

Distinguished Scholars 2024/2025

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:

Awab Abdel-Jalil, MS, BCBA, Endicott College

Marisela Aguilar, MS, West Virginia University

Abbie Cooper, BS, West Virginia University

Jasmeen Kaur, MA, BCBA, University of Nebraska Medical Center

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

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

Stacha C. Leslie, MEd, MSc, BCBA, University of Kansas

Awab Abdel-Jalil, MS, BCBA, Endicott College

Awab Abdel-Jalil is the senior behavior analysis researcher at Upstate Caring Partners and a current PhD student at Endicott College under Dr. T. V. Joe Layng's mentorship. Awab began his study of behavior analysis as an undergraduate at the University of North Texas and carried his passion for the science into the graduate program. On the graduate level, he completed his Masters thesis under Dr. Jesús Rosales-Ruiz's guidance. Awab recently coauthored the book *Nonlinear Contingency Analysis: Going Beyond Cognition and Behavior in Clinical Practice* and two recent papers on a nonlinear constructional approach to assent. He's given over 20 symposia, workshops, and papers at major behavioral science conferences on several topics including nonlinear contingency analysis, the constructional approach, assent, emotions, and problem solving. He's also currently an adjunct instructor for Endicott College's Master ABA program. His current research interests are in signal detection theory and a constructional approach to exposure therapies.

Marisela Aguilar, MS, West Virginia University

Marisela Aguilar is a doctoral student at West Virginia University. Originally from Des Moines, Iowa, Marisela received both a BS in Psychology and a BA in Sociology from Drake University in 2021, and her MS in Psychology from West Virginia University in 2023. She is mentored by Dr. Claire St. Peter and Dr. Ray Joslyn. Her research interests include measurement strategies, procedural fidelity, behavioral interventions in school contexts, and cultural adaptations to behavioral intervention. Upon successful completion of her graduate training, Marisela would like to assume a faculty position to continue her love for research and dissemination of behavior analysis. As a graduate student and future faculty member, Marisela is committed to cultivating an inclusive environment that supports and uplifts the voices of our most marginalized community members.

Abbie Cooper, BS, West Virginia University

Abbie Cooper is a third year graduate student in behavior analysis at West Virginia University working with Dr. Claire St. Peter. She completed her B.S. in chemistry at St. Lawrence University before discovering behavior analysis. Her research interests include the translation of basic principles to applied technology and phenomena related to re-emergence of previously learned behavior. Abbie's Master's thesis focused on the differential impact of positive and negative reinforcement on resurgence. Abbie is also interested in how environmental variables impact infant caregiving behavior.

Jasmeen Kaur, MA, BCBA, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Jasmeen Kaur earned a Master of Arts in Human Services Psychology, with a focus in ABA, at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, under the guidance of Dr. John Borrero. During her graduate studies, Jasmeen worked on the Inpatient Neurobehavioral Unit at Kennedy Krieger Institute, gaining invaluable experience in the assessment and treatment of severe challenging behavior, including treatment-resistant subtypes of automatically maintained self-injury.

Jasmeen is currently a PhD student in the Applied Behavior Analysis program at the University of Nebraska Medical Center under the guidance of Dr. Tara Fahmie. Jasmeen's interests include the assessment and treatment of automatically maintained self-injury, functional analysis methodology, and improving her understanding of cultural competence in behavioral health care. She hopes to make meaningful contributions in the field while maintaining her compassionate commitment to the individuals she serves. In her free time, Jasmeen enjoys spending time with her dog, Murphy, and her loved ones.

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

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. She has been gaining experience with Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS) and is currently working on 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, University of West Florida

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.

Stacha C. Leslie, MEd, MSc, BCBA, University of Kansas

Stacha Leslie (she/her) is in the final year of her doctoral program at the University of Kansas working under the supervision of Dr. Claudia Dozier. She obtained her M.Ed., in Special Education with an emphasis in Behavior Analysis from the University of North Texas, her MSc. in autism spectrum disorders from Queen's University Belfast, and her bachelor's degree in Rehabilitation Studies from the University of North Texas. Stacha has experience working as a Special Education teacher and District Instructional Coach in Texas. Since her tenure at KU, she has worked in clinical settings at KU's Child Development Center, as a lead researcher and behavior analyst on an NIH-R1 grant working remotely with caregivers on the assessment and treatment of restrictive and repetitive behavior and has most recently worked as a training coordinator for GoodLife Innovations working with staff and individuals with IDD. Stacha's research interests include caregiver & staff training, behavioral analysis and special education, and working with individuals who are severely impacted by developmental disabilities. Stacha has a commitment to service and has received the KansABA distinguished service award (2024) as well as KU's ABS departmental service award (2023). In her free time, Stacha enjoys working out, reading fiction novels, taking care of her plants, and snuggling with her Goldendoodle, Burrhus Fredrick (B.F.).