



OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

College of Health Sciences

Friday, March 3, 2023

Dental Hygiene Faculty selected as *Dimensions of Dental Hygiene* magazine's "Six Dental Hygienists You Want to Know"

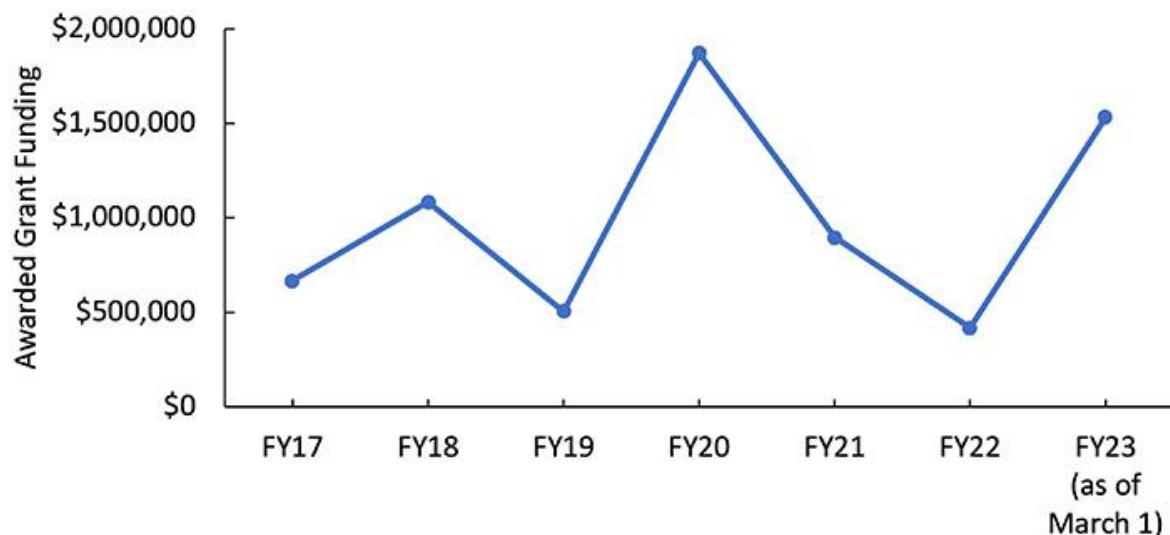


Each year, *Dimensions of Dental Hygiene* recognizes the best and brightest in the dental hygiene profession in their annual "[Six Dental Hygienists You Want to Know](#)." Hygienists are selected for making major impacts in their areas of expertise. Out of over 185,000 dental hygienists nation wide, two ODU faculty were selected.

Ann Bruhn, MS, associate professor and chair of the School of Dental Hygiene, was selected as top influencer, because she "influences dental hygiene through dissemination of her research at national and international levels for more than a decade."

Denise Claiborne, PhD, assistant professor and graduate program director, was selected as top researcher. "Her emerging research led to the utilization of interprofessional education and collaboration among dental hygiene and allied health professionals to increase knowledge and practices in prenatal and pediatric oral health."

External Grant Funding is Rising



By now, you have likely heard that ODU was designated as a Research 1 (i.e., R1) institution by the

Carnegie Foundation at the end of 2021. Only 146 institutions received the prestigious R1 designation out of the 3,900 institutions recognized by the classification system. This means that ODU is in the top 4% of universities with respect to research output and conferral of research doctorates. The move from an R2 to an R1 institution is significant, as it represents the decades-long growth of the research enterprise at ODU.

The College of Health Sciences has contributed in a significant way to the expansion of the university-wide research enterprise. As shown in the figure above, funding from external research grants was relatively stable (between \$500,000 to \$1,000,000) in fiscal years 2017, 2018, and 2019. A boost near \$2,000,000 was realized in fiscal year 2020, which represents proposals that went in before COVID. A decline in research funding was observed in fiscal years 2021 and 2022, consistent with nationwide trends reflecting challenges at beginning/completing research projects and developing competitive research grant proposals during the pandemic. However, we are seeing a significant rebound in fiscal year 2023, with awarded grants already topping \$1,500,000.

With the fiscal year not ending until June 30, we are excited to see what the next four months bring toward our final number for the year. This is a testament to the innovative and forward-focused work that faculty in the College of Health Sciences are doing! We will continue to support and enhance our research enterprise so that important discoveries in basic and applied sciences can be made, which will ultimately contribute to ODU retaining our R1 status.

Natalie Yarish, PhD, received NIH/NHLBI Mentored Research Scientist Development Award; currently recruiting participants



Natalie Yarish, PhD, assistant professor in the School of Community & Environmental Health, is a behavioral scientist who studies physical activity and social connection. CrossFit, marathon runners, yoga enthusiasts, and similar groups each have their communities that support an individual's sense of belonging. Dr. Yarish, who is a military spouse, is studying veteran's needs related to physical activity, social isolation, loneliness, and social connectedness as they transition to civilian life.

This study is part of an NIH/NHLBI Mentored Research Scientist Development Award, which grants \$154,000 per year over the five year study. Currently in her first year, she is conducting interviews to gather qualitative data to develop a digital group-based physical activity intervention to reduce social isolation and loneliness. Her idea is to create community intervention with veterans leading programs themselves.

Dr. Yarish previously published a study which showed a 23% increased risk of cardiovascular disease among older women who report high levels of both social isolation and loneliness. This study among veterans would aim to test a group-based physical activity intervention for cardiovascular disease prevention by harnessing a sense of belonging and reduce social isolation. Findings from the study could have long-term health benefits among vulnerable populations.

Mentored Research Scientist Development Awards also include a mentoring team with people in the field, classes and training, grant workshops, and protected time. In year four of this grant she will write a larger scale grant.

Dr. Yarish is currently seeking participants: "Seeking military veterans who are transitioning or reintegrating to civilian life to participate in a 1:1 private online interview. The purpose of this 60-minute interview is to better understand reintegration and social connection. Each person will receive a \$40 gift card for their time. Please contact Dr. Natalie Yarish via nyarish@odu.edu for more information."

Mira Mariano, PhD, elected president of the Virginia Board of Physical Therapy



The Virginia Board of Physical Therapy is a governor appointed board and Dr. Mira Mariano is serving her second four-year term. This board is different than professional associations, which advocate for the profession. The Virginia Board of Physical Therapy is a regulatory board which serves to protect the public.

While board members are appointed by the governor, leadership positions on the board are voted on by their peers. Dr. Mariano decided to run for a leadership position because her mentor, former ODU faculty member Dr. George Maihafer, encouraged her to get involved. He was president of the board several years ago.

She would encourage other physical therapists and faculty to get involved by attending board meetings, which are open to the public. She said it is a good idea for practicing physical therapists to at least be aware of who is in charge of regulations.

Dr. Miriano advocates that students focus on becoming great clinicians for the first few years in the profession to hone their skills, but get involved in the professional organizations to learn about the bigger picture of the profession such as learning about things like reimbursements, or the differences in practices between state. She said, "There's a progression of learning and only so much you can take in at once."

Elizabeth Brown, PhD, and The Op-Ed Project



Elizabeth Brown began at ODU as the director of the B.S. Public Health Program in January 2023. She is a Public Voices Fellow with AcademyHealth and The OpEd Project. AcademyHealth is a national organization for health services research. Dr. Brown was one of only 20 researchers selected for the 2022-2023 cohort. Fellows are expected to publish at least two op-eds. [Her first piece, "Use 'racial privilege' – not race – to measure and understand health" was published by Stat News in February.](#)

Her next piece will focus on the similarities between not expanding Medicaid in southern states to the Confederate States of America. She says, "This second op-ed goes back to my policy and healthcare access roots. Essentially, the second op-ed is focused on health policy inaction (not expanding Medicaid) and perpetuating racism." Her goal is to publish this piece around the 13th anniversary of the ACA being signed into law (which was March, 23, 2010.)

She is working with two other fellows on a third piece, which will compare current US policies (leisure, mass incarceration, and education) to how slaves were treated. This piece will have a public health spin and they hope to publish during National Public Health Week.

Her advice for others who are interested in this fellowship: "Go for it! There are required meetings about four times during the fellowship year, but the networking and experience I've gained has been ahh-mazing! I've had the greatest mentorship on writing for media." The OpEd Project shops the op-ed pieces around to places for the fellows so the fellows can focus on writing about innovative ways to change the world from an underrepresented voice.

Mobile Health Clinic to Bolster Healthcare in Southampton County



In rural communities, limited access to healthcare, increased poverty levels, transportation challenges and higher unemployment rates conspire to create significant health disparities. At the same time, a national shortage of health care workers has made it harder for aspiring nurses to gain the clinical rotation experience they need.

This spring, Old Dominion University's School of Nursing plans to address both challenges when it launches a mobile health clinic in Southampton County, providing an additional option for much-needed care while simultaneously offering a training ground for nurses.

The van is an entrepreneurial solution to the limited supply of professionals who provide education, supervision and evaluation in a clinical setting. "It's very hard to find preceptors," said Carolyn Rutledge, the associate chair of the School of Nursing who also serves as the project director. "So, we are building our own infrastructure."

The mobile health clinic is funded through a four-year, \$4 million federal grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration. The customized van will be operated by nurse practitioners and offer a spectrum of care provided by students and faculty from across the University, including mental health, physical therapy, athletic training, dental hygiene, speech and human services. The van offers space to draw blood and conduct testing, along with two patient care rooms, including the option to offer women's healthcare.

[Read More](#)

Dental Hygiene Winter Weekend and Alumni Gathering

The School of Dental Hygiene's Winter Weekend was held the last weekend in February with 222 participants in the online continuing education conference, which included five guest speakers over three days.

In addition to the virtual event, an alumni event and vendor expo was held in the health sciences atrium and dental hygiene clinic. Over 100 alumni and nine exhibitors were in attendance. Among the activities

for alumni were a photo booth, student led clinic tours, and raffle prizes from the vendors. The representative for Water Pik, Lorrie San Juan (pictured below), happened to be an alum.

"We are thrilled on the turnout to our first ODU School of Dental Hygiene combined alumni and winter weekend exhibit hall event on our ODU campus and received positive feedback from our guests!" Said Ann Bruhn, MS, RDH, associate professor and chair of the School of Dental Hygiene. "The SODH was excited to provide this event and wants to acknowledge the ODU Office of Alumni Relations for support through awarding of their special alumni event grant as well as our planning committee, Adaira Howell, Lecturer, Emily Ludwig, Assistant Professor, and Jessica Suedbeck, Assistant Professor and all of the SODH faculty and staff. This kind of event took a team effort, and we look forward to similar future events based off this year's success!"

Lauren Ciampoli, director of constituent relations for the office of alumni relations said, "We were so happy to support ODU Dental Hygiene with an alumni association program grant for their Winter Weekend Alumni Event and Vendor Expo." She also invites other departments to reach out to her at lcampol@odu.edu for more information about program grants.

More photos are available on the [ODU Alumni Association Facebook page](#).



School of Public Health Initiative research project awardees



In February, public presentations were given by the 2021-2022 School of Public Health Initiative research project awardees. This mechanism was created to develop and support collaborative public health research within and outside ODU. Each PI awardee is an ODU faculty member in the School of Community and Environmental Health, with at least one colleague on their research team outside of ODU.

Pictured left to right, PI and project title:

- Mariana Szklo-Coxe, “Refining and Piloting a Sleep Health Promotion Intervention for College Students”
- Michele Kekeh, “Assessing the Experiences and Perceptions of the Impact of COVID-19 on Grandparent Caregivers, Resources, and Family Dynamics: A Qualitative Study”
- Jim Blando, “Identification of Cancer Biomarkers in the Urine of Firefighters exposed to toxic combustion by-products and their Correlation with Chemical Markers of Exposure”
- Hadiza Galadima, “Examining the Role of Neighborhood Characteristics on Geographic Variation in Colorectal Cancer: A Combination of Spatial Analysis, Hierarchical Modeling, and Machine Learning Approaches”
- Craig Becker, PhD, CWP, East Carolina University (presented with Leslie Hoglund)
- Harry Zhang, “Developing a Theoretical Framework to Understand the Perception of WIC Breastfeeding Recommendations”
- Leslie Hoglund, “BeWell'r: Perceived Health Interests of College Students” (presented with Craig Becker, PhD, CWP)

Not pictured:

- Anna Jeng, “Assessment of Oxidative Adducts in Sperm Telomeres Induced by Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons”
- Abdullah Al-Taïar, “Women’s Experience and Perceptions of Virtual Home Visits during COVID-19 Pandemic in BabyCare Program in Chesapeake District”

Featured Upcoming Events

Spring Break: March 6-11

Medical Laboratory Sciences Blood Drive: March 21

Nuclear Medicine Senior Colloquium: March 30

College of Health Sciences Research Day: April 14

Reading Day: April 25

Exams: April 26 - May 3

Commencement: May 5-6

To add an event to the calendar, contact Tammie Smith at tsmith@odu.edu. Please include student association events.

Call for stories

Share your stories about research, grants, teaching success, awards and honors, student success, alumni success, interdisciplinary collaboration, students getting experience in the field, community service,

events, and anything else that shows how unique our programs are and how great it is to be a Monarch! If you are featured in the media, please share that as well ***Deadline to be featured in the next newsletter is April 14***, but the "call for stories" is constant. Please share your story ideas with Erica Howell at ehhowell@odu.edu.



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