriculum, and payment stipends for tutors. The UACL served as a liaison for training support, curriculum acquisition, program enrollment support, supervision, tutor pairing, and tutor payment.

In summer 2024, some UACL representatives began the process of reviewing and implementing high-quality instructional materials training within literacy coursework for both the 4-year and 5-year elementary licensure programs. This work was conducted through Deans for Impact and The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and continued throughout the fall of the 2024-2025 school year. The goal of optimizing opportunities for interdisciplinary learning amongst college-wide literacy stakeholders continues to be a key priority for the clinic. This work ranges from advocating for cross-listed and co-taught literacy courses across programs to designing networking and co-learning opportunities, such as the summer 2024 lunch & learn that brought together elementary education and speech and language pathologist candidates around the topic of supporting phonics instruction in the classroom. Additionally, the clinic continues to sponsor teaching materials for candidates within the elementary education programs, the Speech and Hearing Clinic, and the education studies program. In spring 2025, members of the clinic began work on a task force for interdisciplinary literacy learning through a Team Up for Literacy We Care grant.

Summer 2024 programming created an opportunity for M.A.T. candidates to instruct 20 K-5th-grade students during the UACL's annual summer literacy camp in partnership with the University of Arkansas Museum. A new camp was also created in summer 2024, which focused on research and storytelling, allowing participants in both camps to authentically apply literacy skills within an independent research project inspired by collections housed at the museum. This new camp expanded the reach of the UACL to include middle-grade students, which continues to be another prioritized goal for the clinic to serve community students K-8th-grade and beyond. In fall 2024, the clinic leadership team expanded to include representation from other programs across COEHP that prepare candidates to teach and/or support literacy instruction.

*Point of Contact- Kristi Mascher (kamasche@uark.edu)*

## COEHP Honors

The COEHP Honors Program enjoyed continued successes during the 2024-2025 academic year. In the fall 2024 semester, 118 new freshmen joined the COEHP Honors Program, bringing the total number of honors students to 501. These new freshmen included three Honors College Fellows. In addition, 105 current students joined the COEHP Honors Program over the course of the academic year.

In the fall, six sections of University Perspectives were taught by COEHP Honors faculty and staff. The increase in number of COEHP Honors sections allows for the majority of incoming COEHP Honors students to build a solid foundation for their COEHP Honors career by connecting with COEHP Honors faculty, staff, and current students.

In addition to welcoming incoming students, the COEHP Honors Program also celebrated 76 graduating students. In spring 2025, graduating COEHP Honors seniors mingled and decorated crowns and sashes to wear with their regalia, then marched together to Gearhart Hall along with honors students from other colleges to be inducted into the Honors College Senior Common Room.

COEHP Honors Commencement ceremonies were held in both fall 2024 and spring 2025 to recognize the program's graduates and to award their honors regalia, consisting of stoles, cords, and medallions. Parents, family, friends, and faculty mentors were all invited to the ceremonies to join the students as they concluded their undergraduate careers – with well over 300 guests attending.

COEHP Honors students and faculty mentors received grant funding totaling **\$238,435** during the 2024-2025 academic year, with **\$190,035** awarded to students and **\$48,400** awarded to faculty. Two students were awarded SURF grants totaling \$9,500, and an additional twelve students received Honors College Research Grants totaling \$38,000. Thirty-one students received Honors College Study Abroad Grants totaling \$109,575. COEHP Honors Students also received other grants from the Honors College, including Research Team Grants (8 students, \$10,000 awarded), International Internship Grants (1 student, \$5,000 awarded), Domestic Internship Grants (2 students, \$3,000 awarded), Opportunity Grants (1 student, \$500 awarded) and Conference/Workshop Grants (17 students, \$14,460 awarded).

Prior to the 14<sup>th</sup> annual COEHP Honors Symposium, a Sophomore Success Meeting was held in collaboration with Honors College staff and COEHP Honors faculty to inform students about the honors thesis/project process and grant opportunities, as well as allowing students to meet and mingle with faculty.

Following the Sophomore Success Meeting, students attended the COEHP Honors Symposium to view presentations of completed theses/projects. Students and faculty appreciated the opportunity to learn about the projects, network with peers, and recognize the top student presenters.

Anna Claire Gardner, an Exercise Science major, was awarded the Best Research Project award for her project "Comparing Gait Patterns of Individuals with and without Cancer." Anna Claire was mentored by Dr. Abigail Schmitt. Ella Hollingshead, an Exercise Science major, was awarded the Best Literature Review Project award for her project "An Overview of Sport-Related Concussions in American Football: Biomechanics and Challenges to Prevention." Ella was mentored by Dr. RJ Elbin.

For the eighth consecutive year, the COEHP Honors Program solicited nominations from students for the COEHP Outstanding Honors Faculty Award. The winner was Dr. Page Dobbs, Associate Professor of Public Health. Dr. Dobbs was nominated by Charlie McCormick, a Public Health student, and was recognized at the College's end-of-year meeting.

*Point of Contact: Matthew Fey - [mfey@uark.edu](mailto:mfey@uark.edu)*

## CURRENTS

(Center for the Utilization of Rehabilitation Resources for Education, Networking, Training & Service)

### **Expanding Service to Arkansas Through Transformative Educational Experiences and Meaningful Partnerships**

UA CURRENTS continued its mission to advance workforce and leadership development by delivering high-impact training, coaching, and outreach efforts across Arkansas and the broader region.

#### **Leadership Development & Training Impact**

Through our Leadership Development Academies for vocational rehabilitation (VR) professionals, UA CURRENTS trained, mentored, and coached 89 individuals, including 36 participants from Arkansas. Additionally, over 150 rehabilitation professionals engaged with the academy through final project presentations—which focused on innovative solutions to address the national VR priorities. In support of workforce development within the University, UA CURRENTS administered behavioral assessments and training to 17 University of Arkansas students and staff.

#### **Client Experience & Program Evaluation**

UA CURRENTS successfully designed and delivered client satisfaction surveys for Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, reaching at least 314 clients statewide. These surveys provided actionable insights into the quality and effectiveness of services received, helping to inform agency improvements and accountability.

#### **National Engagement & Capacity Building**

UA CURRENTS expanded its national footprint through presentations at key vocational rehabilitation conferences: (1) National Coalition of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) – Bethesda, Maryland: *Audience Reached:* 150 VR professionals, including 13 from Arkansas. (2) Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) – Fall 2024 Conference – Seattle, Washington: *Audience Reached:* 500 participants, including 23 from Arkansas. In addition to these presentations, UA CURRENTS supported NCSAB by providing comprehensive event planning, listserv management, and website maintenance. These platforms serve as vital resources for continuing education and professional collaboration within the VR community.

#### **Outreach, Advocacy, and Collaboration**

As part of our commitment to disability innovation and advocacy, UA CURRENTS participated in the 2025 State Independent Living Council (SILC) Day at the Capitol, an event that brought together over 100 disabled and non-disabled participants from across Arkansas. UA CURRENTS deepened its institutional partnerships by co-authoring a grant proposal for the PRIDE (Promoting Research, Innovation, and Developing Excellence) Pathways to Research in Education Sciences initiative. In collaboration with the UAPB and the UARK COEHP, the proposal aims to increase undergraduate engagement in education research across both campuses. Additionally, UA CURRENTS submitted a successful \$30,000 funding request to the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities Arkansas in support of the LEAD Self-

Advocacy Training Program, which was designed to equip 20 Arkansans with disabilities with the skills and confidence to advocate for their rights and preferences in personal and public settings.

**Other Important Aspect/Measures of impact**

Texas Workforce Commission, Vocational Rehabilitation. *Participants Trained:* 114 professionals through Supervisory and Pathways Leadership Academies. Multi-State Rehabilitation Training Impact. *Total Professionals Trained:* 765 from Alaska, Kentucky, North Carolina, Delaware, and Montana VR agencies

**Strategic Events and Program Leadership**

Facilitated strategic planning for the National Coalition of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB)

**Internal Milestones**

Achieved True Colors™ Certification, enhancing our ability to deliver temperament-based leadership training. Expanded operational capacity by hiring a dedicated Event Coordinator to support growing training and conference initiatives. Successfully transitioned the Hot Springs office.

*Point of Contact: Robin Freeman - rrfreema@uark.edu*

## Early Care and Education Projects (ECEP)

In FY25, the [Early Care and Education Projects](#) (ECEP) continued its mission to **educate, connect, and equip** early childhood professionals across Arkansas through high-quality training, coaching, and resource development. As of June 1, with one month left to report data, ECEP has served more than **5,813 participants across 227+ courses**, supported family childcare providers through dedicated regional coaches, and represented Arkansas through projects, as well as at professional conferences and meetings.

### Professional Development & Impact

ECEP offers a robust lineup of more than **30 courses** at varying levels (foundation, intermediate, and advanced), delivered via face-to-face, online, and self-paced formats. Participants included early childhood teachers, leaders, paraprofessionals, and families. Embedded course options were offered through two-year college partners. Third-party evaluations indicate that **89% of participants** planned to apply what they learned directly in their work.

### ECEP FY25 and FY26 Grant Awards

Grant Source	FY25 Amount	FY26 (Expected)
Arkansas Better Chance Funds	\$1,357,685	\$1,357,685
Child Care Development Fund	\$1,077,025	\$1,077,025
Preschool Development Grant	\$2,506,488	\$916,643
Arkansas Early Head Start Fund	-	\$79,985
Home-Grown (Philanthropic Support)	\$95,000	\$75,000
Walton Family Foundation	-	\$408,963
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,036,198</b>	<b>\$3,915,301</b>

### Selected Additional Activities in FY25

- **Family Child Care Network (FCCN):** A statewide initiative led by ECEP, the FCCN provided monthly professional development, individualized coaching, and quarterly Brunch & Learn events. As of June 1, with one month left to report data, FCCN made 2,825 technical assistance contacts, conducted 24 trainings, met 17 new providers, and signed 28 new MOUs. FY26 priorities include national accreditation support, business training, CLASS® coaching, and BRIGANCE® screening integration.
- **Curricula Concepts (CC):** As of June 1, with one month left to report data, CC has delivered 200 professional development sessions to over 3,000 participants and made 3,540 technical assistance contacts. Topics included family engagement, educator well-being, and early childhood development. Initiatives like Be Well Care Well and Move It! promoted staff wellness, increased physical activity, and increased parent engagement.
- **LENA (Language ENvironment Analysis):** With PDG funding, ECEP has explored the transformative potential of LENA technology to improve children's futures through early talk interventions in infant and toddler early childhood environments. This work will continue in FY26 with generous support from the Walton Family Foundation.
- **HIPPY/FCCN Pilot Project:** ECEP piloted using the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) curriculum with family child care providers.

- **[AR Resource Connections](#)**: This statewide shared services platform provides job postings, cost-saving tools, and access to the Arkansas Licensing Best Practice Toolkits. This site helps early childhood professionals implement efficient, budget-friendly strategies across the state.

### Conferences & Representation

In FY25, ECEP contributed to early childhood education at the state and national levels through active participation in meetings, partnerships, and conferences. Staff submitted two articles for publication and presented at five national and 18 high-level state events. Highlights included national presentations on supporting early childhood educators through shared resources, CLASS® group coaching, early childhood leadership development, and enhancing family child care through coaching.

### Personnel Updates

- **New Hires:** Kathleen Hale – Northwest Arkansas Full Time Trainer, Kimberly R. Jackson – Central Arkansas FCC Support, and Casey Rainer – Special Projects Assistant
- **Staff Pursuing Advanced Degrees:** Jackie Couture and Kimberly Russell - Master's degrees at the U of A; Savanna Gragg and Annie Zay - Ph.D. programs at the U of A.
- **Long Serving Staff:** Kimberly Russell (10 years); Jenny Dura (11 years); Kathrine Slocum (40 years); and Susan Lamp (25 years – retiring June 30, 2025)
- **Recognition:** Jenny Dura was a 2025 Staff Service Award winner for Excellence in Service. Jackie Couture received a WeCare Round of Applause award for her work with Family Child Care providers.

**Looking Ahead:** As we enter FY26, ECEP remains focused on our vision to enhance the quality of care and education for young children throughout Arkansas by providing evidence-based training, collaborative coaching, and statewide early childhood leadership.

*Point of Contact: Deniece Honeycutt - dhoneyc@uark.edu*

## Education Renewal Zone (ERZ)

The Office of Education Renewal Zones has focused expertise, time, and finances focused around four primary goals as follows:

- Bridge the gap between two-year college partners, educator preparation programs, education service cooperatives and public school districts by focusing on high-quality collaborative educator preparation.
- Provide High-Quality Professional Development (HQPD) opportunities for pre-service and in-service educators to engage with High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM).
- Collaborate with districts, cooperatives, and higher education institutions to provide high-quality professional growth opportunities for pre-service and in-service teachers and EPP faculty. Master and Lead Professional Educator Designations Coaching training for experienced mentor teachers and IHE intern supervisors.
- Provide districts, schools and EPPs with exposure to and training on evidence-based practices backed by students-focused research and demonstrate improvement in student growth and achievement.

During the 2024-2025 school year these goals were met through the following performance measures. These goals have also been extended for the upcoming year. During the 2024-2025 school year, the Office of ERZ has partnered with ADE DESE, EPP programs, and school districts to support the registered apprenticeship opportunity. The goal was met with increasing by at least 19 for the 2025-2026 school year. The Office of ERZ has partnered with at least 12 EPP programs between the NIET, Education First, and Bailey Group by providing Communities of Practice support for pre-service candidates to be Day 1 Ready. The Office of the ERZs in conjunction with Education First created, facilitated and coordinated training for Arkansas Traditional EPPs. Six (6) EPP programs that participated in training developed a strategic plan to embed HQIM processes into their coursework starting fall 2025 for candidates working on a K-6 license. The Education Renewal Zone also continued their relationship with the Arkansas Department of Education Division of Elementary and Secondary Education to assist with the tutoring programs as outlined in LEARNS Act. ERZ approved over 1200 individual literacy tutors to provide services to identified students across the state.

The Education Renewal Zone has received funding to continue their work for the 2025-2026 school year.

*Point of Contact: Lindsey Swagerty - lmswager@uark.edu*

## Exercise is Medicine

Exercise is Medicine ([exerciseismedicine.uark.edu](http://exerciseismedicine.uark.edu)) at the University of Arkansas, established in 2018, is part of the Exercise is Medicine-On Campus initiative of the American College of Sports Medicine. Through research, teaching and service, EIM at the University of Arkansas works to promote physical activity as a vital sign by making movement a part of the daily campus culture, assessing physical activity, providing tools, and connecting campus partners. It is supported by the Department of Health, Human Performance, and Recreation, the Exercise Science Research Center and WE CARE.

In October, we co-hosted the Exercise is Medicine Symposium: Translating Science into Action, an event that brought three past presidents of the American College of Sports Medicine to campus for an event highlighting two expert speakers, Dr. Elizabeth Joy and Dr. Barry Franklin, and three additional panelists.

The Exercise is Medicine (EIM) research team has been implementing and evaluating a sustainable, pragmatic implementation of exercise referral for students, faculty and staff. We continued a collaboration with Pat Walker, where patients are referred to Exercise is Medicine to complete a fitness assessment and motivational interviewing sessions with a student exercise counselor. As part of the campus exercise referral, we screened 122 individuals using the Physical Activity Vital Sign and conducted 49 fitness assessments with motivational interviewing sessions. These assessments and interviews have been completed by trained graduate (3) and undergraduate (6) students.

This year, the EIM research team had 3 presentations at a regional conference and published 5 peer-reviewed publications. The EIM team also conducted research on physical activity children including the effects of exercise on cognition, and the effects of recess on student health, wellness, and academic achievement, for an additional 5 publications. Four honors students completed their theses on these topics.

Through teaching, EIM was integrated into Intro to Exercise Science, Exercise Applications for Special Populations, and Pediatric Exercise Science, reaching over 200 students.

The EIM Registered Student Organization (RSO) held student-led meetings, during which they planned further partnerships hosted two field days in the Fall and Spring, hosted a Quiz Bowl, and recruited several EIM Ambassadors to promote physical activity across campus.

In recognition of its efforts, EIM at the University of Arkansas sustained Gold-level honors from the American College of Sports Medicine. This makes the University of Arkansas one of 81 campuses worldwide to achieve this highest level of recognition for our exercise assessment and referral activities.

*Point of Contact: Erin Howie Hickey - [ekhowie@uark.edu](mailto:ekhowie@uark.edu)*

## Exercise Science Research Center

The Exercise Science Research Center (ESRC) is part of the Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation (HHPR) within the College of Education and Health Professions at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas. It is housed in the HPER building and consists of Rooms 321, 322, 323, and 326A (and their subsets) for a total of ~7,000 sq ft.

The primary purpose of the ESRC is to support the research, teaching, and service activities of the Exercise Science faculty. Each Exercise Science faculty member has individual research, teaching, and service goals. Thus, the Center Director serves to facilitate and advocate for these activities.

This report summarizes the ESRC activities that have occurred to facilitate research, teaching, and service from January 1st to December 31st, 2024. It covers the collective activity that has occurred with the support of the ESRC by the Exercise Science Faculty. This report covers the individuals who were active members of the Exercise Science faculty during the year: R.J. Elbin, Ph.D.; Kaitlin Gallagher, Ph.D.; Michelle Gray, Ph.D.; Nicholas Greene, Ph.D.; Erin Howie Hickey, Ph.D.; Kevin Murach, Ph.D.; Amanda Sullivan, Ph.D.; Brendon McDermott, Ph.D.; ATC; Tyrone Washington, Ph.D., CSCS; Cory Butts, Ph.D.; Josh McGee, Ph.D., Megan Rosa-Caldwell, Ph.D. and Anqi Deng. We will also be welcoming Zachary McKenna, Ph.D. in the Fall of 2025.

### *Research.*

Per reported data from our faculty, ESRC faculty and their teams had 42 peer-reviewed scientific publications in 2024 including many in field-leading journals (for example *Journal of Athletic Training*, *American Journal of Physiology Series*, *Journal of Physiology*, *European Journal of Nutrition*). Our faculty and their teams reported 60 presentations of various formats (invited seminars on campus and externally; invited presentations at regional, national, and international conferences, including 1 Keynote lecture). Our faculty presented across the United States and abroad (Limerick, Ireland). Finally, our faculty were part of over \$6.5 million in research funding, not including participation of multiple faculty in the \$10,890,925 Arkansas Integrative Metabolic Research Center COBRE Center). These successes have been well noticed through the upward trajectory in program rankings and reputation observed at national and international conferences.

### *Teaching.*

The following classes are primarily conducted utilizing the resources of ESRC (numbers are 2024 totals):

- EXSC 3421L – Principles and Theories of Strength and Conditioning Laboratory (not taught due to faculty sabbatical)
- EXSC 3533 - Laboratory Techniques (with associated Honors sections, 14 sections for 203 students)
- EXSC 5593 – Practicum in Laboratory Instrumentation (1 section for 14 students)

Additional courses utilize ESRC facilities but are primarily lecture courses supplementing instruction with ESRC equipment and teaching spaces. During Summer 2025 we are renovating our primary teaching laboratory HPER 321J to better serve these and other courses.

Additionally, the ESRC supports the research efforts of students and postdoctoral trainees as they pursue their research training, ultimately aiding in the completion of theses, dissertations, and student-led research publications. An example of this success students and trainees in the ESRC received a reported

17 awards in 2024 from the department and university (i.e., SURF grants) to international levels. One student received the American Kinesiology Association Master's Scholar Award.

*Service.*

The ESRC provides numerous service activities to the University and Community. These activities include providing outreach in the form of fitness testing and seminars/talks throughout the community. Our primary outreach service component is our Fitness For Fun Program and exercise testing for Rogers Firefighters.

Finally, the ESRC teamed with the College of Education and Health Professions and its WE CARE Strategic Plan, the Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation and the University of Arkansas Exercise is Medicine On Campus student organization to host: *Exercise is Medicine: Translating Science into Action*. This all day event culminated with an evening symposium featuring 3 past presidents of the American College of Sports Medicine and was highlighted by KUAF Ozarks at Large.

*Point of Contact: Nic Greene – exercise@uark.edu*

## Interprofessional Education Council (IPEC)

The IPEC is composed of eight faculty members representing programs across the college and is charged with 1) understanding and staying updated on best practices of IPE; 2) establishing IPE, collaborative practice, and research for relevant degree programs in COEHP; 3) evaluating IPE effectiveness; and 4) disseminating the value and impact of IPE to key stakeholders.

Program	Representative	Title
Athletic Training	Luzita Vela, PhD, LAT, ATC	Teaching Associate Professor
Communication Sciences & Disorders	Lisa Bowers	Associate Professor
Counselor Education & Supervision	David Christian	Associate Professor
Education	Bonnie King, Ed.D.	Teaching Assistant Professor
Education	Heather Young, PhD	Associate Professor
Occupational Therapy	Glenda Hux	Assistant Professor
Nursing	Shari Cartwright, MSN, RN	Clinical Instructor of Nursing
Public Health	Mance Buttram, PhD	Associate Professor

During the 2024-2025 AY the IPEC taught a 1-credit interprofessional seminar course EDHP 39001/EDHP 3901H/EDHP 59001 Introduction and Exposure to Interprofessional Practice, created cases for the I4HE Academy, and participated in Arkansas Interprofessional Education Consortium (ARIPEC) observations of 2 events. Descriptions of the IPEC’s work can be found below.

### **EDHP 39001/EDHP 3901H/EDHP 59001 Introduction and Exposure to Interprofessional Practice**

The 1-credit seminar was taught in Fall by Lisa Bowers and Heather Young for undergraduate, honors, and graduate students as an 8-week, Fall 2024 course. This course provided exposure to the IPEC Core Competencies and included an assignment that required students to develop alternative language for the IPEC Core Competencies to include non-healthcare, school-based partners. Students also observed interprofessional collaborative practice occurring at Hunt Elementary in Springdale in the form of the multi-tier support system (MTSS) meetings that included both healthcare professionals and educators.

### **Arkansas Interprofessional Education Consortium (ARIPEC)**

The COEHP IPEC continued their relationship with the Arkansas Interprofessional Education Consortium (ARIPEC) to review and share potential free interprofessional activities with the COEHP community and interested programs. IPEC members observed the “Poverty Simulation” at UAMS and were trained in an online, “Home Assessment” activity that included students from UAMS, Harding, UCA, University of Arkansas, and UA Little Rock.

### **I4HE Academy**

The IPEC coordinated and created the development of four cases and four briefs for the 2025 I4HE Academy, an event where students, faculty, and area practitioners team up to brainstorm solutions to complex health and education problems in Arkansas using design thinking principles. The IPEC assisted with identifying content experts, themes for each case, case and brief templates, and peer reviews for the documents developed. Several members also attended the event and served as judges.

**Trainings and Workshops Attended**

Several IPEC members attended the National Academies of Practice conference in Washington, DC in March. Glenda Hux and Luzita Vela were inducted as Fellows to the occupational therapy and athletic training academies respectively.

*Point of Contact: Luzita Vela - vela@uark.edu*

## Molecular Muscle Mass Regulation (M3R) Laboratory

- a. **Significant achievements and changes including progress related to strategic priorities, etc.**
  - M3R lab branched out to muscle regeneration/healing research, submitting several grants and publishing in the area.
- b. **Achievements in teaching, research, and public service, especially those of national, regional, or statewide significance.**
  - Kevin Murach, PhD (PI) presented 15 times via invited lecture or at a conference – nationally and internationally
  - Murach named on Stanford University/Elsevier Top 2% Most Cited Scientists in the World (for 2024)
  - Murach named to American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) National Scientific Advisory Council
- c. **Achievements of students/members and alumni or former students/members, especially those of national, regional, or statewide significance.**
  - Best Poster Award, Health, Human Performance, and Recreation Innovation Showcase Undergraduate, *Effects of Aging on Collagen Remodeling After Injury-Induced Skeletal Muscle Regeneration* (first author: Zain Malik, Undergraduate)
  - Best Poster Award, Myology Meeting in Gainesville Florida, *Widespread Rewiring of the DNA Methylome and Transcriptome with Decelerated Methylation Age After Regeneration in Aged Skeletal Muscle* (first author: Toby Chambers, PhD)
  - Best Poster Award, Cell Symposia: Exercise Metabolism, *The 24-Hour Time Course of Integrated Molecular Responses to Resistance Exercise in Human Skeletal Muscle Implicates MYC as a Hypertrophic Regulator That is Sufficient for Growth* (first author: Sebastian Edman, PhD)
  - PhD student Ron Jones featured in [Arkansas News](#):
  - Article by Jones in *Journal of Physiology* designated as “Top 10 most cited” of the year
  - PhD student PJ Koopmans received a voucher for analysis from UAMS (~\$4,000)
  - Aram Parhizkar, first year PhD student, received Doctoral Academy Fellowship (DAF)
- d. **The numbers of grants, publications, and awards/honors.**
  - NIH K02 to Murach - (\$712,994.00).
  - NIH R01 Supplement to Murach to support post-doc Toby Chambers, PhD - (\$283,960.00)
  - \$600,000 in combined Co-I grants with Nelson (BMEG) and Rosa-Caldwell (HHPR)
  - 10 research articles, 3 invited reviews, and 1 editorial published. Toby Chambers, PhD, published first author articles in *The Journal of Physiology*, *Aging Cell*, and the *American Journal of Physiology Cell Physiology*; PhD student Ron Jones published co-first author article in *EMBO Reports*; PhD student Koopmans published co-first author article in *Experimental Physiology*.
- e. **Other important aspects/measures of impact that you feel are important to share.**
  - Potentially fundable score on R61/R33 with Murach as PI - >\$2.5 million
  - Murach appointed senior programming representative for the Cell Section of the American Physiological Society Summit for 2026
  - Murach featured on National Public Radio (NPR)

Point of Contact: Kevin Murach - [kmurach@uark.edu](mailto:kmurach@uark.edu)

## Office for Education Policy

The Office for Education Policy (OEP) provides national, state, and regional education research to inform decision-making concerning PK-20 education. Since 2003, OEP has helped Arkansas' education leaders and lawmakers bridge the gap between research and practice. OEP is a member of the National Network of Education Research-Practice Partnerships. Under the direction of Executive Director Sarah McKenzie and Associate Director Denise Airola, the OEP staff includes assistant research professors, affiliated researchers, research associates and graduate students who specialize in education research and policy.

### Research

During the 2024-25 school year, OEP faculty, staff, and students conducted research on a variety of topics including:

- Phone free school pilot
- Chronic Absenteeism in Arkansas
- Arkansas Early Childhood Care and Education
- Arkansas Early Childhood Licensing
- Arkansas Teacher Retention after Changes to Teacher Salary
- Arkansas Parent Survey
- Student Outcomes in Arkansas' Open Enrollment Charter Schools
- 2024 NAEP Results
- K-12 Student achievement

OEP produces annual reports, and in 2024-25 these included:

- 2024 Report Card on Northwest Arkansas Schools
- 2024 Report Card on Pulaski County Schools
- "Outstanding Educational Progress (OEP)" and "Beating the Odds" awards for schools with high levels of academic growth

### Developing Solutions

In addition to research and reports, OEP faculty develop solutions to address persistent challenges facing Arkansas schools. McKenzie works with Arkansas Teacher Corps (ATC) staff to place approximately 200 teachers in Arkansas districts that have the most difficulty recruiting educators. This year, OEP faculty and staff developed a video series explaining Arkansas's Growth Model and ATLAS assessments.

### Service

OEP faculty and students are invested in providing support for students and schools through service activities. During the last school year OEP:

- Embedded a researcher at the Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative to support school districts.
- Expanded Research-Practice Partnerships with several school districts examining the English Learner path to English proficiency, the effectiveness of intervention programs, and the benefits of arts programming.
- Received the AGATE Award of Excellence, 2025
- Support and Partnership Awards at the 11th annual STEM Conference, 2025

*Point of Contact: Sarah McKenzie - scmcken@uark.edu*

## Office for Sport Concussion Research

The University of Arkansas established the Office for Sport Concussion Research in 2014 with the mission of improving the standard of care for athletes with sport-related concussion. These goals are achieved through continuing education and outreach activities involving sports medicine stakeholders (e.g., athletes, coaches, medical professionals, and parents) and conducting clinical research that transforms and advances clinical care. Under the direction of Dr. R.J. Elbin, Associate Professor in HHPR, strategic partnerships with local/regional high schools, youth sport groups, state/local organizations (Arkansas Activities Association: AAA), and medical institutions (University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and Inova Sports Medicine Concussion Program in Washington, D.C.) are on-going and comprise the current research programs of the office. An overview and summary of progress for the current research programs within the office are described below.

### **The UofA Sport Concussion Community Outreach and Research Initiative**

This program conducts outreach and research activities from local and regional high schools and sports leagues in the Northwest Arkansas area. UofA researchers provide continuing education to sports medicine professionals, teachers, coaches, and parents about sport-related concussion. UofA researchers from the Office of Sport Concussion Research provided an in-service mild traumatic brain injury presentation to Pat Walker Health Center clinicians and physicians. This lecture and discussion provided opportunity to review brain injury assessments, management, and treatment practices used by clinical staff. In addition, future support was established for complex cases by way of connections with specialists around the country. This meeting will result in the improvement of care for UofA students that sustain a concussion.

### **The UofA Office for Sport Concussion Research/Inova Sports Concussion Program Collaboration**

In 2018, the UofA Office for Sport Concussion Research established a collaboration with the Inova Sports Medicine Concussion Program (Fairfax, VA). The Inova Sports Concussion program is a physician-based team of experts that are trained in the assessment, management, and treatment of concussion. This specialty clinic provides care for more than 4,500 patients per year and is committed to producing clinical research on sport-related concussion. The UofA Office for Sport Concussion Research is continuing to serve as a remote research arm to this clinic. This collaboration has enabled UofA researchers and students to observe specialty clinicians and therapists and create research pathways for enrolling patients for collaborative studies between these institutions. Moreover, this collaboration exposes UofA students to clinical research that is taking place in both in- and outpatient settings. To date, more than 5,000 patients have been enrolled by UofA researchers into a patient research registry at the Inova clinic, and several collaborative studies have been completed or are currently in progress (see below).

**Research Production and Highlights for 2024-2025:****Grants:**

- We are currently halfway through a multi-site funded study by the Chuck Noll Foundation with University of Pittsburgh, Magee Women’s Hospital, and Inova Healthcare. This study is focused on investigating the effects of mild traumatic brain injury on women’s health outcomes.

**Publications and Presentations:**

- 7 manuscripts were published in several high impact sports medicine journals which include: Journal of Athletic Training, Military Medicine, and Journal of Head Trauma, Rehabilitation. These publications showcase several new findings in concussion including: the relationship between vestibular/ocular motor provocation and anxiety in patients with concussion, as well as long-term health-related quality of life outcomes following a new model of concussion care.
- 15 professional presentations were made by members of the Office for Sport Concussion Research.

*Point of Contact: R.J. Elbin – rjelbin@uark.edu*

## Office for Studies on Aging (OSA)

The Office for Studies on Aging (OSA) is an interdisciplinary Office founded in 1999 in response to the 'graying of America' as a collaboration between the Graduate School and the College of Education and Health Professions at the University of Arkansas. OSA reports directly to the Dean of the College of Education and Health Professions; however, has no physical space or location dedicated for its use. OSA faculty published two peer-reviewed manuscripts and presented eight abstracts regionally, nationally, and internationally. OSA faculty also continued to work on two grants in 2023 totaling more than \$3.4M. OSA also continued a Registered Student Organization – Hogs End ALZ – this organization has grown from six initial students to a membership more than 30 strong, to date. Hogs End ALZ met monthly in 2024 and hosted a memory wall in the AR Union to bring awareness of Alzheimer's Disease to college-aged individuals. Additionally, OSA hosted an event at Butterfield Trail Village to provide functional fitness testing and cognitive assessments for their 400 residents free of charge. To date, approximately 150 residents have been tested with results provided to them to share with their healthcare provider.

*Point of Contact: Michelle Gray – [aging@uark.edu](mailto:aging@uark.edu)*

## Office for Women and Children's Health

Founded in 2023, the Office of Women and Children's Health is housed at the Eleanor Mann School of nursing. The goals of the office are to promote healthy lifestyles in children and families of Arkansas. This is achieved through collaborations between community and UA, providing advocacy for policies promoting healthy lifestyles, creating outreach opportunities for service within families with children and adolescents. The office promotes research to improve women and child health and support student engage in advocacy and research.

Dr. Emily Richardson and Dr. Rebecca McCann joined Dr. Marilou Shreve and Dr. Allison Scott, to expand collaboration, outreach, and research. Currently, over ten nursing and public health undergraduate honor students are participating in pediatric outreach and research. During our 2<sup>nd</sup> year the office has had publication with 2 peer reviews and over 10 international, national, and state presentations. Dr. Richardson received three internal grants to support research and collaborations.

Pediatric outreach included updating pediatric providers on addressing obesity in childhood at the local, state, and national level. Collaborations include Community Clinic of NWA, Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese, National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, Centers for Disease and Prevention and American Academy of Pediatrics, and Hartland Forward. Outreach activities include Tiny Tusks breastfeeding support for mothers at UA athletic events. Student grant awards include SURF and honor grants. The office currently has seven research projects involving students and families in Arkansas.

*Point of Contact: Marilou Shreve – [mdshreve@uark.edu](mailto:mdshreve@uark.edu)*

## Office of Innovation for Education (OIE)

The Office of Innovation for Education’s vision is to consistently have a measurable impact on learning communities throughout Arkansas and the world. We achieve the vision through our mission: we give schools the tools to color outside the lines. From innovation to analytics, OIE is known for its high caliber of expertise, integrity, responsiveness, and commitment.

We have strategically focused on efficiency in accomplishing our work to deliver beyond what is expected by our sponsors based on our grant agreements. This focus on efficiency enabled us to meet the demands of another particularly challenging transition year for state government. Despite the challenges, we continue to go beyond expectations to support our sponsors.

### Return on Investment/ Estimated Savings:

- **Co-wrote Competitive Grant for State Assessments (CGSA) leading to the successful award of a 4-year grant of \$3.64 million for data and assessment literacy.**
- **62 projects called for over 13,000 days of work. OIE delivered an average of 1,055 days of productivity per team member.**
- **Savings of \$6.3 million based on work completed through productivity of existing staff (investment of \$ 1.79 million).**

### Value Provided:

- Research, analytics, data, and reporting for all federal and state accountability requirements for the ADE Divisions of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Career and Technical Education (DCTE).
- Additional research and statistical modeling to support the decision-making of ADE leadership by producing 12 iterations of A –F formula, as well as continued experimental design and quantitative evaluation support for LEARNS Initiatives.
- For DCTE, analytics for Perkins updated plan and additional analytics to support pathways and program development aligned with LEARNS requirements.
- Data loading, transformation, and standardization of all new ATLAS data files. Updates to all calculations using the new ATLAS scores. New growth histories and analytics to ensure growth calculations for End of Course Exams were valid and reliable.
- Leadership of and support for co-design and implementation of innovative educational practices for 121 districts, 443 schools, and 14,626 teachers, impacting 233,782 students.
- Over 150 days of professional learning including a statewide coaching model utilized by DESE to support literacy, math, and science instruction, mentoring support, and instructional transformation in districts across Arkansas for LEARNS.
- Conducted focus groups and produced surveys for Day One Ready Leaders for DESE.

### Value Delivery Type:

- OIE staff provide highly qualified professionals with expertise in research and analytics, subject matter expertise, programming skills, leadership, and consultative services to augment the capacity of DESE and DCTE.
- OIE staff produce deliverables in the form of research and analytical reports, structured data sets for reporting, experimental design and data collection for evaluations.

*Point of Contact: Denise Airola - oie@uark.edu*



## Office of Play Therapy Research and Training

The Office of Play Therapy Research and Training is in its' 10th year as a nationally approved university center for play therapy and an approved center of continuing education. It is one of only 30 approved university centers in the country and received its approval for 5 years in 2021, which is the longest period possible. For the last six years we have had a record number of students enrolled in the Intro to Play Therapy course from counseling, social work and human development, and family science majors as well as post degree mental health professionals from the field. The annual two-day conference training and coursework offered students and professionals from the community an opportunity to obtain their national certification as Registered Play Therapists. The 10th annual conference was held June 27-28th, 2025, in Fayetteville, with over 100 people registered from all over Arkansas as well as Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee and North Dakota with Dr. Sue Bratton as speaker. Five master's students and Five Ph.D. students attended this training free in lieu of volunteering to support their RPT credential. Dr. Perryman is the primary author of an article, co-authored by two alumni (Dr. Julia Conroy and Dr. TJ Schoonover) which is the recipient of the 2025 Association for Play Therapy Research Award. The study is the first to evaluate the psychophysiological impact of Child-centered play therapy with a child with trauma. TJ Schoonover is also co-author on another play therapy award that won a research award from APT in 2025. Four presentations were also conducted at the Association for Play Therapy international conference. Dr. Perryman presented on the physiological impact of child centered play therapy with Ph.D. student Smruthi Chintakunta. She also conducted a presentation with alumni Dr. Kendra Shoge and another with Ph. D. student, Tucker Moretta. Alumni, Hailey Thomas also presented on her play therapy dissertation. Ten current students and alumni attended the conference and a dinner hosted by the office of play therapy research and training. A master's student won a full scholarship to attend the conference as well. Three peer reviewed publications were published in national/international journals along with a book chapter in 2024 as a result of research conducted through the U of A Office of Play Therapy Research and Training with both Ph.D. students and alumni. co-authoring. Over 100 play therapy sessions were conducted by the director, master's and Ph.D. students in the counseling lab with children from the community. The estimated costs for these pro bono services is \$15,000. Kristi Perryman, the director of the office, was recently re-elected by the APT governing board as chair elect. She also continues to serve on the editorial board for the Association for Play Therapy. Dr. Perryman's teaching time was bought out through the Arkansas Department of Human Services and serves as the mental health specialist for the state pilot program, serving children and adolescents around the state and conducting play therapy training. She conducted 7 presentations around the state on childhood trauma. The Office of Play Therapy Research and Training partnered with the grant and Arkansas Play Therapy to host a conference in Arkadelphia on play therapy with national presenter, Dr. Dee Ray, funding 60 professionals registration to obtain training. Through the grant, Dr. Perryman also trains and mentors professionals around the state in play therapy.

The Office of play sponsored and co-sponsored 177 continuing education hours for therapists, teachers and other community members in all regions of the state. Dr. Perryman also obtained an Impactful Research Funding grant through WeCare to recruit a potential play therapy student and have them visit campus. The student received a DAF and will begin fall 2025 as a play therapy GA in the program.

*Point of Contact: Kristi Perryman - [klperry@uark.edu](mailto:klperry@uark.edu)*

## Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)

OLLI operations started the year with a public open house that saw record attendance and the highest number of course registrations and memberships purchased to date—an exciting start that set the tone for a year of growth and momentum.

In 2024–2025, OLLI welcomed 548 dues-paying members—the most significant increase since the 2021 fiscal year—continuing a strong upward trajectory in membership. The institute offered more than 200 enriching programs and activities, including academic classes, lectures, workshops, recreational opportunities, social events, and special interest groups. Over 2,200 total enrollments and RSVPs were recorded, underscoring the community’s growing enthusiasm for lifelong learning.

Volunteers remain the driving force behind OLLI’s success. Nearly 200 individuals gave their time and talent in vital roles—from instructors and facilitators to office support and leadership teams that shape programming and lead outreach efforts. In June, OLLI hosted a Volunteer Recognition Reception to celebrate these individuals, with honors given for outstanding engagement, exceptional service, and ongoing dedication to the institute’s mission.

Director Josh Raney represented OLLI at the 2025 Osher National Conference, where he was invited to present during a breakout session on *Community Collaborations*. Attending alongside OLLI’s incoming Advisory Council Chair, both participated in national conversations and gained valuable insights from peer institutes.

In May, OLLI was honored with the City of Fayetteville’s Historic Preservation Award for History Education—recognition of the institute’s commitment to preserving and teaching local heritage through high-quality educational programming.

OLLI continues to deepen its collaborative efforts on campus and across the community. Partnerships with local senior living communities like Butterfield Trail Village and Ciel Senior Living have brought OLLI programs directly to residents. A continued collaboration with the College of Education and Health Professions resulted in an OLLI-led hike at Devil’s Den State Park, providing a meaningful outdoor experience for faculty and staff while strengthening ties between the institute and the college.

This year’s accomplishments reflect the energy, innovation, and commitment that define OLLI’s mission—and set the stage for continued impact and engagement in the years ahead.

*Point of Contact: Josh Raney - [olli@uark.edu](mailto:olli@uark.edu)*

## Partners for Inclusive Communities (Partners)

Partners implemented fifteen (15) grants and contracts during the past fiscal year totaling \$14,343,671. Activities included preservice training of 162 people across 13 health and allied health disciplines; 95 continuing education offerings for 3996 individuals; 56 technical assistance events totaling 1197 hours and benefiting 10,933 individuals; model services to 238 children in the autism waiver; multidisciplinary diagnostic evaluations for 150 children and youth suspected of having prenatal exposure to drugs/alcohol or autism spectrum disorders; and 41 products developed and disseminated to 20,762 people. Conference presentations/posters were accepted at 8 national and 5 state conferences. Publications included 2 book chapters, 12 peer-reviewed articles, and 2 reports/monographs. Additionally, 2 web-based data systems were developed/updated to manage programmatic/outcome data for projects. Training and mentoring was provided for 10 primary care practices across the state to enable them to complete diagnostic evaluations on children suspected of having FASD or ASD.

Partners' staff continued working on the DHS Prevention Pilot initiated in February of 2024. The pilot began with a grant from the Arkansas Department of Human Services for \$10,047,987. The pilot has multiple components all designed to stabilize children who are Medicaid recipients at risk of losing placement in their homes (biological, foster, or adoptive) or schools (preschool site or public school) due to challenging behaviors. The pilot operated in four communities in the state (Harrison, Batesville, Warren, and Horatio) partnering with the school districts to offer services that are family-centered, multidisciplinary, and community-based. The project provided intensive wrap-around services in the homes and schools of these children to prevent crises, provide diagnostic services as needed, and model a different way of responding to the behaviors of these children and youth. 50% of the children and youth served in the pilot had repeated placements in psychiatric residential or acute care facilities, the most expensive services on the Medicaid continuum, with no positive outcomes. Preliminary data showed a drop in these residential placements from 50% to 3% for younger children and 6% for teens after initiation of pilot services. Because of the promising nature of this data, DHS approved an additional \$1.8 million to extend the project through March of 2026.

An additional component of the pilot was to build capacity across the state for diagnostic assessments, to enable families to access the testing they needed for their children without traveling to Little Rock or waiting months or years on waiting lists. In addition to the clinic operated in the Partners' office, training and mentoring was provided to 10 additional sites across the state with a primary care physician and speech-language pathologist who are now able to evaluate and diagnose children and youth with neurodevelopmental disorders, including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and Autism Spectrum Disorders. During this period 52 children were evaluated by the Partners' team and an additional 98 were evaluated in the 10 sites trained by the Partners' team.

Partners operates a wide range of projects that impact people with disabilities birth to death. Examples of the focus areas include autism, early childhood education, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, ADA access, violence prevention, digital access, language acquisition, educational interpreting, positive behavioral supports, and self-determination.

*Point of Contact: Karan Burnette - [partners@uark.edu](mailto:partners@uark.edu)*

## Razorback Educator Development Hub

The Razorback Educator Development Hub (R.E.D. Hub) began its first full year as a service unit (formally known as the Office of Teacher Education). The office's goals continue to be serving faculty, students, and school partners in their support of preparing licensed educators. The office achieves those goals through developing and supporting strong education programs across three colleges, providing students with high-quality field placements, and recommending for professional licensure.

The 2024-25 academic year welcomed 228 teacher candidates into 14 different programs. The office was responsible for the annual Teacher Induction Convocation to celebrate the new admits. The R.E.D. Hub held program orientations for the new admits, providing feedback and support.

The R.E.D. Hub collected and organized information designed for continuous improvement. Our faculty received two bi-annual reports of data aligned with accreditation standards. The office hosted a Teacher Education Summit in August and met with leaders throughout the fall to prepare for program changes related to the Arkansas LEARNS Act. This year all teacher education faculty were actively involved in 1) preparing programs for a yearlong internship, 2) hosting a new state review in March, and 3) gathering data for the national accrediting body (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation). In July 2024, we received news that we successfully met all Science of Reading standards. In May 2025, the state gave us feedback on the state review, and we met all standards.

The R.E.D. Hub is supported by the Director of Licensure, the Director of Field Placement, and an administrative assistant. The Director of Licensure position was vacated in October 2024 and Ms. Carmen Martin began her position in January 2025. Each member of the R.E.D. Hub has an important role to play in supporting students, faculty, and stakeholders.

- Ms. Carmen Martin, **Director of Licensure**, recommended 164 out of 215 completers for teaching licenses and approved 186 current in-service teachers completing programs of study for endorsements from May 2023 through May 2024. In addition, our Director of Licensure provided fingerprinting services for 257 candidates. These services are key for students as they apply for teacher education programs and for their teaching license.
- Mr. JL Jennings, **Director of Field Placement**, helped place our students in 445 internship placements across the Northwest Arkansas area this academic year. Mr. Jennings successfully coordinated 613 observation placements practicum placements, demonstrating strong organizational leadership in supporting our teacher candidates' field experiences. In the fall, we conducted our 8th annual Career Readiness Seminar. This is a continuing event that prepares students for their professional careers. Additionally, Mr. Jennings effectively collaborated with the Director of Employer Relations for COEHP to organize the teacher education career fair. The spring event returned to an in-person event format and attracted 54 employers, reflecting strong industry engagement with our program. The R.E.D. Hub met with school partners again in the spring, where Mr. Jennings facilitated productive discussions on key issues, including a review of the teacher residency handbook, mentor teacher compensation, and memorandum of understanding (MOU) updates. These conversations continue to strengthen our partnerships and improve program quality, reflecting an ongoing commitment to providing comprehensive support for teacher preparation and maintaining strong connections with our educational partners.

The R.E.D. Hub continued to meet our academic and partnership initiatives.

- The R.E.D. Hub helped prepare a fall and spring partnership meeting for our school partners. Over 60 partners and faculty met at the Jones Center in Springdale in the fall and the Northwest Arkansas Co-op in the spring. The work of the partnership was to provide feedback on the newest state initiative for yearlong internships. In addition to stakeholder feedback, we continue to respond to our yearly exit interviews with students and faculty. Partner feedback continues to fuel the decisions we are making around supporting mentor teachers and clinical supervisors. This work will continue in the 2025-2026 academic year.
- Our initiative to provide resources for teacher candidates included support for licensure testing and equipment for their teacher programs. Licensure test preparation included virtual meetings for candidates as well as continued promotion of the online testing resource (240 Tutoring). This academic year, 66 teacher candidates were supported through our licensure test preparation online software. To support field placements, the office provided checkouts for 58 Swivl cameras and iPads to candidates so that students could film their lessons for faculty feedback.

This academic year was incredibly successful, and the R.E.D. Hub continues to be a vital service unit for faculty and students across three colleges.

*Point of Contact: Jennifer Beasley - [jgbeasle@uark.edu](mailto:jgbeasle@uark.edu)*

## School Wellness Lab

The School Wellness Lab was founded in 2023 by Drs. Kara Lasater, Educational Leadership, and Erin Popejoy, Counselor Education and Supervision. The mission of the lab is to engage in research and service that improves the well-being of youth, teachers, leaders, and other stakeholders within the school community. Of particular interest to the School Wellness Lab is research and service which addresses harmful substance use among school-aged youth.

This year, the School Wellness Lab provided two Adult Mental Health First Aid certification courses. The first course was provided via Zoom and resulted in 26 members of the campus community earning their MHFA certification. The second training was provided in-person to University of Arkansas occupational therapy (OT) doctoral students enrolled in OCH 51101 Behavioral and Mental Health Conditions. This training was supported through the WE CARE Experiential Learning fund and resulted in the certification of 25 OT students. The training advanced the mission of the School Wellness Lab by ensuring OT graduates entered the workforce prepared to support individuals across Arkansas experiencing both non-crisis and crisis mental health challenges.

The School Wellness Lab also proposed a summer intersession course titled “EDHP 41003: Social Ecology of Current Youth Issues.” This course is designed to address cultural and social issues within the lives of youth. Material is presented through a social ecological perspective, and issues such as substance use, social media, bullying, and trauma are explored through an interdisciplinary lens. The course is designed for students across diverse disciplinary backgrounds to highlight the intersectionality and interdisciplinary nature of work with youth and in schools. This course proposal was approved by the CLRM Department Head and added to the course inventory management system but is waiting on full establishment due to the move to Workday.

Additionally, Dr. Lasater published two journal articles and five book chapters related to wellness-related issues in K-12 schools, and she has an additional two book chapters in-press. She also collaborated with Drs. Page Dobbs and Khoa Luu on a \$500,000 project which aims to investigate the use of smokeless tobacco among Arkansas youth. The project was funded by the Arkansas Attorney General’s Office, and Dr. Lasater serves as a Co-PI on the project. Dr. Popejoy and colleagues published two journal articles related to helpseeking and best practices in treatment for non-suicidal self injury among youth and adults. She is continuing as Co-PI on a federally funded Health Resources and Service Administration grant which supports advanced training for clinicians in behavioral health settings, including school-based services.

*Points of Contact – Kara Lasater (klasater@uark.edu) and Erin Popejoy (erinkern@uark.edu).*

## Speech and Hearing Clinic

**Clinic Services:** During the 2024-2025 academic year, the [University of Arkansas Speech and Hearing Clinic](#) (UASHC) provided speech-language and audiology services to students, staff, faculty, and community members. Pediatric speech therapy services included literacy, language, social communication, and articulation diagnostics and intervention. Adult speech therapy centered on auditory-verbal, voice/upper airway, swallowing, and concussion-based cognitive services. Audiology provided hearing screenings, hearing aid evaluations, and hearing aid fittings to both pediatric and adult clients.

**Community Impact:** Between June 2024 and May 2025, the following patient services were provided by five clinical faculty members of the Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSDI) program:

- Over 110 audiology appointments were held at the UASHC.
- Over 620 hours of speech-language assessment and intervention were held at the UASHC.

Clinical faculty led and supervised pediatric screenings through collaborations with Fayetteville Public Schools, The New School, Helen R. Walton's Children's Enrichment Center, and the Jean Tyson Child Development Center. CSDI undergraduate and graduate students gained hands-on clinical experience administering over 145 speech-language preschool screenings, 40 adult voice screenings, and over 2400 school-aged hearing screenings.

**Clinical Education and Training:** Clinical faculty supervised and contributed over 440 diagnostic and clinical simulation training hours to the graduate program in CSDI.

**Clinic Highlights:** The Schmieding Foundation Sensory Room expanded to include a gross motor sensory space (grand opening in Fall 2025). The Schmieding Foundation Sensory Room operates as a research and training space for students and interdisciplinary professionals working with individuals with sensory integration needs. The state-of-the-art clinical space also serves as an intervention space for clinical services.

For the fourth consecutive year, the clinic was selected as a recipient of the SPEAK OUT! Grant through the Parkinson Voice Foundation. This grant offers advanced training and therapy materials, an equivalent of over \$16,500, to CSDI graduate students working with patients with voice disorders caused by Parkinson's Disease.

The clinic successfully launched its first Community Voice Screening Program, which welcomed over 40 adult participants. Graduate students enrolled in the CSDI program conducted complimentary community voice screenings and provided vocal wellness education as an experiential learning component of their coursework. The program was led by Speech and Hearing Clinic Director, Jessica Danley.

Clinical instructor, Stephanie Hicks, was awarded the College of Education and Health Professions (COEHP) Outstanding Teaching Award for her efforts to enhance student learning using innovative instructional approaches. The clinic also welcomed a new full-time clinical instructor, Cynthia Watson, this year. Watson brings decades of experience and expertise in early childhood development and pediatric language intervention.

**Research Lab and Courtesy Space:** The clinic continues to provide lab space for CSDI research faculty; Dr. Andrew Bowers (EEG Lab), Dr. Christine Holyfield (AAC Lab), Dr. Lisa Bowers (Language and Literacy Lab) in the CSDI Program. Finally, the clinic also provides courtesy operating spaces for the Center for Autism Access and Office of Service Learning.

*Point of Contact: Jessica Danley - [spclinic@uark.edu](mailto:spclinic@uark.edu)*

## Appendix E: College Profile

## Dean's Office

Dean - Kate Mamiseishvili

Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs – Matthew Ganio

Associate Dean for Research, Strategy, and Outreach– Michael Hevel

Associate Dean for Administration – Paul Calleja

## Assistant Deans

Advising and Student Success – Elizabeth McKinley

Academic Services – Denise Bignar

Research and Grant Administration – Stacy Stuart

## Department Heads

Curriculum and Instruction – Suzanne Kucharczyk

Education Reform – Harry Patrinos

Eleanor Mann School of Nursing – Marilou Shreve (Interim)

Health, Human Performance and Recreation – Michelle Gray

Communication Disorders and Occupational Therapy – Steve Wheeler

Counseling, Leadership, and Research Methods – Kristin Higgins

## College-Level Directors

Financial Affairs – Brandi Maples

Honors – Rachel Glay

Human Resources – Glennia Hunt

## Program Coordinators

### CIED

Career and Technical Education - Betsy Orr

Curriculum and Instruction - Jason Endacott

Educational Leadership – John Pijanowski

Educational Studies - Rhett Hutchins

Educational Technology - Derrick Mears

Elementary/Childhood Education - Marcia Imbeau/Bonnie King

Secondary Education - Chris Goering

Special Education – Renee Speight

STEM Education - Michael Daugherty

### EDRE

Patrick Wolf

EMSON

BSN pre-licensure – Kelsey Gilmet  
 DNP – Lori Murray  
 MSN - Jan Emory  
 RN/LPN to BSN – Fernanda Zayas

HHPR

Athletic Training - Luzita Vela  
 Exercise Science - Tyrone Washington/Cory Butts  
 Physical Education – Jack Kern  
 Public Health - Bart Hammig  
 Recreation and Sport Management – Craig Schmitt

CLRM

Adult and Lifelong Learning (M.Ed.) - Kenda Grover  
 Adult and Lifelong Learning (EdD) – Kevin Roessger  
 Counselor Education – Erin Popejoy  
 Community College Leadership – Michael Hevel  
 Educational Statistics and Research Methods - Wen-Juo Lo  
 Higher Education (M.Ed.) - LJ Shelton  
 Higher Education (PhD) – Michael Hevel  
 Human Resource and Workforce Development, undergraduate - Mandel Samuels  
 Human Resource and Workforce Development, graduate - James Maddox

CDOT

Occupational Therapy - Kandy Salter  
 Communication Sciences and Disorders - Rachel Glade

## COEHP Committee Memberships

**2024-2025**

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**Unit/Departmental Personnel Committees**

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CIED

Chris Goering	2027
Marcia Imbeau	2028
Bill McComas	2026
Heather Young	2027
Stephen Burgin	2025
Laura Kent	2026
Christine Ralston	2027
Cathy Wissehr	2025
Rhett Hutchins	2026

**HHPR**

Page Dobbs	2025
Bart Hammig	2027
Brendon McDermott	2027
Merry Moiseichik	2025
Mance Buttram	2026
Luzita Vela	2026

**Nursing**

Tom Kippenbrock	2028
Jan Emory	2026
Allison Scott	2025
Anna Jarrett	2025
Kelly Vowell Johnson	2026
Peggy Lee	2026

**CLRM**

Kenda Grover	2026
Kevin Roessger	2025
David Christian	2027
Wen-Juo Lo	2026
Brent Williams	2025

**CDOT**

Bart Hammig	2025
Christine Holyfield	2026
Kimberly Highfill	2027
Lisa Bowers	2026
Andy Bowers	2026

**EDRE**

Bob Maranto	perpetual
Gema Rodriguez (chair)	perpetual
Jonathan Wai	perpetual
Albert Cheng	perpetual
Josh B. McGee	perpetual
Patrick Wolf	perpetual

**College Personnel Committee**
**Tenure Track**

*These individuals must be tenured and hold a minimum rank of Associate Professor.*

CIED	Liz Lorah	2026
EDRE	Bob Maranto	2027
HHPR	Brendon McDermott	2027
NURS	Anna Jarrett	2025
CLRM	Ronna Turner	2025
CDOT	Kimberly Frazier	2026

### Clinical

*These individuals must hold at a minimum rank of Associate Professor.*

CIED	Christine Ralson	2025
HHPR	Liz Parke	2027

### **College Council**

Chair	Wen-Juo Lo	2025
At large	Glenda Hux	2025
At Large	Sean Connors	2025
At large	Liz Lorah	2026
At Large	Craig Schmitt (chair-elect)	2026
CIED	Alissa Blair	2025
EDRE	Gema Zamarro	2025
HHPR	Liz Parke	2025
NURS	Carmel Kruse	2026
CDOT	Jessica Danley	2026
CLRM	Julie Hill	2026
Ex-Officio	Ketevan Mamiseishvili	
Ex-Officio	Matthew Ganio	

### **Faculty Senate (5 Senators)**

*These positions are elected by all eligible faculty in the College (e.g., those in tenure-track positions or full-time clinical lines who have been consecutively appointed for three or more years).*

Vicki Collet	2026
Dennis Beck	2026
Chris Goering	2025
Christine Holyfield	2025
Liz Lorah	2025

### **Staff Council**

Kristen Hartung — chair  
 Gustavo Argueta  
 Monica Atkinson  
 Joe Hamilton  
 Sean Rhomberg  
 Kristen Scott (chair-elect)  
 Sophia Putnamullen  
 Kay Brusca — ex-officio

### **OCDA Faculty Selection Committee**

*These are elected positions by each department for two-year terms.*

EDRE	Albert Cheng (chair)	2025
CIED	Karynecia Conner	2026
NURS	David Hall	2025
HHPR	Mance Buttram	2026
CLRM	Erin Popejoy	2025
CDOT	Andy Bowers	2025

### **College Course and Program Committee (CCPC)**

*The committee membership is elected by academic departments, with representation from both undergraduate and graduate programs, where appropriate.*

Mandel Samuels, Chair	2025
Chris Wernimont, Grad student rep	2025
Rhett Hutchins, CIED undergraduate	2025
Sean Connors, CIED graduate	2026
Bob Maranto, EDRE graduate	2027
Ches Jones, HHPR undergraduate	2026
Amanda Sullivan, HHPR graduate	2027
Diana Dunbar, NURS undergraduate	2026
Hope Ballentine, NURS graduate	2028
Lexi Catterlin, CDOT undergraduate	2026
Jennifer Muriithi, CDOT Graduate	2025
Becca Basset, CLRM undergraduate	2025
Jim Maddox, CLRM graduate	2025
Matt Ganio, Dean's office	ex-officio
Elizabeth McKinley, BCSS	ex-officio
Denise Bignar, BCSS	ex-officio

### **Undergraduate Course and Program Committee (UCPC)**

Matt Ganio	Appointed
Rhett Hutchins	2025

### **Graduate Council**

Ex-Officio	Matt Ganio	appointed
College Representative	Suzanne Kucharczyk	2025
Grad Faculty Representative	Kenda Grover	2026

### **Honors Council**

Director	Rachel Glade	2026
NURS	Emily Richardson	2025
NURS	Sara Sugg	2026
HHPR	Page Dobbs	2025
HHPR	R.J. Elbin	2026
CIED	Renee Speight	2026
CIED	Angela Elsass	2025
CDOT	Kandy Salter	2027
CDOT	Kimberly Highfill	2026
CLRM	David Christian	2027
CLRM	Julie Hill	2026
EDRE	Albert Cheng	2027
EDRE	Sarah McKenzie	2026

### **International Affairs Committee**

*These committee members are nominated by their department heads to two-year terms.*

Ex-Officio	Michael Hevel
HHPR	Bart Hammig
CIED	Mehmet Gultekin
CLRM	David Christian
EDRE	Jonathan Wai
EMSON	Emily Richardson

### **University Teacher Education Board**

*This board is responsible for the general coordination of the initial certification process for teacher education programs at the University of Arkansas. It evaluates all proposals for degree modification, approval of new courses, and approval of course changes for all teacher education programs. It also establishes general policies and procedures necessary to maintain quality in any teacher education program. The Director of the Office of Teacher Education will be ex-officio non-voting member of the board. The board's membership will consist of one elected faculty representative from each department in the University having a teacher education program. Ex-officio non-voting members also include one active public school teacher, one active public school administrator, and two students currently enrolled in teacher education programs.*

Agricultural Education	Chris Estee
Special Education	Renee Speight
Music Education	Daniel Abrahams
Educational Leadership	Christy Smith
Health and Physical Education	Jack Kern
Art Education	Rachel Zollinger

Career and Technical Education	Sheri Deaton
Childhood Education	Bonnie King
Secondary Education	Chris Goering
Birth-Kindergarten	Laura Herold
Associate Superintendent, Springdale, <i>ex officio</i>	Marcia Smith
Principal, McNair Middle School, <i>ex officio</i>	Lisa Davis
Assistant Superintendent, Prairie Grove Public Schools, <i>ex officio</i>	Pete Joenks
FCS Teacher, Springdale Schools	Allyson Bailey
Director of Field Placement, <i>ex officio</i>	JL Jennings
UA Licensure Officer, <i>ex officio</i>	Carmen Martin
Director of Teacher Education, <i>ex officio</i>	Jennifer Beasley
Director of Academic Advising & Student Success, <i>ex officio</i>	Celeste Fishback
Graduate Student Representative, <i>ex officio</i>	Megan Chaffin
Undergraduate Representative, <i>ex officio</i>	Leah Wall

## Degree Programs by Department

The College of Education and Health Professions of the University of Arkansas offers 63 degree and certificate programs, including 18 bachelor's degree programs, 19 master's degree programs, two educational specialist degrees, 11 doctoral degree programs, and 13 certificate programs. We collaborate with the U of A Global Campus to offer 27 of these programs online.

<https://coehp.uark.edu/students/degrees-majors-certificates.php>

### **Communication Disorders and Occupational Therapy (n=5)**

BS in Communication Sciences and Disorders

MS in Communication Sciences and Disorders

OTD, Doctor of Occupational Therapy

Post-Master's Certificate in Advanced School-Based Speech-Language Pathology\*

Post-Bachelor's in Communication Disorders

### **Counseling, Leadership and Research Methods (n=13)**

BSE in Human Resource and Workforce Development\*

MEd in Adult and Lifelong Learning\*

MEd in Community College Leadership\*

MEd in Higher Education

MEd in Human Resource and Workforce Development\*

MS in Counseling

    Clinical Mental Health Counseling Concentration

    Rehabilitation Counseling Concentration

    School Counseling Concentration

EdD in Adult and Lifelong Learning\*

    Adult Education Leadership

    Community College Leadership

EdD in Human Resource and Workforce Development Education\*

PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision

PhD in Educational Statistics and Research Methods

PhD in Higher Education

Post Master's Certificate in Educational Statistics and Research Methods

Minor in Human Resource and Workforce Development Education

### **Curriculum and Instruction (n=34)**

BAT in Social Studies Education

BAT in English Education

BAT in Spanish Education

BAT in French Education

BAT in German Education

BAT in Drama Education

BSE in Career and Technical Education

Business Education Concentration  
Family and Consumer Sciences Education Concentration  
Technology Education Concentration  
BSE in Childhood Education  
EASL Concentration  
Gifted and Talented Concentration  
Reading Concentration  
STEM Concentration  
BSE in Educational Studies  
Mixed Educational Environments Concentration  
Para-Professional Transition Concentration  
BSE in Elementary Education  
BSE in Special Education  
MAT in Elementary Education  
MAT in Teacher Education  
Multiple Level Education Concentration  
Secondary Education Concentration  
MEd in Curriculum and Instruction  
MEd in Educational Leadership\*  
MEd in Educational Technology\*  
MEd in Special Education\*  
MEd in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages\*  
EdS in Educational Leadership\*  
EdS in Curriculum and Instruction\*  
Advanced School-Based Speech-Language Pathology Concentration  
Education Examiner Concentration  
Literacy/Dyslexia Concentration  
K-12 Online Teaching Concentration  
Program Administrator Concentration  
EdD in Educational Leadership\*  
PhD in Curriculum and Instruction  
Certificate of Proficiency in STEM Education  
Graduate Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages\*  
Graduate Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis\*  
Graduate Certificate in K-12 Online Teaching\*  
Graduate Certificate Special Education Transition Services\*  
Graduate Certificate in STEM Education for K-6  
Graduate MicroCertificate in Autism Spectrum Disorder\*  
Post Master's Certificate in Building-Level Administration K-12\*  
Post Master's Certificate in District-Level Administration\*  
Minor in Educational Studies  
Minor in STEM Education  
  
Education Reform (n=1)  
PhD, Education Policy

Health, Human Performance, and Recreation (n=11)

BS in Public Health

BS in Exercise Science

BS in Recreation and Sport Management

BSE in Teaching K-12 Physical Education and Health

M.AT. in Athletic Training

MEd in Recreation and Sport Management

MEd in Physical Education\*

MPH in Public Health

Physical Activity Concentration

Public Health Practice Concentration

MS in Exercise Science

PhD in Health, Sport and Exercise Science

Exercise Science Concentration

Health Behavior and Health Promotion Concentration

Kinesiology Pedagogy Concentration

Recreation and Sport Management Concentration

Minor in Outdoor Leadership

Eleanor Mann School of Nursing (n=6)

BSN in Nursing (pre-licensure, RN to BSN\*, and LPN/LPTN to BSN\*)

MSN in Nursing\*

DNP, Doctor of Nursing Practice\*

Family Nurse Practitioner Concentration

DNP/eMBA program

Post Master's Certificate in Family Nurse Practitioner\*

Graduate Certificate in Nursing Education\*

*\*Offered in an on-line format.*

## Student Enrollment Detail

**Table 1.** Number of students in each degree program type by department as of fall 2024:

	CDOT	CIED	CLRM	EDRE	HHPR	NURS	Non-Degree	Grand Total
Certificate	8	32	11			3		54
Bachelor's	357	777	43		2049	1646		4872
Master's	49	116	256		149	19		589
Specialist		14	5					19
Doctoral	71	50	187	14	25	45		392
Non-Degree	1						238	239
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>989</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2223</b>	<b>1713</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>6165</b>

## Faculty Data

**Table 2.** Full-time faculty in each department as reported by institutional research, fall 2024

	Tenured	Tenure-Track	Non-Tenure Track	Total
CIED	20	6	24	50
EDRE	7	0	0	7
EMSON	6	1	31	38
HHPR	13	6	16	35
CLRM	13	8	5	26
CDOT	5	2	10	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>173</b>

**Table 3.** Faculty by Rank as reported by institutional research, fall 2024

	Dist.	Univ.	Full	Assoc.	Assist.	Inst.	Lect.	Total
CIED	2	0	6	20	17	5	18	68
EDRE	1	0	3	3	0	0	0	7
EMSON	0	0	2	7	5	24	10	48
HHPR	0	0	10	7	13	5	7	42
CLRM	0	0	2	12	12	0	10	36
CDOT	0	0	1	5	6	5	4	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>222</b>