

The Graduate School Citations for Academic Excellence

Fall 2022

Presented by The Graduate School
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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!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey A. Potteiger'.

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

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**GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATIONS FOR
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
Fall 2022**

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN THE DEGREE PROGRAM

Seidman College of Business

- ❖ Samuel Irvin, Business Administration

College of Education & Community Innovation

- ❖ Allison Achenbach-Kramer, Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership
- ❖ Ryan Martin, Health Administration
- ❖ Lisa Newberry, Literacy Studies
- ❖ Julie Nyenbrink, Social Work
- ❖ Stevie Parcell, Public Administration
- ❖ Natalie Thomas, Criminal Justice

Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

- ❖ Luke Cadagin, Data Science & Analytics
- ❖ Akash Shrestha, Applied Computer Science
- ❖ Bereket Teshome, Cybersecurity

College of Health Professions

- ❖ William Ferguson, Physician Assistant Studies
- ❖ Dusti Henion, Medical Dosimetry
- ❖ Amy Stites, Occupational Therapy

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- ❖ Caitlin Williams, Communications
- ❖ Gabrielle Garlicki, Cell & Molecular Biology

OUTSTANDING MASTER'S THESIS

Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

- ❖ Danielle Rose, Applied Computer Science

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- ❖ Sabina Liskey, Cell and Molecular Biology
- ❖ Maggie Petersen, Biology (Annis Water Resources Institute)

OUTSTANDING FINAL PROJECT

College of Education & Community Innovation

- ❖ Matthew Schmude, Instruction & Curriculum

College of Health Professions

- ❖ Adrianna Daniels, Occupational Therapy
- ❖ Diamond Day-Parker, Public Health
- ❖ Katelyn Jones, Occupational Therapy
- ❖ Abigail Katt, Occupational Therapy
- ❖ Kathryn Killman, Occupational Therapy
- ❖ Nora Owens, Occupational Therapy

EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY OR PROFESSION

College of Education & Community Innovation

- ❖ Tamara Van Kampen, Health Administration
- ❖ Erin McIntosh, Public Administration
- ❖ Melissa Rozema, Social Work

College of Health Professions

- ❖ Elaine Chamberlain, Occupational Therapy

- ❖ Lydia Fales, Physician Assistant Studies
- ❖ Libby Filice, Occupational Therapy
- ❖ Madeline Kurt, Occupational Therapy
- ❖ Taylor Porter, Occupational Therapy
- ❖ Nicole Stegeman, Speech-Language Pathology
- ❖ Shannon Twichell, Occupational Therapy

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- ❖ Matthew Bain, Biology

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE TO GVSU

College of Education & Community Innovation

- ❖ Emily Brenner, Public Administration
- ❖ Garrett Heaney, Health Administration
- ❖ Abena Pinamang, Criminal Justice

College of Health Professions

- ❖ Ashley Bittinger, Clinical Dietetics
- ❖ Kacey Davidson, Speech Language Pathology
- ❖ Zoie Hulst, Physician Assistant Studies
- ❖ Adriana Mallett, Occupational Therapy
- ❖ Julia Semaan, Clinical Dietetics
- ❖ Madissen Vacha, Speech Language Pathology

EXCELLENCE IN PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT GVSU

College of Education & Community Innovation

- ❖ Haak Betiem, Health Administration
- ❖ Zahabia Ahmed-Usmani, Public Administration

College of Health Professions

- ❖ Joshua Marvil, Physician Assistant Studies

EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY

College of Education & Community Innovation

- ❖ Jakob Bigard, Public Administration

College of Health Professions

- ❖ Jennifer Yee, Physician Assistant Studies

MAGS DISTINGUISHED THESIS NOMINEES

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- ❖ Brittany Bahl, Communications

Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

- ❖ Kevin Kredit, Applied Computer Science

*Congratulations to the Fall 2022
Graduate School Citation Award Recipients!*

**GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION FACULTY AWARDS
Fall 2022**

OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARD

College of Health Professions

- ❖ Dr. Ashley McKnight, Occupational Science and Therapy
Department
- ❖ Dr. Daniel Pellathy, Management Department
- ❖ Dr. Jill Ellis, Physician Assistant Studies Department

*Congratulations to the Fall 2022
Graduate Student Association Faculty Award Recipients!*

**GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATION FOR
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN THE DEGREE PROGRAM
Fall 2022**

Seidman College of Business

❖ **Samuel Irvin, Master of Business Administration**

Samuel has proven to be an excellent student through his 3.9 GPA and academic performance in his classes. He has consistently been prepared, on time, and knowledgeable in course contents by engaging in class discussions. Faculty have described him to be the type of student instructors prepare class for. He is the first to turn in his exams while also earning a perfect score. He has demonstrated his natural leadership and team-building skills in collaborative projects. While also producing excellent results, he is able to take feedback and apply what he has learned to his projects. Samuel's academic achievements have been rightfully earned due to his qualities in being a team player, critical thinker, analytical, and compassionate.

College of Education & Community Innovation

❖ **Allison Achenbach-Kramer, Master of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership**

Allison is an enthusiastic and committed graduate student who applies these qualities in all her courses. She was able to attend every class and complete assignments all while becoming a new mother during her time in the MPNL program. Allison approached every lecture, assignment, and project with a sense of curiosity and a desire for excellence. Her eagerness to learn and passionate mindset has allowed her to be an excellent graduate student.

❖ **Ryan Martin, Master of Health Administration**

Ryan has been described as a role model for academic and professional excellence. He demonstrates his devotion to the Health Administration field by taking on leadership roles and displaying genuine intellectual curiosity.

He has served as a mentor and encourager to many younger classmates. Other students have stated he has effectively shared his industry experiences to help appreciate issues, patient and community needs, and the importance of leadership in healthcare. His humility and spirit of collegiality has guided him to achieve exceptional academic performance and meaningful relationships with his professors and classmates.

❖ **Lisa Newberry, Master of Education in Literacy Studies**

Lisa exemplifies academic excellence by maintaining a high GPA and through her excellent performance in her courses. In addition, she has made an impact in her field through her K-12 Reading Specialist practicum for leadership and professional development. Her goals focus on encouraging and growing literacy instruction with classroom teachers. Her enthusiasm and dedication to her work has helped teachers in becoming effective instructors of reading and writing. Lisa has also completed an excellent master's project, focusing on increasing student engagement and comprehension in elementary classrooms through text-based discussions. She is described as committed, a leader, and a true asset to the field.

❖ **Julie Nyenbrink, Master of Social Work**

Faculty have praised Julie's positive attitude and perseverance throughout her program. She holds a 3.86 GPA and is seen as a model in the classroom through her group leadership, ambition, and top tier work. She serves as a student representative in a programmatic committee to assist with further development of the program's hybrid model. She also balances her studies with a full-time job and internship requirements. Despite the challenges, she is able to produce meaningful and effective contributions to the Social Work field using human rights and social justice lenses.

❖ **Stevie Parcell, Master of Public Administration**

Stevie has proven to be an outstanding student with her contributions to the Public Administration field—both inside and outside of the classroom. She has the ability to connect course concepts and apply knowledge to situations she faces in her employment. With the skills she developed from the MPA program, she was able to successfully apply for a \$1.5 million grant for her

employer. Stevie's commitment, fervor, and ability to utilize her skills in real-world settings are key factors to her academic and professional success.

❖ **Natalie Thomas, Master of Science in Criminal Justice**

Faculty have described Natalie as a dedicated and bright student. She takes initiative in leading discussions, conducting research, and displays critical and constructive application in her coursework. Her hard work has rewarded her with a 4.0 GPA and the opportunity to present her work on social activism at the upcoming American Society of Criminology conference in Atlanta, GA. Natalie has also served as a senior graduate student and presented at the Criminal Justice program's new graduate orientation. She is a friendly, respectful, and passionate student who has proven her talents through her excellent academic performance.

Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

❖ **Luke Cadagin, Master of Science in Data Science & Analytics**

Luke is recognized for his leadership, academic curiosity, and outstanding work ethic. He is eager to help guide the entire class by asking clarifying questions and initiating discussions during lecture. He is described to be the type of student professors want to collaborate with on research projects. Luke's high mental aptitude and prior industry experience has rewarded him with excellent grades in all of his courses and makes him a standout student within the program.

❖ **Akash Shrestha, Master of Science in Applied Computer Science**

Akash is a highly dedicated student who is described as going above and beyond the requirements of assignments. He is committed to truly learning the base material in his classes and is willing to share his knowledge with other students by introducing useful tools and ideas. His devotion to the Applied Computer Science program has earned him a 4.0 GPA all while maintaining his internship. Faculty unanimously agree that Akash is a talented student who brings joy and meaningful contributions to the classroom.

❖ **Bereket Teshome, Master of Science in Cybersecurity**

Bereket's drive and passions in the Cybersecurity field have resulted in an outstanding academic performance. He currently holds the highest GPA in the program. Prior to joining GVSU, he was a software and web developer in Germany and Ethiopia. Through these web development experiences, he was able to share significant insights to class discussions. Bereket has demonstrated excellent knowledge in his thesis work, focusing on addressing ransomware issues using federated learning. His ambitions and skills have allowed him to become a great example of a graduate student achieving academic excellence.

College of Health Professions

❖ **William Ferguson, Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

William has demonstrated outstanding academic achievements during both the didactic and clinical phase of the Physician Assistant Studies program. He is a great example of a graduate student who puts in hard work and dedication into their studies. Faculty members of the program have commemorated his exemplary academic performance and are proud to have William represent GVSU's Physician Assistant Studies program.

❖ **Dusti Henion, Master of Science in Medical Dosimetry**

Throughout her educational career at GVSU, Dusti has demonstrated admirable work ethic, leadership, and commitment. She graduated from GVSU in 2007 and decided to further her education in the Medical Dosimetry program. She has maintained a 4.0 GPA and displayed her knowledge and skills in her assignments. While balancing her life at home as a mother, she also completed her clinic hours during semester breaks. Her diligence and drive allowed her to graduate in August with her full-time peers, even though she was enrolled part-time. Dusti has succeeded academically and clinically and has proven to embody the essence of academic excellence.

❖ **Amy Stites, Master of Science in Occupational Therapy**

Amy's curiosity and positive attitude has awarded her with exemplary academic performance. She has consistently shown dedication and hard work while enrolled in the hybrid Master of Science in Occupational Therapy program. She is aware of concepts she would like to learn more of and is not afraid to ask thoughtful questions to do so. Amy travels to GVSU monthly from Washington state, takes care of her uncle and children, and is active in her community—all while furthering her graduate education. She is described by faculty members to be inquisitive, articulate, and confident; and has proven so through her coursework.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

❖ **Gabrielle Garlicki, Master of Science in Cell & Molecular Biology**

Gabrielle exemplifies academic excellence through her initiative, dedication, and aspirations. Since joining the Cell and Molecular Biology field through GVSU's CMB combined degree program, she has maintained an excellent GPA in a demanding sequence of courses. She is respected by her instructors for her work ethic, intellect, and ability to collaborate with her peers. She has a keen ability to communicate science effectively. Gabrielle also demonstrates leadership by serving as president for the Gift of Life Marrow Registry Club. These qualities have rewarded her continued academic success throughout her graduate education, internship, research, and service.

❖ **Caitlin Williams, Master of Science in Communications**

Caitlin is described as a talented and deeply passionate graduate student. She possesses remarkable reading knowledge relevant to the field of communication. She also possesses the ability to skillfully apply conceptual principals to practical communication problem-solving. Caitlin's academic performance has been superlative, and faculty commented that her work far exceeds the expectations of the program. She is now working at North Central Michigan College in the office of Annual Giving and Alumni Relations.

**GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATIONS FOR
OUTSTANDING MASTER'S THESIS
Fall 2022**

College of Education and Community Innovation

- ❖ **Sabina Liskey, Master of Science in Cell and Molecular Biology**
 - **Thesis Title:** The Effects of Deleting LRB E3 Ligase Region 2 on Red Light Responses in *Arabidopsis thaliana*
 - **Thesis Committee:** Dr. Matthew Christians (Chair) – Cell and Molecular Biology Department, Dr. Mark Staves – Cell and Molecular Biology, Dr. Sheila Blackman – Cell and Molecular Biology, and Dr. Dawn Hart – Cell and Molecular Biology

Sabina's thesis focused on understanding how Arabidopsis plants perceive and respond to light, which is a major regulator of plant growth and development. This was done through characterizing a domain of unknown function in the LRB protein, which is involved in degrading the key Phytochrome photoreceptor in plants. Her work has also spawned several new avenues of research for future GVSU students, such as the transgenic plants generated from the project may be more drought susceptible. Due to climate change, this is a topic of acute agricultural importance. Sabina utilized clear and exact technical language that explained her ideas in an organized way in the thesis. Furthermore, she also expressed her creativity and graphic design skills through drawings to support the theories and methods involved in the research. Sabina and Dr. Matthew Christians will co-author a publication about protein degradation and light signaling in plants, which includes a significant part based on her work.

Sabina's abstract appears on the next page.

ABSTRACT

The ability of plants to absorb light through photoreceptors is essential for successful plant development. Phytochromes are important plant photoreceptors that detect and absorb red and far-red light and must function properly for plant survival. The Light Response BTB proteins (LRB) play an important role in a plant's response to red light by degrading phytochrome B (PhyB) via the ubiquitin proteasome system (UPS). Although there has been a successful investigation into understanding the function of the LRBs, the function of a few regions within LRB proteins remains unknown, including a portion located on the N-terminal end of the protein, termed Region 2. This study assessed the function of Region 2 by studying the red-light response that occurs when Region 2 is genetically mutated in *Arabidopsis thaliana*. A mutant gene that has deleted portions of Region 2 (LRB-R2D) was created using site directed mutagenesis techniques and transformed into *A. thaliana* *lrb1-1 lrb2-1* mutants. The function of the LRB-R2D proteins were assessed via plant growth when exposed to a red light environment. It was found that *lrb1-1 lrb2-1* plants containing LRB-R2D reverted back to the wild type phenotype. These results suggest that the function of Region 2 may not play a role in some red light responses. Although the function of Region 2 has yet to be determined, future studies searching for interacting factors with Region 2 may reveal possible functions. This study has ruled out red light responses being important for Region 2, but the methodology can be applied to other regions within the LRB protein such as Region 1 or Region 3. Further understanding of Region 2 and other regions of LRB can enhance the comprehension of this protein and its effects on plant development, which could impact agricultural practices in the future.

Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

❖ **Danielle Rose, Master of Science in Applied Computer Science**

- **Thesis Title:** A Hands-On Approach to Applied Programming in a Secondary Education Setting
- **Thesis Committee:** Dr. Byron DeVries (Chair) – School of Computing, Dr. Christian Trefftz – School of Computing, and Dr. Kelly C. Margot – Teaching and Learning

Danielle's thesis creates a curriculum she plans to use in her role as a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) Teacher in a local school district. This curriculum is applicable to high-schoolers, hobbyists, homeschoolers, and summer camps. The inclusive curriculum makes her thesis useful to not only other teachers and school districts in the West Michigan area, but also in alternative education and clubs. Her experience as a teacher gives her the unique ability to create a thesis that draws from both education and computer science fields. The output of her work is a cohesive, self-contained curriculum that directly links to relevant educational standards while still engaging with the existing maker community.

Danielle's abstract appears on the next page.

ABSTRACT

A large portion of the current STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) curriculum that exists utilizes projects that result in predetermined outcomes. While this student-centered approach to learning new materials is crucial in the mastery process, it is a steppingstone and not the end point. It often leaves students wanting more but lacks the pivotal step of allowing them to build the confidence in creating something different than expected. Additionally, though there is a strong maker community that exists digitally, these existing materials can be an overwhelming journey for new learners and are created for pleasure, consequently, K-12 standard alignment is non-existent.

The goal of this thesis is to create a curriculum that utilizes this makerspace by aligning targeted projects to STEAM standards and providing student-friendly educationally focused tutorials that build the learners' confidence to enter the makerspace community. Foundationally, it takes an existing student-centered classroom and guides it into a student-led one through projects with multiple entry points that are aligned to the Michigan Computer Science standards, the Michigan Visual Performing Art Standards, the Mathematic Common Core State Standards, the NGSS and Engineering Processes and use supporting standards from the Standards for CS Teachers. It will be assessable with individualized rubrics that allow space for student voice and input, as well as a system for allowing students to explore the makerspace (e.g., EarSketch, Instructables, Micro:bit) to create projects tailored to their interest. The curriculum will end in a final culminating open-ended project that encourages self-efficacy.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

❖ **Maggie Petersen, Master of Science in Biology – Annis Water Resources Institute**

- **Thesis Title:** Microplastics and Microbiomes: Impacts of weathered microplastic ingestion on fathead minnows (*Pimephales promelas*)
- **Thesis Committee:** Dr. Charlyn Patridge (Chair) – AWRI, Dr. Alan Steinman – AWRI, Dr. Richard Rediske – AWRI, and Dr. Carl Ruetz – AWRI

Maggie's thesis focused on evaluating how ingestion of environmentally relevant concentrations of weathered microplastics impacts the health of adult male and female fathead minnows (*Pimephales promelas*). Microplastics are quickly becoming one of the most ubiquitous pollutants on the planet. While many studies have evaluated the effects of microplastics on various organisms they often use environmentally unrealistic concentrations. Maggie's thesis was a comprehensive study that examined the effects of microplastics on multiple biological levels, including its impacts on general health indicators, molecular responses, and how it altered an individual's natural gut microbiota. She found that microplastics could have significant health implications, even at environmental concentrations, and that environmental factors likely drive changes in gut microbial communities more than microplastic ingestion. Through the success of Maggie's thesis work, we have significantly advanced our scientific understanding of the health implications these micropollutants have on a model freshwater fish species.

Maggie's abstract appears on the next page.

ABSTRACT

Microplastic contamination is a ubiquitous contaminant of concern in natural and built environments. These particles are found in freshwater surface waters and sediments at concentrations that may threaten the biota with which they interact. Laboratory studies are conducted to understand what impacts microplastics have on freshwater organisms like the fathead minnow (*Pimephales promelas*). Exposure experiments should use ecologically relevant concentrations of microplastics to draw realistic conclusions about the risk of environmental microplastic contamination.

Environmentally weathered particles differ from pristine microplastics as they develop a microbial biofilm and may adsorb hydrophobic contaminants. To build on previous microplastic exposure studies, I incubated 500 μm polyethylene beads in the surface water of Muskegon Lake, Michigan, USA for eight weeks and embedded them in commercial fish food pellets. I fed these to adult male and female fathead minnows at two different concentrations (4 and 16 particles/fish/day, respectively) in a 28-day chronic exposure experiment in a flow-through system using Muskegon Lake water. I measured the health endpoints of growth, condition factor, and hematocrit as well as hepatic gene expression of representative immune and stress related genes in the males. I also evaluated the effects of weathered microplastics on the gastrointestinal microbial community of the fish as they may introduce a novel biofilm. There were no relative gene expression differences; however, there was a significant impact to the growth in male fathead minnows in the high concentration treatment, leading to a slight loss of mass over the course of the study. Additionally, I found some impacts to richness and diversity metrics with changes in the relative abundance of several taxa in the gut microbial communities. However, the overall community composition was not impacted by microplastic ingestion, which may have been overwhelmed by the influence of the surface water in the study system. I did see distinct sex effects in the health endpoints, the gut microbial species richness estimates, and microbial community composition. Our study suggests that weathered microplastic ingestion does have organismal health effects, but these were sex specific and probably not driven solely by changes to the gut microbial community.

**GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATION FOR
OUTSTANDING FINAL PROJECT
Fall 2022**

College of Education & Community Innovation

- ❖ **Matthew Schmude, Master of Education in Instruction & Curriculum–
Educational Differentiation**
 - **Project Title:** Preparing Effective Citizens: Developing Essential Skills in Social Studies Education

Matthew’s passion to improve social studies education has led him to his final project for the Educational Differentiation program. He felt the current American education system could improve on preparing students to be active citizens and educate on current issues. For his project, Matthew created a curricular plan that included a map and resources to aid teachers in his school district in preparing students to participate in the democratic process as informed and engaged citizens. The maps in his project would enable teachers to intentionally plan and execute history and civics instruction in meaningful ways. The resources will help assess student progress in their skill development and content knowledge. Rubrics, pretests, and sample assessments related to democratic skills were all included. Matthew’s project has shown dedication and passion towards his major and will allow for increased instruction of democratic skills and social studies content for students in the entire school district.

College of Health Professions

- ❖ **Adrianna Daniels, Katelyn Jones, Abigail Katt, Kathryn Killman, and Nora Owens, Master of Science in Occupational Therapy**
 - **Project Title:** A Survey of Assistive Technology Preferences for Museum Visitors with Sensory Impairment

Adrianna, Katelyn, Abigail, Kathryn, and Nora have demonstrated excellent dedication to the Occupational Therapy program through their collaboration with the Grand Rapids Public Museum. Their project aims to improve museum experiences to be more inclusive for museum visitors who have

sensory impairments. The graduate students partnered with GRPM and other local organization to identify user preferences for assistive technology. Their project has been accepted at regional and national conferences.

❖ **Diamond Day-Parker, Master of Public Health**

- **Project Title:** Perceptions of Lactation Consultants on Exclusive Pumping as a form of Breastfeeding – An Effort to Combat Disparity

Diamond's dedication to quality and equity in public health drives her work in the program. For her project, she sought to address the disparity of breastfeeding practices among Black families. In gaining the perspective of lactation support professionals, she provided a well-supported and persuasive argument for exclusive or supplemental pumping practices to be explored as alternatives to nursing. Furthermore, Diamond also gave insights into how pediatric medical facilities and services can provide more holistic and inclusive support to all women, especially Black women. Her work explores an important but underrecognized practice, applying public health research methods to generate new and generalizable findings for real world problems.

**GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATION FOR EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE
TO THE COMMUNITY OR PROFESSION
Fall 2022**

College of Education & Community Innovation

❖ **Tamara Van Kampen, Master of Health Administration**

Tamara demonstrates many aspiring qualities of a servant leader. Seeing a need for improvement, she sought to expand access to healthcare services on campus. When COVID disrupted healthcare, Tamara introduced telehealth services, and has continued its use for patient benefits. In her work at the Family Health Center, she updated the care model to improve the effectiveness and efficiency for elderly patients and the low socio-economic populations. She also took the initiative to pursue grant funding for the treatment of patients with behavioral and mental health conditions. During the program, she connected fellow students with internships, projects, and practicum opportunities. Other students were also able to learn from the real-life experiences and observations that she brought to classroom discussions. Tamara is the model of the values, roles, and responsibilities that healthcare professionals carry in serving the communities and profession.

❖ **Erin McIntosh, Master of Public Administration**

Erin has dedicated herself to leadership throughout her time at Grand Valley. From her undergraduate work in the Student Senate, to serving in the International City/County Management Graduate Student Chapter, she contributed to the success of the organizations and the school. Particularly, her efforts have provided significant bridging activities connecting students with professional development and networking opportunities. Erin embodies the high ideals of service of a Laker leader.

❖ **Melissa Rozema, Master of Social Work**

Melissa is an outstanding student and advocate for service and social justice, particularly elderly care. During COVID, she selected an internship in the healthcare field with a population that put her outside her comfort zone and knowledge base. As a social worker intern in a senior living community, she

spent hundreds of hours working with rehab patients, in assisted living and nursing care, and individuals with dementia. Despite the hardship the Pandemic had on her organization, Melissa committed herself to seeing the residents and patients received the care they deserved. She exemplified social work ethics and values by putting the patients first, as well as going above and beyond through volunteering in the community with her family. Her dedication will improve the inclusive view and compassionate care, especially for a vulnerable population. Melissa is an aspiring example of a fearless leader.

College of Health Professions

❖ **Elaine Chamberlain, Libby Filice, Madeline Kurt, Taylor Porter, and Shannon Twichell, Master of Science in Occupational Therapy**

Elaine, Libby, Madeline, Taylor, and Shannon are great assets to the Occupational Therapy program. They have demonstrated their initiatives to give back to their community through collaborations with local organizations. The graduate students have partnered with the Grand Rapids Public Museum to develop pre-visit materials for visitors with autism spectrum disorder. Their contribution will continue to shape the local community by ensuring that GRPM exhibits remain inclusive for people with autism and other disabilities. All five graduate students embody the characteristics of caring professionals who will change the future of Occupational Therapy.

❖ **Lydia Fales, Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

Lydia is an excellent example of a graduate student who is passionate about serving to her community and profession. She is enrolled in the Master of Physician Assistant Studies and volunteers her time as a student mentor and tutor to other PA students. Prior to her enrollment into the PA program, she contributed back to her community by volunteering at the Oasis of Hope. Oasis of Hope is a free health clinic in Grand Rapids that services individuals who are in need of resources and are struggling with low income. Lydia exemplifies a kind and caring student who currently, and will continue to benefit, the PA field.

❖ **Nicole Stegeman, Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology**

Nicole is an exemplary student with a strong commitment to her program, faculty, colleagues, fellow students, as well as the patients and families that she serves. As a leader, she took the initiative to connect with the new cohort of SLP students, providing tips and mentorship as they progress through the program. During her time volunteering for the Mitchel Pavlak Foundation, Nicole has assisted in organizing events to raise money for children with disabilities and those that have lost their parents. She exemplifies excellence in service to the community and the profession.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

❖ **Matthew Bain, Master of Science in Biology**

Matthew's passion for freshwater conservation and aquatic entomology drives his work in the classroom and in the field. As a teaching assistant, he excites students with his encyclopedic knowledge for aquatic insects, going so far as to spend time looking up information he didn't know. As a researcher, he focused on critical evaluation of the success or failure of ecological restoration projects, an underdeveloped area in public environmental policy. By combining different models for data analysis, he expanded the possibility of evaluating both the functional attributes and structural components of the ecosystem. Matthew's contributions to the community are significant and will continue to support our collective appreciation and care for freshwater resources.

**GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATION FOR
EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE TO GVSU
Fall 2022**

College of Education & Community Innovation

❖ **Emily Brenner, Master of Public Administration**

A longtime Laker since 2017, Emily has made immense contributions to Grand Valley State University. She played an active role across different student organizations. Her work continues at the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy. Here, she helped solidify GVSU's national reputation in nonprofit leadership and philanthropy. Emily's experience is a shining example of leadership for all Lakers.

❖ **Garrett Heaney, Master of Health Administration**

Garrett is a distinguished example of a servant leader. He is willing to take time working with his peers who are struggling with either classroom materials or professional decisions. He also served as Finance Officer for the Healthcare Professional Graduate Student Alliance (HPGSA), representing the organization at Graduate Student Association meetings. He ensured that the financial needs of HPGSA are presented and handled in a professional manner. Garrett's peer officers stated that, without his leadership, active support, and involvement, many events would not have happened. He has undoubtedly demonstrated professional service to the Master of Health Administration program and HPGSA in an exemplary manner.

❖ **Abena Pinamang, Master of Science in Criminal Justice**

Abena is a leader both in and out of the classrooms. Serving as a peer mentor in the Criminal Justice program, she provides support to her fellow students and volunteers as a point of contact for new international students. She is recognized by multiple faculty members in the program for her leadership within the classroom. As President of the Alpha Phi Sigma National Honors Society in Criminal Justice, Abena facilitates democratic exchanges of ideas with members to make important decisions. She is also described to be an effective communicator with the organization's officers, members, and

advisor. Her dedication created an impact in the field when she presented at this year's American Society of Criminology Conference. Faculty members of the program have shared their appreciation and support for Abena's accomplishments and commitment.

College of Health Professions

❖ **Ashley Bittinger, Master of Science in Clinical Dietetics**

Since the beginning of Ashley's graduate education, she has continuously demonstrated her strong work ethic and passion within the Clinical Dietetics program. She has maintained a 3.87 grade point average while taking full-time graduate courses, completing 30 hours per week of supervised practice, and working and volunteering her time as co-president of the GVSU's Clinical Dietetics Student Association. Ashley naturally takes on leadership roles in group projects and in culinary and simulation labs. She is a great example of a leader with excellent communication skills and confidence.

❖ **Kacey Davidson, Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology**

Kacey embodies leadership through her compassion and initiatives in the Speech-Language Pathology program. She has written an excellent poem titled *Miss Understood*, which focuses on a child with a language-learning disability. This poem highlights the challenges that children with language-learning disabilities experience. Kacey plans to raise awareness of these challenges by disseminating the poem as an open educational resource for all professionals working with this population. She understands that bringing attention to these kinds of disabilities is crucial to ensure this community are receiving the resources they need to succeed academically and socially. Additionally, she also plans to disseminate materials she has developed for intervention that can be used by speech-language pathologists. Her devotion and initiative to provide accessible resources proves her quality leadership skills in the Speech-Language Pathology field.

❖ **Zoie Hulst, Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

Zoie has continuously shown excellent leadership skills throughout her time in the Physician Assistant Studies program. She was elected by her classmates

to lead and serve as the president of the Richard P. Clodfelter Physician Assistant Student society. She led herself and her colleagues with humility, dedication, and respect. Zoie has shown initiative by leading and helping with several student events. She has proven to be a strong and compassionate leader.

❖ **Adriana Mallett, Master of Science in Occupational Therapy**

Adriana has modeled leadership skills and has made a positive impact to the Occupational Therapy program. She is a fieldwork student and a Graduate Assistant for the Department of Occupational Science and Therapy. In the Spring of 2022, Adrianna collaborated with her fieldwork coordinator to develop a new Level I Fieldwork placement through the City of Big Rapids. She researched workplace practices that promote psychological well-being of employees, conducted ADA compliance audits for several community buildings, and facilitated communication between the city and the community regarding housing needs. As a Graduate Assistant, she has played a major role in the success of an interprofessional education event involving health and education disciplines from GVSU and Muskegon Community College. Her excellent skills in communication, collaborations, initiative, and passion have demonstrated her to be a fantastic leader.

❖ **Julia Semaan, Master of Science in Clinical Dietetics**

Julia has proven to be an excellent leader within the Clinical Dietetics program. She has shown outstanding academic performance. She was able to maintain a 3.68 grade point average while being enrolled as a full-time student, completing 30 hours a week in supervised practice, and being employed. In addition, she also makes time to give back to her community by serving as the public relations chair at Slow Food with Michigan State University, she works as an intern at the Allen Neighborhood Center, and volunteers for the Circles Grand Rapids. Julia has demonstrated her leadership skills in group projects, at interprofessional events, and as co-president of the GVSU's Clinical Dietetics Student Association. She is described as a great communicator, honest, trusting, and compassionate.

❖ **Madissen Vacha, Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology**

Since enrolling into the Speech-Language Pathology program, Madissen has continuously impressed faculty with her ability to exceed expectations. She is a great collaborator and leader. She ensures to express her appreciation for her classmates and professors in her program. Madissen served as the president of the GVSU chapter of the National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association. She has done an excellent job leading this student organization and working as a team with her peers. Her clinical experience involved working with a bilingual preschooler with a classmate. They both created a poster on their experience which won first place in the student poster competition at the Michigan Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association Annual Conference. Madissen's contribution and service to her program and field are great examples of what defines a team-leader.

**GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATION FOR EXCELLENCE IN
PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT GVSU
Fall 2022**

College of Education & Community Innovation

❖ **Haak Betiem, Master of Health Administration**

Haak's strength is his dedication to outreach and providing resources to the community. He has contributed to Grand Valley State University's standing as an institution that values and supports diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Many students of color were connected to a resource initiative at GV thanks to Haak, with two of them receiving acceptance and therefore able to begin their undergraduate education as Lakers. He also led discussions and education initiatives to improve support for diversity and equality in the Master of Health Administration program. In every leadership organization he is a member of, Haak is always willing to provide insights in supporting current and upcoming students. The Office of Inclusion and Diversity even invited him to share his personal story to address ongoing concerns on campus. He is no doubt a champion of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the GVSU community.

❖ **Zahabia Ahmed-Usmani, Master of Public Administration**

Zahabia is an outstanding student and a dedicated advocate for social justice. Her work as a program manager with the Kaufman Interfaith Institute is dedicated to an inclusive environment on campus. Outside of Grand Valley, she also serves in various organizations and initiatives for improving the community through housing, literature, diversity, women issues, and more. Zahabia reflects the exemplary qualities inspiring fellow Lakers.

College of Health Professions

❖ **Joshua Marvil, Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

Joshua's passion, humility, and devotion to inclusion and diversity has elected him as Diversity Chairperson by his peers. He has shown initiative by

encouraging changes within the Physician Assistant Studies program that ensures equitable health care delivery. These changes included inviting expert speakers to address current issues and improving the inclusivity within the program's technical standards. Faculty members of the program have shared their appreciation for Joshua's commitment and dedication.

**GRADUATE SCHOOL CITATION FOR
EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY
Fall 2022**

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 Health Professions

❖ **Jennifer Yee, Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

Jennifer has presented excellent leadership and initiative during her time with the Physician Assistant Studies program. She is a part of the student mentor program where she shares her knowledge and skills to other students. She also has prior experience in nursing that allows her to see aspects of patient care that are commonly missed. Jennifer is described as caring and passionate to help others. Her drive and positive attitude are contagious to others around her. She is often found to be surrounded by other students while studying to learn from her wisdom. Jennifer is a great example of someone whose selfless acts will continue to keep the PA student mentorship program thriving.

College of Education and Community Innovation

❖ **Jakob Bigard, Master of Public Administration**

Jakob is a leader that take initiatives. For class, he conducted an excellent research paper on a Triple Bottom Line sustainability assessment for local organizations. Through an internship with The Right Place Program, he works with local businesses in West Michigan to develop retention plans and promoting long-term sustainable growth. Jakob has worked with the Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies in developing public programs to address sustainable development issues like climate change, renewable energy, social and racial inequality, democracy, and many other pertinent

topics in our society. Some of these programs were even selected for coverage by C-SPAN. He also participates in service projects with the Cook Leadership Academy students. Through his Master of Public Administration program, Jakob's leadership is shown in his various Laker Effects.

MAGS DISTINGUISHED THESIS NOMINEES OUTSTANDING THESIS 2023

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 Mathematics/Physical Sciences/Engineering and Social Sciences. 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 2023 MAGS selection committee included:

- Dr. Jamal Alsabbagh, School of Computing
- Dr. Frederick Antczak, Department of English
- Dr. Karl Brakora, School of Engineering
- Dr. Anthony Spencer, School of Communications
- Dr. Joshua Veazey, Department of Physics
- Dr. Ayana Weekley, Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

College of Liberal & Arts Science

❖ **Brittany Bahl, Master of Science in Communications**

- **Title:** Princes, Moms, and Warriors: A Feminist Rhetorical Analysis of Toxic Depictions in Film
- **Committee Chair:** Dr. Richard Besel – Department of Communications

Dr. Richard Besel, Brittany's thesis committee chair, stated, "Her thesis, *Princes, Moms, and Warriors: A Feminist Rhetorical Analysis of Toxic Depictions in Film*, is a timely and important rhetorical criticism of three artifacts found in popular culture. As her thesis advisor, I can say without doubt she has submitted an outstanding work of scholarship.

While my testimony is needed for this recognition, do not take my word alone as evidence of Brittany's excellent performance. Her work has also been recognized by the larger academic community. For example, an early draft of one of her chapters was presented at the Midwest Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association convention in October 2021. Another chapter was not only presented at the Central States Communication Association convention, held in April 2022, but it was also recognized with two awards, including a top graduate student paper designation and a top debut paper recognition. Most recently, her thesis was selected as the winner of GVSU's Outstanding Master's Thesis Award in 2022. In sum, Brittany Bahl not only submitted an outstanding thesis, but she would also be a worthy recipient of this honor."

ABSTRACT

Various forms of toxic rhetoric have been the subject of academic study for decades. Despite some advancements toward a more progressive society, toxic rhetorics have continued to persist within the United States, especially within entertainment media. Toxic rhetorics within film, in particular, have remained steadily prevalent and continue to strongly impact audiences and constructions of identity. This thesis utilizes primarily close reading and feminist rhetorical criticism to examine rhetorics of toxicity within three popular film franchises: (1) toxic masculinity in *Coming to America* (1988) and *Coming 2 America* (2021); (2) toxic femininity in *Bad Moms*; and (3) straightwashing as a more toxic form of heteronormativity in *Wonder Woman* (2017) and *Wonder Woman 1984* (2020). The definitions and primary characteristics of these concepts are discussed, including brief histories of their foundations and usage. Some of the main topics addressed in this thesis include concerns regarding representation, visibility, and erasure of marginalized groups within film, as well as the problematic treatment of consent.

- ❖ **Kevin Kredit, Master of Science in Applied Computer Science**
 - **Title:** Confronting Wicked Crypto: Wicked Problems, Encryption Policy, and Exceptional Access Technology
 - **Committee Chair:** Dr. Andrew Kalafut – School of Computing

Dr. Andrew Kalafut, a committee member on Kevin's thesis, stated, "Kevin has chosen in his thesis work to examine the problem of Exceptional Access to encrypted communications (the ability of Law Enforcement to decrypt encrypted communications). This is a truly important problem in computing, as both the technical advances on the problem and public policy decisions by the government will have lasting effects on security and privacy of electronic communications and stored data. While this is far too large of a problem to be resolved in a single thesis, Kevin's thesis contributes to advancing the conversation.

Kevin also makes a significant additional contribution in the computing field by inventing his own new extension to data flow diagrams (a common type of diagram used for system design and analysis) to show what data is encrypted and what key is being used for the encryption. However, what I have been most impressed by has been Kevin's willingness and ability to address the policy aspects of the problem. An acceptable thesis could have been written that addressed only the technical issues of encryption. However, because the technical and policy sides must account for the concerns of each other, early in the thesis process Kevin decided that his thesis needed to cover all sides of the issue. This has required significant extra background work but clearly has improved the value of his thesis."

ABSTRACT

Public debate has resumed on the topic of exceptional access (EA), which refers to alternative means of decryption intended for law enforcement use. The resumption of this debate is not a renege on a resolute promise made at the end of the 1990s “crypto war”; rather, it represents a valid reassessment of optimal policy in light of changing circumstances. The imbalance between privacy, access, and security in the context of constantly changing society and technology is a wicked problem that has and will continue to evade a permanent solution. As policymakers consider next steps, it is necessary that the technical community remain engaged. Although any EA framework would increase risk, the magnitude of that increase varies greatly with the quality of the technical and regulatory approach. Furthermore, if one considers hardline legislative action and malicious abuse of cryptosystems as part of the threat model, well-designed EA may reduce risk overall.

The root of the conflict lies in cryptography’s dual role as an enabler of unprecedented privacy and a cornerstone of security. The emergence of strong encryption incited the first crypto war, and its proliferation is causing the second. In response to both polarized and conciliatory voices, this paper analyzes strategies for confronting wicked problems and proposes an iterative approach to the case of encryption and EA. Along the way, it illustrates the components of the debate in argument maps and demonstrate the security risks with data flow diagrams and threat analysis, focusing on one EA proposal in particular, Stefan Savage’s “Lawful Device Access without Mass Surveillance Risk.”

**GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION
OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARD
Fall 2022**

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.

Seidman College of Business

❖ **Daniel Pellathy, Management Department**

Nominated by: Rebecca Ramos, Business Administration

Rebecca writes: "Professor Daniel Pellathy is an excellent educator who cares for his students. In more ways than one, I was extremely grateful that he was my professor. He connected with students on a personal level and was honest with us. He is also extremely organized and provided meticulous detail on assignments and what was required of his students. It provided comfort knowing exactly what was needed to succeed in his class. He is very observant and in-tune with his students. I am grateful for my time in his class."

College of Health Professions

❖ **Dr. Ashley McKnight, Occupational Science and Therapy**

Nominated by: Libby Filice, Occupational Therapy

Libby writes: "I have been fortunate enough to have Dr. McKnight over the course of my two years in the graduate master's occupational therapy program...Her genuine passion for occupational therapy radiates through the way she teaches and fosters success within her students. Sharing her clinical knowledge and experiences in practice displays her commitment for this profession and her desire to educate those around her. Outside of the classroom, Dr. McKnight also demonstrate exemplary concern and devotion to her students, especially their mental health. She goes out of her way to

make her students feel heard and valued. In the beginning of the program, I felt very overwhelmed and contemplated if I belonged here, however, Dr. McKnight changed my perspective. Her calming demeanor and confidence in me made me feel that I belonged in this profession, and I mattered. Grand Valley's occupational therapy program is highly accredited and known to be the best in Michigan and I believe that Dr. McKnight is one of the reasons for this. I have sincere respect and admiration towards her creativity, leadership, and attributes to this profession and hope someday I can emulate just that."

❖ **Dr. Jill Ellis, Physician Assistant Studies**

Nominated by: Noelle Kraus, Physician Assistant Studies

Noelle writes: "Dr. Ellis is always ready for anything and everything. She teaches several courses within our program and has exceeded every expectation in each one. She is intentional with our time and learning. She goes beyond her call, to ensure she is up to date on every development in medicine so that we receive the highest quality education possible. Dr. Ellis' communication skills and adaptability within the classroom are unmatched. She is innovative and teaches in a way that allows the students to truly learn the material. Most importantly Dr. Ellis is kind, inclusive, and approachable. Her feedback and responses to questions are encouraging, relevant to 'real' life, and impactful. Her passion and dedication for teaching are evident in everything she does for our program. She has helped to create generations of competent and inclusive health care providers, and I can only aspire to leave such an impact."

**GRADUATE STUDENT
PRESIDENTIAL RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENTS**

Spring/Summer 2022

Addie, Leona. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology.

Title: *Assessing Effects of an Extreme Weather Event on the Spatial Genetic Structure of the Woodland Jumping Mouse*

Daigle, Rebecca. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology.

Title: *Ecosystem Responses to Fire and Girdling Treatments at Two Altered Oak Savannas in West Michigan*

Everhart, Kristin; Lanning, Jordan; McIntyre, Madeline; Novak, Nicole. College of Health Professions, Occupational Therapy

Title: *The Effects of Virtual Reality on Stress in Graduate Students*

Fischer, Abigail. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology.

Title: *Avian Community Response to Oak Savanna and Oak Woodland Management Within Western Michigan*

Fray, Davis. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology – Aquatic Sciences.

Title: *Life in the Extreme - Characterizing Diatom Communities in Low-Oxygen High-Sulfur Spring Ecosystems in Michigan and Florida*

Gunnnett, Benjamin. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology.

Title: *Habitat Suitability of Lake Sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*) in the Grand River*

Hart, John. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Biology.

Title: *Enhancing Precision Conservation Planning with Microbial Source Tracking Methods*

Hutton, Rebecca; Kukla, Olivia; Reidy, Julie; Ross, Blake; Sills, Kerri. College of Health Professions, Occupational Therapy

Title: *Identifying Gaps in Spinal Cord Injury Treatment in Post Acute Care: A Therapist's Perspective*

Mancero, Emilio. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Biology.

Title: *Analysis of Patterns of Island Gigantism in the San Cristobal Lava Lizard (*Microlophus bivittatus*)*

Suttorp, Taylor. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Biology – Aquatic Sciences.
Title: *Impact of Invasive Asian Clam (Corbicula fluminea) on Midwestern Streams' Benthic Community*

Velasques, Paris. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: Biology.
Title: *Effects of Microplastic Biofilms on an Anthropogenically Impacted Urban Lake*

White, Karina. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: Biology.
Title: *Developing a Protocol for Students to Provide a Long-Term Solution to Restoration Monitoring at Grand Ravines Park (Ottawa County, MI)*

Wilson, Kathryn. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: Biology.
Title: *Genetic Diversity and Pedigree Analysis of Captive Amur tigers (Panthera tigris altaica) in AZA Accredited and non-AZA Accredited Sites*

Fall 2022

McCluskie, Bridie. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: Biology.
Title: *PCR Assay for the Detection of Mosquito Vectors Present in MI*

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

President: Hannah Robinson, Doctorate of Audiology

Vice President: Jhon Kerby Gerlin, Business Administration

Finance Officer: Masego Seamogano, Accounting

Communications Officer: Joe Ohaeche, Cybersecurity

Advisors:

Dr. Jennifer Pope, Department of Marketing
Melissa Baker-Boosamra, Office of Student Life

GRADUATE COUNCIL OFFICERS

Chair:

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Vice-Chair:

Dr. Monica Harris, Education

Policy Subcommittee Chair:

Dr. Jennifer Pope, Marketing

Curriculum and Program Review Subcommittee Chair:

Dr. Mark Staves, Cell and Molecular Biology



Dr. Jeffrey A. Potteiger, Associate Vice-Provost for the Graduate School

Trista Bergerud, Assistant Director of Programming and Communication

Sheri DeVries, Administrative Assistant

Graduate Assistants:

Kassie Nguyen, Public Health
Long Ho, Public Administration

Student Assistants:

Riley Begeman, Advertising and Public Relations (undergraduate)
Ashley Derfiny, Management and Marketing (undergraduate)

The Graduate School

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