

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Doctoral Commencement Ceremony

MAY 5, 2026



DOCTORAL COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Tuesday, May 5th, 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

Lyman Dawkins III

Education Systems Improvement Science

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

Interim President Robert H. Jones

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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Brian Voss Vice President and Chief Information Officer,
Clemson Computing and Information Technology
Robert Donato Chief Strategy Officer

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

John Lopes.....Associate Provost and Dean
Natasha N. Croom Associate Dean
William Ferrell Associate Dean
Jeffrey C. Hallo Associate Dean
Jenny Presgraves..... Assistant Dean

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Interim Associate Dean of Research

Matthew Interis
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

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

Charles V. Privette, III.....Agricultural Sciences
Jim Strickland, interim Animal and Veterinary Sciences
Ramesh Jeganathan Food, Nutrition, and Packaging Sciences
Kyle Barrett, interim..... Forestry and Environmental Conservation
Jim Faust, acting 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. Zimany Department of Art
Tom Leathem Nieri Family Department of
Construction and Real Estate Development

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

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Associate Dean for Undergraduate and Graduate Studies

Amit Bein
Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs

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Stephanie Barczewski History and Geography
Lisa Melonçon Interdisciplinary Studies
Joseph Mai..... Languages
Linda Dzuris..... Performing Arts
Ben White Philosophy and Religion

COLLEGE OF BEHAVIORAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES

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Associate Dean for Research

Joel Williams
Associate Dean for Graduate Studies

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. Weisensee..... Sociology, 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

Kristen Cuthrell Education and Human Development
Hans W. Klar Educational and Organizational
Leadership Development
Kristen Cuthrell, acting Teaching 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. Brinkman..... Materials 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

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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 Mayor Lyman Dawkins III, who is graduating with a Ph.D. in Education Systems Improvement Science from the College of Education.

The text of Mayor Dawkin'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 formally mentored and guided the student's research and education.

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

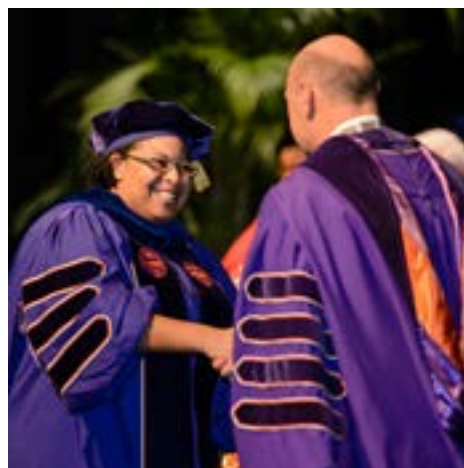
You will note that faculty members are wearing gowns, caps and hoods of many colors and designs. These academic costumes of medieval origin are, for faculty with degrees from U.S. institutions, specified by a uniform code maintained by the American

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

Animal and Veterinary Sciences

Joshua Luke Jacobs.....Danville, Alabama

Evaluation Of The Effects Of Implantation And Precision Supplementation On Muscle Accretion Patterns Of Backgrounded Beef Steers

Advised by Dr. Susan Duckett

Alexis Jade Millspaugh.....Seneca, South Carolina

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

Impact of Housing, Litter, and Supplementary Management Practices on Musculoskeletal Health, Production, and Welfare of Laying Hens in Two Commercial Non-Cage (Aviary) Systems

Advised by Dr. Ahmed Ali

Alexis was awarded the Morgan Poultry Fellowship in 2024 and the Wade Stackhouse Fellowship in 2025. She has seven peer-reviewed publications with an additional five under review. She plans to work in animal agriculture.

Entomology

Adam Young Whitfield.....Little Rock, Arkansas

B.S., M.S., University of Arkansas

Refining Treatment Thresholds of Insect Pests in South Carolina Soybean Using Simulated Injury and Natural Populations

Advised by Dr. Jeremy Greene and Dr. Francis Reay-Jones

Adam is a recipient of the R.C. Edwards Graduate Fellowship, Wade Stackhouse Fellowship, and the W. Carl Nettles Memorial Endowment in Entomology. His research on refining treatment thresholds for insect pests in South Carolina soybeans has been presented at several scientific and industry meetings. Adam plans to pursue a career in the agricultural crop protection industry.

Food, Nutrition, and Packaging Sciences

Toni Sharp.....Memphis, Tennessee

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

The Impact of Label Material on Perceived Value and Environmental-Friendliness of Beverages in Returnable Glass Bottles

Advised by Dr. Andrew Hurley

Toni has one peer-reviewed publication with three others under review. She has plans to pursue a career in food science as a product developer.

Forest Resources

Jeremy Forsythe Endicott, New York

B.S., University of Albany; M.A., University of Kansas

Diffuse Radiation Controls on Southern Pine Forest Ecosystem Functioning

Advised by Dr. Tom O'Halloran

Miah Maye Mendoza Pormon Iloilo, Philippines

B.S. M.A., University of the Philippines, Visayas

Integrating Incentive Design and Spatial Prioritization for Climate-Smart Forestry Adoption in South Carolina, United States

Advised by Dr. Marzieh Motallebi

Plant and Environmental Sciences

María Antonella Conti Pergamino, Argentina

B.S., National University of Northwestern Buenos Aires

Sorghum Grain Secondary Metabolites and Underlying Genetics to Reduce Foodborne Pathogens in Poultry

Advised by Dr. Richard Boyles

Payton Davis Canton, Georgia

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

Enhancing Climate Resilience in South Carolina Agroecosystems: The Role of Cover Crops in Soil Water Dynamics and Soil Physical Properties

Advised by Dr. Park

Payton received the Soils System Travel award in 2025 and was a WaterSoftHack Fellow in 2024. Payton has six peer-reviewed publications with another two under review.

Sagar GC Clemson, South Carolina

B.S., Tribhuwan University; M.S., Agriculture and Forestry University

Understanding Variability in Geographic Isolates of *Rotylenchulus Reniformis* Across the US Cotton Belt

Advised by Dr. Churamani Khanal and Dr. Christopher Saski

Sagar was awarded the Wade Stackhouse Fellowship in 2025 and has three peer-reviewed publications with another one accepted for publication during his doctoral study.

Ayodeji Peter IdowuIle-Ife, Nigeria

B.S., Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria; M.B.A., Federal University of Agriculture, Nigeria; M.S., Tokyo University of Agriculture

Nutrient Dynamics and Horticultural Performance of Peach Orchards in Response to Different Soil Amendment Programs in South Carolina.

Advised by Dr. Juan Carlos Melgar

Most recently, Ayodeji was awarded the Doctoral Dissertation Completion Grant Award from the Graduate School. Prior to that, he was a recipient of the Gerald O. Mott Meritorious Award from the Crop Science Society of America, Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award-Horticulture from the Plant and Environmental Sciences Department. and the Wade Stackhouse Fellowship for 2024 and 2025. He was also awarded the prestigious African Business Education Fellowship from the Japanese Government from 2018 to 2021.

Amod Udayanga MadurapperumageClemson, South Carolina

B.S., Institute of Chemistry Ceylon, Sri Lanka

High Throughput Phenomics Pipeline for Pulse Crop Nutritional Breeding

Advised by Dr. Dil Thavarajah

Amod was a Wade Stackhouse Fellow in the Plant and Environmental Sciences department in 2024 and 2025. He has contributed to ten peer-reviewed publications with seven as the first author, along with a pending patent. Presently, he has accepted a research scientist position in industry.

Gursewak SinghSangrur, India

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

Exploring Salt Tolerance and Crop-Weed Interactions to Improve Organic Rice Systems in Coastal South Carolina

Advised by Dr. Matthew Cutulle and Dr. Brian Ward

Gursewak has authored five first-author, peer-reviewed publications, with four additional manuscripts under review. He has worked closely with South Carolina growers to translate research into practical applications. He has won awards for presenting at national and international conferences, including the Southern Weed Science Society and the Weed Science Society of America. After graduation, he will begin a USDA-ARS postdoctoral position in Charleston, SC, focusing on developing novel strategies for detecting viruses in crops and weeds. He plans to pursue an academic career.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Rhetorics, Communication and Information Design

Jaquial De'Vonte Levon DurhamClemson, South Carolina

A.A., Tri-County Technical College; B.A., Winston-Salem State University; M.Ed., The George Washington University; M.S., Georgetown University

#BlackClemson Neo Griot: Curating Sounds Minds through Storytelling, Cinema, & Hip Hop

Advised by Dr. Rhondda Robinson Thomas

Jaquial is a scholar, educator, and filmmaker. His dissertation, #BlackClemson's Neo Griot, is a digital humanities project and living archive documenting the historic Black community of Clemson through storytelling, cinema, and hip hop. He curated the exhibition Sincerely, Daniel, securing over \$300,000 in funding; the project is now being digitized with Clemson University Libraries. As a Graduate Assistant with Call My Name, he has helped recover and elevate hidden Black histories through public events and archival initiatives. Durham is also director of the award winning documentary Southern Prison Culture. He plans to continue advancing digital humanities, filmmaking, and public scholarship.

David Allen Rochlin.....Moraga, California

B.S., University of California Berkeley; M.B.A., Northwestern University

Techno-Optimistic Rhetoric and Deliberative Futures: Shaping Definitions of Progress

Advised by Dr. David Blakesley

David will continue his teaching and research at the University of California, Berkeley, where his work focuses on innovation, sustainability, and responsible business.

COLLEGE OF BEHAVIORAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES

DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE

Nursing Practice

Whitney Ann BridgesSpartanburg, South Carolina

B.S., Clemson University

Project Evaluation of the Daily Huddle Process at the Wonder Center

Advised by Dr. Heide Temples

Whitney was a 2025 South Carolina Palmetto Gold Nursing Graduate Scholarship recipient, a student liason on the South Carolina National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners Chapter Board, a representative on the Graduate Student Advisory Committee, a member of Sigma Theta Tau - Gamma Mu Chapter, a clinical instructor for the undergraduate pediatric course, a 2023 School of Nursing Senator Representative for the Graduate Student Government, and published a peer-reviewed publication in the Journal of Pediatric Heath Care.

Alecia Moody..... Augusta, Georgia

A.D.N., Midlands Technical College; B.S.N., M.S.N., Claflin University

Implementing the CMS AHC Health-Related Social Needs Screening Tool to Enhance Nurses' Knowledge of Social Determinants of Health Affecting Medication Adherence in Patients with Sickle Cell Disease

Advised by Dr. Kathleen Valentine and Dr. Kendra Allison

Adrain C Sims..... Sumter, South Carolina

A.D.N., Central Carolina Technical College; B.S.N., M.S.N., Claflin University

A Quality ImprovementProject: Enhancing DocumentationGuidelinesforRestraintUseinAcuteCareSettings.

Advised by Dr. Kathleen Valentine and Dr. Kendra Allison

Adrain's career plan is to become a director of nursing and continue in academia, educating the next generation of nurses.

Deonte Lamont ThompsonLadson, South Carolina

B.S.N, Charleston Southern University; M.S.N., Claflin University

Improving Access to Outpatient Mental Health Services to Reduce Readmissions and Psychiatric ED Boarding

Advised by Dr. Kathleen Valentine and Dr. Kendra Allison

Deonte is a dedicated healthcare leader and hospital supervisor with a strong foundation in emergency and acute care nursing. Inspired by a lifelong calling to serve, he is committed to compassionate, patient-centered care and servant transformational leadership. His professional journey reflects a passion for improving healthcare systems, empowering staff, and advancing equitable care for diverse populations.

Patrice Linette BurgessOrangeburg, South Carolina

A.D.N., Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College; B.S.N., M.S.N., Claflin University

Telehealth Services in Rural Communities: Access to Mental Health Care Pre, During, and Post Covid Pandemic

Advised by Dr. Kathleen Valentine

Patrice plans to continue working within the rural community. This is an area of healthcare that is near and dear to her, as she grew up in a rural community. She plans to continue serving in the rural community to ensure equitable access to health care services. Patrice is also an active member of the Zeta Eta Eta Chapter of Chi Eta Phi Nursing Sorority Incorporated.

Shantanique Ka'Niece Givens-Franklin.....Walterboro, South Carolina

A.D.N., Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College; B.S.N., M.S.N., Claflin University

Screening With Purpose: A Quality Improvement Initiative Integrating Social Determinants of Health into Intentional Depression Screening in Rural Primary Care

Advised by Dr. Kathleen Valentine

Shantanique is a board-certified Family Nurse Practitioner with clinical experience in primary care, urgent care, and pediatrics. She is a recipient of the Big Cat Fellowship and the Go Mobile rural health workforce grant supporting rural workforce development. Her Doctor of Nursing Practice project, Screening With Purpose, advanced intentional depression screening through integration of social determinants of health and earned second place in the poster presentation category at the 2026 UpToDate Advanced Practice Provider Conference. She plans to advance equitable healthcare delivery for historically marginalized communities across diverse practice settings.

Tarah Nichole SimmonsWalterboro, South Carolina

B.S.N., M.S.N., Claflin University

"Improving Access to Orthopedic Urgent Care in Rural Outpatient Walk-In Clinics: Evaluating the Impact of Targeted Marketing Campaigns versus Traditional Recruitment Strategies Over a 3-Month Period"

Advised by Dr. Kathleen Valentine

Tarah Simmons, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, is a participant in the GoMobile Initiative, a grant-funded program dedicated to training a diverse nursing workforce to serve underserved rural communities across South Carolina. She currently serves as the provider for the Orthopedic Urgent Care Walk-In Clinic at MUSC Orangeburg, where she leads efforts to improve specialty access and advance health equity for rural populations.

Chevron R Vice.....Lexington, South Carolina

A.A.S., Midlands Technical College; A.D.N., Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College; B.S.N., M.S.N., Claflin University

From Education to Adoption: A Quality Improvement Project Promoting Provider Adolescent Tobacco and Nicotine Screening in Rural Settings

Advised by Dr. Kathleen Valentine

Chevron will continue on her twenty-five year healthcare journey devoted to rural communities and global health.

Corbyn Marie Cohen Greenville, South Carolina

B.S.N., Clemson University

Nutritional Psychiatry: The Role of the Mediterranean Diet in Depression Treatment

Advised by Dr. Lisa Miller

Corbyn has a strong passion for lifestyle medicine and plans to pursue her certification promptly to provide holistic, person-centered care to all of her patients.

Noémie Echols..... Kingston, Canada
B.S.N., University of South Carolina Upstate
Utilization of a Pediatric Head Injury Clinical Pathway Following the Diagnosis of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury
Advised by Dr. Lisa Miller and Dr. Charlotte Branyon

Margarite Helen Elsey..... Boiling Springs, South Carolina
B.S.N., University of South Carolina Upstate; M.S.N., P.M.C., Gardner-Webb University
Assessing the Impact of Chest Pain Education on Medical Assistants' Knowledge and Intervention Skills in
Urgent Care Settings: A Quality Improvement Project
Advised by Dr. Jennifer Hall and Dr. Jennifer Bagwell
Maggie is a family nurse practitioner practicing in urgent care in the Upstate. She received the 2025 Fall South Carolina
Emergency Nurses Association Professional Development scholarship recognizing her commitment to emergency nursing
practice. She is an active member of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners and the South Carolina and Foothills
Emergency Nurse Associations. She teaches basic, pediatric and advanced life support courses and plans to advance
evidence-based urgent and emergency care in her community.

Sarah Christine Keith Greenville, South Carolina
A.D.N., Greenville Technical College; B.S.N., University of South Carolina Upstate
Empowering Prevention: Curbing Diabetes Progression with Lifestyle Change in Underserved Communities
Advised by Dr. Jennifer Hall
Sarah's doctoral work focused on lifestyle interventions to improve cardiometabolic health in underserved communities.
She is also the author of a publication on patellofemoral pain syndrome in the Journal of Pediatric Health Care. Sarah has
accepted a position with Carolina Cardiology's Advanced Heart Failure team.

Cierra Cathryn Sorrells..... Greenville, South Carolina
B.S., Clemson University
A Quality Improvement Project: The Importance of Individualized Education on Hypertension for the
Hypertensive Patient
Advised by Dr. Amy Garrison and Dr. Jennifer Hall
Cierra was named Best Nurse in South Carolina 2025 by Today's Nurse Magazine. She served as a cabinet member in
Graduate Student Government in her time at Clemson University. She is also an ambassador for Sigma Theta Tau.

Sloane Shank Herring..... Greenville, South Carolina
B.G.S., B.S.N., M.S.N., Francis Marion University
Effect of an Educational Intervention on Healthcare Provider Wound Care Knowledge
Advised by Dr. Stephanie Trammel

Sloane plans to continue working as a nurse practitioner in wound care. She looks forward to utilizing evidence-based practice to guide innovation and improve health outcomes.

Kristi Lou HerzogFountain Inn, South Carolina

B.S.N., University of South Carolina Upstate

Evaluating the Impact of Education for Nurses and Medical Support Staff on Bereavement Care, Therapeutic Communication, and Psychological Support Following Pregnancy Loss

Advised by Dr. Casey S. Hopkins

Kristi has proudly served the Upstate of South Carolina as a nurse for over eight years. Throughout her career, she has cared for diverse patient populations, gaining broad clinical experience and a deep commitment to compassionate care. As she advances her role as a nurse practitioner, Kristi remains dedicated to supporting the Upstate by prioritizing her patients' physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Mary Rosemonde MettsColumbia , South Carolina

B.S.N., Clemson University

Providers' Confidence and Knowledge of Screening for Diabulimia Among Females with Type 1 Diabetes

Advised by Dr. Casey Hopkins

Michael Peter LeporeGlastonbury, Connecticut

B.S.N., Quinnipiac University; B.A., M.P.A., University of Connecticut

Survey of Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Practitioner Students of Public Policy Affecting Access to Healthcare for the LGBTQIA+ Community.

Advised by Dr. Mary Ellen Wright

Michael was named a recipient of the 2024 Doctoral Award for Outstanding Teaching Assistant after being nominated by his students for his steadfast mentorship. He recently published in the Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care and plans on submitting his doctoral project for publication as well. Upon graduation, he hopes to work in the clinical setting as a nurse practitioner, as well as continue pursuing his passion of teaching by contributing to the Clemson community.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Applied Health Research and Evaluation

Samuel AnkomahSevern, Maryland

M.S., Clemson University

Comprehensive Analysis of Diabetes Risk Factors and Interventions: Predictive Modeling and Physical Activity.

Advised by Dr. Joel Edward Williams

Samuel has published seven peer-reviewed articles since 2021, has sixty-eight citations, and currently has three additional manuscripts under review.

Cassius Modisana Hossfeld.....Wilmington, North Carolina
B.A., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; M.S., M.S., Clemson University
Examining A Composite Food Security Status/Home Food Environment Measure As A Meaningful Emergency
Food System Qualification Criteria
Advised by Dr. Sarah Griffin

Martin Arthur Louis Shaw Mills River, North Carolina
B.A., Southern Adventist University; M.Div., Andrews University; M.P.H., University of Florida; M.S., Clemson
University
Pathways to Healing: Determinants, Spiritual Influences, and Chaplain Roles in Mental Health Support for
Veterans
Advised by Dr. Amanda Stover and Dr. Sarah Griffin

Martin is a board-certified chaplain and public health professional whose scholarship advances the integration of spiritual care within healthcare systems. His research examines the organizational, workforce, and clinical dimensions of chaplaincy, with particular attention to demonstrating its value in complex care environments. Martin has authored ten peer-reviewed publications contributing to interdisciplinary conversations at the intersection of spiritual care, healthcare delivery, and public health. His work reflects a commitment to evidence-informed practice and the strengthening of compassionate whole-person care across healthcare settings.

Healthcare Genetics and Genomics

Sujata Srikanth..... Belton, South Carolina
M.S., M.Phil., University of Hyderabad, India; M.S., Tennessee Technological University
Metabolic Signatures of Long COVID-19
Advised by Dr. Luigi Boccuto and Dr. Delphine Dean

Sujata earned a Master's Degree in physiology and has long been interested in metabolic changes in humans, both in health and in disease. Her early work focused on neuronal changes associated with normal aging. During the pandemic, her research expanded to investigate metabolic alterations in patients with long COVID-19. She has published three highly cited papers in this area. She plans to continue this work, aiming to advance impactful approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of patients.

Shannon M EblePortland, Oregon
B.S., M.S., Thomas Jefferson University
Genetic Factors Associated With Hidradenitis Suppurativa
Advised by Dr. Heide Temples

Andrea Gretchev..... Coquitlam, Canada
B.S., McGill University; M.N., University of Victoria

Epigenetics as a Mechanism of Developmental Programming Within a DOHaD Framework

Advised by Dr. Heide Temples

Andrea is an experienced nurse educator and will continue her academic career focusing on policy and models of care for integrating genomics into healthcare. She has eleven peer-reviewed publications with another two currently under review.

Nicole Yvette Fugal..... Charleston, South Carolina

B.S., Cornell University; M.S., New York University

Dietary Management in Clinical Trials: Integrating FDA Guidance, Methodological Rigor, and Phenylketonuria Variability Analysis to Inform Trial Design

Advised by Dr. Tracy Lowe

Nicole has published five peer-reviewed manuscripts during her time at Clemson University, both for her program and professionally. She has been involved in her professional community and will continue working with pharmaceutical companies on designing clinical trials after graduation.

Human Factors Psychology

Yizhou Liu Nanjing, China

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

An Empirical Exploration of Privacy Fatigue and Design Interventions to Empower Internet Users' Decisions Regarding Online Cookies

Advised by Dr. Kaileigh A. Byrne

Yizhou was named Outstanding Researcher Doctoral Student by the College of Behavioral, Social, and Health Sciences, received the Graduate Student Research Paper Award, and was selected as Outstanding Doctoral Student by the Department of Psychology in 2025. He plans to pursue a tenure-track faculty position at The University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Morgan Rome ChandlerSimpsonville, South Carolina

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

Beyond Challenging Up: How Organizational Climate Shapes Externally-Oriented Courage in the Workplace

Advised by Dr. Cynthia L.S. Pury

Morgan serves on the Workforce Intelligence team at RTX Corporation, applying the industrial-organizational psychology scientist-practitioner model through people analytics to inform organizational strategy and decision-making. During graduate school, she served as a research assistant on the Army Research Institute's Next Generation Teams and Organizational Subsystems project and led a Graduate School-wide survey assessing graduate student well-being and psychological climate perceptions; presenting actionable insights to Graduate School leadership. Her research examines environmental antecedents to courageous workplace behavior, and she plans to continue advancing evidence-based workforce strategy in the aerospace and defense industry upon graduation.

Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management

Michaela Elizabeth Birek Endicott, New York
B.S., Western Carolina University; M.S., Clemson University

Understanding Compulsive Exercise: An Integrative Examination of Lived Experience, Conceptual Development, and Practical Intervention

Advised by Dr. Ashlyn Hardie

Mick is the head recreational therapist at the Elmira Psychiatric Center with the New York State Office of Mental Health. Mick has plans to continue their career path in clinical recreational therapy practice, administration, education and workforce development, where they will use their expertise in eating disorders and compulsive exercise to help bridge the gap between eating disorder treatment and general mental health care.

Kelly Marie Alvidrez Anderson, South Carolina
B.S., Arizona State University; M.S., Clemson University

Participatory Land Management in a Dynamic Coastal, Partial Wilderness Landscape: Stakeholder Engagement, Public Land Disinvestment, and a Paradox at Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge

Advised by Dr. Aby Sene-Harper

Cameron Smith Chapel Hill, North Carolina
B.S., University of North Carolina at Greensboro; M.S., North Carolina Central University

Reimagining Access: Gentrification, Race, and Youth Engagement in Outdoor Recreation

Advised by Dr. Aby Sene-Harper and Dr. Corliss Outley

Jennifer Nicole Kinch Garcia Greenville, South Carolina
B.S., West Texas A&M University; M.Ed., Strayer University

Assessing Neurodiverse Inclusion in Zoos, Aquariums, and Nature Centers: A Secondary Analysis of the Mozaics Project

Advised by Dr. Corliss W. Outley

Jennifer has been a growing professional in the field of parks and recreation for over fifteen years. Her work with the MoZAICS project has led to leadership training programs building autism inclusion at over fifty organizations. Her current work as senior director at The Children's Museum of the Upstate aims to reduce barriers to playful environments for neurodiverse children and their families.

Alayna Mykal Schmidt Rocky Mount, North Carolina
A.A.S., Pitt Community College; B.S., North Carolina State University; M.S., Western Carolina University

Rooted in Solidarity: Visibilizing Youth-Led Resistance, Nature-Based Healing, and Social Justice in Appalachia

Advised by Dr. Corliss W. Outley

Alayna won \$214,000 over the course of their graduate education and has six peer-reviewed publications with three more under review. They have accepted a position as the founding faculty of the Outdoor Education and Leadership program at Pfeiffer University.

Allison MaynardCircleville, Ohio

B.S., B.A., Canisius University; M.A., Brock University

Virtual Reality in Informal Education: Trends, Frameworks, and Implementation Strategies

Advised by Dr. Matthew Browning

Alexandra Claire Skrocki College Station, Texas

B.S., M.S., Texas A&M University

Understanding Mental, Emotional, and Social Health Policy within the Camp Industry

Advised by Dr. Barry A. Garst

Alexandra received the Marge Scanlin Outstanding Research Award in 2026 from the American Camp Association and was selected as a Marsha A. Ward Fellow for Play in 2025 at Clemson University. She has authored over fifteen peer-reviewed publications.

Emily Barton SwettCody, Wyoming

B.A., Amherst College

Nonprofit Youth Sports Boards as a Context for Positive Youth Development: How USA Swimming's Local Swimming Committee Boards Provide Positive Youth Development Outcomes for Athlete Board Members

Advised by Dr. Edmond P. Bowers

Emily lives and works in Cody, Wyoming. Upon graduating, she plans to keep building her consulting practice working with youth sports boards of directors.

Xianyong WangClemson, South Carolina

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

Using Large Language Models to Assess Entrepreneurial Personality in Generation Z Young Adults

Advised by Dr. Edmond P. Bowers

Policy Studies

Andrew Gordon TateCampobello, South Carolina

B.A., University of South Carolina Upstate; M.P.A., Clemson University

Religion as Political Influence: Representation, Rhetoric, and Advocacy in American Politics

Advised by Dr. K. Amber Curtis

WILBUR O. AND ANN POWERS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Business Administration

Hyunji Suh..... Daegu, Korea, Republic of
B.S., Minnesota State University, Mankato; M.S., Illinois State University

I Am a Fighter, but There's More to It: Examining the Mixed Effects of Resilient Work Identity on Employee
Performance and Well-Being

Advised by Dr. Sharon Sheridan

Hyunji studies self-regulation in the workplace. She has published two peer-reviewed articles on the topic, with additional projects under review. She received the Academy of Management Human Resources Division Best Paper Award in 2025. At Clemson University, she received the Interdisciplinary Research Fellowship in 2024 and 2025 and the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award in 2024. She will join the University of South Alabama as an assistant professor of management in Fall 2026.

Economics

Jacob Campbell..... Pleasant Hill, Tennessee
B.S.B.A., B.S., Tennessee Technological University; M.S., M.S., Clemson University

Two Essays In Economic Growth

Advised by Dr. Michal Jerzmanowski and Dr. Robert Tamura

Noara Razzak..... Dhaka, Bangladesh
B.S., Tennessee Technological University; B.A., Bryn Mawr College; M.S.S., East West University

Understanding Chemistry-Property Relationships of Topological Magnetic Metals Toward Magnetic Skyrmion
Material Designcredit Accessibility in Diverse and Underserved Urban Communities and the Dynamics of
Their Lending Markets: The Case of Minority Deposit

Advised by Dr. Howard Bodenhorn

Noara is an applied microeconomist working on financial institutions, banking and household finance, drawing on frameworks from industrial organization and urban economics. She received the M.S Wallace Fellowship and the Doctoral Dissertation Completion Award in 2024-2025. She will be joining the University of Minnesota, Morris as an assistant professor of economics, business and management in Fall 2026.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Education Systems Improvement Science

Lyman Douglas Dawkins III.....Gaffney, South Carolina

B.A., Limestone University; M.Ed., Anderson University; Ed.S., Converse University

LEARNING IS LIT: Examining the Impact of Improvement Science-Based Professional Development on Teacher Capacity in a Rural Middle School

Advised by Dr. Brandi N. Hinnant-Crawford

Lyman serves as the principal of Gaffney Middle School and as the Mayor of Gaffney, South Carolina. His work focuses on strengthening teacher capacity and improving student outcomes through improvement-driven professional learning. His research examines the impact of professional development in rural schools. Mayor Dawkins plans to continue advancing educational leadership and community development, expanding initiatives that connect schools, families, and local systems to create stronger outcomes for all students.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

LEARNING SCIENCES

Virginia Elizabeth ClarkWoodstock, Georgia

B.S., Emory University; M.S., Georgia State University

Neurobiological Mechanisms of Attention in Adolescents

Advised by Dr. Faiza Jamil

Virginia has six peer-reviewed publications, with two as the first author, as well as twenty-five conference presentations, with fifteen as the first author and three at the international level. A two-time finalist in the Three Minute Thesis competition, she also served as the graduate representative on the Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research with the Office of Sponsored Projects. Alongside her doctorate, she holds a CDC Program Evaluation Framework certificate and is completing a certificate in clinical and translational research.

Educational Leadership

Ali Jahanaray Mashad, Iran

B.S., Eqbal Lahori Institute of Higher Education; M.A., Islamic Azad University

Discipline Policy, Racial Inequity, and Student Outcomes: A Cross-State Analysis of Suspension Practices in South Carolina and California

Advised by Dr. Hans Klar

Literacy, Language and Culture

Kathryn Michelle McGee Plano, Texas

B.S., Texas Christian University; M.Ed., Clemson University

Young Adult Literature Book Clubs as a Catalyst for Racial Literacy Development: A Participatory Study with Preservice Teachers

Advised by Dr. Susan Cridland-Hughes

Katie was named the College of Education and Clemson University's Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant in 2025. She earned a College of Education interdisciplinary fellowship and collaborated with colleagues to publish five peer-reviewed articles, with three more under review. Katie plans to continue to work in the field of literacy after graduation.

Victoria Graves Pennington Greenville, South Carolina

B.A., University of South Carolina; M.A., Clemson University

Designing Multilingual (Maker) Spaces: Exploring the Intersections of Play, Posthumanism, and Pre-Kindergarten

Advised by Dr. Lindsey W. Rowe

Tory is an assistant professor of early childhood education at the University of South Carolina Upstate. She missed her initial hooding ceremony in August of 2025 due to the birth of twins.

Teaching and Learning

Althea Allyn Morelock Roy Atlanta, Georgia

A.A., Oxford College of Emory University; B.S., Emory University; M.A.T., Columbus State University

Supporting the Development of Sociopolitical Consciousness in Elementary and Middle Grades Science Teachers

Advised by Dr. Brooke A. Whitworth and Dr. Julianne A. Wenner

Althea holds over a decade of experience teaching secondary science, mentoring and coaching K-12 teachers, and leading professional development. She has developed and led school-based programs focused on equity, science identity, and community-engaged learning. Her research agenda is driven by a commitment to realizing the promise of "Science for All" by supporting teachers in creating inclusive, justice-centered science learning environments. During her doctoral studies, she served as chair of the College of Education Graduate Student Conference.

Rachel Leigh Hall Rome, Georgia

B.A., Shorter University; M.Ed., Brenau University; M.B.A., Southern New Hampshire University

Why Families Stay or Leave: Experiences in Dual Language Immersion Programs

Advised by Dr. Brooke Whitworth

Rachel is the Associate Dean of Education at Central Piedmont Community College and author of "Educator to Entrepreneur."

Morohunkeji Yomi Orija..... Central, South Carolina

“Do We Belong?”: Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students Through Teacher Education

Advised by Dr. Anna Hall

Morohunkeji received the Outstanding Contribution to Early Childhood Education award from the Chartered Institute of Mentoring and Coaching, Nigeria in 2025, and the Graduate Student Award of Excellence in Service: Outreach or Clinical from the Clemson University College of Education in 2026. She is a Certified Educator, Coach, and Mentor through the Chartered Institute of Mentoring and Coaching, Nigeria.

Kayla Steele Payne..... Greenville, South Carolina

B.A., University of Tennessee; M.A., University of Delaware

Navigating the Minefield: A Narrative Inquiry into Faculty Experiences with Political Extremism in the College Classroom

Advised by Dr. Kristen Duncan

Kayla completed the program while working full-time in Clemson's College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences. She plans to continue her career in higher education.

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, COMPUTING AND APPLIED SCIENCES

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Automotive Engineering

James Matthew Gohn..... Greenville, South Carolina

B.E., Stony Brook University; M.S., Clemson University

Development of a Mixing Controlled Combustion Model

Advised by Dr. Benjamin Lawler

Dhruv Mehta Mumbai, India

B.E., University of Mumbai; M.S., Michigan Technological University

Hybrid Learning for Rough Terrain Navigation of Actively Articulated Wheeled Vehicles

Advised by Dr. Venkat Krovi

Dhruv successfully defended his Ph.D. dissertation in September 2025 and has authored five peer-reviewed publications in robotics and intelligent systems. He currently works as a robotics specialist at Arrive AI Inc., advancing autonomous last mile delivery solutions, with the goal of creating meaningful real-world impact through robotics and AI.

Ameya Salvi Mumbai, India

B.E., University of Mumbai; M.S., Clemson University

Learning Enhanced System Identification and Control for Skid-steered Robots

Advised by Dr. Venkat Krovi

Ameya now continues and scales his work in robotics at Hitachi Research and Development as a robotics researcher.

Luke Jack ShannonRancho Palos Verdes, California

B.S., University of California Santa Barbara; M.S., Colorado School of Mines

Modernizing Plastics and Composites Manufacturing Systems Using Hybrid Modeling Techniques

Advised by Dr. Saeed Farahani

Bioengineering

Nathan Foster Buchweitz.....Grand Ledge, Michigan

B.S., Michigan State University

Pathomechanics of Cervical Intervertebral Discs: Degeneration and Allograft Transplantation.

Advised by Dr. Yongren Wu

Nathan authored five peer-reviewed publications during his studies at Clemson University, and received the Page Morton Hunter Graduate Researcher award from the Bioengineering Department in 2025. He has been supported for the past two years as a National Institutes of Health / National Institute of Dental and Cranofacial Research Trainee fellow by the Medical University of South Carolina where he will continue his work as a post-doctoral scholar.

Pantrika KrisanarungsonClemson, South Carolina

B.E., Chulalongkorn University; M.S., University of Arkansas

Doxycycline As Prophylactic Treatment For Severe Covid-19 Induced Symptom Prevention And Other Inflammatory Diseases

Advised by Dr. Agneta Simionescu

Andrea Vera Martinez.....Hanahan, South Carolina

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

The Impact of Biomaterial Selection, Porosity, and Topography on the Osteoconductive Potential of Orthopaedic Implants

Advised by Dr. Agneta Simionescu

Andrea was awarded the Frank H Stelling and C Dayton Riddle Orthopedic Doctoral Scholar Fellowship in 2024. During her graduate studies, she also received a Biomedical Regulatory and Quality Science post-baccalaureate certificate and Quality Science Education micro-credential with honors. She hopes to pursue a career in the medical device industry.

Anthony Philip Marino Birmingham, Alabama

B.S., Auburn University; M.S., Texas A&M University; M.S., Clemson University

Experimental and Computational Investigation of the Effects of Neck Musculature During Head Impacts in American Football

Advised by Dr. John D. DesJardins and Dr. Gregory Batt

Abraham E Umo..... Lagos, Nigeria
B.S., University of Pittsburgh; M.S., Carnegie Mellon University

Advances in Hybrid Cardiovascular Modeling via the Pscope Framework: Novel Methodology and Applications in LVAD Digital Twins for Personalized Treatment Planning

Advised by Dr. Ethan Kung

Marshall Bernard Wilson Greenville, South Carolina
B.S., Clemson University

An Investigation of the Human Temporomandibular Joint Disc Nutrient and Mechanical Loading Environment

Advised by Dr. Hai Yao

Marshall has five peer-reviewed publications, with another one currently under review, and two additional manuscripts in preparation. He was a Ph.D trainee on the Medical Univeristy of South Carolina's T32 grant, funded by the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. He earned multiple awards at both MUSC Research Day and Scholars Day. Each of the four dental students he mentored also received an award at these events.

Biomedical Data Science and Informatics

Emma Rose Coen..... Charleston, South Carolina

Progressive Digital Health Engagement and Genetic Testing Intention: Evidence from The Genetic And Rare Disease Evaluation (GARDE) Health System Trial and the Health Information National Trends Survey (HINTS7)

Advised by Dr. Aaron Masino and Dr. Caitlin Allen

As a National Institutes of Health T15 Health Equity Trainee, Emma coauthored five peer-reviewed publications on technology-driven approaches to improving healthcare access and presented her research at national conferences. Emma plans to continue her career in oncology research and implementation science to improve patient outcomes and health equity.

Chemical Engineering

Chloe Katrina Forenzo Lebanon Township, New Jersey
B.S., Clemson University

Redox-Responsive Polyamine-RNA Coacervates: Design, Characterization, and Applications in RNA Sensing and Delivery

Advised by Dr. Jessica Larsen

In 2026, Chloe was named Outstanding Graduate Researcher for both the College of Engineering, Computing, and Applied Sciences and Clemson University overall. She has authored four peer-reviewed publications and holds a pending patent."

Civil Engineering

Miranda Eleanor Grice.....Athens, Georgia

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

Quantifying the Value of Adaptability: Bridging Real Options Analysis and Adaptable Building Design

Advised by Dr. Brandon Ross

Miranda was awarded a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship in 2022 and has gone on to research and develop a tool for the application of real options analysis to adaptable building designs. Additionally, she was awarded the ART Fellowship in the Glenn Department of Civil Engineering for the 2025-2026 school year.

Computer Engineering

Xusheng Ai Hangzhou, China

B.S., Changsha University of the Science and Technology; M.S., University of the Pacific

Breast Cancer Assessment With Generative Models

Advised by Dr. Melissa C. Smith and Dr. F. Alex Feltus

Zeyu Tang.....Xiaogan, China

B.E., Huazhong University of Science and Technology; M.S., Clemson University

Learning Global Context For Sparse Activity Recognition In Lengthy Recordings

Advised by Dr. Adam Hoover

Jie Ji Yangzhou, China

B.S., Tongji University; M.S., Northeastern University

Efficient Optimization Frameworks for Sparse and Scalable Deep Learning

Advised by Dr. Fatemeh Afghah

Jie's research focuses on efficient and scalable AI systems, including sparse training, optimization, and vision-language models. Her work has been published in top-tier AI conferences such as CVPR, ICML, ICLR, ICCV, ECCV, and NeurIPS. She plans to pursue a career in industry after graduation.

Computer Science

Margi Engineer..... Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India

B.E., Gujarat Technological University, India; M.E., Gujarat Technological University, India; M.S., Clemson University

Towards Dementia Inclusive Digital Text-based Health Information: A Multi-Method Investigation of Cognitive and Affective Accessibility

Advised by Dr. Emma Dixon

Margi was recognized as Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant in 2021 and has published over seven research papers across her academic career, with multiple additional publications forthcoming. Her goal is to create experiences that minimize cognitive and emotional friction in everyday tasks, enabling people to enjoy moments instead of navigating complexity.

Electrical Engineering

Niloufar Alipour TalemiClemson, South Carolina

B.S., Shahid Beheshti University; M.S., University of Guilan

Generalizable Adaptation for Vision-Language Models

Advised by Dr. Fatemeh Afghah

Niloufar is graduating with a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering, focusing on computer vision and multimodal artificial intelligence. She has worked on interdisciplinary projects addressing real world challenges in biometrics, healthcare, and environmental monitoring. Her dedication has resulted in publications in top tier venues and multiple research awards. After graduation, she plans to pursue impactful research in artificial intelligence and interdisciplinary work that translates cutting edge methods into practical solutions.

Hossein Kashiani..... Central, South Carolina

B.S., Imam Khomeini International University; M.S., Iran University of Science and Technology

Towards Generalizable Representation Learning Across Domains

Advised by Dr. Fatemeh Afghah

Hossein's research has bridged the gap between theoretical machine learning and Trustworthy AI. Focusing on anomaly detection, digital forensics, and multimodal large language models, he has authored several papers at top-tier venues in computer vision and multimodal AI.

Sahand Ghaseminejad Liasi..... Charleston, South Carolina

B.S., M.S., KN Toosi University of Technology

Enhancing Reliable Performance Of Microgrids With Autonomous Control Of Distributed Energy Resources

Advised by Dr. Ramtin Hadidi

Miaoxiang YuNantong, China

B.S., Nanjing Tech University

Domain-Specific Design On FPGA And NPU For Scientific Computing And On-Device LLM Inference

Advised by Dr. Tao Wei

Engineering and Science Education

Margaret Ann Bolick.....Natick, Massachusetts
B.S., M.A.T., Boston University

Examining Mathematics Identity and Student Capital in the United States and Norway: Comparative Insights
from First-Generation College Students in First-Year Mathematics Courses

Advised by Dr. Matthew Voigt

Margaret Ann was named the Engineering and Science Education department's Outstanding Graduate Researcher in 2026, a Community College Research Fellow and a Community for Advancing Discovery Research in Education Fellow in 2025, and Clemson University's Institutional Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant in 2024. Her research focuses on improving retention of first-generation college students in first-year mathematics courses. She plans to pursue a career in education research aimed at transforming education systems to better support students.

Haleh Barmaki BrothertonAtlanta, Georgia
B.S., Middle East Technical University; M.S., Istanbul Technical University; M.S., South Dakota School of Mines
and Technology

Development and Validation of the AMPERE Scale: Measuring Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism in
Engineering Students

Advised by Dr. Karen High

Haleh developed and validated the AMPERE Scale, a domain-specific measure of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism in engineering students. Her work bridges psychometrics, engineering education, and student well-being. Prior to her Ph.D, she contributed to industry innovation as a co-inventor on a Nokia patent. She is building Perfectionism Hub, a research and design initiative translating scholarship into practical tools. Haleh plans to pursue faculty and research roles in metropolitan institutions.

Environmental Engineering and Earth Sciences

Eman Zuhair AlhamdanIrbid, Jordan
B.S., Jordan University of Science and Technology; M.S., The University of Alabama in Huntsville

Investigation of Low-Pressure Mercury Lamp System Configurations and Xenon Excimer Lamp System
Development as Vacuum Ultraviolet Sources for Optimal Photolytic Degradation of Poly-/Perfluoroalkyl
Substances

Advised by Dr. Ezra L. Cates

Eman was awarded the Legacy of Learning Scholarship by the Water Environment Association of South Carolina in recognition of her outstanding achievements and dedication. Her research has garnered international recognition, highlighted by her presentation at the International Ultraviolet Association conference, where she earned a highly competitive travel award in 2025.

Jaqueline Jamara Souza SoaresJanauba, Brazil
B.S., Oswaldo Cruz University; M.S., University of Sao Paulo

Membranes from Plant-Based Cellulose Nanocrystals for Water Treatment

Advised by Dr. Debora Frigi Rodrigues and Dr. David L. Freedman

Jaqueline was awarded the Thomas Keinath Water Environmental Association Award for outstanding performance and lasting contributions to Environmental Engineering and Earth Sciences in 2025.

Hatice Yildirim Bursa, Turkey

B.S., Middle East Technical University

Environmental Sorption Behavior Of Antimicrobial Contaminants And Pfas On Virgin And Weathered Microplastics

Advised by Dr. Tanju Karanfil

Human Centered Computing

Samaneh Zamanifard Easley, South Carolina

A.S., Viliars University; B.S., Islamic Azad University; M.S., Islamic Azad University

Personalizing Education with Large Language Models: Learner Characteristics, Style Inference, and Adaptive Engagement

Advised by Dr. Andrew Robb

Samaneh was awarded Facebook Fellowships to fund her Ph.D. research.

Industrial Engineering

Soumya Ranjan Pathy Bhubaneswar, India

B.Tech., Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology; M.Tech., Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur

Stochastic and Robust Chance-Constrained Programs

Advised by Dr. Hamed Rahimian

Soumya has published three peer-reviewed papers in journals including Optimization Letters and Computational Optimization and Applications, focusing on resilient supply chains. He plans to pursue a career as a research scientist, specializing in last-mile science and global logistics optimization.

Tong Zhang Jinan, China

B.S., Chongqing University; M.S., Northeastern University

Optimal Allocation of Flexible Servers in Healthcare Systems

Advised by Dr. Tugce Isik

Materials Science and Engineering

Zachary Louis CaprowVirginia Beach, Virginia

B.S., Virginia Tech

Engineering Silicone Magnetic Fluids for Localized Radiation Attenuation During Ocular Melanoma
Brachytherapy

Advised by Dr. Olin Thompson Mefford

Zac served as an officer for the Materials Research Society and has authored two peer-reviewed publications, with another currently under review. His doctoral work has generated innovative materials platforms advancing toward intellectual property protection and future clinical translation. He plans to bring this innovation-driven perspective to the energy and environmental industries after graduation.

Peter Francis Wachtel II.....Dansville, New York

B.S., M.S., Alfred University

Physical and Optical Properties of the Germanium-Arsenic-Selenium Glass-Forming Region for Precision Glass
Molding and Infrared Optics

Advised by Dr. John Ballato

Peter was a founder and the Chief Technical Officer of a Clemson University patent/research spin-off company purchased by Rochester Precision Optics, where he currently works. He plans to continue to act as a lead in the research and development team as a senior research scientist.

Mechanical Engineering

Benjamin J Elbrecht West Columbia, South Carolina

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

Interplay Between Phase Instability and Deformation Mechanisms in Beta Titanium Alloys in Aggressive
Environments

Advised by Dr. Garrett J. Pataky

Benjamin was an important member of the Mechanical Engineering department and contributed through his research, teaching, and service. He plans to stay in academia.

Akash GuptaKolkata, India

B.Tech., M.S. Ramaiah Institute of Technology, India; M.S., Clemson University

Partitioned Multiscale Methods In Cardiovascular Research: Surgical Planning And Methodological Innovations
In Automated Model Tuning

Advised by Dr. Ethan Kung

Sriram Sundar Krishnamoorthy Shankara NarayananChennai, India
B.Tech., SASTRA University; M.S., University of South Florida
Safe Control Design for Quadruped Locomotion in Unstructured Environments using Linear Transfer Operators
Advised by Dr. Umesh Vaidya
Sriram received the Mechanical Engineering Graduate Teaching Excellence Award at Clemson University and was a co-author of a Best Paper Award from the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. He plans to continue working in robotics, focusing on safe control and learning for autonomous systems

Muhammad Usman Gujranwala, Pakistan
B.S., University of Engineering & Technology, Pakistan; M.S., Michigan Technological University
Hydrodynamics of Perforated Heave Plates
Advised by Dr. Hassan Masoud
Muhammad is currently working as a postdoctoral researcher at Clemson University. To date, he has three peer-reviewed publications with other two under review. He intends to pursue a career in academia.

Miao Yu.....Beijing, China
B.S., North China Electric Power University; M.S., Washington University in St. Louis; M.S., University of Maryland
A Versatile Exoskeleton Control Paradigm for Agile Human Locomotion: Task-Agnostic and Stability-Augmented Assistance
Advised by Dr. Ge Lv

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Chia-Lun WuNew Taipei City, Taiwan
B.S., Fu Jen Catholic University; M.S., Taiwan National University
Abnormal Trafficking and Processing of Multiple Matrix Metalloproteinases Drive Cartilage Defects in Glycosylation Disorder
Advised by Dr. Trudy Frances Charlene Mackay and Dr. Heather-Flangan Steet
Allen has three peer-reviewed publications with two others under review. He has accepted a job at the Greenwood Genetic Center in Greenwood, SC.

Biological Sciences

Ramses Alejandro Rosales Garcia.....Jerez, Mexico

B.S., Universidad Autonoma de Aguascalientes

Gene Family Evolution: Understanding Selection, Duplication, Gene Loss, and Transposable Elements as Mechanisms Responsible for Toxin Gene Family Expansion

Advised by Dr. Christopher Parkinson

Ramses was awarded the Findley Fellowship in 2024. By the end of his Ph.D., he had published thirteen peer-reviewed papers and one book chapter. He has accepted a postdoctoral position at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Chemistry

Giovani Gutierrez.....Maryville, Tennessee

B.S., Maryville College

Deoxy-Diversification of Carboxylic Acids and Alcohols

Advised by Dr. Daniel Whitehead

Giovani is a first-generation Mexican-American and a recipient of the Call Me Doctor Fellowship. As one of the first members of the Kim Group, he has published one first-author paper, and has multiple follow-up manuscripts in progress. He looks forward to working in the pharmaceutical industry

Cameron Jean Stouffer.....Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

B.S., Bloomsburg University

Interfacing Pre-Sampling Platforms with ICP-MS for High Sensitivity Atomic Detection in Biological and Environmental Matrices

Advised by Dr. R. Kenneth Marcus

Cameron was named the International Atomic Spectrometry Association 2025 Student Award winner and plans to work in the pharmaceutical industry.

Madison Rose Vicente.....Glendora, New Jersey

B.S., Clemson University

Assay Development to Examine Radical-Mediated Oxidation of Biothiols and Degradation of Monoamide Complexants

Advised by Dr. Julia Brumaghim

Madison was awarded the Clemson University College of Science Outstanding Graduate in Learning award and the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award in Chemistry in 2025. She was also awarded the Dr. Frederick S. Mandel '78 Fellowship in 2024, as well as multiple Clemson Graduate Student Government Graduate travel grants throughout her graduate school career. Currently, Madison has one peer-reviewed publication with three additional manuscripts in preparation. Madison plans to obtain a postdoctoral position at an academic institution after graduation.

Chuanlei Wang Jinan, China
B.S., University of Jinan
Developing Buoyant-Analyte-Magnetic (Bam) Assays For Ultrasensitive And Rapid Point-Of-Care Diagnostics
Advised by Dr. Jeffrey Anker

Jason Alexander Wilt Sanford, North Carolina
B.S., Appalachian State University
Asymmetric Deoxy-Diversification of Amides and Carboxylic Acids Enabled by Titanium Multicatalysis
Advised by Dr. Byoungmoo Kim

Jason has a major peer-reviewed publication in Organic Letters, which was highlighted in Organic Letters' most-read articles, Organic Process Research & Development's monthly newsletter, and in the SynFacts academic newsletter, with another publication in preparation for submission.

Genetics

Austin Alexander Herbert Aiken, South Carolina
B.S., University of South Carolina - Aiken; M.S., Clemson University
Precursor-RNA Properties Driving Cryptic 3' Splice Site Selection In SF3B1 Mutant Malignancies
Advised by Dr. Lela Lackey

Mathematical Sciences

Julianne Barnhart Central, South Carolina
Parametrized Polynomial Systems: Monodromy, Sparse Polynomials, And Real Solutions
Advised by Dr. Michael Burr

Rakhi Goswami Serampore, India
B.S., Calcutta University; M.S., Indian Institute of Engineering, Science, and Technology, Shibpur
A Novel Method Parametric Benders' Decomposition to Solve Two-Stage Robust Multiobjective Optimization
With Uncertainties.

Advised by Dr. Margaret M. Wiecek

Rakhi was a finalist in the 2023 3-Minute Thesis competition and in the 2024 Graduate Research and Discovery Symposium.

Benjamin Hamlin Hinesville, Georgia
B.S., M.S., Georgia Southern University

Large-Scale Decision-Making Under Uncertainty and Conflict

Advised by Dr. Cheng Guo and Dr. Margaret Wiecek

Jared William Robert KettingerRochester, New York

B.S., B.A., Grove City College; M.S., Clemson University

Arithmetic and Galois Actions in Algebraic Number Fields

Advised by Dr. Jim Coykendall

Jared was named the College of Science Outstanding Graduate in Learning in 2025 and the College of Science Outstanding Graduate in Engagement in 2026. He plans to continue research and postsecondary teaching in mathematics.

Trevor Scott Trees Vilaridi.....Fabius, New York

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

Monomial Quadratic Identities of Hecke Eigenforms

Advised by Dr. Hui Xue

Microbiology

Sophie Alys Millard Greenville, South Carolina

B.S., Clemson University

Donor and Recipient Microbiome Interactions Determine Functional Outcomes of Fecal Microbiota Transplantation for *Clostridioides Difficile* Infection

Advised by Dr. Anna Seekatz

Sophie was named the 2026 Biological Sciences Department Outstanding Graduate in Discovery. Her work has been featured in multiple media articles for its impact on understanding microbiome-based therapies for infectious disease. Sophie will continue her work at Clemson University as a postdoctoral researcher.

Physics

Isaiah Samuel Cox.....Kingsport, Tennessee

B.S., B.S., East Tennessee State University

X-raying the Material Surrounding Supermassive Black Holes

Advised by Dr. Marco Ajello

Isaiah was awarded the Department of Physics and Astronomy Graduate Researcher Award in 2026 and was named a Donald D. Clayton Scholar. During his time at Clemson, he secured \$250,000 in research grants and published three first-author papers with a fourth under review. He co-authored an additional fifteen publications with collaborators from all around the world.

Benjamin Charles Martinez Ridgefield, Connecticut

B.A., Wesleyan University

The Predictability of the Ionosphere-Thermosphere During Sudden Stratospheric Warmings

Advised by Dr. Xian Lu

Rajen Kumar Goutam Jhapa, Nepal

B.S., M.S., Tribhuvan University; M.S., University of Texas at El Paso

Cancer-Associated Pathogenic Missense Mutations in the ARID Domain of ARID1A Reveal Biophysical Insights
Into Structural Destabilization and DNA Binding

Advised by Dr. Hugo Sanabria

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 always.

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.