

Spring 2023

[www.oibr.uga.edu](http://www.oibr.uga.edu)

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

As we conclude spring semester and look forward to summer, it is time to reflect on the successes of our distinguished scholars and affiliates over the last year. In this edition of the Owens Observer, you'll find award and funding announcements that highlight the breadth and depth of our faculty's scholarly work. I am particularly pleased to announce that two faculty associated with OIBR, Ron Simons (Distinguished Scholar) and Ping Ma (Affiliate), have been named AAAS Fellows. I am also pleased to introduce you to our newest OIBR staff member, Shradha Patel, who is featured on page 4 of the newsletter. This edition of the newsletter continues the two columns introduced in the fall newsletter – Tips from the Experts and Policy Updates. Here you'll find information that you can use to move your research program forward.

Finally, looking toward next year, I'm delighted to announce the speakers for the 2024 Owens Lecture. Perry Zurn and Dani Bassett will be discussing their new book, "Curious Minds: The Power of Connection" on February 22nd. More details to come. In the meantime, I look forward to seeing you all at the Gathering in the Garden on May 3rd.



## NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

---

**Spotlight**

---

**Faculty Awards & Promotions**

---

**Tips from the Experts**

---

**Funding News**

---

**NIH and NSF Policy Updates**

---

**New Affiliates**

---

**Institute News & Events**

# SPOTLIGHT

## SUN JOO (GRACE) AHN, PH.D.

### ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, ADVERTISING & PUBLIC RELATIONS



*Interviewed by Andrea Horsman*

Dr. Sun Joo (Grace) Ahn, Associate Professor, Advertising & Public Relations, never thought she would become an academic. Her dad worked in sales for a very long time at multinational corporations in South Korea, and Grace still remembers her dad telling her about the challenges of leading large, integrative teams of people from different backgrounds and the excitement of finally being able to close a deal after months of preparation. She said, "I didn't really understand much of the content of what was being said- but was always in awe of how the adult world worked and at the multinational scale of things."

Looking back now, though, Grace shared that "it's funny how my dad's experiences and wisdom delivered to me during long conversations over dinner impacted my career choices: I love thinking about how persuasive messages can be designed and evaluated, the processes and outcomes of persuasion, pulling together large integrative teams for research, and ultimately developing interventions for large-scale attitude and behavior change. I never intended to be a professor of advertising but maybe my dad secretly knew all along!"

"Studying persuasion is a constant lesson in humility and the appreciation of diversity," said Dr. Ahn. "Communication science is complicated and fascinating, because it is very much a relational science, where interactions between the medium, user, and contextual details all matter. The human stands at the center of our science and their lived experiences play a key role in how persuasive messages are processed and interpreted. Understanding the diversity and complexity of these relationships and designing a successful intervention to modify behavior, particularly in the context of everchanging technologies always keeps me on my toes," Grace said. "What surprises me most about working on these types of projects is that understanding human behaviors and how they interact with technologies never, ever gets any easier (despite all these years)!"

Communication undergirds almost every human activity we can think of; it's omnipresent. As a result, there are many more armchair scientists in this neck of the woods than there may be in, say, physics or chemistry. Grace added, "It's surprisingly challenging to get noncommunication scholars to understand what communication science is and why it is important. Despite the seemingly frivolous nature of our research topics (e.g., entertainment, video games, social media), we employ systematic and rigorous methodologies to address our scientific inquiries."

"Media and communication are weaved into almost every part of our lives and we are far more impacted by mediated communication than we realize; yet, it's often a challenge to be taken seriously when your area of research is virtual reality, avatars, and video games."

Grace has over 20 years of training and experience in media psychology with an emphasis on technology-integrated community-level interventions. She is currently serving as the Deputy Director and a MPI of the Center for Children's Health Assessment, Research Translation, and Combating Environmental Racism, which is part of her current \$4.5 million grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health.

The Center for Children's Health Assessment, Research Translation, and Combating Environmental Racism (CHARTER), works to develop effective strategies to translate research findings of importance to children's environmental health to relevant stakeholders in the community, academia, and healthcare. The research team with CHARTER know that working with community partners is the key to developing communication products that can be used to improve children's health. The center acknowledges the structural nature of health inequity and is working on projects that address how structural inequities can negatively impact children's health via research projects and community engagement (e.g., social media activities, training community health workers, K-12 outreach programs).

In recent years, Dr. Ahn has really expanded her partnerships with grassroots, non-profit organizations in the community, translating science into actionable, technology-mediated interventions. "When I launch interventions with these community partners, my research team gets to know them well and over the years, and we develop strong friendships with people who share our vision of leveraging science to help people live happier, healthier lives," she said. "Being able to directly see and interact with community members and observe the positive impact of my research really makes all the hard work worth it. As many of us understand, this job is much more than "just a job"—it creates a lot of meaning in my life. The thrill of making discoveries and generating new knowledge never gets old, but I truly love the opportunity to be able to give back to community through my research. I think that intrinsic reward is what keeps me up working late at nights and drives a lot of the motivation behind my recent work."

"My research program that started out with a small \$20,000 internal grant has now become a sizeable enterprise with over \$10 million in extramural funding. The interesting thing is that none of these people are in the field of communication; but their mentorship, guidance, and friendship over the years has allowed my scholarship to dramatically expand beyond its initial narrow focus to something that is much more transdisciplinary and meaningful," Grace added.

**More information on the center, and  
CHARTER pilot/seed grant opportunities:  
[Go HERE](#)**

# AWARDS

## 2023 Josiah Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor



**Dr. Tessa Andrews**

Associate Professor, Genetics

*The professorship is the university's highest recognition for instruction at the undergraduate and graduate levels.*

## 2023 UGA Creative Teaching Award



**Dr. Jane McPherson**

Associate Professor, Social Work

*This award is presented annually on behalf of the Office of Instruction to faculty who have demonstrated exceptional creativity in using either an innovative technology or pedagogy that extends learning beyond the traditional classroom or for their creative course design or implementation of subject matter that improves student learning outcomes in their courses.*

## 2023 UGA Distinguished Research Professor



**Dr. Joshua Miller**

Professor, Psychology

*The title of Distinguished Research Professor recognizes senior faculty members who are internationally recognized for their innovative body of work and its transformational impact on the field.*

## 2023 UGA Creative Research Medal



**Dr. Assaf Oshri**

Associate Professor, Human Development & Family Science

*This award recognizes established investigators whose overall scholarly body of work has had a major impact on the field of study and has established the investigator's international reputation as a leader in the field.*

## Georgia Bio Golden Helix Award



**Dr. Bradley Phillips**

Professor,  
Clinical & Administrative Pharmacy

*Recently received this award for his work with Georgia CTSA*

## 2023 Engaged Scholar



**Dr. Henry Young**

Professor,  
Clinical & Administrative Pharmacy

*The award recognizes a tenured associate or full professor who has made significant career-spanning contributions to the University of Georgia's public service mission through scholarship, service-learning opportunities for students and campus leadership.*

# AAAS 2023 FELLOWS



PING MA



RON SIMONS

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world's largest general scientific society and publisher of the Science family of journals, annually bestows the honor of Lifetime Fellow for extraordinary achievements leading to advancement in science. This award is one of the most distinguished honors within the scientific community.

This year, two scholars from the Owens Institute for Behavioral Research were awarded this prestigious title.

**Dr. Ping Ma** is an OIBR Affiliate, a Distinguished Research Professor in Statistics and an adjunct professor of computer science at UGA. He has authored or co-authored more than 80 research articles and was recognized with the National Science Foundation Distinguished Lecture in 2021. His work lies in development of statistical theory and methods to solve scientific and engineering problems with broad societal impacts. He was recognized in the statistics category by AAAS.

**Dr. Ronald Simons** is an OIBR Distinguished Scholar, Regents' Professor in Sociology, a Fellow in the Center for Family Research, and co-director of the Center on the Biological Embedding of Social Events and Relationships at OIBR. He has received numerous awards for his research including best article awards from three different professional organizations and the UGA SEC Academic Achievement Award.

These new Fellows will be celebrated for their scientific and socially notable achievements spanning their careers in Washington, D.C., in summer 2023.

## New Staff Member SHRADHA PATEL Grants Manager



Shradha joined the OIBR post-award team in December 2022. She has many years of accounting experience from various financial institutions and has experience in post-award research administration.

She received a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Delaware majoring in Finance, with minors in Management Information Systems and Economics.

"My job requires me to interact and communicate with different stakeholders. I love that no one day is the same at work. We are constantly learning and evolving," said Shradha.

She is originally from Tanzania, East Africa, and grew up in a friendly town called Dar-es-Salaam, right by the shore. Although she has lived in the US on and off over the years, she moved to Athens in the midst of COVID – December 2020.

Shradha has two beautiful boys, ages 10 and 6, and a supportive husband. Apart from soccer games and swim meets, her family loves to travel and try new cuisines.

Her hobbies include reading and watching movies, but she also loves playing sports. In fact, she has competed on a national level back home in table tennis!



## Scientists Engaged in Education Research UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

**Dr. Tessa Andrews** will be the new Executive Director of the Scientists Engaged in Educational Research (SEER) Center, effective July 1. She is replacing the Center's founding Director, Paula Lemons, who is stepping down on June 30th.

"I was delighted to receive Dr. Andrews' application for this position. Her extensive record of service to SEER, combined with her scholarly excellence and national reputation, make her the ideal person to lead the SEER Center. I am confident that Dr. Andrews will be outstanding in this role, and I look forward to working with her to advance the SEER Center's mission," stated Dr. Clay-Warner.

# Faculty Promotions



**Dr. Grace Ahn**  
Professor,  
Advertising & Public  
Relations



**Dr. Rachel Fusco**  
Professor,  
School of Social Work



**Dr. Orion Mowbray**  
Professor,  
School of Social Work



**Dr. Rebecca Nesbit**  
Professor,  
Public Administration &  
Policy



**Dr. Michael A. Robinson**  
Professor,  
School of Social Work



**Dr. Michelle vanDellen**  
Professor,  
Psychology



**Dr. Juliet Sekandi**  
Associate Professor,  
Epidemiology &  
Biostatistics



**Dr. Dee Warmath**  
Associate Professor,  
Financial Planning,  
Housing, & Consumer  
Economics

## "Did you know?" Tips from the Experts



- If you need assistance finding grant funding, your OIBR grants coordinator, **Chris Thornton**, (csthor@uga.edu) is happy to help! UGA subscribes to Pivot, a grant-finding database funded by the UGA Office of Research, which makes identifying potential funding sources easier. Once you create a profile, you can turn on alerts to receive notifications and reminders. You can also name Chris as a proxy in your profile. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you would like tailored assistance with finding funding opportunities.
- When developing a compelling idea to drive your field vertically, don't forget to work on your grant budget. The budget is the "bones" of your project and reflects who will be needed and for how much time, as well as what materials, supplies and travel costs are applicable and necessary to complete your scope of work. Working on the budget early helps you conceptualize the timeline and feasibility of executing the proposed aims. Your OIBR grants coordinator is glad to consult with you regarding your project idea and put together a draft budget. "Ask early, ask often!"



## Cotwright named director of nutrition security and health equity for the USDA

Dr. Caree Cotwright, OIBR affiliate and associate professor in the College of Family and Consumer Sciences, will lead the USDA Food and Nutrition Services strategic focus on nutrition security, including raising awareness of USDA's actions to advance food and nutrition security and building partnerships with key stakeholders.

# FUNDING NEWS

Congratulations to our Distinguished Scholars and Affiliates who have recently received research project funding.



**Dr. Grace Ahn** (Advertising & Public Relations), Distinguished Scholar, received a NIH UL1 pilot award for her project entitled, "Positive Youth Development in the Metaverse - Development of a Virtual Reality Afterschool Program for Middle Childhood Youth (CTSA Pilot Grant)" in the amount of \$60,400. Virtual Reality (VR) presents a cost- and labor-effective solution for providing equitable access to high quality afterschool programs for youth. VR involves highly immersive virtual spaces that allow multiple users to interact with each other via online avatars. Rather than administer a group activity that everyone must participate in, VR empowers youth to pursue activities that interest them, and engage in the activity at their own pace. Working together with Chess & Community, the project aim is to 1) develop materials for 8 VR meetings to be used in tandem with 8 in-person meetings afterschool, and 2) examine whether leveraging VR to expand traditional afterschool programming so that youth receive high quality afterschool content more often can promote mental wellbeing in youth. Co-I's: Kyle Johnsen, Electrical and Computer Engineering; Steve Kogan, CFS Human Development & Family Science; Allan Tate, Epidemiology & Biostatistics; Jessica Knight, Epidemiology & Biostatistics. Project period: 9/1/2022-7/31/2023



**Dr. Erin Dolan** (Biochemistry and Molecular Biology), Distinguished Scholar, received a Howard Hughes Medical Institute award for her project entitled, "Meaningful evaluation of effective and inclusive teaching through changes in policy, effective instructor development, and optimal sources of evidence" in the amount of \$493,065. The HHMI's IE3 initiative challenges U.S. colleges and universities to substantially and sustainably build capacity for students to have meaningful and positive experiences in science through which they will better understand and engage in scientific thinking and discovery, especially students from backgrounds that have been historically excluded from the sciences. Co-I's: Tessa Andrews, Genetics; Peggy Brickman, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology; Paula Lemons, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology. Project period: 11/1/2022 - 10/31/2028



**Dr. Assaf Oshri** (Human Development and Family Science), Distinguished Scholar, received a NIH R01 award for his project entitled, "Early Adversity and Drug Use Vulnerability Among Low Income Rural Children: Testing a Neuro-ecological Model of Resilience" in the amount of \$3,264,082. Despite the risks conferred by SES-related stress, most low-income, rural children will not develop drug use problems—a phenomenon known as resilience. However, little is known regarding the influence of contextual protective factors in the indirect link between childhood adversity and drug use vulnerability among rural children. They will investigate the protective effects of rural context on neural risk processes associated with drug use vulnerability versus resilience among rural children (ages 7-10 years) to better inform the design and implementation of substance use prevention programs. Co-I's: Diane Bales, Human Development & Family Science; Margaret Caughy, Human Development & Family Science; Steve Kogan, Human Development & Family Science; Kalsea Koss, Human Development & Family Science; Larry Sweet, Psychology. Project Period: 4/1/2023 - 1/31/2028



**Dr. Brad Phillips** (Biomedical and Translational Sciences Institute), Distinguished Scholar, received a NIH NCATS UL1 subaward encompassing UL1, TL1 and KL2 programs as PI for UGA on the project entitled, "Georgia Clinical & Translational Science Alliance (Georgia CTSA)" in the amount of \$7,061,479. The Georgia CTSA supports high quality collaborative translational science locally, regionally, and nationally; fosters scientific and operational innovation to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of clinical and translational research; and creates, provides, and disseminates domain-specific translational science training and workforce development. Co-I's: Amanda Abraham, Public Administration & Policy; Michael Bartlett, Pharmacy & Biomedical Sciences; Alison Berg, Nutritional Sciences; Ikseon Choi, Workforce Education & Instructional Technology; Kevin Dobbin, Epidemiology & Biostatistics; Lillian Eby, Psychology; Grace Gowda, International Biomedical Regulatory Sciences and Clinical Trials Programs; Janette Hill, Workforce Education & Instructional Technology; Allisen Penn, Associate Dean for Extension and Outreach, FACS; Jay Rojewski, Workforce Education & Instructional Technology; Somanath Shenoy, Clinical & Administrative Pharmacy; Tiffany Washington, School of Social Work; Henry Young, Clinical & Administrative Pharmacy. Project period: 9/1/2022-7/31/2027



**Dr. Jing Xu** (Kinesiology), Affiliate, received a NIH UL1 pilot award for her project entitled, "Building a Stroke Patient Research Network in Athens and Northeast Georgia (GaCTSA Pilot Project)" in the amount of \$60,400. The short-term objective of this pilot project is to develop effective and sustainable patient recruitment strategies for conducting a UGA-based translational research project on motor skill recovery after stroke. The long-term goal is to establish UGA as a site for interdisciplinary collaborations across multiple institutes in Georgia to conduct research aimed to improve stroke prevention, treatment, recovery, and education. Co-I: Deborah Barany, Kinesiology. Project period: 9/1/2022-7/31/2023

# NIH & NSF POLICY UPDATES



## Policy Updates



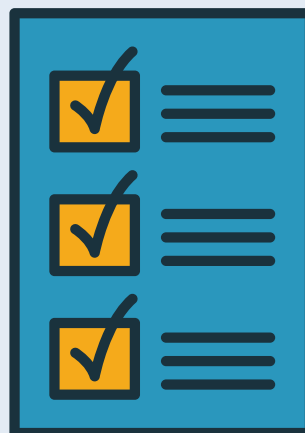
### NIH Forms H includes required Data Management & Sharing Plan

With the start of the new year, many agencies have introduced changes to their grant policies. NIH has begun using Form-set H, with the new Data Management & Sharing Plan (NOT-OD-21-013). This new attachment is now required for all proposals that will be resulting in the generation of “scientific data.” This is a trial year for this attachment, so it is currently separated and not included in the merit review of applications. Associated costs must be included in the budget and budget justification.

### NSF announces SciENcv requirement delayed

NSF is now following the rules outlined in PAPPG 23-1, which includes updates to address NSF’s new use of BAAs. The requirement for all Biosketch and Current & Pending documents to be generated with SciENcv has been delayed at least until October 2023. If you are not yet using this system, then they have released new fillable PDF templates for both of these documents that now include an optional space for your ORCID ID, as well as a required signature line that certifies that all information is correct.

Please contact your OIBR Grants Coordinator, [Chris Thornton](#), or Assistant Director, [Kim Cherewick](#), as soon as possible if you plan to submit a proposal to an external sponsor.



# NEW OIBR AFFILIATES

# Welcome!

OIBR Affiliates represent a wide range of departments across campus. Anyone with a Behavioral/Social Science component to their research who wishes to be included in communications about upcoming events and research related topics may request to be an Affiliate of OIBR.



**Dr. Janet Frick**  
Associate Professor  
Psychology

*Research Interests: Developmental psychology, Infancy, Visual attention, Joint attention*



**Dr. Cassia Roth**  
Associate Professor  
History

*Research Interests: Reproductive health; Public health; Latin America; Abortion; Childbirth*



**Dr. Susan Haire**  
Professor and Department Head  
Political Science

*Research Interests: Judicial behavior; Gender, Race; Ethnicity*



**Dr. Shane Singh**  
Professor  
Public & International Affairs

*Research Interests: Elections; Democracy; Political attitudes; Electoral behavior; Electoral rules*



**Dr. Nathen Hansen**  
Professor  
Health Promotion & Behavior

*Research Interests: Mental health; Sexual health; Substance abuse; HIV prevention and care; Traumatic stress*

Application to Affiliate  
with OIBR







Owens Institute for Behavioral Research  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Join us for an informal, year-end get together

# A Gathering at the Garden

MAY 3, 2023 | 4:30 - 6PM

UGA Founders Memorial Garden  
325 S. Lumpkin St., Athens

(Parking available in the Hull St. Parking Deck)

Drop in as your schedule allows for some yummy food,  
drinks & time with old and new friends.



Follow us on  
Twitter  
@OIBR\_UGA



Follow us on  
LinkedIn  
@OIBR\_UGA



## Have something to share?

Do you have an interesting project that you are working on? Did you recently publish your work? Did you receive an award? Let us help promote you and your research. We love sharing the accomplishments and successes of our faculty! Please contact [Andrea Horsman](#) with anything that you would like to share.

*Save  
the Date*

## OWENS LECTURE February 22, 2024

Join us for a discussion with  
Perry Zurn & Dani Bassett as  
they discuss their book  
"Curious Minds: The Power  
of Connection."

*More details to follow.*



Owens Institute for  
Behavioral Research  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA