

# DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED HUMAN SCIENCES

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

SPRING 2021

## From the Department Head



Fall 2020 was our first semester to start and finish in a primarily remote format. I feel fortunate to be in Applied Human Sciences during the most challenging times in higher education. We are resilient, empathetic and vigilant. Faculty, staff, and students have repeatedly demonstrated their strength. We are busy updating curricula and creating new opportunities for students and the greater community. The excitement of the warmer and longer days brings new energy to campus.

Enjoy the stories in this semester's newsletter about active learning in the department, stuttering, teaching kindergartners in a pandemic, and providing support to student parents. I hope you enjoy reading about the department happenings.

Go CATS!

- Sonya Lutter, Ph.D., CFP®

## Our Latest News

- K-State associate professor and university affiliated research team receive Outstanding Research Journal Article of the Year Award
- Adelaide Klutse receives graduate school grant to research socio-emotional development in early learners during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Boost your professional skills by adding a conflict resolution minor or certificate to your resume
- Doctoral student receives \$1,000 grant from The Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood
- Erin Yelland named associate editor of the Journal of Extension
- Johannes selected to serve as Kansas Health Foundation Distinguished Professor of Community Health

Stay up to date with all our latest news on our [website](#) and on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

## Integrated Applied Learning in Applied Human Sciences

Integrated applied learning is a critical component of the student experience in Applied Human Sciences. Integrated applied learning connects content to personal and professional lives through classroom activities and assignments as well as active “hands-on” application in real-world settings that lead to tangible materials and outcomes.



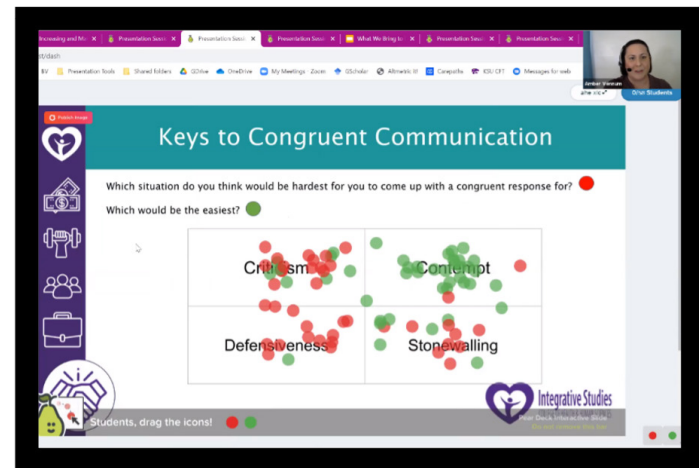
Here are some highlights of ways AHS faculty are rising to the challenge of providing Integrated Applied Learning in the virtual classroom.

How do you create a community of learners in a class of hundreds the

students and their teachers are hundreds and even thousands of miles apart? Katie Thompson-Laswell has found a unique way to do just that in her introduction to human development course. Students get an activity packet with materials to do hands-on, active learning activities throughout the semester!

Preparing a simple recipe helps students to learn about Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory. A balloon and a ping-pong ball illustrate concepts related to birth; the important role of play in early childhood is demonstrated through guided play with play-doh and a punching balloon. Developmental changes specific to aging come to life through activities that allow students to see, feel, and hear aging-specific sensory changes.

New technologies that can be used in the zoom classroom have facilitated applied learning in ways that are both fun and educational. Dr. Amber Vennum uses Pear Deck- a tool that allows students to interact and provide, and receive feedback on learning in real-time.



Through zoom, Dr. Anthony Ferraro is providing opportunities for students to engage with experts across the nation. Students prepare questions for the guests ahead of time; these questions are then used to actively frame the conversation with the visiting scholar.

Hear what students across the department have to say about guest speakers:

***“It’s really interesting to hear what led these individuals to their careers and how they got to where they are at.”***

– Ellie Wells, junior, human development and family science

***“It’s almost like a field trip in college being able to have outsiders come in and speak and is usually always relevant.”***

—Chesney Moore, junior, human development and family science

***“I always find it so interesting to learn how a major can break off into different professions after graduation. I also appreciate when a guest speaker is closer in age to me because they have knowledge on recent information on grad school and their suggestions on what has aided their success are very beneficial to hear.”***

–Katie Zimmerman, senior, communication sciences and disorders

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## Proud of Our Alumni

Can you imagine being in a classroom of five-year-olds who haven’t been in group settings for at least six months and you can’t see their face and they can’t see yours? That’s exactly what it was like for kindergarten teachers this year.

I was fortunate to have my five-year-old assigned to Ms. Minge’s class. Jessica graduated with her Early Childhood Education degree from K-State in 2016. Jessi (as her friends call her) told her kindergarten teacher that she wanted to be a teacher, just like her, and she followed her dream. She chose Early Childhood Education not only because she liked working with and teaching younger children, but she also wanted to work in a school district. “Early Childhood Education seemed like the best of both worlds,” she said. Did you know that the first 1,000 days of a human’s life are the most important days of development? A degree in Early

Childhood Education leads to unified licensure—or the ability to teach typically developing children and special education—from birth through kindergarten. Students conduct practicums in infant, toddler, and preschool spaces. They also have a semester of student teaching, just like elementary education students, in preschool or kindergarten spaces.

For Jessi, the most memorable moment of her college experience was when she planned a music unit as a student teacher in a toddler classroom. She managed to coordinate with the K-State marching band to play for all of the classes. Can you imagine hearing music coming out of instruments bigger than your whole body? What a magical experience for toddlers.

Jessica said, “having the background knowledge of early childhood gave me insight about the students coming into kindergarten. It also stressed the importance of play-based learning which I use in my kindergarten class now. They love hands-on activities!” She loves working with kids (and she’s pretty great with parents, too!). She said, “They each have their own personalities, learning styles, and interests. I love challenging each of them at their level, meeting their needs, and having fun. Most of all, I love seeing each student progress as they learn and grow. I strive for a positive classroom environment where everyone is kind and willing to help one another. We all celebrate each child’s successes together.”

**Your professors and I are proud of you, Ms. Minge. Your students will remember your experiential teaching for life.**

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## Thankful for Our Excellence Funds

Since our last newsletter, we have put some excellence funds—our flexible donations—to good use in promoting well-being among students, staff, and faculty. We purchased picnic blankets to distribute to students faculty saw in most need of a, “we’re thinking of you/you’re not alone” message. Many of the blankets were given anonymously by nominating faculty. Students who received the blankets are juggling a multitude of issues, including parents with cancer, students whose partners are deployed, students who are parents (with or without support), students who are struggling with mental health, etc. We received such grateful responses from students. The small token meant so much to them to know that we are listening and we are here for them. Thank you for allowing us to provide this support to students.

Department ambassadors recently made “busy bags” for student parents who could use something to bring cheer to children and allow them to focus attention on their work in small bits of day time. We have the distinct advantage of having developmental experts in our department to help.



Infants: Did you know that infants explore their world starting as soon as they enter the world? Babies need “tummy time” to build body awareness and muscle control supporting this on a blanket allows for tactile exploration. Babies don’t see in color until roughly 2-3 months

of age providing black and white and limited colored objects helps them to focus and distinguish between hues. Babies are oral explorers providing soft, chewy, and larger-sized objects that support this development.

2 to 3-year-olds: During this period of development, young children experience an explosion of holistic growth: physically, linguistically, cognitively, and socially-emotionally. Children thrive with hands-on materials that they explore using all four senses. Children are also expressing their independence and when given challenging yet appropriate toys their exploration, curiosity, and play take off preparing them for later life.





4 to 7-year-olds: Children continue to develop holistically and thrive on consistency. Play continues to be serious work for young children to figure out how the world works around them. Children in this period of development need a balance of independent activities, peer relationships, and playtime, as well

as meaningful exchanges of play with a trusted and responsive caregiver. Providing activities that foster creativity and open-ended play expand a young child's mind and confidence.



8-year-olds and older: Children in this developmental period are experiencing a shift in cognitive abilities and can process more complex thoughts, engage in deeper conversations with peers and adults, think outside of an egocentric bubble, and continue to thrive on routine,

consistency, and expectations. Providing open-ended activities allows for creativity, ingenuity, and collaborative work/play with peers and trusted adults. Children in this developmental period need a balance of structured and unstructured activities to continue holistic growth and development.

To support our early childhood teachers, we used excellence funds to pay fees to continue their education. Several teachers are pursuing their bachelor's degree or master's degree with the financial support of our excellence funds.

**To support the department, please [click here](#) or email Jeff Haug, [jeffh@ksufoundation.org](mailto:jeffh@ksufoundation.org).**

## Faculty and Staff Kudos

Here is just a snapshot of some of the amazing work our faculty are doing.

- **Jared Durschi**, associate professor in couple and family therapy, spent the fall 2020 semester on sabbatical. While on focused research time, Dr. Durtschi drafted a \$1.5 million National Institute for Health grant proposal with an interdisciplinary team, published eight manuscripts, prepared another 10+ manuscripts, and continued his personal development as a therapist. We were glad to welcome him back from his sabbatical in January.
- **Briana Goff**, professor, was recognized as the Twitter Teacher of the Month in December 2020 from the Teaching and Learning Center at K-State.
- **Elaine Johannes**, associate professor and Extension Specialist, has been named the Kansas Health Foundation Distinguished Professor in Community Health—an endowed position held by K-State Research and Extension and selected into the National Leadership Academy for the Public's Health Cohort 10 (2021) by the Center for Health Leadership and Practice. Dr. Johannes also won the KSRE Annual Team Award - Farm Financial Skills for Kansas Women in Agriculture in August 2020.
- **Mindy Markham**, associate professor in human development and family science and associate department head, won the Outstanding Research Journal Article Award from the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education in September 2020.
- **Erin Yelland**, assistant professor and Extension Specialist, was selected to the national Health and Wellness Fellowship program by eXtension Foundation.

- **Adelaide Klutse**, M.S. student in applied family science, was awarded \$1,000 from the K-State Graduate Schools 2021 Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences Small Grant Program for her project, “Post COVID-19 Families- How Early Educators facilitate SocioEmotional Development in their students during the COVID-19 Pandemic.”
- **Shelby Astle**, Ph.D. student in applied family science, received a \$1,000 research grant from The Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood.
- **Bronwyn Fees**, associate dean and professor, was elected to the national Board of Human Sciences’ Board of Directors

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## National Stuttering Association

Have you ever struggled to find the right words or stuttered during a public presentation? I know I have and I know how it feels. What I don’t know is how that feels daily for people who stutter, but I have a better idea after visiting with experts in fluency disorders.



Dr. Kristin Pelczarski leads monthly meetings through the National Stuttering Association (NSA) held at the K-State Speech and Hearing Center. Jayden McCall, a second-year veterinary medicine student at K-State, got involved with the local NSA chapter after volunteering for one of Dr. Pelczarski’s research

studies. Dr. Pelczarski’s research with colleagues uses eye-tracking to determine how people retrieve and assemble sounds. It is

hypothesized that part of stuttering is the result of delays or difficulties during this process. Dr. Pelczarski and colleagues found that adults who stutter took significantly longer than typically fluent adults to phonologically encode words when reading aloud. This, among other research and clinical work by Dr. Pelczarski and colleagues, is providing empirical data to inform best-practices in speech-language pathology (SLP) for therapists across the nation.

Jayden had tried speech therapy in grade school but quit before middle school. He was reluctant to try speech therapy again as an adult but was willing to give it another try at the K-State Speech and Hearing Center after a good experience in Dr. Pelczarski’s research experiment. He has gained a lot of knowledge and confidence with his SLP. He learned that speech-language therapy is not just about trying to become more fluent, but also about learning tools to manage stuttering as well. Jayden reinforced that stuttering is a fluency disorder, not an intellectual deficiency. Joining the NSA was life-changing for Jayden. He learned that he is not alone and that stuttering impacts all races, genders, cultures, and every walk of life. He has met another veterinarian who stutters, a psychiatrist, a psychologist, and other well-regarded professionals through the NSA.

Jayden’s advice for other people who stutter? Be yourself. Accept the stutter and develop a toolbox to live with it and not fight it. While he was not ready to hear this advice at age 10, at age 20, he was ready to accept the information and has benefited greatly from the peer group of NSA. Stuttering has in no way limited his potential. On top of being halfway through his Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) program, he will be finishing his Master’s of Public Health degree soon and has already started a Ph.D. program to develop his research skills.

Naturally, I asked Jayden about his favorite animal—the elephant. He describes the elephant as a seemingly giant, clumsy animal but in reality, the elephant is a very intelligent mammal with incredible social-emotional capabilities.

Elephants are herd animals. They reportedly visit the death sites of their herd companions. It is easy to see why Jayden adores the elephant. He, too, is an intelligent mammal who is incredibly easy to visit with who taught me new information about fluency disorders.

While I have no question about Jayden’s intelligence, I did question his sanity with taking on three intense programs simultaneously and he just laughed and said he loves it. His passion is obvious. My favorite Jayden quote was, “I’m going to do what’s important to me—with or without a stutter.”

**You are going to be a brilliant researcher, discoverer and veterinarian, Jayden.**

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## We Want to Hear from You!

Interested in a visit? [E-mail](#) to arrange an in-person visit or Zoom conversation. I am always open to hearing new stories.

—Sonya Lutter, department head



Emeriti faculty members Charlie Griffin, Joyce Cantrell and Marlene VerBrugge visit the new wall displaying all emeriti faculty and staff outside the Applied Human Sciences Student Success Center. (photo taken pre COVID).

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