

Leading with CARE



Georgia



France



Pine Bluff, AR



Yosemite, CA





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Letter from the DEAN

Dear colleagues, students, and friends,

I love being the dean of our incredible college! Every day, I get to work with the most dedicated and passionate team that cares deeply about our students and our state and takes pride in our mission and the quality of their work. Every day, I am amazed by the resilience, creativity, and enthusiasm of our students. They are eager to learn, and their desire to change the world — one person, one child, and one patient at a time — is contagious. I also get to meet many loyal alumni, donors, and partners who volunteer their time, invest their financial resources, and are motivated to help. What’s not to love?

I hope the stories in this magazine will give you a glimpse of the inspiring work happening in our college to advance impactful research, foster a caring culture, and expand our service to Arkansas. I am so proud of everything we have accomplished together!

With care,
Dean Kate Mamiseishvili



WE CARE

WE CARE stands for Wellness and Education Commitment to Arkansas Excellence, and it guides everything we do in the college. We're committed to fostering a **aring culture**, advancing **impactful research**, and expanding our **service to Arkansas**. Watch our [WE CARE video](#) to hear from students, staff, faculty, and alumni about how these three priorities are changing people's lives every day.



"WE CARE Day" Proclamation

Fayetteville Mayor Lioneld Jordan proclaimed August 19 "[WE CARE Day](#)" in honor of the college's faculty, staff, and students' work to improve people's everyday lives in Arkansas and beyond. He read the proclamation at the fall kickoff meeting, noting that the college's diverse programs make us uniquely qualified to lead with care and advance growth and innovation in education and healthcare. Dean Kate Mamiseishvili invited the college community, alumni, and friends to participate in the WE CARE movement. During the first week of classes, many showed how they care through acts of kindness or service or by supporting the WE CARE mission through monetary gifts.



\$1.28 Million
scholarship awards
(Academic year 2023-24)

1,348 degrees awarded
(Academic year 2023-24)

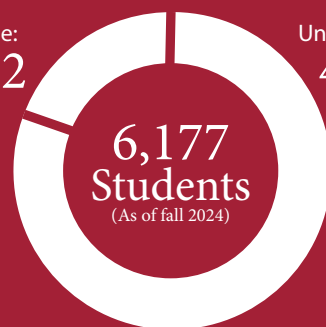
501 honors students

Degrees and Programs

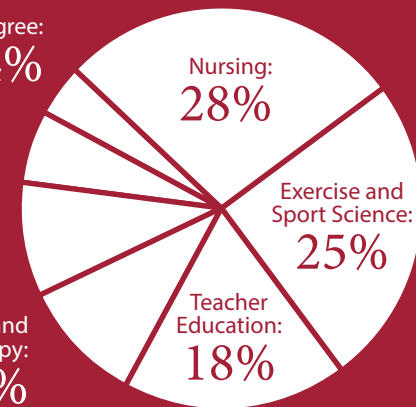
The college offers 64 degree and certificate programs, including 18 bachelor's, 20 master's, two educational specialist, 11 doctoral, and 13 certificate programs. Twenty-eight of these programs are offered online.

Graduate:
1,232

Undergraduate:
4,945



Exploring/Non-degree: **4%**
Leadership, Policy, and Workforce Development: **6%**
Public Health: **9%**
Counseling, Speech and Occupational Therapy: **10%**



Students by
Field of Study

Our Departments



Students from the outdoor leadership minor



Nursing students at the recent pinning ceremony



Jessica Danley, clinical education coordinator, works with a student in the Speech and Hearing Clinic



Curriculum and Instruction faculty with Provost Terry Martin

The Department of Counseling, Leadership, and Research Methods prepares professionals who promote mental health and wellness, provide leadership and training to educational institutions and organizations, and perform evaluation and research.

The Department of Education Reform advances education and economic development in Arkansas and nationwide by focusing on research that directly informs policy.

From prelicensure degree options to graduate degrees, the **Eleanor Mann School of Nursing** prepares students for a wide variety of career pathways in nursing.

The Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation conducts groundbreaking research in aging, muscle health, substance use disorders, and more.

The college's **Department of Curriculum and Instruction** received the coveted Daniel E. Ferritor Award for Departmental Excellence in Teaching in 2024. The department prepares students for many careers in education.

Students in the **Department of Communication Disorders and Occupational Therapy** are taught by expert clinicians and researchers and are empowered to become innovative and caring practitioners and advocates.

Our Leadership



Top, from left: Matthew Ganio, Michelle Gray, Marilou Shreve, Harry Patrinos | Middle, from left: Michael Hevel, Suzanne Kucharczyk, Steven Wheeler | Bottom, from left: Kay Brusca, Paul Calleja, Dean Kate Mamiseishvili, Kristin Higgins

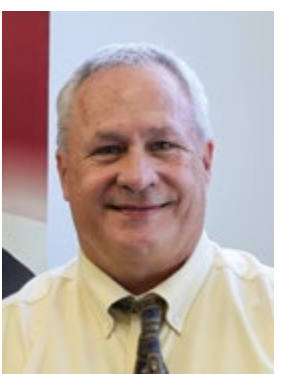
The college's executive leadership team is made up of individuals who are passionate about our students, faculty, and staff and dedicated to improving health and education across Arkansas and beyond. The team has become even stronger with the addition of two new nationally renowned leaders.

Dr. Harry Patrinos joined the Department of Education Reform as head and 21st Century Endowed Chair in Education Policy following a successful career at the World Bank, where he most recently held the role of senior advisor for education. He has led global education policy development in countries worldwide and provided strategic vision and direction to governments and policymakers. His research has been cited over 23,000 times, making him the seventh most cited scholar at the University of Arkansas.



Harry Patrinos

Dr. Steven Wheeler, who assumed the role of head of the Department of Communication Disorders and Occupational Therapy, came to us from West Virginia University, where he served as professor and chair of the Division of Occupational Therapy at the School of Medicine and the principal investigator of the statewide West Virginia Traumatic Brain Injury Program. Dr. Wheeler is a nationally recognized occupational therapist with 30 years of experience in brain injury-related teaching, research, and clinical work.



Steven Wheeler



Dean Kate Gets Coached

Dean Kate Mamiseishvili chooses a theme to inspire her leadership approach each new academic year. It frames how she motivates her team and sets the tone for the year. This fall, she decided on coaching wisdom and began meeting with Razorback coaches to hear about their coaching insights and learn about each sport. The theme is especially fitting for our college since we prepare athletic trainers, exercise scientists, coaches, physical educators, and recreation and sports managers. We also enroll a large number of student-athletes in our college.



*Jason Watson,
Volleyball*



*Mike Neighbors,
Women's Basketball*



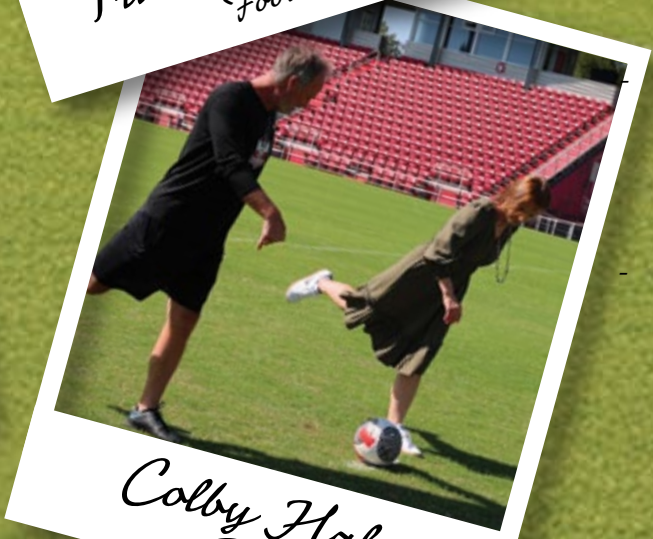
*Jordyn Wieber,
Gymnastics*



*Travis Williams,
Football*



*Jerel Stewart,
Cheerleading*



*Colby Hale,
Soccer*



*Shauna Ester,
Women's Golf*



Impactful Research



Page Dobbs

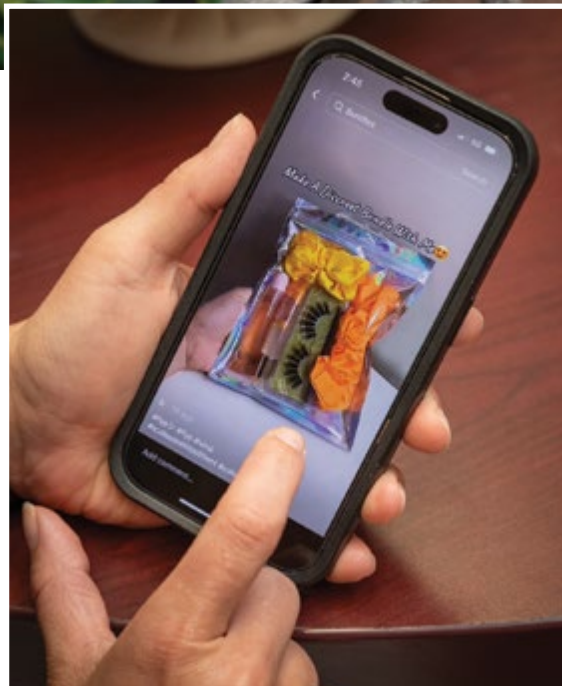
#DiscreetShipping: Selling E-cigarettes on TikTok

Dr. Page Dobbs, co-director of the college's Center for Public Health and Technology, hopes her research will help parents intercept e-cigarettes that are being sent to their homes without their knowledge.

Dr. Dobbs and two other researchers found that some businesses on TikTok are circumventing local, state, and federal laws that restrict the individual sale of tobacco products. They use "discreet shipping" methods intended to evade detection, such as bundling or hiding the tobacco products within another product to conceal them from being viewed when opened.

Specifically, the researchers found that 45% of the TikTok videos highlighted the fact that they did not require identification to verify the purchaser's age.

"Many states have laws that govern procedures necessary to sell e-cigarettes," said Dr. Dobbs, an associate professor of public health in the college's Department of Health, Human Performance and



Recreation. "For example, many U.S. states require a tobacco retail license to sell tobacco products, and in the U.S., e-cigarettes are considered tobacco products. The videos we found display people across the world who are selling e-cigarettes. For those sold in the U.S., this displays illegal sales happening on TikTok."

Dr. Dobbs' findings were published in the journal *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*. Her co-authors on the article — titled "#Discreetshipping: Selling E-Cigarettes on TikTok" — were Ph.D. candidate Eric D. Schisler and undergraduate Honors College student Charlotte McCormick.

The researchers analyzed 367 videos on TikTok's #discreetshipping, #puffbundle and #hiddennic pages, which had a combined 55.8 million views as of 2023. Fifty percent of the videos promoted certain brands in their hashtag, and 45% mentioned a cannabis product such as Cake Bars. Several described that they would bundle (28.6%) or

hide (8.7%) the e-cigarette within other products to conceal it from being viewed when opened. This type of discreet shipping was intended to evade detection by the USPS service or parents/guardians who may intercept e-cigarettes purchased by youth.

“Parents need to be aware that youth may be buying e-cigarettes through TikTok.”

Page Dobbs

Over half (57.5%) of the videos directed users to Instagram or another method (58.3%) using a link or account information to sell the e-cigarette products. Other sites used to complete the sale of the e-cigarettes included Telegram, personal websites, and other money transfer services.

"Parents need to be aware that youth may be buying e-cigarettes through TikTok," Dr. Dobbs said. "Parents can ask to view their children's 'For You' page to see the type of content that is commonly portrayed. Next, if your child receives a bundle of fake nails, eyelashes, lip gloss, or something that seems out of the norm, open the products and inspect them thoroughly. It may be inside a scrunchy that zips or in the foot of a pair of house shoes."

Regarding public policy, she noted, "While platforms list their tobacco marketing and sale policies on their website, all content identified in our study violated these policies. Restricting TikTok will not stop people from illegally selling e-cigarettes to youth. Instead, tobacco control agencies can work collaboratively with platforms to use technological advances that will close hashtags, detect illegal activity, and identify violations."



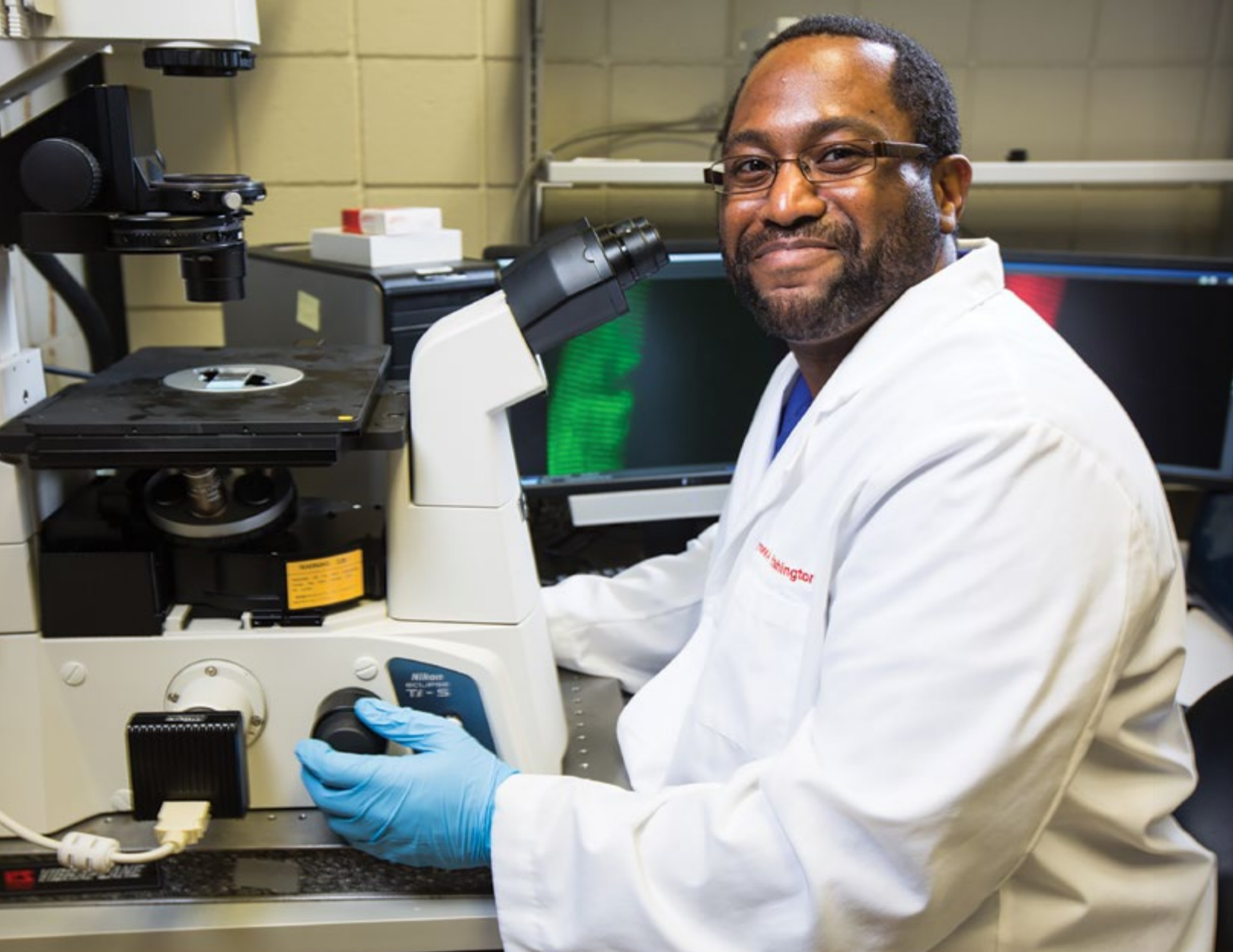
Stanford University Professor Bonnie Halpern-Felsher

WE CARE Speaker Series

The college's WE CARE Speaker Series features lectures by prominent scholars with broad appeal across education and health to promote a culture of research excellence. Speakers have included Stanford University Professor Bonnie Halpern-Felsher, founder and executive director of the Tobacco Prevention Toolkit, who presented "Adolescent E-cigarette Use: What's Going On and How to Prevent and Reduce Use." World-renowned speakers Drs. Barry Franklin and Elizabeth Joy lectured on the topic of "Exercise is Medicine: Translating Science into Action." Exercise is Medicine is a major global health initiative managed by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM). Both speakers are former presidents and current fellows of the ACSM. Their presentations were followed by a panel conversation with leaders in clinical and physical activity fields.



From left, Barry Franklin, Elizabeth Joy, J. Larry Durstine, Becky Todd and Debbie Deere



Tyrone Washington

NIH Grant Advancing Traumatic Muscle Damage Research

Volumetric muscle loss (VML) often occurs with significant traumas such as battlefield injuries caused by stepping on an improvised explosive device (IED), crush injuries in car accidents, and some resection procedures such as tumor removal.

Professor Tyrone Washington was recently awarded a \$434,793 National Institutes of Health R15 grant to explore how to help enhance recovery following devastating events like these. Co-investigators include exercise science faculty colleagues Drs. Nicholas Greene and Kevin Murach and the head of the U of A biomedical engineering department, Dr. Jeff Wolchok. Students will also contribute substantially to the project, giving them unique, hands-on training in high-end biomedical research.

“Receiving funding from the NIH is a thrilling milestone, as it fuels my long-held passion for understanding skeletal muscle regeneration — a field I’ve been dedicated to exploring since 2001,” Dr. Washington said.

He’s grateful to have met Dr. Wolchok at a chancellor’s dinner for new faculty in 2011. Dr. Wolchok introduced Washington to volumetric muscle loss, a more traumatic type of muscle damage in which full regeneration does not occur.

“This opportunity will allow me to delve deeper into the science I’ve always believed holds transformative potential for regenerative medicine,” Dr. Washington added.

Current volumetric muscle loss treatments have a ceiling of about 80 percent force recovery. This leads to a long-term inability to carry out otherwise normal daily activities. Drs. Washington and Wolchok have been researching new ways to extend beyond this current ceiling in recovery by combining surgical repair and physical exercise approaches.

The NIH grant will leverage these combined approaches to improve current treatment paradigms and enhance recovery and

long-term physical function following volumetric muscle loss injuries.

Dr. Washington developed a keen interest in muscle regeneration as a graduate student in Dr. James Carson’s laboratory. Dr. Carson is currently the director of the Huffines Institute for Sports Medicine and Human Performance and a professor at Texas A&M. He was trained by some of the most preeminent scientists in the field of muscle biology. Dr. Washington was deeply immersed in Dr. Carson’s study of muscle plasticity, which is defined as the ability of a given muscle to alter its structural and functional properties in accordance with the environmental conditions imposed on it.

“Through this training, I developed a passion for all things muscle but more specifically, skeletal muscle regeneration,” Dr. Washington said. “My dissertation actually examined the role of inflammatory cytokine interleukin-6 (IL-6) during skeletal muscle hypertrophy and skeletal muscle regeneration. So, this has been an interest of mine for some time.”

Dr. Carson said hearing the news of Washington’s NIH funding is gratifying. “One of the true joys of being a professor is following your former students’ successes over the years,” he said. “Tyrone was one of the first students to work with me in my laboratory, which I had just started as an assistant professor at the University of South Carolina. I am not sure why, but I am incredibly grateful he took a chance on an unproven adviser, and we went on to make a great team that took him through his Ph.D. and produced numerous impactful publications.”

Dr. Carson noted that NIH funding is extraordinarily competitive and involves a rigorous review of the proposed project and investigator by a panel of established experts. “Tyrone’s NIH funding is a fitting validation of his research standing and achievements and demonstrates his continued efforts to develop and generate impactful research for the foreseeable future,” he said.

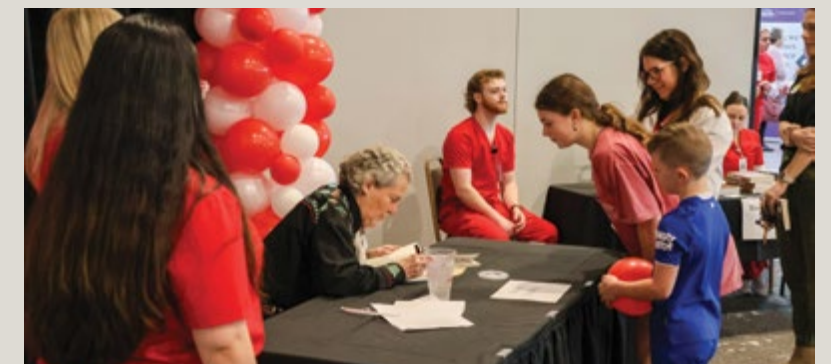
Dr. Nicholas Greene, director of the U of A Exercise Science Research Center, has worked with Washington since 2013. He also lauded Washington’s research and achievements. “As biomedical researchers, funding from the NIH is considered one of the ultimate barometers of professional success,” he said. “Tyrone has worked diligently and tirelessly to develop his research program and to develop the students, undergraduate and graduate, that he has worked with since his arrival to the University of Arkansas faculty.”



Josh McGee and Gema Zamorro

Researching Teacher Shortages

Drs. Gema Zamorro and Josh McGee from the Department of Education Reform will provide research focused on [K-12 teacher recruitment and retention](#) as part of a five-year, multi-state effort from the Institute of Education Sciences. This year, the IES created the National Research and Development Center to examine the impact of policies intended to address one or more teacher shortage areas in general education. Drs. Zamorro and McGee will complete several research projects that examine the impact of compensation reforms, teacher licensure reforms, and more.



Temple Grandin signs copies of her book for guests

Nursing Science Day

Around 400 nursing students, healthcare professionals, and community members attended the second annual Nursing Science Day event, which focused on animal-assisted therapy. The symposium featured prominent author and speaker Temple Grandin, a distinguished professor from Colorado State University who is well known for her advocacy for the humane treatment of livestock and research into animal behavior.

Grant Success

Our faculty and staff have increased their external funding to address complex education and health problems in Arkansas and beyond. Their efforts have resulted in significant success over the past year.

\$30 million in new funding

89 new grants

69 faculty & staff became PIs/Co-PIs on new grants



Clockwise from top left: Alissa Blair, Kevin P. Brady, Vinson Carter, Rachel Glade, Christian Goering, Michelle Gray, and Erin Howie Hickey

Clockwise from top left: Claretha Hughes, Thomas A. Kippenbrock, Kevin Murach, Kristi Perryman, Christine Ralston, Patrick J. Wolf, and Gema Zamarro

National Accolades

Dr. Alissa Blair, an assistant professor of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), was honored by her alma mater, the University of Notre Dame, with the Michael Pressley Award for a Promising Scholar in the Education Field. During commencement weekend for Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education, she was presented with the award for her promising future in research and academia. Dr. Blair researches the education of K-12 multilingual learners.

Dr. Kevin P. Brady, a professor of educational leadership, was elected president of the Education Law Association. The nonprofit member organization offers unbiased information about current legal issues affecting education and the rights of those involved in education. Dr. Brady will lead the organization during the 70th anniversary of its founding in 1954 and the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which ruled that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional.

Dr. Vinson Carter, an associate professor of STEM education, was named Technology and Engineering Education Teacher Educator of the Year by the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA). Dr. Carter's approach to education, which has earned him numerous accolades and recognitions, focuses on integrated instruction and helping students make real-world connections in their daily lives.

Dr. Rachel Glade, program director of the college's

Communication Sciences and Disorders program, was elected vice president of academic affairs of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Board of Directors. Dr. Glade will begin her three-year term in January 2025. She's the first faculty member in the program's history to serve on the board.

Dr. Christian Goering, a professor of English education, was named a 2024 Alumni Fellow by Kansas State University. He currently serves as the coordinator of the Secondary Education program in our Department of Curriculum and Instruction and the director of the Northwest Arkansas Writing Project and the Center for Children and Youth. He has been awarded numerous accolades for excellence in teaching, research, and leadership.

Dr. Michelle Gray, an exercise science professor and head of the college's Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation, was named a fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine. Dr. Gray, who previously served as director of the Exercise Science Research Center, conducts research on increasing the quality of life among older adults. She is a reviewer for 11 journals and an associate editor for the *Journal of Medical Internet Research*.

Dr. Erin Howie Hickey, an associate professor of exercise science, has been selected as a 2024-25 Fulbright U.S. Scholar for Australia. Fulbright fellowships provide opportunities to teach and conduct research abroad while also working to establish long-term relationships between people and foreign nations. During Dr. Howie Hickey's year in Australia, she'll work on a research project at

Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia, titled "States of Play: The Impact of Recess Policies on Rural Children's Health and Learning."

Dr. Claretha Hughes, a professor of human resource development, was elected to the Academy of Human Resource Development Board of Directors. Dr. Hughes will apply her expertise and research to implementing new programs and initiatives designed to assist human resource development students at all levels. Her research on valuing people and technology in the workplace continues to influence the field of human resource development.

Dr. Thomas A. Kippenbrock, a professor in the Eleanor Mann School of Nursing, was inducted as a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing. His research and publication contributions have routinely focused on men's health, men in the nursing profession, and advanced practice nurses in rural areas.

Dr. Kevin Murach, an assistant professor in the Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation, was awarded the 2024 Cell & Molecular Physiology Section New Investigator Award from the American Physiological Society. Each year, the award is given to an outstanding investigator in the early stages of their career who has made significant contributions in cell and molecular physiology research areas.

Dr. Kristi Perryman, director of the college's Office of Play Therapy Research and Training, received a Counselor Educator Advocate Award from the Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling. Former students nominated her, making the honor even more special. The award

recognizes counselor educators who exemplify advocacy and outreach, are leaders for change, and have a history of mentoring.

Dr. Christine Ralston, a teaching associate professor of childhood education, was elected to the Association of Teacher Educators' (ATE) Board of Directors. She will help lead the organization of over 1,400 members during a critical time in education due to challenges related to teacher retention and recruitment.

Dr. Patrick J. Wolf has been ranked in the top 200 most influential education scholars every year since the Edu-Scholars Public Impact Rankings began in 2011. This year, he moved up nearly 30 spots to rank in the top 50. He also ranked No. 8 among his fellow political scientists. The ranking scores education policy professors based on the number and reach of their publications and policy influence. Since he holds the only endowed chair in school choice in the country, Dr. Wolf is highly sought after for his subject matter expertise by print and broadcast media.

Dr. Gema Zamarro, Twenty-First Century Endowed Chair in Teacher Quality, was elected to the Association for Education Finance and Policy Board of Directors. The association brings together researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to tackle important education finance and policy issues. Dr. Zamarro has studied the relationship between teacher quality and student performance, the effect of dual-language immersion programs on student outcomes, and more.

Staying Healthier Longer

Drs. Michelle Gray and Kevin Murach, researchers in our Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation, study [how aging affects the body](#) — both physically and cognitively. Dr. Gray has designed studies to explore high-velocity resistance training and its impact on muscular power. Improving the musculature around joints and bones also helps prevent falls — and the breaks that often result — which can often be detrimental to older adults. Dr. Murach studies human bioenergetics, researching muscle mass regulation and how to improve muscle performance. He is testing new concepts and therapies for maintaining physical function and strength as people age.



Kevin Murach and Michelle Gray

Teaming Up to ELEVATE

A \$6 million [U.S. Department of Education training grant](#) will allow faculty at five universities 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. Faculty from our Department of Curriculum and Instruction are partnering with the University of Oklahoma, the University of Connecticut, the University of Kansas, Ohio State University, and Sam Houston State University. By integrating more universities in high-quality and rigorous doctoral student preparation, ELEVATE prepares future faculty and leaders in special education to champion change for youth with disabilities as they transition to postsecondary education, engagement in the workforce, and participation in the community.



From left, Department of Curriculum and Instruction faculty Melissa Savage, Suzanne Kucharczyk, Sheida Raley, and James Sinclair

Enhancing Arkansas Education

The Office for Education Policy (OEP) routinely provides assistance and consultation services to state policymakers, school district leaders, and classroom teachers. By helping

inform education leaders in Arkansas, OEP advances policy decisions, accountability systems, and educational interventions. The research unit, in the college's Department of Education Reform, received \$1.17 million in new funding from the Walton Family Foundation this year. The funding supports [Arkansas-focused education research](#) and data-informed decision-making throughout the state. The grant allows OEP to continue various ongoing projects focused on education policy and practice



Partners staff with Dean Kate Mamiseishvili

Strengthening Partnerships

Partners for Inclusive Communities, an outreach unit in the college, was awarded [two grants](#) in 2024 to further its mission of facilitating the inclusion of people with disabilities in community life. The Arkansas Department of Human Services awarded Partners \$10 million to expand home and community-based services for children and families, including those who experience neurodevelopmental disabilities, behavioral health conditions, or both. The Blue and You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas awarded Partners more than \$170,000 to bolster the program's work related to fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.



Partners Executive Director Karan Burnette (left) and Associate Director Elizabeth Cleveland

over the next three years. Also in 2024, OEP received funding from the Walton Family Foundation to enhance and continue its [early childhood education work](#). More than \$400,000 in grant funding, dispersed across three years, expands OEP's ongoing data collection and research efforts in four main areas of early childhood education in Arkansas: finance, labor force, quality and elementary alignment/outcomes, and evaluation programs and policies.

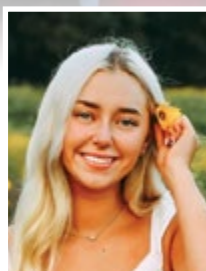


OEP Executive Director Sarah McKenzie

Caring Culture



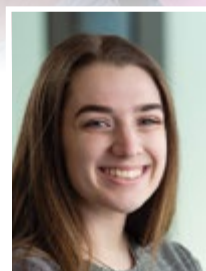
Brooklyn Beard



Natalis Carter



Daion Daniels



Abby Glose



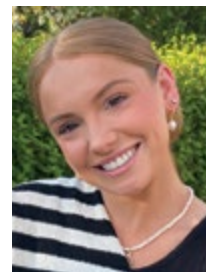
Olivia Mac Donald



Kaylis Mahar



Kyra Merritt



Josie Stadler



Caroline Stewart



Anjali Thakkar



Lauren Waddell



Madi Wells

Highlighters: Students Shining a Light on the Caring College

A dozen students from the college's various programs who are passionate about their field of study are part of a [new "Highlighters" team](#). Highlighters shine a light on our caring college, partnering with the communications team to create social media campaigns about day-to-day life in their major, help with marketing projects, and brainstorm ideas for connecting with fellow students. These creative and enthusiastic students are helping influence the future of the college as they share authentic glimpses into their unique lives on campus.



Dean's Executive Advisory Board

Our Dean's Executive Advisory Board — made up of alumni, community partners, and other stakeholders from education and health fields — links the community and the college. Board members offer insights about the needs of people across the state, region, and nation. The [March board meeting](#) focused on the ways health and education are interconnected and how to better integrate the two. A highlight of the event included a panel of students from various degree programs sharing poignant stories illustrating the impact of their hands-on learning experiences on them and the people they serve. [October's board meeting](#) centered on engaging in meaningful partnerships and fostering caring connections. Members learned about some of the college's most impactful partnerships and participated in immersive experiences such as arts integration, adventure therapy, dyslexia simulation, and gait analysis.



Scenes from 2024 Dean's Executive Advisory Board meetings





Honoring Outstanding Students

The college recognized the academic achievements of more than 100 students at its annual [student awards ceremony](#), the largest celebration of student achievement aside from commencement. Dean Kate Mamiseishvili applauded their decision to choose careers in education and healthcare, noting, “We teach, heal, train, inspire, and help people reach their full potential. What we do builds the foundation for prosperity, success, and well-being.”



National Wear Red Day

The college joined the American Heart Association on February 2 for National Wear Red Day, raising awareness about heart disease among women and sharing tips for boosting heart health. Faculty, students, and staff across the college’s various programs and departments dressed in their favorite red attire and attended a panel hosted by the Eleanor Mann School of Nursing.



A Celestial Show

On Monday, April 8, a partial eclipse was visible on the U of A campus. College faculty and staff took a mindfulness walk together before the celestial show, making their way to the south side of the Epley Center for Health Professions overlooking Razorback Stadium. Popcorn and eclipse viewing glasses were provided.



WE CARE on the Go

In April, the college initiated [WE CARE On the Go](#), a movement to promote physical health and well-being in the workplace. Group activities included yoga, mindfulness sessions, walking, cycling, and hiking. Teams were also encouraged to incorporate outdoor walking meetings and infuse healthy practices into their workday.



Fresh Fall Adventures

When the academic year ends and begins, the dean hosts family events to thank faculty and staff for their hard work and welcome them back for the fall. The fall kickoff event at the Fayetteville Public Library featured good food, great company, and live music courtesy of the guests with the debut of WE CARE-aoke (WE CARE + karaoke).





2024 Alumni Award winners (front row, from left) Karan B. Burnette, Michael M. Kocet, Keith A. Jones, Elise Swanson, Michael Tapee, and Heather D. Hunter; (back row, from left) Naccaman Williams, Judd Semingson, Reed Greenwood, Curtis L. Ivery, Jordan Glenn, and Jennifer Ash

Celebrating Alumni Award Winners

The college celebrated a dozen outstanding alumni who are transforming people's lives through research, teaching, leadership, philanthropy, and public service.

"My heart is filled with gratitude as we celebrate the careers of our outstanding alumni who have opened the doors to brighter futures, more educational opportunities, and better quality of life for many individuals and communities around them," Dean Kate Mamiseishvili said to alumni and friends gathered at the spring awards banquet at the Janelle Y. Hembree Alumni House.

Each award recipient has made a transformative change in education or healthcare in their own unique ways, but their stories all have one thing in common. They embody the values of our caring college, Dean Mamiseishvili highlighted. She also noted that each awardee has abundant patience, tolerance, kindness, empathy, and genuine care.

The evening was filled with inspiring stories and moving tributes, including the moment Keith Jones, who began his career in athletic training at the U of A, dedicated his award to Dean Weber. Weber, a longtime beloved head athletic trainer at the U of A, passed away in February 2024.

Before each alum was invited onstage to receive their award, a video featuring photos and details of their lives and careers was played.

The first awards were presented to outstanding alumni from the college's five departments and the Eleanor Mann School of Nursing.

The departmental alumni award winners were:

- Department of Communication Disorders and Occupational Therapy: Karan B. Burnette, executive director of Partners for Inclusive Communities
- Department of Counseling, Leadership and Research Methods: Michael M. Kocet, assistant vice chancellor for graduate education and professor of counseling at the University of Colorado in Denver

“My heart is filled with gratitude as we celebrate the careers of our outstanding alumni who have opened the doors to brighter futures, more educational opportunities, and better quality of life for many individuals and communities around them.”

Dean Kate Mamiseishvili



Naccaman Williams and Dean Kate Mamiseishvili

- Department of Curriculum and Instruction: Michael Tapee, math teacher at Hellstern Middle School, Springdale Public Schools
 - Department of Education Reform: Elise Swanson, senior research manager at the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University
 - Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation: Keith A. Jones, longtime head athletic trainer for the Houston Rockets
 - Eleanor Mann School of Nursing: Heather D. Hunter, clinical instructor of nursing and online BSN practicum coordinator at the nursing school
- Following the departmental awards, Mamiseishvili announced college-wide winners. Among them was Distinguished Public Service Award winner Dr. Naccaman Williams, director of special projects at the Walton Family Foundation. This is a new award in the college and is given to a graduate who has fostered a caring culture and improved people's lives through civic engagement, community service, and volunteer efforts.
- Dean Mamiseishvili noted that Dr. Williams has committed his professional career to advancing philanthropy and improving communities throughout Arkansas. "Dr. Williams has made it his life's mission to create access to opportunity for everyone, mentor others, and serve the underserved," she said. "Dr. Williams' caring approach to service and delivery of innovative services for public schools is legendary. He is widely respected for his dedication to



From left, Halley Mayo, Jennifer Ash, Michelle Harpe, and Elise Swanson



From left, Mandel Samuels, Provost Terry Martin, Curtis L. Ivery, and Dean Kate Mamiseishvili

excellence and his warmth and goodwill toward everyone."

Dr. Williams' wife, Angela Williams, is also an alumna of the college. Their son, Nathan, recently graduated from the college with a Master of Science in Counseling degree.

The college-wide alumni award winners were:

- Emerging Leader in Education Award: Jennifer Ash, director of the National Center for Rural Education Research Networks at the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University
- Emerging Leader in Health Award: Jordan Glenn, chief science officer at Neurotrack
- Distinguished Career in Education Award: Curtis L. Ivery, chancellor of the Wayne County Community College District
- Distinguished Career in Health Award: Judd Semingson, chief executive officer of Community Clinic
- Distinguished Public Service Award: Naccaman Williams, director of special projects at the Walton Family Foundation

“Dr. Williams' caring approach to service and delivery of innovative services for public schools is legendary. He is widely respected for his dedication to excellence and his warmth and goodwill toward everyone.”

Dean Kate Mamiseishvili

“WE CARE Everywhere” Goes Global

Faculty, staff, students, friends of the college, and alumni shared the WE CARE message across the globe this summer.

They posed with “WE CARE Everywhere” banners on family vacations and many other summer adventures, including at conferences and while studying abroad. The banners were also featured in social media posts from various events on campus and by the college’s outreach units across Arkansas.

Dean Kate Mamiseishvili packed a WE CARE banner when she visited her home country of Georgia, and the banners also made appearances at Disney World’s Magic Kingdom, the Rocky Mountains, Half Dome, and Ithaca Falls, as well as in Germany, France, Ireland, and Sweden.

Dr. Kathy Pillow-Price, director of the college’s outreach program Early Care and Education Projects (ECEP), was the first to receive a banner so she could take it along while presenting at a conference in Canada. Dr. Price and her family snapped photos with their banner before a whale-watching excursion and at the Britannia Mine Museum.

She said the photo sessions sparked questions from onlookers.

“I think the WE CARE Everywhere campaign is helping our college and those of us at ECEP promote the fact that we are directly improving people’s lives,” she said.



Italy



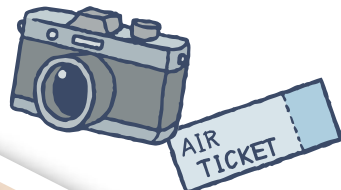
O'Brien, OR



Travel



Little Rock, AR



Altus, AR



Austin, TX



Canada



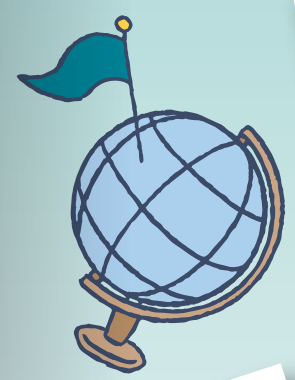
Trip



Fayetteville, AR



Ireland



Ithaca Falls, NY



Ponca, AR
Hawksbill Crags



Orlando, FL



Journey



Washington, DC



Hot Springs, AR



Fayetteville, AR





A-Week Welcome

During A-Week, our Sylvia Hack Boyer Center for Student Services advising team hosted an open house to welcome first-year students to campus. Students met with faculty in various programs, learned about our college, and enjoyed a visit from Boss Hog. Our team of advisors and specialists helps students navigate their college experience, supporting them all the way through graduation.



First-Year Faculty Engagement and Networking Series

The college welcomed 20 new faculty members this fall and is supporting them through First-Year Faculty Engagement and Networking Series programs. The programs are designed to help acclimate new faculty members to the college, the U of A, and the broader community. One of the sessions featured a fun pizza-making class with the leadership team.



Mentors pose with Sue E. at the kickoff event



Student mentees take a turn with the mascot



Alumni Mentoring Program

The college kicked off its new [Alumni Mentoring Program \(AMP\)](#) at an event on campus this fall, allowing students and alumni to connect in person. AMP was created as part of our WE CARE strategic plan to build strong connections between students and alumni and help students navigate their professional journeys. Alumni can choose among three mentorship options depending on their availability and preference. The program provides crucial support and real-world insights to students while simultaneously strengthening alumni bonds with the college.

Leaving a Legacy: A Q&A with Donors

Rebecca (Bke) Thompson Millwee Endowed Scholarship in Nursing

Newly admitted Eleanor Mann School of Nursing students are welcomed into the profession with white coat ceremonies each year. At this year's fall ceremony, senior Rivers Nicholas was presented with the inaugural Rebecca (Bke) Thompson Millwee Endowed Scholarship in Nursing. Bke's husband, Patrick Millwee, and their daughter, Haleigh, presented a special award to Rivers at the white coat ceremony to commemorate her achievement. The scholarship honors the legacy and life of Bke, an alumna who attended nursing school on a scholarship. She was a loving nurse, wife, and mother whose professional career embodied profound and intentional care for patients, a servant-leader mindset, an insatiable curiosity for learning, and boundless compassion for all. The scholarship, which is peer-nominated and peer-recommended, recognizes an outstanding rising senior nursing student "who displays compassion for patients and people at the highest level, curiosity for continued learning, leadership, and service by example and is well-respected by their peers."



Rebecca (Bke) Thompson Millwee

Bke would encourage Rivers to always remember why she originally became a nurse. The best days offer opportunities to make big differences in the lives of others. On the hardest days in a very challenging profession, it's important to stay grounded. She would encourage her to care for herself along the way. She would challenge her to keep learning by being teachable "in the moment", but also to intentionally seek new knowledge in her chosen field. She would encourage her to be open to new opportunities throughout her career. Bke would say to build and invest in professional friendships as her career progresses.



From left, Patrick Millwee, Rivers Nicholas, Dean Kate Mamiseishvili, and Haleigh Millwee Geels

What inspired you to honor Bke's memory through philanthropy?

As a family, we have often experienced the profound impact great nurses can have on a patient's healing and well-being. We wanted to honor Bke's life with a permanent and enduring investment in future generations of nurses and patients.

What advice would you give someone who's interested in becoming involved in philanthropy?

Intentionally investigate how to best support those issues that mean the most to you and, by extension, the institutions that address those issues. Seek guidance from the professionals inside the institution itself, as well as outside counsel. Working together, it is possible to structure a philanthropic solution that best meets the needs of the various stakeholders while providing focused funding for the particular purpose you have identified.

What message do you hope people will take away when they hear about your endowed scholarship?

It is rewarding and a privilege to honor the past while investing in the future. Whether it motivates someone to join in supporting the scholarship or inspires them to pursue their own philanthropic goals, our hope would be more people doing more with their resources to make a difference in our community.



Make a Gift

Mahoney Endowed Scholarship in Teaching

Larry and Sandy Mahoney generously established a \$100,000 endowed scholarship in the college this year to support graduate students pursuing teaching degrees. The scholarship honors the life and career of their daughter, Dr. Caitlin Mahoney Spears, who received a doctoral degree from the college in 2022 and continues to focus her academic work on K-12 teacher education. The Mahoneys established a companion \$100,000 endowed scholarship at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences to honor their son, Dr. Brendan Mahoney, an emergency medicine physician in Kansas City. The Mahoney family, including Caitlin and Brendan, visited the U of A in the fall to catch up with leadership from both campuses. Larry and Sandy have a tradition of philanthropy. They created the Mahoney Family Foundation in 2017 to recognize the tireless efforts of nurses and teachers. Their scholarships support the ongoing education and training of people in those professions. They are committed to improving the quality of life in the communities where their scholarship funding is provided.

You believe that investing in the education of healthcare professionals and teachers assures quality care and education for future generations. Can you share more about that?

Educators and medical professionals must stay up-to-date on the latest pedagogy and best practices. It is our belief that making funds available for advanced education through our scholarship program helps remove financial barriers that may otherwise



Larry and Sandy Mahoney



From left, Scott Varady, Sandy Mahoney, Larry Mahoney, Caitlin Mahoney, Brendan Mahoney, and Dean Kate Mamiseishvili

prevent qualified individuals from growing their knowledge base. By advancing their education, these professionals will be better equipped to contribute to the individuals and communities they serve.

What lasting change do you hope to achieve through your giving?

By providing the opportunity to serve their community from a deeper knowledge base, our hope would be that our award winners will have a lasting effect on the education and medical systems for which they are responsible far into the future. We also hope to instill the value of philanthropy.

What advice would you give someone who's interested in becoming involved in philanthropy?

Individuals who are interested in growing their philanthropy need look no further than their heart. Research, volunteer, get involved with what you find important. While monetary gifts are necessary to organizations, it is important to understand that there are many ways to give back through your time, talents, and/or gifts. Monetary gifts can grow over time. Start where you can.

What message do you hope people will take away when they hear about your scholarships?

Most of us have been in a position during our lives where we needed the help and support of others. We hope to set an example for others in recognizing the importance of investing in people and that those who find themselves in a position to help will begin to establish their own path toward philanthropy. There are many successful individuals in our world. We hope that they will cross the bridge Lloyd Reeb created in his book, *From Success to Significance*. By becoming significant, we aid in the growth of others and enjoy their success as well as our own.

Faculty and Staff Award Winners



Outstanding Faculty Award winners (front row, from left) Hilary Bowling, Kit Kacirek, and Kevin Murach; and (back row, from left) Nicholas Greene, Brent Thomas Williams, Michele Kilmer, and Craig Schmitt. Not pictured: Thomas Kippenbrock and Wen-Juo Lo



2024 Faculty and Staff Award Winners (from left) Kay Brusca, Anaid Espinosa, and Andrea Howard. Not pictured: Kirsten Christian and Brandi Maples



Chancellor Charles Robinson and William F. McComas



Amy May Hopper and Al Gordon



EMPOWER leadership on game day

EMPOWER Students Thriving in Growing Program

EMPOWER, a program for students with intellectual disabilities, kicked off the fall semester with its [largest class yet](#). The four-year non-degree-seeking program, established in the college in 2017, stands for “Educate, Motivate, Prepare, Opportunity, Workplace readiness, Employment, Responsibility.” This year, 25 students, including 11 in their first year of college, are participating. Thirteen have graduated from EMPOWER. More than 150 peer student mentors are also part of the program. EMPOWER incorporates functional academics, independent living, employment, social and leisure skills, and health and wellness skills to help young adults become self-sufficient.



EMPOWER students and peer mentors at the Fayetteville Farmers Market



Regina Hopper and Fred A. Bonner II



Amy May Hopper and Ashlie Hilburn



Chancellor Charles Robinson and John C. Pijanowski

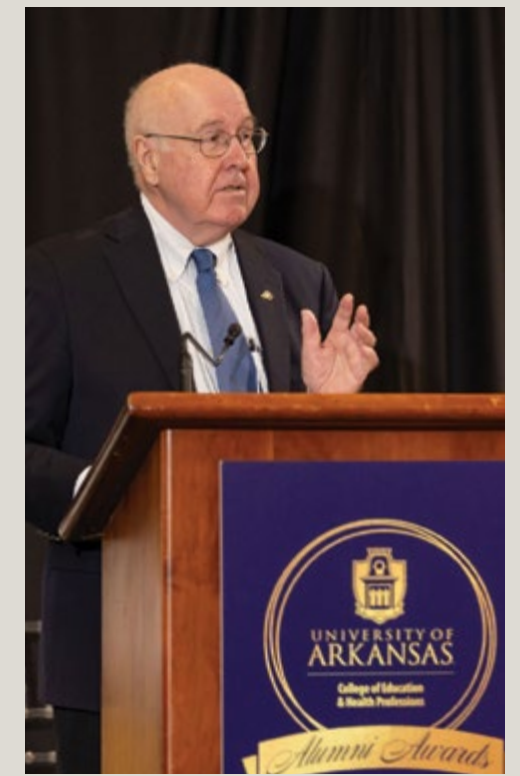
Arkansas Alumni Awardees

Our college shined at this year’s Arkansas Alumni Awards celebration, earning five of the 11 awards bestowed upon distinguished alumni, friends, and faculty from across the university. Dr. Ashlie Hilburn, senior vice president and chief strategy and communications officer at Arkansas Children’s, was honored with the Young Alumni Award. Dr. Fred A. Bonner II, Endowed Chair in Educational Leadership and Counseling at Prairie View A&M University, was recognized with the Citation of Distinguished Alumni Award. Dr. Al Gordon, primary care physician at Medical Associates of NWA and medical director of our Master of Athletic Training program, received the Honorary Alumni Award. Additionally, two of our faculty members, Dr. William F. McComas, distinguished professor and Parks Family Endowed Professor in Science Education, and Dr. John C. Pijanowski, professor of educational leadership, were honored with the Faculty Distinguished Achievement Awards for Research and Service, respectively.

Scholarship Recipients and Benefactors Luncheon

The college hosts a Scholarship Recipients and Benefactors Luncheon every fall to congratulate students on their academic achievements and celebrate the benefactors who generously support our students. Dr. Fran Hagstrom, professor emerita faculty member and founding head of the Department of Communication Disorders and Occupational Therapy, spoke on behalf of the benefactors. Alumna Arilyn Hernandez, a kindergarten teacher at Harp Elementary in Springdale, spoke on behalf of students.

We're grateful that these benefactors were able to attend: Bob and Becky Alexander, Charles and Anne Allen, Freddie Bowles, Carolyn Brooks, Margaret Clark, Annette Digby, John and Eileen Donaldson, Alice Fletcher, Al Gordon, Reed Greenwood, Fred and Nancy Grimes, Scott and Tina Howlett, Steve and Kandy Johnson, Ann Karkoska, Douglas Moore and Marti Scharlau, Kathy Simmons, Tom and Debi Smith, Kathy Swann, Lance Taylor, Betty Wallace, Jim and Kathy Wright, Mark and Kim Zemsch, and Ann Ziegler.



Dean's Circle of Care Award

Dean Emeritus Reed Greenwood was selected for the college's inaugural [2024 Dean's Circle of Care Award](#).

Dean Kate Mamiseishvili created the award to recognize friends and supporters who have exemplified extraordinary care for the college and displayed abundant generosity with their time, guidance, and support.

Dr. Greenwood served as the college's dean from 2001 to 2009 and retired in 2014 after a 35-year career with the U of A. "Dr. Greenwood was selected for his unwavering role as a wise sounding board, confidant, adviser, and friend as I embarked on my deanship journey," Dean Mamiseishvili told the crowd at the alumni award event. "It is impossible to imagine navigating the last 18 months without his kindness, counsel, and care."

Dr. Greenwood interviewed Dean Mamiseishvili for her first job at the U of A. "What I could have never imagined at that time was how much of an impact he would have on my career as I stepped into the biggest role of my life as the dean," she said.



Service to Arkansas

Serving Arkansas Through Summer Camps

Each summer, the college hosts a variety of camps for local children and teens that provide memorable experiences, encourage campers to build new skills, and help them make new friends. These camps cover a wide range of the college's majors and give students opportunities to grow their skill sets and gain hands-on experience in their programs and fields of study.

Summer Camp at the Speech and Hearing Clinic

Throughout the summer, the Department of Communication Disorders and Occupational Therapy's Speech and Hearing Clinic hosted an Olympic-themed summer camp three days a week.

Faculty leader Stephanie Hicks and a team of undergraduate and graduate communication sciences and disorders students used an interactive blend of engaging speech, language, and literacy activities to teach campers all about this year's Olympic Games in Paris.

Campers even had the opportunity to meet and learn from Olympic gold medalists on campus. Razorback gymnastics head coach Jordyn Wieber and assistant coach Kyla Ross met with camp attendees to help them learn what it takes to train for the Olympic Games.

Graduate communication sciences and disorders student Bailey Standridge assisted Dr. Hicks throughout the camp and said it was a great way to gain experience.

"Helping with the Speech and Hearing Clinic camp allowed me to see a variety of clients with varying goals, which allowed me to hone my clinical skill set to work with a population of clients I haven't had much experience with," Standridge said. "This experience allowed me to learn through my clinical sessions while having tons of fun with my clients."



Augmentative and Alternative Communication Camp

The Augmentative and Alternative Communication Lab (AAC) launched a new free camp experience this summer for children who are AAC users or candidates.

Throughout the three-week camp, children were paired with non-AAC user peers for a STEM-themed experience. In the camp's final week, attendees took a field trip to the Physics Department in the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences for interactive experiments with professor Daniel Kennefick.

AAC Lab co-directors, Drs. Elizabeth Lorah and Christine Holyfield, led the camp with a team of graduate and undergraduate students from the college's teacher education, communication sciences and disorders, and occupational therapy programs.

AAC devices allow someone with limited speech to communicate by selecting photos or words on a tablet, which can improve interactions with family, friends, and others.

Hayley Hames enrolled her 8-year-old son in the camp and said in an interview on radio station KUAF's *Ozarks at Large* show that the camp has given her son the summer experience he deserves.

"He needs a little bit of extra support that a lot of camps can't really provide, and so having this for him allows him to have the normal day camp experience just like his sister does," she said.

AAC camp was made possible with the help of the College of Education and Health Professions' WE CARE funding.

Literacy Camp

The College of Education and Health Professions' Clinic for Literacy hosted its annual Literacy Camp on the U of A campus July 8-19.

Dr. Kristi Mascher, a teaching assistant professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, leads the camp each year, along with a team of Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) candidates.



For this year's camp, 18 MAT candidates and 18 children who have completed grades K-5 were paired to work on reading intervention, non-fiction comprehension lessons, and museum-inspired animal research.

Each student developed a final non-fiction text or poster project based on the research they conducted throughout the camp experience.



campers then applied those concepts to their own original stories and projects.

At the end of the camp, students produced an original comic book centered around an item from the museum that they researched and characterized in an original work.

Middle Grades Storytelling Camp

Dr. Mascher and the Clinic for Literacy developed a new summer camp experience for students entering grades 5-8 called Middle Grades Storytelling Camp.

Graduate student Robert Lalonde co-constructed the camp alongside Mascher. The Clinic for Literacy partnered with the U of A Museum, so students could have access to museum collections for research and writing inspiration.

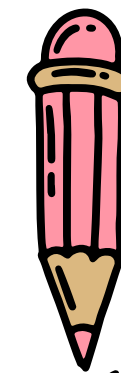
Guided visual storytelling lessons helped campers learn about the creative processes of cartoonists and comic book artists. The



Young Writers Camp

This year, the Young Writers Camp returned to several locations throughout Northwest Arkansas, including Peabody Hall at the U of A.

Northwest Arkansas teachers help teach the camp each year, which has programming for students in second through 11th grades. Campers work on both creative and academic writing and have the opportunity to meet with UAPD K-9 handlers and Razorback student-athletes.



The Northwest Arkansas Writing Project, a professional organization focused on improving writing in area schools, has sponsored camps for young writers for over 20 years.

As one of about 200 National Writing Project sites, it provides professional development for educators and directly reaches young writers through summer camps and other activities.

Service to Arkansas Celebration

The college's Service to Arkansas Celebration highlighted the many ways faculty, staff, and outreach units have consistently and meaningfully impacted the state. Guests included current and emeriti faculty, staff, members of the Dean's Executive Advisory Board, U of A Chancellor Charles Robinson, and Provost Terry Martin. The college's Service to Arkansas priority pledges to care for Arkansas through transformative educational experiences and meaningful partnerships.



Innovating for Healthcare

The college hosted the inaugural [Innovate for Healthcare \(I4H\) Academy](#) this year, which featured Shark Tank-style student presentations focused on improving healthcare access in Arkansas. Top students across the college's various healthcare programs — including nursing, counseling, communication sciences and disorders, occupational therapy, athletic training, exercise science, and public health — collaborated as they learned more about innovation and entrepreneurship. The workshop focused on “Access to Quality Care in Arkansas” through the lens of empathy. The day included a fireside chat with local clinicians about ways innovation has made life better for their patients.



Dean Kate Mamiseishvili, Schmieding Foundation President Lance Taylor, and Fran Hagstrom cut the ceremonial ribbon

Sensory Room Training Space

Thanks to a \$100,000 gift from the Schmieding Foundation, the college's Speech and Hearing Clinic now has a new sensory room that benefits practicing healthcare professionals, students, and members of the community.

The new facility operates as a research and training space for students and current professionals in multiple health-related disciplines (nursing, communication sciences and disorders, and occupational therapy) to learn and grow and as a service for families in Northwest Arkansas who have children and teens with sensory integration needs.

The Schmieding Foundation Sensory Room features state-of-the-art sensory and observation equipment, providing faculty and students with an ideal space for assessment, intervention, and research participation. Bubble tubes, mirrors, fiber optics, a sensory swing, and more are used during intervention sessions to improve sensory processing.

“This new sensory room offers many opportunities to further the understanding of sensory processing differences and evidence-based therapeutic strategies to our students and families,” said Dr. Michele Kilmer, assistant professor of nursing and founder of the Access for Autism program. “The room was designed to provide services to all age groups and can be modified to accommodate the individual's specific therapeutic needs.”

“We are most excited about providing a hands-on experience for caregivers to learn and practice sensory strategies to incorporate into the client's daily routine, thus augmenting the value of therapy offered by researchers and faculty,” she added.



Occupational Therapy faculty member Amanda Troillett works with a child in the sensory room

Consistent time in sensory rooms can help children improve sensory processing and teach them to self-regulate and focus. Due to a significant lack of training and trained professionals, families can end up on long waitlists for assessment and intervention for their child.

The sensory room represents a unique partnership opportunity between the college's nursing, occupational therapy, and communication sciences and disorders programs. Each year, hundreds of graduate students across the three programs will directly benefit from training in the room.

In addition to the abundance of opportunities for student training and research, faculty members anticipate being able to create training videos for students and professionals who work with children and teens with sensory integration needs. These videos could benefit programs and professionals across Arkansas and beyond.

“We are pleased to partner once again with the University of Arkansas to create the Schmieding Foundation Sensory Room,” said Lance Taylor, president of the Schmieding Foundation. “The sensory room should help students in the College of Education and Health Professions gain additional experience and also help children throughout Northwest Arkansas by providing an expansion in evaluation and therapeutic services.”

A SPARKling Experience

Nursing, speech-language pathology, and occupational therapy students in the college had the unique opportunity this year to work with children who have hearing loss. During [SPARK Day](#), students were supervised by licensed and certified speech-language pathologists, audiologists, occupational therapists, and nurses from the Northwest Arkansas area. After completing their clinical screenings, they participated in professional development and breakout sessions. SPARK — an acronym for Student Preparation to care for ARKansas Kids — was partially funded through a WE CARE grant.



Advancing the Nursing Pipeline

The college's Eleanor Mann School of Nursing (EMSON) was awarded \$1.19 million through the [Arkansas Linking Industry to Grow Nurses \(ALIGN\) program](#) as part of an initiative to boost the nursing pipeline in the state. Washington Regional Medical Center generously offered additional grant support to help grow the number of highly skilled nurses in the region. The funds will allow RNs at Washington Regional to earn their Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at EMSON, increasing their wage potential and opportunities for advancement while improving patient outcomes.



In Little Rock to accept the ALIGN Grant, Dean Kate Mamiseishvili (second from right) and Sarah Bemis (right), joined (from left) state officials Cody Waits and Hugh McDonald, Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Chancellor Charles Robinson, and Meredith Green.

Dynamic Dean's Seminar

Each semester, the college offers a 1-credit hour Dean's Seminar that tackles a complex societal challenge at the intersection of education and health. Students from any major are invited to enroll. The spring seminar, "[The Mind-Body Connection](#)," explored how our mental and physical processes are linked in powerful and surprising ways. Many course activities were geared towards arts integration as a form of connection and its implications on different concentrations within the college, like exercise science, education, and physical wellness. Dr. Erin Howie Hickey, associate professor of exercise science, and Hung Pham, director of the Center for Children and Youth, helped guide students through the course as they discovered how engaging the entire body benefits thinking and learning. The fall seminar



Valorie Kondos Field and Ro Di Brezzo teaching the fall seminar

was taught by two instructors with a combined 50 years of experience in coaching and leadership. Valorie Kondos Field and Dr. Ro Di Brezzo taught "[Leadership in Coaching: Lessons from Lincoln to Lasso](#)," which introduced students to philosophies and leadership methods through the writings of highly accomplished leaders and college sports coaches. "Miss Val" shared lessons from her experience as the head coach of the seven-time NCAA champion University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Bruins gymnastics program. She was named National Coach of the Year four times and was inducted into the UCLA Athletic Hall of Fame in 2010. Dr. Di Brezzo, University Professor emerita, served as a faculty member in the college's Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation for 37 years. The two used their wealth of knowledge to inspire students to develop authentic, intentional, and thoughtful leadership styles.



Erin Howie Hickey exercising with students



Educate to Elevate

The college's Department of Education Reform and the associated Office for Education Policy host a yearly conference for diverse stakeholders across the state to share research on K-12 issues and discuss advancing Arkansas education. This year's event, "[Educate to Elevate: A Year of Change and Growth](#)," was held in Little Rock. Speakers focused on topics like early literacy, improving special education, Arkansas school funding, and changes in

school accountability and teacher salaries. The Department of Education Reform is committed to producing and disseminating high-quality research that will inform policymakers, scholars, parents, teachers, administrators, and the public about policies and practices that could improve the performance of schools in Arkansas and nationwide. The Office for Education Policy provides Arkansas educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders with research and advice about current education policy issues to help students reach their full potential.



WE CARE-A-VAN Across Arkansas

WE CARE-A-VAN tours help the college build new partnerships, strengthen relationships, and care for communities across the state. The [spring WE CARE-A-VAN](#) tour sent the college to the southwest corner of Arkansas. Twenty-two faculty, staff, and administrators joined Dean Kate Mamiseishvili for stops in Hope, Texarkana, De Queen, and Mena. The group forged new friendships, snapped fun photos while standing in Arkansas and Texas at Texarkana's popular "photographer's island," visited colleagues at other University of Arkansas



system community colleges, and toured the Sevier County Medical Center. In the [fall, another group toured Southeast Arkansas](#), making caring connections with alumni, friends, and community partners in Pine Bluff, Monticello, Portland, and El Dorado. Highlights included a partnership dinner in Pine Bluff, an alumni meet and greet at a popular coffee shop in Monticello, a Portland Elementary School visit, a reception with stakeholders in El Dorado, and an interprofessional panel at GrantMED Family Medicine & Walk-In Care.



Inaugural Service to Arkansas Award

Early Care and Education Projects (ECEP), which has delivered professional development to early childhood educators in the state for over 30 years, received the college's inaugural Service to Arkansas Award. Dean Mamiseishvili created the award as part of the WE CARE strategic plan to recognize "a faculty or staff member, team, or entire unit that has demonstrated extraordinary care for Arkansas and Arkansans through their research, outreach, and/or educational activities." The team educates, connects, and equips early childhood professionals, which ultimately helps children across the state thrive emotionally, physically, and academically. Also this year, the program was awarded a \$6 million grant to expand and enhance its current work and explore new technologies and programs designed to support its vision of improving the quality of care for children in the state.



The Early Care and Education Projects team poses with their Service to Arkansas Award, held by former director Deniece Honeycutt



OLLI Celebrates 17 Years

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute marked its 17th year this fall and celebrated by hosting a record number of classes, special events, and social outings. The institute, known by its acronym OLLI, is based in the college and provides opportunities for adults to share intellectual interests, meet new people, and explore cultural topics with peers. Current and retired university faculty, graduate students, distinguished community members, business leaders, hobbyists, and others teach a wide range of thought-provoking courses guided by member interests. The institute kicked off this fall season with topics related to local history, art appreciation, literature, yoga, hiking, and other activities that allow participants to stay active. Other topics cover current events abroad and at home, such as county government, elections, weather events, and living on Mars.



Hogs Teach InspiRED

The college is committed to nurturing future educators who are prepared to lead their own classrooms and inspire a lifelong love of learning in their students. Through teach.uark.edu, aspiring teachers can discover the field and explore all the college's



program options to find the best fit for them. The teacher education welcome page also connects future teachers to the Razorback Educator Development (RED) Hub, where they can find the right resources and be motivated to join the next generation of educators who will transform lives.

Exercise is Medicine Gold Campus

Exercise is Medicine On Campus at the U of A, which operates within our college, was awarded "Gold Status" by the American College of Sports Medicine, the highest honor awarded to schools creating a culture of wellness on college campuses. Achieving this level takes years of hard work. A campus must have successfully implemented an exercise referral system, which helps members of the campus community assess their physical health and receive feedback to improve it. The U of A program has been educating students, faculty, and staff about the health benefits of physical activity since 2018.



Erin Howie Hickey receiving the Gold Status award



Arts Integration in Arkansas Schools

Arkansas A+ is a school transformation organization in the college that views the arts as fundamental to teaching and learning. Over the summer, the team was [incredibly productive](#), working with 161 teachers and 53 Arkansas school districts through workshops and whole-school summer institutes. Ideas and strategies from these workshops have the potential to impact over 14,800 students across the state by equipping teachers with practical tools to enhance student engagement and achievement. A+ truly shines through "Whole School Transformation," a process that reshapes an entire school through the A+ model over a three-year period. The organization worked with three new "whole schools" this year in Pulaski and Faulkner counties. Arkansas A+ is supported by the generosity of the Windgate Foundation.



Arkansas Teacher Corps' Record Cohort

Arkansas Teacher Corps (ATC) partners with school districts to recruit, train, license, and support teachers in areas with teacher shortages across the state. The program has 44 fellows this year, [the largest cohort](#) in the program since its launch in 2013. The 2024 fellows from across Arkansas met for the first time to participate in the program's annual Summer Institute, a six-week intensive training curriculum. This summer's training theme was

"What You Tend Will Grow," which emphasized the need to tend to one's own needs and pour into each other to help foster student growth. Fellows also receive 40 hours of professional development and 40 hours of individualized classroom coaching each year throughout the three-year fellowship. ATC's approach leads to better classroom teaching and improved student outcomes.



IMPACT's Extensive Footprint

The IMPACT Arkansas Principal Fellows Program footprint now includes [60% of high-poverty school districts](#) across the state. As of this summer, the innovative program has been preparing future leaders for Arkansas' highest-needs schools for a decade. Educators who aspire to become leaders in their schools are chosen for the program each year through a rigorous review process. The 20 new members of the ninth cohort met for the first time in June to participate in an intensive summer symposium, which kicked off the 18-month program that leads to a master's degree in educational leadership from the college. IMPACT has supported 168 aspiring school leaders who have



served 145 high-poverty schools in 97 Arkansas public school districts and eight charter schools. The program's latest cohort includes 20 Arkansas schools that are new to IMPACT.

Transformative Literacy Lessons

Multiple Master of Arts in Teaching students helped boost the reading skills of first-graders at Westwood Elementary in Springdale this year through a high-impact tutoring program. The college's mentor teachers and faculty hosted a celebration at Westwood to recognize the hard work of the teacher candidates and first-grade students. Through this collaboration, our teacher candidates gained new confidence and skills and Westwood students showed growth in their reading skills. The program was so successful that within a year, the college expanded it to 10 schools in three Northwest Arkansas school districts.



STAR Team Partnership

The college's Seamless Transition for Arkansas (STAR) faculty and staff team cohosted a [Pine Bluff Career Council kickoff](#) event in partnership with the Pine Bluff School District. One aspect of STAR focuses on fostering grassroots community support through Career Councils, which are representative community groups that work together to identify goals and action steps to improve the transition to adulthood for youth with disabilities. Over the next four years, another four Career Councils will be supported in Southern Arkansas — the identified region of the STAR project — to build a sustainable infrastructure to continually remove barriers for these young people.



Photo credit: Devon Purifoy

From left, Bianca Eatmon, Virginia Humphrey-Gulley, Carnitris Hale, and Jarvis Hale

Innovation Rally

The Office of Innovation for Education (OIE), a research and outreach unit of our college, routinely brings educators together to pursue improved student-centered learning practices. In June, OIE hosted its annual Education Innovation Rally in Jonesboro, AR with the theme, "Collaborate to Innovate." In breakout groups throughout the three-day rally, participants concentrated on four key areas to help promote innovation: flexible thinking, new ideas, collaborative problem-solving, and lasting connections. OIE continued its TED-Ed Student Talks, a program that brings students together to discover, develop, and present their best ideas. Thirteen Arkansas schools were also recognized as being designated or renewed as 2024 Schools of Innovation.

Photo credit: Nathan Knight



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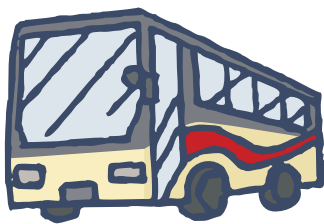
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