
CHET is supported by the Colleges of Medicine, Arts and Sciences, and Public Health; the Center for Clinical and Translational Science; the Markey Cancer Center; and the Office of the Vice President for Research.

CHET's Statement Decrying Anti-Asian Racism

The horrific attack in Atlanta that has resulted in the murder of eight people, six of whom were of Asian descent and seven of whom are women, sends yet another bell of alarm in a nation already besieged and undermined by division and hate. We have been witnessing an escalation of xenophobia and violence, with this recent act of terrorism serving as one of many examples and byproducts of anti-Asian American racism. It is also of critical importance to point out that misogyny occurs at the root of many violent forms of extremism, including white supremacy. Indeed, as documented by Stop AAPI Hate (<https://stopaapihate.org/>), since the pandemic's inception, 68% of the victims of such anti-Asian incidents have been women.

The Center for Health Equity Transformation (CHET) is united with all people and is committed to calling out and working to rectify hatred, misogyny, racism, and xenophobia. We grieve the loss, suffering, and anxiety of the Asian community impacted by this violent, xenophobic, and racist attack. We call on each of us to speak out against this and every other act of bias and violence, to seek and secure justice, and to work to end all forms of structural and personal racism. Our lives and our nation depend on it.

Message from the Chair of Core Faculty

**Chair, Core Faculty, Center for Health Equity Transformation,
Anita Fernander, Ph.D.**



We recently passed the one-year COVID-19 pandemic anniversary. The past year has been a trying one for all of us. Each of us have been impacted in various ways. Some of us have suffered the pain of COVID-19 related death of family members and friends; others have endured COVID-19 illness; many have had to remain isolated from family, close friends, and fellow worshipers; and, still others, have had to cope with economic loss, homelessness, educational challenges, mental health

struggles, and putting important life-altering plans on hold -- all due to the pandemic.

The arrival of Spring always brings with it a feeling of restored life and hope. We have reason to be hopeful as the unprecedented collaborative efforts of multiple institutions and corporations have worked to create vaccines that are becoming more plentiful, and equitable vaccine distribution and access becomes increasingly addressed in various communities. Reports across the nation indicate that virus transmission is slowly decreasing and hospitalizations and death rates due to COVID-19 are lowering. However, as we hold on to the restoration that this hope brings, it is important that we all remain vigilant. Vigilant not just about wearing masks in public, avoiding crowds, and practicing good hygiene – we must also remain vigilant about doing our part to collaboratively address the pre-existing disparities and inequities that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted.

I am thankful that the Center for Health Equity Transformation has steadfastly remained committed to addressing the inequalities and inequities that lead to health disparities among various communities in Kentucky. There is much transformational work to be done and we all have the opportunity to allow the hope of Spring to rejuvenate us to create unprecedented collaborative work to create an equitable society.

CHET Announces New Biostatistics Core Coordinator

CHET Biostatistics Core Coordinator: Meredith Duncan, Ph.D.

Meredith Duncan, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biostatistics. Her PhD is in Epidemiology, but, with a Master's in Biostatistics, she has a strong analytic background and considers herself an Applied Biostatistician. Dr. Duncan trained with the Framingham Heart Study at Boston University and the Center for Clinical Cardiovascular Research and Trials Evaluation at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. She completed her PhD at Vanderbilt University in July 2020 and joined the University of Kentucky College of Public Health in August of that same year. She loves team science and is always happy to support CHET faculty and affiliates in their research. Her research focuses on cardiovascular health disparities related to race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and sexual and gender identity. Dr. Duncan is a Kentucky native who bleeds blue and loves bourbon. Be sure to ask her about her dogs!



April is Minority Health Month!



#VaccineReady | April 2021

CHET Minority Health Month Events



PROMOTING MATERNAL HEALTH EQUITY: A PANEL DISCUSSION



Register here: <https://conta.cc/3fzVC9c>
April 19th 12:00pm-1:00pm

Promoting Maternal Health Equity: A Panel Discussion - April 19, 2021 12:00pm-1:00pm

April is National Minority Health Month, which is an opportunity to illuminate health inequities, and innovative health equity research efforts to eliminate gaps in health. This webinar will feature three researchers at the University of Kentucky working to eliminate maternal health disparities in the commonwealth.

[Register here.](#)



Achieving Health Equity: Student Research on Black Health - April 30, 1:00pm

Concerned about health equity or curious about what health equity means? Wondering what training to be a health equity researcher could entail? Attend a panel of current and former trainees at UK's Center for Health Equity Transformation (CHET) as they discuss their path to health equity research and their current work focused on the health of the Black population. This webinar will focus on the work of student health equity researchers to eliminate health inequities in Black health. [Register here.](#)

Faculty Updates



Rachel Farr, Ph.D.

Congratulations to CHET Core Faculty member Rachel Farr, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology who earned the College of Arts & Sciences award for the Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion. In selecting her, the College's Diversity and Inclusivity Committee noted that they "recognized the incredible breadth of her contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion at the University of Kentucky, and in the local community. As both a researcher and an advocate for LGBTQ individuals and families, Dr. Farr models a deeply intersectional approach to social justice, incorporating issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality in everything she does."

Carrie Oser, Ph. D.

Our Associate Director, Carrie Oser, Professor of Sociology, will serve as the new DiSilvestro Professor in the College of Arts & Sciences at the University of Kentucky. The UK Board of Trustees approved the appointment in June. The DiSilvestro Professorship recognizes a full professor who is dedicated to enhancing research excellence.

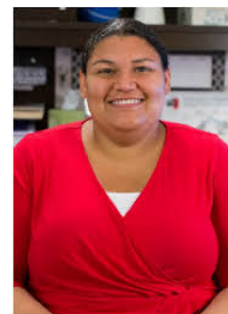


Makenzie Barr, Ph.D.

Congratulations to Makenzie Barr, Ph.D., RDN, LD, Assistant Professor of Dietetics and Human Nutrition in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment for receiving a CHET Just-in-Time award for her project, "A Qualitative Community Based Participatory Research Approach to Identifying Community Supported Interventions for Laurel County Kentucky."

Corrine M. Williams ScM, Sc.D.

As of January 1, 2021, Dr. Corrine M. Williams is the interim Associate Vice President for Student Well-being in the Office for Student Success. As interim AVP she will oversee the UK Counseling Center, the VIP Center, the Disability Resource Center, Campus Recreation and the office of Student Financial Wellness. She will also lead a strategic initiative dedicated to a holistic approach to student wellness.



Anita Fernander, Ph.D.

Dr. Anita Fernander, who is the chair of CHET's Core Faculty members, was appointed to serve as the Director of the Department of Behavioral Science's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council, an action-oriented group composed of a diverse representation of six faculty members and two staff members. Dr. Anita Fernander was also interviewed to

discuss racial disparities in COVID-19 and other issues related to health inequities among African Americans on the podcast, "The Reckoning: Facing the Legacy of Slavery in America".

[Listen to the podcast here.](#)

Finally, Dr. Fernander along Dr. Williams penned an op-ed for the Lexington Herald-Leader on February 11, 2021 entitled "The same Ky. communities most harmed by COVID-19 now face a lack of vaccine access." **[You can read the article here.](#)**

Lovoria Williams, Ph.D.

Dr. Lovoria Williams, Associate Professor in the College of Nursing and Co-Director of Special Populations for the Center for Clinical and Translational Sciences was featured in a Reuters article, "Pandemic spurs quest to enroll more Black Americans in vaccine trials."

[Read full article here.](#)



Anna Hansen, MD/Ph.D. Candidate

Anna Hansen, MD/Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology, was recently highlighted by the College of Arts and Sciences for her research on maternal health. Anna supports CHET's Students Participating as Ambassadors for Research in Kentucky (SPARK) Program as a graduate student mentor. Her research is funded through an F30 Fellowship from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, sponsored by CHET Director Dr. Nancy Schoenberg and CHET Associate

Director Dr. Carrie Oser. **[You can read the full article here.](#)**

Brittany Smalls, Ph.D., MHSA

Dr. Brittany Smalls recently accepted the position of Assistant Director of the Disparities Researchers Equalizing Access for Minorities (DREAM) Scholars Program. This program supports the training of exceptional, underrepresented pre-docs, post-docs and assistant professors at the University of Kentucky who are committed to health equity research. Dr. Smalls is a former DREAM Scholar and also served as a peer mentor, where she informed the evolution of the program by assisting with training development and topic selection. Dr. Smalls is also the new Co-Director of Integrated Special Populations at the CCTS.



Ariel Arthur

Ariel Arthur, manager of the University of Kentucky's Center for Health Equity Transformation and a maternal-health researcher, was featured in an article about Black mothers in the Appalachian region. **[Read full article here.](#)** Ariel was also awarded the John Sterling Wiggs "Golden Rule" Award from the University of Kentucky College of Public Health. The award is given to students

who have demonstrated a commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion in the field of public health or health administration. Ariel will be recognized during an awards ceremony on April 9, 2021.

CHET Equity Changemaker Award Winners: Graduate Students, Professional Students, and Post-doctoral Scholars

Congratulations to Jardin Dogan, Kendra OoNorasak, and Kaylin Batey, who were recognized as part of CHET's inaugural Equity Changemaker Award competition. The purpose of the Center for Health Equity Transformation (CHET) Equity Changemaker Award is to recognize the efforts of University of Kentucky graduate students, professional students, and post-doctoral scholars in advancing health equity through research and training. Annual awards are made to individuals whose research seeks to understand health disparities and inequities and whose mentorship has contributed to the next generation of health equity scholars.

Jardin Dogan – Awardee

Jardin is a Counseling Psychology Ph.D. candidate in the College of Education. With a stellar record of scholarly research, community outreach, and clinical work, she strives to eliminate mental, social, and sexual health disparities for Black people by focusing on racial identity, racial trauma, and mental health; substance use, incarceration, and racial health disparities; and Black sexualities, sexual pleasure, and intimate relationships. She was a predoctoral trainee with the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) and now provides clinical services to Black and Brown clients at the Center for Healing Racial Trauma. Jardin has excelled in her dedication to Black communities impacted by inequities by providing mental health and self-care workshops, disseminating mental health research for Black people to over 1 million people through her social media Instagram platform @blkfolxtherapy, and establishing community partnerships to eradicate gun violence, assist with cannabis criminal record expungement, and promote sex positivity and sexual pleasure among Black women.



Kendra OoNorasak – Honorable Mention

Kendra is a Ph.D. student in the College of Education earning a doctorate in Education Sciences with a specialization in Health Education. Through her outstanding commitment to research, service, teaching, mentorship, and program development, Kendra has made great strides in addressing nutrition inequity and food insecurity in the University of Kentucky and Lexington communities. This commitment is illustrated through her involvement as a founding member of the Campus Kitchen at the University of Kentucky (CKUK) and the Farm-to-Fork Program, mentorship of CKUK students, successful grant writing and evaluation, and dissemination of her research findings. Kendra is a multidisciplinary research collaborator who embodies CHET's mission and values through her zealous efforts in leveraging resources and pushing the boundaries of health and nutrition equity research and programming.

Kaylin Batey – Honorable Mention

Kaylin is a second year medical student in the College of Medicine. His outstanding dedication to social justice, community engagement, and mentoring are evidenced through his numerous efforts to address health inequities outside of his medical studies. He has worked with numerous UK Healthcare clinicians to investigate clinical and social factors of adverse health outcomes among marginalized and oppressed groups. Kaylin also successfully collaborated with fellow students to reform the medical curriculum to include social determinants of health and equity, and has extended his advocacy efforts to his leadership position in the Student National Medical Association (SNMA). He has developed a mini-medical school curriculum for Black boys, mentored and trained research staff and community members, has worked with a Lexington community coalition addressing COVID-19 and resiliency among marginalized communities.



CHET Undergraduate Essay Competition Winners

Congratulations to Nyassa Emedi and Kayla Woodson, who were recognized as part of CHET's inaugural undergraduate essay competition. In an effort to implement programming focused on health equity and anti-racism, CHET invited students to reflect on a quote from bell hooks, "***Critically intervene in a way that challenges and changes.***" Students submitted thoughtful essays focused on the intersection of health and justice to illustrate the importance of health equity – the fair and just opportunity for everyone to live their healthiest life possible.



Nyassa Emedi – First Place

Nyassa is a sophomore in the College of Public Health, earning a Bachelor's degree in Public Health. Her essay focused on the racism and xenophobia in healthcare, and her commitment to address these inequities by personally contributing to the diversity of healthcare professionals. In her words, "As a young black woman, I am aware that there aren't a lot of people who look like me in the medical field but stepping into a scene that wasn't built for me is my way of critically intervening in a way that challenges and changes." Nyassa has also led advocacy efforts among her peers to address cyberbullying and has participated in community protests against racist violence.

Kayla Woodson – Second Place

Kayla is a junior in the College of Arts and Sciences, earning a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. Her essay focused on the impact of medical racism on Black women's health, and its relationship to historic injustices. In her words, "Medical racism kills, it ruins lives, but it doesn't have to be this way. Medical education needs a complete overhaul. One that acknowledges its racist history, one that trains the bias out of everyone in the profession, and one that focuses on ensuring equitable care to every patient no matter gender, sexuality, or race." Kayla also led the Student Government



Association's response to the racial injustices happening across the nation, specifically crafting a statement voicing support for justice for Breonna Taylor.

SPARK Students Featured in UKNow



UK Undergraduate Research Program Sparks Student Success

The current Students Participating as Ambassadors for Research in Kentucky (SPARK) cohort was recently featured in a UKNow article. SPARK, a collaboration between CHET and the Center for Clinical and Translational Sciences, provides health equity research training to undergraduate

students from underrepresented backgrounds. We are very proud of this year's students Alexis James, Hope Makumbi and Roberto Obregon Garcia , and are grateful for the faculty and staff that support the program. [Read full article here.](#)

DREAM Program Featured in UKNow

DREAM Program Expands Community, Career Development for Health Equity Researchers from Underrepresented Minorities

Take a look at how the DREAM Scholars program has evolved into a robust, multidisciplinary career development opportunity for researchers from across UK's colleges! [Full article here.](#)



Spring Upcoming Events

Center for Clinical and Translational Sciences Spring Research Days

April 7 & 8, 2021

[Register here.](#)



We invite you to support the current DREAM Scholars and both the 2019 and 2020 SPARK Scholars as they are recognized for their participation in the program and as our current scholars present their research findings.

All events will take place during the [2021 Center for Clinical and](#)

Translational Science (CTS) Spring Research Days on April 7th and 8th.
Registration is required.

SPARK and DREAM Scholar Awards & Recognitions Ceremony

April 7, 2021

3:00-4:00pm

Virtual Auditorium

Both the 2019 and 2020 SPARK Cohorts will be honored during this ceremony.

SPARK/DREAM Oral Presentations at CCTS Conference

1:30 to 1:45 SPARK Introductions and Update

Presenters: Jerod Stapleton, PhD, & Ariel A. Arthur.

1:45 to 2:00 "COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy and Skepticism Among Young African Americans: A Qualitative Study with Implications for Health Communication"

Presenter: Diane B. Francis, PhD.

2:00 to 2:15 "Riskful drug-use behavior among people who use heroin in Washington Heights."

Presenter: Roberto Obregon Garcia.

2:15 to 2:30 "Exploring the Association Between Depression, Traumatic Life Events, and Coping Among Incarcerated African American Men."

Presenter: Alexis James.

2:30 to 3:30 Von Allmen Poster Pitch – Hope Makumbi.

Hope will be competing in the Von Allmen Center for Entrepreneurship "60-second Elevator Pitch" Competition.

3:30 to 5:00 Poster presentation – Hope Makumbi

Hope's poster is in the Community Research section and is titled, "Adult Education and Childhood Developmental Disorders."

Exploring the NIH Diversity Supplement: An underutilized Tool for Diversifying Health Research Teams

CHET and the UNITE Research Priority Area are hosting an introduction to the NIH Research Supplements to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research. We'll walk through the basic eligibility requirements, the application process, and special considerations for parent project investigators and potential candidates. A panel of current and former researchers funded through diversity supplements will share their experiences and tips for success. This workshop is targeted to NIH-funded investigators looking to grow their team, diverse candidates interested in NIH funding, and those who work in biomedical education and training. **[Register Here](#)**



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
UNITED IN TRUE RACIAL EQUITY (UNITE)
RESEARCH PRIORITY AREA

Lunch & Learn

Exploring the NIH Diversity Supplement

An Underutilized Tool
for Diversifying Health Research Teams

April 14, 2021
12:00pm - 1:00pm
Zoom: <https://bit.ly/3uao1HZ>

Presenters: Lou Hurst and Rachel Noble-Varney, PhD

Panelists: Dr. Carrie Oser, Dr. Danella Stevens-Watkins,
Dr. Brian Noehren, Dr. Charlotte Peterson, and Dr. Jean Fry

This Lunch & Learn will provide an introduction to the NIH Research Supplements to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research. This workshop is targeted to NIH-funded investigators looking to grow their team, diverse candidates interested in NIH funding, and those who work in biomedical education and training.

Past Events

An Overview of Hybrid Effectiveness – Implementation Designs

By Dr. Geoffrey Curran from the University of Arkansas Center for Implementation Research.

[Watch the presentation here.](#)

Health Disparities associated with Long-Term Partner Violence and Drug Use Patterns among Latina Young Adults

By Dr. Alice Cepeda from the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work.

[Watch the presentation here.](#)

A Deeper Understanding of Racism in the COVID-19 Pandemic: Lessons from Public Health Critical Race Praxis

By Chandra L. Ford, Ph.D. Professor of Community Health Sciences, and Founding Director of the Center for the Study of Racism, Social Justice & Health at the UCLA Jonathan & Karin Fielding School of Public Health.

[Watch the presentation here.](#)

CHET Student and Trainee Listserv

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