

Distinguished Scholars 2023/2024

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

The mission of the Distinguished Scholars is to support the advancement of elite graduate students on their journeys toward becoming leaders in behavioral science. In service of the mission of the Center, Distinguished Scholar volunteers collaboratively identify, explore, and execute projects under the guidance of established leaders, the Center Advisors and Trustees. The group was formed in response to the one of the Center's primary goals: to improve the future of behavioral science by education and development of the next wave of behavioral scientists and practitioners. Student-initiated projects align with the Center's other main goals: to create and deliver trustworthy information on high quality behavioral services and science around the world, and to promote global collaboration among behavioral organizations. Students also work in various capacities to support the Center, such as through volunteer efforts at Center conferences. Scholars' activities align with Center's overall mission: to use the science of human behavior to alleviate human suffering.

LEADER

Tara Fahmie, PhD, BCBA-D

*Associate Professor and Associate Director, Severe Behavior Program
University of Nebraska Medical Center's Munroe-Meyer Institute*



Dr. Fahmie received her bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Florida in 2005. She received her Master's degree in Applied Behavioral Sciences from the University of Kansas under the mentorship of Dr. Gregory Hanley in 2007. She received her PhD from the University of Florida in Behavior Analysis under the mentorship of Dr. Brian Iwata in 2012. Between 2012 and 2020, Dr. Fahmie was a faculty member of the Psychology Department at California State University, Northridge. In 2021, Dr. Fahmie joined the Severe Behavior Program at the Munroe-Meyer Institute as an Associate Director. The Severe Behavior Program clinics provide assessment and treatment services to children with severe problem behaviors. The aim of services is to provide evidence-based behavioral assessment, intervention, and training to individuals and their caregivers, focusing on decreasing problematic and maladaptive behaviors and teaching functional, alternative behaviors

using the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis.

Dr. Fahmie specializes in the assessment and treatment of problem behavior and has experience providing these behavioral services in various settings (homes, schools, residential programs, clinics). At California State University, Northridge, Dr. Fahmie directed the Functional Assessment and Healthy Behavior (FAHB) clinic and research lab, which provided low- or no-cost access to assessment and treatment services in an outpatient university setting and in collaboration with local schools and autism agencies. In addition, Dr. Fahmie regularly consults with service providers in her local community and internationally to assist in the development and implementation of evidence-based, best practice strategies for the assessment and treatment of problem behavior. Dr. Fahmie focuses on training and consultation models that are culturally informed and sustainable. Dr. Fahmie also investigates assessment and intervention strategies that will prevent minor forms of problem behavior from escalating in severity.

Dr. Fahmie thoroughly enjoys mentoring students and professionals from various backgrounds and strives to provide an inclusive training environment that embraces diverse perspectives.

DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS:

Ryan Atkinson, MS, BCBA, Simmons University

Kaitlin Brunt, BA, University of Kansas

Elaina Heard, MS, BCBA, LBA, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology

Marissa Kamlowksy, MS, BCBA, University of Kansas

Kelly Krukowski, MA, BCBA, LBA-MI, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology

Carla Lasagna Del Val, BS, BCaBA, IBA, aAdC, University of West Florida

Matthew Laske, MA, University of Kansas

Fernanda Oda, MA, BCBA, University of Kansas

Alyssa Rojas, MS, BCBA, University of South Florida

Sandra Ruby, MA, University of Kansas

Ryan Atkinson, MA

Ryan Atkinson received his Bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Psychology from the University of Massachusetts Boston, followed by a Master's degree in Behavior Analysis from Regis College. Currently, they are pursuing a Ph.D. at Simmons University, focusing on behavior analysis and its philosophical underpinnings.

Their passion for behavior analysis and behaviorism was ignited by their exposure to Gilbert Ryle's logical behaviorism, which later led them to explore Radical Behaviorism. With an interest in pragmatism and epistemology, Ryan has actively pursued publication opportunities in these areas.

In their academic journey, Ryan has sought to bridge the gap between philosophy and behavior analysis, aiming to integrate theoretical insights with practical applications. They are particularly interested in exploring the foundations of behaviorism within a broader philosophical context.

Kaitlin Brunt, BA

Kaitlin Brunt is an online student in the master's program at the University of Kansas in the Department of Applied Behavioral Science. Kaitlin graduated from Capilano University in Vancouver, British Columbia with a bachelor's degree in Applied Behavior Analysis (Autism) in 2015 and wrote her board certification as an assistant behavior analyst (BCaBA) in 2020. Kaitlin's academic and professional interests include play-based, preventative/ pre-diagnosis behavior analytic interventions for children showing signs of autism and supporting families following diagnosis through a center-based treatment model. Her personal interests relate to the effects of behavior analysis in the area of sustainability, including transportation decisions, reducing waste, and increasing engagement in community efforts.

Elaina Heard, MS, BCBA, LBA

Elaina has spent a decade practicing in the field of applied behavior analysis (ABA). She is the founder and chief clinical officer of Watson's Way ABA Corp. She received her undergraduate degree in psychology from The University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) and her MS in applied behavior analysis (ABA) from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Currently, Elaina is completing her third year in the applied behavior analysis doctoral program studying under the supervision of Dr. Robyn Catagnus and Dr. Chrystal Jansz.

She believes in helping the world through behavior analysis while finding cultural components to enhance science literacy. While practicing as a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst, she provides and develops verified international lectures and presentations coupled with ABA to students and parents with practitioners in the field. To date, she delivers courses and guest presentations in Latvia, Brazil, West Africa, and South Africa. As a researcher, her interests include video-modeling, play-based learning, audience response systems, training, inter-cultural competency in behavior analysis, and inclusive practice.

Marissa Kamlowsky, MS, BCBA

Marissa is heading into her fourth year in the doctoral program at the University of Kansas' Behavioral Psychology program under the supervision and mentorship of Dr. Claudia Dozier. Marissa completed her master's degree in Applied Behavior Analysis in Melbourne, Florida under the supervision of Dr. David Wilder at Florida Institute of Technology and her bachelor's degree in Psychology at Ohio University. Marissa has worked in both early intervention and severe behavior clinical settings at The Scott Center for Autism Treatment and the Edna A. Hill Child Development Center. More recently, Marissa has taken a clinical consultation role at GoodLife Innovations working with adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Marissa also enjoys conducting research projects at each clinical setting, and her primary research aims surround prevention, assessment, & treatment of behavior disorders, teaching functional skills, and staff or caregiver training. In her free time, Marissa enjoys spending quality time with her family, taking her dog to local trails, and cooking for friends.

Kelly R. Krukowski, MA, BCBA, LBA-MI



Kelly has been a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst since 2016 and has been working in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis since 2012. She has extensive experience in early intervention with children with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities. She received her bachelor's degree in Psychology from The University of Michigan and her master's degree in Applied Behavior Analysis from Ball State University. Kelly is in her third year in the Applied Behavior Analysis doctoral program at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. She has been gaining experience with Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS) in preparation for her dissertation. Kelly has assisted with multiple research projects focused on early intervention for individuals with PWS in the TCS PWS Lab under the leadership of Dr. Kasey Bedard and Dr. Annette Griffith. Additionally, Kelly serves as a graduate Teaching Assistant for an introductory course in Applied Behavior Analysis at TCS.

Carla Lasagna Del Val, BS, BCaBA, IBA, aAdC



Graduated at the University of Sussex, in Brighton, UK, with a degree in Psychology, since 2017 she has been working in the field of Behavior Analysis, experiencing the application of such a science in the field of Autism, and specifically within the Organizational Behavioral Management context. From 2020 she has been specifically working as a consultant, under the supervision of Professor Fabio Tosolin and Doctor Maria Gatti, with the implementation of Behavior-Based Safety processes in various national and international industrial settings. In 2020 she passed and achieved her certification as a Registered Behavior Technician, from the Board of BACB. In 2021 she took part at the Verified Course Sequence in Behavior Analysis, accredited by the ABA International entity and she is currently studying to achieve her accreditation as a BCaBA. Since 2020 she has been collaborating with AARBA, the Italian scientific association that has the main to promote and disseminate the

scientific methodological evidence-based applications of Behavior Analysis.

She participated at the Behavior-Based Safety course, achieving her qualification and certification and consequentially she is currently part of the registry of the qualified experts in BBS implementations.

Matthew Laske, MA



Matthew Laske is a doctoral student at the University of Kansas' behavioral psychology program, working under the supervision of Dr. Florence DiGennaro Reed. Working with Dr. Timothy Ludwig, he obtained his M.A. in Industrial-Organizational Psychology and Human Resource Management at Appalachian State University. Matthew completed his bachelor's degree in behavioral sciences from Western Michigan University. He has designed, implemented, and assessed behavioral safety programs in multiple industries, including fortune 500 companies. His research and expertise include behavioral safety, behavioral systems analysis, and public speaking/communication. He has presented at over 50 conferences, workshops, and other training on workplace behavior and public speaking topics. In his free time, Matthew enjoys hiking, basketball, and painting.

Fernanda Oda, MA, BCBA



Fernanda S. Oda (she/her) is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Kansas in the Applied Behavioral Economics Lab. She is an international student from Brazil, a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), and an Associate Editor of a peer-reviewed Brazilian journal (RBTCC) in behavior analysis. She received her bachelor's degree in Psychology in Brazil from the Federal University of Paraná in 2012 and her master's degree in Behavior Analysis from the University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL) in 2019. Her interests include verbal behavior, conceptual and translational research, decision making and choice, social justice, and international dissemination. Fernanda has peer-reviewed publications in American and Brazilian behavior-analytic journals and books, and other publications on dissemination of behavior analysis, including seven small contributions to the Science Magazine. She has teaching, research, and clinical experiences in Brazil and in the U.S. She received

the 2017 SABA International Development Grant, 2019 SEAB Graduate Student Diversity Scholarship, 2019 UHCL Most Outstanding Student Award for the Behavior Analysis Master's Program, 2020 VB-SIG ABAI Student Grant Competition, 2021 University Women's Club Scholarship, and other national and regional awards for her master's thesis on gender-biased verbal behavior and self-editing, including the 2020 Forrest J. Files Basic Research Student Paper Award from MABA, the 2020 VB-SIG ABAI Student Paper Award, the 2019 MABA and 2019 FABA posters awards.

Alyssa Rojas, MS, BCBA

Alyssa Rojas is a 3rd year PhD student in the Applied Behavior Analysis program at the University of South Florida. She earned her master's 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 working on proposing her dissertation where she will be comparing subtyping methodologies and extending research on augmented competing stimulus assessments. She looks forward to continuing her contributions to this field and strives to create an inclusive and meaningful impact. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her four-legged son and loved ones.

Sandra Ruby, MA

Sandra is a doctoral candidate in the Performance Management Laboratory at the University of Kansas under the mentorship of Dr. Florence DiGennaro Reed. She completed her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at California State University, Fresno and her Master of Arts in Applied Behavioral Science at the University of Kansas. During her graduate studies, she has concentrated in Organizational Behavior Management and has consulted with organizations to help achieve their business goals. Her current research interests include technology-based staff training and performance management. In her free time, Sandra enjoys laughing with friends and photography.