

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Doctoral Commencement Ceremony

AUGUST 6, 2026



Doctoral Commencement Ceremony

Thursday, August 6, 2026

3:00 p.m.

Littlejohn Coliseum
Clemson, South Carolina

ORDER OF CEREMONIES

Processional
Stage Party

National Anthem
(Please stand as you are able)

Opening of Ceremony
University Marshal

Welcome and Introductions
John Lopes
Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

GRADUATE ADDRESS
Jeremiah Farmer
Literacy, Language and Culture

Remarks
John Lopes
Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
and
J. Cole Smith
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Conferring of Degrees
President Benjamin C. Ayers

Alma Mater
*(See last page for lyrics;
please stand as you are able and remain standing for the recessional of the stage party)*

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DEANS

Sean Brittain.....Associate Provost and
Dean of Undergraduate Learning
John Lopes.....Associate Provost and
Dean of the Graduate School
Matt Holt..... Dean, College of Agriculture,
Forestry and Life Sciences
Ece ErdogmusDean, College of Architecture,
Art and Construction
Nicholas Vazsonyi Dean, College of Arts and Humanities
Leslie Hossfeld Dean, College of Behavioral,
Social and Health Sciences
Wendy York..... Dean, Wilbur O. and Ann Powers
College of Business
Kristin M. Gehsmann.....Dean, College of Education
Anand K. Gramopadhye.....Dean, College of Engineering,
Computing and Applied Sciences
Cynthia Y. Young Dean, College of Science
Steven Marks Dean, College of Veterinary Medicine
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GRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Kazi Jewel Rana President
Elletson Dubose..... Interim Vice President

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

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Academic Affairs and Provost
Maxwell Allen Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff
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Matt Holt Dean, College of Agriculture,
Forestry and Life Sciences
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Finance and Operations
and Chief Financial Officer
Brian VossVice President and Chief Information Officer,
Clemson Computing and Information Technology
Robert Donato Chief Strategy Officer

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

John LopesAssociate Provost and Dean
Natasha N. Croom Associate Dean
William Ferrell..... Associate Dean
Jeffrey C. Hallo Associate Dean
Jenny PresgravesAssistant Dean

ASSOCIATE DEANS, SCHOOL DIRECTORS, AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences

Carlyle Brewster
Interim Associate Dean of Research & Director of
Experiment Studies

Matthew Interis
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Thomas Dobbins
Associate Dean of Outreach and Engagement
and Director of Clemson Cooperative Extension

Charles V. Privette, III.....Agricultural Sciences
Jim Strickland, interimAnimal and Veterinary Sciences
Ramesh Jeganathan Food, Nutrition, and Packaging Sciences
Kyle Barrett..... Forestry and Environmental Conservation
Jim Faust, interim..... Plant and Environmental Sciences

College of Architecture, Art and Construction

Ufuk Ersoy
Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs

Vivek Sharma
Associate Dean of Student Excellence

Dan Harding, interim..... Richard A. McMahan School of Architecture
Valerie A. ZimanyDepartment of Art
Tom Leathem.....Nieri Family Department of
Construction and Real Estate Development

College of Arts and Humanities

Michael LeMahieu
Associate Dean for Undergraduate and Graduate Studies

Amit Bein
Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs

William Stockton..... English
Stephanie Barczewski History and Geography
Lisa Melonçon.....Interdisciplinary Studies
Joseph Mai..... Languages
Linda DzurisPerforming Arts
Ben White.....Philosophy and Religion

College of Behavioral, Social and Health Sciences

Bryan Miller
Associate Dean for Research

Edmond P. Bowers
Associate Dean for Graduate Studies,
Engagement and Assessment

Denise M. Anderson
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies,
Faculty Success and Well-Being

Lior Rennert
Associate Dean for Health Sciences

John Whitcomb..... School of Nursing
Deana Sellnow Communication

Robert Barcelona.....Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management
Joseph Daniel Ura..... Political Science
Patrick H. Raymark.....Psychology
Wiley Jenkins.....Public Health Sciences
Katherine E. WeisenseeSociology, Anthropology and
Criminal Justice

Wilbur O. and Ann Powers College of Business

Carl W. Hollingsworth
Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Jennifer Siemens
Associate Dean for Faculty Excellence

Scott Baier
Acting Associate Dean for Research

Robin Radtke School of Accountancy
Robert Tamura, acting..... Economics
Brandon Lockhart, acting..... Finance
Charles “Chip” Tonkin Graphic Communications
Craig Wallace Management
Danny Weathers Marketing
Jane Layton, interim..... MBA

College of Education

Celeste C. Bates
Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies

Michelle P. Cook
Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies
and Faculty Engagement

Edmond P. Bowers, acting Education and Human Development
Hans W. Klar.....Educational and Organizational
Leadership Development
Kristen CuthrellTeaching and Learning

College of Engineering, Computing and Applied Sciences

Daniel L. Noneaker
Senior Associate Dean of Strategic Initiatives
and Faculty Affairs

Thompson Mefford
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies

Melissa C. Smith
Associate Dean for Graduate Studies

Delphine Dean Bioengineering
David A. Bruce Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
Jesus M. de la Garza School of Civil and Environmental
Engineering and Earth Sciences
Brian Dean School of Computing
Hai Xiao Electrical and Computer Engineering
Melissa C. Smith..... Engineering and Science Education
R. Joe Watkins..... General Engineering

Kevin M. Taaffe.....Industrial Engineering
Kyle S. BrinkmanMaterials Science and Engineering
Laine Mears School of Mechanical and Automotive Engineering

David F. Clayton Genetics and Biochemistry
Colin Gallagher.....School of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences
Chad Sosolik.....Physics and Astronomy

College of Science

Stephen E. Creager
Associate Dean for Discovery, Graduate Education,
Space Optimization and Faculty Affairs

Calvin L. Williams
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Excellence
and Global Engagement

Karolina Mukhtar..... Biological Sciences
Daniel Whitehead.....Chemistry

College of Veterinary Science

Brian Butler
Associate Dean of Clinical Programs

Nicki Wise
Associate Dean of Academic Affairs

Jonathan Fogle, interim Veterinary Medicine and Sciences

GRADUATE ADDRESS



For each doctoral commencement ceremony, one graduating student is chosen by a panel of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars to deliver the Graduate Address.

Today's speaker is Jeremiah Farmer, who is graduating with a Ph.D. in Literacy, Language and Culture from the College of Education.

The text of Jeremiah's speech will be available [HERE](#) shortly after the conclusion of today's ceremony.

A SLIDESHOW OF PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY TODAY'S GRADUATES

Click or Tap to play



2026 AWARDS IN GRADUATE EDUCATION

Outstanding Graduate Researcher Award

Augustine Owusu Achiaw

Teaching and Learning

Chloe Forenzo

Graduate, Chemical Engineering

Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award

Janghyeok An

Economics

Rosemaria Serradimigni

Environmental Toxicology

Frankie O. Felder Graduate Student Award of Excellence

Srikanth Rapala

Chemical Engineering

Commitment to Community and Engagement Award

Jared Kettinger

Graduate, Mathematical and Statistical Sciences

Distinguished Doctoral Mentoring Award

Rachel Margaret Mayo, Ph.D.

Professor, Public Health Sciences

Distinguished Graduate Student Support Staff Award

Shay Stewart Vinson, M.Ed.

Student Services Coordinator, Richard A. McMahan School of Architecture

CENTENNIAL MEDALLION

To honor the extraordinary dedication and achievement of today's graduates, each one will receive a medallion celebrating 100 years of graduate education at Clemson University. Each medallion features a logo specifically designed for the centennial celebration.



DOCTORAL COMMENCEMENT

The doctoral hood is a symbolic honor of distinction bestowed upon scholars who have attained the highest level of formal education available in the world, representing a typical range of five to seven years of study beyond the bachelor's degree. Clemson's 46-inch-long doctoral hood is usually draped over the shoulders by the faculty member who, as chair of the advisory committee, has

The University has named "Clemson purple" *Regalia* in a nod to the doctoral commencement gowns.

formally mentored and guided the student's research and education.

You will note that faculty members are wearing gowns, caps and hoods of many colors and designs. These academic costumes of medieval origin are, for faculty with degrees from U.S. institutions, specified by a uniform code maintained by the American

Council on Education. Caps are black and are usually mortar boards or tams with tassels. Doctors of philosophy wear gold tassels usually of metallic thread; those with other degrees wear black or discipline colors. Those who have received their degrees from institutions outside the United States wear regalia specified by the awarding institutions.

Doctors' gowns are full, with bell-like sleeves. The front is bordered with velvet panels and the sleeves are marked by three velvet bars. While some gowns are black with black velvet, one variation is to replace black velvet with velvet in the discipline color. A second variation is a colored gown usually of the university's colors.

All hoods specify the level of degree, the type of discipline studied and the awarding institution. The width of the velvet trim conveys the degree. In addition, the degree is indicated by the color of the trim edging the hood to form the throat over the gown. The most frequently seen color is dark blue, which designates the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree. Finally, the color of the hood's lining is specific to the awarding institution. The colors are displayed in combinations that are drawn from heraldry. Notice that the Clemson University hood is lined with purple through which is an orange chevron (a "V"). Although many combinations are duplicated by dozens of institutions, Clemson is presently the only institution with that registered combination of purple and orange.

The officers, trustees and honored guests wear academic, ecclesiastical or military regalia as



set forth by their professions. The president of Clemson University wears a purple gown with four velvet bars piped in orange and the University seal embroidered on the panels. Each trustee wears a similar gown with three velvet bars piped in orange for doctorates and an embroidered palmetto tree on each sleeve for those who do not hold doctorates. Trustee hoods are either from Clemson or from the awarding school.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GRADUATE EDUCATION AND THE GRADUATE SCHOOL AT CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

[Clemson's faculty] would engage in original and important research, by which knowledge would be increased, whilst the immediate objects . . . would be the diffusion of facts on all scientific subjects. It would be vain to attempt to fix a limit to the benefits that would thus be conferred upon mankind and their effects upon society...

— THOMAS GREEN CLEMSON¹

In conceptualizing a “high seminary of learning” for South Carolina, Thomas Green Clemson knowingly set the stage for graduate education to emerge as an engine of economic development in the state. Graduate education quickly became synonymous with the application of theory to improving the practices of education and agriculture. The analysis of fertilizer, a contracted activity of the chemistry department that began in the late 1930s, would help restore depleted South Carolina soils, increase agricultural production, and spur a rapid development in opportunities for students at Clemson College to study beyond the baccalaureate degree.

Graduate coursework initially responded to the needs of veterans and to the interests of teachers wanting to improve their classroom skills, but also — from its inception — attracted international students' attention. On June 3, 1924, Patrick Hobson of Sandy Springs, South Carolina, earned the first master's degree awarded at Clemson. He used his degree in vocational education to serve as a high school principal and later as superintendent of schools in York County, South Carolina and Mitchell County, North Carolina. The third graduate degree, a master's in textile industrial education awarded to Ko-Chia Li from Mukden, China, on June 1, 1926, initiated an enrollment trend that has catapulted China to its status as the number-one sending country for international graduate students for many years. Mr. Li returned to China and taught as a professor of textile engineering at Peking University and served as head of the construction department in LiaoBei Province.

From 1938 until 1945, all aspects of graduate education (courses, programs, policies, procedures, admission, and graduation) developed under the auspices of the Committee on Graduate Instruction, chaired by F. H. H. Calhoun, Dean of the School of Chemistry and Geology. Twice during these years, the University's attempts to formalize graduate education were thwarted because of the challenges to the Committee to maintain the necessary standards of quality. Clemson faculty recognized early that to establish a graduate program that enabled Clemson alumni to enroll would require strengthening the undergraduate curriculum and courses to prevent knowledge gaps “between the two.”²

On March 14, 1945, President Poole received the Committee's resolution requesting the appointment of a Dean of the Graduate School. It had been ascertained by that time that 19 courses could be offered immediately by the schools of agriculture, chemistry, engineering, textiles, and arts and sciences.

On July 27, 1946, the Board of Trustees approved the Committee's proposed graduate program of study and, that fall, formally admitted the first class of students into “the Graduate School.” However, it would not be until June 15, 1951, that Herbert J. Webb, Chair of the Department of Chemistry and Toxicology, was appointed as the first Dean of the Graduate School.

Masterfully stewarded by President Poole himself and modeled initially after several prestigious southern institutions, Clemson's graduate programs grew cautiously but the officers, trustees and honored guests wear academic, ecclesiastical or military regalia as set forth by their professions. The president of Clemson University wears a purple gown with four velvet bars piped in orange and the University seal embroidered on the panels. Each trustee wears a similar gown with three velvet bars piped in orange commemorating the first doctoral degree, in plant pathology, granted in 1955. Today, the Graduate School proudly enrolls more than 5,800 graduate students and is committed to continued growth at both the master's and doctoral levels.

1. Holmes, A. and G.R. Sherrill. *Thomas Green Clemson: His Life and Work*. 1937, p. 129.
2. Clemson University Library System archives. *Minutes of the Committee on Graduate Instruction*, 1945-1953, p. 7.

CANDIDATES FOR THE DOCTORAL DEGREE
JOHN LOPES, DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY
AND LIFE SCIENCES

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Agriculture

Matthew James FischerPendleton, South Carolina

B.S., M.S., Clemson University

An Examination in the Southeastern Feeder Cattle Cash Price Market: Evidence from Regional Price Relationships, Basis, and Value-Added Programs.

Advised by Dr. Nathan Smith and Dr. Anastasia Thayer

Animal and Veterinary Sciences

Mostafa Gamal Naguib AhmedGiza, Egypt

B.V.Sc., M.V.Sc., Cairo University

Multi-Antigen Subunit Vaccine Encapsulated in Chitosan Nanoparticles for Control of Campylobacter jejuni in Chickens

Advised by Dr. Khaled Abdelaziz

Erika Christine HwangColumbia, South Carolina

B.S., M.S., Clemson University

Effects of Dietary Supplementation of Conjugated Linoleic Acid on Naturally Occurring Joint Disease in Exercised Horses

Advised by Dr. Kristine Vernon

Erika was named the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences' Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant in 2025 and plans to work in academia or the equine industry.

Aliute-Nkoyo Sophia Udoka.....Greensboro, North Carolina

B.S., M.S., Clemson University

Molecular and Nutritional Regulation of Skeletal Muscle Growth in Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)

Advised by Dr. Susan Duckett

Aliute-Nkoyo was named the 2026 College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences Outstanding Graduate Assistant and is a recipient of the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Predoctoral Fellowship from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (2023-2026) and the Wade Stackhouse Fellowship (2025-2026). She has authored or coauthored five peer-reviewed publications, with additional manuscripts currently under review, and completed Clemson University's Engineering, Science and Education (ESED) Certificate in 2026. Following graduation, she plans to pursue a career in research and higher education focused on animal physiology, nutrition and aquaculture.

Food, Nutrition, and Packaging Sciences

Erika Margarite RichterHouston, Texas

B.S., Baylor University; M.S., Auburn University

Epigenetic Signatures of Sleep Timing as an Early-Life Driver of Childhood Obesity

Advised by Dr. Geetha Thangiah

Erika has authored four first-author peer-reviewed publications, including research published in *Clinical Epigenetics*, a journal within the Nature portfolio. Her work focuses on lifestyle factors such as sleep and nutrition and their impact on epigenetics in relation to childhood obesity. She has received multiple research honors, including first-place awards for oral presentations. Following graduation, she will join Columbia University as a postdoctoral fellow, where she will continue her research in nutrition and cardiometabolic health.

Forest Resources

Ebere Loretto AnozieUnubi, Nigeria

B.S., M.S., University of Benin

Regional Forecasting of Southern Pine Beetle Outbreaks in the Southeastern USA Using SPBOM1 with Artificial Intelligence-Based Modeling

Advised by Dr. Bo Song and Dr. David Coyle

George Ryan BohannonMebane, North Carolina

B.S., M.S., North Carolina State University

Silviculture for Coastal Forest Resilience: Promoting Forest Regeneration and Managing Invasive Plant Species

Advised by Dr. Geoff Wang

Armin WeiseChemnitz, Germany

B.A., Warren Wilson College; M.S., Clemson University

Considerations and Challenges for Oak-Pine Woodland Restoration

Advised by Dr. Donald Hagan

Armin has collaborated with natural resource managers to restore natural communities using prescribed fire, with a focus on how invasive silvergrass poses a challenge for these conservation efforts. He has accepted a faculty position at Western Carolina University.

Plant and Environmental Sciences

Om Prakash GhimireClemson, South Carolina

B.S., Sam Higginbottom Institute of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences; M.S., Indian Agricultural Research Institute

Root Phenotypes That Improve Water Use Efficiency and Yield of Cotton

Advised by Dr. Sruthi Narayanan

Om won first place in the oral presentation in the Crop Physiology and Metabolism Division and was a finalist in the society-wide student competition at the Crop Science Society of America's 2023 annual conference. He also organized ComSciCon-Atlanta 2025, a science communication workshop for the southeastern United States, and was selected for several summer schools and training programs.

Luvina Bondoc Madrid.....Quezon, Philippines

B.S., Far Eastern University; M.S., Central Luzon State University

Evaluating the Responses of Organic Corn Systems to Interseeded Cover Crops, Seeding Rate, and Tillage

Advised by Dr. Sruthi Narayanan and Dr. Rongzhong Ye

Luvina received first place in the 2025 College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences' Three-Minute Thesis competition and won best poster awards at regional and national conferences.

Frank Eli OliverSmithville, Tennessee

B.S., University of Tennessee, Knoxville; M.S., Utah State University

Soil Carbon and Nitrogen Cycling in Organically Managed Sandy Soils Under Cover Crop-Based Conservation Management

Advised by Dr. Rongzhong Ye

Simardeep Singh.....Charleston, South Carolina

Weed and Root-Knot Nematode Management in Sweetpotato Through Anaerobic Soil Disinfestation

Advised by Dr. Matthew Cutulle and Dr. Churamani Khanal

Wildlife and Fisheries Biology

Meghan Patricia Keating.....Modesto, California

B.S., Colorado State University; M.S., University of Nevada, Reno

Effects of Urbanization on Barrier Island Bobcats

Advised by Dr. David Jachowski

Meghan was awarded the Dr. Kenyon Fairey Annual Doctoral Fellowship and the Douglas R. Phillips Award in 2024 and was named Graduate Student Employee of the Year in 2025. She has ten peer-reviewed publications, with another under review. Her work has been featured in national and international media outlets and has led to regulatory change in South Carolina. She has accepted a postdoctoral position at Clemson University and is excited to remain part of the Clemson community.

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE, ART AND CONSTRUCTION

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Design and the Built Environment

Seonghyuk Son.....Daegu, South Korea

Exploring Optimal Indoor Environmental and Spatial Conditions in Virtual Reality: Implications for Human Experience and Productivity

Advised by Dr. Dongwoo Jason Yeom

Seonghyuk's research focuses on human-building interaction, virtual reality and smart home systems that enhance occupant experience in the built environment. He will begin as an assistant professor in the School of Architecture at the University of Kentucky.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Rhetorics, Communication and Information Design

Frances Ellen Chapman.....Ware Shoals, South Carolina

B.A., Columbia College; M.A.T., University of South Carolina; M.A.E., Clemson University

Rhetorics of the Lost Cause Myth and Its Lingering Hegemony in the South

Advised by Dr. Vernon Burton

Frances has received the Doctoral Dissertation Completion Grant and the Interdisciplinary Research Fellowship. She has three peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, all of which have either already been published or will be in 2026. She has accepted positions at Lander University, Spartanburg Methodist College and Tri-County Technical College to continue teaching first-year students to write.

- Andrew Nii Okai OkaiAccra, Ghana
 B.S., Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology; M.A., East Tennessee State University
 “SankɔFa Sini” and the Recovery of the Storying Foundations of Afrofuturistic Film
 Advised by Dr. David Blakesley
 Andrew received the Best Emerging Filmmaker award at the African Film Festival in 2024 and won Best Art Film at the Charlotte Black Film Festival that same year.
- Molly Claire RiddellAmarillo, Texas
 B.A., University of North Texas; M.A., Iowa State University
 The Populist Fantasy-Themes of Social Media Influencers During the 2024 Presidential Election
 Advised by Dr. Darren Linvill
- Ashlyn Christine WaldenLandis, North Carolina
 B.A., Western Carolina University; M.A., University of North Carolina Charlotte
 The Pedagogies and Practice of CARE: Evolving A Collective Access Research Ethic (CARE)in Higher Education
 Advised by Dr. Aga Skrodzka
 Ashlyn is a senior lecturer at UNC Charlotte and maintains an active research agenda in digital composition and accessibility. She is incredibly grateful for the support of her family and friends, especially her sons, Liam and Barrett, who made this achievement possible.
- Gabrielle Aurora Wilkosz.....Rochester, New York
 B.A., St. Edward's University; M.A., Clemson University
 The Rhetoric of Flattery: Institutional Identity, Embodiment, and Persuasion in Papal Discourse
 Advised by Dr. Bryan Denham
 Gabrielle is a 2019 Fulbright awardee and a 2023 recipient of the Thomas E. Douglass Award for Excellence in Teaching.

COLLEGE OF BEHAVIORAL, SOCIAL
AND HEALTH SCIENCES

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Healthcare Genetics and Genomics

Brooke GoodenowDaytona Beach, Florida

B.S., University of Central Florida; M.S., University of South Florida

Exploring Public Perceptions of Genetic Risk in Substance Use Disorders

Advised by Dr. Kendra Allison

Brooke is the process improvement and research manager at SMA Healthcare in Central Florida. Her doctoral research explored public perceptions of genetic risk in addiction using social media data. She is passionate about improving healthcare through research, quality improvement and innovation.

Elizabeth VanSickleGrand Rapids, Michigan

B.S., M.S., Michigan State University

Clinical Characterization of the Polyaminopathies and the Development of a Novel Zebrafish Model for
Bachmann-Bupp Syndrome

Advised by Dr. Sara Sarasua

Liz serves as a scientist in the Division of Genetics and Genomics at Corewell Health Helen DeVos Children's Hospital, a mentor for medical students in clinical research at the Michigan State University College of Human Medicine and a scientist for the International Center for Polyamine Disorders. She has coauthored 27 papers, including the *GeneReviews* entry for Bachmann-Bupp syndrome, as well as two first-author publications. During her time in the healthcare genetics and genomics program, Liz also co-authored a paper outside her dissertation with her co-chair and was invited to present her work at several domestic and international conferences.

Human Factors Psychology

Tyler Joseph DuffrinJackson, Michigan

B.A., Denison University; M.S., Illinois State University

Perceiving Affordances with Tools in Virtual Reality: Pseudo-Haptics & the KSD Principle

Advised by Dr. Christopher Pagano

Connie KuRichmond Hill, California

Explaining the Relationship Between Trust and Dependence: The Unexplored Interactive Effect of
Workload and Individual Differences in Cognitive Abilities

Advised by Dr. Richard Pak

Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Elizabeth BellSaint Louis, Missouri

B.A., DePauw University; M.S., Clemson University

When AI Joins the Team: Exploring Team Development Interventions in Human-AI Teaming

Advised by Dr. Allison Traylor

Marlee Johnson MooreBirmingham, Alabama

B.A., Rollins College; M.S., Clemson University

When Does Incongruity Pay? Exploring Boundary Conditions of Incongruity Credits in NIL Deals

Advised by Dr. Marissa Shuffler and Dr. Allison Traylor

Jordan BrittPiedmont, South Carolina

B.S., M.S., M.S., Clemson University; M.S., Clemson University

A Socio-Cognitive Process Theory of Error Response: Evidence from Shot Selection in Basketball

Advised by Dr. Robert R. Sinclair and Dr. Susan Limber

Meredith Jordan PoolFort Mill, South Carolina

B.S., M.S., Clemson University

Going Green: A Multilevel Examination of Sustainability Climate Formation

Advised by Dr. Robert R. Sinclair

Meredith's graduate experience has spanned research, teaching, mentoring and applied consulting. She has presented her research at national and international conferences, taught courses in organizational psychology and research methods, mentored 33 undergraduate researchers through Clemson's Creative Inquiry program and gained industry experience through consulting, talent management and organizational development roles. After graduation, she plans to pursue a full-time career in industry while continuing to travel, backpack and convince others that sustainability and well-being belong in the workplace.

Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management

Mondira BardhanKhulna, Bangladesh

Understanding Health Impacts and Adaptive Capacity in Response to Extreme Heat in U.S. Summer Camps

Advised by Dr. Matthew Browning

Mondira has accepted a faculty position at the University of Georgia.

Fu LiNanfeng, China

B.L.A., Shenyang Jianzhu University; M.L.A., Peking University

Designing a Replication-Ready Virtual Reality Research Infrastructure for Environmental Psychology: A
Research-through-Design Inquiry

Advised by Dr. Matthew Browning

Fu was named a Clemson University Graduate Fellow, a competitive merit-based fellowship. Following graduation, he will join the faculty of the landscape architecture program in Clemson University's Richard A. McMahan School of Architecture.

Policy Studies

Chikezie Adindu Isiguzo.....Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

B.S., University of Nigeria; M.S., Carnegie Mellon University; M.B.A., Bangor University

Digital Money and Financial Inclusion: Microfoundations, Macro Diffusion, and Micro-Macro Interactions
Using the Global Findex Database

Advised by Dr. Lori Dickes

Chikezie is a public policy scholar, banking professional and risk management expert with more than two decades of leadership experience in financial regulation, internal audit, governance and institutional development. His work has strengthened banking supervision, financial stability and organizational resilience across multiple jurisdictions. A passionate researcher and educator, his doctoral studies at Clemson University focused on public policy and governance. He is dedicated to advancing ethical leadership, innovation and evidence-based policymaking for societal impact.

Md Ashiqur RabDhaka, Bangladesh

B.B.A., University of Dhaka, Bangladesh; M.B.A., Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas

Essays on Opioid Prescription Limit Policy Diffusion, Evaluation, and Opioid Use Disorder Treatment
Utilization

Advised by Dr. Lori Dickes

Ashiqur has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship offer at the Addiction Science Center of East Tennessee State University.

Alesia A SmithClemson, South Carolina

B.S., M.S., Illinois State University

Equity in Healthcare: Exploring the Viability of Reparations as a Means to Address Racial Health
Inequities, Invest in the Community and Bestow Reconciliation for African Americans

Advised by Dr. Kenneth Robinson

WILBUR O. AND ANN POWERS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Economics

Pratistha AdhikariKathmandu, Nepal

B.A., Ramapo College of New Jersey; M.S., Clemson University

Essays on Gender Reforms, Education, and Child Marriage in India

Advised by Dr. Jonathan M. Leganza

Pratistha was awarded the Hugh H. Macaulay Award for Outstanding Graduate Student in 2023 and the Southern Economic Association Graduate Student Award in 2025. She is joining the School of Economics at the Georgia Institute of Technology as a postdoctoral fellow.

Huiyu YangJingmen, China

B.A., Hubei University of Technology; M.A., University of International Business and Economics; M.S., Clemson University

Essays on Reputation and Feedback Systems in Digital Markets

Advised by Dr. Babur De los Santos

Business Administration

Michelle Renee GrasFort Mill, South Carolina

B.S., United States Air Force Academy; M.P.A., Southern Illinois University; M.B.A., University of Birmingham

Strategic Ties That Bind: How Founder Identity Shapes Enduring Imprints Across the Firm and Community

Advised by Dr. Chad Navis

Michelle plans to continue her current career as an executive director in the financial services industry while pursuing an adjunct professor position in a Master of Business Administration program.

Gabriela Maria PeschieraPiedmont, South Carolina

B.A., Kalamazoo College; M.A., Western Michigan University

Toward a Conceptual and Methodological Understanding of Supervisor Gaslighting in the Workplace

Advised by Dr. J. Craig Wallace

Gaby is a faculty member in Clemson University's Department of Management and teaches general management, global business and organizational behavior courses. She will assume additional administrative responsibilities for the department in the Fall. She presented at the 2026 Academy of Management Annual Meeting and will continue research on dysfunctional workplace behaviors, with a specific focus on the underexplored phenomenon of workplace gaslighting.

Ondina Sevilla RovirosaTabasco, Mexico

B.S., La Universidad de las Américas Puebla; M.B.A., Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education;
M.S., Oklahoma State University

An Expectancy-Based Theory of the Firm: How Media Tone and CEO–Media Political Ideological
Alignment Shape Corporate Investment

Advised by Dr. Amy Ingram

Ondina is an entrepreneur, former industry executive and lecturer in business strategy at Clemson University. She received Clemson University’s 2026 Junior Teaching Excellence Award. Before pursuing her doctorate, she founded and was an executive at multiple businesses. She plans to continue her academic career while pursuing opportunities that combine teaching, strategic management research, industry collaboration and entrepreneurship, with a passion for connecting rigorous scholarship to real-world business practice.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Education Systems Improvement Science

Deirdre Lucille ApplebyBeaufort, South Carolina

B.S. - Southern Illinois University; M.S.A., Central Michigan University; Ed.S., The Citadel

Teacher Self-Efficacy and Student Engagement in Rural Science, Technology, Engineering, and
Mathematics Magnet Schools: A Correlational Study Within an Improvement Science Context

Advised by Dr. Noelle Paufler

Dee has dedicated her career to transforming education through innovation, leadership and a commitment to equity. As director of a federally funded magnet initiative, she expands pathways in high-demand STEM fields while also serving as president of the South Carolina affiliate of Women in CyberSecurity. Recognized as one of only 30 selected from more than 3,000 applicants, she continues to advance her impact through national programs in artificial intelligence, governance and risk, and public speaking leadership.

Alexis Williamson Black.....Columbia, South Carolina

B.S., Winthrop University; M.Ed., Coastal Carolina University; Ed.S., Clemson University

Changing the Trajectory: A School Based Mentorship Program to Improve Attendance and Belonging

Advised by Dr. Noelle Paufler

Alexis serves in public education in Richland School District Two and has accepted a position as a special education program specialist. Her doctoral work focused on improving student outcomes through school-based mentoring and fostering students’ sense of belonging. As a first-generation doctoral graduate, she is passionate about creating systems of support that change trajectories and expand equitable opportunities for students and schools.

Logan Dexter Greene.....Hoover, Alabama

B.A., M.Ed., University of Montevallo; Ed.S., University of North Alabama

"Growing Our Own Garden: The Implementation of Cross Curricular and Cross Grade Level Teacher Rounds to Increase Professional Learning Individualization and Feedback"

Advised by Dr. Noelle Paufler

Logan is the seventh-grade assistant principal at Simmons Middle School in Birmingham, Alabama. His research and work focus on improving teacher professional learning through collaboration and feedback and on equity and tolerance education for students and teachers. He has worked with students and teachers across the country and internationally on effective pedagogy for teaching the Holocaust. He hopes to continue his research as a scholar-practitioner in both fields of study.

Wanda Lee Hughes.....Lake View, South Carolina

B.S., SC State University; M.Ed., University of South Carolina; Ed.S., The Citadel

The Effects of Readworks on Readers in a Rural Title I School

Advised by Dr. Noelle Paufler

Wanda has been an educator for 33 years and has served as a teacher, reading specialist and administrator in South Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia. Wanda will continue her career with Colleton County School District in Walterboro, South Carolina, as an instructional facilitator.

Angela Katrina Johnson.....Simpsonville, South Carolina

B.S., Ed.S., South Carolina State University; M.Ed., Converse College

Equity in Digital Diagnostics: Examining i-Ready's Role in the Achievement Gap Among African American Students in Middle School

Advised by Dr. Noelle Paufler and Dr. Edwin Bonney

Katrina is an accomplished educational leader who has served as a teacher, principal, assistant principal and program director. Throughout her career, she has remained committed to student success and educational leadership. She currently serves as a leadership coach with Clemson University's Center of Excellence and previously coached aspiring leaders through Voorhees University's Center of Excellence. Katrina is the author of *"Turning Trash Into Treasure"* and founder of KJ Legacy Reads, a consulting company that promotes literacy, character development and continuous improvement.

- Tomeka Johnette LoveLexington, South Carolina
 Ed.S., Clemson University
 Unlocking Potential: How High-Fidelity PLCs Protect First Graders from Over-Identification in Special Education
 Advised by Dr. Brandi Hinnant-Crawford
 Tomeka was named the South Carolina Association of School Administrators Assistant Principal of the Year in 2024. She was recently promoted to principal on July 1, 2026.
- Kevin Laron Clarence SmithNorth Charleston, South Carolina
 B.A., Winthrop University; M.Ed., Ed.S., The Citadel Military College
 Who Gets to Belong: Using a Tier Two Intervention to Increase Student Sense of Belonging and Supportive Student-Teacher Relationships
 Advised by Dr. Brandi Hinnant-Crawford
 Kevin is a longstanding school leader with a career spanning two and a half decades. He plans to continue using his knowledge and experience to influence practitioners' work and improve student outcomes.
- Erin Catherine Smith-HarrahGreenville, South Carolina
 B.S., M.Ed., University of Pittsburgh; Ed.S., Clemson University
 Unlocking the Behavior Code: How Function-Based Behavior Skills Coaching Empowers Teachers and Reduces Tier III Referrals in MTSS
 Advised by Dr. Brandi Hinnant-Crawford
 Erin has authored a peer-reviewed publication and will serve as an MTSS Coordinator and Lead RISE Facilitator in the School District of Pickens County for the 2026–2027 school year. Her research focuses on behavior skills training, teacher self-efficacy, and equitable MTSS implementation.
- Taylor Logan WatsonBishopville, South Carolina
 B.S., College of Charleston; M.A., Ed.S., The Citadel
 Increasing General Education Teacher Effectiveness When Working with Students Receiving Special Education Services
 Advised by Dr. Brandi Hinnant-Crawford
 Taylor is currently employed as a school psychologist in Berkeley County School District.

Capricia K WhiteCharleston, South Carolina

B.A., Spelman College; M.A., Ed.S., The Citadel Graduate College

From Referrals to Results: Strengthening MTSS Pre-Referral Practices to Improve Special Education Referral Decision-Making

Advised by Dr. Brandi Hinnant-Crawford

Capricia is the founder of PEARL Assessment Services. Following graduation, she plans to expand her practice by providing evaluation support and consultative services to schools, agencies and families across South Carolina.

Caitlin Mckenzie BlackwellKershaw, South Carolina

B.A., Clemson University; M.A., Gardner-Webb University; M.Ed., University of South Carolina

"I Feel Really Jazzed up": Using Lesson Study to Improve Teacher Morale in a Rural High School

Advised by Dr. Phillip D. Grant Jr.

Jamie Ann MegnaCentral, South Carolina

B.A., M.A.T., Clemson University; Ed.S., Arkansas State University

Counting the Days: The Impact of Career and Advanced Coursework on Academic and Perceptual Outcomes for Eighth Grade Students Who Are at Risk of Experiencing Adverse Educational Outcomes

Advised by Dr. Phillip D. Grant Jr.

Jamie serves as assistant principal at Gettys Middle School in Pickens County, South Carolina. Her doctoral research focused on improving outcomes for middle school students by expanding access to advanced and career-based coursework. In recognition of her academic achievement and leadership, she was inducted into the Society for Collegiate Leadership & Achievement. Jamie is proud to be the first person in her family to earn a doctorate and plans to continue supporting students and educators through her love for learning and leadership.

Janine H SutterEasley, South Carolina

B.A., Mount Vernon College; M.Ed., M.A., M.S., M.Ag., Clemson University

Making the Case for Minority Students at Career Centers with a Focus on Agriculture

Advised by Dr. Phillip D. Grant Jr.

- Tabytha Lien-Yee WallsCharleston, South Carolina
 B.M., University of Akron; M.M., University of Florida; M.Ed., Ed.S., The Citadel
 Closing the Gap: Addressing College Readiness Inequities Through Dual Enrollment Policy and Practice Reform
 Advised by Dr. Phillip D. Grant Jr.
 Tabytha is an assistant principal at R.B. Stall in North Charleston, South Carolina and is entering her 10th year there as an educator. She intends to continue her work in education systems improvement science, the expansion of the dual enrollment program and the improvement of academic success for students at Stall.
- Patrick Ryan Withers.....Goose Creek, South Carolina
 B.S., Clemson University; M.A.T., Ed.S., The Citadel; M.Ed., Charleston Southern University
 Lesson Plans, Teacher Self-Efficacy, and ML Achievement: A Quantitative Study of Teachers Incorporating Language Acquisition Within Lesson Plans to Improve Multi-Lingual Learner Achievement
 Advised by Dr. Phillip D. Grant Jr.
 Patrick serves as an assistant principal at Stratford High School in Goose Creek, South Carolina. He has been married to his wife, Amy, also a Clemson graduate, for 22 years, and they have three children, two of whom are undergraduate students at Clemson.
- Jalynn Shade CarterLouisville, Kentucky
 B.A., University of Georgia; M.A.T., M.Ed., Ed.S., Mercer University
 Say WHAT? An Improvement Science Approach to Build Teacher Empathy and Multilingual Learner Engagement
 Advised by Dr. Carlos Sandoval Jr.
 Jalynn achieved National Board Certification for Teachers in 2025 in English as a New Language/Early Adolescence Through Young Adulthood.
- Elaine Trowbridge NaradowskiPendleton, South Carolina
 B.S., Southern Illinois University; M.Ed., Clemson University
 Teacher Efficacy Using Thinking Maps Impacts Student Reading Success
 Advised by Dr. Carlos Sandoval Jr.
 Elaine was awarded National Board Certification in 2002. She serves as a literacy coach at Thomas E. Kerns in Greenville County School District.

Cary Cottrell RitaAnderson, South Carolina
 B.S., Clemson University; M.S., North Carolina State University
 Use of Active Learning in the Teaching of the Veterinary Science Course
 Advised by Dr. Carlos Sandoval Jr.
 Cary plans to continue improving curriculum and growth within agricultural education.

Barbara Ann WarrenIva, South Carolina
 B.S., Erskine College; M.A.P.E., University of Florida
 Technology Enhanced Math Instruction and Student Achievement
 Advised by Dr. Carlos Sandoval Jr.
 Barbara has worked in public education for 45 years, primarily as a math teacher and coach.

Melanie WilliamsPowdersville, South Carolina
 S.S.P., Winthrop University
 Novice Teachers' Effective Use of Progress Monitoring to Improve Student Outcomes
 Advised by Dr. Carlos Sandoval Jr.
 Melanie is a school psychologist for the School District of Pickens County.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Educational Leadership

Yolande GrahamRockville, Maryland
 B.A., University of Maryland, College Park; M.S.Ed., Baylor University
 “The People Will Say They Did It Themselves”: A Qualitative Analysis of How Mid-Level Managers in
 Residence Life Learn to Supervise Entry-Level Full-Time Staff
 Advised by Dr. Michelle Boettcher
 After completing her doctorate, Yolande looks forward to sharing her research findings through peer-reviewed publications and presentations at regional and national organizations in her field. Yolande is excited to continue her work with Clemson Home and in the Division of Student Affairs at Clemson.

Amanda Loraine Lockett.....St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin
 B.S., M.S., The University of Wisconsin-Madison; M.Ed., Vanderbilt University
 Experiential Learning in Child Life Education
 Advised by Dr. Sonja Ardoin

Eric SabinPiedmont, South Carolina
 B.S., Florida State University; M.S., University of Memphis
 Strategic Leadership in the Post-House Era: Examining the Evolving Relationship Between Athletic
 Directors and University Presidents
 Advised by Dr. Sarah Stokowski
 Eric serves as deputy athletic director for finance and operations at Clemson University and teaches sport facilities
 and event management as an adjunct faculty member. He plans to continue serving in athletics administration while
 teaching and contributing to research in collegiate athletics leadership.

Literacy, Language and Culture

Elizabeth Tiffany Besch.....Hartsville, South Carolina
 B.A., B.A., Coker University; M.Ed., University of South Carolina
 Shaping Writers, Shaping Pedagogy: Elementary Teachers' Writing Identities and Instructional Change
 Within Literacy Coaching Contexts
 Advised by Dr. Sarah Jerasa
 Tiffany currently serves as curriculum coach at Carolina Elementary School in Hartsville, South Carolina. She was
 the 2025 recipient of the Mary A. Kelly Graduate Scholarship from the Palmetto State Literacy Association and has
 presented at state and national literacy conferences. She plans to continue supporting teachers and advancing
 literacy instruction through instructional coaching and professional learning.

Alecia Wheeler ClampMt Pleasant, South Carolina
 B.A., Clemson University; M.Ed., University of South Carolina
 Voices from the Classroom: A Multiple Case Study of Early Childhood Educators Implementing Science of
 Reading Curricula with Multilingual Learners
 Advised by Dr. Lindsey Rowe
 Alecia is a National Board Certified educator, interventionist and multilingual learning specialist with more than 20
 years of experience in elementary education. Her dissertation reflects her commitment to advancing equitable
 literacy instruction for all students, particularly multilingual learners. Following graduation, she plans to continue
 her work in public education, teaching students while also supporting educators through literacy leadership,
 professional learning and advocacy for multilingual learners.

Michael Jeremiah FarmerPiedmont, South Carolina

B.S., Appalachian State University; M.H.R.D., Clemson University

Speakin' Southern: A Phenomenological Exploration of the Lived Experiences of College Students with a Southern Dialect

Advised by Dr. Lindsey Rowe

Jeremiah is the director of graduate student services for the College of Engineering, Computing and Applied Sciences at Clemson University, where he has worked since 2018. His research, presented at numerous conferences, focuses on the experiences and perceptions of southern dialect speakers, especially in higher education. He hopes to continue elevating southern speakers and speech through scholarship, his presence at Clemson and social media. He has received multiple Clemson awards for his student services work.

Special Education

Melissa Dawn Hullett.....Spartanburg, South Carolina

B.A., University of South Carolina - Upstate; M.A., Francis Marion University

An Investigation of the Use of Self-Regulated Strategy Development with a Mnemonic on the Mathematics Computation Performance of Students At-Risk for Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

Advised by Dr. Antonis Kaysiannis

Melissa received the 2025-2026 Interdisciplinary Research Fellowship Award from Clemson University's College of Education, a stipend from the 2026 Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders and the 2026 Carl Fenichel Research Grant from the Council for Exceptional Children's Division of Emotional and Behavioral Health. She was featured in Clemson News in February 2026. She has four peer-reviewed publications and four additional manuscripts under review. Her career goal is to transition from K-12 education to higher education and prepare future preservice teachers.

Zachary Byron HurleyClarkesville, Georgia

B.S., M.A., Ed.S., Piedmont University

Use of a Task Analysis Application with Video-Prompting to Increase Social Skills for Individuals with Moderate to Severe Intellectual Disabilities

Advised by Dr. Joesph Ryan and Dr. Kristina Randall

Zach has been fortunate to work alongside many colleagues, resulting in peer-reviewed publications and another manuscript in progress. He will continue to teach in Habersham County, Georgia.

Teaching and Learning

Nan BurvenichBeaufort, South Carolina

B.S., M.A.T., University of South Carolina

Building Resilience in the Classroom After Exclusionary Discipline

Advised by Dr. Julianne A. Wenner

Summer M. Landreth.....Anderson, South Carolina

B.S., Furman University; M.A.T., Converse University

The Impact of Mentoring: Professional Growth, Reflection, and Retention in Secondary Science Education

Advised by Dr. Julianne A. Wenner

Kristen Kay FinkOskaloosa, Iowa

B.A., B.A.J., M.A.T., Drake University

Perceptions of Planning and Implementing Field Trips During and After a Site-Based Teacher Institute

Advised by Dr. Mindy Spearman

Kristen was an inaugural Eugene T. Moore Fellow in the College of Education and served as graduate assistant to the University historian. She established the Professional Advancement Through History teacher institute for Clemson University's Historic Properties and served as president of the College of Education Graduate Student Advisory Board. She was recognized as Student of the Game in Fall 2025 and honored with the College of Education Graduate Student Award of Excellence in Service and the Graduate Student Government Clemson Spirit Award in 2026.

Kristen will join the history department at the State University of New York at Cortland, where she will be an assistant professor of social studies education.

Benjamin John KruidGrand Rapids, Michigan

B.A., Aquinas College; M.A., University of Jyväskylä; M.A., Grand Valley State University

Student Motivation in Social Studies Classes at the Public Museum High School

Advised by Dr. Jacquelynn A. Malloy

Benjamin teaches Global/Local History and Curation at Public Museum High School in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is the Grand Valley State University Cooley-Huff Social Studies Award mentor teacher and serves on several social studies curriculum development teams for the state of Michigan. Benjamin won the 2016 International Student Award at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland and has presented at conferences in the U.S., Sweden and China.

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, COMPUTING AND APPLIED SCIENCES

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Automotive Engineering

Mohammad Hossein AbbasiGreenville, South Carolina

Optimal Management of Electric Vehicle Fast Charging Stations via Lyapunov Optimization and Reinforcement Learning

Advised by Dr. Jiangfeng Zhang

Atharva Pravin GhatеPune, India

B.E., Savitribai Phule Pune University; M.S., Michigan Technological University

Energy Efficiency Aware Trajectory Planning for Autonomous Off-Road Vehicles

Advised by Dr. Robert Prucka and Dr. Qilun Zhu

Atharva is grateful to his family, friends, advisor, colleagues and the Clemson University community for their support throughout his doctoral journey. His research focused on intelligent methods for advanced vehicle control and autonomous off-road systems. He looks forward to continuing work at the intersection of intelligent mobility, vehicle systems and sustainable transportation.

Anirudh SundarBangalore, India

B.Tech., M.Tech., Indian Institute of Technology Madras; M.S., Clemson University

Integrated Power, Energy, and Thermal Management for Autonomous Hybrid Off-Road Vehicles: Multi-Timescale Modeling, Predictive Control, and Resilient Thermal Design

Advised by Dr. Robert Prucka and Dr. Qilun Zhu

Anirudh received the Outstanding Master's Student Award from the Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research and the VIPR-GS Best Poster Award in Propulsion Systems in 2025 and 2026. His doctoral work has led to multiple peer-reviewed publications in hybrid-electric propulsion, battery thermal management, and vehicle controls. He plans to work in advanced electrified mobility, focusing on propulsion, energy management, and powertrain modeling.

Matthew John Godbold.....Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

B.S.E., M.S., University of South Carolina; M.S., University of South Carolina

Smart Process Planning for Automated Fiber Placement

Advised by Dr. Ramy Harik

Matt received the 2024 Society for the Advancement of Material and Process Engineering International University Student Leadership Experience Award. He has authored 21 peer-reviewed publications, delivered 15 conference presentations and holds one patent. He is the co-founder and chief executive officer of Stratos Composites LLC, a software company developing computer-aided process planning tools for advanced composites manufacturing.

Bioengineering

Jeremiah Wesley Harlin CarpenterJohnson City, Tennessee

B.S., Clemson University

Evanescent Wave Fiber Optic Biosensor for Cobalt Detection: Surface Functionalization and Optical Characterization

Advised by Dr. Delphine Dean

Lauren Elizabeth Joy Franklin RentzGreenville, South Carolina

B.S., Bob Jones University

Mechanistic Investigation into Host-Microbe Interactions of the Human Skin Microbiome

Advised by Dr. David Karig

Lauren has presented her skin microbiome research at multiple conferences and plans to continue her research career, exploring and sharing knowledge. She taught more than 500 biology laboratory students at Clemson University and is a former president and treasurer of the Research Troubleshooting Club. She is immensely thankful to her advisor, colleagues, family and friends who have all supported her journey.

Biosystems Engineering

Javad Alavi.....Seattle, Washington

B.S., Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran; M.S., Sharif University of Technology, Iran

Development of an Automation System for Site-Specific Irrigation and Nitrogen Application Using a Center Pivot Irrigation System

Advised by Dr. Tom Owino and Dr. Jose Oscar Payero

Javad received the Water Environment Association Award in 2025 for outstanding performance in environmental engineering and currently has four publications under review. He is now a senior researcher at Parametrix, based in Seattle, Washington.

Chemical Engineering

Oreoluwa Rebecca AgedeClemson, South Carolina

B.S., The University of Alabama; M.S., Clemson University

Sustainable Processing and Molecular Characterization of Lignin Biopolymer for Commercial and Materials Applications

Advised by Dr. Mark Thies

Civil Engineering

Kunal BhardwajShimla, India

B.Tech., Jaypee University of Information Technology; M.Tech., Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar

Hydroclimatic Variability and Drought Driven Changes in Water Availability in the Southeastern United States

Advised by Dr. Abdul A. Khan and Dr. C. Prakash Khedun

- Elnaz Heidari.....Sunnyvale, California
 Leveraging Deep Learning Recurrence and Attention Mechanisms for Flood Forecasting and Assessment
 Advised by Dr. Abdul A. Khan
- Susmita Bhowmik.....Kishoreganj, Bangladesh
 B.S., Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology, Bangladesh; M.Eng., Tokyo Institute of Technology, Japan
 Probabilistic Modeling of Hurricane Hazards and Structural Reliability of Offshore Wind Turbines Under Climate Change
 Advised by Dr. Weichiang Pang
 Susmita has multiple peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations on wind-hazard modeling, offshore wind infrastructure and climate change impact assessment. She has accepted a postdoctoral research associate position at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and will also work as a visiting research scholar at Johns Hopkins University.
- Liming LuXuchang, China
 B.S., Northeast Normal University; M.S., Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications
 Theory-Informed Generative Agents for Human Behavioral Modeling in Disasters
 Advised by Dr. Chao Fan
 Liming studies generative agents and plans to work in industry.
- Computer Engineering**
- Mikaila Jenn Gossman.....Pelzer, South Carolina
 B.S., Clemson University
 Improving Collective Aggregation Strategies for HPC and AI Workloads
 Advised by Dr. Jon Calhoun and Dr. Melissa Smith
- Gen Li.....Yichang, China
 Towards Scalable and Trustworthy Machine Learning for Future AI Systems
 Advised by Dr. Linke Guo
 Gen has published more than 20 peer-reviewed papers at premier AI conferences, including CVPR, ICLR, ICML, ICCV, NeurIPS, and IEEE S&P. He has accepted a tenure-track assistant professor position in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Houston, where his research will focus on efficient, trustworthy, and scalable artificial intelligence systems.

Chun-Chih LinYilan, Taiwan

B.S., Chang Gung University; M.S., National Cheng Kung University

Resilient and Awareness-Driven Wireless Networks: Deep Learning-Enabled Sensing, Communication,
and Security

Advised by Dr. Linke Guo

Computer Science

Yarui CaoBeijing, China

B.S., Beijing Jiaotong University; M.S., University of Manchester

Matrix Optimization in Machine Learning and Fine-Tuning in Deep Learning

Advised by Dr. Kai Liu

Bennett CooperBrentwood, Tennessee

B.S., Clemson University

A Comprehensive Study and Performance Optimization of Shared Virtual Memory

Advised by Dr. Rong Ge

Errol Francis IIWindsor, Connecticut

B.A., Pomona College; M.S., Clemson University

Cryptographic Provenance Tools to Enhance Trust and Credibility of Online Information

Advised by Dr. Kelly Caine

Errol's research has led to two peer-reviewed publications at both CHI and CSCW, with another manuscript in preparation. He is deeply grateful to the HATLab advisors and members for their mentorship and constant tutelage over the years. After graduation, he will join the Boeing Company as a user experience lead.

Melanie E LambertApex, North Carolina

Causal Discovery Methods for Single Cell RNA-seq Data

Advised by Dr. Feng Luo

Hao WangFlagstaff, Arizona

B.S., Northern Arizona University; M.S., Clemson University

Efficient and Scalable Visual Computing for Nanoscale Imaging

Advised by Dr. Abolfazl Razi and Dr. Fatemeh Afghah

Electrical Engineering

Md Saiful IslamDhaka, Bangladesh

A Compact Microwave Flow Cytometer for Real-Time Monitoring of Cellular Dynamics and Stress Response

Advised by Dr. Pingshan Wang

Engineering and Science Education

Aradaryn Marsh.....Pickens, South Carolina

B.S., Southern Wesleyan University; M.W.F.R., Clemson University

From Gatekeeping to Opportunity: Authentic Assessment in Natural Resources Education

Advised by Dr. Lisa Benson and Dr. Althea Hagan

Aradaryn was named the 2026 Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant for the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences. She has authored three peer-reviewed publications, with a fourth currently under review.

Environmental Engineering and Earth Sciences

Dongli Wang.....Dengfeng, China

B.S., M.S., Central South University

Airborne Investigations of Black Carbon Aerosols and Aerosol-Cloud Interactions

Advised by Dr. Andrew R. Metcalf

Human Centered Computing

Oluwafemi OshoAbuja, Nigeria

B.Tech., M.Tech., Federal University of Technology, Minna; M.S., Missouri University of Science and Technology; M.S., Clemson University

Broadening Participation in Computing: Retention Pathways for Supporting Underrepresented Students

Advised by Dr. Bart Knijnenburg

During his time at Clemson University, Femi has earned a master's degree in Computer Science and an Industry Master Certificate in user experience. He has over 40 peer-reviewed publications.

Industrial Engineering

Farhatul Janan.....Clemson, South Carolina

B.S., Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology; M.S., Clemson University

Network Interdiction with Restructuring: Novel Models to Disrupt Drug Trafficking

Advised by Dr. Thomas Sharkey

Janan has been named the recipient of the 2026 Janine Bowen '89 Graduate Fellowship and has accepted an offer from NBC Universal.

- Dixizi LiuShanghai, China
 B.S., Hubei University of Automotive Technology; M.S., Shanghai Maritime University; M.S., Texas State University
 Bridging Models and Real-World Adaptations: Capturing Represented, Hidden, and Unrepresented Dynamics in Complex Systems
 Advised by Dr. Sudeep Hegde and Dr. Kevin Taaffe
- Hanwen LiuJinan, China
 B.S., Shandong University; M.E., University of Florida
 Sequential Decision-Making Under Uncertainty: Applications in Disaster Response and Patient-Centric Clinical Trials
 Advised by Dr. Amin Khademi
- Bhargav Vipul UpadhyayCentral, South Carolina
 B.E., University of Pune; M.S., Clemson University
 Human Centered Design of Extended Reality for Learning: Adoption, Effectiveness, and Collaborative Training Performance
 Advised by Dr. Kapil Chalil Madathil
 Bhargav received the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society’s 2025 Student Member with Honors Award and has co-authored three peer-reviewed journal articles on virtual, augmented and extended reality technologies for education and workforce training. Drawing on research and user experience at Clemson University, Wayfair and Truist, he plans to build intuitive, evidence-based technologies that make complex systems more user-friendly.
- Materials Science and Engineering
- Yanfei Cai.....Luoyang, China
 B.S., Zhengzhou University; B.S., Nagaoka University of Technology; M.S., Nagoya University
 Advancing Protonic Ceramic Fuel Cells Toward Long-Term Operation Through Reproducible Manufacturing and Microstructure Control
 Advised by Dr. Jianhua Tong
 Yanfei’s research focused on developing reproducible manufacturing strategies and designing electrode microstructures to improve the performance and long-term durability of protonic ceramic fuel cells. Her doctoral work resulted in a patent disclosure and three peer-reviewed journal manuscripts. She plans to pursue a career in materials research and process development for advanced energy technologies.

Yuchen ZhangBayan Nur, China
 B.S., Tianjin University
 Processing-Microstructure-Performance Relationships of Proton-Conducting Solid Oxide Cells
 Advised by Dr. Jianhua Tong

Rahul RajeevThrissur, India
 B.Tech., Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar
 Advanced Synthesis, Compositional Control, and Stability of Garnet-Type LLZO Solid Electrolytes
 Advised by Dr. Kyle S. Brinkman

Rahul's doctoral work advances ceramic solid electrolytes for next-generation solid-state batteries and high-temperature energy applications. He has authored or co-authored three peer-reviewed publications, with one additional manuscript under review. His honors include the David Jennings Memorial, Kentwool Educational and Gilbert Robinson Memorial fellowships; two first-place graduate poster awards from the Materials Research Society-Optica competition; and recognition as a finalist representing the College of Engineering, Computing and Applied Sciences in the 2024 Three-Minute Thesis competition.

Mechanical Engineering

Seyed Ali Asli.....Tehran, Iran
 Microstructural Shielding and Advanced Fatigue Crack Analysis in the Presence of Deformation Twinning
 Advised by Dr. Garrett J. Pataky

Meredith Grace SuttonPickens, South Carolina
 B.S., M.S., Clemson University
 Investigating the Impacts of Information Framing and Representation on Multi-Stakeholder Decision-Making for Tradespace Exploration
 Advised by Dr. Cameron J. Turner

Meredith was recognized as a U.S. Department of Education GAANN Fellow and as a Mechanical Engineering Departmental Teaching Fellow. She was active in departmental organizations, serving as an officer for the Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student Council and Women in Mechanical and Automotive Engineering groups. Her research work has resulted in three journal publications and nine peer-reviewed conference proceedings. After graduation, Meredith will begin as an assistant professor at the Florida Institute of Technology.

Ji YangXianyang, China

Computational Insights into Processing-Structure-Property Relationships of Polymer Blends and Nanocomposites

Advised by Dr. Zhaoxu Meng

Ji focuses primarily on applying computational modeling and simulations to reveal the mechanisms underlying material properties. He has published four papers related to his research interests.

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Xiaotong ChenNanjing, China

B.Ag., Jinling Institute of Technology; B.S., State University of New York at Cobleskill

Towards Improved Stress Resilience, Optimal Growth and Enhanced Biosafety in Transgenic Plants

Advised by Dr. Hong Luo

Amarachukwu Pearl OnohCentral, South Carolina

B.S., University of Nigeria; M.S., Clemson University

Biochemical Characterization of Key Factors in Meiotic Homologous Recombination

Advised by Dr. Michael Sehorn

Biological Sciences

Matthew Ryan McTernanNew Orleans, Louisiana

B.S., Auburn University; M.S., Western Washington University

The Past, Present, and Future of Climate Adaptation in a Widespread Lizard Species

Advised by Dr. Christopher L. Parkinson

Victor David MunteanuCortland, New York

B.S., Bucknell University; M.S., Clemson University

Lizards in the Trees: Structural, Functional, and Behavioral Specializations to a High-Risk Environment

Advised by Dr. Richard W. Blob

David received the Department of Biological Sciences' Alexander P. and Lydia Anderson Fellowship in 2023, 2024 and 2025. In 2025, David led a team of undergraduate researchers that won Best Poster Presentation at Clemson University's "Focus on Creative Inquiry" symposium. He has eight peer-reviewed publications, with two more currently under review. He has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

Prakrit SubbaCentral, South Carolina

B.S., M.S., University of Massachusetts Amherst

Prenatal Acoustic Programming of the Developing Hypothalamus: A Multi-Omic Analysis of Heat Call Exposure in Zebra Finch Embryos

Advised by Dr. Julia George

Prakrit received Clemson University's Graduate Interdisciplinary Fellowship and research awards from the South Carolina Academy of Sciences and the Allen Brain Institute. He has one peer-reviewed publication and another manuscript under review and is now a postdoctoral researcher at the Medical University of South Carolina.

Chemistry

LSSN Vigna AbbarajuHyderabad, India

B.Pharm., Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad; M.S., National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Hyderabad

Imaging Oxygen Near Implanted Medical Devices Through Tissue with X-Ray and Ultrasound Modulated Luminescence Chemical Imaging

Advised by Dr. Jeffrey N. Anker

Thomas Franklin BurgessStreetsboro, Ohio

B.S., University of South Carolina Aiken

Nanostructured Insulated Electrodes for Directed Nanoparticle Assembly: Development and Characterization

Advised by Dr. George Chumanov

Barbara Guerra de Souza GuinatiClemson, South Carolina

B.S., M.S., Federal University of Goias, Brazil

Upcycling Mixed-Material Waste into Reinforced Sulfur-Based Polymer Composites

Advised by Dr. Rhett C. Smith and Dr. Andrew G. Tennyson

Barbara has accepted a tenure-track faculty position at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Rosita Priyadarsani SivarajColombo, Sri Lanka

B.S., Institute of Chemistry Ceylon, Sri Lanka; M.B.A., Cardiff Metropolitan University, UK

Structure and Dynamics of Associative Polymers Under Quiescent State and Flow: Computational Insights

Advised by Dr. Dvora Perahia and Dr. Gary Grest

Rosita earned her Doctor of Philosophy in chemistry after conducting research on polymer materials using molecular dynamics simulations and neutron scattering. She received the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award and the Mandel and Interdisciplinary Fellowships. She was selected for the National Institute of Standards and Technology Neutron Scattering Summer School and won the National Graduate Research Polymer Conference Competition.

Emily Danielle WilliamsDallas, Georgia

B.S., University of North Georgia

The Exploration of One-Dimensional and Two-Dimensional Frustrated Magnetic Transition Metal
Phosphates and Arsenates via Hydrothermal Synthesis

Advised by Dr. Joseph Kolis

Emily was awarded the 2025 Margaret C. Etter Student Lecturer award, the 2024 Clemson Mandel Fellowship, and the 2021-2023 SCIENCE Clemson Graduate Student Fellowship. She also has seven peer-reviewed publications with another under review.

Genetics

Rui CheNanjing, China

B.S., State University of New York at Cobleskill; B.S., Jinling Institute of Technology

Forward Genetic Identification of Human Nuclear Non-Coding RNA Apathways

Advised by Dr. Andrei Alexandrov and Dr. Hong Luo

Mathematical Sciences

Deborpita BiswasPurulia, India

B.S., Calcutta University, India; M.S., Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology

Pseudo-Riesz Bases

Advised by Dr. Mishko Mitkovski

Rakhi GoswamiSerampore, India

B.S., University of Calcutta, India; M.S., Indian Institute of Engineering, Science and Technology

A Novel Algorithm- Parametric Benders Decomposition to Solve Two-Stage Robust Multi-Objective Linear
Programs with Uncertainty

Advised by Dr. Margaret M. Wiececk and Dr. Herve Kerivin

Physics

Nikita Sohan KhatiyaMumbai, India

B.E., University of Mumbai, India

Probing Progenitors of Exploding Stars from Population Studies

Advised by Dr. Dieter Hartmann

Danielle Giuseppa MarkowskiEllington, Connecticut

B.S., B.S., Saint Michael's College

Day-to-Day Ionospheric Variability in the Midlatitudes

Advised by Dr. Stephen R. Kaeppler

During Danielle's time at Clemson University, she was part of two NASA sounding rocket missions, was named a Space Weather Summer School Fellow at Los Alamos National Laboratory and published one peer-reviewed paper, with another currently under review. She also co-authored three additional peer-reviewed publications. Danielle has accepted a postdoctoral position at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C.

Clemson Alma Mater

Farmer and McGarity/arr. Freeman

Where the Blue Ridge yawns its greatness,
Where the Tigers play;
Here the sons of dear Old Clemson
Reign supreme alway.

Chorus

Dear Old Clemson, we will triumph
And with all our might,
That the Tiger's roar may echo
O'er the mountain height.

We will dream of greater conquests,
For our past is grand,
And her sons have fought and conquered
Every foreign land.

Where the mountains smile in grandeur
O'er the hill and dale,
Here the Tiger lair is nestling
Swept by storm and gale.

We are brothers strong in manhood,
For we work and strive;
And our alma mater reigneth
Ever in our lives.

