

USCA Psychology Graduate Program Newsletter

Summer 2024



DEPARTMENT CHAIR, DR. JANE STAFFORD

Here's what has happened in the last year and what's to come!

Hello and happy summer to our alumni and community partners! We have had an eventful last year and have a lot to look forward to in the coming academic year.

This year, Dr. Callen gave us the bittersweet news that he would be retiring. We don't have to tell you how important Dr. Callen has been to the development of our graduate program. We are so excited for this new chapter in his life, but we will miss him dearly. Luckily for us, he is staying around to work on research and other things he rarely had time for so we won't miss him too much.

We have a wonderful class of graduates this summer, some of whom will remain in our

Aiken community working at Aiken Barnwell Mental Health Center. Others are moving back to where they came from or are on to new adventures in states like Maine and Louisiana. We wish them all the best as they finish the program this summer.

We are so grateful to you for your support of our program over the years. Check out the rest of this newsletter to see exactly what we've been up to and how your support has helped us to continue training new clinicians and providing high-quality care to our community.

The Psychology Faculty

In this newsletter you can expect:

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Faculty Accomplishments

We had an eventful year of faculty accomplishments! We had a wonderful time at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Psychological Association (see above photo), where several students earned awards. Check out our awesome faculty!

Dr. Ed Callen



Dr. Callen has decided to retire this summer. He has had an immeasurable impact on USCA in his 38 years of service, and that has not gone unrecognized! In fact, the University has decided to rename the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning in his honor. We couldn't think of a better way to recognize his dedication to our community and our students especially. Congratulations, Dr. Callen! We wish you a retirement full of safaris, European adventures, and Broadway shows!

Dr. Jane Stafford

With Dr. Callen moving on after serving as our department chair for several decades (!!), we needed to elect a new leader for our department. We are excited to share that Dr. Stafford has accepted our nomination for this position! Given all of her experience with running our graduate program, we have every confidence that she is the perfect candidate to lead our department.





Dr. Laura Swain

We all know that Dr. Swain is a well-decorated educator and scholar, and once again this year she has been recognized. The USC System has acknowledged her as this year's Distinguished Undergraduate Research Mentor of the year. This system-wide award is presented to only a handful of faculty members across the entire USC system.

Dr. Adam Pazda

Adding to our ever-growing cabinet of University awards earned by the psychology faculty, Dr. Pazda was given the Excellence in Teaching Award. This prestigious award involves not only a lengthy application process, but also several weeks of surprise classroom visits from the award committee. We are so lucky to have Dr. Pazda on our team!



With Dr. Stafford becoming department chair, we are beginning to realize just how much work she put into our graduate program. In fact, filling her shoes is going to require a heavy lift from all of our clinical faculty! Their new roles are detailed below.



Dr. Mary Moussa Rogers

Dr. Moussa Rogers will be assuming the role of Field Placement Coordinator. Already, she has begun finding new placement sites and meeting with directors and supervisors at various sites - new and old!



Dr. Maureen Carrigan

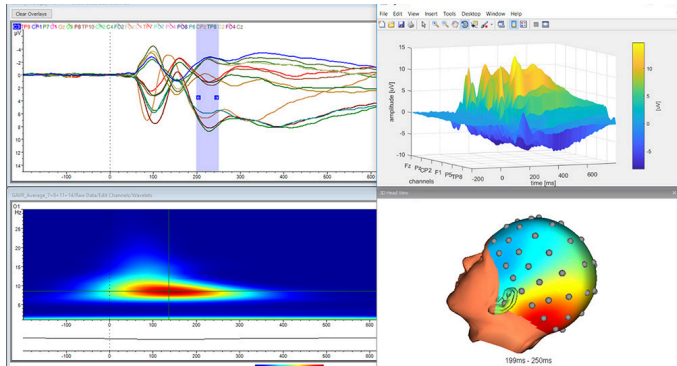
Dr. Carrigan will be assuming the role of Graduate Program Director. She will be in the advisor to all of our graduate students, will run our orientation, spearhead any changes to our curriculum among many other things.



Dr. Bridget Cho

Dr. Cho will be assuming the role of Clinic Director. She will be moving into her new office in our new clinic (keep reading to hear more about that!) and assuming all the responsibilities that go into running our very busy clinic.

NSF-Funded Equipment Update



New EEG Coming this Year

This year, Dr. Swain was awarded a competitive Major Research Instrumentation Grant from NSF for over \$150,000 (have we mentioned how awesome she is?!). This grant will allow her to buy us a brand new EEG system! This system will allow us to stay at the cutting edge of neuroscience research, which is a popular area of study for our students. Way to go, Dr. Swain!

New Faces



Dr. Olivia Smith

In the fall of 2023, we were granted a new faculty position for our department, and we were lucky to hire Dr. Olivia Smith. Dr. Smith earned her PhD in Experimental Psychology at the University of Wyoming. She specializes in the intersections of psychology and the legal system, studying topics such as jury decision making and public perceptions of the criminal justice system and suggestions for its reform.

Dr. Andrew White

With Dr. Callen retiring, we needed to hire another faculty member this year. We are thrilled to introduce Dr. Andrew White. Dr. White earned a PhD in Social Psychology from the University of Indiana Bloomington. His research interests center on motivation and goal pursuit, stereotyping and prejudice, and diversity science. He is particularly interested in how our social identities shape the goals we pursue. Much of his work focuses on utilizing psychological concepts to address disparities in STEM education.



Alumni Spotlight

Elizabeth Willits, LPC



Elizabeth Willits graduated from our graduate program in 2016.

Elizabeth is an ACT therapist in Columbia, SC specializing with clients living with chronic illness and adult ADHD. She is co-founder of Columbia Counseling Collective, a co-working space for therapists aimed at supporting folks who want to start their own private practice.

In addition to her own practice, Elizabeth serves as one of our adjunct clinical supervisors. Our students tell us how much they appreciate learning from our alumni who work as LPCs in our community. Thank you for coming back to supervise our students, Elizabeth!

Outstanding Students

Eliya Burton

This year's Alverson Award winner is Eliya Burton. Eliya is a rising second-year graduate student who has demonstrated excellent performance in the classroom, in research, and in her clinical experiences. She spent her internship hours working at the Counseling Center on campus and will be starting a new assistantship at Mead Hall, a private school in Aiken this fall. We are excited to see how much she will accomplish during the rest of her degree!



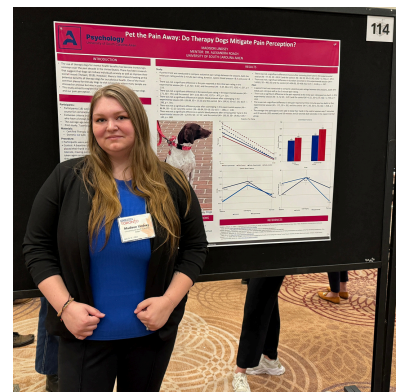
Hannah Milius



Hannah Milius was awarded the Callen Research Award for her outstanding work over the past two years. She also received the Alverson Award in her first year. After graduation Hannah will be attending the University of Maine where she will begin her doctoral studies in Clinical Psychology. Congratulations, Hannah!

Maddison Lindsey

Maddison Lindsey presented her research, titled 'Pet the Pain Away,' at the annual Cognitive Neuroscience Society meeting in Toronto, Canada, this past April. Her study focused on non-pharmacological pain management methods, specifically using therapy dogs.



Research Spotlight: Faculty Publications

Cook, C., Demanararig, D., Metviner, S., Stoppa, T., *Milius, H., Grahe, J., Kawabata, Y., Schmidt, K., Sonnentag, T., DeNigris, D., Norvilitis, J., Berry, S., Cuccolo, K., Kagalis, A., Keum, B., Hawkins, G., Ogba, K. T. U., Farahani, H., Azadfallah, P., ... & **Moussa Rogers, M.** (2023). Personal need for structure as a protective factor on beliefs and coping with COVID-19: A crowd-sourced multicultural exploration. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass special issue: The Social and Personality Psychology of COVID-19*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12797>

Cho, B., Fleckman, J., & Scott, J. (2023). Anti-Black racism within child welfare services: Past, present, and future. *The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) Advisor*, 35(3), 106-126.

Coulombe, B.R. & Yates, T.M. (2023). Children's prosocial resilience in the face of adversity: The role of narrative coherence. *Adversity and Resilience Science*.

Coulombe, B.R, Cho, B., & Yates, T.M. (2023). Attachment and the COVID-19 pandemic. In L. Ennis (Ed.), *Are the Kids Alright? The Impact of the Pandemic on Children*. Demeter Press.

Dahl, E., Sturges, H. A., **Smith, O. K. H.**, Hardesty, C., & Root-Elledge, S. (2023). Changing the approach to educator professional development: The ECHO Model for education. *Frontiers in Education*, 4. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2023.115191>

Diekman, A. B., Joshi, M. P., **White, A. D.**, Tran, Q. N., & Seth, J. (in press). Purpose reflection benefits minoritized students' motivation and well-being in STEM. *Scientific Reports*.

*Hall, K., **Stafford, J.**, & **Cho, B.** (2023). Women receive more positive reactions to childhood sexual abuse disclosure and negative reactions are associated with mental health symptoms in adulthood for men and women. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 38, 8803-8823.

*Hall, K., & **Pazda, A.D.** (2024). The roles of gender and employment status in abdication decisions. *Psychological Reports*, 124, 419-431.

Jelsone-Swain, L., *McCommon, S.A., *Turk, B., **Roach, A.**, (2023). Acetaminophen changes Mu rhythm power related to pain empathy, *Neuropsychologia*.

Jelsone-Swain, L., *Settepani, M., *McMullen, K., **Stafford, J.**, & **Cho, B.** (2023). An examination of mindfulness on Mu suppression and pain empathy and its relation to trait empathy. *Social Neuroscience*, 18, 245-255. doi: 10.1080/17470919.2023.2242093.

Moussa Rogers, M., Cuccolo, K., McKinney, C., Edlund, J. E., Grahe, J. E., Zlokovich, M. S., Bauer, L. M., El-Kour, T., Hässler, T., Jia, F., Norvilitis, J., Shane-Simpson, C., Yockey, R. A., Cramblet Alvarez, L. D., Eisner, L., Evans, T. R., Farahani, H.k, Haden, S., Hawkins, G., Kawabata, Y., & Kalibatseva, Z. (2024). Understanding family dynamics in a cross-cultural sample: A multi-national study. *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research*.

*Parent, A., **Carrigan, M.**, & **Pazda, A.D.** (2023). The impact of viewing opioid overdose photos on stigma, desire for social distance, and willingness to help. *Stigma and Health*, 8, 462-466.

Pazda, A.D., Thorstenson, C.A., & Fetterman, A.K. (2024). Colorfulness influences perceptions of valence and arousal. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 153, 145-158.

Szkody, E., Spence, A., Özdoğru, A., Tushir, B., Chang, F., AKKAŞ, H., Sotomayor, I., Pavlova, I., Petrovic, I., Norvilitis, J., Pena-Shaff, J., Maney, J., Arrow, K., Rodriguez, L., **Moussa-Rogers, M.**, McTighe, M., Ogba, K. T. U., Yeung, S. K. W. A., Stoppa, T., ... Dimitrova, R. (2024). Social support and help-seeking worldwide. *Current Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-024-05764-5>

Smith, O. K. H., & Nuñez, N. (2024). Counterfactuals in mainstream media: A pathway for blame attribution and policy endorsement in police lethal force incidents. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 38(3), e4219. <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.4219>

White, A. D. & Diekman, A. B. (in press). Stereotypes of masculinity and femininity across intersections of social class and gender: A social structural perspective. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.

*Wolkowicz, N., Ham, L., **Carrigan, M.**, & **Pazda, A.D.** (2023). An experimental examination of trait and momentary fear of missing out (FoMO) in predicting alcohol craving and drinking likelihood. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 84, 245-256.

We're Up for Re-Accreditation!

As you know, we are accredited by the Masters in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council, which accredits academic programs that provide science-based education and training in the practice of counseling and psychological services. This accrediting body ensures that all programs receiving accreditation are providing high-quality science-based educational experiences to their students. Re-accreditation is now required every eight years, and this year we're up!

What does that mean for you?

If you're a recent alumnus of our program, you'll be invited to participate in our site visit in the next six months or so. Keep an eye out for an email from Dr. Carrigan inviting you to participate! This is an important process that allows us to understand our strengths and weaknesses as a program so we can continue improving our graduate program year after year.

As always, your feedback in particular is incredibly valuable and often results in change! You can read about those changes below.

Program Changes

We recently solicited feedback from graduating students, alumni, and our external supervisors to learn how we could improve the program. All three groups thought that the training we provide was high-quality, and noted particular strengths in our students' skills in assessment and diagnosis and their ability to develop a strong therapeutic alliance. That said, the surveys illuminated a few areas of growth for us that we are actively making changes to accommodate. Check them out below!

1. New Course Offerings: Several current students and alumni noted that our program would benefit from including formal training in trauma psychology and child and family therapy. In response to this feedback, Dr. Cho developed a trauma psychology course that will now be required for all students and a child and family therapy course that will be regularly offered as a special topics class starting this fall.
2. Electronic Health Records: As you probably know, we don't currently have an electronic health record system in our clinic. Students have mentioned that they wished they had experience with electronic health records since they're standard in practices that take insurance. This spring, Dr. Moussa Rogers applied for a grant that, if funded, would allow us to purchase an electronic health record system. We are still waiting to hear back, but this is a priority for us, and we feel hopeful that her grant application will be funded - if not this year hopefully next!
3. Integrated Ethics Education: Another piece of common feedback we received was that although students feel our ethics course is comprehensive (shout out to Dr. Carrigan!), students realize when working with clients that ethical dilemmas come up more frequently than they'd anticipated, and the answers are not always black-and-white. Although including a second ethics course later in the program isn't feasible, our clinical faculty are committed to explicitly discussing real-world ethical concerns during supervision and practicum and throughout the curriculum.

*For a full report on this year's program evaluation data,
please email Dr. Coulombe at brianne.coulombe@usca.edu.*



Looking Forward

There is a lot of excitement on the horizon for the USCA Psychology Graduate Program!

With Dr. Callen's retirement and no remaining psychologists doing animal research, we have decided to renovate the rat lab into a new-and-improved clinic space! Renovations have begun (see above photo) and we hope they will be finished by the end of summer. For those of you who visited our previous clinic, you know that the hallway was cramped at times which didn't make for the best waiting area. Our new clinic will feature a large waiting room with a reception desk, comfortable chairs, and even a play area for child clients! We will still have three treatment rooms, but these will be bigger and newly updated. We are so glad to offer our services in this newly updated space!

This coming fall, we will welcome **17 (!)** incoming first year graduate students as we continue working with the 11 returning second year students. We are excited to meet the incoming cohort and help them transition into graduate school.

In 2022, we made a change to our curriculum such that we removed the requirement of a formal thesis for graduation from our program. That said, research remains a primary value of ours, and although a formalized thesis manuscript is no longer required, all students are required to complete an original research project which is presented to the faculty at a departmental poster session in the spring. Although the thesis is not required, some students still choose to complete one, and all benefit from our dedication to research training. Already, several of our rising second-years have begun working on their research projects, many of which will be submitted to this year's meeting of the Southeastern Psychological Association in Atlanta this spring.

We so appreciate your continued support of our program. We feel so grateful for our connections to current and former students and the broader Aiken community. We would not be here without you.

Thank you for reading!

Current Faculty Directory

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Dr. Alex Roach, Cognitive Neuroscientist, alexandraro@usca.edu

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Dr. Andrew White, Social Psychologist, andrew.white.socpsy@usca.edu

Dr. Olivia Smith, Legal Psychologist, olivia.smith@usca.edu