CEHS Students, Faculty, and Staff Receive College and University Awards

06/14/2022

Utah State University Awards

D. Wynne Thorne Career Research Award: *For a lifelong career of outstanding research*

Melanie Domenech Rodríguez, Psychology

Dr. Melanie Domenech Rodríguez's research focuses on family processes in Spanish-speaking Latinx families and, more broadly, on multicultural issues in psychology. Her scholarship on cultural adaptations of evidence-based interventions addresses health disparities in access, acceptability, and effectiveness of treatment for ethnic and culturally diverse people. She is a past president of the National Latinx Psychological Association and of Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology. Dr. Domenech Rodríguez has chaired 24 dissertations to completion; 23 added specifically to scholarship on health disparities, and 19 were authored by graduate students of color.

Community-Engaged Faculty Presidential Award:*For outstanding community-engaged teaching and research*

Aurora Hughes Villa, School of Teacher Education and Leadership

Aurora Hughes Villa is the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Endowed Program Director for Elementary Arts Education and a Professional Practice Associate Professor at USU. Professor Hughes Villa's work reaches beyond USU to local students, educators, and the public through arts education and public initiatives. Hughes Villa founded "Art in Transit: From Schools to Community," a program that brings children's art into public places, and she was named the 2021 Utah Art Education Association Higher Education Art Educator of the Year. Hughes Villa received her BS in Arts Education and BFA in Ceramics from Buffalo State College and her MFA in Ceramics from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Professional Advisor of the Year: ***For excellence in academic advising***

Laura Parrish, Special Education & Rehabilitation Counseling

Laura Parrish is an undergraduate advisor in the Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling department. A proud USU alumna, Parrish graduated from Utah State with an undergraduate degree in Psychology and an emphasis in human resources. She also holds a master's degree in academic advising from Kansas State University. Parrish works with both traditional and non-traditional students to help them pursue a degree in Special Education. She greatly enjoys working with future special education and rehabilitation professionals who are eager to work hard and make a difference in the lives of special education students.

Legacy of Utah State Award

Honoring a student who represents the heart and soul of the university

Alejandro Vázquez, Psychology

Alejandro L. Vázquez is a fifth-year doctoral student in the Combined Clinical/Counseling Psychology program in the USU department of Psychology. Alejandro is a bicultural/bilingual Cuban American and the first in his family to access higher education. He is completing his doctoral training in the Culture and Mental Health Lab directed by Dr. Melanie Domenech Rodríguez. Vázquez's research focuses on reducing mental health disparities in underserved populations, with a specific interest in Latinx communities. He is interested in increasing engagement in youth mental health services through the optimization of screening tools, as well as identifying opportunities to integrate evidence-based interventions into formats that Latinx caregivers may find less stigmatizing and more accessible.

Undergraduate Awards

Scholar of the Year:*For excellence in scholarship and service to USU by a graduating senior*

Macie Armstrong, Communicative Disorders & Deaf Education

Macie Armstrong is a senior in the Communicative Disorders and Deaf Education department at Utah State. She has a passion for working with people and helping them improve their lives. After she graduates, she plans to earn a master's degree and clinical certification in speech-language pathology. Through her experience with Common Ground Outdoor Adventures and Mount Logan Middle School, Armstrong has discovered a love for working with minority populations, particularly people with disabilities. She hopes to work as a school-based speech-language pathologist or specialize in therapy for individuals with disabilities in her future speech-language pathology practice.

Undergraduate Student Researcher of the Year:*For outstanding undergraduate research*

Kate Pyfer, Communicative Disorders & Deaf Education

Kate Pyfer grew up in Grantsville, Utah and is a fourth generation Aggie. She earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology from USU and intended to pursue a PhD in child psychology. To gain experience, she volunteered in COMDDE professor Dr. Ronald Gillam's lab and was fascinated by their research. She changed her career path to one in speech language pathology and will complete her second bachelor's degree in Communication Disorders and Deaf Education in Fall 2022. Kate is passionate about helping others and would like to work in a hospital setting helping stroke patients regain the ability to communicate.

Undergraduate Teaching Fellow of the Year:*For outstanding teaching fellowship*

Jenny Le, Special Education & Rehabilitation Counseling

Jenny Le grew up in a Sun Valley, Idaho and is a first generation college graduate. Both her parents are native to Vietnam and did not pursue any education past 7th grade, so they made education a priority for Le and her siblings. Through their support, Le graduated with honors with two bachelor's degrees in education. As an undergraduate teaching fellow, Le has been able to share her passion for learning and teaching with fellow educators. She strives to create meaningful teaching moments that implement integrated learning, support diversity, and foster inclusion of students with diverse backgrounds.

Graduate Awards

Doctoral Student Researcher of the Year: *For valuable contributions by a doctoral student in the area of research*

Camille Wynn, Communicative Disorders & Deaf Education

Camille Wynn is currently in the fourth year of her PhD studying neuroscience with an emphasis in speech-language pathology. Wynn received her undergraduate and master's degrees in Communication Disorders from USU and is a Presidential Doctoral Research Fellow working under the mentorship of Dr. Stephanie Borrie. Before beginning her PhD, Camille worked as a speech-language pathologist at Cassia Regional Hospital in Burley, Idaho. Camille's research focuses on the speech coordination strategies used by adolescents and how disruptions in speech coordination impact the interactions of autistic adolescents.

Graduate Student Teacher of the Year: *For valuable contributions by a graduate student in the area of teaching*

Aubrey Rogowski, Instructional Technology & Learning Sciences

Aubrey Rogowski is a doctoral candidate in the Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences department at Utah State University. After teaching and integrating technology in her elementary classroom for three years, Rogowski returned to graduate school to further her education and prepare to teach and inspire future generations of teachers. She conducts research and evaluation work that is heavily focused on K-12 learning settings, and her areas of expertise include STEM-rich making, developing curriculum materials, teacher and librarian learning, and K-5 computational thinking and professional development.

Master's Student Researcher of the Year:*For valuable contributions by a master's student in the area of research*

Leandra Ashworth, Kinesiology & Health Science

Leandra Ashworth was born and raised in Las Vegas, Nevada. She came to Utah State University in 2016 to pursue a degree in Human Movement Science with a pre-physical therapy emphasis. Growing up, Ashworth played indoor and outdoor volleyball; an injury in her sport and weeks of physical therapy led to her interest in rehabilitation and kinesiology. She is now pursuing a master's degree in health and human movement science with an emphasis in exercise science. Ashworth's research focuses on minimizing fall risk in older populations through preventative measures such as strength training, and she hopes to contribute to new developments in fall prevention.

Faculty Awards

Eldon J. Gardner Teacher of the Year: *For outstanding performance in the areas of teaching and learning*

Kaitlin Bundock, Special Education & Rehabilitation Counseling

Dr. Kaitlin Bundock is an Assistant Professor of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling. She earned her bachelor's degree in political science and anthropology from Northern Arizona University, her MEd in special education from the University of Hawaii, and her PhD in Special Education from the University of Utah in 2015. She previously taught high school math in a resource setting in Salt Lake and in Kona, Hawaii. Dr. Bundock's primary research focus is effective instruction and intervention for secondary students struggling in mathematics. She also focuses on variables that impact student success, such as behavioral interventions, engagement, and self-regulation.

Faculty Researcher of the Year: ***For outstanding research and scholarly contributions within the last five years***

Kay Bradford, Human Development & Family Studies

Dr. Kay Bradford is a Professor of Human Development and Family Studies at Utah State University. He is also an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Clinical Fellow and a licensed marriage and family therapist. Dr. Bradford's research focuses on processes and outcomes in relationship education, and he is the principal investigator on a $3.4 million federal grant to strengthen the relationships of at-risk youth. Additionally, he is involved in three other federal grants totaling $11.2 million. These projects serve thousands of at-risk youth as well as low-income and incarcerated adults across the state of Utah.

Faculty University Service Award:***For outstanding leadership and excellent service to the university***

Marilyn Cuch, School of Teacher Education & Leadership

Marilyn Cuch is Hunkpapa Lakota from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of North and South Dakota. She is a Senior Lecturer and co-coordinator of the Secondary Teacher Education program in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership. Dr. Cuch's teaching and academic interests focus on secondary science education, curriculum development and instruction, and culturally relevant teacher preparation. Marilyn also advises Secondary Teacher Education majors at USU's Statewide Campuses while working with Indigenous populations in Utah to meet the critical education needs in teacher preparation.

Outstanding Graduate Faculty Mentor of the Year:*For excellence in preparing graduate students for productive careers*

Tyler Renshaw, Psychology

Dr. Tyler Renshaw is an Associate Professor of Psychology and co-director of the School Psychology Specialization program at Utah State University. Dr. Renshaw's research aims to improve the accessibility and quality of school-based mental health services. He is particularly interested in validating brief rating scales for measuring mental health and evaluating the effects of mindfulness-based interventions. Dr. Renshaw holds a PhD in Combined Clinical/Counseling and School Psychology from UC Santa Barbara. At USU, heteaches graduate seminars, supervises a graduate clinical practicum, and directs a graduate research lab focused around school-based mental health services.

Strong Human Services Award: *For significant and sustained leadership in human services and applied research*

Sue Olsen, Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice

Sue Olsen is the director for the Division of Exemplary Services in the Institute for Disability Research, Policy and Practice at Utah State. This division provides numerous services to the community, including clinical services, TOP sports activities, the Disability Support Center for Families, and the Up To 3 Early Intervention Program. Olsen's primary goal is to ensure that all services provided by the Division support and enhance capabilities and self-determination for individuals and families. Though a comprehensive and interdisciplinary array of services, Olsen's division supports expanded opportunites for community participation.

Undergraduate Faculty Mentor of the Year: *For faculty excellence in academic advising*

Emma Mecham, School of Teacher Education & Leadership

Emma Mecham currently serves as a Professional Practice Assistant Professor in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at Utah State University. She received her doctorate degree in Education, Culture, and Society from the University of Utah in 2008. She has had the opportunity to work as a research associate at the Center for the Study of Empowered Students of Color at the U, and she has been a teacher in a variety of elementary schools—from India, to Peru, to Nibley, Utah. Her research interests include teacher preparation, identify formation and learning, place-based education, educational policy, and equity in education.

Undergraduate Research Mentor of the Year:*For outstanding undergraduate research mentorship*

Chris Dakin, Kinesiology & Health Science

Dr. Chris Dakin is an Assistant Professor in the department of Kinesiology and Health Science. He received his undergraduate degree in Human Kinetics and his PhD in Neuromechanics from the University of British Columbia, Canada. Following his PhD, Dr. Dakin spent three years as a post-Doctoral fellow between the Department of Neuroscience at Baylor College of Medicine and the Institute of Neurology at University College London. Dr. Dakin's research examines how sensory information is used to control and stabilize human movement. He enjoys the opportunity to foster scientific literacy in the next generation of scientific researchers.

Staff Awards

Outstanding Staff of the Year:*For carrying out responsibilities in an exceptional manner*

Lisa Christensen, Office of Undergraduate Affairs

Lisa Christensen grew up in Smithfield, Utah. She graduated from Sky View High School and then completed a two-year secretarial degree at USU in 1981. In 2006, Christensen was hired as a staff assistant at Utah State University in the Board of Trustees and Government Relations office. She began working for the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services in 2007, accepting a position as coordinator of programs in the Graduation, Educator Licensing, and Accreditation Office in 2015. Christensen loves working at Utah State University and the College because of the wonderful people she has been able to meet and collaborate with over the past 15 years.

Contents

- University Awards
- Legacy of Utah State Award
- Undergraduate Awards
- Graduate Awards
- Faculty Awards
- Staff Awards