

Center for

GERONTOLOGY

Discovery

Learning

Engagement

Fall 2014/ Winter 2015 Newsletter

We've Moved!

In November, the Center for Gerontology staff and research assistants moved into our new location in the ISCE building at **230 Grove Lane**. We are thrilled with our new space and to continue our work with both new and familiar faces. In this issue of the newsletter, we are excited to share with you faculty and project updates, highlights of our involvement in international collaborations and the Gerontological Society of America, plus recognitions received by our faculty and students!



The Center Welcomes New Faculty

The Center for Gerontology is pleased to introduce two new faculty members. This year marks the beginning of new partnerships and the return of a familiar face. Dr. Laura P. Sands and Dr. Pamela B. Teaster are welcomed additions to Virginia Tech's Center for Gerontology!

Laura P. Sands, PhD



The Center is excited to introduce our newest faculty member, Laura P. Sands, PhD. Dr. Sands received her doctorate in Quantitative Psychology, a master's degree in Biostatistics, and a bachelor's degree in Psychology all from the University of California, Berkeley. She served in several research associate or research director roles in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and California before becoming an Associate Adjunct Professor of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. From 2010 to 2014, she held the Katherine Birck Professor of Nursing position and was the Director of Research in the School of Nursing at Purdue University.

Dr. Sands' research agenda focuses on determining optimal care pathways for many different older adult populations, including older adults with cognitive impairment, or chronic physical

disability, those hospitalized for acute illnesses, or surgical patients. In Sands' collaborations, she has worked to incorporate perspectives from multiple disciplines. "My background in psychology and statistical modeling has been enriched by my experiences and collaborations with social scientists, engineers, statisticians, and clinician researchers."

Dr. Sands will be working on several federally funded projects at the Center for Gerontology, with her academic appointment in the Department of Human Development. Her current research projects focus on: 1) identifying risks for development of post-operative delirium among older surgical patients, 2) determining the risks and consequences of unmet need for physical disabilities among community living older adults, and 3) understanding the impact of Hurricane Sandy on older adults' health outcomes. For the latter two projects data are from national surveys and federal administrative data including Medicare claims data.

In addition to her research duties, Dr. Sands supports her husband Timothy D. Sands in his role as President of Virginia Tech. She is excited about getting to know members of the Hokie Nation. "We've met so many wonderful people so far and are enjoying Blacksburg. It is a treasure - listening to stories and learning what drives people to invest and work so hard for this community. The Sands stay busy keeping up with their four adult children and extended family.

Pamela B. Teaster, PhD

The center is delighted to welcome back Professor Pamela B. Teaster. Dr. Teaster returns to the Center as the Associate Director of Research from the University of Kentucky, where she spent the last 12 years working in the College of Public Health and the Department of Gerontology. Dr. Teaster received her Ph.D. from Virginia Tech in 1997 and served for four years as Assistant Professor in the Department of Human Development and at the Center as the State Specialist in Gerontology for Virginia Cooperative Extension.

At the University of Kentucky, she worked mostly with graduate students, fulfilled an administrative role, and taught public health courses in ethics, feminism, public policy, elder mistreatment, and grant writing. Dr.



Teaster will continue her research with colleagues at the University of Kentucky on resident rights and quality of care issues as well as using community theatre performed by and for older farmers as a means to disseminate information about farm safety. She'll also take on new roles at Virginia Tech. "I'm really shifting back to a faculty position and returning to the work to be done on guardianship, elder mistreatment, and elder decision making."

Teaster's approach to elder mistreatment research and advocacy is comprehensive. "It's about the whole system – family, nursing home staff, and public policy. These all come together. Elder abuse is a wicked problem where solutions are hard to come by, especially when researchers are still sorting through the complexities of the phenomenon." Looking to the future, Dr. Teaster intends to frame elder abuse as a human rights issue.

"It's great to be home," Teaster relayed, "and I'm just so grateful to have the opportunity to come back to this university and work closely with Dr. Roberto again." In addition to her role as new faculty and senior researcher at Virginia Tech, Dr. Teaster spends her time outside the university raising her two children, Evan and Hadley, and pursuing her other passion, film making, with her husband, Gerald.

International Collaborations

Faculty Affiliate Toni Calasanti Appointed to Serve the International Institutes on Aging

This August, Center faculty affiliate Dr. Toni Calasanti (Sociology) was appointed to serve on the Board of the International Institute on Ageing, United Nations – Malta. During her three-year term she will join other board members representing China, the United Kingdom, Argentina, Russia, and Nigeria. Dr. Calasanti's ongoing professional relationship with Dr. Marvin Formosa (University of Malta) was instrumental in bringing about this opportunity. "Dr. Formosa and I are distant acquaintances. We each knew of each other's work and had corresponded with each other about our aligning research interests," Dr. Calasanti explained, "and when he became the new director of the International Institute on Ageing, he approached me about possibly serving a role within the Institute." The board will meet in May and their responsibilities are to serve as a think tank and training institute. "The hope of the Institute is to take ideas concerning policies and programs for older adults that work in higher income countries and see if and how these might be applied to help middle or lower income countries deal with population aging."



Dr. Calasanti expressed her enthusiasm for the new appointment: "I am excited for this opportunity to serve and to possibly contribute to constructive solutions for not just lower income countries and communities, but in all countries. I hope to see how we can come together to make a difference and contribute to gender, age, and economic equality. It will be exciting to think about how we can apply best practices to other places, and I am particularly interested in addressing the issue of economic security for both men and women in later life." Congratulations Dr. Calasanti! We look forward to hearing more in the upcoming months.

Jeju Institute Collaboration

In June, Dr. Nancy Brossoie accompanied Center faculty affiliates Drs. Julia Beamish and Eunju Hwang from Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management and Anisa Zvonkovic from Human Development to a teaching conference at Hanyang University in South Korea. Dr. Beamish gave a keynote address on universal design and aging friendly products and services. Dr. Hwang also spoke on aging friendly housing and services.



After the conference, Drs. Brossoie, Beamish, and Hwang attended the 20th Jeju Future Forum in Jeju, South Korea. Dr. Hwang coordinated the trip to the Jeju Development Institute and provided the keynote address at the Forum. She discussed housing welfare in both South Korea and the

United States. Dr. Beamish spoke on age-friendly housing policy, and Dr. Brossoie discussed community priorities and housing welfare. "At this time, Jeju is undergoing a lot of policy changes and considerations as it relates to housing for older or aging adults," Dr. Brossoie explained, "and as familial caregiving trends change, Jeju is attempting to engage in best practices for aging in place."

"The Korean society is changing." Dr. Beamish added, "It used to be that sons and daughters-in-law typically provided care for aging parents. However, changing family structure and housing types have strained this support system. Moreover, Jeju's aging population is multicultural, so policies promoting aging in place are

complicated.” Jeju is making progress in accommodating aging adults with a mix of eastern and western care models.

Drs. Hwang, Brossoie, and Beamish used their visit to Jeju as a way to expand their ongoing partnership with Dr. Seong-Hahn Koh, Director of Research for Jeju Longevity Institute and engage in real-time collaboration. Looking to the future, Drs. Brossoie and Hwang are already planning their third visit to Jeju in June 2015 to continue work on their collaborative research projects.

Dr. Karen A. Roberto Reflects on Gerontological Advancement in Turkey

In October, Center Director Karen Roberto travelled to Antalya, Turkey to take part in the 6th Annual Social and Applied Gerontology Symposium. She joined four other American colleagues to visit the country’s only gerontology program, located at Akdeniz University. This was Dr. Roberto’s third time attending the two-day symposium, which boasts participants from Europe, North America, and Asia. Her presentation, entitled *Changes in Family Structure and Care of Older Adults across the Globe*, took a look families ties and aging globally, with specific attention given to changes in Turkey. Turkey is projected to have more than a 200% increase in their older adult population between 2012 and 2050. “As longevity rates continue to increase,” Dr. Roberto explained, “the citizens and government of Turkey will need to join forces to support older adults”.

Established in 2006 by Dr. Professor Ismail Tufan, the gerontology program at Akdeniz University provides education and training to approximately 150 undergraduate and master’s students. Dr. Roberto speculated, “As more and more students complete their degrees in gerontology, we will see changes in how Turkey will support older adults and their families.”

To see firsthand the progress being made, Dr. Roberto made a site visit to a new senior center called Yaşlı Evi (translated as “home for senior citizens”) run by former Akdeniz University gerontology student, Çiğdem Akbaş Metin. While at the Center, Dr. Roberto and her colleagues met the vice mayor of Antalya and shared information about aging services in America compared to those developing in Turkey. Dr. Roberto described the center, which is located on prime land donated by the city, as a “beautiful open-space area overlooking the ocean that provides older adults a peaceful place to gather, socialize, and engage in a variety of activities.”



Dr. Professor Ismail Tufan

Dr. Susan Pickard Visits Virginia Tech for Gender, Bodies, and Technology Conference

This Spring, the Center for Gerontology co-sponsored Dr. Susan Pickard of the University of Liverpool in her visit to Virginia Tech as part of the 3rd Annual Gender, Bodies, and Technology Conference. Dr. Pickard was awarded an International Academic Scholarship, designed to promote scholarly collaboration across national boundaries. Dr. Pickard chose to use this award to build on her existing relationship with Center faculty affiliate, Dr. Toni Calasanti (Sociology). “After meeting Dr. Calasanti at past conferences,” Dr. Pickard explained, “I saw this international scholarship as a way for us to start a professional collaboration. Our interests in aging and gender, and our backgrounds in sociology, meshed so well that I jumped on the opportunity to establish this partnership.”

Dr. Pickard uses a sociological perspective to analyze aging bodies, gender, and health. Her talk at the conference, entitled *Technologies of Frailty: New Problematizations of Gendered Inequality in Old Age*, addressed issues of ageism and structural stratification. Dr. Pickard also used her time in the United States to expand other international collaborations, work on three manuscripts, and lay foundations for future scholarship.



Currently, Dr. Pickard is in the midst of writing a textbook entitled, *Age Studies*, which examines aging throughout the life course. “My work tends to focus on age, stratification, and the phenomenon of age ideology. By age ideology I mean the ways in which Western society makes aging a problematic state in which we see ourselves or others as deficient at later stages in life. This ideology is at the center of ageism.”

Gerontological Society of America

GSA Executive Director, James Appleby, Speaks at Virginia Tech

In April 2014, the Center for Gerontology was honored to have the Executive Director and CEO of the Gerontology Society of America (GSA), James Appleby, visit Virginia Tech. Mr. Appleby joined GSA in 2008. Among his many responsibilities, Mr. Appleby provides assistance to the Executive Committee, which was chaired this year by the Center’s Associate Director, Dr. Rosemary Blieszner, to plan and organize the annual meeting as well as represent GSA’s interests to multiple national social and biological science organizations and businesses providing goods and services for older adults.

During his formal presentation to faculty and students, Mr. Appleby discussed the history of GSA and the importance of professional organization membership. “One key thing to professional organizations,” Mr. Appleby explained, “is its members. Members are also owners and contributors that play a vital role in advancing and supporting fields of research. Organizations like GSA bring together individuals and keep the ‘ecosystem’ of gero-science healthy by advocating for older adult research, networking with researchers of similar interests, and advancing innovations in research.” Mr. Appleby also discussed the ways in which GSA has worked to reframe aging in the United States and its widespread influence in medicine, research, and policy.



Mr. Appleby met individually with several students and faculty from the Center to discuss opportunities for attendees of the GSA annual meetings and hot topics in gerontology. “It was a wonderful visit to Virginia Tech,” said Mr. Appleby, “and my first time down here. It was a delight to see the campus and meet numerous students and faculty. I look forward to seeing many familiar faces at GSA for years to come and encourage everyone interested in careers in aging to mark your calendars for IAGG’s 21st World Congress meeting in San Francisco in 2017!”

Dr. Rosemary Blieszner Presides over 2014 Gerontological Society of America's Annual Meeting

Congratulations to Dr. Rosemary Blieszner for a successful Gerontological Society of America (GSA) Annual Meeting. As GSA's 2014 President, Dr. Blieszner was involved in the organization, planning, and execution of the GSA scientific meeting. Her hard work and dedication were clear to the over 3600 attendees at this year's meeting. During the meeting, Dr. Blieszner spoke at multiple sessions, presided at a Presidential Symposium, and was a co-author of several presentations.

At the Presidential Symposium, Dr. Blieszner expressed her excitement, "Here at GSA we see the leading clinicians and researchers come together and work to advance the field in an interdisciplinary way. From unstable cells to enduring families, GSA's alliances continue to improve the lives, services, and communities for older adults." She introduced the invited speaker, Dr. Francis Collins, Director of the National Institutes on Aging. His presentation on aging research across the NIH programs and over time reflected Dr. Blieszner's conference theme, *Making Connections: From Cells to Societies*.

The Annual Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America boasted a 4th record-breaking year with 80 vendors and 3600 participants registered from over 40 countries around the world.



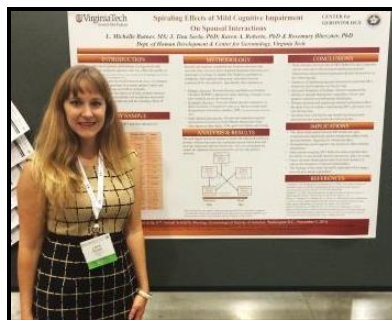
Drs. Roberto, Blieszner, and Savla at the Presidential Symposium

Graduate Student Presenters at GSA

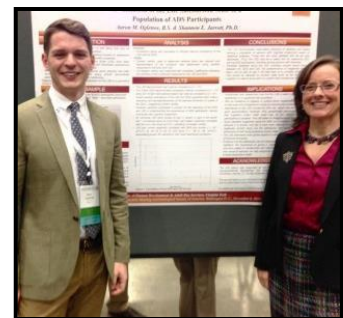
This year the faculty associated with Center for Gerontology was proud to have had 10 graduate students present their research at the Gerontological Society of America's 2014 Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. Students presented papers or posters on different areas including evaluation of intergenerational programs, adult day services, adult foster care, mild cognitive impairment and family or spousal issues, use of theater in reaching out to older adults, and community service use. Congratulations on your accomplishments at this year's GSA!



Kendra O'Hora and Raven Weaver



Michelle Butner



Aaron Ogletree with Dr. Shannon Jarrott

Graduate Student Presentations

- Aaron Ogletree and Shannon Jarrott. *A Validation of the Life Satisfaction Scale in a Population of ADS Participants*. (Poster)
- Emma Potter, Karen Roberto, Nancy Brossoie, and Rosemary Blieszner. *Perception, Roles, and Systems of Support among African American Families Responding to Mild Cognitive Impairment*. (Paper)
- Kelly Munly, Karen Roberto, and Katherine Allen. *Understanding Adult Foster Care Provider Experiences in North Carolina*. (Paper)

- Kendra O’Hora, Karen Roberto, Rosemary Blieszner, and Sujee Kim. *Care Partner Relationships: Thematic Analysis of Planning in Families with Mild Cognitive Impairment*. (Paper)
- Michelle Butner, Tina Savla, Karen Roberto, and Rosemary Blieszner. *Spiraling Effects of Mild Cognitive Impairment on Spousal Interactions*. (Poster)
- Neda Norouzi and Sara Lyon-Hill. “*All the World’s a Stage*” – *Bridging the Generational Gap through Theatre*. (Poster)
- Raven Weaver, Andrea Mendes, Kendra O’Hora, and Shannon Jarrott. *Process Evaluation of Training to Enhance Evidence-based Practice Use in Elder and Child Programs*. (Poster)
- Raven Weaver and Karen Roberto. *Home and Community-Based Service Use by Vulnerable Older Adults*. (Poster)
- Sujee Kim, Rosemary Blieszner, Karen Roberto, and Kendra O’Hora. *Does Family Agreement on Mild Cognitive Impairment Affect Care Partners’ Coping?* (Paper)
- Vidya Gowda, Karen Roberto, and James Jones. *Lighting metrics limitations for designing transitional spaces: Older adults with vision impairments*. (Poster).
- Yujun Lui and Eunju Hwang. *The Need and Provision of Community Health and Social Services in Montgomery County, Virginia*. (Poster)

Research in Action

Institutes in Caregiving Honors Futures Board Member Dr. Richard Lindsay

In September, the Institute for Innovations in Caregiving held a formal event at Pippin Hill Farm and Vineyard in Charlottesville to announce its new name: *The Lindsay Institute for Innovations in Caregiving*. The SeniorNavigator board hosted the event and surprised Dr. Lindsay, and over 150 guests, with their recognition of Dr. Lindsay’s contributions and lifetime dedication to elder caregiving issues in Virginia.

Adrienne Johnson, Executive Director of Senior Navigator and Initiative Lead of The Lindsay Institute, lauded Dr. Lindsay’s work and advocacy for older adult caregiving, “While Dick stands out for being so forward-thinking, he is also grounded by what he carries in his heart – a passion for helping older adults and their caregivers. I am honored and extremely proud to be working with Dr. Lindsay and our esteemed Advisory Council members to truly shine a spotlight upon and improve caregiver health through the many initiatives of the Lindsay Institute.” Congratulations to Dr. Richard Lindsay!



(L to R): Kathy Fletcher, Dr. Ed Ansello, and Dr. Richard Lindsay of the Advisory Council

The Lindsay Institute for Innovations in Caregiving is currently making plans for its “Caring for the Caregiver Hack” – a grant initiative to encourage Virginia colleges and university students to create technology-based tools to improve family caregivers’ physical or emotional health. For more information on the name change or the grant challenge visit the Institute’s website at <http://CaregivingInnovations.org> or email info@SeniorNavigator.org.

Drs. Roberto and Blieszner Address Over 125 Attendees at Elder Abuse Conference

In September, Dr. Roberto provided the keynote address and Dr. Rosemary Blieszner provided the concluding session at the 2014 Linking Gerontology and Geriatrics Conference held at the Oklahoma State University. The



conference series aims to identify links between social behavior and health and is organized by former Virginia Tech faculty member and Center affiliate, Dr. Tammy Henderson. This year's conference theme, *Breaking the Silence: Elder Abuse, Care, and Resilience*, included

sessions on elder abuse in long term care facilities, identifying warning signs of abuse, self-neglect, the intersection of mental health and elder abuse and resiliency.

During her opening keynote, *Understanding Elder Abuse: Causes, Consequences, and Care Solutions*, Dr. Roberto discussed definitions and prevalence of elder abuse; relationship dynamics between perpetrators and victims; physical, emotional, and psychological costs of elder abuse; and prevention and intervention strategies. "The conference was a great success," Dr. Roberto explained, "in bringing together those that work on behalf of and with older adults - researchers, health professionals, practitioners, and policy makers – and normalizing the conversation about abuse. I was pleased to be a part of a program that encourages evidence-based best practices in addressing this prevalent family issue."

Dr. Blieszner ended the conference with a presentation on resilience in which she discussed the ways in which older adults maintain psychological well-being in later life despite challenges they may face. Individuals interested in training materials, conference highlights, and more information on continuing education credits available can find information at <http://osu-okgec.okstate.edu/>.

Fall 2014 Research Forum:

Consequences of Insufficient Help in Late Life: Evidence from Medical Claims Data

This fall's research forum featured work from the Center for Gerontology's and Department of Human Development's newest faculty member, Dr. Laura P. Sands. Dr. Sands discussed the importance of evaluation in long term care, outcomes of Medicaid home-based community service programs, and the downstream consequences of self-reports of insufficient care among community living older adults. Her most recent work looks at comparing health outcomes including hospital admission risk among older adults who need help for their physical disabilities.



Using Medicaid and Medicare claims data, Dr. Sands and her team of researchers found that among older adults who qualified for paid long-term care from Medicaid, those who received home-based long-term care services had lower monthly expenditures than those who received long-term care in nursing homes. However, those who received home-based long-term care were at a higher risk of being admitted to the hospital, a very expensive health outcome. Dr. Sands explained that the risk of hospital admission was related to the amount of services (hours per month) they received. Dr. Sands compared older adults who received five, fifteen, and twenty-five hours of attendant care per month to those who received no attendant care, "There is no algorithm or formula to decide exactly how many hours per month someone needs assistance or care, but the results suggest that more care is associated with lower risk of being admitted to a hospital." About one-third of Medicaid expenditures are

spent on long term care for older adults and Medicaid has become a top state expenditure. Thus, these findings are not just relevant to disabled older adults and their caregivers, but also to those who are concerned about Medicaid expenditures.

Dr. Sands also presented findings about unmet need and hospital readmissions. She found that older adults who had new unmet need were at significantly higher risk for readmission than those who reported long-standing or no unmet need. After 100 days, 55% of those who reported having new unmet care need were readmitted compared to about 20% of those with existing or no unmet need. She concluded that “In a time where patient-centered care is a healthcare priority, we need to make sure we listen to patients’ perceptions of all of their healthcare needs, including their need for help with their disabilities, to ensure that they receive not only quality care, but also sufficient care.”

Faculty and Student Recognitions

Faculty Affiliate Katherine Allen Receives Multiple NCFR Awards

Congratulations to Center faculty affiliate, Dr. Katherine Allen, for receiving the inaugural Alexis J. Walker Award for Lifetime Achievement in Feminist Family Studies and the 2014 Felix Berardo Scholarship Award at this year’s National Council on Family Relations conference. Dr. Allen received the inaugural award for her work and contributions to the feminist family studies field. Dr. Allen gave an address entitled, *Feminist Family Studies, Reflection and Critique*, in which she outlined some of the core foundations and assumptions behind feminism, feminist theory, and feminist family studies, and showcased how many of the issues and concepts feminists first sought to deconstruct continue to merit feminist analysis today. The Felix Berardo Scholarship award honors NCFR members who are noted for excellence and mentoring of junior colleagues. Dr. April Few-Demo spearheaded the nomination process for the Berardo award, which included letters of support from over 20 current and former students, junior colleagues, and peers.



Raven Weaver Receives Multiple Awards for Masters Work



Congratulations to Raven Weaver on receiving the Elaine M. Brody Award (Runner Up) at this year’s Gerontological Society of America Annual Meeting. This award recognizes excellence in research in social, policy, and practice related to older adults.

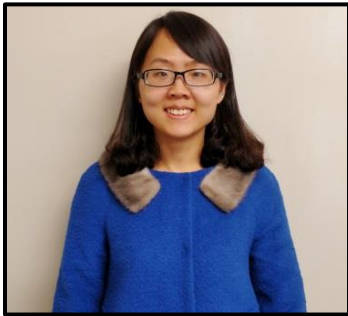
Raven also received the Francis G. Caro Student Paper Award sponsored by the University of Massachusetts. Raven was one of two students whose master’s level papers were recognized for exceptional work in the field of aging and the life course.

Raven’s masters thesis, *Home and Community Based Services Use by Vulnerable Older Adults* used a statistical cluster analysis to explain group and individual characteristics associated with service use among low-income and nursing-home eligible older adults in Virginia. Dr. Karen Roberto served as chair of Raven’s master’s committee. Congratulation, Raven on your many accomplishments!

The Center Welcomes Graduate Research Assistants for 2014-2015

The Center is pleased to introduce two new graduate research assistants this Fall. Yimeng Xie and Miao Yuan join returning GRAs Sujee Kim, Emma Potter, and Raven Weaver. Welcome!

Yimeng Xie is a fourth-year doctoral student in the Department of Statistics. She holds a B. S. in Statistics from University of Science and Technology of China. She is working with Dr. Sands on how environmental changes impact older adults' health care afterwards and whether depth of anesthesia is correlated with the postoperative cognitive dysfunction of older adults. Her research interests in statistics include reliability, survival analysis, and test planning. In her free time, Yimeng enjoys traveling, reading, and eating spicy food.



Miao Yuan also is a fourth-year doctoral student in the Department of Statistics. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Actuarial Science from Chongqing University in China. At the Center she works with Dr. Sands on projects examining adverse consequences associated with unmet needs for older adults with disabilities and cognitive outcomes of anesthetic depth during surgery. In her free time, she enjoys playing Guzheng (a traditional Chinese instrument), music, and sports.

Thanks for Making a Difference!

Your donation to the Center for Gerontology supports a variety of activities including student travel, special publications, scholarships, and professional development activities. This year, Yujun Lui, doctoral student in Human Development and Gerontology Graduate Certificate student, was the recipient of the Futures Board Scholarship. Yujun expressed her gratitude for this year's award,

"I feel so honored for being selected as the Futures Board Scholarship recipient. The award gives me great confidence and support in my research and study. Thank you for the encouragement as I pursue my career in the field of aging."

Donations can be mailed directly to the Center, or made on-line:

<http://www.givingto.vt.edu/>

Center for Gerontology Staff

Karen A. Roberto, Ph.D., *Professor & Director*

Rosemary Blieszner, Ph.D., *Alumni Distinguished Professor & Associate Director*

Pamela B. Teaster, Ph.D., *Professor & Associate Director of Research*

Tina Savla, Ph.D., *Associate Professor & Research Methodologist*

Laura P. Sands, Ph.D., *Professor*

Nancy Brossoie, Ph.D., *Senior Research Associate*

Megan Stuart, M.P.H., *Project Manager*

Carlene Arthur, B.S., *Operations Coordinator*

Emma Potter, M.S., Raven Weaver, M.S., Sujee Kim, M.S., Yimeng Xie, B.S., Miao Yuan, B.S. *Graduate Research Assistants*

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