

SPRING 2025 • NEWSLETTER • ISSUE NO. 15

THRIVE!

School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences

SDSU



Dr. Matthew Mahar

Director, School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences

Director's Message

As we move into a new season of growth and reflection, I'm reminded that the heart of any great academic community lies in the people who shape it. In this Spring 2025 issue of the School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences newsletter, we honor the journeys, contributions, and aspirations that continue to define who we are. This edition is especially meaningful as we bid a fond farewell to our beloved Operations Coordinator, Karin Nichols, whose dedication and warmth have supported our School's success for many years. At the same time, we're thrilled to welcome new faculty and staff whose passion and perspectives strengthen our mission. You'll also enjoy reconnecting with one of our emeritus faculty members and reading an inspiring feature on an alumnus in our "Cradle of Professors" spotlight. One of the most meaningful stories this issue highlights is the profound impact of Dr. and Mrs. Buono's mentorship on a current master's student—an example of how faculty influence stretches far beyond the classroom. Our students continue to lead with excellence, earning awards, presenting groundbreaking research, and contributing to academic publications. As Albert Einstein once said, "It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge." Their achievements are a testament to the incredible mentorship and support they receive from our faculty and community. We also feature updates from the JEDI Student Advisory Council, recognize distinguished alumni, and shine a light on a few exceptional faculty members who are helping to shape the next generation of leaders in exercise and nutritional sciences. Whether you're a long-time supporter or a new member of our community, we hope this issue reminds you of the inspiring work happening every day within the School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences.

SDSU Acknowledges the Legacy of the Kumeyaay Nation

For millennia, the Kumeyaay people have been a part of this land. This land has nourished, healed, protected, and embraced them for many generations in a relationship of balance and harmony. As members of the San Diego State community, we acknowledge this legacy. We promote this balance and harmony. We find inspiration from this land; the land of the Kumeyaay.

Kumeyaay Land Acknowledgement created by Michael Connolly Miskwish.

Celebrating the Retirement of Karin Nichols: A Legacy of Dedication and Heart

School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences Operations Coordinator



On May 1, the School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences (ENS) gathered to celebrate the remarkable career and well-deserved retirement of Karin Nichols, our beloved School Operations Coordinator. For over 20 years, Karin has been the steady hand behind the scenes—keeping us organized, on budget, and (mostly) sane.

After nearly three decades at SDSU—beginning with the Research Foundation in 1996 and joining ENS in 2004—Karin’s retirement marks the end of an era. Her departure brings a mix of deep gratitude and just a touch of panic, as we look ahead without the one person who seemed to keep everything running like clockwork.

Known for her exceptional competence and unwavering dedication, Karin was the foundation of our daily operations. She effortlessly managed complex budgets, class

schedules, and staff supervision—all with a calm demeanor, sharp insight, and her signature good humor.

The celebration brought together faculty, staff, friends, and family—including a notable number of emeritus faculty who returned to campus to honor Karin. Their presence underscored the deep respect she has earned across generations of leadership and highlighted the lasting relationships she’s built over the years.

Adding a warm and personal touch to the event was the presence of Karin’s children and grandchildren. It was especially moving to see how naturally her grandchildren gravitated toward her—gathering close, beaming with pride, and expressing the kind of affection that speaks volumes about who Karin is beyond her professional accomplishments.

Speakers at the event included Emeritus Professor Dr. Fred Kolkhorst, Dr. Dan Cannon, staff colleagues Cathy Chavez and Jen McFadden—all of whom shared heartfelt (and humorous) stories that highlighted Karin’s leadership, generosity, and unwavering support for those around her.

In recognition of her incredible service, Karin received a collection of thoughtful gifts: a card signed by colleagues, gift cards, luggage for future travels, and a one-of-a-kind planter—selected to bring a smile and remind her fondly of her ENS family. While no gift can fully express our appreciation, we hope these tokens reflect the deep gratitude we feel.

Karin, thank you for everything. Your legacy of professionalism, humor, and heart will remain with us for years. Congratulations on your retirement—you’ve more than earned it.



ENS News

Welcome New Faculty & Staff

Mr. Adam Mills, Lecturer



Mr. Adam Mills graduated from the University of Kansas with a Master of Science in Education in Exercise Physiology. He joins us as a lecturer teaching ENS 265 Care and Prevention of Athletic and Recreational Injuries.

Ms. Christina Vialva, Research Assistant



Ms. Christina Vialva joined the Weaver lab as an undergraduate student volunteer in spring 2023. Since earning her Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry from SDSU in 2024, she has been hired as a full-time research assistant and works on a variety of analytical nutrition projects.

Dr. David Kahan, Professor Emeritus



Dr. David Kahan is Professor Emeritus of ENS having retired in 2022 after 22 years of service. He is teaching ENS 605 and 607, which are in the "Evidence Based Practice in Athletic Training" course series. Outside SDSU, he teaches after-school youth pickleball in the Solana Beach Elementary School District.

Dr. Katie Crist, Assistant Professor



Dr. Katie Crist received her Ph.D. in Health Sciences from the University of Southern Denmark and her Master of Public Health in Chronic Disease Epidemiology from the Yale School of Public Health. Her research focuses on behavioral and built environment interventions to increase physical activity, and she teaches ENS 434 Promoting Physical Activity and Healthy Eating.

Mr. Daniel Melara, Lecturer



Mr. Daniel Melara, ATC, is an SDSU alumnus and holds a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Arts in Kinesiology. Currently, he serves as a full-time Athletic Trainer at CSU San Marcos and is teaching ENS 664L Musculoskeletal Interventions for the Upper Extremity Laboratory.

Catching Up with Emeritus Faculty Member - Dr. Jan Harris



Dr. Jan Harris

Professor Emeritus Dr. Jan Harris has been enjoying retirement since 2010. She is active on advisory groups for two local organizations focused on recreation, health, and fitness: the board of the Copley Price Family YMCA at the corner of El Cajon Boulevard/Fairmount Avenue; and the advisory group of the La Jolla Recreation Center, a facility of the San Diego Parks and Recreation Department. The service area of the Copley Price Family YMCA includes SDSU and the areas of City Heights, Talmadge, and Kensington. Over 35 languages are spoken in this area, primarily because City Heights is home to many immigrants and refugees. One of the main jobs of the

board is raising money to partially subsidize the memberships and special activity fees for those who could not otherwise be involved. The La Jolla Recreation Center advisory group is in the middle of a years-long planning process to design and raise donated money for the renovation of both the playground and the recreation center building.

Jan has also been doing a lot of international travel, and she is usually away on two month-long trips per year. She is especially interested in learning about the cultures of the places she visits—through interacting with local guides who are native to the area and sharing meals in the homes of local residents. Her most recent travels have been to Patagonia (Chile and Argentina); Egypt, Jordan, and Istanbul; and Central Asia (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan). She also enjoys ongoing personal exercise activities—two hours/day on most days of the week. Part of this is stretching, something she had little time to do while fully employed. Both a love of plants and the exercise involved have led her to remain an avid gardener, as well.

The Cradle of Professors: Dr. Jeff Cherubini

Dr. Jeff Cherubini received his M.A. in Physical Education from SDSU in 1997 and Ph.D. in Kinesiology from Temple University in 2003. During his time at SDSU, Dr. Cherubini provided mental skills training for student-athletes through the Applied Sport Psychology lab and assisted on the Project Grad research study designed to promote and maintain physical activity among graduating seniors. An additional highlight was competing as a road cyclist on SDSU's Cycling Team.

Currently a Professor of Kinesiology at Manhattan University (MU), Dr. Cherubini has served as Chair of Kinesiology, Chair of the MU Curriculum Committee, and Chair of the MU Promotion and Tenure Committee. Other service includes extensive

mentoring as supervisor of MU's Exercise is Medicine - On Campus initiative which has earned Gold-level status from the American College of Sports Medicine. In the classroom, Dr. Cherubini has added value through implementing community-engaged learning methodology with a focus on physical activity and public health.



His recent research has focused on social justice in kinesiology, health benefits of community gardening, and mental toughness in strength and conditioning (this eclectic nature of interests he most attributes to the influence of his professors at SDSU). This past winter, Dr. Cherubini earned the designation of Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist® (CSCS) from the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA). As an avid outdoor enthusiast, and further tapping into his SDSU cycling days, Dr. Cherubini currently competes in the sport of Adventure Racing where his team ranked 1st nationally in the 2024 United States Adventure Racing Association's (USARA) male division points classification.

The Buono Legacy: A Tale of Mentorship and Kindness

By Paolina Chavez Ibarra, M.S. Candidate, Exercise Physiology



When I reflect on the mentors who shaped my path in academia, two names rise to the top: Mrs. Shelly Buono and Dr. Michael Buono. What makes this story so special is not just their individual impact, but the beautiful and unexpected way their lives crossed paths with mine. I was a student at Gompers Preparatory Academy for seven years, from middle school through high school. During that time, I came to know Mrs. Buono as a warm and kind soul who always greeted me in the library with a smile and always remembered my name. She didn't have to go out of her way to check in on me or

offer encouragement, but she always did. As a first-generation student, her kindness made me feel seen.

I remember the moment I told her I was applying to San Diego State University, her joy was contagious. She made me feel that my accomplishments were worth celebrating, even when I was too focused on pushing forward to see it for myself. Years later, I found myself in a packed lecture hall at SDSU, nervously taking my first core class for the Exercise and Nutritional Sciences program: BIOL 336 Principles of Human Physiology. Our professor walked in, picked up a dry-erase marker, and started drawing and teaching with no PowerPoint in sight. His energy was magnetic. That was Dr. Michael Buono. He was hilarious, brilliant, and someone who could make a room of 300+ students feel like they belonged. One day, it hit me: Buono. Could it be? The name was too unique to be a coincidence. The next time I visited Gompers, I couldn't wait to tell Mrs. Buono. I was in awe to find out the truth. The connection felt full circle. I told her my first impression of him was "who can keep up with him?!" I said it jokingly, but I meant it in the most genuine way, he's full of life. Truly, I couldn't imagine a better partnership than the one they share: both dedicated to education, each with their own remarkable way of uplifting students. What I didn't realize then was that both Mrs. Buono and Dr. Buono were shaping me in different but equally powerful ways. Mrs. Buono taught me that kindness is remembered. Dr. Buono taught me that teaching is a noble profession. Their impact helped affirm my own calling. Not just as a student, but as a future educator. Today, I am a master's student in Exercise Physiology at SDSU, leading my own thesis project on neuromuscular fatigue and performance. I serve as a graduate assistant for the ENS 304 Physiology of Exercise Lab and will be a graduate teaching assistant for this lab in summer 2025 as well as for the following year of 2025-2026. Looking back now, I carry a deep sense of gratitude knowing that I had the privilege to learn from Dr. Buono. To them both, I've learned that kind hearts have the greatest reach and as I pursue a future in research, teaching, and service, I hope to pass on the same light they shared with me.

Student Spotlight

Gurleen Kaur Chhabra



Gurleen Kaur Chhabra is pursuing a Master's in Exercise Physiology and is actively involved in research and clinical practice. At SDSU, she is conducting her graduate thesis under the mentorship of Dr. Daniel Cannon, focusing on the use of wearable wireless sensors to assess lung function, an innovative project that blends clinical application with technology. In addition to her research, her internship at Sharp Memorial Hospital has given her hands-on experience working with patients undergoing cardiac rehabilitation, further solidifying her passion for clinical-based practice. As an international student from India and a licensed physiotherapist, she brings a strong clinical background to her academic journey. Her time at SDSU has strengthened her interdisciplinary outlook and deepened her interest in improving patient care through evidence-based practice. After graduation, Gurleen aims to continue her work in cardiopulmonary rehabilitation settings, using her international training and U.S. experience to help bridge gaps in global rehabilitation practices.

Stacey Lehrer



Stacey Lehrer is a passionate food enthusiast currently in her senior year of the Foods & Nutrition program at San Diego State University. Here, she collaborates in cutting-edge laboratory research focused on sustainable proteins, notably micro and macroalgae. Her commitment to enhancing flavor profiles and developing innovative recipes epitomizes the perfect blend of her love for food and science. With over 25 years of culinary experience following her graduation from the California Culinary Academy, Stacey has transformed her education into a vibrant career as a chef. She enriched her skills further with training at the prestigious Napa Valley CIA Greystone and holds four certifications in artisan cheeses and cheese-making. Her adventurous spirit shines through in her role as a private chef for 14 years, where she explored the diverse culinary landscapes of the United States and Canada, bringing a wealth of regional flavors and influences to her art.

ENS Student Accomplishments 2025

ENS faculty members are proud to support students as they strive for excellence. We celebrate our students' achievements, including awards, scholarships, professional presentations, and publications of their research.

Grants and Awards **ENS Student Names in Bold**

Student: Griselda Luna
-2024 Food Equity Award



Griselda Luna
Project New Village

Student: Yesenia Ceja Zamorano
-2024 Food Equity Award



Yesenia Ceja Zamorano
Project New Village

Students: Stacey Lehrer and Jesse Baker
SDSU Social Venture Challenge
-Greatest Social Impact Award



Stacey Lehrer (second from left) and **Jesse Baker** (third from left)
2025 SDSU Social Venture Challenge

ENS Student Accomplishments 2025

MS in Athletic Training Student Awards

Student: Jessica Manzuk

- ENS Emeritus Professors' Scholarship
 - Reet Howell Memorial Endowed Scholarship
 - Robert Gamble Bowers, Sr. Memorial Endowed Scholarship
 - D8 Bill Chambers Scholarship
 - Distinguished 2025 FWATA Scholarship
-

Student: Jackson McClain

- Distinguished 2025 FWATA Scholarship
-

Student: Annaliese Andersen

- Gregory Voigt and Robert Moore Endowed Scholarship in Athletic Training
 - Kasch-Boyer Scholarship
 - Rachel Oats Leadership Scholarship
 - Distinguished 2025 FWATA Scholarship
-

Student: Brianna Helsley

- Gregory Voigt and Robert Moore Endowed Scholarship in Athletic Training
 - Robert Gamble Bowers, Sr. Memorial Endowed Scholarship
 - PBATS Hall of Fame Scholarship
-

Student: Madison Cirillo

- D8 Jack Rockwell Scholarship
-

Student: Yareli Vasquez

- CATA Symposium Grant
 - BOC Paul Grace Scholarship
-



**Yareli Vasquez, Brianna Helsley, Annaliese Andersen,
Madison Cirillo, and Jessica Manzuk**
2025 NATA Scholarship Awardees

ENS Student Accomplishments 2025

Student: Ashley Woo

-Southern California Institute of Food Technologists Section (SCIFTS) Award

Student: Marissa Mclean

-Southern California Institute of Food Technologists Section (SCIFTS) Award



Ashley Woo (Front row, fifth from right) and **Marissa Mclean** (Front row, third from right)
2025 Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) Pacific Southwest College Bowl

Student: William Wong

-American Kinesiology Association Master's Scholar Award (SDSU Awardee)



Dr. Jochen Kressler, William Wong, and Dr. Leo Nogueira
American Kinesiology Association
Master's Scholar Award

ENS Student Accomplishments 2025

SDSU Student Symposium Award Recipients

Student: Amanda Williams

-SDSU Undergraduate Research Excellence Award

Student: Emma Johnson

-SDSU Provost's Award

Students: Stacey Lehrer and Jesse Baker

-SDSU Food Insecurity Awareness & Solutions Awards - Poster



Jesse Baker and Stacey Lehrer

SDSU Student Symposium Faculty Recognition Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities Mentor Award



Dr. Shawn O'Connor
Associate Professor

Student Publications

Student (in bold): Jing Zhao, Changqi Liu, **Selene Alvarado Martinez**

Title: *Wet extraction of proteins. In Plant-based Proteins – Production, Physicochemical and Functional Properties* (pp 61–67); Li, Yonghui, Ed.; Springer: New York, USA. doi.org/10.1007/978-1-0716-4272-6_5

Student (in bold): Changqi Liu, Jing Zhao, Sahil Gupta, **Marta Carrillo**

Title: *Quantification of crude and soluble protein content. In Plant-based Proteins – Production, Physicochemical and Functional Properties* (pp 107–122); Li, Yonghui, Ed.; Springer: New York, USA. doi.org/10.1007/978-1-0716-4272-6_9

ENS Student Accomplishments 2025

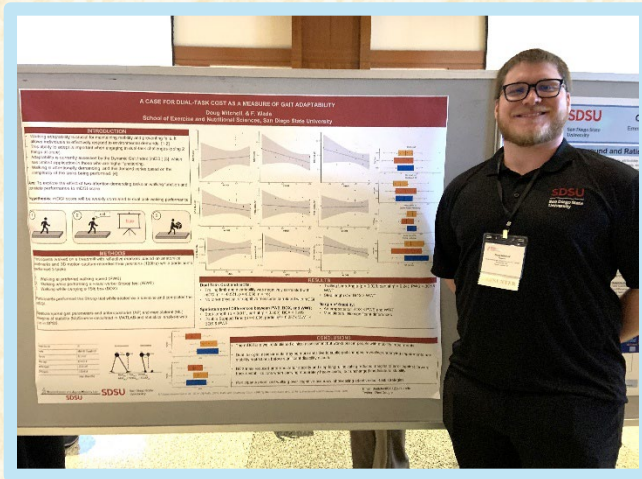
SDSU Student Symposium Presentations

Student: Doug Mitchell

Mentor: Dr. Frankie Wade

Title: *A Case for Dual-Task Cost as a Measure of Gait Adaptability*

Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



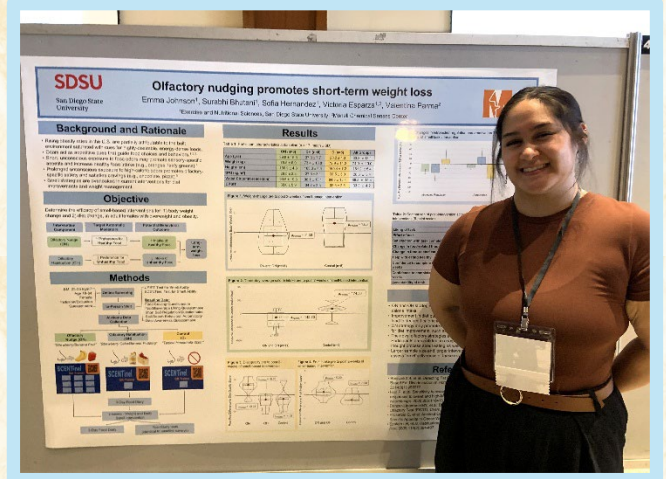
Doug Mitchell

Student: Emma Johnson

Mentor: Dr. Surabhi Bhutani

Title: *Odor Nudging Promotes Short-term Weight Loss*

Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



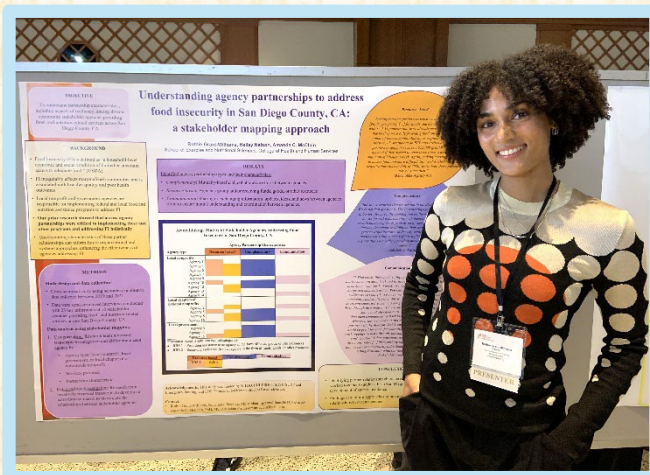
Emma Johnson

Student: Ruthie Grant-Williams

Mentor: Dr. Amanda McClain

Title: *Understanding Agency Partnerships to Address Food Insecurity in San Diego County, CA: A Stakeholder Mapping Approach*

Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



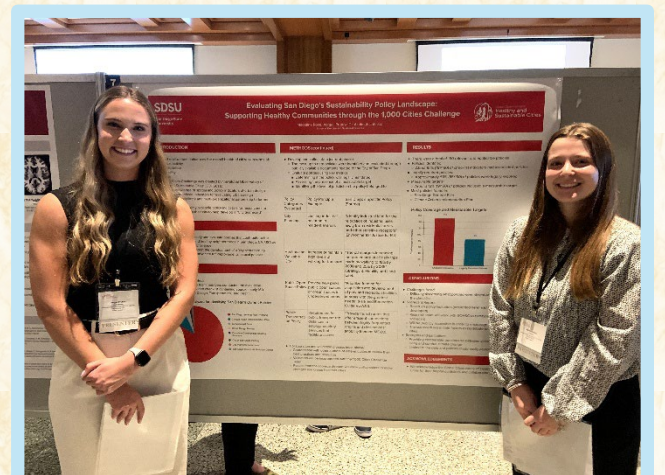
Ruthie Grant-Williams

Student: Madeline Roke, Abigail Prutow

Mentor: Dr. Ashleigh Johnson

Title: *Evaluating San Diego's Policy Landscape: Supporting Healthy Communities through the 1000 Cities Challenge*

Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



Madeline Roke and Abigail Prutow

ENS Student Accomplishments 2025

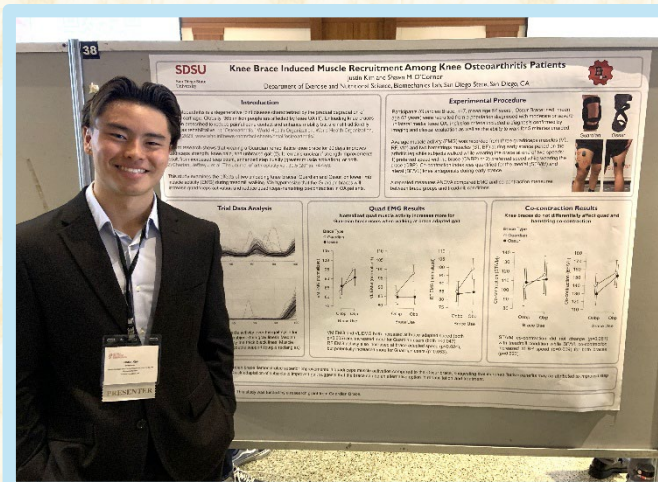
SDSU Student Symposium Presentations

Student: Justin Kim

Mentor: Dr. Shawn O'Connor

Title: *Knee Brace Induced Muscle Recruitment among Knee Osteoarthritis Patients*

Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



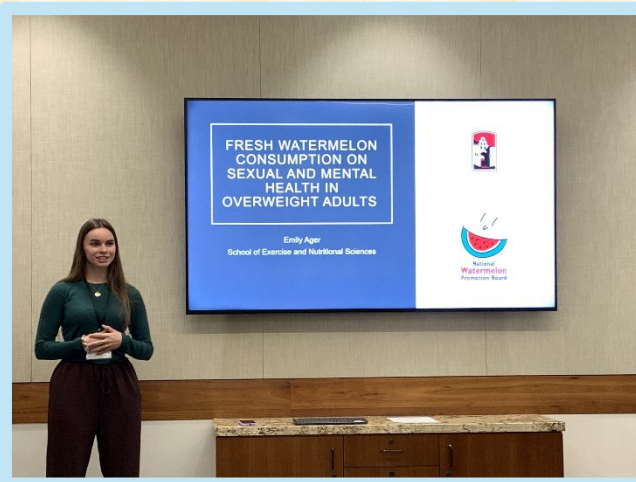
Justin Kim

Student: Emily Ager

Mentor: Dr. Mee Young Hong

Title: *Impact of Fresh Watermelon Consumption on sexual and Mental Health in Overweight Adults*

Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



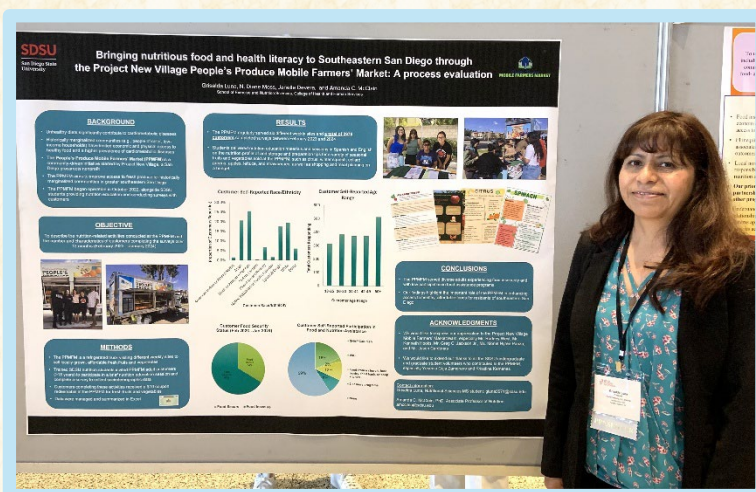
Emily Ager

Student: Griselda Luna

Mentor: Dr. Amanda McClain

Title: *Bringing Nutritious Food and Health Literacy to Southeastern San Diego through the Project New Market Peoples Produce Mobile Farmers Market: A Process Evaluation*

Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



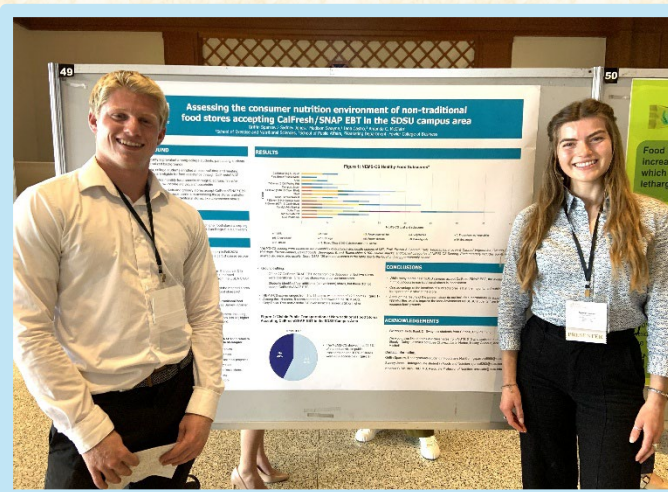
Griselda Luna

Students: Griffin Sparrow, Sydney Jones

Mentor: Dr. Amanda McClain

Title: *Assessing the Consumer Nutrition Environment of Non-traditional Food Stores Accepting CalFresh/SNAP EBT in the SDSU Campus Area*

Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



Griffin Sparrow and Sydney Jones

ENS Student Accomplishments 2025

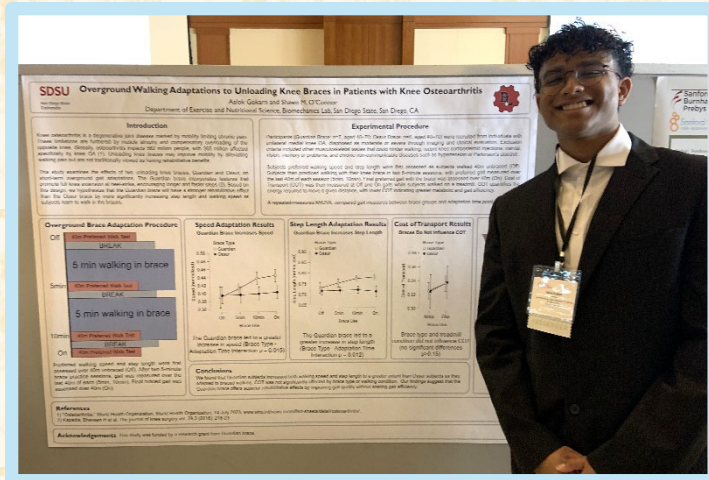
SDSU Student Symposium Presentations

Student: Aalok Gokarn

Mentor: Dr. Shawn O'Connor

Title: *Overground Walking Adaptations to Unloading Knee Braces in Patients with Knee Osteoarthritis*

Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



Aalok Gokarn

Students: Stacey Lehrer, Jesse Baker

Mentor: Dr. Changqi Liu

Title: *Vital Tidal: An Affordable Meal Replacement to Address Food Insecurity and Nutrient Deficiency in Southern California*

Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



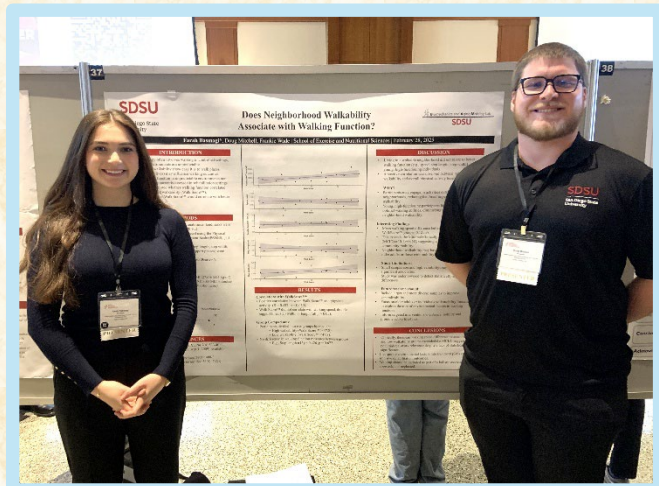
Stacey Lehrer and Jesse Baker

Students: Farah Basmagi, Doug Mitchell

Mentor: Dr. Frankie Wade

Title: *Does Neighborhood Walkability Associate with Walking Function?*

Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



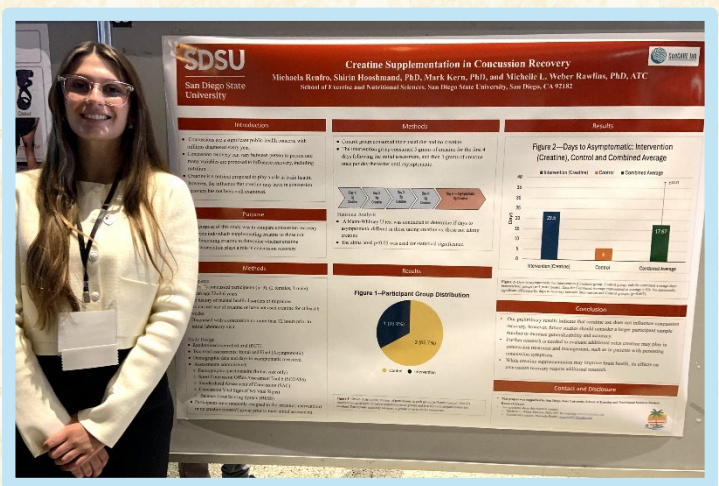
Farah Basmagi and Doug Mitchell

Student: Michaela Renfro

Mentor: Dr. Michelle Weber Rawlins

Title: *Creatine Supplementation in Concussion Recovery*

Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium

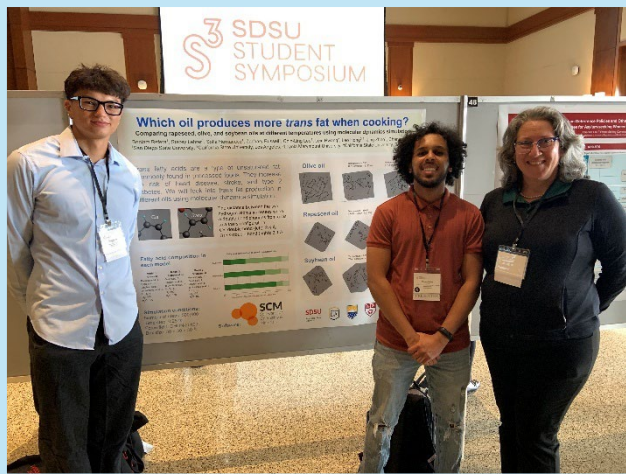


Michaela Renfro

ENS Student Accomplishments 2025

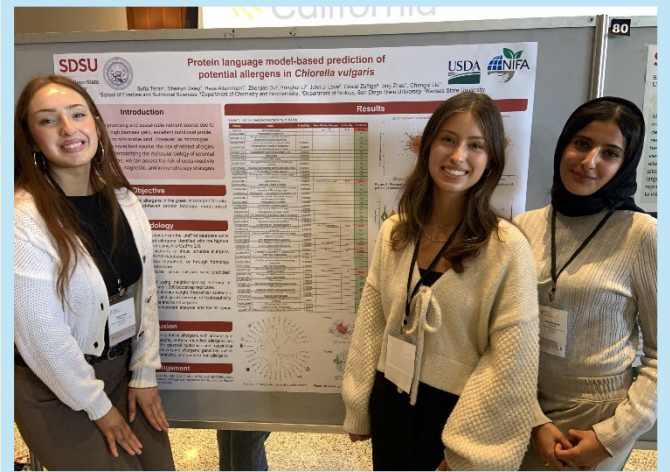
SDSU Student Symposium Presentations

Students: Beniam Refera, Sofia Hernandez, Stacey Lehrer, Zachary Russell, Chih-Ling Lee
Mentors: Dr. Changqi Liu, Dr. Jing Zhao
Title: *Comparing Trans Fatty Acid Production Through Heat in Rapeseed, Soybean, and Olive Oils*
Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



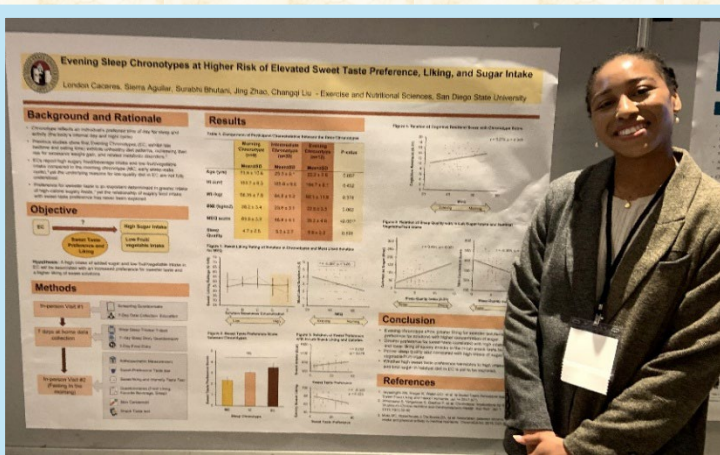
Beniam Refera, Zachary Russell, and Stacey Lehrer

Students: Sofia Teran, Shealyn Daley, Haya Altammami
Mentors: Dr. Changqi Liu, Dr. Jing Zhao
Title: *Protein Language Model-based Prediction of Potential Allergens in Chlorella vulgaris*
Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



Sofia Teran, Shealyn Daley, and Haya Altammami

Student: London Caceres, Sierra Aguilar
Mentor: Dr. Surabhi Bhutani
Title: *Sleep Phenotype of Evening Chronotypes at Higher Risk of Increased Sugar Intake Due to Elevated Sweet Taste Preference*
Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



London Caceres

Students: Destiny Akins, Clarisse Rivera, Sabrina Stringfellow
Mentor: Dr. Jeni Green
Title: *Prenatal Health Care Provider Survey*
Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



Clarisse Rivera and Destiny Akins

ENS Student Accomplishments 2025

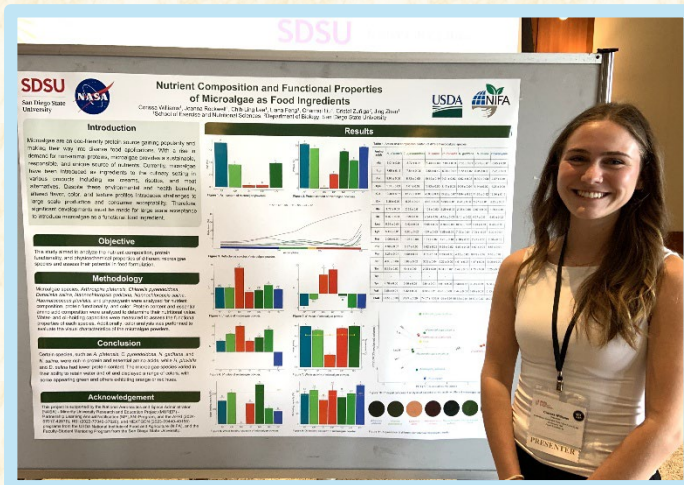
SDSU Student Symposium Presentations

Students: Corissa Williams, Joanna Rockwell, Chih-Ling Lee, Liana Feng

Mentors: Dr. Jing Zhao, Dr. Changqi Liu

Title: *Nutrient Composition and Functional Properties of Microalgae as Food Ingredients*

Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



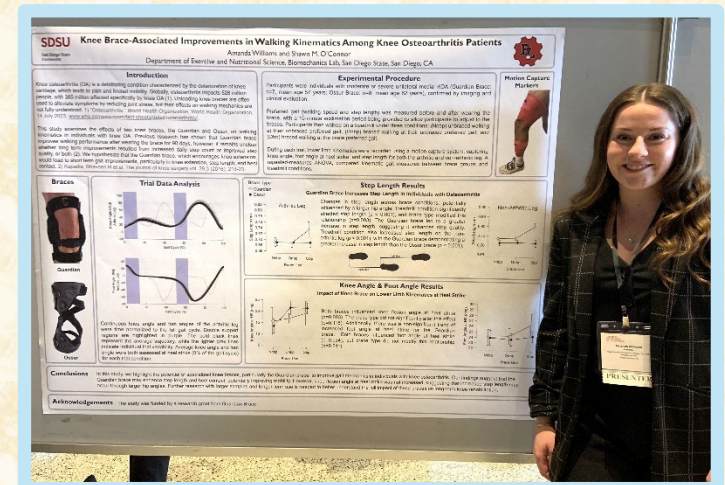
Corissa Williams

Student: Amanda Williams

Mentor: Dr. Shawn O'Connor

Title: *Knee Brace-Associated Improvements in Walking Kinematics Among Knee Osteoarthritis Patients*

Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium



Amanda Williams

Student: Ivan Leon

Title: *Exploring the Role of Molecular Chaperone Hsp83 in Muscle Function and Integrity*

Presented at the SDSU Student Symposium

ENS Student Accomplishments 2025

American Chemical Society National Meeting Presentations

Student: Christina Vialva

Mentor: Dr. Connie Weaver

Title: *Is your food label accurate? Designing research diets using USDA Food Composition Tables and ICP-OES*

Presented at the American Chemical Society Spring 2025 National Meeting

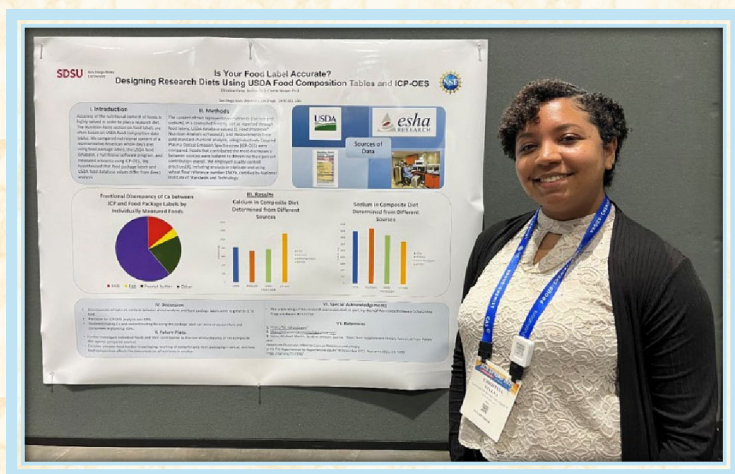
Students (in bold): James Wadman, Liana Feng,

Stacey Lehrer, Ali Raza, Changqi Liu, Jing Zhao

Mentors: Dr. Jing Zhao, Dr. Changqi Liu

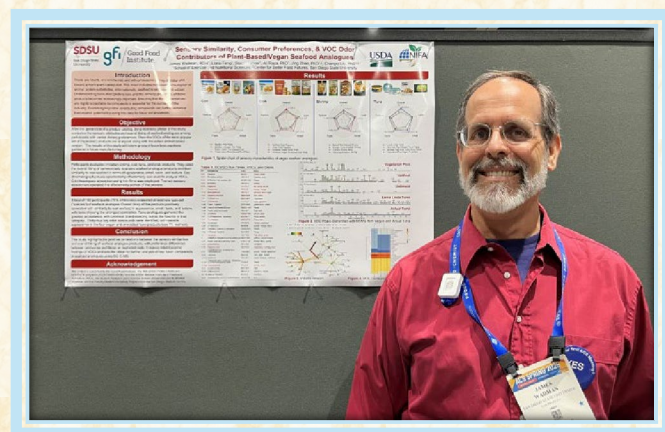
Title: *Sensory similarity and consumer preferences of plant-based seafood analogues*

Presented at the American Chemical Society Spring 2025 National Meeting



Christina Vialva

American Chemical Society 2025 National Meeting



James Wadman

American Chemical Society 2025 National Meeting

Students (in bold): Arpit Vaishya, Chih-Ling Lee, Charles Bilgrien, Sungwook Hong, Jiwon Hwang, Changqi Liu, Jing Zhao

Mentors: Dr. Changqi Liu, Dr. Jing Zhao

Title: *Molecular dynamics simulations of trans fatty acid formation in various oils during high-temperature frying*

Presented at the American Chemical Society Spring 2025 National Meeting

Students (in bold): Changqi Liu, Zhenjiao Du, Yonghui Li, John J. Love, Haya Altammami, Shealyn Daley, Sofia Teran, Cristal Zuñiga, Dr. Jing Zhao

Mentors: Dr. Changqi Liu, Dr. Jing Zhao

Title: *Protein language model-based prediction of potential allergens in Chlorella vulgaris*

Presented at the American Chemical Society Spring 2025 National Meeting

ENS Student Accomplishments 2025

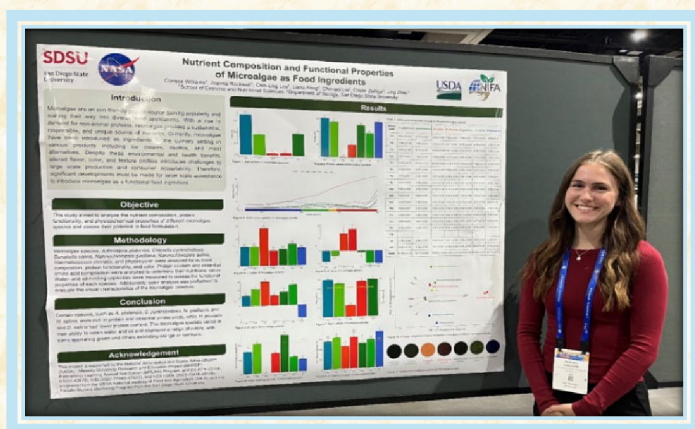
American Chemical Society National Meeting Presentations

Students (in bold): Corissa Williams, Joanna Rockwell, Liana Feng, Dr. Changqi Liu, Cristal Zuñiga, Dr. Jing Zhao

Mentors: Dr. Changqi Liu, Dr. Jing Zhao

Title: *Nutrient composition and functional properties of microalgae as food ingredients*

Presented at the American Chemical Society Spring 2025 National Meeting



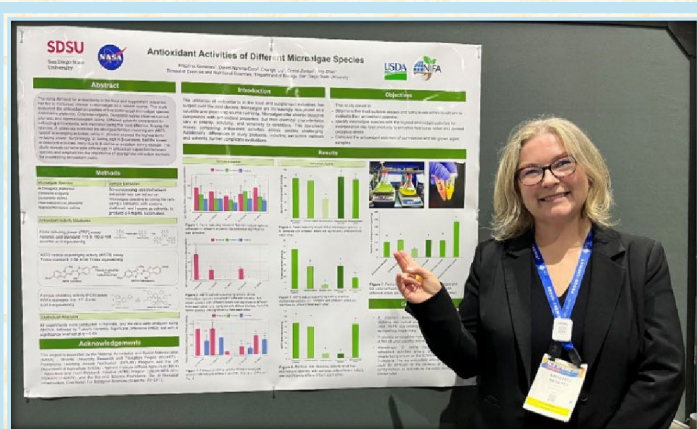
Corissa Williams

American Chemical Society 2025 National Meeting

Student (in bold): Krisztina Kemenes, Daniel Noreña-Caro, Dr. Changqi Liu, Cristal Zuñiga, Dr. Jing Zhao
Mentors: Dr. Changqi Liu, Dr. Jing Zhao

Title: *Antioxidant activities of different microalgae species*

Presented at the American Chemical Society Spring 2025 National Meeting



Krisztina Kemenes

American Chemical Society 2025 National Meeting

Students (in bold): Jiwon Hwang, Sungwook Hong, Jing Zhao, Changqi Liu, Wyatt Mathers, Chih-Ling Lee, Arpit Vaishya

Mentors: Dr. Changqi Liu, Dr. Jing Zhao

Title: *From theory to practice: Enhancing undergraduate problem-solving skills in food and agricultural sciences through computational chemistry modeling, molecular dynamics simulation, and culturally relevant pedagogy*

Presented at the American Chemical Society Spring 2025 National Meeting

Diverse Journeys, Shared Purpose: JEDI Council Connects and Inspires

The ENS Student Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Student Advisory Council is a dynamic group of students, including both undergraduate to graduate students. Each member brings their unique perspective and experiences to the Council, enriching the Council's work with diverse viewpoints. The primary mission of the JEDI Student Advisory Council is to amplify student voices, ensuring that their stories are heard. By sharing their personal experiences, the Council members help the School of ENS better understand and address the barriers that ENS students may face in their academic and professional journeys. Over the years, the JEDI Student Advisory Council has hosted a series of Coffee and Conversation events, where students have the opportunity to engage with faculty, staff, and peers, learning about ways to get involved in the ENS community through avenues like research and student clubs. These events have become a valuable space for students to connect, share ideas, and collaborate. This Spring semester, the JEDI Student Advisory Council hosted an inaugural Alumni Speaker Event, where alumni in various stages of their careers returned to share their insights and experiences. The event provided a unique opportunity for current students to hear directly from alumni, learn about their diverse journeys, and gain valuable advice as they navigate their own futures. Stay tuned for future events and initiatives as the JEDI Student Council continues to work towards fostering inclusive excellence.



Adriana Rabay

JEDI Student Advisory Council Member



Arianne Cacdac

JEDI Student Advisory Council Member

Coffee and Conversation Event – Spring 2025



Distinguished Alumni

Athletic Training

Kevin Bravo, MS, ATC

Salt Lake City Stars
Assistant Athletic Trainer



Mr. Kevin Bravo, a graduate of San Diego State University's Athletic Training Program in May 2021, went on to pursue a master's degree in Sports Administration at Eastern Illinois University. During his time at Eastern Illinois University, as he honed his skills and gained valuable experience in various sports, he achieved remarkable success, contributing to four championships with his baseball and cross-country endeavors. Additionally, he completed an athletic training internship with the Chicago Bears during the summer of 2022. Following the completion of his master's degree, Kevin embarked on his professional sports career with the San Francisco Giants, where he was assigned to their Dominican Summer League team. In the fall of 2023, he accepted a full-time position with the Utah Jazz's G-League Affiliate, the Salt Lake City Stars, as an assistant athletic trainer. In his inaugural season with the Salt Lake City Stars, the team returned to the NBA G-League playoffs. His contributions were pivotal in securing the Western Conference Athletic Training Staff of the Year award for the 2023-2024 season. Kevin continues his dedicated service with the team, as they remain steadfast in their pursuit of a return to the playoffs and an NBA G-League

Foods and Nutrition

Paulina Delgado, MS

Pediatric and Family
Sleep and Nutrition



Ms. Paulina Delgado started her professional career with a BS in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry from Mills College. After 6 years of academic research, she completed a master's degree on Nutritional Sciences at SDSU. During her time at SDSU, she joined Dr. Shirin Hooshmand's student research group and contributed to published work. After completing the master's program, she joined the Pharma world of research conducting drug and biologics efficacy work. Six years ago, she was an exhausted mother to a 6-month-old baby who would not sleep. Working with a sleep scientist changed her life and she realized she could help other families. Ms. Delgado went back to school and soon after graduating, her private practice was born. Very recent science suggests that quality sleep and family emotional stability are not a luxury, but an achievable lifestyle. Her mindful and integrative approach helps families understand the unique biological rhythms of each baby, establishing quality sleep as a sustainable daily habit for everyone. In 2025, she made her debut as a children's book author with her first children's bedtime book "Let's Breathe about It and Dream BIG."

Kinesiology

Carolyn Peters, MA, ATC, NREMT

Christian Unified Athletic
Trainer; Pawsitive Teams
Service Dog Program
Manager



Ms. Carolyn Peters is a proud San Diego State University alumna and a respected leader in athletic training, education, and community service. As a dual-sport athlete in Track and Field and Women's Basketball at SDSU, she balanced the demands of collegiate athletics while completing her degree in Physical Education with an emphasis in Athletic Training. She became both a Certified Athletic Trainer and Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist, later earning a master's in Kinesiology. While completing her graduate studies, she served as an assistant strength coach before being hired as a full-time athletic trainer for Aztec Athletics. Over the course of her career, Ms. Peters has taught at multiple colleges and universities, presented nationally, and mentored countless young professionals. She also served on the National Athletic Trainers' Association Board of Directors and was inducted into the Far West Athletic Trainers' Association Hall of Fame. In addition to her work in athletic training, she serves the community as an Emergency Medical Technician and service dog trainer with Pawsitive Teams, supporting individuals with mobility disabilities. Currently, she is a secondary school athletic trainer at Christian Unified Schools and is pursuing her Ph.D. in Leadership with an emphasis in Educational Administration. Her journey reflects a lifelong commitment to service, education, and faith.

Faculty Highlight

Dr. Amanda McClain, Associate Professor



Dr. Amanda C. McClain's experiences growing up in a low-income environment in Memphis, TN fueled her desire to attain a PhD, both as a means of upward mobility and to address pressing health disparities. She completed her BS in Sports Medicine in 2002 at the University of Evansville and her MS in Human Movement Sciences/Health Promotion in 2005 at The University of Memphis. Her master's thesis research on physical activity and physical fitness among low-income urban middle school students in Memphis sparked her interest in community-based research. Thus, she worked as a Research Associate at the University of South Carolina for five years, creating and implementing community-based interventions as a part of randomized control trials focused on nutrition and physical activity behavior change. Simultaneously, she co-founded and (volunteer) managed the first local farmers' market in Columbia, SC. These experiences empowered her to continue her education. Dr. McClain earned her PhD from the Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell University in 2016 and completed a postdoctoral research fellowship in the Department of Nutrition at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (2016 – 2018). Her population science and community-engaged mixed methods research employs health and social science perspectives to investigate how the stress of marginalization (e.g., food insecurity) shapes food choice, dietary intake, psychosocial health, and cardiometabolic risk among marginalized populations, particularly Hispanic/Latino communities. Concurrently, her research aims to identify and leverage existing cultural, social, human, and material assets as a part of interventions embedded in existing infrastructure (e.g., federally qualified health centers, food assistance programs), to promote food security, nutritious diets, and health equity. Her research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and she provides advisory and evaluation support for Project New Village, a BIPOC-led, grassroots nonprofit promoting food sovereignty in the historically marginalized area of Southeastern San Diego.

Discover ENS Research

Dr. Katie Crist **Health Promotion Researcher**

Dr. Katie Crist is a behavioral scientist whose research aims to understand how programmatic and built environment interventions impact physical activity, travel behaviors, health, and equity outcomes. Her doctoral work focused on data driven collaboration between researchers and transportation planners to improve health through active transportation. She is currently leading a 3-year study to understand how physical activity and travel behaviors change during the COVID-19 recovery period and in the context of the new light rail extension to UC San Diego. She aims to contribute evidence to build communities that support active lifestyles, health equity, and climate sustainability.



Dr. Shirin Hooshmand **Nutrition Researcher**

Dr. Shirin Hooshmand has been a professor of Nutrition working at ENS for the past 14 years. Her research focuses on enhancing human health through dietary modulation by investigating how food components influence physiological processes. Dr. Hooshmand loves mentoring students, helping them to become critical thinkers and scientist-minded individuals. She is passionate about sharing her research through presentations, webinars, podcasts, and articles, making her work accessible to everyone. She's also a Registered Dietitian who loves eating but isn't a fan of cooking. In her free time, she enjoys being active while socializing with friends—her favorite way to “kill two birds with one stone.”



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