Distinguished Scholars 2021/2022

**Supporting the advancement of elite graduate students
on their journeys toward becoming leaders in behavioral science.**

LEADER:
Michael Kranak, PhD, BCBA-D
*Assistant Professor, Department of Human Development and Child Studies and Director of Research for the Center for Autism
Oakland University*

Michael P. Kranak, PhD, BCBA-D

Michael Kranak, PhD, BCBA-D is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Human Development and Child Studies and the Director of Research for the Center for Autism at Oakland University. He completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the Kennedy Krieger Institute and Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; and earned his PhD in Psychology and Behavior Analysis from Western Michigan University, MA in Special Education and Applied Behavior Analysis from The Ohio State University, and BA in Psychology from West Virginia University.

His research interests include applied and translational investigations of relapse, the assessment and treatment of problem behavior, and behavioral technology in supervision and higher education. He is a co-investigator on NIH-funded research, and has supported several R01 and LRP applications. Dr. Kranak serves on the Board of Editors for the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, and as an ad hoc reviewer for several other journals. In his spare time, he enjoys working out, cooking, golfing; and is an avid Pittsburgh sports fan.

The DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS:

Abigail Blackman, MS, BCBA, *University of Kansas*
Maya Fallon, MS, BCBA, *Munroe-Meyer Institute for Genetics and
Rehabilitation, University of Nebraska Medical Center*
Nicole Kanaman, MA, BCBA, *University of Kansas*
Matthew Laske, MA, *University of Kansas*
Alyssa McElroy, MA, BCBA, LBA, *Western Michigan University*
Alyssa Rojas, MS, BCBA, *University of South Florida*
Kristen Rolf, MEd, *Utah State University*
Ashley Romero, MA, BCBA, *University of Kansas*
Andressa Sleiman, MS, BCBA, *University of Florida*
Valeria Squatrito, MA, *Kore University, Enna (Italy)*

Abigail Blackman, MS, BCBA

Abigail Blackman is a doctoral student in the Performance Management Laboratory at the University of Kansas. After receiving her bachelor's degree in Psychology from Binghamton University, she went on to pursue her master's degree in Applied Behavior Analysis and Organizational Behavior Management at Florida Institute of Technology. During her graduate training she has gained experience consulting with a local human service agency and conducting translational and applied research. Presently, she is interested in determining training and supervision practices that impact employee retention and the influence of contextual variables on trained behavior.

Maya Fallon, MS, BCBA

Maya Fallon is a third-year student in the Applied Behavior Analysis doctoral program at the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Munroe-Meyer Institute, working under the mentorship of Dr. Kevin Luczynski. Maya works as a clinical supervisor in the Prosocial Interactions Program at Munroe-Meyer Institute, where her primary area of focus is advanced social skills. As a graduate research assistant, Maya works with children with deficits in verbal behavior and social skills. Her research currently includes evaluating procedures to increase remembering and reporting on pasts events, establishing echoic control and increasing mand responses, and teaching children how to respond to instances of unkindness and threats of harm. This year, Maya was a recipient of the Giri Hedge Research Grant from the Speech Pathology Applied Behavior Analysis SIG. She enjoys conducting research in verbal behavior and social skills and hopes to continue working in these areas after earning her doctoral degree.

Nicole Kanaman, MA, BCBA

My name is Nicole Kanaman and I am a fifth-year doctoral student in the department of Applied Behavioral Sciences at the University of Kansas working under the supervision of Dr. Claudia Dozier. I received my bachelor's degree in applied behavior analysis from the University of North Texas and my master's degree in applied behavioral sciences from the University of Kansas. Broadly, my research interests include the assessment and treatment of problem behavior across the lifespan and staff training. Currently, I provide consultative behavioral services to adults with intellectual and development disabilities living in community-based residential placements and supervise undergraduate research and practicum students interested in working with adults with IDD. In my free time, I enjoy reading, biking, and camping.

Matthew Laske, MA

Matthew Laske is a second-year doctoral student at the University of Kansas' behavioral psychology program, working under the supervision of Dr. Florence DiGennaro Reed. Matthew completed his master's degree in industrial-organizational psychology and human resource management at Appalachian State University working under the guidance of Dr. Timothy Ludwig. He completed his bachelor's degree in behavioral sciences from Western Michigan University. He previously served as a project manager for the safety analytics team at Appalachian State University seeking to identify variables that are most predictive of adverse safety outcomes. His current research interests include the investigation of effective communication, improving public speaking behaviors, and behavioral safety. In his free time, Matthew enjoys biking, painting along with Bob Ross, and anything involving basketball.

Alyssa McElroy, MA, BCBA, LBA

Alyssa is Board CAs Alyssa McElroy is a BCBA and fifth-year doctoral student at Western Michigan University. Alyssa received her master's degree in behavior analysis with a focus on early intervention and organizational behavior management from Western Michigan University in 2013. Upon receiving her master's degree, Alyssa worked as a clinician at Trumpet Behavioral Health in California and Colorado, where she, developed interventions for individuals diagnosed with autism and developmental disabilities, supervised BCBA fieldwork, and oversaw operations at Trumpet's South Denver Center. After spending four years in the field, Alyssa re-joined Western Michigan University as a doctoral student in 2017. Alyssa has a variety of experience teaching undergraduate courses, including introduction to behavior analysis, introduction to psychology, concepts and principles in behavior analysis, and research methods/statistics. She's published research on teaching feminine hygiene skills to young females with ASD and is currently working on research related to supervision best practices in the field of behavior analysis. Alyssa serves as an executive member of the Michigan Autism Conference planning committee. Her interests include school-based consulting, effective teaching strategies, supervision, and instructional design.

Alyssa Rojas, MS, BCBA

Alyssa Rojas is a first year PhD student in the Applied Behavior Analysis program at University of South Florida. She earned her Masters in Science in Applied Behavior Analysis at California State University Northridge under the advisement of Dr. Tara Fahmie where she worked on a prevention of problem behavior project. She is currently under the advisement of Dr. Catia Cividini-Motta where her research focus is on the assessment and treatment of automatically reinforced problem behavior. She is currently a doctoral level instructor in the University of South Florida's ABA minor program. She is currently working on a systematic literature review and a precursor identification assessment protocol. She looks forward to continuing her contributions to this field as an active researcher is interested in continuing her research in prevention of problem behavior and strives to foster an interdisciplinary approach to developing efficient programs and disseminating research.

Kristen Rolf, MEd

Kristen Rolf is in her final year of the Special Education PhD program at Utah State University under the supervision of Tim Slocum and Kaitlin Bundock. She earned her teacher certification and M.Ed. from the University of Washington Tacoma. She taught for five years in K-8 general and special education classrooms and served three years as an instructional coach. As an instructional coach, she was responsible for supervising dual-certification pre-service teachers from the University of Washington Tacoma and training pre- and in-service teachers and paraeducators in the implementation of Direct Instruction programs. Since coming to Utah State, she has researched the selection and implementation of empirically-supported instructional programs in schools. Currently, she is leading a cross-disciplinary team in the development of an explicit, systematic mathematics vocabulary intervention. She plans to study the efficacy of the intervention for her dissertation. Kristen has co-authored multiple articles and conference presentations on Direct Instruction and implementation in the context of education since becoming a doctoral student. She is also a co-author of *Direct Instruction Mathematics – 5th ed.*

Ashley Romero, MA, BCBA

My name is Ashley Romero and I am a fifth-year doctoral student at the University of Kansas under the advisement of Dr. Pam Neidert. I received my Master's degree in 2018 from the University of Kansas and my thesis was an evaluation of effective and efficient toileting procedures in young children. I received my bachelor's degree in 2016 from the University of Florida. I am currently working as a BCBA for an early intensive behavioral intervention clinic and supervising RBTs and BCBA supervisees. My research interests include the assessment and treatment of severe problem behavior, training FA methodology to staff and students, functional communication training, and dissemination of our field. My personal interests include spending time with my family in Miami, FL while boating, fishing, and diving.

Andressa Sleiman, MS, BCBA

Andressa Sleiman, MS, BCBA, earned her Masters of Science degree in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Organizational Behavior Management (OBM) from Florida Institute of Technology (FIT) in 2017. She is currently pursuing her PhD at the University of Florida under the supervision and guidance of Nicole Gravina, PhD. Andressa has been in the field of ABA since 2011 and has worked with individuals with developmental disabilities, typically developing children and adults, and as an internal OBM consultant. Andressa's general research interests include OBM, process improvement, behavioral economics, determinants of reinforcement, training, dissemination of ABA and OBM, and science literacy.

Valeria Squatrito, MA

Valeria Squatrito is a PhD student in the doctorate program in "Social Inclusion in Multicultural Contexts" at Kore University of Enna (Italy). She was born and raised in Sicily and in 2011 she entered the BA program in Psychology and she immediately started to get interested in research, on the recognition of emotions as a first start. To get her MA degree Valeria presented a thesis on IRAP and religious prejudice. For this research she was honored with the ACBS Junior Investigator Poster Award at ACBS World Conference 15 in 2017 in Seville (Spain). She is interested in Clinical Psychology, Social Psychology and Behavioral Sciences, Web Communication and Social Media and Facial Action Coding System (FACS). She has attended in several conferences, such as ACBS World Conference 15 in 2017 and 8th EABA conference in 2016, presenting symposia and posters.