Graduate School Citation Awards

Fall 2021

Presented by The Graduate School
318C DeVos Center
616-331-7105
www.gvsu.edu/gs
gradschool@gvsu.edu

in collaboration with the
Graduate Student Association (GSA)

Dear friends and members of our graduate education community,

At the end of each academic semester, we have the great pleasure to honor those students and faculty who have distinguished themselves in graduate education at Grand Valley State University. The Graduate School Citation Awards for Academic Excellence and the Graduate Student Association Faculty Awards are proud Grand Valley State University traditions that began in 2006 thanks to the combined efforts of the University Graduate Council and the Graduate Program Directors. The Graduate School and the Graduate Student Association serve as co-sponsors for this event.

The Graduate School Citation Awards recognize excellence in academic performance in several categories. Graduate students are nominated for these awards by staff or faculty members, advisors, graduate program directors, and departmental chairs or school directors. The Vice-Provost for the Graduate School reviews the nominees and approves the final selection. Each recipient receives a certificate of recognition and a graduate honors cord. Additionally, the Graduate Student Association honors members of our graduate faculty who have distinguished themselves in mentoring and supporting our students at Grand Valley. Their noteworthy dedication helps to create a vibrant and engaged learning community.

Grand Valley State University is extremely proud of the accomplishments of these graduate students and graduate faculty members. I commend each of our award winners and wish them a very successful future.

Congratulations to all!

Jeffrey A. Potteiger, Ph.D., FACSM
Associate Vice-Provost for the Graduate School
Grand Valley State University

Table of Contents

GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATIONS FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
Fall 2021

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN THE DEGREE PROGRAM

Seidman College of Business

- Hope C. Ramseyer, Business Administration

College of Education & Community Innovation

- Kathryn Thill, Criminal Justice
- Catherine Cushway, Educational Leadership
- Abigail Clasen, Health Administration
- Andrea J. Anderson, Public Administration
- Christopher G. Eakin, Public Administration
- Lisa Mulder, Literacy Studies-Reading
- Melissa J. Vader, School Counseling

Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

- Roberto Sanchez, Applied Computer Science
- Jacob Getzen, Health Informatics and Bioinformatics

College of Health Professions

- Jessica Guerra, Occupational Therapy
- Mackenzie Ford, Physician Assistant Studies

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- Francesca Golus, Biology
- Megan M. Ulbricht, Cell and Molecular Biology
- Jennifer VanderMolen, Communication

OUTSTANDING MASTER'S THESIS

College of Education & Community Innovation

- Jeffery Brown, Higher Education

Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

- Ryan C. Lubbers, Engineering

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- Alyssa Swinehart, Biology

OUTSTANDING FINAL PROJECT

College of Education & Community Innovation

- Jacquelyn Abeyta, Leadership (Ed.S.)
- Jennifer M. Loudin, Literacy Studies-TESOL

Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

- Jacob Getzen, Health Informatics and Bioinformatics

College of Health Professions

- Jenna Asper, Kyra Chase, Laura Matney, and Kayleigh Thomas, Occupational Therapy

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- Sara K. Sumerix and Laura Shattuck, Cell and Molecular Biology

OUTSTANDING PUBLICATION

Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

- Natalie Tipton, Engineering

EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY OR PROFESSION

College of Education & Community Innovation

- Melissa L. Brown-Culbertson, Criminal Justice
- Rosemarie Starook, Leadership (Ed.S.)

College of Health Professions

- Abigail K. Eekhoff, Claire Harrison, Candice O. Marthlater, Megan E. Seromik, Occupational Therapy
- Andrew Ashenfelter, Physician Assistant Studies

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- Emily Neuman, Biology

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE TO GVSU

College of Education & Community Innovation

- Zoë A. Fry, Health Administration
- Azra Causevic, Public Administration

College of Health Professions

- Michelle L. Magnusson, Physician Assistant Studies

PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT GVSU

College of Education & Community Innovation

- Jessica S. Harris, Public Administration

College of Health Professions

- Brett M. Miller, Physician Assistant Studies

EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- ❖ Carly Brouwers, Biology

MAGS DISTINGUISHED THESIS NOMINEES

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- ❖ Nicholas Preville, Biology
- ❖ Julie Oosterink, English

Congratulations to all of the Fall 2021
Graduate School Citation Award Recipients!

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION FACULTY AWARDS
Fall 2021

KIMBOKO INCLUSION AWARD

College of Health Professions

- Jennifer Fortuna, Occupational Science and Therapy

FACULTY MENTOR AWARD

College of Health Professions

- Elizabeth Fausone, Speech-Language Pathology
- Heather Wallace, Public Health

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- Kristin Renkema, Biomedical Sciences

OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARD

College of Education & Community Innovation

- Donijo Robbins, Health Administration

College of Health Professions

- Srihimaja Nandamudi, Speech-Language Pathology

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- Jennifer Moore, Biology

Congratulations to the Fall 2021
Graduate Student Association Faculty Award Recipients!

GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATION FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN THE DEGREE PROGRAM
Fall 2021

Seidman College of Business

- **Hope C. Ramseyer, Master of Business Administration**

  Hope Ramseyer is described as a bright, dedicated, and hard-working graduate student. She is both a strong leader and an excellent team player. During the previous semester, the MBA program divided students into teams to strategically solve a business issue with research and data analysis. From the beginning, Hope took on the role as a leader in a collaborative way while also inspiring her classmates. She is well-respected by her peers and is reported to be extremely helpful and cooperative. She actively participates in class discussions with valuable reflections and feedback. She shows interest and support of her classmates' participation and comments and is able to make the connection of multiple concepts within the program. Hope's academic performance has shown she is a focused and articulate student who is willing to put effort into achieving her goals.

College of Education & Community Innovation

- **Kathryn Thill, Master of Science in Criminal Justice**

  Kathryn has shown exceptional academic performance through her 4.0 GPA and class contributions. She maintained quality and integrity in her coursework despite the challenges presented by the pandemic. She has secured an internship with the Social Security Administration (SSA), which has given her the opportunity to network and build experience in program evaluation of current SSA fraud detection practices. Her dedication to her studies and engagement in the field have contributed significantly to her successes in the program.

- **Catherine Cushway, Master of Education in Educational Leadership**

  Catherine has illustrated academic excellence throughout the duration of the master's program, graduating with a 4.0 GPA. Her grades reflected her

success in all courses, which demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of the program's content. She has shown her ability to take new information from class and apply it in her coursework and in her leadership positions at school. Her contribution to class discussions was described as thought-provoking and allowed for stimulating class conversations. Her colleagues viewed her as a leader due to her philosophy that building relationships is a priority before getting any work done. Her positive attitude and personality often draw people's attention to being an "instant" friend and colleague. Catherine is a person who demonstrates what it means to be an Educational Leader.

- **Abigail Clasen, Master of Health Administration**

  Abbey has demonstrated excellent academic performance rooted in her persistent intellectual curiosity. She is not afraid to ask questions, take risks, and jump into exploring topics under discussion. Her courage and enthusiasm to explore new topics have provided her with greater clarity and a more in-depth understanding of the program's content. She has also shown a high degree of classroom and team leadership, outstanding written and verbal communication skills, and dignified interpersonal skills.

- **Andrea J. Anderson, Master of Public Administration**

  Faculty in the MPA program have collectively acknowledged Andrea's ability to grasp and demonstrate a deep understanding of course materials quickly. Due to this, she has displayed outstanding academic performance and excelled in every aspect of her coursework. She regularly contributes to class discussions with valuable reflections as she has effectively drawn upon her professional experiences to bring concepts to life. Andrea is described to be a great example of this award and a successful student in the MPA program.

- **Christopher G. Eakin, Master of Public Administration**

  Chris has proven to be an outstanding student with a strong work ethic. He is a student who takes preparation and engagement in a community of learners seriously. Faculty have expressed their appreciation for his contributions to both in-person and virtual class discussions. Chris is described as a student who embodies the type of excellence the MPA program seeks to recognize through nomination for this award.

- **Lisa Mulder, Master of Education in Literacy Studies-Reading**

  Lisa has demonstrated academic excellence by achieving high grades in her courses. However, beyond grades, Lisa has performed in outstanding ways within her coursework. For example, she is currently enrolled in her final Reading Teacher practicum this fall, reflecting on how to grow her literacy instruction. Her thoughtful and conscientious persona has led her to create meaningful experiences for students, growing them as readers and writers. Additionally, Lisa wrote an outstanding master's project, earning her a pass with distinction, as she wrote about finding new, more meaningful ways to approach literacy homework in the elementary grades. Thus, we have looked to Lisa as a leader in our courses, and we see her as an emerging leader in the field.

- **Melissa J. Vader, Master of Education in School Counseling**

  Melissa has demonstrated the ability to adapt, thrive, and creatively address challenges. Her academic work displays scholarly knowledge, motivation for success, and attention to detail. Melissa has a passion for serving all students and actively seeks feedback from supervisors to further improve her skills and better serve her students. She serves as a middle school counselor at Mill Creek Middle School in addition to her internship. She is currently designing a comprehensive school counseling program based on the American School Counselor National Model. She is well respected by her colleagues and is known to build rapport with students, parents, and staff. Melissa is sociable and committed to professional excellence.

Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

- **Roberto Sanchez, Master of Science in Applied Computer Science**

  Rob has demonstrated his hard work and dedication through his excellent academic performance. In addition to providing consistent and high-quality coursework, he has shown intellectual maturity and inquisitiveness. He is described as intelligent, curious, and constantly striving for the best version of himself. Rob not only academically performs well but also has a great attitude, enthusiasm, and eagerness to help his peers. He has served as the System Administrator for the School of Computing's Distributed Execution

Network Lab (DEN) for several semesters. He has volunteered to tutor other students and help prepare and test labs for the "Artificial Intelligence" and "Machine Learning" courses. Rob is considered to be a great example of a successful student in the program.

- **Jacob Getzen, Master of Science in Health Informatics and Bioinformatics**

  Jacob is described as a highly interested and active student within the program. He has the capability of being consistent in providing quality work, maintaining a positive attitude, and being an excellent team player. Many of the course projects required students of varying academic and career experiences to work together to learn how to communicate and collaborate with a partner from a different background. Jacob was able to master the projects and their challenges without difficulties. He has maintained exceptional grades and GPA in all of his classes. The faculty have recognized Jacob to be a committed, confident, thoughtful, and hard-working student.

College of Health Professions

- **Jessica Guerra, Master of Science in Occupational Therapy**

  Although Jessica joined the program amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, her personable, positive, and explorative attitude contributed to her successes during a stressful and unpredictable academic year. She has excellent leadership skills that allowed her to rally and communicate effectively with her cohort. She informs her peers of legislative matters that are important to the profession of occupational therapy. She was elected the position of Assembly Student Delegates, where she acts as the program's liaison with the profession's national organization American Occupation Therapy Association. Jessica has advocated starting a Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) committee devoted to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice efforts. She has demonstrated these values within her fieldwork placements and personal experiences and plans to continue her commitment to serving marginalized populations further in her career in occupational therapy.

- **Mackenzie Ford, Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

  Mackenzie's academic performance and achievements have demonstrated her work ethic and dedication to her studies. She has excelled in all classes, including her lecture-based, laboratory, small group, and clinical-based classes. She is described as someone who is eager to learn, patient, calm, and great with patients. Despite the challenges she has faced throughout the duration of her program, Mackenzie was able to stay devoted and focused. Her passion and curiosity, in addition to her application of knowledge, have allowed her to succeed in the PAS program.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- **Francesca Golus, Master of Science in Biology**

  Francesca has illustrated a great work ethic and academic performance throughout the duration of her program. Her knowledge and skills are represented well in her coursework, earning her an exceptionally high GPA. Her dedication and intelligence were also present in her thesis research. Her thesis focused on the pedigree vs. genetic degree of relatedness in a captive population of chimpanzees. Francesca's work represents an important contribution to the discipline of captive breeding programs, where there are great concerns about genetic inbreeding. As proven by her work, she is a driven student who is passionate about the field of biology.

- **Megan M. Ulbricht, Master of Science in Cell and Molecular Biology**

  Despite being called to serve in Washington DC with the National Guard in the middle of her studies, Megan maintained an excellent GPA in a demanding sequence of courses. She was also able to utilize skills in the laboratory that she developed in the program during her successful internship with the Molecular Monitoring Lab at GVSU. She is currently a Graduate Assistant with the Department of Cell and Molecular Biology, where she helps prepare and assist in the 400-level course "Laboratory in Cell and Molecular Biology." Her supervisor has reported she is an amazing leader with effective communication skills and did an excellent job interacting with students.

- **Jennifer VanderMolen, Master of Science in Communication**

  Jennifer exhibits a master level of understanding of the program's content. Her academic performance has exceeded expectations, and she will be graduating with a 4.0 GPA. She is a student who is deeply passionate about education and is committed to learning. In addition to possessing a remarkable reading knowledge relevant to the field of communication, Jennifer also skillfully applies conceptual principles to practical communication situations, which is crucial in succeeding in the Master of Science in Communications program.

GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATIONS FOR OUTSTANDING MASTER'S THESIS
Fall 2021

College of Education & Community Innovation

- **Jeffery Brown, Master of Education in Higher Education**
  - **Thesis Title:** The Hyperinvisibility of Queer Black Women in Higher Education
  - **Thesis Committee:** Dr. Reginald Blockett (Chair) – Educational Leadership and Counseling, Dr. Marla Wick – Milt E. Ford LGBT Center, Ms. Myra Burton – School of Social Work

Jay has served as an advisor for the LGBTQ student of color organization at GVSU called Shades of Pride. His experiences and passion for LGBTQ students of color have inspired him to conduct a qualitative research study on the unique experiences of Black lesbian, queer, and bisexual women motivated by the lack of existent research literature involving this community. The research utilized theories such as intersectionality to analyze better queer women of color and their experiences with hyperinvisibility. He provides a holistic approach to student learning and development that includes cross-examining sexual, racial, and gender identity development. His study has helped form a new student group for Black queer women in college and has added growth to the Allendale campus of GVSU overall. He has clearly demonstrated his passion for LGBTQ folks of color, knowledge of core concepts, strong analysis of identified issues, and provided suggestions for continued research on this topic. Jay is committed to his education and to creating spaces where other students can learn and flourish as well.

Jay's abstract appears on the next page.

ABSTRACT

Colleges and universities aim to support students with marginalized identities. However, for students who hold multiple marginalized identities, those efforts are often lost on them because they are overshadowed by majority minorities. For Queer Black Women, they are often left to build community and navigate college on their own. Furthermore, Queer Black Women are likely to encounter racism, sexism, and homophobia among peers and in academic spaces which sometimes positions them to defend and educate others on their core identities. The participants in this study were undergraduate and graduate students at a predominantly white institution in the Midwest. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, and from that data, themes emerged that identify how Queer Black Women engage with peers, the institution, and support centers that are designed to provide additional support to marginalized communities. Through this study, I aimed to identify how Queer Black Women currently find support from higher education institutions, how they form community and what gaps need to be addressed to better support these students as they persist to degrees. From there, recommendations are offered for best practices to reduce feelings of isolation and invisibility among Queer Black Women and implications for future research that can further highlight gaps in supporting students with intersecting marginalized identities.

Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

- **Ryan C. Lubbers, Master of Science in Engineering**
  - **Thesis Title:** CFD Analysis of Subcutaneous Deposition and Dispersion of Insulin in Adipose Tissue
  - **Thesis Committee:** Dr. Wael Mokhtar (Chair) – School of Engineering, Dr. Mehmet Sozen– School of Engineering, and Dr. Ryan Krauss – School of Engineering

  Ryan's thesis focused on understanding the varying ways insulin dispersion kinetics is affected due to factors such as cannula geometry and thickness of adipose tissue. He used Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD), which is a numerical tool to simulate Insulin deposition. During the process of building this model, he had to expand his engineering and biomedical knowledge to simulate the real case, and examined several tools currently used by patients. His work showed that significant improvements in drug delivery could be achieved by changing cannula length and angle to account for the differences in adipose tissue thickness of individual patients. The conclusions and

recommendations explained the process and gave the opportunity for future efficient use of Insulin deposition tools that can help many patients. Ryan was consistent throughout the entire research process and kept high standards for his thesis. He was able to adapt and adjust his research plan as he addressed new challenges. The quality of the thesis, topic, simulation model, and results strongly met the levels of an outstanding master's thesis.

ABSTRACT

Drug delivery is the most important factor of many therapies, but a lack of technology and research have led to a very generalized understanding of drug kinetics. Insulin pump therapy for the treatment of Type 1 Diabetes depends on precise delivery of the hormone into the adipose region between the dermis and underlying muscle. The kinetics of insulin within the adipose tissue environment is not well understood and varies greatly case to case. The use of computation fluid
dynamics (CFD) models to study insulin kinetics in relation to influential factors will lead to a better understanding of the characteristics of insulin infusion.

Previously published studies revealed a single study using CFD to analyze insulin delivery, which indicated CFD research of insulin delivery was viable, but also needed more development for a complete biological computational model to simulate insulin delivery. Other studies have presented research in many of the key areas needed to create such a CFD model incorporating interstitial adipose tissue fluid flow and insulin delivery. Important characteristics were able to be identified from published research aiding in the development of an adipose tissue CFD model.

A porous media CFD model simulating the interstitial flow within adipose tissue was developed and modified to include insulin infusion in the model. The insulin deposition modeling was verified through the agreement with published study results. A study to analyze the effect of infusion set design and adipose tissue thickness on insulin deposition and dispersion was developed. This study considered the five most common cannula geometries currently on the market as well as adipose tissue thicknesses found across the body mass index range of patients, resulting in the parametric analysis of twenty-five cases.

Through the use of both graphic and statistical analysis, the results of the study indicated that both the cannula design and adipose tissue thickness have a significant effect on deposition and dispersion of insulin. Further, there was a clear difference between the thin adipose tissue and thick adipose tissue insulin deposition and dispersion observed. *Abstract continued on next page.*

ABSTRACT

It was also found that as the lower angle cannulas decreased the dispersion of insulin within the tissue, but the cannula length at these infusion angles did not significantly impact the deposition and dispersion of insulin. In conjunction with previous understanding of insulin kinetics, the results indicated using a similar cannula geometry in lean and thick adipose tissue would result in largely different drug absorption characteristics. Further there would likely be a large variation in the insulin kinetics even within a singular patient due to adipose tissue thickness deviation.

Therefore, further research in the area of insulin kinetics with relation to the cannula design and tissue thickness is highly warranted, especially with autonomous insulin pumps already on the market. The best way to further improve insulin treatment would be to achieve a more precise delivery and absorption across each adipose environment within a singular patient's anatomy. This study proved the use of computational models such as CFD is a very useful technology for such research in insulin delivery, but additional studies are required to further utilize computational models to enhance the understanding of insulin delivery kinetics within adipose tissue and the different factors affecting it.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- **Alyssa Swinehart, Master of Science in Biology**
  - **Thesis Title:** Fecal Findings: Investigating Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake Diet Using DNA Metabarcoding
  - **Thesis Committee:** Dr. Jennifer Moore (Chair) – Department of Biology, Dr. Amy Russell – Department of Biology, and Dr. Charlyn Partridge – Department of Biology

  Alyssa conducted her thesis research on the feeding ecology of the federally-threatened eastern massasauga rattlesnake using a unique genetic barcoding approach. The results of her research show significant implications for the ongoing protection and recovery of this species. Her data indicate that certain food resources are used at different life-history stages—which is significant in considering the long-term viability of the species. She was dogmatic in figuring out the extremely technical methods for this project, which were new to both her and her advisor. Her dedication and work ethic has allowed her to carry this project to completion successfully. Alyssa's work has been

disseminated widely, and a manuscript is in the process of being submitted for publication.

ABSTRACT

Characterizing the diet of imperiled species using minimally invasive methods is crucial to understanding their conservation requirements. DNA metabarcoding methods have been used to characterize the diet primarily in mammalian systems, while reptiles are heavily underrepresented in this literature. Here, we apply a DNA metabarcoding approach to study the diet of the eastern massasauga rattlesnake (*Sistrurus catenatus*); a Federally Threatened snake found throughout the Great Lakes Region. Eighty-three fecal samples collected across 10 different massasauga populations located in Michigan were sequenced. We use universal metazoan primers and develop a host-specific oligonucleotide blocker to uncover the full potential diet of the eastern massasauga. We identified at least 18 prey items. Non-target taxa and taxa from potential secondary consumption were also identified in fecal samples. Eastern massasaugas exhibited a strong preference towards small mammals, with meadow voles (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) being the most common (69.4% of diet), along with occasional bird and snake prey. We did not find that younger snakes preferred other snake prey, but instead consumed smaller mammals such as masked shrews (*Sorex cinereus*) and northern short-tailed shrews (*Blarina brevicauda*). Adult individuals exhibited a more generalized diet, consuming a wider range of prey taxa, and appear to be opportunistic predators. We conclude that small mammals are a crucial part of eastern massasaugas diet and recommended this be taken into consideration when conservation strategies are developed. Additionally, we tested the efficiency of sample preservation methods with the fecal samples and suggest freezing samples as soon as possible following collection to prevent further degradation of DNA. This study is one of few to apply metabarcoding methods to study snake diet, and the first to study rattlesnake diet. We have demonstrated that DNA metabarcoding is a reliable, accurate approach to obtain quality dietary 6 information from snake fecal samples. As reptiles are currently facing global declines, the methods developed in this study can be applied to other reptile species, providing a way to study the diet of at-risk species minimally invasively.

GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING FINAL PROJECT
Fall 2021

College of Education & Community Innovation

- **Jacquelyn M. Abeyta, Educational Specialist in Leadership**
  - **Project Title:** Leadership Theory into Practice Capstone
  - **Project Advisor:** Dr. Gregory Warsen – Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling

  Jacquelyn has experience in higher education and currently serves as a Student Services Coordinator at the Center for Adult and Continuing Studies for the Grand Valley Traverse City Regional Center. She adapted her project to her higher education background by developing a proposal that connected strategic improvements of student advising to the six major state and national advising standards: vision, culture, management, community outreach, ethics, and the larger political context. Jacquelyn suggested transformative and modern improvements that would make advising more effective and efficient for students. Her project is described to be representative of the program, and through her work, she has met all standards of a student the program seeks to enroll: curious, motivated, thoughtful, and thorough.

- **Jennifer N. Loudin, Master of Education in Literacy Studies-TESOL**
  - **Project Title:** Effective Methods for Virtual Teaching: A Professional Development
  - **Project Advisors:** Dr. Rui Niu-Copper and Dr. Nagnon Diarassouba – Department of Literacy Educational Foundations & Technology

  Jennifer's project focused on the preparedness of teacher capacity to respond to challenges of unexpected circumstances such as pandemics. Her project argues it is critical to build teacher capacity to effectively support students and parents through well-developed virtual learning platforms when teachers are expected to work in new teaching and learning environments due to the sudden COVID-19 pandemic. The lack of preparation has impacted teachers' ability to teach adequately, which also impacted students' learning. Resources and proper training that includes the challenges that come with virtual teaching and learning must be provided to ensure teachers

are being appropriately prepared. What makes Jennifer's project unique is her acknowledgment and consideration of the partnership virtual learning environments require between the teachers and parents. Her project is a bridge between the school and the community for an improved virtual environment that supports students to flourish.

Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

- **Jacob Getzen, Master of Science in Health Informatics and Bioinformatics**
  - **Project Title:** Investigation of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD): Genetics and Microbiome – A Literature Review
  - **Project Advisors:** Dr. Guenter Tusch – School of Computing

Jacob's project consisted of conducting a quality study on Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD. He identified a set of relevant literature using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines and also developed a proposal for IBD diagnostics that potentially could be used in a major research setting and hospital. This incorporates the use of microbiome, epigenetics, nutrigenetics, autoimmune disease, and possibly transplant as options when biologics, nutrition interventions, and medical management have failed. Jacob has applied concepts he has learned from class, his previous degree in human biology and physiology, and his professional experiences as a laboratory technician into this project. He has presented with his work to be an outstanding student with a great attitude, curiosity and interest in the subject, and exceptional organizational skills.

College of Health Professions

The Department of Occupational Therapy has selected a group for this semester's Outstanding Final Project Award.

- **Jenna Asper, Kyra Chase, Laura Matney, and Kayleigh Thomas, Master of Science in Occupational Therapy**
  - **Project Title:** A Survey of Universal Design Principles at Museums: Current Industry Practice and Perceptions
  - **Project Mentor:** Dr. Jennifer Fortuna – Department of Occupational Therapy

Jenna, Kyra, Laura, and Kayleigh conducted a survey that identified common challenges and success related to incorporating universal designs into public spaces, educational programming, and exhibits. They partnered with 25 museum associations to assist with recruitment resulting in a total of 60 museums participating in the study. A descriptive numerical summary, qualitative thematic analysis, and concept maps were used to summarize the results. This project was established through the collaboration between the Occupational Science and Therapy (OST) Department and the Grand Rapids Public Museum (GRPM) to renovate the GRPM building into a more accessible space for museum visitors with disabilities. Jenna, Kyra, Laura, and Kayleigh's research project demonstrated their passion for promoting inclusion and universal design and were able to personify the OST program's mission of having a positive impact on health within communities.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

The Department of Cell and Molecular Biology has selected a group for this semester's Outstanding Final Project Award.

- **Sara K. Sumerix and Laura Shattuck, Master of Science in Cell and Molecular Biology**
  - **Project Title:** Phi6 as a Process Control in Wastewater Monitoring for SARS-CoV-2
  - **Project Advisor:** Dr. Sheila Blackman and Dr. Pei-Lan Tsou– Department of Cell and Molecular Biology

Laura, who has an undergraduate degree in biology, and Sara, who has a background in business, became partners in their academic studies and their internship. They presented their poster on Phi6 at the Professional Science Showcase in Fall 2021. Both graduate students contributed to building the GVSU's program to monitor the SARS CoV-2 virus in wastewater. Although Laura and Sara have very distinct personalities and educational backgrounds from one another, they were able to collaborate with their diverse experiences and became instrumental to a state-wide initiative sponsored by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. They are both excellent students who were successful in their internships and also assisted in fermentation courses as Graduate Assistants—Laura in "foundations of brewing" and Sara in "Living foods—ferment them yourself!"

GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING PUBLICATION
Fall 2021

- **Natalie Tipton, Master of Science in Engineering**
  - **Publication Title:** Effect of Changing Stability Conditions on Approximate Entropy of Center of Pressure During Quiet Standing
  - **Co-Authors:** Dr. Gordon Alderink – Department of Physical Therapy and Dr. Samhita Rhodes – School of Engineering

Natalie demonstrated a strong understanding of the complex physiological process involved in maintaining balance in her abstract "Effect of Changing Stability Conditions on Approximate Entropy of Center of Pressure During Quiet Standing." She used sophisticated non-linear signal processing techniques to investigate the dynamic variations, and the rate of change in the body's center of pressure as subjects progressed from quiet standing to increasing levels of postural instability. Natalie reported that the measure of approximate entropy was sensitive enough to differentiate between eyes open and eyes closed variations of subjects' upright posture. Since postural control can be affected by concussion and traumatic brain injury, these measures can be used to determine the severity of such conditions using the measure of the center of pressure. This is one of the two abstracts of her thesis that is currently in the process of being written into a full-length manuscript to publish next year.

Natalie's abstract appears on the next page.

Effect of Changing Stability Conditions on Approximate Entropy of Center of Pressure During Quiet Standing

Natalie Tipton[1], Gordon Alderink[2], Samhita Rhodes[1],
[1]School of Engineering, Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids, MI, USA
[2]Department of Physical Therapy, Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids, MI, USA
Email: tiptonna@mail.gvsu.edu

Introduction

The physiological processes involved with keeping a human upright are complex and dynamic. A metric commonly used to quantitatively analyze postural control is center of pressure (COP). In order to maintain balance during quiet standing, this factor follows a general oscillatory pattern where it sways about the center of mass (COM) to counteract a potential fall that could otherwise be caused by the COM moving beyond the base of support [1]. The primary objective of this research was to determine whether approximate entropy (ApEn), which quantifies the regularity of a signal [2], could be capable of quantifying changes in stability in typical individuals when implemented on COP signals during quiet standing under increasing levels of instability. We hypothesized that as stability decreased ApEn would increase, indicating less predictability in the postural control mechanism.

Methods

Six healthy individuals (4 females; 24.8±3.3 yrs; 170.8±10.5 cm; 71.0±13.5 kg) participated. Approval was obtained from the Grand Valley State University Human Research Review Committee (#18-246-H). A Full-Body Plug-in-Gait model was utilized in conjunction with 16 Vicon MX cameras (120 Hz) and Nexus motion capture software v2.9.2 (Oxford Metrics) to track anatomical marker trajectories, which were filtered with a 15 Hz Woltring filter. Ground reaction forces were collected using floor-embedded AMTI (Advanced Mechanical Technology Inc.) force plates (1200 Hz) and were filtered with a 6 Hz Butterworth filter. Data were collected for 30 seconds over 5 trials with participants standing with arms flexed, hands touching shoulders, on two force plates under six conditions, from most to least stable: 1) eyes open feet together (EOFT), 2) eyes closed feet together (ECFT), 3) eyes open dominant foot on rear plate (EODB), 4) eyes closed dominant foot on rear plate (ECDB), 5) eyes open dominant foot on fore plate (EODF), and 6) eyes closed dominant foot on fore plate (ECDF). Participants were asked to stand with knees extended, while maintaining equal distribution of weight on each force plate for tandem foot stances. Custom Python code (Python Software Foundation) was used to determine the combined (from the rear and fore force plates) COP location [1]. ApEn was used to quantify changes in stability in antero-posterior (AP) and medio-lateral (ML) directions. Estimation of ApEn requires carefully choosing the parameters m (data length) and r (filter or tolerance level). We selected m = 2, as suggested by Pincus [2]. However, the choice of r largely depends on the data itself and so is less standardized. We chose r = 10 based on empirical observation.

Results and Discussion

Five of the six subjects showed a significant difference ($p<0.01$) in ApEn between one or more stability conditions. For all of these subjects, a 2-sided Dunnett's post-hoc test showed that every tandem foot position was significantly different from the most stable, EOFT condition in both ML and AP directions (Figure 1), which is supported by previous research [3,4]. ApEn was also able to determine significant differences between eyes open and eyes closed variants of the feet together position on multiple occasions. This suggests that ApEn can be used as a sensitive indicator of stability in postural control. Changes in ApEn between stability conditions did not appear to differ significantly between the AP and ML directions.

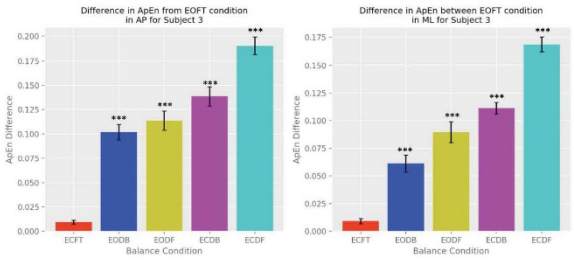

Figure 1. Difference in approximate entropy for each stability condition from most stable, eyes open feet together, position where *** denotes a significance of $p<0.001$, for representative subject.

Significance

It is known that postural control is affected by injuries to the brain [5,6]. Additional information gained from ApEn on the COP provides insight into patterns and indices that are characteristic of a typical brain and how it works to maintain balance. Understanding how an uninjured brain works to keep a person upright during different stability conditions is invaluable for future research with subjects that have suffered from a traumatic brain injury such as a concussion. Our data suggest that ApEn is a metric that can distinguish less stable postural control in healthy individuals. These findings will allow for comparison between the way a typical brain and a damaged brain react to the same quiet standing conditions, and may lead to eventual conclusive testing for concussion diagnosis.

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GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATION FOR EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY OR PROFESSION
Fall 2021

College of Education & Community Innovation

- **Melissa L. Brown-Culbertson, Master of Science in Criminal Justice**

  Melissa has shown commitment to serving the community and profession throughout her duration in the program. She was assigned as the program's Graduate Assistant, where she was tasked to write a grant proposal to secure funding for restorative practices and mediation training for members of the National Lifers Association (NLA) within the Michigan Reformatory in Ionia. She has spent the entirety of the Winter 2021 semester working on this grant and continued working through the non-compensated Spring/Summer semester. Melissa has conducted in-depth research on utilizing this form of training in other facilities and reviewed existing studies on its application and success. In addition to this project, she has also been involved in the Kent County Sexual Assault Prevention Action Team's survey, and the evaluation of the Children's Advocacy Center of Kent County's Kids Have Rights program. Her performance has exceeded her assigned responsibilities as a graduate student and graduate assistant. Melissa puts in unapparelled levels of effort, not because she is required to do so, but because she wants to be a part of the systemic change that is needed in this field.

- **Rosemarie Starook, Educational Specialist in Leadership**

  Rosemarie has been active in education as an English Language (EL) middle school teacher at Harbor Lights and an EL teacher and at-risk interventionist for grades K-8 at Eagle Crest Charter school. She is known for her excellent communication skills with classroom teachers, administrators, and families in second language acquisition and instruction. She shares her expertise and tools with her colleagues to ensure success in students who are challenged in their ability in the English language. She also provided training as an EL Content Area Lead for the Western Michigan Region, implemented the Calling All Colors program for middle school students, conducted EL Parent Community Nights, established after-school tutoring programs, and is a SIOP trainer. Rosemarie graduated with her Master of Education in Literacy

Studies with an emphasis in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages in 2016. She is continuing her work by developing and implementing research to improve explicit language development.

College of Health Professions

The Department of Occupational Science and Therapy has selected a group for this semester's Award for Excellence in Service to the Community or Profession.

- **Abigail K. Eekhoff, Claire Harrison, Candice O. Marthaler, and Megan E. Seromik, Master of Science in Occupational Therapy**

  Research has shown when businesses or organizations begin their planning and designing processes, people with visual impairment are often not considered. Abigail, Candice, Claire, and Megan have demonstrated excellence in service to the community by tackling this issue through a collaborative partnership between the Occupational Science and Therapy (OST) Department and the Grand Rapids Public Museum (GRPM). The GRPM is planning to renovate the building to increase accessibility for museum visitors with disabilities. The students collected feedback from 12 people with visual impairment to inform GRPM's planning. Abigail, Candice, Claire, and Megan were also invited to review plans and identify barriers at several service-learning events for GRPM. During the events, they have conducted observations, environmental assessments and provided suggestions for future events. The students are great examples of passionate future leaders who are able to promote diversity and inclusion within an inclusive profession such as occupational therapy.

- **Andrew Ashenfelter, Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

  Early in Andrew's academic career, he had developed a passion for emergency medicine. He has taken opportunities to expand his own knowledge in this specialty during both the didactic and clinical phases of the PAS program. In addition to growing his own experience, he has been dedicated to expanding student knowledge relating to emergency medicine in the PA profession as well. Andrew became an integral part of developing a point of care ultrasound club within the program. His ability to collaborate, organize meetings, and assist his classmates with ultrasound skills has given

students the opportunity to have enhanced skills upon joining the PA profession after graduation. Andrew will continue his hard work and passion in this field as he starts his career in emergency medicine with Munson Healthcare upon graduation.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- **Emily Neuman, Master of Science in Biology (Annis Water Resources Institute)**

  Upon entering her program, Emily has expressed her interest in aquatic ecology and studying aquatic invasive species. Her previous experiences in lab and research increased her knowledge and skills to identify native aquatic and invasive plants, conduct surveys, treat lakes struggling with invasive species, and educate boaters on the effects of invasive species. Emily was able to apply this knowledge in her thesis research on studying a new invasive aquatic macroalga called starry stonewort (Nitellopsis obtuse). She has worked closely with the Pentwater Lake Association (PLA) to scout possible locations for her surveys. In addition to her work being featured in the PLA's newsletter, her work was also published in The Michigan Riparian, an outreach publication of the Michigan Lakes and Streams Association. She was then invited to present as an annual speaker at PLA meetings attended by landowners and board members upon completion of her data analyses. Emily was able to build a strong relationship with the local Pentwater Lake community with her dedication and passion for aquatic invasive species management.

GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATION FOR EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE TO GVSU
Fall 2021

College of Education & Community Innovation

- **Zoë A. Fry, Master of Health Administration**

  Zoë has consistently functioned as an effective classroom, team, and student organization leader. She has demonstrated leadership in the classroom through engagement in class activities and projects. She has held both the Communications Officer and President positions within the Health Professional Graduate Student Organization and has led in the design and deployment of multiple virtual professional development and networking programs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Her inclusive and participatory leadership style is a key factor for her successes in creating and implementing projects and programs. Zoë eagerly welcomes the input of others and celebrates the successes of her classmates.

- **Azra Causevic, Master of Public Administration**

  Azra has demonstrated an excellent work ethic at the GVSU Career Center. Her efforts to help students have benefited the department with the goal of building the connection between students and employment after college. She is described by her colleagues as a dedicated, innovative, conscientious, team-oriented, and tech-savvy problem-solver. Her commitment to building meaningful relationships and creating opportunities has had a positive impact on both GVSU and employer partners. These connections have led to more conscious career decision-making for students. Azra thinks about the broader scope of Career Center work and how it impacts the GVSU community.

College of Health Professions

- **Michelle L. Magnusson, Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

  Elected by her peers to lead the team of PA students, Michelle has served as the president of the Richard P Clodfelter Physician Assistant Student society. She is described as a leader with humility, dedication, and respect for her colleagues. She has demonstrated these qualities when attending to her responsibilities as president, including leading meetings, participating in activities in and around campus, and supporting her peers in their work. She is able to delegate herself as a leader and as a participant. Michelle's leadership has been recognized by her peers, and she was chosen to receive a programmatic award for her contributions. Her dedication, sense of humanity and justice, and kindness will not go unnoticed by future patients in her career.

GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATION FOR EXCELLENCE IN PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT GVSU
Fall 2021

College of Education & Community Innovation

- **Jessica S. Harris, Master of Public Administration**

  Jessica has exemplified herself as an advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion both in and out of the classroom. She is actively involved with the International City/County Management Association (ICMS) student Chapter, an organization of current and future local government professionals dedicated to creating and sustaining thriving communities globally. During her internship with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) at Ottawa County, she has played an integral role in developing their October forum focusing on safe and healthy communities. This forum reached a broad and diverse audience of more than 160 people. Jessica was also involved in developing racial equity toolkits, effective communication strategies for multiple stakeholders to understand DE&I better, and guiding the County's Gateways for Growth Immigrant Welcoming Plan. She is an exceptional student who embodies the work on a personal and professional level through her methodology, approach, and leadership.

College of Health Professions

- **Brett M. Miller, Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

  Brett was elected by his peers to serve as the Diversity Chairperson for the program. He served this position with passion, purpose, and humility. He has advocated for changes within the program that promotes inclusion and equitable health care delivery that has since been incorporated in all program courses. These changes include having experienced speakers discuss topics such as how the program addresses race in documentation. With his commitment to promoting inclusionary practices in the PA profession, Brett collaborated with several of his classmates to develop the Physician Assistant Studies Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Advisory Committee, made up of students and faculty. Their mission seeks to support diversity, equity, and inclusion in the GVSU PAS curriculum, admissions, and faculty hiring practices.

GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATION FOR EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY
Fall 2021

Each Excellence in Sustainability award nominee has demonstrated outstanding leadership and innovative thinking in the community by implementing sustainable best practices. The award recipients must have given life to a sustainability initiative in one or more aspects of the triple bottom line in sustainability (economic, social, or environmental).

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- **Carly Brouwers, Master of Science in Biology**

  Carly has conducted her thesis research on the effects of urbanization on small populations of turtles. She was able to track their movements over time, resulting in new insights into how these turtles navigate a complex and highly developed landscape. She has worked closely with external stakeholders, including John Ball Zoo, Kent County Parks, and Blandford Nature Center, who were all interested in furthering their knowledge on threatened turtles that inhabit their properties. Carly's research was the first of its kind to examine turtle movements and demography in such a heavily urbanized landscape. This data is not only essential to their long-term viability but also for environmental conservation and wildlife management, particularly as urbanization continues to increase. She has demonstrated to be a dedicated student who is passionate about turtle and reptile/amphibian conservation through her strong commitment to leadership and sustainability.

MAGS DISTINGUISHED THESIS NOMINEES
OUTSTANDING THESIS 2022

The Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS) calls for nominations for the annual Distinguished Thesis Award. Each school is allowed to nominate one student thesis for the award competition in each discipline category. This year's nominations are in the category of Biological Sciences/Life Sciences and the Humanities. The theses representing GVSU are selected by a committee of faculty members from multiple disciplines and approved by the Associate Vice-Provost for the Graduate School.

The GVSU faculty who served on the 2022 MAGS selection committee included:

- Dr. Todd Aschenbach, Department of Biology
- Dr. Sheila Blackman, Department of Biology
- Dr. Kurt Bullock, Department of English
- Dr. Lindsay Ellis, Department of English
- Dr. James McNair, Annis Water Resources Institute
- Dr. Stephen Rybczynski, Department of Biology
- Dr. Brian White, Department of English
- Dr. Jennifer Winther, Department of Biology

College of Liberal & Arts Science

- **Nicholas Preville, Master of Science in Biology**
  - **Title:** Habitat Use and Tributary Occupancy of the Threatened River Redhorse (*Moxostoma carinatum*) in the Grand River, MI, USA
  - **Advisor:** Dr. Eric Snyder – Department of Biology

  Dr. Eric Snyder, Nicholas' thesis committee chair, stated, "Nick's thesis provides significant insights into the behavior and habitat preferences of a freshwater fish, the river redhorse sucker, which is listed as 'threatened' by the State of Michigan. The data Nick has collected have provided information critical to the continued protection and hopefully the restoration of this imperiled fish—the largest native sucker in the upper Midwest, including Michigan, and a species that is considered to be an excellent ecological indicator of river ecosystem health.

Nick is exceptionally motived to make a difference in aquatic ecosystem management and has the intellectual capacity to do so. I found Nick to be engaged and interested in learning as much as he could about stream ecology, management, and restoration. I greatly anticipate watching his career trajectory. He has all kinds of potential to make meaningful and lasting contributions in science education, aquatic science in general, and specifically in fisheries biology, and stream ecology, restoration, and management."

ABSTRACT

The resiliency of our aquatic ecosystems hinges on our ability to protect the native species that reside within them. The river redhorse (*Moxostoma carinatum*) is one such example and populations have become low enough to warrant listing by the State of Michigan. Causes of decline include overfishing, habitat alteration, and lack of knowledge of basic life-history attributes including their use of non-spawning habitat and spawning locations. In order to understand the river redhorse's habitat use we implanted 15 individuals with radio transmitters and tracked their locations over the course of a summer. Tagged river redhorse were found to move as far as 50 km down river after spawning and establish themselves in small home ranges between 0.04 and 0.12 km2. The presence of mussels and snails, the river redhorse's preferred food source, was the primary habitat characteristic selected for by tagged individuals and was documented at 79 percent of all tracked locations. In order to locate the tributaries that the river redhorse use for spawning we developed a species-specific genetic test and used eDNA collection to examine their springtime occurrence in five tributaries of the Grand River. While no tributary samples amplified successfully it is possible to use our test in future studies to identify river redhorse spawning areas and to identify potential river redhorse specimens. The recovery of the river redhorse in the lower Grand River will depend on our ability to protect these newly discovered feeding areas and to ensure an accurate understanding of the river redhorse's current distribution. Future management should therefore focus on expanding our knowledge of the river redhorse's distribution, protecting native mussels and snails, and should attempt to maintain migration routes between spawning and summer habitats.

- **Julie Oosterink, Master of Arts in English**
    - **Title:** "'Arriving at your own door': Transnational identity formation in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*
    - **Mentor:** Dr. Robert Rozema – Department of English

Dr. Robert Rozema, a committee member on Julie's thesis, stated, "Julie's thesis on Americana exemplifies what scholarship in the humanities can achieve. In my view, the best of this scholarship offers us insight into the lives of others—their identities, languages, cultures, and societies—helping us become more empathetic and informed about people beyond the small circle of our immediate experience. As a novelist, Adichie already pushes many Western readers out of their comfort zones by disrupting the "single story" of unidirectional immigration, as when immigrants (generally dark-skinned) flee from persecution or war in their homelands, arrive in America, and never look back, assimilating their own identities into the cultural mainstream, typically losing their native language within two generations.

Julie's thesis, and scholarship like it, gives us the vocabulary for understanding these new kinds of narratives—as she suggests, Adichie's novel features transnational migrants who travel between their home country and adopted lands, occupying multiple cultural spaces, trying on identities that meet or undermine what others expect. Julie's prose is eminently readable and engaging, without sacrificing subtlety. In short, her thesis was a joy to read, and I learned a great deal from it. I should also note that Julie's oral defense reaffirmed the quality of her thesis: she was deft and nuanced in this conversation, well in command of the novel and critical theory."

ABSTRACT

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) guides readers through the internal questions and external pressures that contribute to identity formation of her transnational characters. This paper examines the specific ways in which Adichie's protagonist, Ifemelu, engages with both self-discovery and self-fashioning in order to shape the narrative of her past and make a plan for her future. Kwame Anthony Appiah's *The Ethics of Identity* offers a philosophical framework to consider the many components of identity formation and the ways in which individuals form personal and collective identities. Adichie uniquely addresses personal and collective identities through the transnational experiences of her characters. Her protagonist, Ifemelu, experiences Homi K. Bhabha's concept of *unhomeliness* and seeks belonging as she moves from Nigeria to the United States. More importantly, once she finds ways to belong in the United States, she makes the decision to return to Nigeria. Adichie presents Ifemelu's story through her braided memories by jumping back and forth between varied experiences of the past and the present. Through Ifemelu's reflection on her actions to find belonging and fashion her identity in the United States, she crafts a narrative of her experience which helps justify and empower her in the decision to return to Nigeria.

Adichie's characters immerse themselves in literature and the stories around them. Ifemelu, especially, shapes her understanding of the world through the books she reads. She seeks stories which help her imagine her life as a narrative toward self-actualization.

Ifemelu discovers that the "single story" for 21st century immigrants in the United States is one of suppressing alterity in order to assimilate. When she first arrives in America, she follows the advice of fellow African immigrants and begins to hide her identity by imitating an American accent and relaxing her hair. She even uses another woman's name in oder to search for a job while she does not have a green card. However, Ifemelu finds this existence unfulfilling and makes the deliberate decision to stop conforming to the expectations placed on her by others. She stops speaking with an American accent and cuts her hair. Rather than feeling more isolated, Ifemelu finds that embracing her alterity allows her to connect to an online African hair movement. She writes a blog in America and gains financial stability and social connections. By expressing herself through writing, Ifemelu further recognizes how she can delineate her worldview and even influence those around her.

It is when Ifemelu has the option of staying in America, that she realizes her desire to return to Nigeria. The "single story" of immigration celebrates finding a home in the host country, but Adichie presents a different story through Ifemelu. Adichie shows Ifemelu's ability to embrace the parts of her identity like her name and accent that make her unique, while she seeks new stories to guide her self-fashioning. As a transnational migrant, Ifemelu views the world from the threshold. She exists in the liminal space between nations, cultures, and languages. This allows her to imagine many possibilities of her life, choose the life she wants, and inspire others to do likewise.

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION
KIMBOKO INCLUSION AWARD
Fall 2021

The Kimboko Inclusion Award recognizes faculty who have made significant contributions in outstanding teaching, distinctive scholarship or creative work, or noteworthy service in moving GVSU graduate education toward being a more diverse and inclusive community. The award recognizes the accomplishments of Dr. Priscilla Kimboko, GVSU's first Graduate Dean, and represents her commitment to these values.

College of Health Professions

- **Dr. Jennifer Fortuna, Department of Occupational Health and Safety**
  Nominated by: Jenna Asper, Kyra Chase, Laura Matney, Kayleigh Thomas, Occupational Science and Therapy

  The group writes: "Dr. Fortuna is the research mentor on our project, created through a partnership with the Occupational Science and Therapy (OST) department and the Grand Rapids Public Museum (GRPM) and has extended over the course of our time in this program, specifically Fall 2020-Present. The purpose of this study was to identify how the GRPM can redesign their museum to go beyond ADA requirements, providing a welcoming place for all visitors, regardless of physical, sensory, and intellectual/developmental limitations.

  Dr. Fortuna has sought out additional opportunities to promote our learning and understanding. For example, she invited us to the annual sensory-friendly night for children with autism at the GRPM. During the event, we were able to make observations regarding the environment and make recommendations for future events. This opportunity allowed us to grow as researchers and future practitioners. Throughout the duration of this project, Dr. Fortuna has demonstrated compassion and motivation to elicit change in the community and has made it her mission to provide a voice to individuals oftentimes left unheard. Furthermore, she has inspired us to advocate for underrepresented populations and has provided us with the tools and knowledge to do so, which is why we believe she is the ideal candidate to receive this award."

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION
FACULTY MENTOR AWARD
Fall 2021

The Faculty Mentor Award serves to acknowledge faculty who exemplify a deep commitment to fostering the professional and personal development of graduate students. This includes encouraging the development of individual talent through advising graduate-level research, promoting professional development opportunities beyond the classroom, and providing a successful transition from graduate studies to individual careers.

College of Health Professions

- **Ms. Elizabeth Fausone, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**
  Nominated by: Emily Reynolds, Speech-Language Pathology

  Emily writes: "Ms. Fausone has been my clinical affiliate as a graduate speech-language pathology student. She has immensely contributed to my growth and confidence as a clinician with her continuous support and knowledge. Her direct and functional approaches to mentoring and speech therapy have made it possible for me to utilize the knowledge that I've acquired through my coursework within the real-world medical setting by providing me with practical advice and techniques. Her approachable and down-to-earth nature has fostered a learning environment in which I am comfortable with asking questions. Additionally, her continued correspondences have been impeccable and are always timely, as she has continuously demonstrated an integral trait within the SLP profession of effective and efficient communication. She has seamlessly faded required supports systematically to aid in our transition to becoming independent clinicians while maintaining an accessible presence. She genuinely cares for each of her mentees."

- **Dr. Heather Wallace, Department of Public Health**
  Nominated by: Hava Topolski, Public Health

  Hava writes, "We nominate Dr. Wallace because she not only prepares graduate students for their career in Public Health, but she truly cares for their mental wellbeing while obtaining their master's degree. Dr. Wallace

begins each three-hour-long class by leading students in a mindfulness activity. She brings students to a place of ease before we enter the intensive coursework. Dr. Wallace takes away any intimidation from daunting assignments and projects by always having an open door and providing a class atmosphere similar to that of a community. Given her background in mindfulness, she emphasizes not overwhelming students but taking one step at a time. Once a month, in collaboration with PHS, she hosts a mindfulness night. During this time, she leads students through body scans, mental check-ins, and so much more! Dr. Wallace is also a master's project faculty mentor. Her mentees report that she has been nothing but attentive to their needs as well as being readily available and offering useful advice to students up for success."

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- **Dr. Kristin Renkema, Department of Biomedical Sciences**
  Nominated by: Nick Bunda, Biomedical Sciences

  Nick writes, "I've had the great fortune of conducting my thesis research in Dr. Renkema's lab. When we met, I pitched her a grandiose research idea requiring expensive cancer treatments and hundreds of mice. Instead of immediately pointing out the obvious flaws, she encouraged and refined my idea. She has never dismissed my lofty goals. Instead, she makes them a reality by establishing a culture that fosters innovation.

  Dr. Renkema has continually given her time and expertise, even at all hours of the night! When I locked myself out of the lab at midnight, she was there. When I was worried about presenting my thesis proposal, she calmed my nerves. When we developed a novel experiment, she arranged collaborative meetings with experts in the field.

  It's obvious that I've never been a task on her to-do list. She receives no bonus or compensation for mentorship, yet she remains fully invested in my development. Recently, I was accepted to medical school, an accomplishment that I proudly share with her. The impact that she's had on my life is significant, and I'll become a better physician for having known her."

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION
OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARD
Fall 2021

The Outstanding Teaching Award distinguishes faculty who deserve special recognition for exemplary teaching. This includes contributing to graduate student development by using thoughtful and creative methods of instruction, assisting in deeply understanding course content, and engaging students in a dynamic and inclusive manner.

College of Community & Public Service

- **Dr. Donijo Robbins, School of Public, Nonprofit, Health, Hospitality and Tourism Management**
  Nominated by: GlenEllen Lehmberg, Public Administration

  GlenEllen writes: "Dr. Robbins is an exemplary professor who goes above and beyond in teaching, even in an online format. Her online classes were just as engaging and worthwhile as they would be in person. These assignments are grounded in making sure that students are ready to thrive in their careers after they graduate from Grand Valley State University. My favorite assignment to this day is analyzing the financial structure of a city to ensure we understand how a city's finances impact its citizens and the services provided. It is personal to me because last year, during her Public Financial Management course, I forgot about meeting with her because I got the days mixed up. When she wasn't in our Blackboard Collaborate meeting, I emailed her, wondering where she was because she was always on time. She quickly emailed me back and told me that while I missed the original office hour, she could hop on Blackboard Collaborate. She could have waited to email me back and decided that she did not want to meet with me because I had forgotten about her office hours. It was an incredibly kind moment in a semester that was tough because of online classes. I will remember her kindness long after graduate school."

College of Health Professions

- **Dr. Srihimaja Nandamudi, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**
  Nominated by: Delanie King, Speech-Language Pathology

  Delanie writes, "Dr. Nandamudi has had more of an effect on my life than she knows. I had the privilege of having Dr. Nandamudi as an undergraduate professor as well, and as my supervisor when I was president of GVSU's Chapter of the National Student Speech-Language and Hearing Association. To say I have learned a lot from her is such an understatement. She constantly strives to create inclusive environments and encourages all others to do the same. While Dr. Nandamudi's classes are always a challenge, I find that the hard work required always leads to a deeper understanding in ways that, as a student, I did not know were possible for myself. She works to incorporate real-life experiences into her course work which always end up being a positive experience to expand knowledge of the subject in the class. Dr. Nandamudi also creates a certain level of comfort in her classes where we are challenged but not afraid to ask questions and ask for help. Dr. Nandamudi puts her students first and provides an overall stimulating learning environment for every single class."

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- **Dr. Jennifer Moore, Department of Biology**
  Nominated by: Sarah Ansbro, Biology

  Sarah writes, "Being a student in three graduate courses with Dr. Moore; I can say each course was a joy to participate in – my enrollment allowed me to expand my worldview and strengthen the quality of my thesis. Dr. Moore repeatedly demonstrates a vested interest in her students' success in the form of readily available help, engaging coursework, and unbiased, concise exam questions. It is so easy to be infected by the passion that she radiates while teaching both in the classroom and in the field. Particularly in Scientific Methodology, Dr. Moore provided honest feedback on projects, papers, and other assignments. She successfully cultivated a classroom environment in which early-career scientists felt empowered to share their work and take chances with their writing. Without her direction, the idea for my project may never have materialized.

In addition to her ample professional qualities and talents, Dr. Moore is kind, authentic, and considerate. She has firsthand experience with difficulties associated with being a woman in STEM and does not hesitate to share those experiences to offer solidarity and support to her students on an intersectional level. It has been a pleasure to be her student over the last several years, and I hope that our professional paths align in the future."

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The Graduate School
401 W. Fulton St
318C DeVos Center
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Phone: 616-331-7105
Email: gradschool@gvsu.edu
Website: http://www.gvsu.edu/gs