
Center for Health Equity Transformation

"The Center for Health Equity Transformation (CHET), Lexington Kentucky, is located on the original homeland of diverse Native peoples who arrived over 10,000 years ago. The most recent among them were the Shawnee. Today, Kentucky is still home to over 25,000 Native people representing scores of tribal groups. CHET recognizes the injustices Native peoples have endured. Through this statement, we hope to begin the long process of healing."

[Visit our Website](#)

Fall 2022 Newsletter

A Message from CHET Director, Nancy Schoenberg

Welcome back to a new academic year!

Once again, we begin this semester under challenging circumstances—natural disasters, growing fissures in our society, entrenched and systemic racial injustice, unprecedented economic stratification, and a stubbornly persistent pandemic. As I pondered this welcome back message, I began to write “unique and challenging circumstances.” But I have paused on that thought. While the confluence of the circumstances listed above may be unique to these times, we as a nation have faced similarly difficult and seemingly intractable times in our collective pasts. The question before us: How do we heed the call to action and set a path toward alleviation of such profound suffering?



One response to this question is: through the collective activities of those committed to becoming the most effective scientists that we can be, through research and training. That orientation is aligned with the mission of the Center for Health Equity Transformation (CHET). Although we are barely out of toddlerhood (we have just celebrated our 4th year), CHET has experienced exciting growth—we now have six primary faculty, dozens of talented staff members, 18 Core faculty members, over 170 faculty affiliates, and seven Graduate Research Assistants. All this talent provides capacity and support for our research training programs, allows us to obtain millions of dollars of extramural grants to enable discovery, permits us to disseminate impactful scholarship, and enables us to provide extensive programming. We are grateful for the resources we receive both within and from outside the UK community.

We appreciate your interest in and support of CHET in our mission to foster innovative, transdisciplinary and impactful research and training to improve the health of the most vulnerable residents of Kentucky and beyond. In this quarterly newsletter, you will meet some of the new faces around CHET and learn about accomplishments by and opportunities of our students, staff, and faculty.

While the challenges we face are daunting, I am filled with hope and gratitude as I see the work that my colleagues at CHET, across UK, and throughout the research community are doing to improve the lives of everyday people. We at CHET hope that you share our aspirations and join us, participate in our programming, seek us out for consultation and collaboration, and engage with our talented people.

CHET Welcomes New Core Faculty Members

CHET is pleased to welcome three new Core Faculty members, who represent a diverse array of disciplinary backgrounds, research expertise, and career levels. All of these stellar faculty members are committed to advancing our mission to achieve health equity for all. You can read about each faculty member below.



Laneshia Conner, PhD, MSW, CSW, Assistant Professor of Social Work in the College of Social Work. Dr. Conner’s research expertise is in the areas of HIV and aging (cultural adaption of prevention interventions), adult learning principles in higher education, and anti-racism in social work education. Her current projects include one related to faculty perceptions of self-plagiarism among students and another using the ADAPT-ITT framework to modify a web-based HIV Intervention for older Black women. [Read more about Dr. Conner here.](#)

Aaron J. Kruse-Diehr, PhD, Assistant Professor in the Department of Health, Behavior & Society in the University of Kentucky College of Public Health. Dr. Kruse-Diehr also is the Director of the Community Leadership Institute of Kentucky (CLIK) through the UK Center for Clinical and Translational Science. His research centers on reducing cancer disparities, with primary focus on increasing colorectal cancer screening rates in clinic and community-based settings using approaches guided by implementation science theories and frameworks. [Read more about Dr. Kruse-Diehr here.](#)



Kathy Sheppard-Jones, PhD, CRC, is the Executive Director of the Human Development Institute (HDI), one of UK’s Centers and Institutes administered under the Office of the Vice President for Research. She leads over 300 interdisciplinary staff around research priority areas that include employment, education, health, leadership, advocacy, assistive technology and universal design. Dr. Sheppard-Jones serves as implementation lead for the University on the Retaining Talent after Injury/Illness Network grant, funded by the US Department of Labor. Dr. Sheppard-Jones also serves as adjunct assistant faculty in the Counselor Education program in the College of Education. [Read more about Dr. Sheppard-Jones here.](#)

CHET by the Numbers Fall 2022

6

Primary Faculty

18

Core Faculty

170+

Affiliate Faculty

10

Staff Members

12

Graduate Research
Assistants & SPARK
Trainees

\$20.7M

Total PI/MPI Grant
Funding Awarded to
CHET Primary Faculty



Faculty Updates



Dr. Carolyn Lauckner (mPI), CHET primary faculty member, was recently awarded an R01 from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), which will utilize a randomized controlled trial to evaluate an intervention for reducing alcohol use among sexual minority male and transgender individuals. This enhanced motivational interviewing intervention utilizes smartphones and mobile breathalyzers to provide real-time messaging that address triggers for drinking and aims to reduce harm when individuals visit locations associated with risky alcohol use.

Dr. Elizabeth Rhodus has recently joined CHET as primary faculty. She leads the newly formed CHET Community Engagement subcommittee. The subcommittee's primary aims are to create a Community Partners Repository and to establish a Community Engagement Advisory Council. CHET GRA Yolanda Jackson will be assisting Dr. Rhodus in meeting the aims of the subcommittee. Dr. Rhodus also received a 5-year NIH/NIA K23 grant to develop assessments and non-pharmacological telehealth interventions to address behavioral symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and related





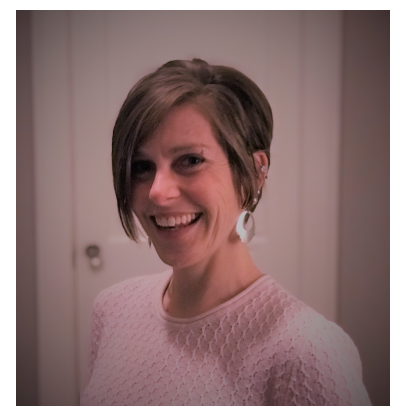
Dr. Carrie Oser and Dr. Nancy Schoenberg were both recently named as two of the fourteen University Research Professors for 2022-23. The University Research Professorship Awards honor faculty members who have demonstrated excellence that addresses scientific, social, cultural and economic challenges in our region and around the world. Each University Research Professor, nominated based on criteria set by college leadership, receives a one-year award of \$10,000.

Dr. Lisa Cliggett is starting a new research project on Social Networks and Rural Wealth Inequalities in her long term field site of Zambia (Southern Central Africa) this fall. This is part of a large comparative project of 52 sites around the world, all seeking to understand the ways social relationships influence livelihood security and well-being. Dr. Cliggett and colleagues from the University of Zambia will be collecting the first wave of data from September through December, and plan to return in 2026 for the second wave of data collection.



Dr. Ana Maria Linares was funded by UNITE to conduct the study entitled "Familismo and Social Determinants of Health: Critical components of Exclusive Breastfeeding Disparities in Hispanic mothers." The study has a mixed-method approach to assess the interconnection of Familismo, ethnic identity, and other SDOH, to evaluate whether these affect the intention of exclusive breastfeeding and the infant feeding method at 1-month after birth in Latinx mother/infant dyads. Dr. Linares also was selected as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing.

Dr. Rachel Farr (Co-PI) received a 2022 – 2023 UK Center for Clinical Translational Science (CCTS) and CHET Health Disparity/Health Equity Pilot Program Grant (\$25,000) for the project "NICQu: Neonatal Intensive Care for Queer Families." The research team also includes Dr. Aubrey Jones (PI, Social Work), Dr. Olivia S. Yinger (Co-PI, Music Therapy), and Dr. Keisa Fallin-Bennett (Co-I, Family and Community Medicine).



Dr. Patrick Kitman recently received a multi-year contract with the State Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Kentucky Assistive Technology Network to establish a new Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC) at the Center of Excellence in Rural Health to support individuals with disabilities living in eastern KY.

Dr. Danelle Stevens-Watkins, Associate Vice President for Research in diversity and inclusion, was recently awarded a grant from the National Institute on General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) to co-lead a mentoring program to foster success among racial/ethnic underrepresented faculty, called "Ensuring Success in Academia for Underrepresented Faculty to Advance Biomedical Science Research (ACCESS)."



Dr. Loka Ashwood Awarded CHET Just-In-Time (JIT) Award



Congratulations to Dr. Loka Ashwood on receiving a CHET JIT grant (\$2,000) to support her project, “Right-to-Farm's Might and Hype: A State-by-State Guide to Understanding and Reforming America's Most Controversial Agricultural Laws.” In this project Dr. Ashwood, in coordination with a team of sociologists and practicing lawyers, developed the first nationally comprehensive analysis of Right-to-Farm (RTF) laws and their associated cases. The three-part book "identifies key elements of the law, geopolitical structures, and outcomes nationally; provides accessible summaries for each state; and makes recommendations for how to reform or abolish RTF laws to achieve agricultural, rural, and environmental justice." The authors have begun to share information as part of the [One Rural initiative](#), and the JIT grant will be put toward a subvention to make the book open access.

Introduction to Robert Bell, CCTS Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator



The CCTS is pleased to welcome Robert Bell, MA, as its inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator, a member of the growing [Integrated Special Populations](#) team.

In this new role, Bell will support the Students Participating as Ambassadors for Research in Kentucky (SPARK) and Disparities Researchers Equalizing Access for Minorities (DREAM) programs, liaise with the Community Advisory Board, review and compile relevant DEI training for CCTS faculty and leadership, collaborate with program managers on DEI services, represent UK at community functions and more.

In his role with the SPARK Program, a collaboration with CHET, Bell supports the financial, recruitment, and dissemination aspects of the program.

"Rob has been an excellent addition to the SPARK team and has shown great dedication and passion to advancing the next generation of health equity scholars," said Ariel Arthur, CHET manager. "I look forward to continuing our work to strengthen the SPARK Program and provide high-quality health equity research training to traditionally underrepresented undergraduate students."

[Read more about Bell here.](#)

**Advancing Health
Equity:
Translating
Stories to
Partnership,
Policy and
Practice**

**October 17, 2022
Charles T. Wethington Building
Room 127
11:30am - 1:00pm**

Save the Date

October 17, 2022

CHET's Elevating Equity Speaker Series



**Darrell Gray II,
MD, MPH, FACG**
Chief Health Equity
Officer for
Elevance Health,
parent company of
Anthem BlueCross and
BlueShield

Join us for a luncheon with
clinical and health policy expert
Dr. Darrell Gray II as the
inaugural event for our
2022-2023 CHET Speaker
Series



bit.ly/3qIZnDJt

[Click here for more details.](#)

Follow us on social media!

If you are not already doing so, please consider following CHET on social media to stay up-to-date on all things healthy equity:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UKYCHET>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/CHET_UKY

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ukychet/>

Biostatistics and Research Design Core

To request a consultation with the CHET Biostatistics and Research Design Core, please click the following link: https://uky.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9GlfBA9n9aPOFlb

CHET Student and Trainee Listserv

Please encourage your students and trainees to join our listserv here: bit.ly/joinchet

