



SPRING 2024 • NEWSLETTER • ISSUE NO. 13

THRIVE!

SDSU

School of Exercise and
Nutritional Sciences



Dr. Matthew Mahar

Director, School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences

Director's Message

Welcome to the latest edition of *Thrive!*, our newsletter showcasing the vibrant community of the School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences. As we approach the end of another academic year, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the remarkable achievements of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni. This issue of the Newsletter is a testament to the thriving spirit that permeates our School. Within these pages, you'll find inspiring highlights of student excellence, from award-winning research presentations to scholarship triumphs. Our students are not only excelling academically but also actively contributing to the advancement of knowledge through their involvement in faculty research endeavors. One of the highlights of this edition is the feature on our inaugural National Biomechanics Day held at SDSU. This event exemplifies our commitment to extending our partnership with the San Diego community. We also celebrate the remarkable accomplishments of our faculty, whose dedication to excellence in teaching and research continues to inspire and shape the minds of our future leaders. Their accolades and awards are a testament to the exceptional quality of our academic programs. We also bid farewell to our esteemed colleague, Dr. Denise Lebsack, who is retiring after 30 years of dedicated service. Congratulations to all those featured in this issue and thank you for your unwavering commitment to excellence. Your achievements inspire us all and contribute to the continued success and growth of our School.

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.

ENS News

The Cradle of Professors – Dr. Kevin Petti



Dr. Petti received his MA in Exercise Physiology from SDSU, and then a Ph.D. in Science Education from the University of San Diego. He has been teaching anatomy and physiology, human dissection, and health science at San Diego Miramar College for over 35 years where he is a full professor. Dr. Petti, a dual U.S./Italian citizen, is also a textbook coauthor, and president-emeritus of the Human Anatomy and Physiology Society.

Dr. Petti also leads academic programs to Italy and across Europe in the Anatomia Italiana program he founded in 2012. This interdisciplinary curriculum Connecting Art and Science focuses on the genesis of anatomy in medical education, while also exploring how the Renaissance masters studied human anatomy to heighten their art. Initially geared towards anatomy professors pursuing professional development, this program now includes ENS students in an SDSU Global Seminar.

Dr. Petti is invited to speak about his international research incorporating the humanities into the sciences at conferences, museums, and universities throughout North America and Europe. The Italian government invited him to speak at their Cultural Institutes in Los Angeles, New York City, and Houston, as well as at the Italian Embassy in Washington, D.C. The University of Palermo, Sicily, hosted Dr. Petti for a week as a guest lecturer in their seminar series celebrating its 210th anniversary, and most recently Chinese Central Television (CCTV) featured Dr. Petti in their eight-part documentary, 200 Years of Surgery.

Dr. Petti credits his career success to his SDSU graduate experience when he was challenged to consider ideas from a variety of perspectives, cultivating “out of the box” thinking.

The Master of Science in Athletic Training

The Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT) is proud to announce the continued success and tradition of excellence in athletic training education. The Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) has voted to grant 10 years of Continuing Accreditation to the Professional Athletic Training Program at San Diego State University. The next required comprehensive accreditation review for this program will be conducted during the 2033-2034 academic year, with a self-study due date of July 1, 2033, and an on-site visitation scheduled in consultation with the institution. For 55 years, the SDSU athletic training program has been a leader in athletic training education, setting the standard for excellence and shaping the future of the athletic profession. Congratulations to the athletic training alumni, students, and faculty!



<https://ens.sdsu.edu/athletic-training/>

Student News

Student Spotlight

Brandon Arnold



Brandon Arnold will graduate in May with a B.S. degree in Kinesiology Pre-Physical Therapy and start the SDSU Doctor of Physical Therapy program within the same month. He is originally from St. Louis, Missouri, where he left to enlist in the Marine Corps as an infantry machine gunner. After two deployments and an honorable discharge, Brandon decided to continue a career of service, but this time through the lens of health and wellness. He became a National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) certified personal trainer, where he trained clients one-on-one at 24-Hour Fitness while simultaneously embarking on his academic journey in kinesiology with his sights set on becoming a clinician. Brandon worked under many different physician specialists as a medical assistant and volunteered at several physical therapy clinics, where he learned the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to optimal patient care. He now helps clients with their fitness goals remotely under his coaching brand “e.basedstrength.” In his free time, Brandon enjoys training and competing as a powerlifter. When he is not training, he loves to go off-roading, camping, hiking, to the beach, and eating at good restaurants with friends.

Daisy Lopez



Daisy Lopez will graduate in May with a B.S. degree in Foods and Nutrition. Daisy is the recipient of the Sustainable Food Systems Scholarship funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), as well as a Tau Sigma National Honor Society member and the recipient of the Tau Sigma Scholarship. She has contributed to two research projects: one involving the analysis of flavor profiles of edible ants, and another focusing on the development of shelf-stable microalgae-enriched guacamole for astronauts, which was funded by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Daisy has presented research at the Southern California Section of the Institute of Food Technologists Student Research Showcase, the Southern California Conferences for Undergraduate Research, and the SDSU Student Symposium. She also worked to develop Chipulines, a blue corn and cricket tortilla chip, and participated in the Student Product Development Competition at the Southern California Food Industry Conference and secured third place for the Chipulines product. After graduation, Daisy aspires to be a food technologist who specializes in the product development of nutritious and sustainable food items. In her free time, she likes to go on hikes and be in nature. Daisy enjoys volunteering at the Associated Students Food Pantry on campus where she assists students who are experiencing food insecurity.

American Kinesiology Association Undergraduate Scholar Award

Simon Pierce



Simon Pierce is honored to be the recipient of the American Kinesiology Association Undergraduate Scholar Award. In the Fall semester of his junior year, Simon started as one of the first students in Dr. Nogueira's Muscle Contractile Function and Repair Laboratory. He contributed to researching different variables that affect the rate at which diaphragm force is impaired during mechanical ventilation (ventilator-induced diaphragm dysfunction). Simon performed all procedures, contractile experiments, and statistical analysis of data independently. He presented his research at local academic meetings such as the SDSU Student Symposium 2023 and 2024, as well as in refereed proceedings such as the Southwest American College of Sports Medicine and the American Physiological Society. To gain experience and enhance his application for graduate school, Simon accumulated almost 500 hours of volunteer time in various physical therapy settings such as skilled nursing, pediatrics, orthopedics, and acute rehabilitation. He will graduate in May with a bachelor's degree in Kinesiology. His commitment to learning, obtaining practical experience, and research has allowed him to pursue his academic journey at UC San Francisco for a Doctorate in Physical Therapy.

"I am extremely grateful to accept this award which would not have been possible without the outstanding support from Dr. Leonardo Nogueira and Dr. Daniel Cannon, who not only shared their passion and knowledge of science with me but led me to develop my own academic path and future career."

American Kinesiology Association Master's Scholar Award

Austin Morales

Austin Morales is honored to receive the American Kinesiology Association Master's Scholar Award. As a transfer student, arriving at SDSU in 2020, Austin was eager for the opportunity to expand his knowledge and continue advancing his passion for nutrition in the BS in Foods and Nutrition program. During his undergraduate degree, he explored various research opportunities by working under Dr. Bhutani and Dr. Liu in the realm of sensory and clinical research. These experiences helped motivate him to continue his education in the concurrent MS in Nutritional Sciences and MS in Exercise Physiology in the School of ENS. As a graduate student at SDSU, working under Dr. Kressler, Austin's research manuscript focused on the effects of stair-stepping on reducing late-day postprandial blood glucose. Upon completion of his manuscript, he plans to submit it for publication. Austin is humbled and thankful to have had the opportunity to learn and evolve his knowledge under the guidance and devotion of the ENS faculty. Specifically, Dr. Kressler's unwavering support and consistent guidance particularly influenced him. Upon graduating this Spring, Austin will pursue his registered dietitian license in the Fall. In the long term, Austin strives to become a professor in the field of nutrition and exercise physiology and share his passion for education with future students.



"Winning the American Kinesiology Association award is a proud accomplishment and one that I would not have been able to achieve without the help of the ENS faculty; their dedication is integral to student success. They have helped encourage a mindset of curiosity and lifelong learning"

ENS Student Accomplishments 2024

ENS faculty members are dedicated to students' potential and steer them toward success in future careers. We congratulate ENS students who made professional presentations and publications in their research and the students who were awarded grants and scholarships in recognition of their accomplishments.

Grants and Awards

ENS Student Names in Bold

Student: Katie Williams, co-presenter with Sierra Aguila

-San Diego State University President's Award

Student: Sierra Aguilar

-San Diego State University President's Award

Student: Mikaela Garcia

-San Diego State University Undergraduate Research Excellence Award

Student: Meghen Bishop

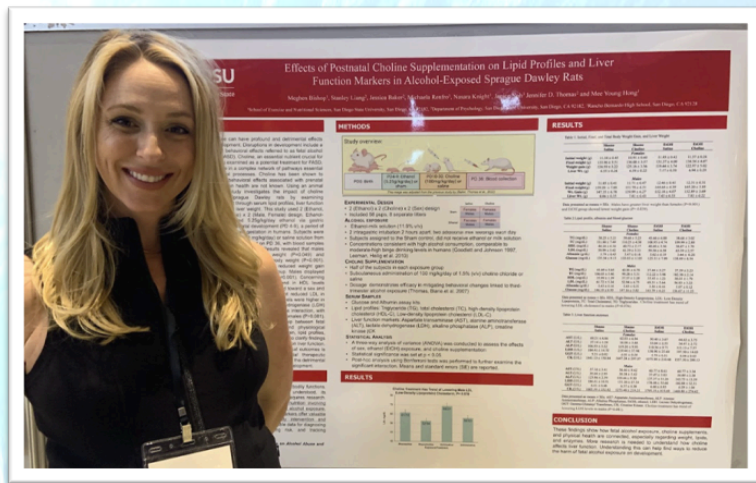
-San Diego State University President's Award

Student: Kylie Macias

-San Diego State University Library Award



Dr. Denise Lebsack and Mikaela Garcia
SDSU Student Symposium



Meghen Bishop
SDSU Student Symposium

ENS Student Accomplishments 2024

Student: Daisy Lopez

- Southern California Food Industry Conference, Garden Grove, CA. Third Place
- School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences Student Conference Travel Award
- Sustainable Food System Scholarship

Student: Adriana Martinez

- Southern California Food Industry Conference, Garden Grove, CA. Third Place
- School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences Student Conference Travel Award

Student: Lloyd Marshall

- Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (RSCA) Travel Funds

Student: Ana Gaxiola Alvarez

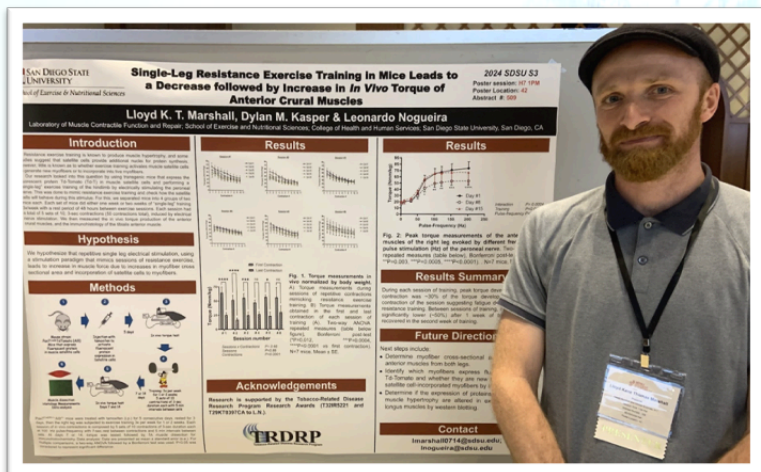
- Southern California Food Industry Conference, Garden Grove, CA. Third Place
- School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences Student Conference Travel Award

Student: Jessica Borough

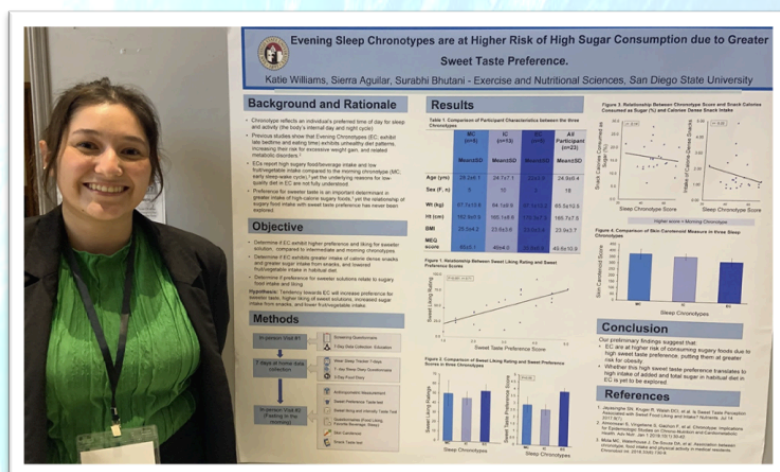
- Southern California Food Industry Conference, Garden Grove, CA. Third Place
- School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences Student Conference Travel Award

Student: Yasmin Velazquez

- American Society of Biomechanics Grant



Lloyd Marshall
SDSU Student Symposium



Sierra Aguilar
SDSU Student Symposium

ENS Student Accomplishments 2024

The National Athletic Trainers' Association Scholarships

Student: Anna LaFontaine

-Jack Rockwell Scholarship

Student: Alexandra Spare

-Jeff Snedecker Memorial Scholarship

Student: Jessica Manzuk

-Richard E. Vandervoort Memorial Scholarship

Student: Annaliese Andersen

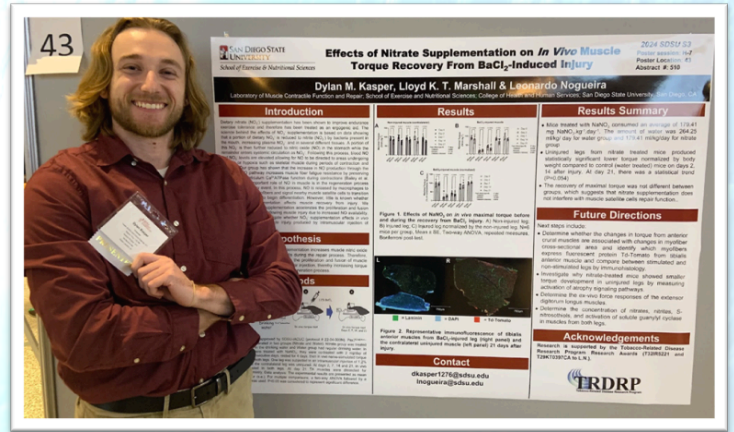
-NATA Hall of Fame Scholarship

Student: Brianna Helsley

-Pete Demers Scholarship



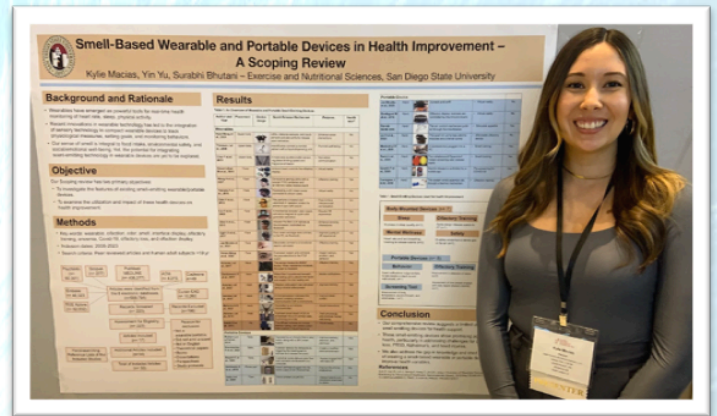
Brianna Helsley, Anna LaFontaine, Jessica Manzuk,
Annaliese Andersen, Alexandra Spare
NATA Scholarship Awardees



Dylan Kasper
SDSU Student Symposium



Mikaela Garcia
SDSU Student Symposium



Kylie Macias
SDSU Student Symposium

ENS Student Accomplishments 2024

Presentations

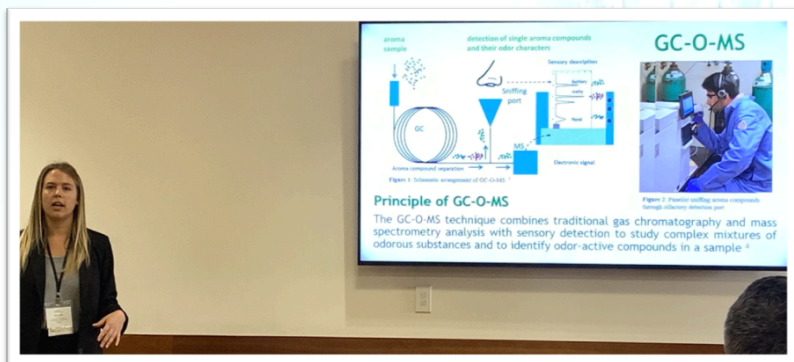
ENS Student Names in Bold

Student: Ali Raza, **Ellie Cramton**, and **Jesse Baker**, Dr. Changqi Liu, Dr. Jing Zhao
Mentor: Dr. Chih-Ling "Janet" Lee, Dr. Jing Zhao
Title: *Algae as a precursor of seafood flavor in alternative seafood*
Presented at the American Chemical Society Spring 2024 National Meeting & Expo: New Orleans, LA

Student: **Joanna Rockwell**, Ali Raza, **Rebecca Vernazza**, **Ellie Cramton**, **Victoria Esparza**, **Daisy Lopez**, **Corissa Williams**, Dr. Cristal Zuñiga, Dr. Changqi Liu, Dr. Jing Zhao
Mentor: Dr. Chih-Ling "Janet" Lee and Dr. Jing Zhao
Title: *Better space parties with algae-enriched guacamole*
Presented at the 2024 National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Human Research Program Investigators' Workshop: Galveston, TX

Student: **Selene Alvarado Martinez**, Ali Raza, **Daisy Lopez**, **Victoria Esparza**, Dr. Jing Zhao, Dr. Changqi Liu
Mentor: Dr. Chih-Ling "Janet" Lee, Dr. Jing Zhao
Title: *Exploring flavors of edible ants: A path to sustainable gastronomy and consumer acceptance*
Presented at the American Chemical Society Spring 2024 National Meeting & Expo: New Orleans, LA

Student: **Joanna Rockwell**, Ali Raza, **Rebecca Vernazza**, **Ellie Cramton**, **Victoria Esparza**, **Daisy Lopez**, **Corissa Williams**, Dr. Cristal Zuñiga, Dr. Changqi Liu, Dr. Jing Zhao
Mentor: Dr. Chih-Ling "Janet" Lee and Dr. Jing Zhao
Title: *Identification of flavor active compounds in micro- and macro-algae*
Presented at the 2024 San Diego State University Student Symposium



Ellie Cramton
SDSU Student Symposium



Selene Alvarado Martinez
SDSU Student Symposium



Joanna Rockwell
SDSU Student Symposium

ENS Student Accomplishments 2024

Student: Daisy Lopez, Ana Gaxiola Alvarez, Jessica Borough, Adriana Martinez

Mentor: Dr. Chih-Ling "Janet" Lee, Dr. Jing Zhao

Title: *Chipulines blue corn cricket chips: Jump to a more sustainable snack*

Presented at the 2024 San Diego State University Student Symposium

Student: Selene Alvarado Martinez

Mentor: Dr. Chih-Ling "Janet" Lee, Dr. Jing Zhao

Title: *Exploring flavors of edible ants: A path to sustainable gastronomy and consumer acceptance*

Presented at the 2024 San Diego State University Student Symposium

Student: Marta Carrillo, Jennifer Villalobos

Mentor: Dr. Chih-Ling "Janet" Lee, Dr. Jing Zhao

Title: *Nutrition composition and flavor profile of chia seeds*

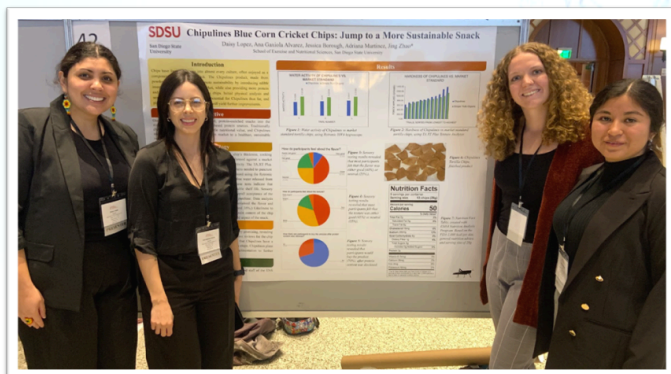
Presented at the 2024 San Diego State University Student Symposium

Student: Ellie Cramton

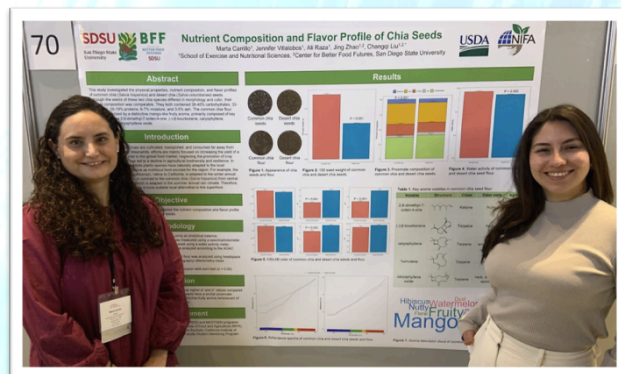
Mentor: Dr. Chih-Ling "Janet" Lee, Dr. Jing Zhao

Title: *Identification of flavor active compounds in micro- and macro-algae*

Presented at the 2024 San Diego State University Student Symposium



Daisy Lopez, Ana Gaxiola, Jessica Borough, Adriana Martinez
SDSU Student Symposium



Marta Carrillo, Jennifer Villalobos
SDSU Student Symposium



Katelin Wisenor, Becca Pierce, Erika Pulliam, Natalie Gaharan,
Corina Kaufman, Dr. Antoinette Domingo, and Blake Williams
2024 Combined Sections Meeting, Boston, MA

ENS Student Accomplishments 2024

Student: Jesse Baker

Mentor: Dr. Chih-Ling "Janet" Lee, Dr. Jing Zhao

Title: *Unlocking seafood flavors from macroalgae: A sustainable, vegan approach*

Presented at the 2024 San Diego State University Student Symposium

Student: Lloyd Marshall, Dylan Kasper, Dr. Leo Nogueira

Mentor: Dr. Leonardo Nogueira

Title: *Time course changes in muscle torque development after single-leg fatiguing exercise training in mice*

Presented at the American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting, 2024, Boston, MA

Student: Tyler Kent, Jennah Brow, Kyle Dominguez, Kristen Keeble, Dr. Leo Nogueira

Mentor: Dr. Leonardo Nogueira

Title: *Recovery of muscle torque after lengthening contraction injury in cigarette smoke-exposed mice*

Presented at the American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting, 2024, Boston, MA

Student: Dylan Kasper, Lloyd Marshall, Dr. Leo Nogueira

Mentor: Dr. Leonardo Nogueira

Title: *Nitrate supplementation decreases in vivo muscle torque without affecting injury recovery in mice*

Presented at the American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting, 2024, Boston, MA

Student: Simon Pierce, Dr. Dan Cannon, Dr. Leo Nogueira

Mentor: Dr. Leonardo Nogueira

Title: *Diaphragm force and mitochondrial function following enhanced nitric oxide availability during mechanical ventilation*

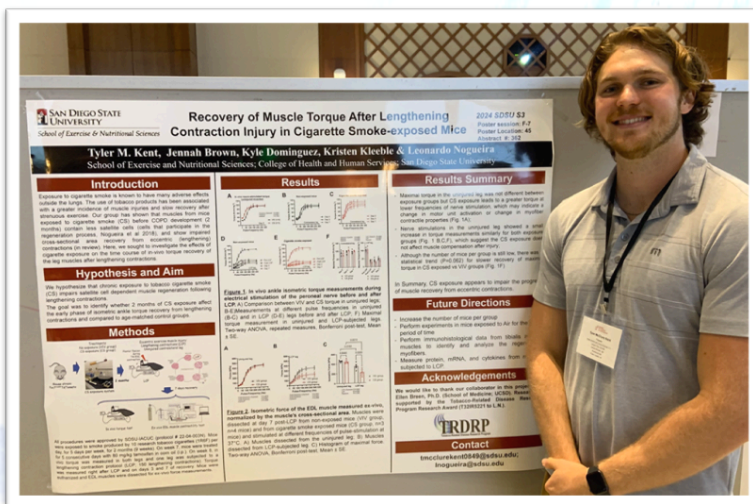
Presented at the American Physiology Summit, 2024, Long Beach, CA

Student: Madeline Strom, Anna LaFontaine, Monica Lopez

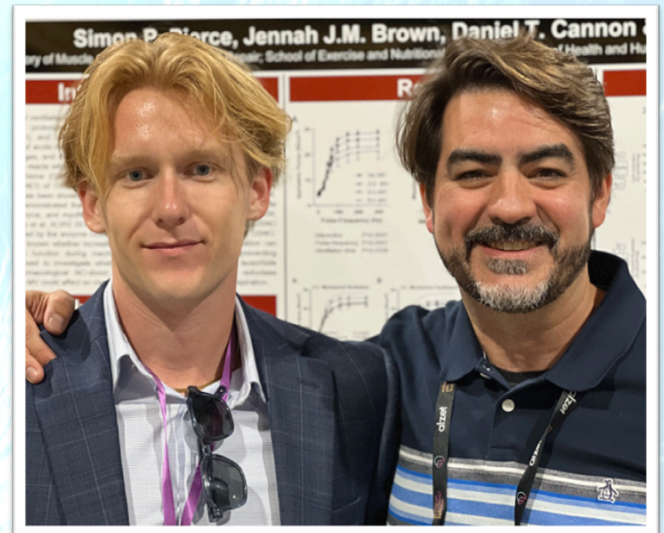
Mentor: Dr. Michelle Weber Rawlins

Title: *Bridging the gaps within concussion education: A preliminary analysis into proposed improvements from student-athletes*

Presented at the 2024 San Diego State University Student Symposium



Tyler Kent
SDSU Student Symposium



Simon Pierce and Dr. Leo Nogueira
American Physiology Summit, 2024, Long Beach, CA

ENS Student Accomplishments 2024

Student: Annaliese Andersen

Mentor: Dr. Michelle Weber Rawlins

Title: *Does the self-reported healthcare access and health literacy predict concussion care seeking?*

Presented at the 2024 San Diego State University Student Symposium

Student: Mikaela Garcia

Mentor: Dr. Jennifer Green

Title: *Concussion care seeking intentions and behavior does not differ between ethnicities in collegiate athletes*

Presented at the 2024 San Diego State University Student Symposium

Students: Becca Pierce, Erika Pulliam, Katelin Wisenor, Corina Kaufman, Natalie Gaharan, Dylan Deuling, Blake Williams, Dr. Antoinette Domingo

Mentor: Dr. Antoinette Domingo

Title: *Perceived Value for Injury Prevention in Wheelchair Athletes: Lessons Learned from a Program Development Study*

Presented at the 2024 Combined Sections Meeting, Boston, MA

Student: Julia Ng

Mentor: Dr. Michelle Weber Rawlins

Title: *Is health literacy associated with concussion care seeking intentions and behavior in collegiate students?*

Presented at the 2024 San Diego State University Student Symposium

Students: Destiny Akins, Kaylee Childers, Olivia Harris, Zamira Smith

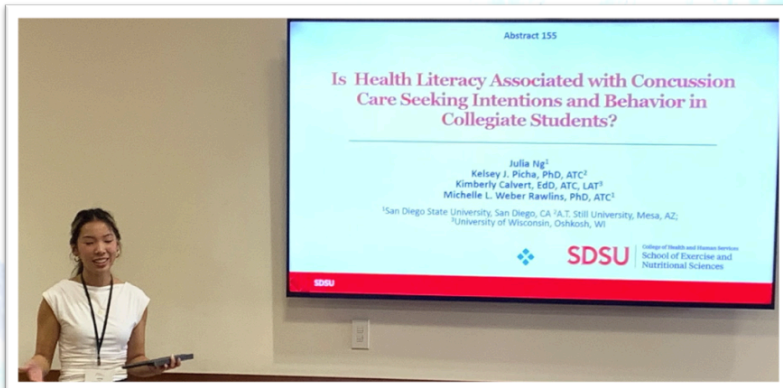
Mentor: Dr. Jennifer Green

Title: *Testing the feasibility of a prenatal yoga mobile app in African American pregnant women: The mindful maternity study*

Presented at the 2024 San Diego State University Student Symposium



Kaylee Childers and Destiny Akins
SDSU Student Symposium

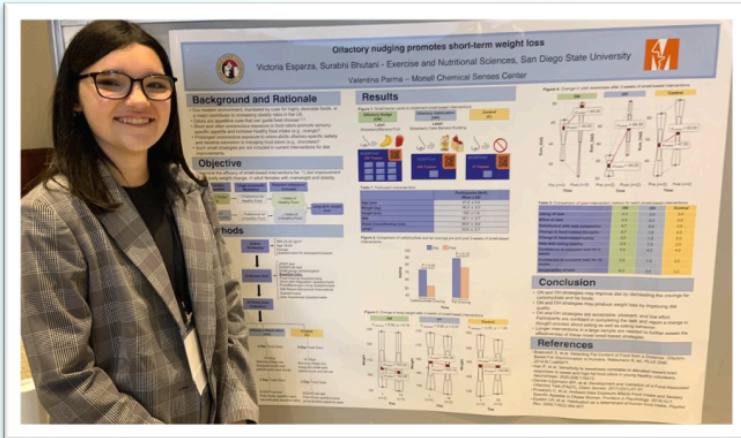


Julia Ng
SDSU Student Symposium

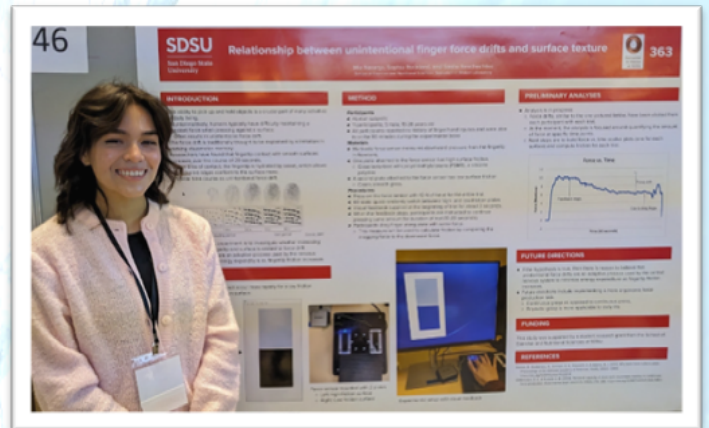


Annaliese Andersen
SDSU Student Symposium

ENS Student Accomplishments 2024



Victoria Esparza
SDSU Student Symposium



Mia Naranjo
SDSU Student Symposium



Jay Barolo and Sarah König
SDSU Student Symposium

Instructionally Related Activity (IRA) Awards

Dr. Antoinette Domingo received \$575 for the Aztec Adaptive Sports organization to host the Adapted Athletics Keynote Speaker event.

Dr. Shirin Hooshmand received \$2,000 to support the Foods and Nutrition students to host the Aging Experts Guest Lecture Series.

Dr. Denise Lebsack received \$2,400 to support the Master of Athletic Training program students to attend the 2024 FWATA Annual Symposium.

Dr. Mee Young Hong received \$2,000 to support the Foods and Nutrition students to host the Nutrition Guest Lecture Series.

Dr. Mark Kern received \$2,385 to support the Foods and Nutrition students to attend the Dietetics Admissions Toolkit course.

National Biomechanics Day



On April 12, 2024, The School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences hosted 18 students from Hoover High School for a morning of biomechanics fun. This opportunity was made possible due to MS Exercise Physiology student Yasmin Velazquez receiving a “Latinx in Biomechanics Outreach Through NBD” grant from The Biomechanics Initiative and partnership with Avenues for Success – particularly Claudia Martinez. National Biomechanics Day is an annual event that sees biomechanics labs around the world host students to provide hands-on experiences in biomechanics.

Our event started with a demonstration by Dr. Antoinette Domingo, accompanied by three Doctor of Physical Therapy students, of her robotic exoskeleton. We had many engaging questions including those about gyroscopes and how to get into physical therapy. The remainder of our day was split into smaller groups, where students got hands-on experiences with Dorsavi wearable sensors, motion capture protocols used for injury surveillance in the Aztec’s basketball team, a flexing competition with EMG sensors on their biceps, and fun jumping on force plates. We had approximately 20 SDSU students involved, with a strong Latinx representation. Questions and demonstrations became bilingual, with 77% of the attending high school students identifying as Latinx/Hispanic and many of our ENS students fluent in Spanish. We can’t wait for next year’s event!



DPT program 53rd in the nation



SDSU DPT ranked #53 among all Doctor of Physical Therapy programs nationwide. The good news is that we moved to #3 among all California DPT programs and remained #1 among all CSU DPT programs.

Featured Student Organization

Future Physical Therapists Organization



Members of the Future Physical Therapists Organization

The Future Physical Therapists Organization (FTPO) is a thriving Recognized Student Organization (RSO) at San Diego State University. Our organization comprises a group of diligent and motivated students passionate about the field of physical therapy. The FTPO's mission is to nurture a robust community of aspiring physical therapists by providing educational resources on physical therapy and graduate school requirements, facilitating networking opportunities, and encouraging community engagement. Within the past few years, the organization has grown into a supportive community not only within the University but also among the broader physical therapy community in San Diego. The remarkable achievements of former FTPO members are a testament to the organization's success and serve as an inspiration to continue to expand our success to create the best physical therapists the profession has to offer.

Sports Nutrition Cooperative Cooking Demos

The Sports Nutrition Cooperative (SNC) comprises students interested in sports nutrition and who are, or who plan to become, registered dietitians. Founded on the belief that proper nutrition is fundamental to athletic success and overall well-being, this group has been instrumental in providing invaluable nutrition education and support to the Division I and adapted athletes at SDSU since 2016. Beyond offering services such as personalized nutrition consultations and team presentations, this academic year marked a significant milestone for the group as they initiated cooking demonstrations tailored specifically for the Division I Women's Lacrosse team, led by Nick Portoni, and Women's Soccer team, led by Jill McNutt.



These demonstrations not only serve to educate athletes on the importance of fueling their bodies for optimal performance with whole and nourishing foods, but also empower them with practical culinary skills to prepare nutritious meals independently. The sessions are interactive and engaging, fostering a sense of camaraderie and teamwork among the athletes as they come together to learn and experience how easy and fun cooking can be.

Follow @sdsu_snc on Instagram to witness our students in action! Go Aztecs!



ENS Faculty and Staff Awards 2024

2024 Pediatric Research in Sports Medicine Achievement Award **Dr. Mitchell J. Rauh, Professor & Director, Doctor of Physical Therapy Program**



Dr. Mitchell J. Rauh, PT, PhD, MPH, FACSM, was recognized with the Physical Therapy Achievement Award at the 2024 Pediatric Research in Sports Medicine Meeting in Anaheim. The award recognizes research excellence in pediatric sports medicine by a physical therapist. Dr. Rauh's research has focused on identifying risk factors for running-related injuries in adolescent and youth runners, as well as examining sports specialization and the female athlete syndrome and their role on the incidence of sport-related injury in high school athletes.

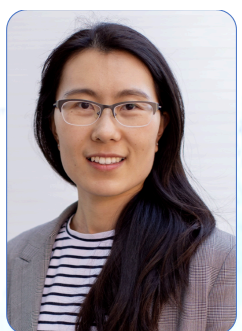
Annual Aztecs Celebrating Excellence Award **Dr. Sara Gombatto, Professor, Doctor of Physical Therapy Program**



At the recent 3rd Annual Aztecs Celebrating Excellence (A.C.E.) Awards, Dr. Sara Gombatto was the recipient of the Dr. James Kitchen Distinguished Service Award, which is presented to the individual who demonstrates an unwavering commitment to enhancing the well-being of SDSU's student-athletes. Their collaboration with the SDSU athletic medicine department is exemplary, as they continually seek innovative ways to elevate the standard of care provided to our athletes.

Outstanding Volunteer Award 2022-2023 *Protein Volunteer Award*

Dr. Jing Zhao, Assistant Professor



Dr. Jing Zhao was awarded the 2022-2023 Outstanding Volunteer Award by the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) at the 2023 IFT Annual Meeting and Expo in Chicago. Dr. Zhao has been a leader in the IFT Protein Division since 2017 and has led various activities such as session proposals, graduate student oral competitions, and infographics. Dr. Zhao currently serves as the incoming chair of IFT Protein Division in 2023-2024.

ENS Faculty and Staff Awards 2024

College of Health and Human Services Council Awards

Outstanding Undergraduate Professor

Dr. Sasha Reschechtko
Assistant Professor



Outstanding Graduate Professor

Dr. Sara Gombatto
Professor



Outstanding Support Staff

Jennifer Groenendal
Accounting Technician II



ENS By The Numbers Graduates



Undergraduate Degrees Awarded Fall 2023 & Spring 2024

Degree	Number of Degrees
BS Foods & Nutrition	60
BS Kinesiology – Exercise Science Generalist	57
BS Kinesiology – Fitness Specialist	68
BS Kinesiology – Pre-Physical Therapy	297
Total Undergraduate Degrees	482

Graduate Degrees Awarded Fall 2023 & Spring 2024

Degree	Number of Degrees
Doctor of Physical Therapy	37
MS Athletic Training	8
MS Exercise Physiology	10
MS Nutritional Sciences	14
MS Nutritional Sciences & MS Exercise Physiology	7
Total Graduate Degrees	76

Distinguished Alumni

Doctor of Physical Therapy

Jessica Agrimis

Founder of NeuroLab 360



Dr. Jessie Agrimis received her Doctorate in Physical Therapy from SDSU in 2017. She completed a Neurologic Physical Therapy Residency at the University of Washington Medical Center, ultimately becoming board certified as a Neurologic Clinical Specialist. Dr. Agrimis is a PWR! Moves Certified Therapist, an Assistive Technology Professional (ATP), and holds a certificate in Vestibular Rehabilitation. Recognizing the need for ongoing services for individuals with neurological disorders, Dr. Agrimis founded NeuroLab 360, a nonprofit

organization offering rehabilitation and wellness services in Encinitas, CA. NeuroLab 360 is a cash-based Neuro Rehab clinic that provides scholarships for therapy for individuals in need, and additionally offers many free services to the community so that individuals can access the care that they need despite their insurance limitations or financial situation.

Kinesiology

Stan Yong

Internal Medicine Resident Physician



Dr. Stanley Yong earned his B.S. in Kinesiology from SDSU in 2017. This is where he became intrigued by the complexities of the human body and wanted to care for the acutely ill. He then moved on to obtain his medical degree at Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona, CA. He is currently doing his internal medicine residency at Mercy Catholic Medical Center in Darby, PA, and is interested in pursuing a pulmonary and critical care fellowship after completion.

Outside of his medical career, he is passionate about serving the underserved and is always finding ways to impact the community around him. In addition, he enjoys mentoring others interested in pursuing a career in the field of medicine. For fun, he enjoys reading, playing sports including basketball and golf, and spending time with loved ones. Dr. Yong believes success is shaped by the generosity of the people around you and he is grateful for the entire School of ENS with a special highlight of his mentor, Dr. Daniel T. Cannon, for his unwavering support not only during his undergraduate studies, but afterward as well.

Athletic Training

David McClaskey

Primary Care Sports Medicine Physician



Dr. David McClaskey graduated from the SDSU Athletic Training Program in 2005. Afterwards, he attended the UCLA School of Medicine and subsequently completed his residency in Family Medicine at UCSD. He completed a fellowship in Sports Medicine at UCSD as well. Dr. McClaskey currently works for Kaiser Permanente with a blended practice in Primary Care and Sports Medicine. He is the Medical Director for the Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT) program at SDSU. When he is not working, you will find him on

the baseball field with his sons. Go Aztecs!

Foods and Nutrition

Kristina Morales

Registered Dietitian

Director of Dietetics for Maryland Department of Health



Ms. Kristina Morales is a Registered Dietitian in the Washington D.C. Metropolitan area. She obtained her bachelor's degree in Foods and Nutrition in 2014 from SDSU and her Master's in Dietetic Administration from Utah State University. While at SDSU, Kristina was highly involved in campus organizations with roles as the Associated Student Representative for the College of Health and Human Services and Vice President of the Student Nutrition Organization and is one of the founders of the Josephson-Spindler Fundraising Gala Dinner

and Silent Auction. Since then, Ms. Morales spent her first three years as a dietitian working with the geriatric population in clinical settings. She moved across the country to pursue her goal of becoming a director. She's worked for prestigious organizations such as the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC), Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, and the University of Maryland Medical System. Currently, Kristina serves as the Director of Dietetics for the Maryland Department of Health, continues to volunteer as the Communications Officer for the Maryland Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and sits on the Nominating Committee for CV-Well DPG. She's received awards such as the Civilian Achievement Award from WRNMMC and was also recognized as Young Dietitian of the Year in 2023 for her involvement and impact as a dietitian. Kristina continues to enjoy leading and mentoring others in her field.

Faculty Highlight

Dr. Changqi Liu



Dr. Changqi Liu received his B.E. in Food Quality and Safety from Sichuan Agricultural University in China, followed by an M.S. in Animal and Food Sciences from the University of Kentucky, and a Ph.D. in Nutrition and Food Sciences from Florida State University. He joined SDSU in 2016. Dr. Liu began his teaching career at Florida State University, where he taught several courses ranging from food science to nutrition. At SDSU, Dr. Liu teaches food science lecture and laboratory and co-teaches an interdisciplinary course focused on food sustainability. Additionally, he works on several educational projects and serves as a mentor in the Faculty-Student Mentoring Program. Dr. Liu's early research focused on meat science and protein chemistry during his M.S. studies, while his Ph.D. work delved into food allergy and immunoassays. Since joining SDSU, Dr. Liu has expanded his research interests to include sustainable foods. He explores novel and underutilized food sources such as cereals, legumes, algae, edible insects, and native plants, alongside investigating sustainable food production methods like milpa, hydroponics, and precision fermentation. He also collaborates with the nutrition faculty on functional food studies. In his free time, Dr. Liu finds joy in traveling, exploring nature, and trying different foods.

Discover ENS Research

Dr. Jennifer Green

Physical Activity Researcher

Dr. Jeni Green is dedicated to enhancing the health and well-being of historically marginalized groups and addressing health inequalities, with a particular emphasis in maternal health. Her research centers on developing and testing mind-body practices like yoga, mindfulness, and meditation, as well as physical activity interventions to improve mental and physical health outcomes.

She integrates technology into her work to administer interventions and assess health outcomes, forging robust partnerships with digital health companies and community organizations. Currently, Dr. Green is exploring the feasibility and preliminary effects of a prenatal yoga mobile application in African American expectant mothers.



Dr. Michelle Weber Rawlins

Concussion Researcher



Dr. Michelle Weber Rawlins is an athletic trainer who researches sport-related and military-related concussions, driven by a commitment to make sport and military duty safer. Her research is guided by a multifaceted approach, encompassing understanding care seeking behavior, academic adjustments, nutritional practices, medical disqualification, and health disparities. Central to her work is the incorporation of the patient perspective, ensuring that equitable, patient-centered health care is accessible to all.

Dr. Denise Lebsack to Retire After 30 Years at SDSU



After an exceptional 30-year career at San Diego State University, Dr. Denise Lebsack is retiring from her position as Associate Professor in the School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences (ENS). Dr. Lebsack's career at SDSU has been marked by outstanding achievements in teaching, instructional innovation, and professional service.

Dr. Lebsack joined the SDSU faculty in 1994 as a Lecturer after earning her Ph.D. in Sports Medicine from the University of Virginia, where her dissertation focused on the relationship between strength and balance across the lifespan. She was hired as an Assistant Professor in 1995 and achieved the rank of tenured Associate Professor in 1999.

Throughout her career, Dr. Lebsack has taught a wide range of courses including clinical pathology, therapeutic modalities, applied kinesiology, and numerous techniques in athletic training. Her dedication to effective instructional methods led her to author several athletic training-related teaching publications, most notably the widely acclaimed "Special Tests for Orthopedic Examination" textbook, which has seen four editions and has been translated into five languages, earning a "best seller award." Her exceptional contributions to education were recognized with the California Athletic Trainers' Association (CATA) Educator of the Year Award in 2021, and the CATA Lifesaver Award in 2022.

"Denise exemplifies the essence of a servant leader, consistently prioritizing the needs of the students and the program. Her nurturing demeanor and unwavering support have earned her the affectionate moniker, Mama D, among students. While the athletic training Aztec family will undoubtedly feel the absence of Mama D, her legacy of positivity and mentorship will endure, leaving an indelible mark that will be cherished and remembered."

~ Dr. Margo Greicar, Program Director of MS in Athletic Training

In addition to her teaching, Dr. Lebsack made outstanding contributions to professional service. She served as an administrative leader for the SDSU Athletic Training program for 16 years, including 13 years as the Program Director and three years as the Clinical Coordinator, guiding the program through three accreditation cycles. Additionally, she served as the School of ENS Graduate Advisor for six years and participated in several National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) committees, such as the NATA Education Council. Underscoring her dedication to students, Dr. Lebsack served as the Faculty Advisor for the Future Athletic Trainers' Society for over a decade.

As Dr. Denise Lebsack embarks on her well-deserved retirement, the School of ENS extends its heartfelt congratulations and gratitude for her remarkable career and extensive contributions to the university over three decades of dedicated service. Her impact on students, colleagues, her profession, and the community has been exceptional, leaving an indelible legacy at SDSU.



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