

# SPARTAN REHAB NEWS

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF REHABILITATION AND DISABILITY STUDIES (ORDS) AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY DESIGNED TO BUILD BRIDGES BETWEEN PRACTITIONERS, RESEARCHERS, & EDUCATORS.



# WELCOME SPARTANS!

RECENT EVENTS

AWARD  
CELEBRATIONS

ONGOING  
RESEARCH  
PROJECTS

UPCOMING  
EVENTS

ALUMNI  
SPOTLIGHTS

## The Message from Dr. Michael J. Leahy

Dear Students, Faculty, Alumni and Friends of the Program,

As my retirement starts, I just wanted to take a moment to thank all of you. I have been very fortunate to have worked at MSU with the absolute best faculty, students and staff for these past 35 years.

Collectively we have all accomplished so much during this time and built an exceptional program that will continue to thrive and evolve well after I am gone.



Leaving is very hard for me to do but necessary. Knowing that the program is in great shape and in very good hands with an extraordinary faculty makes it much easier for me to leave. With that said, I wish you all the absolute best and hope that our paths will cross in the future. Thank you again for all you have given me over these many years. It has meant so much.

Michael J. Leahy

# SPARTAN REHAB NEWS EDITORIAL BOARD

Connie Sung - Faculty Advisor  
Heerak Choi, Trisha Easley- Editor, Writer

## CONTRIBUTORS:

Brenna Breshears	Milan Monardes
Jina Chun	Jarhed Peña
Pamela Davis	Alicia Strain
Trisha Easley	Amy Smith
Mudita Jagota	Emre Umucu
Hung Jen Kuo	Anni Wang
Beatrice Lee	Mizuka Yasuoka
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If you are interested in contributing to Spartan Rehab News, please contact Dr. Connie Sung at [csung@msu.edu](mailto:csung@msu.edu)

## Follow us:



Rehabilitation Counseling,  
Michigan State University



## Recent Events

### OUTDOOR GET-TOGETHER EVENT

After not seeing each other in-person (but mostly via zoom) for so long, we were very excited to finally have our in-person get-together event and have the opportunity to connect with each other this Fall. Over 30 rehabilitation counseling master's and doctoral students, visiting scholars, and faculty gathered in the backyard of Erickson Hall! We kicked off the year and welcomed our returning students as well as new students from the U.S. and all over the world who have very diverse background and high level of dedication to the field of disability and rehabilitation. Everyone had a blast! We very much look forward to a great year ahead!

Who Will Empower Individuals with Disabilities? Spartans Will!



Faculty and doctoral students



Faculty and master's students

# PHD GRADUATES OF CLASS 2020-2021



Congratulations to all of our doctoral and master's graduates, class of 2020-2021! We are proud of you and your accomplishment! Wishing you all the best for a bright future ahead of you!

# MA GRADUATES OF CLASS 2020-2021



Dr. Jorem Awadu



Dr. Brenna Breshears



Dr. Sara Grivetti



Dr. Heekyung Lee



Dr. Rosanne Renauer



Dr. Rosemarie VanHam



Dr. Tammi Williams



Jessica Fairbanks



Jessica Heim



Mikayla Kuenzel



Evin Papuga



Amy Smith



Shelby Gombosi



Jessica Hester



Dina Novelli



Lucinda Reed-Nowland



Michael Yeomans

# WELCOMING OUR NEW FACULTY

Dr. Emre Umucu obtained his PhD in Rehabilitation Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

He was an Assistant Professor in the Rehabilitation Counseling Program at the University of Texas at



El Paso. His research program examines modifiable biopsychosocial risk and protective factors affecting psychosocial adjustment, resilience, well-being, and employment in individuals with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities, through the lens of positive psychology. His research has been successfully funded by intramural and extramural grants and was awarded by the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association.

Dr. Beatrice Lee received her PhD in Rehabilitation Counselor Education from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research focuses on exploring malleable risk and protective factors that can help people with disabilities



cope more effectively with stress. Her goal is to further inform the development and validation of strength-based, stress management interventions to improve community participation and the quality of life for people with neurological and psychiatric conditions. In particular, she is interested in examining the extent to which protective personal and environmental factors can alleviate vulnerability to experience stress and foster health and well-being in individuals with neurological disorders, such as multiple sclerosis.

# WELCOMING OUR NEW MA & PHD STUDENTS

We welcome our new master's and doctoral students into our program! This year, we admitted thirteen master's and five doctoral students.

New MA students: Zeynep Aydin, Nolah Brown, Andrew Harsh, Jeffrey Hartmeyer, Yusi Hu, Mudita Jagota, Kaily Kraft, Sydney Kroll, Michael Laird, Callan Leavitt, John Leech, Milan Monardes, Jessica Nichols, and Rhiannon Serrurier.

New PhD students: Abdullah Almutairi, Amy Smith, Anni Wang, Michael Yeomans, and Mizuka Yasuoka.

## AWARD CELEBRATIONS

### LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Dr. Michael Leahy, University Distinguished Professor Emeritus received NRA's E.B. Whitten Silver Medallion Award. The award is presented to an individual who has exercised notable leadership in removing



environmental and legal barriers and in helping to overcome discrimination of individuals with disabilities. Dr. Leahy also received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the State of Michigan given his lifetime contribution and leadership in the field and his dedication and commitment to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.

# NATIONAL COUNCIL ON REHABILITATION EDUCATION'S AWARDS

Amy Smith, an alumni of our master's program and a new doctoral student was awarded the 2021 National Council on Rehabilitation Education's Student of the Year. She is currently employed as a transition counselor with Michigan Rehabilitation Services, and serves the Shiawassee County area while pursuing her doctoral studies.



Dr. Emre Umucu was awarded 2021 New Career in Rehabilitation Education Awards by the National Council on Rehabilitation Education. Dr. Umucu's research program aims to examine the extent of modifiable biopsychosocial risk and protective factors that affect psychosocial adjustment, resilience, well-being, and vocational outcomes in individuals with disabilities.



## OUTSTANDING REVIEWER

Dr. Hung Jen Kuo was recognized as one of the Outstanding Reviewers in the Emerald Literati Awards for Excellence by the Journal of Enabling Technologies (JET).

Dr. Kuo was specifically selected for this award given his outstanding contributions to the journal since 2019.



# AMERICAN REHABILITATION COUNSELING ASSOCIATION RESEARCH AWARD

Alicia Strain, a doctoral candidate along with Dr. Songtian Zeng and Dr. Connie Sung received the 2021 Research Award from the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association on their recently published research paper, titled "Healthcare Transition Services and Adaptive and Social-Emotional Functioning of Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder".

## DISSERTATION & SUMMER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

Two doctoral students, Jarhed Peña and Alicia Strain, and one recent doctoral graduate, Brenna Breshears, were awarded dissertation completion fellowship. Jarhed's dissertation aims to examine experiences and perceptions of individuals with and without ASD in conceptualizing stressful social situations using heart rate indices. Alicia's dissertation focuses on evaluating the feasibility, social validity, and preliminary reliability of the Employment Success assessments across multiple users and settings. Dr. Breshears' dissertation examines the lived experiences of mandated counseling for community members, practitioners, and court employees. Additionally, our doctoral student, Heerak Choi, also received a summer research fellowship to develop her study regarding employers' perspectives who have been participating in work-based learning programs.

# Ongoing Research Projects

## INTERACTION STYLES AND PSYCHOSOCIAL OUTCOMES OF FAMILY CAREGIVERS OF ADOLESCENT AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS

Trisha Easley graduated from Michigan State University's Rehabilitation Counseling master's program and began her doctoral studies at MSU in 2019. She is currently running an exploratory mixed-methods study with the goal of understanding the relationship among caregiver stress, family caregiver interaction styles and impact on family caregivers of adolescent and young adult with neurodevelopmental disorders.



## OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE STRESS RESPONSES OF YOUNG ADULTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Jarhed Macarubbo Peña graduated from Utah State University's Rehabilitation Counseling Program and began his doctoral studies at MSU in 2018. Previously, he worked as a vocational rehabilitation counselor for the State of Idaho for two years. He has recently proposed his dissertation research, titled Objective and Subjective Stress Responses of Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. For this study, Jarhed plans to examine the stress appraisal and coping of young adults with autism using a virtual stress stimulation. His research interest revolves around understanding how day-to-day stress appraisal and coping impact an individual's biopsychosocial adjustment to disability.



# Upcoming Events

## VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE FOR MASTER'S & DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

We will hold virtual open house for our doctoral and master's programs this fall and next spring semesters. The MSU's Rehabilitation Counseling Virtual Open House will feature "meet-and-greet" with faculty, admission advisors, and students from all over the world. For those who are interested, please see below for more details. We look forward to see you!

### PhD Rehabilitation Counselor Educator Program Virtual Open House

Date: October 15, 2021 (Friday)

Time: 9:00 to 10:30 am U.S. Eastern Time

Zoom Link: <https://msu.zoom.us/j/456329544>

Program Website:

<https://education.msu.edu/cepse/rehab/phd/>

Contact: Dr. Gloria Lee, PhD Program Director at [leekalai@msu.edu](mailto:leekalai@msu.edu) or (517) 432-3623.

### MA Rehabilitation Counseling Program Virtual Open House

Date: January 14, 2022 (Friday)

Time: 9:00 to 10:00 am U.S. Eastern Time

Zoom Link: <https://msu.zoom.us/j/456329544>

Program Website:

<https://education.msu.edu/cepse/rehab/masters/>

Contact: Dr. Connie Sung, MA Program Director at [csung@msu.edu](mailto:csung@msu.edu) or (517) 353-1638.

## 47TH ANNUAL PECKHAM-SMITH GOLF TOURNAMENT

We are excited to announce that the 47th Peckham-Smith Golf Tournament will be held on October 8 this year at Forest Akers West. All the proceeds from this event will be donated to the Ralf A. Peckham Memorial Fund at MSU. The funds raised will be used for student support and educational activities in the rehabilitation counseling programs. For more information, you can contact Dr. Andrew Nay at [nayandre@msu.edu](mailto:nayandre@msu.edu) or David Campbell at [CampbellD5@michigan.gov](mailto:CampbellD5@michigan.gov). We hope to see you there!



**47th Annual Ralf Peckham & Harry Smith Memorial Golf TOURNAMENT**

**Friday, October 8th, 2021**

**Forest Akers West • 3535 Forest Rd, Lansing, MI**  
Shotgun Start 9:30 AM • Registration 8:00 AM

**Hosted by: MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY** College of Education  
Rehabilitation Counseling Program

- Michigan Rehabilitation Association
- Incompass Michigan
- Michigan Rehabilitation Counselor & Educators Association

Game is 4 person scramble with prizes for men, women & mixed. Prizes also awarded for closest to the pin, longest drive, and 50/50 raffle.

\*\*\* Come visit and throw Frisbee's to MSU's famous "Zeke The Wonderdog" \*\*\*



Flyer of golf tournament of this year (top) and the picture taken at the prior golf tournament (bottom).

# Alumni Spotlights

Dr. Jina Chun graduated from MSU Rehabilitation Counselor Education Program in 2017. She has been working at the University of Wisconsin-Madison since 2020 and is currently taking a role of the director in the Clinical Rehabilitation



Counseling Master's program. She is actively working on two research projects. The first is about identifying the path to career decision-making for transition-aged youth with disabilities. She has been exploring how to develop programs for transition-aged youth and young adults with autism and other neurodevelopmental disabilities that foster self-efficacy, facilitate positive career development and outcomes, and are grounded in lived experience. The other project is Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment (VRTAC-QE), which aims to increase the knowledge and skills of state vocational rehabilitation agencies and community partners who help people with disabilities achieve quality employment and career advancement, with emphasis on competitive integrated employment.

Pamela Davis graduated from MSU's Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling Program in 1985. She has been working at Lansing Community College (LCC) since 1995. For 18 years, she worked in the Office of



Disability Support Services and then transferred to Counseling Services where she's been for the past seven years working as a counselor for the general student population. Pamela also serves on the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT), which works to promote the health and safety of students. As a team member of BIT, she serves as the liaison to the Office of Student Compliance. Pamela also teaches a Stress Management course at LCC to help students find their strengths through personal and educational development.

**Go Green! Go White!**