

Re:Search

Graduate Studies & Research at Salisbury University

2025 Edition

RESEARCH TAKES
TO THE PONDS
OF PANAMA



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PRESIDENT & PROVOST MESSAGE

At Salisbury University, research is more than just discovery – it is innovation, collaboration and transformation. Every year, our talented faculty and students push the boundaries of knowledge, solving complex challenges and advancing their fields.

This edition of *Re:Search* magazine celebrates that spirit of inquiry, highlighting exceptional work across a number of disciplines. From the bioacoustics research of the Robofrog Lab in Panama to the doctoral students shaping the future of literacy education in Greece, the pages ahead showcase how research at SU is not only global in reach but deeply rooted in the needs of our communities.

SU is proud of our faculty's commitment to mentorship and how they ensure student researchers have the guidance and opportunities to explore their passions, whether in biology, public communication, social justice or environmental science. The stories featured in this issue are a testament to the power of research to bridge cultures, strengthen industries and improve lives.

As we continue to expand our programs and research initiatives, we remain dedicated to fostering a culture of curiosity and discovery at SU. We are grateful to all our faculty, staff, students and research partners who make this work possible, and we invite you to explore the impact of their efforts in the pages ahead.

Thank you for your continued support of research and scholarship at Salisbury University.



Carolyn R. Lepre

Dr. Carolyn Ringer Lepre
President, Salisbury University



Laurie Couch

Dr. Laurie Couch
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On the Cover: The Robofrog Lab Group at their new bioacoustics research lab in Gamboa, Panama. Team members include Marissa Carey, Michael Caldarola, Kimberly Armah, Lauren Knapp, Dr. Logan James (University of Texas), Grant Zemanek, Korbin Reynolds and Dr. Ryan Taylor. Not pictured: Dr. Kim Hunter. Read more about their research on page 8. (Photo Credit: Dr. Kim Hunter)



New Public Communication Master's Program

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics expects employment of public communication professionals to rise 11% from 2020-2030. Salisbury University is stepping up to help prepare the next generation of professionals in the field with its new Master of Arts in Public Communication Program.

Launched in fall 2024, the program will help fill the expected need for 30,000 professionals who will enter the field each year, particularly in the New York-to-Washington, D.C., corridor – the area of the country that employs the

largest number of public communication specialists.

“How an organization communicates is paramount to its success, in prosperous times and in times of crisis,” said Dr. David Burns, Communication Department graduate director. “SU’s program will prepare communicators for all aspects of the profession and allow them to customize their path for the specific field they hope to pursue.”

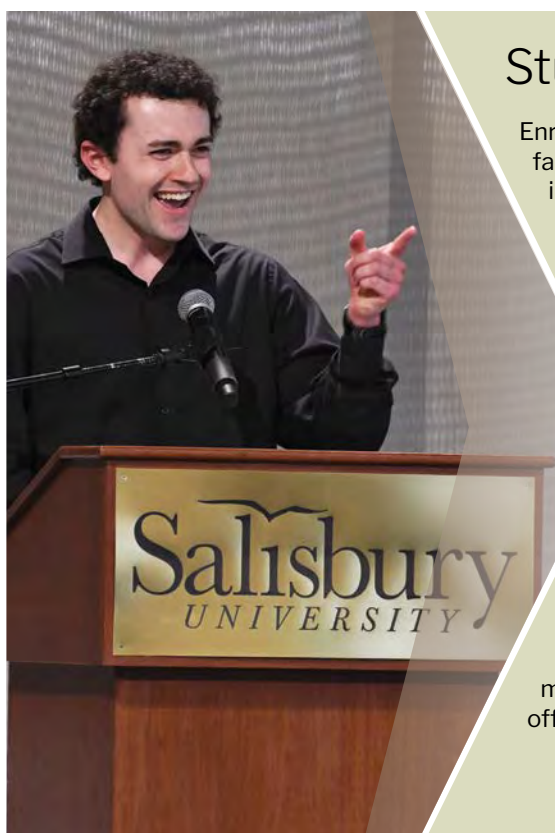
Tracks in SU’s new program include athletic, corporate, health, and public affairs and political communication.

Along with core classes, each track will have specialized courses focused on specific skills.

SU’s graduate program in public communication equips you with the skills to analyze, design and implement innovative and diverse solutions to contemporary social challenges. You will be prepared for work in public communication sectors in one of four disciplinary interest areas:

For more information on the program, contact Burns at dpburns@salisbury.edu or visit salisbury.edu/comm.

Pictured above are Drs. Eun-Jeong Han (far left) and David Burns (far right) with members of the first cohort of the M.A. in Public Communication Program – from left, Katelyn Ray, Jakob Todd and Elle Wood.



Student Spotlight: **Jakob Todd**

Enrolling in SU’s newly established M.A. in Public Communication Program this fall was the next step in my pursuit of a career in the sports marketing and media industry. After graduating from SU with a bachelor’s degree in communication in spring 2023, I accepted a full-time role in SU’s Center for Student Involvement and Leadership while awaiting the official start of the graduate communication program, which was in the final stages of development when I received my first degree as a Sea Gull. I have now transitioned to a graduate assistant in the office and have returned to the classroom to pursue additional knowledge and opportunities in the field I am most passionate about.

Thus far in the master’s program, I have continued to build on the media production skills I gained through my undergraduate coursework included in the multimedia journalism track, from on-site camera operations to conducting research on sports organizations’ social media platforms. I intend to continue exploring the best practices for collegiate and professional sports organizations to increase in-person and digital fan engagement in my future courses, including advancing research I have already started collecting alongside the University’s Sports Information Office and Athletics Department. Through a combination of hands-on experience and first-hand research data collection, I aim to develop strategic templates and methods for improving sports-based social media and digital content for other offices and institutions to replicate.

A Legacy of Leadership

10 Years Later, SU's First Doctoral Graduates Shape the Future of Health Care

By Mikayla Wiseman

When the first cohort of Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.) students graduated from Salisbury University in 2015, they were not just earning a degree – they were marking a pivotal moment in SU history and the future of health care.

As SU's very first doctoral program, the D.N.P. was launched to meet the growing need for advanced clinical leadership in nursing. Today, these eight trailblazers have flourished in diverse and impactful ways, becoming leaders in health care organizations, academic institutions and community health initiatives. Through their research, dedication and leadership, they have made lasting contributions to nursing and health care, proving that the influence of a doctoral education extends far beyond the classroom.

As SU celebrates the 10-year anniversary of its first doctoral graduates, the members of that inaugural cohort reflect on where they are now, how their doctoral research at SU shaped their careers and how they continue to lead the way for the next generation of nursing professionals.



The inaugural cohort of the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program pose at their spring 2015 commencement with then President Janet Dudley-Eshbach and the dedicated faculty and administrators whose support made the program a reality.

KIMBERLY ALLEN: Inspiring Tomorrow's Nurses

Dr. Kimberly Allen is not only a trailblazer for SU's D.N.P. Program, she's also shaping the next generation of nurses – right at home at SU, where she graduated 10 years ago.

Dr. Allen used her capstone project to design a groundbreaking medical triage protocol for the Eastern Shore's Mission of Mercy (MOM). Her work, which included creating online training for volunteers, was published in the *Journal of Community Health Nursing*, and the project has since been adopted across Maryland for other MOM events.

Dr. Allen credits her time in the D.N.P. with honing essential skills that have defined her career. The competencies she gained throughout the program, from evidence-based practice to leadership in health care, have been instrumental in her role today.

Now, as director of the undergraduate nursing program at SU, Dr. Allen uses her leadership experience to inspire students to aim higher. She is not only preparing students for clinical excellence, but she is also shaping a culture of lifelong learning that will carry them through the evolving health care landscape.

"I am uniquely positioned to inspire, guide and encourage undergraduate students to consider graduate education," she said. "This helps students realize their potential and ensures the next generation of nurses is prepared to lead and transform the future of health care."

In addition to her leadership role as the undergraduate program director, she also occasionally teaches in SU's D.N.P. Program, has been chair for several D.N.P. projects, and works closely with the graduate program director – and one of her classmates in the D.N.P. cohort – Dr. Annette Barnes.



KATHRYN FIDDLER: Improving Access To Care

When Dr. Kathryn Fiddler set out to tackle the issue of hospital readmissions for her D.N.P. project, she never imagined how much the research would shape the trajectory of her career – or how it would set the stage for transformative changes in health care access on the Delmarva Peninsula.

It was her D.N.P. research, and her partnership with the leadership at TidalHealth, that planted the seeds for these far-reaching changes. Her project, focused on improving post-discharge access to primary care, became a critical springboard that launched her into leadership roles where she would go on to address broader issues of health care access.

Now, as vice president of population health at TidalHealth, Dr. Fiddler oversees a comprehensive range of initiatives aimed at improving health care for vulnerable populations on the Delmarva Peninsula. Her work has expanded into the community to support improvement in transportation, access to insurance, financial stability, food access and other social determinants of health.

She has also mentored many D.N.P. students from SU as well, continuing a relationship where she can empower others to be part of broader change.

"Working with current D.N.P. students allows me to give back and honor those who have supported me while I was getting my D.N.P.," Dr. Fiddler said. "It is amazing how much the D.N.P. process has helped develop a new perspective, a

more systematic way of thinking to build structure, process and outcomes to make an impact in our community."



Dr. Kathryn Fiddler
with her husband

STACEY MALINOWSKI: Leading The Way By Teaching



After years of working in nursing leadership positions, Dr. Stacey Malinowski has found the place she can best make a difference in nursing: by paying it forward and teaching others.

Since graduating with her D.N.P., Dr. Malinowski has transitioned into an academic role as the nursing simulation coordinator at Chesapeake College. She is also an adjunct professor in

the D.N.P. Program at Wilmington University, where she teaches evidence-based practice courses and serves as a D.N.P. project advisor.

"The skills I learned during my time in the D.N.P. Program gave me the tools to be a champion of evidence-based practice in both the clinical and academic settings," Dr. Malinowski said. "So, you could say my education from SU is being used to pay it forward to the next generation of D.N.P. nurses."

Dr. Malinowski's D.N.P. project focused on reducing delirium in critically ill patients – but for her, the program was the key to unlocking her passion for teaching and helping others become agents of change in health care. Going through a similar doctoral program allowed her to explore her options and find the place where she can make the greatest impact.

"Leadership for me means being able to teach and reach more students," Dr. Malinowski said. "I feel like I'm in a place where I can really make a difference, helping students grow and watching them take their research to the next level."

AMY STAFFORD: Improving Patient Satisfaction and Safety

Dr. Amy Stafford's D.N.P. project was aimed at improving medication communication and patient satisfaction, using the teach-back method on a neuroscience unit at a rural community hospital. The project addressed a significant gap in how staff communicated medication instructions to patients, implementing a standardized approach to best meet patients' learning needs.

"SU's D.N.P. Program helped me develop leadership skills and foster evidence-based solutions," Dr. Stafford said. "The program also helped diversify my skill set and grow as a nurse leader."

Dr. Stafford is now the University of Maryland Shore Region Health Infection Prevention

and Control Coordinator. Her experience in the D.N.P. Program helped her develop leadership skills that have been critical in her new role, where she is responsible for ensuring patient safety and preventing infections across multiple health care facilities.



Dr. Lisa Tayman
(far left) with
her family



LISA TAYMAN: Advocating for Pediatric Injury Prevention

Dr. Lisa Tayman has dedicated her career to pediatric injury prevention.

After directing her D.N.P. research on pediatric injury prevention, Dr. Tayman worked as a clinical educator at a trauma center for five years following graduation. She then worked full time as a nurse practitioner in pediatric primary care and juvenile corrections, and she is now an adjunct associate professor at Wilmington University.

Throughout her career, she has developed pediatric trauma educational programs for the ER, managed pediatric injuries, and taught prevention to parents and community members in a variety of formats.

"I have found within both roles as an educator and a pediatric nurse practitioner, I have been an advocate for injury prevention for this population within the community," Dr. Tayman said.

AARON SEBACH: Pioneering Innovations in Health Care

Like Dr. Malinowski, Dr. Aaron Sebach, now the dean and chief nurse administrator of the College of Health Professions and Natural Sciences at Wilmington University, has had a significant impact on both health care and education.

His D.N.P. project focused on the implementation of a nurse practitioner-led preoperative evaluation program. The pilot program began within a large multispecialty orthopedic practice in 2014 with availability two-three days a week.

"Since then, the program has expanded to five days per week across multiple locations in Maryland and Delaware," Dr. Sebach said. "The program has served approximately 20,000 patients."

In the past decade, Dr. Sebach's work in clinical practice has extended beyond his D.N.P. project. He also maintains an active clinical practice as a mobile integrated health nurse practitioner at TidalHealth and pioneered the EMS nurse practitioner role on the Eastern Shore. This initiative, which pairs nurse practitioners with paramedics to respond to low-acuity 911 calls and treat patients on scene, helps prevent unnecessary emergency department visits and ensures patients receive timely care.

Dr. Sebach said earning his D.N.P. from SU helped him transition full time into academia and implement clinical practice changes in both inpatient and outpatient environments. Since graduating from SU, he has been named a Senior Fellow of Hospital Medicine by the Society of Hospital Medicine, Distinguished Practitioner and Fellow of the National Academies of Practice, and Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners. The time for learning is never through – he even earned a second doctorate, a Ph.D. in nursing.



HEATHER WESTERFIELD: Advancing Nursing Education

Like many of her peers in the D.N.P. Program, Dr. Heather Westerfield's journey from nursing to academia has been a natural evolution, both areas where she can be in a position to support others while shaping the future.

Her experience in the D.N.P. Program helped her develop the leadership skills necessary for her current role as the director of nursing at Chesapeake College. Her D.N.P. project, which focused on implementing bedside shift reports in a local hospital, became a standard practice and continues to be used today.

The results of her research are a testament to how even small changes can have a significant impact. That lesson has stayed with her as she transitioned into academia, where she has the ability to inspire change and make a difference by imparting her knowledge and experience to the next generation of nurses.

"The knowledge and experience I gained through the D.N.P. Program have been valuable in developing the leadership abilities required for my current position," Dr. Westerfield said.

In addition to her leadership at Chesapeake College, Dr. Westerfield has served on two governor-appointed boards – the Maryland State Board of Nursing and Eastern Shore Hospital Center Citizens Advisory Board – contributing her expertise to shaping nursing education policies at the state level. Recently, she was inducted as an Academy of Associate Degree Nursing Fellow, which recognizes individuals who have worked as agents of change to advance health and education through associate degree nursing.



ANNETTE BARNES: Empowering the Next Generation



Dr. Annette Barnes has seen her career come full circle: She is now the director of the same program she graduated from 10 years ago.

When she first returned to SU in 2018, she brought a wealth of experience as an independent family practice owner and occupational health nurse. As she stepped up into the position of D.N.P. graduate program director, she realized how her time in the program transformed her vision for the future.

"Being in that program and working on my research alongside my peers changed the way I think as a health care provider," Dr. Barnes said. "I started to ask myself: How can I make a greater impact? How do I fill in the gaps? How can I help more people?"

That perspective shaped her mindset into one of paying it forward. Now, she takes on the responsibility of guiding future nurse leaders through the very same program that had so profoundly shaped her own career.

"It's an exciting role, because I get to mentor students who are walking the same path I walked 10 years ago," Dr. Barnes said. "I understand what they're going through, and I also see the incredible potential they have."

As the director and practicing Family Nurse Practitioner, Dr. Barnes has seen firsthand how the D.N.P. Program continues to evolve with the ever-changing demands of the health care field. Now, she gets to enjoy being part of that change.

During her tenure, Dr. Barnes has focused on addressing critical issues in health care, such as mental health and preventing burnout in nurses – areas she grew passionate about during the COVID-19 pandemic. She feels a deep sense of fulfillment in being in a position to empower D.N.P. students to not only provide exceptional care but also be part of systemic change.

"Seeing how our students can advance progress in their field is so exciting," Dr. Barnes said. "I love hearing these students' ideas. They're so creative and inspiring. It's so special to be part of that and celebrate their achievements with them."

As Dr. Barnes guides the next generation of health care professionals, she is not only passing on her knowledge but also paying it forward, ensuring that future nurses are empowered to continue pushing the boundaries of innovation for years to come.

Long-Standing Robofrog Research Gives SU Students a Launching Pad for the Future

By Mikayla Wiseman



Photos Credit: Dr. Kimberly Hunter and Dr. Ryan Taylor

“ THE COMPLEX QUESTIONS WE’RE ASKING THESE FROGS TELL US SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT, NOT JUST FOR THE FIELD OF BIOLOGY, BUT BEYOND. ”

Students Marissa Carey and Lauren Knapp are proud members of Team Robofrog.

Since the two women joined the Robofrog Lab of Drs. Kimberly Hunter and Ryan Taylor at Salisbury University, they have dived headfirst into the world of biology, formed powerful bonds with their peers and even traveled to another country to research túngara frogs in the field.

“Animals are always telling you something,” Knapp said. “The complex questions we’re asking these frogs tell us something very important, not just for the field of biology, but beyond.”

Last summer, Drs. Hunter and Taylor, professors of biological science, traveled to Panama with three undergraduate and three graduate students for research funded by the National Science Foundation. There, they took to the ponds, where túngara frogs congregate and the males emit a call to attract mates. On any given night, the ratio may be 10-20 male frogs for every female.

In their Robofrog Lab, Taylor and Hunter digitally synthesize the male frog’s call, then survey a sample of female frogs from the population in Panama to determine their preference. Ultimately, they want to know: What drives female frogs’ mate choice?

For Carey and Knapp, that is one of the coolest things about the research: Just as the female frogs they study are the ones making the decisions that impact evolution, they are women directing their own futures in STEM.

“What really drew me to the research is that we’re looking at how the female frogs make the decisions they do,” Carey said. “The few males that do mate get to put their genes into the next generation, and the females are the ones making that choice.”

It turns out one little frog the size of a human thumb has a lot to say.

Exploring Complicated Questions

Frogs calling, crickets chirping, birds singing and the male peacock’s colorful plumage all result from competition among males to attract a mate. In the Robofrog Lab, the team is asking similar evolutionary questions – they’ve just amped up the game and made the questions more complicated, comparing what they can learn from the túngara frogs to other animal systems and even human beings.

Over the years, their research has grown more sophisticated, as they look at other factors beyond the vocal call that may influence a female frog’s decision, and how she detects signals from the male frogs in such a noisy, high-sensory environment. For example, they have designed a robotic frog with a silicone vocal sac that simulates the way a male frog’s throat pouch inflates when it calls, similar to humans’ lip reading at loud parties, as well as a ripple generator that simulates the movement of frogs in the water.

“As scientists, we ask questions about the world we live in,” Taylor said. “We’re interested in answering questions like: How is the female frog’s ear tuned? How well does she see? How is she able to then take those sensory systems and use that information to make mate choice decisions that impact future generations?”

Two Decades of Research

A collaboration between SU, the University of Texas and Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama, the project has been going on for 40 years. Dr. Taylor developed the robotic frog 20 years ago as a postdoc with his mentor at the University of Texas. Since then, the project has grown into something much bigger, inviting physiologists, geneticists, ecologists and more to the table.

In addition to working with Henson technician Paul Clements, who designed technology for the project including the robotic frog control unit, SU’s lab values collaboration with students of all backgrounds and interests. In their 20 years on the project, Drs. Taylor and Hunter have mentored more than 50 SU students from numerous disciplines. Students with an art background like Guiliana Coco have designed graphics to communicate the science. Students with computer skills have helped with sound files. Students interested in gaming have used SU’s MakerLab facilities to create 3D models of the frogs’ foam nests to take into the field.

“No one person does the same thing in our lab,” Hunter said. “That kind of collaboration is rare, and I think it’s what makes us continue with this research and keep asking important questions.”

Student Lab Leaders

Even more impressive is that SU students on the team are often the leaders of their own projects. Last summer, they investigated more complex questions such as how the túngara frog’s natural predators, including bats and snakes affect mating behavior; how much information, between sight, sound, and seismic cues, is too much for the frogs to process; and where the frogs go after leaving the pond, thanks to elaborate tracking devices that attach to the frogs via a silicone waistband designed by Clements, which is visible under blacklight and small enough to not interfere with their natural behavior. This was a particular challenge, as frogs have sensitive skin, and unlike turtles or insects, trackers cannot be glued directly to the frog.

“The amazing thing is that all of the work and technology is coming from SU,” Taylor said. “Even though we’re working with scientists at the Smithsonian and Research 1 universities, we and our students are the ones leading this work.”

Korbin Reynolds, a graduate student in SU’s Master of Science in Applied Biology Program, came to SU from Florida to study bioacoustics with the Robofrog Lab. Last summer was his second time traveling to Panama for field research.

“It’s important to appreciate the biodiversity of all the life on this planet, and what’s really exciting is there’s a lot of diversity amongst these frogs,” Reynolds said. “It’s really interesting, seeing how something so small can create these intricate performances and help us answer questions about ourselves as humans.”

Although the overarching study deals with evolution and animal behavior, it intersects with genetics and biodiversity, cognitive psychology, and technology. Using frogs as a model to ask how humans process information and make decisions in high-sensory environments could impact research on hearing deficits and hearing aids. It could also have implications for pilots and nuclear plant operators, who may



have to make life-and-death decisions in environments with multiple sensory information streams.

Graduate students have lent their interests to the project in other ways, with Grant Zemanek focusing on predation studies and Mike Caldarola focusing on tracking studies. The broad applications of the research invite people of varied backgrounds to the project, opening the doors for anyone to contribute.

“Anyone can join our lab,” Hunter said. “We currently have an art minor. We have people interested in acoustics and people more interested in the visual world. We have right- and left-brained people. Everyone brings something to the table, and what we’re all here to do is find truth in this frog.”

A Transformative Experience

Hunter and Taylor said one of the most rewarding parts about working with students on such expansive research is seeing how they grow throughout the process.

Traveling to Panama to conduct research was a transformative experience for the students of the Robofrog Lab. Aside from the fieldwork, they had to navigate numerous challenges, such as being in an unfamiliar country where they may not speak the language fluently, learning how to take public transportation to get groceries and how to drive a car with manual transmission. (Most had never heard of a stick shift!)

While these things may seem small, especially when it’s something they don’t have to worry about when they go back to the United States, the experience helped the students grow more confident in themselves and their potential. Each of them left Panama a different person than when they arrived.

“Our students are learning about the world. They’re learning the importance of collaboration and trust, both in others and

themselves. These things aren’t quantifiable,” Hunter said.

“They may not know who they’re going to be at the end of the experience, but they all find they have special gifts and unique perspectives to share with the world.”

Hunter’s and Taylor’s students have gone on to do incredible things. Some have gone to medical school and Ph.D. programs at international institutions; others have landed tech jobs in San Francisco, and still others have gone into the priesthood.

After finishing their master’s degrees at SU, Caldarola and Reynolds are considering applying for Ph.D. programs. Carey is thinking of going into genetic counseling. Knapp wants to become a dentist. The professors said they know that, no matter what their students do when they go on, they’re confident they will go far and have unlimited choices for their future.

“This research has given more opportunities than I ever could have dreamed,” Reynolds said. “Being able to travel to another country, engage with a different culture and participate in research with some of the brightest minds in science at the Smithsonian is such a huge stepping block for me to pursue a Ph.D. in the future.”

Taylor’s and Hunter’s work has been published in top journals such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science. They have earned multiple competitive grants from the National Science Foundation. They have received attention from popular press such as *The New York Times* and BBC, and they have been invited to give talks all over the world, from Australia to Vienna.

And the work isn’t finished.

“Getting an NSF grant is like the Nobel Prize for us,” Hunter said. “And to do it later in my career, it’s such an exciting reminder that we’re not done. It’s a real testament to what we do in our lab, which is create opportunities for connection, success and fulfillment. Our students are going somewhere, and we are honored to be their advocates for the next step.”



Building Bridges: From Djibouti to Salisbury, Making Connections to Empower Others

By Mikayla Wiseman

When Djibouti native Kamil Mohamed and Maryland Secretary of Housing and Community Development Jake Day arrived at the groundbreaking ceremony for Salisbury University's Blackwell Hall last fall, they met not as strangers, but as old friends (pictured bottom right). It was the first time they had seen each other in five years – although this time, their roles were reversed.

The two men's paths first crossed in 2020, when Day was deployed with the 110th to the Horn of Africa and Mohamed served as his translator. Their bond, forged over shared meals and a mission to bridge cultures, left a lasting impact.

"We achieved a lot together, and we learned a lot from each other," Mohamed said. "It wasn't just about translating. It was about connecting people."

Mohamed, a civil liaison fluent in eight languages, has spent much of his life building bridges between the government and the people. He has worked with the United Nations Refugee Agency in the Horn of Africa, started various workforce development programs and founded the Hali English Language Center to create career opportunities for disadvantaged people in Djibouti. His work with Day was an important experience in seeing the power of human connection.

One memorable experience during their time together involved visiting a village, where Day was moved when he noticed the well lacked fresh water. He immediately took action, working with Mohamed on solutions to fix the well.

"It showed me how even the smallest gesture makes a big impact," Mohamed said. "It also forges a relationship between the U.S. and Africa, where we can work together and learn from each other."

It was in that spirit that Mohamed applied to SU's M.A. in Conflict Analysis and Dispute Resolution (CADR) Program. In just a few months, he is already making an impact. His

graduate research, which includes working with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) and English Language Institute, focuses on helping international students and students with disabilities overcome barriers to success, connecting them with resources both on and off campus. The work encourages him to do what he does best: reaching out to people and making connections.

"Working with Vice President of Inclusion, Access and Belonging Zebadiah Hall and the ODI team has been a rewarding experience, especially in making a positive impact at the University," shared Mohamed.

Returning to Djibouti with a master's degree from SU is just one part of his larger goal: to foster cross-cultural relationships and bring educational opportunities to underserved communities in Africa. He has a vision of building bridges between SU and African universities, helping African students see the possibilities for studying in the U.S.

"This is why I came to Salisbury to achieve my goals, and the environment here is helping me to do that," Mohamed said. "There are a lot of opportunities here. Any door you knock on is open to you."

Now that Mohamed is a guest in

the U.S., Day has been happy to return the favor from five years ago, inviting him to dinner with his family and giving Mohamed the chance to lead as well. He told Mohamed he could be president of Djibouti one day – to which Mohamed laughed and thought, "Why not?"

No matter where he ends up, Mohamed will always work to ensure that every person regardless of their background is afforded the opportunity to succeed.

"Connections are power. Bringing people together – that's happiness," Mohamed said. "I'm taking steps toward the future, and we'll see where it takes me."



Literacy Studies Doctoral Students Share Practitioner-Based Research in Greece

By Vanessa Junkin '11

Doctoral students from Salisbury University's Department of Leadership and Literacy Studies had the opportunity to share their research findings on an international stage. They presented at a conference in Greece, and they also got to interact with other scholars in their field of study.

Students and faculty collaborated for a symposium, titled "The Promise of Doctoral Research for Effective Literacy Instruction Across Diverse Contexts," which they presented at the 23rd European Conference on Literacy and 7th Panhellenic Literacy Conference in Crete, Greece, in June 2024.

The conference theme, "Literacy for All: New Challenges, New Perspectives," was an ideal fit for this research, said Dr. Maida Finch, professor of literacy studies and director of the Ed.D. program.

"This was an opportunity for them to be able to engage with literacy scholars from around the world," Finch said. "And then it was also an opportunity for us to promote the Ed.D. program, which has recently gone to a fully online format."

Finch accompanied the students presenting in the symposium to Greece and also presented an oral session that was part of a panel with another student, titled "Practitioner Researchers' Contributions to Literacy Scholarship."

"We put together a symposium with the doctoral student researchers with the goal of really focusing the session on understanding how practitioner-based literacy research can inform literacy education practices," said Dr. Heather Porter, assistant professor in literacy studies. She was not able to travel with the group, but she supported the work ahead of time.

For the symposium, the students each presented a condensed version of their dissertation research. With practitioner-based research, the researcher studies a topic that relates to their career, which means they have the ability to use what they've learned right away, or even during the study.



Pictured at the Panhellenic Literacy Conference in Greece are (from left) Drs. Kirstin Gibson, Rebekah Davis-Slade, Maida Finch, Haley Cristea and Heather Porter.



PRACTITIONER RESEARCH INVOLVING SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

Dr. Rebekah Davis-Slade, who presented as part of the symposium and graduated with her doctorate in May 2024, said presenting at the conference was rewarding and also represented the mission and values of the doctoral program. The program's core values are collaboration, community, diversity, innovation, professionalism and respect.

"I think that it was a great showcase of really what's happening in practitioner research, especially here at Salisbury," she said of the symposium.

Davis-Slade surveyed school librarians from all regions of the United States about their beliefs and use of culturally responsive literacy teaching. Davis-Slade, who works as a school library media specialist, had 159 completed surveys to work with from teachers serving prekindergarten through 12th grade students.

Culturally responsive literacy teaching involves making learning more relevant to students from diverse backgrounds, she said.

She found that the respondents overwhelmingly endorse the belief that culturally responsive school librarians challenge the everyday ways of knowing, promote social justice, validate ethnic groups and diverse learning styles, connect home and school ways of knowing, and maintain high academic expectations.

These principles were the five core tenets of culturally responsive teaching that were key to her study.

She was surprised to learn that 11 of the respondents didn't consider themselves literacy teachers. This study helps show the role of school librarians as educators.

"It broadens the educational community's view of how school librarians engage diverse learners," Davis-Slade said.

One thing Davis-Slade found is that more investigation is needed. For instance, research is needed to gather observable data to gain a greater understanding of the culturally responsive literacy practices occurring within school library spaces.

She said there's more research out there about culturally

responsive practices relating to core subjects. And, with a survey, for example, people could have different definitions of "always" doing something when choosing from different options.

"Oftentimes, school librarians are not invited into the conversation about data," Davis-Slade said. "They're not invited into the conversations about literacy practice. And, so there's ongoing professional development that is needed."

With additional professional development, school librarians could grow their cultural competency and use that to meet students' and families' needs, she said.

For Davis-Slade, learning more about culturally responsive literacy teaching and self-reflection has changed the way she has taught, even before she started this study. SU's Literacy Studies Program also encourages conversations and challenges students' way of thinking, she said.

She found the experience of presenting at the conference to be rewarding and exciting.

"Someone in the audience came and spoke to me afterward, and it really validated my work and the importance of working with students and having the opportunity to grow collections and meet the diverse needs," Davis-Slade said.



RESEARCH USING AN INQUIRY GROUP

Dr. Kirstin Gibson, who also studied culturally responsive literacy instruction, but in a different way, was also part of the symposium.

Gibson, who graduated from the doctoral program in December 2024 and works as an elementary school principal, did her research with an inquiry group consisting of six teachers spanning from second to fifth grades from the same school. They read and discussed texts about culturally responsive teaching practices, collaboratively planned culturally responsive literacy lessons, recorded themselves teaching the lessons, and participated in ongoing reflection, she said.

She said her research questions related to what

the teachers learned about culturally responsive literacy instruction and also what she learned about using inquiry groups as a structure for professional development.

“They learned the importance of building trusting relationships with culturally diverse students,” Gibson said. “They also learned about dedicating time for students to share about their cultural identities, and that helped to build not only the cultural knowledge of the teachers but also the cultural knowledge of their students.”

Gibson also learned the value of collaboration. The inquiry group met over an 11-week period and offered an opportunity for teachers of different grade levels to connect when they don’t always have that chance – something the teachers appreciated. They co-constructed knowledge and worked as a team to grow their knowledge on the topic.

“We were looking at how do we make literacy instruction more valuable for our culturally diverse students; how can we make sure that we’re including all of our students and helping them to be valued and seen in our classrooms,” she said.

Teachers can enact culturally responsive teaching by “teaching to,” which is more about the texts and content being taught – or “teaching through,” which is how they are teaching through the students’ cultural identities, Gibson said. In this case, teachers couldn’t determine which texts they were going to use with the curriculum, so this study focused on “teaching through.”

She said she enjoyed sharing research done on the Eastern Shore internationally and to be surrounded by literacy experts, taking plenty of notes to bring back to Delmarva.

“I’m just extremely grateful for the opportunity,” Gibson said. “It was really a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I am so grateful to Salisbury University for allowing me to be able to share my research.”



MULTIMODAL LITERACIES OF FACULTY

Dr. Haley Cristea, who studied multimodal literacies of faculty in the postsecondary classroom, also presented as part of the symposium. She graduated from the doctoral program in December 2024.

For her research, she observed two postsecondary classes, one focused on interdisciplinary study of pop culture and another that

was a yoga course, to see how the professors used multimodal literacy. Literacy is not all about reading – Cristea explained how it has to do with effectively communicating information through a combination of modes for conveying ideas and meaning. Effective communication relates back to her role as an instructional designer at SU, in which she helps faculty find the best ways to get information across.

There are various things a professor could do to help share their message, such as talking (lecture, facilitating discussion, providing instructions), incorporating visuals, showing a video, using facial expressions or gestures, and more.

While observing the classes, Cristea saw how each instructor used and modified their modal approaches to support student learning throughout the semester. For example, over time in the yoga class, the instructor could prompt students into each pose using the names of the poses, rather than explaining what the poses were.

She also found that students most appreciated orality as a mode of literacy, but it was more in-depth than just being lectured at.

“It’s not necessarily more, it’s how it’s being used,” Cristea said.

Cristea did three interviews with each faculty member – at the beginning, middle and end of the semester – and also interviewed the students in the classes.

“Both faculty members expressed the reflection throughout the semester had them planning changes that they would implement in the next semester,” Cristea said. “They were already thinking about areas where they might be able to grab a student’s attention differently or support that student with the extra need.”

Cristea appreciated the opportunity to attend a talk by an expert in the field of multimodality, Dr. Mary Kalantzis, at the conference in Greece. Kalantzis was a keynote speaker and presented about multimodality before Cristea presented her own research.

“To be able to expand on (Dr. Kalantzis’ assertions) with my research, it was so gratifying,” Cristea said.

She also appreciated the literacy studies faculty’s support of this opportunity.

“It makes you feel respected and that your work is valuable when they say it’s worth going to this conference and talking about it,” Cristea said.

Drs. Porter and Finch are champions of their students, she said.

“It’s very evident that they want you to succeed when they curate these kinds of opportunities for you,” she said.



IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

This was the first time members of the department attended this particular conference, which was held in the English language. Not only was it rewarding for the students, but for the faculty as well.

“It just reminds me of why we pursue these projects and why we support our students,” Finch said of seeing the students at the conference.

Doctoral students normally work full time, so study abroad is likely not an option, but this was a chance to have the students travel to another country and also meet scholars from varied backgrounds, Finch said. The travel was funded by the Seidel School of Education’s Dean’s Office and the Graduate School at Salisbury University.

Research is also important for the wide-ranging and ever-changing field of literacy.

“When we talk about the importance of research in literacy, I think it’s really important to understand that literacy is constantly evolving with different shifts and trends in our larger society,” Porter said.

Literacy studies students and graduates are able to continually improve in their career field as they learn more.

“Particularly in our program, I think the role of research is to help our students understand how to consider research as a tool for understanding more about their practice and (for) broadening and expanding and strengthening their practice,” Finch said.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH SHARED

For the oral session on practitioner researchers’ contributions, Finch worked with **Lauren Hatch Pokhrel**, a current doctoral student in the Literacy Studies Program.

Hatch Pokhrel worked as a research assistant, and she and Finch looked at and coded more than 60 articles for a content analysis to look at trends in what prekindergarten through high-school educators were studying. The research process took more than two years.

She said the Salisbury team and another research team studying a similar topic both found that practitioners were mostly publishing articles about instruction. That other research team also attended the conference in Greece.

The Salisbury team used the same codes to classify articles as the other research team, Hatch Pokhrel said. The articles she and Finch looked at all related to the code of “culture, diversity and equity.”

They looked further into the meaning of these findings. Hatch Pokhrel said she and Finch also found that the researchers were prioritizing struggling students and the needs and identities of students.

She said practitioner research may be undervalued in the education field, but it’s important – teachers are taking time to focus on issues they’re seeing in their classrooms and how to make improvements.

Hatch Pokhrel, who teaches college English, was grateful that Finch brought her into the research process, and they worked well together.

“I really appreciate that and getting that experience and doing it under her mentorship,” Hatch Pokhrel said.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE LITERACY STUDIES PROGRAM

[SALISBURY.EDU/LITERACY](https://salisbury.edu/literacy)



A & Joan Ruelle

DEAN OF LIBRARIES



“We are eager to partner and collaborate, so I hope everyone at SU utilizes these resources and services that we make available.”

What led you to pursue a career in library and information science?

Libraries have been a constant in my life – from the rural bookmobile of my childhood to work-study employment as an undergraduate and assistantships while I did graduate work in gender and women’s studies and cultural studies. I have always been curious about everything, and libraries can be a gateway to any kind of inquiry. Once I experienced that pure, teachable moment of helping someone find information to solve a problem, answer a question or pursue their curiosity, I was hooked.

I also love that libraries are at the intellectual crossroads of the campus where creative collisions across disciplinary boundaries can lead to new and exciting discoveries. In the case of the Guerrieri Academic Commons, the library is also a literal crossroads at the center of campus, and I am eager to be a part of the energy and synergy of the co-location and proximity to other campus partners working together to support success at SU.

How has research informed that pursuit?

As a practitioner, most of my research has been action research (plan, act, observe, reflect) to improve how libraries can best understand and meet the needs of library patrons. If educational high-impact practices (HIPs) are an effective determinant of student engagement and success, how can libraries be partners and contributors to the availability and success of HIPs on their campus? What are potential barriers to patrons making full use of the library resources and services available to them? Is there a gap between what faculty research mentors think their students know about using library resources and what the students actually know and use? How can we cultivate a sense of belonging and ownership in the library for all patrons? These are the kinds of action-research questions that enable faculty librarians to move from anecdotes to focused observation to make data-informed decisions that meet the unique needs of our campus.

Joan Ruelle joins Salisbury University this spring as the new dean of libraries. She comes to SU having served as the dean of the Carol Grotnes Belk Library at Elon University since 2012. Over the past 12 years at Elon, Ruelle worked to integrate the library as a key component in the academic and overall fabric of the campus. She led the Elon community in creating a strategic plan and diversity statement for the Belk Library, working with colleagues to infuse anti-racism into library policies and practices, including hiring, retention and collections. Ruelle earned her M.A. in library and information science from the University of Iowa. She also received a B.A. in English from the University of North Dakota and a master's degree in women's studies from Mankato State University.

What is something you learned in the course of your research that would surprise readers?

People love libraries. I mean, people really love libraries. But for many people, that love of libraries is tied to a particular and formative library experience – like my childhood bookmobile, someone reading to you at story time, a favorite study carrel or the librarian who helped you find the perfect article for your thesis – and their love of libraries is often locked in on that experience. Libraries have always been early adopters of new technologies and the pace of change in how we do our work is dizzying. So, if someone is locked in to love libraries based on a long-ago (or even not-that-long-ago) experience, it can be a challenge for us to help them understand how modern academic libraries really work. This is why it is so imperative that libraries conduct and share research about the current needs and utilization of our resources and services to effectively tell the story of how the library does and can contribute to the success of our patrons and campus.

What role does the library play in the research pursuits of SU's students and faculty and how do you hope to support those efforts?

My hope is that the library is trusted to be the best first stop in the research process. Whether a line of exploration starts with primary resources in the archives, focused inquiry in electronic databases, deep reading in texts, or lateral reading to avoid mis- and dis-information, these are the unique skills and expertise that your colleagues in the library can contribute to facilitate your research. Sometimes we can suggest tips and tricks to make your research more efficient, and sometimes we can introduce you to productive rabbit holes that slow things down but open up whole new lines of inquiry. There is no one-size-fits-all in how research is conducted across the University and community, but in my experience, there is always someone in the library (often someones) who can ask a clarifying question, introduce me to a new resource or connect me with another colleague across campus to improve my research work.

I'm new to SU, so I am still learning about the specifics of this research community. In my experience, everyone I have ever met who chooses a career in academic libraries wants to see our patrons succeed in whatever way that individual patron defines success. So, we build local collections to support local needs, we collaborate with other libraries to facilitate connections and provide access to shared collections, we provide resources to feed curiosity within and beyond academic work, and we curate a variety of spaces where everyone can find a spot to get work done. We are eager to partner and collaborate, so I hope everyone at SU utilizes these resources and services that we make available.



RECENT FACULTY BOOKS

Sexuality Social Justice

Co-Authored By Dr. Becky Anthony, Social Work

This edited open access book helps expand understanding of sexuality and related topics while applying an intersectional, social justice lens. It introduces relevant theories and knowledge areas as well as affective processing components and provides strategies for application in future practices. The goal in editing this free book is to increase access to the type of information that is often left to the margins of academia. Therefore, they have purposefully included stories, narratives and voices that are often excluded in traditional publishing methods. Pressbooks, 2024

The Importance of the Dissertation in Practice (DiP): A Resource Guide for Ed.D. Students, Their Committee Members and Advisors, and Departmental and University Leaders Involved with Ed.D. Programs

Chapter 16 – Process Issues

By Dr. Christina Camillo, Medical Laboratory Science; Dr. Maida Finch, Literacy Studies; Dr. Judith Franzak, Literacy Studies

This is the first book-length study that looks at the elements of high-quality Dissertations in Practice (DiPs). It serves as a resource for Ed.D. students, their committee members, their advisors, and departmental or university leaders involved with Ed.D. programs. The book can be used to improve support from key stakeholders within Ed.D. programs for the implementation of the DiP in the development of practitioner-scholars. The ultimate goal of *The Importance of*

the Dissertation in Practice is to serve as a practical guide for all those involved with the DiP, reflecting the editors' and authors' experiences working with students within a variety of higher education institutions. Myers Education Press, 2024

Transformative Women Leaders Book Series

Book 1: Genderwashing in Leadership: Power, Policies, and Politics

Book 2: Women Embodied Leaders: Peacebuilding, Protest, and Professions

Series Co-Edited by Dr. Chrys Egan

The *Transformative Women Leaders* book series provides a dynamic exploration of women leaders overcoming obstacles, redefining leadership and diversifying power. The series considers emerging areas of women's leadership in global contexts. The first book, *Genderwashing in Leadership: Power, Policies, and Politics*, examines "genderwashing," where organizational rhetoric and practices differ from workers' lived experiences, creating illusions of gender equity while hiding organizational biases. The second book, *Women Embodied Leaders: Peacebuilding, Protest, and Professions*, documents women's struggles to reclaim their bodies from cultural practices by embracing their own embodied leadership. The books feature cutting-edge scholarship from International Leadership Association members around the world. Emerald, 2024



New Directions in Sex Therapy: Innovations and Alternatives (Third Edition)

Chapter: Capable of Risk: Sexual
Risk-Taking and the Dignity
of Marginalized Women

**Co-Authored by Dr. Hannah G. Ginn,
Social Work**

This book chapter challenges the dominant model of sexual risk-taking with particular reference to young women and women labeled with intellectual disability. The authors offer three arguments to shift attention to the socio-economic roots of sexual vulnerability and to center women's sexual rights and dignity in discourses about sexual risk-taking. They argue that marginalized women are put at risk by broader injustices, problematically barred from sexual risk-taking that otherwise fosters meaning and growth, and are entitled to life circumstances that mitigate compelled risk-taking and uphold exercising sexual rights.

Routledge, 2025

Salt Folk

By Dr. Ryan Habermeyer

Set within a speculative geography that is and is not Utah's past, present and future, the panoramic collage of stories and flash fictions in *Salt Folk* explores the eco-fabulist environs of the American West at the intersections of history and myth. The Yeti, recently deported from the Himalayas, finds himself in a Mormon retirement community. A glacier grows in the toxic valley left behind by the evaporated Great Salt Lake. A librarian collects the residue of a decayed rainbow on the outskirts of Salt Lake City. Melancholically absurd, the salty women and foolhardy men in this reimagined American West confront catastrophes large and small, magical and mundane, with grotesque optimism and quixotic tenderness.

Cornerstone Press, 2024

Biological Science (Eighth Edition)

**Co-Authored by Dr. Kim Quillin,
Biological Sciences**

After 25 years in circulation, *Biological Science* continues to reach tens of thousands of undergraduate introductory biology students nationally and internationally every year. Since the beginning, the book (in print form, eText and online MasteringBiology engagement platform) has focused on training students to apply concepts and skills to 'think like a biologist' rather than just memorize facts. The Eighth Edition builds on cultivating student skills, solving societal challenges and welcoming diverse students to the discipline.

Pearson, 2024

Marginal Paris: Representing the Shadows of the City of Light

**Co-Edited By Dr. Aurélie Van de Wiele,
Modern Languages & Intercultural Studies**

This volume invites you to wander through the shadows of the City of Light and discover another, often invisible and silent Paris. Its chapters explore Parisian margins, including various populations, spaces and practices, as represented in French literature and cinema since 1800. Take a peek at the Parisians' criminal activities and nocturnal lives in the 19th century, and witness how industrialization and capitalism between the 1850s and the 1970s reshaped the socioeconomic map of the city by creating or reinforcing spaces of social inequity. Meet marginalized groups that are often ignored or neglected in today's Paris - and French society - including the LGBTQIA+, Black and immigrant communities.

**Brills Academic Publishers
(Series Francopolyphonie), 2024**



FACULTY MINI-GRANT PROGRAM

The SU Faculty Mini-Grant Program provides awards up to \$3,000 to encourage faculty to develop research, scholarly or creative programs that provide the potential for sustained professional development and “seed funds” to secure additional extramural support. The following is an overview of this year’s awardees.

William “Billy” Lee: Enslaved Person American Hero

Dr. Jon Andes, Leadership & Literacy Studies

Andes is bringing to light the untold story of William “Billy” Lee, George Washington’s enslaved manservant, through a groundbreaking children’s book project. Billy served Washington from his early political career through his presidency, playing a crucial yet largely unrecognized role in American history – including saving Washington’s life twice during the Revolutionary War.

Despite Billy’s significant contributions and his presence at pivotal moments in America’s founding, his story remains largely unknown, particularly to young readers. While two adult books mention Billy’s life, no children’s book has yet been published about this American hero who now lies in an unmarked grave at Mount Vernon.

This project supports SU’s commitment to diversity through literature while providing educators with a valuable resource for creating culturally responsive classrooms. By telling Billy’s story, Andes aims to help young readers understand and celebrate the contributions of enslaved people to American history, while deepening the University’s engagement with its community through meaningful historical narratives.

Sustaining a Research Practice Partnership with Salisbury University Ed.D. Program Graduates

Dr. Maida Finch, Leadership & Literacy Studies

Finch is building bridges between academic research and classroom practice through innovative Research Practice Partnerships (RPPs) with Ed.D. program graduates. These partnerships foster long-term collaborations between practitioners and researchers to investigate real-world educational challenges and develop practical solutions.

The project supports two key partnerships: one exploring culturally responsive literacy teaching in school libraries and another examining drama-based pedagogies in high school English language arts classrooms. Working with recent Ed.D. graduates Drs. Rebekah Davis-Slade and Chelsea Taylor, Finch presented their findings at the European Conference on Literacy in Crete and the National Council for Teachers of English conference in Boston. (See related story on page 12.)

This project strengthens ties between SU and local schools while creating opportunities for continued research collaboration with program alumni. Through these sustained partnerships, Finch aims to bridge the gap between academic research and classroom practice, ultimately enhancing literacy learning opportunities for students.

The Man with a Jellyfish for a Face **Dr. Ryan Habermeyer, English**

Habermeyer’s current creative project, *The Man with a Jellyfish for a Face*, is a genre-bending series of fictional memoirs exploring masculinity, mental illness and Medusa mythology. Combining elements of autofiction, biofiction, memoir, fairy tale and speculative scientific treatises, this project delves into themes of identity, transformation, and the intersection of science and art. The narrative fuses fictionalized episodes from the author’s life and German ancestry with a reimagined biographical account of Ernst Haeckel, the 19th-century German naturalist. Haeckel’s fascination with jellyfish, central to the project’s metaphor, is reframed into a cryptozoological conspiracy theory that reflects contemporary doubts about truth and fact.

To deepen his research and enhance the authenticity of the biofictional elements, Habermeyer traveled to Germany to conduct archival research at the Ernst Haeckel House at Friedrich Schiller University and the Phyletic Museum in Jena. These institutions house invaluable collections and exhibits related to Haeckel’s life, research and work, especially materials not available digitally. The research explores personal artifacts – such as Haeckel’s handwriting, eyeglasses and library – and primary materials documenting his interest in jellyfish. The goal is to enrich the historical context of the project and complete the research phase of the manuscript, which is expected to be finalized within four-six months following this trip.

This interdisciplinary and innovative project offers pedagogical benefits, aligning with the new General Education model at SU, which emphasizes experiential and interdisciplinary learning. Habermeyer’s research methodology serves as a model for his students, particularly in teaching how to conduct research for creative writing projects. His research also informs a newly developed creative writing course on the intersections of science and literature, with plans to establish it as a permanent offering in the curriculum.

Multiversal: The Large Ensemble Compositions of Prof. Stephen Philip Harvey

Stephen P. Harvey, Music

Harvey’s project, *Multiversal*, focuses on the composition, rehearsal and recording of original works for his 17-piece large ensemble, the Stephen Philip Harvey Jazz Orchestra (SPHJO). Building on the success of his 2022 debut album, *Smash!*, this project continues his scholarship in jazz composition and large ensemble writing. Harvey, a saxophonist, composer and bandleader, seeks to advance the tradition of American large ensemble music, commonly associated with “big band” jazz, by creating innovative and contemporary works for this format.

The project encompasses multiple phases: composition, preproduction, recording and postproduction. The requested funds support the production and postproduction phases, ensuring the completion of 10 original recordings. Outcomes include digital and physical releases (CDs), video assets, promotional photography, and album artwork. These outputs provide a lasting documentation of Harvey’s creative scholarship and contribute to the evolving discourse on jazz composition.

The album will enhance the University’s visibility, attracting potential students interested in jazz composition, improvisation and music entrepreneurship. With the potential for international recognition, *Multiversal* showcases SU’s commitment to supporting faculty innovation and promoting modern contributions to the arts

Korean Immigrants’ Efficacy, Outcome and Emotional Adjustment

Dr. Kyoung-Rae Jung, Psychology

Jung’s study explores the emotional adjustment of Korean immigrants, focusing on the feeling of “emptiness,” which has not been fully understood in previous research. Traditional studies have often used broad terms like “acculturation” and “depression” to describe immigrant experiences, overlooking the nuanced cultural factors at play. This project aims to use an idiographic approach to delve deeper into how Korean immigrants experience and interpret emptiness, which is characterized as a feeling of “hitting a wall” in personal growth and losing direction in life. This state is often caused by a perceived gap between the effort immigrants put into their lives and the unfulfilling outcomes they encounter.

The project uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative component examines the relationship between self-efficacy, life outcomes, acculturative stress and the feeling of emptiness, while the qualitative component explores the culturally specific meaning of emptiness. Jung’s previous research found key themes related to identity confusion and cultural differences, leading to the hypothesis that the feeling of emptiness is more about emotional exhaustion than clinical psychopathology.

This research is particularly relevant to SU’s focus on cultural diversity and has the potential to improve the mental health and adjustment of Korean immigrants, especially in the local Salisbury, DC and Virginia areas. By offering insights into culturally specific issues, the study could inform the development of more effective intervention programs for immigrant populations. The findings will not only contribute to the field of psychology but also enhance understanding of the immigrant experience, supporting future research and fostering a greater sense of community within the university and beyond.

From Boardroom to Biosphere: How Executive and Governance Factors Shape Environmental Practices **Dr. Ronei Leonel, Management**

Leonel's research explores how corporate governance structures, such as CEO duality and board committees, along with executive traits like personality and political ideology, influence firms' environmental practices. Addressing a critical gap in understanding discretionary, non-financial outcomes, his study examines actions like waste management, emissions goals and carbon reduction outcomes.

Using a panel dataset of firms from 2013 to 2023, Leonel integrates financial data from COMPUSTAT, governance metrics from BoardEx and environmental data from the Corporate Response Data - Climate Change database. Executive characteristics are assessed using textual analysis of earnings call transcripts, with econometric methods applied to uncover key relationships. Expected outputs include a peer-reviewed article, a practitioner-focused piece, a teaching case and a national conference presentation.

Leonel is completing data analysis and drafting manuscripts. The project offers practical insights for corporate leaders and policymakers on improving environmental performance while advancing academic understanding of governance and sustainability.

By fostering research collaborations and providing students with real-world applications through courses like MGMT 325 and MGMT 492, this work exemplifies SU's commitment to impactful scholarship and sustainability in business education.

Divided Loyalties and Shifting Perceptions: The Jōkyū War as Event and Myth in Medieval Japan **Dr. Michael McCarty, History**

McCarty's project explores the Jōkyū War, a traumatic conflict in medieval Japan, to examine how the aftermath shaped new relationships and identities in the country. His research fills a significant gap in English-language historiography, as the last major treatment of the Jōkyū War was Jeffrey Mass's 1979 work, *The Development of Kamakura Rule*. McCarty's book, a revised version of his dissertation, applies innovative methodologies such as "textual archaeology," which traces how concerns around an issue evolve over time. By focusing on the war's lead-up, outbreak and aftermath, McCarty analyzes the conflict both as an event that revealed the complexity of 13th-century Japan and as a myth that influenced the formation of courtier and samurai identities in the years that followed.

McCarty conducted essential research for his monograph at Tokyo University's Historiographical Institute, a key resource for medieval Japanese studies. This trip allowed him to fill in remaining gaps in his research. He plans to submit the manuscript to the University of Hawaii Press for publication in 2025.

This interdisciplinary project will have wide-reaching implications, appealing to scholars and students in East Asian studies, as well as those interested in themes of class hierarchy, civil-military power, Confucian and Buddhist ideology, and cultural myths. The publication of this book will foster potential collaborations with scholars in Japan and North America. McCarty's work will contribute to the development of the Asian studies minor and enrich his teaching,

offering students the opportunity to engage with complex historical narratives.

Dynamic Imagery in Cause-Related Marketing Messages **Dr. Gustavo Schneider, Marketing**

Building on his successful research into dynamic price displays in advertising, Schneider is exploring how movement in cause-related marketing messages influences consumer perceptions. This innovative study examines how different types of motion in advertising - such as up/down movements, looming or receding imagery - affect how consumers respond to companies' promotions of their non-profit partnerships.

The project comes at a critical time, as recent research shows cause-related marketing campaigns can boost sales by nearly 5%. Through a series of carefully designed experiments using online participants and retail consumer panels, Schneider aims to provide valuable insights for both academic researchers and marketing practitioners on how to create more effective cause-related marketing communications.

This research extends Schneider's previous work on dynamic imagery in pricing, which was published in the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*. His findings will contribute to our understanding of consumer behavior while highlighting the marketing department's expertise in communication strategies and information processing.

Water Quality in a Coastal Mill Pond in the Wicomico River Basin, Maryland, Chesapeake Bay Watershed **Dr. Keota Silaphone, Geography & Geosciences**

Silaphone's study aims to assess the health of Schumaker Pond and establish a long-term water quality monitoring approach. This 39-acre mill pond, situated in a mix of residential, agricultural and forested areas, has faced persistent issues with aggressive aquatic vegetation (AV) growth. Since 2000, local concerns have centered on AV causing poor water quality, resulting in navigation difficulties and swimming bans. Despite chemical treatments aimed at controlling the AV, the problem persists, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying causes.

The study documents seasonal changes in AV extent and develop a water quality monitoring program. Through biweekly drone flights, Silaphone is capturing aerial images of the pond from March to November, using geographic information systems (GIS) to map AV growth. In addition, vegetation density and volume are sampled to estimate its contribution to the pond's bottom. Water samples are collected from across the pond to measure key quality parameters along with data from drone flights to establish a baseline for seasonal nutrient levels and provide insights into nutrient hotspots, allowing for more targeted management strategies.

This project holds significant value for both the Salisbury community and the university as a whole. By involving local residents in the study, Silaphone will help them better understand the pond's conditions and offer alternatives to chemical treatments. The project will also serve as a living laboratory for students, providing hands-on experience in GIS applications

and water quality monitoring, while fostering experiential learning that connects students to real-world environmental challenges. This initiative will also support the development of new course materials for field-based courses planned for this academic year.

Editing and Mastering Five Recording Projects **Dr. Jerry Tabor, Music**

Tabor aims to complete the post-production of five key audio and video projects, each marking a milestone in his creative work. These include the 2022 recording of his jazz suite *Change the Message*, along with several collaborative recordings featuring the SU Percussion Ensemble and a professional guitar ensemble. The funding allows for the editing, mixing and mastering needed to prepare these projects for public release.

The work includes finalizing the *Change the Message* recording as a model for other performers, along with an edited video of the session. Tabor also plans to complete two 2013 recordings of his percussion quartet *40-Grit* for commercial release, alongside a 2014 recording of *Frieze* by a guitar ensemble.

This project is significant for its potential to elevate SU's visibility by showcasing the talent of its faculty and students. The recordings will serve as high-quality models for performers and, with commercial release, increase exposure for SU's Jackson Music Program. With time and funding often being limiting factors, this effort will not only enrich the academic community but also further solidify SU's reputation for artistic excellence.

Tokyo Public Art (Trolls in the Park) **Bill Wolff, Art**

Wolff was invited to participate in the 2024 iteration of *Trolls in the Park*, a long-standing public art exhibition in Zempukuji Park, Tokyo. This invitation reconnects Wolff with Tokyo's vibrant art scene, where he previously exhibited during his time at Tokyo University of the Arts (Tokyo Geidai) as a Monbukagakusho scholar. *Trolls in the Park*, organized by Youkubo Art Space, features open-air installations, public tours, and community engagement activities, making it a unique platform for creative expression and dialogue.

Wolff's project was developed in two stages: initial construction at his Salisbury studio and final assembly on-site in Tokyo. Leveraging his familiarity with the local environment, materials and resources, he completed the work using a studio provided by Youkubo Art Space. Additionally, he was invited to serve as a Visiting Researcher/Artist at Tokyo Geidai, where he had access to a studio and the opportunity to reconnect with former colleagues and expand his professional network.

This project aligns with Wolff's recent research focus on public art and represents a significant step in fostering international collaborations. It also lays the groundwork for future study abroad programs that could benefit SU students.

By participating in *Trolls in the Park*, Wolff not only advance his creative practice but also enhance the visibility of the Art Department on a global scale. His work will strengthen ties between SU and Japan's academic and artistic communities, demonstrating the University's commitment to fostering cross-cultural engagement and innovative scholarship.

GRADUATE RESEARCH AND PRESENTATION (RAP) GRANT PROGRAM

SPRING AND FALL 2024

The Office of Graduate Studies and Research provides research grants, up to \$750, to help graduate students develop research and scholarly projects with faculty supervisors and present their projects at various conferences and meetings. The program enables students to receive recognition for their work and provides networking opportunities and professional development in their field of study.

Tungara Frog (*Engystomops pustulosus*) Movement Ecology in Complex Environments

Michael Caldarola, M.S. Applied Biology

This research is a first of its kind frog tracking study, aimed at understanding the movement ecology of tungara frogs (*Engystomops pustulosus*) in their natural environment. This study consists of real-world ecological tracking to examine the role of risk and environment in frog movement and reproductive decision-making. In collaboration with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, innovative technology is used to track the movements of 27 male tungara frogs in both an urban and a forest site between 8 p.m. and 3 a.m. These movement data, coupled with independent factors such as tree cover, weather and time of day can highlight how environmental risks can influence movement patterns. Integrating these movement data with spatial and behavioral observations can show the importance of environmental complexity in reproductive decision-making, showing the trade-offs between predation risk and reproductive success. This research contributes to the fields of behavioral ecology and evolutionary biology, providing a better understanding of the general ecology of this species. It also opens new possibilities for the application of tracking technology to other small, active species of frogs, where such techniques have been underutilized.

Movement Ecology, Sexual Selection, and Landscape of Fear in Tropical Anuran Species (*Engystomops pustulosus* and *Leptodactylus savagei*)

Michael Caldarola, M.S. Applied Biology

Movement ecology is pivotal in understanding animal behaviors, particularly during breeding seasons. Male tungara frogs (*Engystomops pustulosus*) exhibit intricate mating behaviors around breeding ponds, with limited studies focusing on their distance movements. Understanding male movement patterns during mating seasons is crucial for comprehending tungara frog spatial ecology. This study aims to investigate male movement patterns, including daytime resting spots and roaming distances from breeding sites, using Lotek nanopin trackers. They also aim to track the smoky jungle frog (*Leptodactylus savagei*), a common predator of tungara frogs, to determine its movements and potential influence on prey species. By tracking both predator and prey, they seek to understand predator-prey relationships and how predator presence may affect prey movement. Lastly, they will investigate female tungara mate choice in a landscape of fear, considering external spatial factors such as anthropogenic light and predator presence. Using an outdoor phonotaxis arena, they will assess female navigational performance under different environmental conditions, including predator calls and varying light levels. This research will provide valuable insights into the factors shaping tungara frog movement ecology, contributing to our understanding of predator-prey dynamics and mate choice behaviors.

Uniting Forces in Interprofessional Collaboration for Legislative Advocacy and Addressing Health Care Disparities for the Medically Complex

Alita-Geri Carter, D.N.P. Nursing Practice

According to the Maryland State Department of Education, data from 2021-2022 showed that 12% of students had a disability (2023). Prince George's County Public Schools reported having 12.8% (13,582) of its students with a disability (Maryland State Department of Education, 2023). According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, health equity for children and youth with

special health care needs (CYSHCN) requires a multisector approach, which includes community development (Houtrow et al., 2022). CYSHCN may experience health disparities due to poverty and discrimination, including structural discrimination (Houtrow et al., 2022). The journey of House Bill 420 (formerly House Bill 05) in Maryland is groundbreaking legislation aiming to revolutionize public playgrounds to increase accessibility by providing communication boards. Communication boards are assistive or augmentative communication devices that utilize photos, symbols, or illustrations to support communication (Stanborough, 2020). The bill proposes using "open space funding" to integrate communication boards on playgrounds. In the past, the draft legislation was reported to primarily benefit non-verbal children. Despite being sponsored twice, the bill has yet to receive a vote. Enhancing community development through initiatives like House Bill 420 (HB 420), which emphasizes accessible playgrounds and communication boards, presents a unique opportunity to bridge gaps in health equity by providing inclusive spaces that cater to the diverse needs of children and youth with special healthcare requirements.

The Promise of Doctoral Research for Effective Literacy Instruction

Rebekah Davis-Slade, Ed.D. Literacy Studies

The purpose of the non-experimental survey research was to explore U.S. school librarians' beliefs about culturally responsive teaching (CRT), as well as the CRT practices used within their learning environments. Research questions include: 1.) What do U.S. school librarians believe about culturally responsive teaching? 2.) In what ways do U.S. school librarians learn about culturally responsive teaching? 3.) What culturally responsive teaching practices are most frequently used by U.S. school librarians? 4.) Is there a relationship between what U.S. school librarians believe about culturally responsive teaching (CRT) and the frequency of implementation? 5.) How do U.S. school librarians implement culturally responsive literacy instruction in their school? 6.) What barriers do U.S. school librarians see for implementing culturally responsive literacy instruction in their library media center? They recruited the 159 U.S. school librarians through the ALA Connect forums and Facebook groups for school librarians. The structured survey instrument collected close-ended and two open-ended responses. The close-ended survey responses underwent descriptive and inferential data analysis. The open-ended responses were analyzed qualitatively. The results suggest the participants endorse the belief that culturally responsive school librarians challenge the everyday ways of knowing, promote social justice, validate diverse populations and learning styles, connect home and school knowledge, and maintain high academic expectations. While it can be assumed that a higher level of endorsement for these CRT tenets will be reflected in a more frequent use of its implementation, this is not always the case. Open-ended responses illuminated factors standing in the way of school librarians implementing culturally responsive literacy instructional practices. The findings from this dissertation add to the growing body of empirical research focused on culturally responsive teaching and the context of school librarians and their role in literacy instruction.

International Writing Center Peer Tutor Exchange Pilot Program

Jeffrey Dean, M.A. English

College writing centers exist to support student writing in academic settings. The specific ways writing centers

accomplish their missions is highly variable and informed by the unique values and realities of the institutions they support. One common challenge faced by writing centers across the nation and the world is how to support writers working in languages other than the native or dominant language of the institution, culture, or national setting. This project will work toward developing an international peer tutor exchange, possibly through the International Writing Centers Association, by developing a pilot program exchange between Salisbury University's Writing Center and the writing center at La Universidad del Norte in Barranquilla, Colombia, an existing international exchange partner of Salisbury University.

Empowering Youth and Dispute Resolution

Nnaemeka Phil Eke-okocha, M.A. Conflict Analysis and Dispute Resolution

The student will participate in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Summit as well as United Nations General Assembly events. This networking opportunity complements efforts to increase opportunities for meaningful student engagement with pressing issues. Participation also aligns with substantial program changes and community engagement efforts happening in our area. Work with United Nations has regenerated the "Democracy Across the Disciplines" series as a modular exploration of local issues in a global context, a change that will also impact our "Changing Climate, Changing World" series.

Does Regenerative Agriculture Improve Soil Health?

Emilie Ekholm, M.S. Applied Biology

In recent times, regenerative agriculture has received considerable attention due to the current soil health crisis affecting the globe. Currently, the world's agricultural soil is facing a crisis as poor agriculture methods have resulted in its degradation and depletion (Rhodes 2017). This is cause for concern as soil health is important in the production of crops which are important to feeding the ever-growing population (Norris and Congreves, 2018). It is because of this concern that many researchers and agriculturalists have started to study and use agricultural practices that focus on soil health, like regenerative agriculture. Regenerative agriculture is a series of agricultural practices that focus on improving soil health, carbon sequestration and crop biodiversity (Daverkosen et al. 2022; Singh et al. 2023). This study aims to compare soil sampled from vegetable farms practicing regenerative agriculture and vegetable farms practicing conventional non-regenerative agriculture. They will be comparing these two farming methods to see how they affect soil nutrients and the soil microbiome. Both are important indicators of soil health. The overarching question is: Does regenerative agriculture offer a solution to our current soil health crisis?

Osteoblast and Osteoclast Dynamics in Hyperglycemic *Danio rerio*

Brianna Esker, M.S. Applied Biology

SU's Clark Lab has developed a model to induce hyperglycemia in larval zebrafish. These fish exhibit diabetic complications including peripheral nerve degeneration and skeletal defects, and when allowed to recover from hyperglycemia, the nerves regenerate but the bone does not fully recover. However, the mechanisms underlying these skeletal defects remain unknown. The next step is to elucidate these mechanisms by characterizing osteoblast and osteoclast dynamics around the vertebral column to characterize potential differences in bone mineralization and bone resorption in response to hyperglycemia. Characterizing changes in cellular patterns

during bone development can lead to a better understanding of how diabetes mellitus impacts bone development.

Building Culturally Responsive Literacy Teachers: How Principals Can Use Inquiry Groups to Develop Teachers *Kirstin Gibson, Ed.D. Literacy Studies*

The purpose of this dissertation study is to determine how collaborative inquiry groups can deepen teachers' understanding of culturally responsive teaching (CRT) strategies, impact literacy instruction and how leading collaborative inquiry groups deepens my (as the practitioner researcher) understanding of facilitating professional development (PD). Guiding this study are the following research questions: 1) How do teachers' understanding of culturally responsive teaching strategies deepen as a result of participation in an inquiry group? 2) How does participation in an inquiry group about culturally responsive teaching strategies affect elementary teachers' literacy instruction? 3) How does understanding (as the practitioner researcher) of facilitating professional development change as a result of leading an inquiry group? To answer these research questions, data will be collected in the form of three interviews, inquiry group observations, three lesson reflections, artifacts and a researcher journal. This study will provide a road map for school leaders as they plan PD on CRT, helping teachers plan literacy instruction for diverse student populations. Furthermore, results from this study will influence how Gibson plans PD within professional context.

Practitioner Researchers' Contributions in Literacy *Lauren Hatch Pokhrel, Ed.D. Literacy Studies*

Comprehensive literature reviews make important contributions to our knowledge about a subject by synthesizing research across a defined topic area and suggesting future directions for scholarship, practice, and policy. For example, in the field of literacy, recent notable reviews have extended our understanding about multimodal writing (Nash, 2018), teacher preparation (Wetzel et al., 2019) and critical discourse analysis (Rogers & Schaenen, 2014). However, reports of empirical research conducted by practitioners are seldom included in these studies leaving such scholarship unexamined. The current study addresses the exclusion of practitioners' perspectives from this type of scholarship by reviewing 66 reports of practitioner research in literacy to describe the topics explored and theories utilized and situate the findings related to literacy instruction within the broader field of literacy. Since practitioner researchers examine problems of practice within their own contexts, their research can offer important insights into the realities of effective literacy instruction. Importantly, it can result in more socially just and humanizing instructional practices (Johnston & Harper, 2021; Simon & Campano, 2013) and the knowledge generated from such inquiries is valuable to both teaching and university communities (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990).

Serving the Nation's Interests in WWII: The Phillips Packing Company's Contributions to Military Rations *Richard Hoffman, M.A. History*

During the Second World War, the U.S. launched one of the most ambitious programs of industrialization. While the efforts to provide weapons and vehicles for the war are well known, there has been little research on the effort to provide rations for the war. This study examines how one firm provided food for the U.S. military. Motivated by profit and patriotism, the study examines how the Phillips Packing Company, MD (PPC) switched from peace to wartime production. At the time, PPC was the sixth largest food processor in the U.S. Its war efforts included foods for which the firm had to develop special equipment. This microhistory reveals that changing from a peacetime to wartime production was not a simple matter of producing different products for the government. It entailed a revision in how the company was organized operationally and the need to strengthen security of facilities. This research is based primarily on company newsletters, local and national newspapers, as well as selected government documents. This micro history provides insights into the decisions and processes involved in meeting military needs and the public interest and contributes to the economic and business history of World War II.

Artificial Intelligence Empowered Learning Support for Promoting Educational Equity: Implications of Learning Patterns for First-Generation and Minoritized Students of Color at Salisbury University

Peter Jabal, M.A. Conflict Analysis and Dispute Resolution
Over the past years, artificial intelligence has resulted in a massive revolution in numerous industries, with education as no exception. This research proposal aims to harness data-driven tools, particularly leveraging artificial intelligence as a tool to promote educational equity, to shed light on the learning behaviors and academic performance of first-generation and minoritized students of color during their critical first year at Salisbury University. The transition to higher education often poses a formidable challenge for anyone entering college, but the hurdles are usually higher for first-generation students and those from underrepresented minorities. Students often face obstacles in college, including navigating an unfamiliar academic system, balancing financial pressures, and adapting to a new cultural environment. By analyzing students' data using AI algorithms, hidden patterns and insights can be uncovered that could be the key to unlocking their full potential.

Censorship and Disproportionality in Banned Books *Julia Laug, M.Ed. Reading Specialist*

Research was presented at the State of Maryland Literacy Association (SOMLA) in April 2024 to present on the topic of censorship and disproportionality in banned books across America. The American Library Association has noted the most banned books in the United States each year, and recently, these books most often address topics in and contain protagonists who identify with individuals in the BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities. Book bans are censoring the experiences of people of marginalized backgrounds, resulting in a misrepresentation of these groups. The presentation consists of information and research informing participants on the significance of the topic and avenues to enact change.

Assessment of the Physical Activity Environment in Rural Community Parks: An Audit of Maryland's Eastern Shore *Ariene Ohimor, M.S. Health and Human Performance*

Participating in regular physical activity (PA) has been associated with improvements in multiple health outcomes and prevention of chronic disease; however, few Americans meet PA guidelines. This public health issue is particularly evident in rural communities, who experience health disparities and additional barriers to active living. According to the Social Ecological Model, environments and policies influence physical activity in communities. In particular, recreational parks may serve as a valuable physical activity resource in rural communities.

International Writing Center Peer Tutor Exchange Pilot Program - The Co-Design of Inquiry-Based Writing Professional Learning

Amy Palmer, Ed.D. Literacy Studies
The goal of this dissertation research study was to learn more about how writing teachers co-design inquiry professional learning (PL) experiences and what they learn from those experiences as well as how district leaders such as an English Language Arts (ELA) supervisor, might facilitate and support that learning. The inquiry centered around two research questions: (1) How do elementary writing teachers co-construct a PL experience about writing instruction and what new understandings about writing do they develop as they participate in this co-constructed PL experience? and (2) How does an elementary ELA supervisor support teachers as instructional leaders through inquiry-based writing PL?

Mate Choice in a Complex Multimodal Environment Can Promote Maladaptive Decision Making in *Engystomops pustulosus*

Korbin Reynolds, M.S. Applied Biology
Females across many different species and taxa use multiple different modalities such as acoustic, visual, and seismic cues to assess the environment and influence their decisions. These modalities influence decisions of foraging, predation evasion and most importantly mate choice. Much is known about the tungara frog system much information is known about their use of auditory information in determining a mate choice. Until 2008, their visual capabilities were disregarded when

discussing the female's decision making. They have employed the use of robotic frogs that have inflatable vocal sacs that acted to relay information as a visual modality. They conducted an experiment with the goal of cognitively overloading females with a combination of modalities in three categories of acoustic, visual and seismic cues testing to see if this overload can promote maladaptive decision. This maladaptive decision would be in the form of choosing a predator smokey jungle frog call instead of their own species call in a two choice phonotaxis experiment.

Creating Spaces for Kindergarten Writers Through Collaborative Inquiry

Jennifer Spivey, Ed.D. Literacy Studies
This project aimed to create spaces for kindergarten writers by collaborating with kindergarten teachers to develop emergent writing pedagogy. The collaborative inquiry centered around two research questions: (1) How do kindergarten teachers in collaboration with a reading resource teacher create spaces for young children to write? and (2) How does a reading resource teacher collaborate with kindergarten teachers to develop emergent writing pedagogy? The project's problem of practice is situated in the understanding that writing instruction within kindergarten classrooms is being marginalized due to Science of Reading (SoR) related practices, an erasure of play, a lack of professional development in early writing instruction, and an over-reliance on sanctioned curriculum that dictates how and what is taught. As a result, a reductionist view of early literacy is creating a reductionist practice of writing pedagogy in kindergarten classrooms. The project situated a siloed and single-handed approach to writing instruction in kindergarten classrooms as problematic and counterproductive to the emergent nature of early writing.

Evaluating Visual and Auditory Perception of Tungara Frogs (*Engystomops pustulosus*), Determining its Correlation to Mate Choice and Predator *Grant Zemanek, M.S. Applied Biology*

In nature, animals are forced to make decisions that increase the chances of successful reproduction and survival. These crucial decisions may be driven by many factors, such as resource availability or urbanization, but nearly all prey species face predation risk daily. In dense rainforest ecosystems such as Panama, prey species are constantly forced into the predicament of finding a mate or risking death. Through collaboration with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Gamboa, Panama, this project evaluated the decision-making of prey species. Using the tungara frog (*Engystomops pustulosus*), a small nocturnal anuran species, work was performed to determine if the presence of a predator altered female mate choice behavior or influenced movement patterns. For 71 days, between 2130 and 0330 h, 256 total female tungara frogs were tested in two different environments, both land and aquatic (pool), inside of a sound chamber. Females completed standard preference experiments, being presented with both attractive and unattractive male tungara calls with the addition of the predator stimuli. Half of the tested females faced an aerial predator model (bat), while the other half faced a terrestrial predator model (snake). The results show that predator presence does alter mate choice behavior. In water, females are less "choosy," picking an unattractive male call more often.

Evaluating Tungara Frog (*Engystomops pustulosus*) Mate Choice Behavior, Determining the Effects of a Predator's Presence

Grant Zemanek, M.S. Applied Biology
Many species face challenges in nature as they try to find resources or a mate. Using the tungara frog (*Engystomops pustulosus*), a small prey species, they aim to determine if the presence of a predator alters mate choice behavior or influences movement patterns through the "landscape of fear" concept. Through collaboration with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute located in Panama, they can conduct controlled predator experiments by deploying 3D-printed snake and bat models inside a sound chamber, measuring the tungara frog's behavior. Outside the lab, they will collect and tag both tungara frogs and predator species, allowing us to follow multiple species throughout the day. Data from this project will highlight movement patterns of these animals, which can have profound consequences for ecology and conservation of the species.

SUMMER STUDENT RESEARCH

Every year, Salisbury University students spend their summer engaged in extensive research projects. In 2024, they explored topics ranging from the deceptive cuteness of house wrens to creating space for kindergarten writers. Over 30 students presented their results during a poster session at SU's annual Summer Student Research Showcase. They are among the summer researchers listed here.

HENSON SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY SUMMER UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH PROGRAM

Impact of VasX effector on Interbacterial Competition in the Bacterial Symbiont *Vibrio fischeri*

Nikki Amarasinghe
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kristin Guckes

Fast and Feathery: Comparing Rates of Brain Development Seen in Owls, Ducks and Chickens

Reagan Angle
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jeremy Corfield

Genetic and Cellular Characterization of Co-Isolated Bacterial Symbionts

Hope Barber
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kristin Guckes

Comparing Various Toxins in Eastern Shore Waterways and Sediment to Locally Caught Seafood Items

Jasmine Bowie
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jennifer Nyland

Investigation of a Moribund Zebrafish Spinal Cord Phenomenon

Maia Burger
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jessica Clark

The Sound of Attraction: A Deep Dive into Acoustic Decision-Making in Female Mate Choice

Marissa Carey
Faculty Mentors: Dr. Kimberly Hunter, Dr. Ryan Taylor

Evaluation of Gluten Aptameric Detection Systems Under Different Environmental Conditions

Olivia Gaines
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Joshua Sokoloski

Antibiotics from the Landfill: How Different Soil Conditions Affect Antibiotics Quality

Olivia Ingrao
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Elizabeth Emmert

Examining the Relationship Between Human Activity, Sediment Size and Sand Budget in Assateague Island National Seashore

Rachel Keim
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Thomas Cawthern

It Is Hard to See at Night: Does Vocal Sac Size Play a Role in Mate Choice?

Lauren Knapp
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kimberly Hunter, Dr. Ryan Taylor

Investigations of Fractal Dimensions in Group-Generated Cellular Automata

Lilly Ngo
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Michael Bardzell

The Effects of Sunscreen Chemicals on Elasmobranchii and Their Behavioral Reactions

Colin O'Donnell
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Noah Bressman

Spatio-Temporal Salinity Data Modeling and Visualization for Salt Contamination Monitoring in the Chesapeake Bay Area

Vincent Pham
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Shuangquan Peter Wang

The Effect of Hemin and the Crosslinker Length on the Swelling Properties of a Synthetic Hydrogel

Mahruckh Rizwan
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Zulma Jimenez

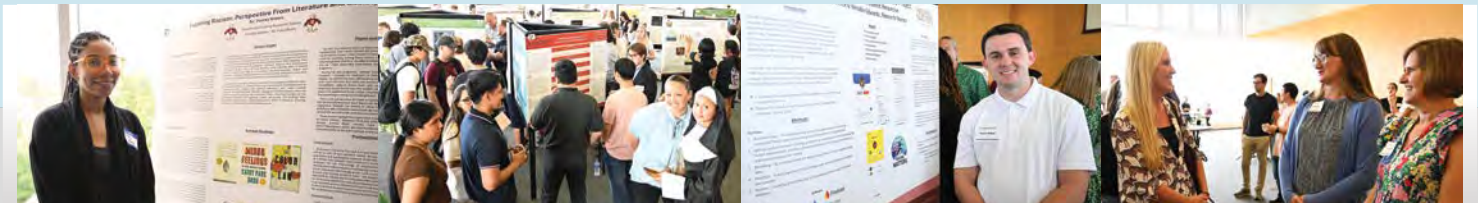
Monitoring Seasonal Variations in Salinity in Freshwater Pools on Assateague Island

Charis Rose
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sarah Jones

Birds in the City: How Green Spaces in Urbanized Areas Affect the Biodiversity of Local Birds

Jessica Stevens
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Xuan Chen

student at posters on the bay



GRADUATE STUDIES & RESEARCH SUMMER 2024 RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

Exploring the Correlation Between Relative Size of the Nucleus Taeniae and Social Behavior in Songbirds

Sara Alessandrini
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jeremy Corfield

Impact of Sports on Cognition/COVID-19 Project

Emma Barthelmess
Faculty Mentors: Dr. Echo Leaver, Dr. Yuki Okubo

Associative Recognition in Aging

Delaney Bartosz
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Meredith Patterson

Movement Ecology, Sexual Selection and Landscape of Fear in Tropical Anuran Species (*Engystomops pustulosus* and *Leptodactylus savagei*)

Michael Caldarola
Faculty Mentors: Dr. Kimberly Hunter, Dr. Ryan Taylor

Understanding the Multimodal Literacies of Faculty in Disciplinary Postsecondary Classrooms

Haley Cristea
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Heather Porter

The Deception of House Wrens: How Cuteness Hides Destruction

Malone Dampier
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jeremy Corfield

COVID-19 Research Project

Alexis Davis
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Yuki Okubo

A Comparison of the Mummichog Escape Response to Different Types of Predator Stimuli

Alexis Dawson
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Noah Bressman

Designing and Implementing Writing Center Workshops for First Year Seminar

Jeffrey Dean
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Melissa Bugdal

Developing a Directorial Process

Allison Dincau
Faculty Mentors: Dr. Jamie McKittrick, Blake Harris

Osteoblast and Osteoclast Dynamics in Hyperglycemic *Danio rerio*

Brianna Esker
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jessica Clark

Interactions Between Ants (*Hymenoptera: Formicidae*) and Plants on the Salisbury University Campus

Maya Fieck
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Dana Price

Salisbury Zoo Nesting Platforms for Birds of Prey

Kenneth Fraker
Faculty Mentor: Bill Wolff

Uncovering Sor Juana: Flipping Through Books for the Education, Identity and Empowerment of Women

Lucia Fuentes Scott

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Cristina Cammarano

Effect of Ground Cover on Ant Community Dynamics on the Urban Campus of Salisbury University

Isabella Garrison

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Dana Price

Building Culturally Responsive Literacy Teachers: How Principals Can Use Inquiry Groups to Develop Teachers

Kirstin Gibson

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Maida Finch

Forensically Important Flies (Diptera) Attracted to Small Baits in Maryland

Natasha Herlinger

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Dana Price

Developing Fluorescence Spectroscopy for Temperature and Salt-Dependent Enzymatic Reactions for Malaria Research

Andersen Herman

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Joshua Sokoloski

Barriers to Implementing Standards-Based Curriculum in Bono East Region of Ghana

Peter Jabal

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jim Fox

Conversion Therapy: Policy and Advocacy Research

Lauren Kellam

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Daniel Green

The Role of AI in Enhancing Academic Writing for International Students

Aysan Kolahdouzipour

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Farzad Karimzad

COVID-19 Research Project

Kaliyah Little

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Yuki Okubo

Development of a Lab-Based Astronomy Astrophotography Course

Justin Malloy

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Joe Howard

Studying Tooth Surface Sharpness in Premolars and Molars to Distinguish Dietary Differences in Primates

Gabriela Maroto

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Susanne Daly

The Impact of COVID-19 on Socioemotional Goals in Older Adults

Kavina McDonald

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Echo Leaver

Secondary Social Studies Teachers and Students Engagement in the Discussion Process

Jessica McInerney

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Thea Williamson

Sleep and Cognitive Health in Sports

Nikki Mondo

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Echo Leaver

Extracting Water Salinity User Requirements Using Large Language Models

Dustin O'Brien

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sophie Wang

Assessment of the Physical Activity Environment in Rural Community Parks: An Audit of Maryland's Eastern Shore

Ariene Ohimor

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Zachary Townsend

Elementary Teachers' Co-Construction of Writing Professional Learning

Amy Palmer

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Maida Finch

Periodic Behavior in Finite Linear Cellular Automata

Abigail Pierson

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Mike Bardzell

Practitioner Researchers' Contributions in Literacy

Lauren Pokhrel

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Maida Finch

Deployment of LLMs on Edge Devices

Spencer Presley

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Junyi Tu

Literary Canon and Pedagogy in Higher Education

Susannah Randall

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Isabel Quintana Wulf

A Comparative Study of Building Materials, Costs and Energy Consumption Between Earthships and Commercial Construction Homes

Luis Enrique Rangel-Mora

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Gina Bloodworth

REmpowering Reader Identities: A Journey Fostering Engagement among Diverse Middle School Male Students in Reading Intervention Classes

Gabrielle Remington

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Koomi Kim

The Visual Acuity of Tungara Frogs: A Behavioral Assessment for Vision

Korbin Reynolds

Faculty Mentors: Dr. Kimberly Hunter, Dr. Ryan Taylor

The Odyssey and the Nature of Homecoming

Daniel Robinson

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Cristina Cammarano

Writing Center Tutors' Conceptualizations of Linguistic Justice

Faith Sears Thompson

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Melissa Bugdal

Cognition and Club Sports

Sydney Shannon

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Echo Leaver

LGBTQ+ Climate Survey

Sage Simone

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Becky Anthony

Leveraging Machine Learning for Golf Swing Analysis: A Video-Based Application

Oscar Spiers

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Yaping Jing

Creating Spaces for Kindergarten Writers Through Collaborative Inquiry

Jennifer Spivey

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Judith Franzik

MOVE4WELLNESS Mobile App Development

Connor Sullivan

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Victoria Venable-Edwards

Identifying DNA and RNA Sequences that Bind Tightly to Copper Ions for Click Chemistry Labeling of Probes for Tumor Imaging and Ablation

Min Thway Khant

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Joshua Sokoloski

Development of a Lab-Based Astronomy Astrophotography Course

Susan Velasquez-Perez

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Joe Howard

Racism and Coping Research

Tierney Waters

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Yuki Okubo

High-Accuracy Walking Surface Classification through Heel Strike Detection

Mariamawit Yohannes

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Peter Wang

Tungara Frog (*Engystomops pustulosus*) Behavior: Evaluating Predator Response and its Effects on Memory

Grant Zemanek

Faculty Mentors: Dr. Kimberly Hunter, Dr. Ryan Taylor

The Development of Literary Magazines at Salisbury University

Josey Zeunges

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Melissa Bugdal

Associate Recognition in Aging

Joyce Zhang

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Echo Leaver



NSF RESEARCH EXPERIENCE FOR UNDERGRADUATES EXERCISE - EXPLORE EMERGING COMPUTING IN SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

Cole Barbes • Yuqi Chen • Henry Chien • Joshua Essandoh • Erin Hopper • Timothy McKirgan • Michael Straus • Carlos Torres Anglero • Ian Wilson

UNIVERSITY STUDENT ACADEMIC RESEARCH AWARD

University Student Academic Research Awards (USARA) are research grants, up to \$400, that are available to help support undergraduate research projects and creative endeavors related to developing and conducting projects with a faculty supervisor. These competitive funds support undergraduate research projects, directed by a faculty mentor, that may include research development, supplies, and the presentation of research/scholarly pursuits at national or regional meetings.

SPRING 2024 WINNERS

Machine Learning and Computer Vision Techniques to Identify and Monitor Ostreidae Non-Disruptively

Alexander Mekovsky

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Enyue Lu

The Quality of Roommate Relationships of Undergraduate Students

Alexandra Slovikosky • Riley Dombrowsky

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Rachel Buchanan

The Impact of Roommate Relationships on College Students

Jolie Jones

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Rachel Buchanan

Roommate Relationship Survey

Katy Musse & Kyarah Pete

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Rachel Buchanan

To What Depths Will Endangered Spotted Turtles Go? Potential Differences Based on Sex and Injuries

Benjamin Houser

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Eric Liebgold

Pawpaw Toxicity

Carina Kamuf

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Chris Briand

Senior Exhibition – 3D Printed Statue

Hunter Plaskon

Faculty Mentor: Laura West

The Effects of Lavendustin - A on Peripheral Neuropathy and Skeletal Development in Hyperglycemic Zebrafish

Jane Simoncic

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jessica Clark

The Visualizations of Sounds

Luke Zolenski

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Don Spickler

Quantifying and Determining the Presence of Microplastics in Wicomico County's Waterways

Siddarth Ghosh

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Noah Bressman

FALL 2024 WINNERS

Large-Scale Steel Public Sculpture

Kenneth Fraker

Faculty Mentor: Laura West

COVID-19 and Changes in Socioemotional Motivations and Perceptions of Mortality

Kavina McDonald

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Echo Leaver

The Use of Sonography in Hand Therapy

Kaylee Shaw

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Gregory Chown

Cardiovascular Responses to Single vs. Multi-Chambered Blood Flow Restriction Cuffs

Sean Zupnik

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Tim Werner

POSTERS ON THE BAY 2025

Salisbury University students presented their research and other creative work to Maryland Governor Wes Moore, state legislators and other guests during SU's ninth annual Posters on the Bay presentation in Annapolis. Sponsored by SU's Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (OURCA), the event provides students with the opportunity to share their faculty-guided scholarship.

"SU offers many ways for students to get involved in research and creative work, and the presentation of their work and results is a key part of that process and their growth in their chosen fields," said Dr. Rhyannon Bemis, director of OURCA. "To be able to present their work to the Governor Wes Moore, SU President Dr. Carolyn Ringer Lepre and the many members of Maryland's legislature is a truly beneficial experience for these student scholars as they continue their academic and professional journeys."



This year's projects covered a wide variety of social, health and economic issues. Presenters and their topics included:

Stephora Cesar Alberi, Jordan Pinckney and Jorge Armando Verduzco Zavala: "Real-Time Recall App"

Vic Androcy, Andrew Black, Delaney Fairley and Elysha Ross: "The Push and Pull for LGBTQIA+ Rights in an Evolving Society"

Sophia Broyles, Delaney Fairley, Tabatha Hayes, Madelynne Mattare, Odette Pierre and Sam Simmons: "Living Beyond Your Means: The Psychological Impact of Housing Unaffordability"

Morgan Burnett: "Changing the Gain: Teaching the Art of Sound in Technical Theatre B.A. Programs"

Kailah Caliskan, Zoe Clarke, Julia Dyer and Mauren Krauser: "Newton Street Mural"

Urijit Chakraborty: "Empowering Solar and Soil: A Suitability Analysis for Agrivoltaic Systems in Maryland"

Josie D'Aquila and Argeroula Halkias: "Conceptions of Adulthood in India"

Lauryn Dennis, Neila Henrice, Tyler Hummer, Zainab Jabeen, Dagmawit Kebede, Jody Kieffer, Ashley Marcum, Michael Ogbonna and Jahnaiya Sutherland: "Community Strengths Survey"

Ashley Gerbes, Jude Maggitti, Connor Sullivan, Noah Webb and Will Weber: "Prairie Patrol"

Tessah Good: "Picture-Perfect Pain: Educating Tattoo Artists

about the Overlaps between Self-Harm and Tattooing among Women"

Jacob Griffin: "Be a Man: How Hegemonic Masculinity Presents a Violent and Prevalent Message in America's School-Age Boys"

Andersen Herman: "Developing RNA Thermometers and Fluorescence Spectroscopy for Enzymatic Reactions in Plasmodium Falciparum"

Thway Khant and HsiangKun Shih: "Targeting Cancer-associated Proteins and Click Chemistry Labeling of Probes for Tumor Imaging and Ablation Min"

Logan Krebs: "Who Will Lead Tomorrow?: An Extended Literature Review Exploring the Importance of Leadership Education in Higher Education Institutions"

Lucas Kuriawa: "Impact of Blood Flow Restriction Cuff Design on Upper Body Exercise: A Randomized Crossover Trial in Resistance-Trained Adults"

Cole Ledger: "Preventing Acute Malnutrition: The Role of Energy Expenditure and Postnatal Nutrition Among Infants"

Kyla Linz: "Discovering Worlds of Literature: Increasing Recreational Reading Rates in University Students Through Use of Social Media and University Community Members"

M.J. Marshall: "Hear Me Out: Improving Deaf Accessibility in Educational Theater"

Andrew Mehall, Walter Euceda-Mendoza and Oscar Spiers: "AI Sport Swing Analysis Application"

Cleo McLaughlin: "Determining Charge Limits on Scaled Geometrical Surfaces Using Electrostatic Energy Analysis in Electrospray Ionization Mass Spectrometry"

Joyce Montero: "Enforcing Sustainability: The Role of Law and Green Information Systems in Transforming Supply Chains and Logistics"

Ariene Ohimor: "Assessment of the Physical Activity Environment in Rural Community Parks: An Audit of Maryland's Eastern Shore"

Sophia Reister: "Human and Artificial Intelligence Communication: Strengths and Weaknesses of Conversing with AI for Coding Mathematical Models"

Charis Rose: "Monitoring Salinity in Assateague Island's Freshwater Ponds at the Spring and Neap Tides"

Mark Weedon: "Performance and Perceptual Responses to Different Chambered Blood Flow Restriction Cuffs"

Grace Wincovitch: "One Post Away from Diversity: The Way Instagram Can Market Study Abroad Opportunities to Black and African American Students at Salisbury University"

Josey Zeunges: "The Evolution of Literary Magazines and Creative Writing at Salisbury University"

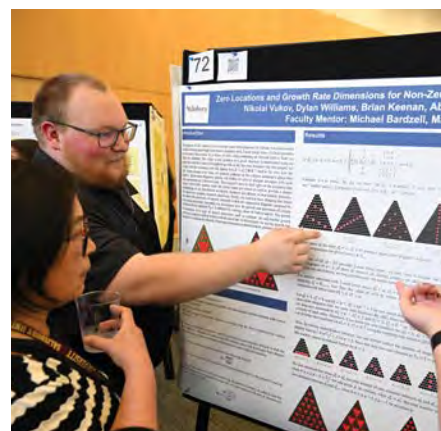
Sean Zupnik: "Cardiovascular Responses to Single vs Multi-Chambered Blood Flow Restriction Cuffs"

2024 Salisbury University Student Research Conference



Lu Earns Outstanding Research Mentor Award

Dr. Enyue (Annie) Lu, SU professor of computer science, earned SU's 2024 Outstanding Research Mentor Award. Presented at the 22nd SU Student Research Conference, the honor celebrates faculty who are excellent supervisors of student research or creative work. In the past 20 years at SU, Dr. Lu has mentored 76 students in undergraduate research and internship projects. Lu's students have presented multiple times at the Super Computing: IEEE/ACM International Conference for High-Performance Computing, Networking, Storage and Analysis, and well as the National Conference on Undergraduate Research and several SU research events. Lu has brought \$1.5 million in grant funding to SU as the principal investigator for the National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates "Explore Emerging Computing in Science and Engineering" (NSF REU EXERCISE) program. The initiative has attracted 114 students from across the U.S. to conduct summer research at SU since 2012.



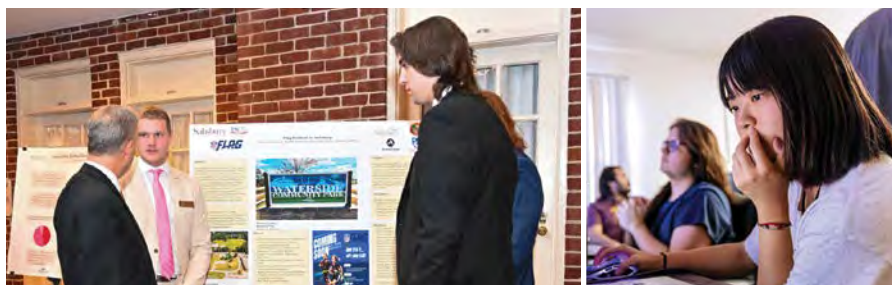
Save the Date!
SUSRC 2025: Friday, April 25

Becoming an REU site is highly competitive, and most are found at large research institutions. This designation is a testimony of the superior research opportunities undergraduates receive at SU.

— **Dr. Enyue (Annie) Lu**, Professor of Computer Science
2024 Outstanding Research Mentor Award Recipient



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MASTER'S PROGRAMS

- Applied Biology (M.S.)
- Business Administration (M.B.A.)*
- Conflict Analysis and Dispute Resolution (M.A.)*
- Curriculum and Instruction (M.Ed.)
- Curriculum and Instruction - Higher Education Leadership (M.Ed.)
- Educational Leadership (M.Ed.)*
- English (M.A.)
- Geographic Information Systems Management (M.S.)*
- Health and Human Performance (M.S.)
- History (M.A.)
- Mathematics Education (M.S.M.E.)
- Nursing (M.S.N.)*
- Public Communication (M.A.)
- Reading Specialist (M.Ed.)
- Social Work (M.S.W.)*
- Teaching (M.A.T.)

DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

- Literacy Studies (Ed.D.)*
- Nursing Practice (D.N.P.)*

CERTIFICATES

- Educational Leadership*
- Educational Leadership Certificate of Advanced Study*
- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
- Health Care Management*
- Family Nurse Practitioner Certificate of Advanced Study

* Online option available