CEHS Awards 2021

02/17/2021

Legacy of Utah State Award

Honoring a student who represents the heart and soul of the university
Katelyn Elizondo Childers, School of Teacher Education and Leadership

Katelyn Elizondo Childers is in her senior year at Utah State. As a first-generation college student, navigating the college experience independently has been challenging, but it is easily her life's most fulfilling endeavor. She is currently studying Elementary Education and has found education and equity to be not only a career path, but a calling. Katelyn works as an undergraduate teaching fellow for the USU Literacy Clinic and an undergraduate research assistant for the Early Math Research Group in math education. She is also taking courses toward her M.Ed. Katelyn feels that teachers who allow students to discover, innovate, and practice grit are teachers that change the world.

Undergraduate Awards

Scholar of the Year

Honoring excellence in scholarship and service to the university by a graduating senior

Moana Fullmer, Human Development and Family Studies

Moana Fullmer will graduate in May 2021 with a Human Development and Family Studies degree with an emphasis in family and community services, as well as dual minors in psychology and mental health advocacy and awareness. She plans to pursue a master's degree in marriage and family therapy. Moana works as an undergraduate teaching fellow and an undergraduate research assistant. She is currently the Marriage and Family Therapy Student Association president and volunteers with multiple local organizations like CAPSA and the Logan Family Center.

Undergraduate Student Researcher of the Year

Honoring an outstanding undergraduate researcher

Hannah Johnson, Psychology

Hannah Johnson is earning a bachelor's degree in Psychology. Since 2019, she has been a research assistant in Dr. Odum's Behavior Analysis Lab and Drs. Levin and Twohig's Clinical/Counseling Lab. She is currently preparing multiple manuscripts and international presentations for submission. Hannah's interests in basic and applied psychology led her to begin independent research on how behavior analysis connects to psychological flexibility among depressed individuals. Hannah hopes to improve treatment for depression and provide therapy for lower socioeconomic communities.

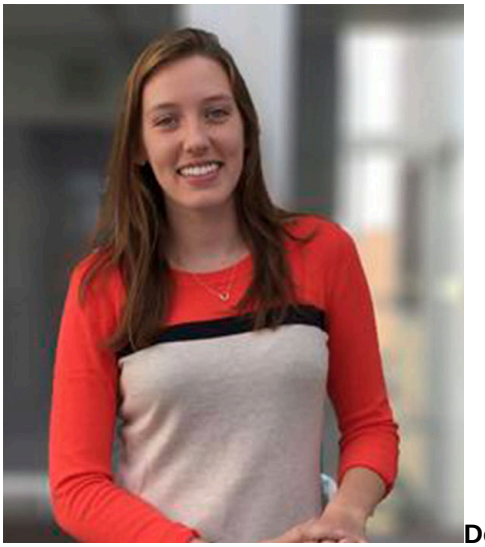
Undergraduate Teaching Fellow of the Year

For an outstanding teaching fellow

Connor Morrison, School of Teacher Education and Leadership

Connor Morrison is an elementary education major. For the past couple of years, Connor has been an Undergraduate Teaching Fellow for Dr. Emma Mecham in her course centered around the historical, social, and cultural foundations of education. He aids her in teaching about topics such as the purpose of school, its history and development, and the disparities in American education related to religion, nationality, language, class, gender, sexuality, and white privilege. Connor hopes to help future teachers see the importance of developing healthier attitudes about gender, sex, and sexuality.

Graduate Awards

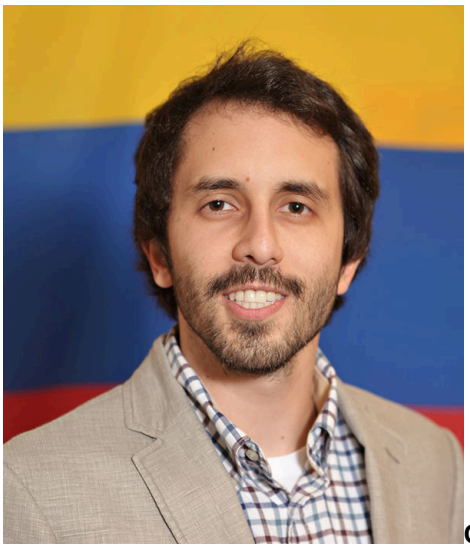


Doctoral Student Researcher of the Year

For valuable contributions by a doctoral student in the area of research

Whitney Livingston, Psychology

Whitney Livingston is fifth-year student pursuing her Combined Clinical/Counseling Psychology PhD. Whitney is a Presidential Doctoral Research Fellow working under the mentorship of Drs. Rebecca Blais and Jamison Fargo. She earned her Psychology B.A. from American University and completed a two-year postbaccalaureate research fellowship at the National Institutes of Health. Her research focuses on military sexual harassment/assault and mental health outcomes of sexual dysfunction, PTSD, depression, and suicide risk in military veterans, with the goals of prevention and intervention.

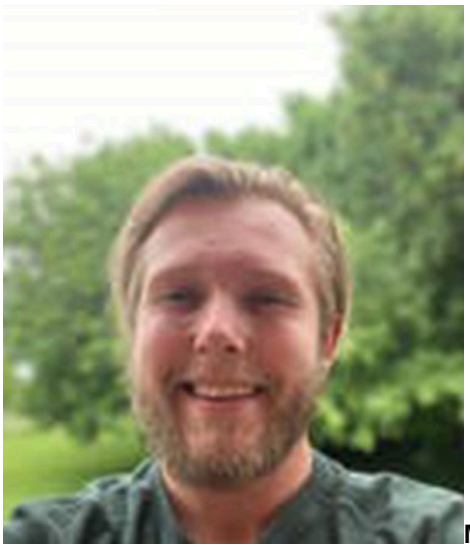


Graduate Student Teacher of the Year

For valuable contributions by a graduate student in the area of teaching

Juan Estrada, Psychology

Juan Estrada is a fourth-year doctoral student in the Clinical/Counseling Psychology program. His passions surround teaching undergraduate psychology and conducting clinical work. He is particularly interested in serving students and clients with marginalized identities. His research focuses on investigating protective properties of ethnic identity in promoting wellness in Latinx youth, as well as culturally adapting treatment for Latinx populations. Juan has taught five courses at USU, including Psychology of Gender, Behavioral Assessment and Intervention, and Introduction to Psychology.



Master's Student Researcher of the Year

For valuable contributions by a master's student in the area of research

Tyler Hansen, School of Teacher Education and Leadership

Tyler Hansen is a master's student, research assistant, and high school life sciences teacher. He finished his undergraduate with a bachelor's degree in biology and teaching. His research interests include scientific literacy, technology in the science classroom, and biology education research. He was named 2021 Teacher of the Year at Mountain Crest High School in Cache Valley. When he's not working, Tyler enjoys the great outdoors by backpacking, biking, and trying to identify as many species as possible along the way.

Faculty Awards

Eldon J. Gardner Teacher of the Year

For outstanding performance in the areas of teaching and learning

Kimberly Lott, School of Teacher Education and Leadership

Dr. Kimberly Lott currently serves as coordinator and initial advisor for all of the School of Teacher Education and Leadership master's programs and students, and she also advises multiple students in the science doctoral program. In addition to her work at USU, Dr. Lott uses her expertise to support teachers throughout the state of Utah. Her recent grant from the Utah State Board of Education is focused on training teachers to integrate science and literacy skills. She is a frequent contributor to Science and Children, the world's leading elementary science teacher practitioner journal.

Cazier Professor Lifetime Achievement Award

For 20+ years of consistent excellence from a senior faculty member

Steve Hawks, Kinesiology and Health Science

Dr. Steve Hawks began his career at USU in the fall of 1991, earning promotion and tenure in the HPER (now Kinesiology and Health Science) department. In 1997, he accepted an Executive Director position, overseeing distance education and extension efforts for USU's Southeast Region. Later he served as Interim Dean of the Uintah Basin Regional Campus and Dean of the Southwest/Moab Region. In 2018, Dr. Hawks returned to the faculty to support a new Masters of Public Health program. He is currently on assignment as a visiting professor at the University of Tsukuba, Japan.

Faculty Researcher of the Year

For outstanding research and scholarly contributions within the last five years

Mimi Recker, Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences

Mimi Recker is a professor of Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences. She earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of Pennsylvania and a PhD from the University of California, Berkeley. Her research focuses on helping educators and students reap the benefits of cyber-learning through access to high-quality, interactive, and free online learning resources. This line of research, largely funded National Science Foundation, has involved a dynamic mix of faculty, post-doctoral students, and graduate students from USU as well as around the world.

Faculty University Service Award

For outstanding leadership and excellent service to the university

Scott Hunsaker, School of Teacher Education and Leadership

Dr. Scott Hunsaker, in his 25th year at USU, is an Associate Professor in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership and director of TEAL Undergraduate Teacher Preparation. He teaches courses in educational foundations and gifted and talented education. He has published in the leading journals in gifted and talented education, including Gifted Child Quarterly, Journal for the Education of the Gifted, and Roeper Review. He has served on the board of directors for the National Association for Gifted Children and as president of the Utah Association for Gifted Children.

Outstanding Graduate Faculty Mentor of the Year

For excellence in mentoring graduate students to prepare them for productive careers

Jody Clarke-Midura, Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences

Jody Clarke-Midura is an associate professor of Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences. She is an educational designer and researcher who studies how people learn with digital media, toys, and games in the context of science, technology, engineering, math, and computer science. Her current research examines the classroom and district-level challenges in developing and adopting Computer Science resources, particularly in K-5 computing education. Jody's research has been supported by grants from the National Science Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Strong Human Services Award

For significant and sustained leadership in human services and applied research

Kristin Searle, Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences

Dr. Kristin Searle is an assistant professor of Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences. Her research focuses on how making activities (like electronic textiles) can broaden young peoples' sense of what computing is and who can do it. Dr. Searle has been internationally recognized for her qualitative research in computing education, receiving the 2015 John Henry Prize from the International Computing Education Research association. Her work has appeared in Harvard Educational Review, Thinking Skills and Creativity, and the International Journal of Multicultural Education.

Undergraduate Faculty Mentor of the Year

For faculty excellence in academic advising

David Law, Human Development and Family Studies

David Law is a professor in Human Development and Family Studies and associate director for the Uintah Basin Campus. He oversees the Statewide Faculty-to-Student Mentoring Program and teaches courses on marriage and family relations and family life education. His research interests are in the areas of family life education, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, and the impact of faculty-to-student mentoring on student success. He and his wife Shirlene enjoy running together and have completed 12 half-marathons. Their four children have all attended Utah State University.

Undergraduate Research Mentor of the Year

For an outstanding undergraduate reseach mentor

Breanne Litts, Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences

Breanne K. Litts is an assistant professor in Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences and director of Learn Explore Design Lab. She investigates how people learn through making, designing, and producing at the intersection of physical and digital worlds. She conducts this work in collaboration with Indigenous communities, formal and out-of-school educators, and other community organizations. Together they examine how to use technology to bring people together in cross-cultural contexts and how people collaborate across disciplines, communities, and cultures.

Staff Awards

Outstanding Staff of the Year

For carrying out responsbilities in an exceptional manner

Mary Ellen Heiner, Center for Persons with Disabilities

Mary Ellen Heiner has been working at the Center for Persons with Disabilities for almost 37 years. She provides administrative support to the staff in the Research and Training Division, instructs the Interdisciplinary Disability Awareness and Community-Engaged Learning course, is the proposal development coordinator for the CPD, and helps coordinate training and data entry for the National Information Reporting System. She is also an approved dissertation/thesis editor for the graduate school and has edited over 1,000 dissertations and theses for USU students.

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