EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP & POLICY STUDIES

GREETINGS FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD

It has been a busy academic year in ELPS. Here are some of the key events that defined our department in the 2024-25 academic year:

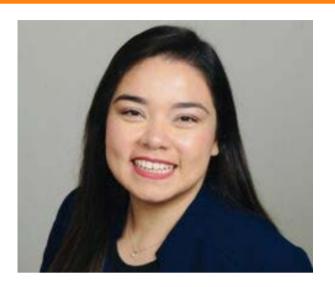
- Many of our faculty and staff have received awards from the college, university, and national organizations for their outstanding work.
- We underwent a thorough academic program review process that highlighted the many strengths of ELPS while also giving us some areas to work on going forward.
- We successfully hired two tenure-line faculty members to begin in the fall and are conducting searches for a staff member and an assistant/associate professor of practice.
- We had opportunities to bond as a department and with our colleagues in the Education Research & Opportunity Center.

ELPS's work does not stop in the summer, but we are all looking forward to a period of calm before things ramp up again in August. Have a wonderful summer!

Robert Kelchen, Ph.D.

Professor & Department Head Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies





Dr. Duenas Receives Outstanding Doctoral Mentoring Award

The Graduate School recently announced that Mary Duenas won the first ever <u>Outstanding Doctoral</u> <u>Mentoring Award</u>! This award recognizes that mentoring graduate and professional students can be critical to their success. Dr. Duenas also recently received the <u>Mena Valdez Outstanding</u> <u>Faculty Award</u> at NASPA as well!

Dr. Irwin Recognized as Annuit Coeptis Emerging Professional

Dr. Irwin received this award at the <u>ACPA</u> <u>Convention</u> in Long Beach, CA. <u>The award</u> honors exemplary educators in the early stages of their careers. Irwin was one of five early-career professionals recognized for their contributions to the field.





CSP Program Pausing New Student Enrollment Moving Forward

Moving forward, the <u>CSP program</u> will shift away from primarily serving students who work in 50% time graduate assistantships towards a new model that provides a different type of experience for our students. We are excited about these changes and believe they will enhance the professional preparation and development of our graduate students.

Dr. Kelchen Recognized as Top Scholar Influencer by Education Week

Dr. Kelchen ranked 31st out of 200 scholars nationwide in <u>Education Week's Edu-</u>
<u>Scholar Public Influence Rankings for 2025</u>.
He is the only scholar from the University of Tennessee to make this year's list!





Leadership Studies Adjunct Faculty Dr. Gary Petree Receives Faculty Advisor Award from TennACADA

Dr. Gary Petree received the <u>Outstanding</u> <u>Advising Faculty Advisor Award from</u> <u>TennACADA</u>. Nominated by Heath Cox, he went to great measures to help the advisor and his student!

ERO's Amy King Partners with MDC to Present at Grand Challenges Conference

Amy King, an Educational Specialist within the <u>Education Research & Opportunity</u> <u>Center</u>, partnered with the <u>Metro Drug</u> <u>Coalition</u>, a substance abuse prevention and recovery center that serves the local community, to present at the Grand Challenges Conference in Murfreesboro.





The Education Research & Opportunity Center Hosts TRIO Day in Spring

This February, the <u>ERO Center</u> hosted the <u>TRIO Day</u> with over 300 participants! This event gives first-generation, low-income, and disabled potential Vols access to the skills, experience, and knowledge they need to succeed in formal post-secondary education.

Dr. Leia Cain Named New CEHHS Senate Representative for ELPS

<u>Dr. Leia Cain</u> has recently been named as the new <u>College of Education, Health, &</u> <u>Human Sciences (CEHHS)</u> Senate Representative for the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies.





ELPS Holds The Annual ELPS Awards Ceremony in May

The ELPS Department held its annual Awards Ceremony in May as we all got the chance to spend time together with other faculty, staff and students while enjoying great food, prizes and awards!

Three ELPS Members Receive Recognition at CEHHS Ceremony

<u>Dr. Louis Rocconi</u>, and <u>Dr. Lauren Irwin</u>, as well as our Business Manager, <u>Constance Honorable</u>, all received award recognition at the 2025 Faculty & Staff Recognition Ceremony across CEHHS.

T CEHHS



ESM Launching New Evaluation Methodology Certificate This Fall

The <u>Evaluation Statistics &</u> <u>Methodology</u> (ESM) program will launch two new certificates this Fall. One being the Evaluation Methodology graduate certificate. <u>Click here for more information.</u>

ESM Launching New Survey Methodology Certificate This Fall

The <u>Evaluation Statistics &</u> <u>Methodology</u> (ESM) program will launch two new certificates this Fall. One being the Survey Methodology graduate certificate. <u>Click here for</u> <u>more information.</u>



Congratulations to Our Students Who Recently Defended Their Dissertations or Doctoral Applied Research Successfully:

Dr. Hope Adkins, PhD	Dr. Christian Lockhart, PhD
Dr. Meagan Booth, EdD	Dr. Amanda Mason EdD
Dr. Adam Brimer, PhD	Dr. Anne McKendry EdD
Dr. Katrina Benson, PhD	Dr. Julie Roe , PhD
Dr. Katherine Estep, EdD	James Sparkman, EdS
Dr. Melissa Grant, PhD	Dr. Laura Stansell, PhD
Dr. Jesse Gray, EdD	Dr. Natalie Stepanov, PhD
Hunter Grubb, EdS	Dr. Marshall Steward, PhD
Dr. Shea Hennessee EdD	Dr. Brittany Sutton, EdD
Dr. Jordyn Horner, EdD	Dr. Casey Upson, EdD
Dr. Toni Jackson, PhD	Dr. Blake Weiss, PhD
Dr. Stephanie Knight, EdD	

Student Highlights



Abraham Cervantes - HEAM PhD

HEAM PhD student Abraham Cervantes was recently awarded the <u>ACPA Latinx</u> <u>Outstanding Early Scholar Award</u> at the recent <u>ACPA Convention</u> in Long Beach, California!

Amanda Mason - EDAM EdD

Amanda Mason, in our EdD Ed. Leadership program has accepted a position with the <u>Tennessee Department of Education</u> as the Senior Manager of Early Childhood Special Education upon her graduation in May 2025.





Donate to ELPS Here

ESM PhD Students Present at CEHHS Research Colloquium

ESM Ph.D. students Jerri Danso and Sara Hall (pictured), as well as Richard Amoako, and Chelsea Jacobs presented their research during the Spring semester at the <u>CEHHS</u> Research Colloquium.

Student Highlights



Abraham Cervantes - HEAM PhD

Abraham Cervantes will present research this July at the <u>British Educational Leadership</u>, <u>Management</u>, and Administration Society <u>Annual Conference</u>, held in Brighton, England. The research presentation is titled: "The Politics of Identity: How 'Latinx' Reflects the Tension Between Academia and Culture"

Jerri Danso - ESM PhD

Jerri Danso, a PhD student within our <u>Evaluation, Statistics, & Methodology</u> program recently received the opportunity to serve as faculty at the <u>2025 ACPA Assessment</u> <u>Institute</u>. She will be facilitating sessions for the Department and Divisional Leaders track.





Donate to ELPS Here

Richard Amoako - ESM PhD

Richard Amoako, a PhD student within our <u>Evaluation, Statistics, & Methodology</u> program recently received a student award for his presentation "Towards a Culturaly Responsive Evaluation Framework for Rural Appalachian School Mental Health Programs" at the <u>Eastern Evaluation</u> <u>Research Society</u> 2025 Annual Conference.

Volunteers of Distinction!



Amy Clevenger - CSP

<u>College Student Personnel</u> student, Amy Clevenger, recently received <u>this</u> <u>award</u> that celebrates outstanding students who received their degrees in Fall 2024 or will receive their degrees in Spring 2025.

Gavin Aitken - CSP

<u>College Student Personnel</u> student, Gavin Aitken, recently received <u>this</u> <u>award</u> that celebrates outstanding students who received their degrees in Fall 2024 or will receive their degrees in Spring 2025.





Noelia Rodriguez - CSP

<u>College Student Personnel</u> student, Noelia Rodriguez, recently received <u>this award</u> that celebrates outstanding students who received their degrees in Fall 2024 or will receive their degrees in Spring 2025.

Alumni Highlights

Phil Cook - HEAM PhD

The Lee University Board of Directors recently announced the appointment of Dr. Phil Cook, a Higher Education Administration PhD alumni, as the school's next President, effective July 1st, 2025.



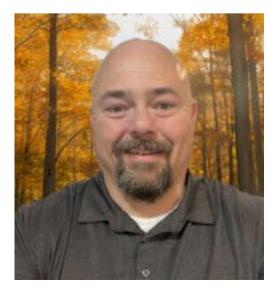


Aaron Culver - VOLS Lead Ed.S.

Aaron Culver, a 2020 ELPS Vols Lead program graduate, and former principal of <u>Kittrell Elementary School</u> recently completed his Ed.D. degree from the <u>University of the Cumberlands</u>. Dr. Culver was hooded on May 1st.

Paul Kirkland - ESM PhD

Dr. Paul Kirkland works as a Grant Manager for <u>Monroe County Schools</u>. His work has contributed to the implementation of impactful initiatives in STEM education, school safety and educator development. He is also an adjunct faculty within our <u>ESM PhD program</u>!



Alumni Highlights



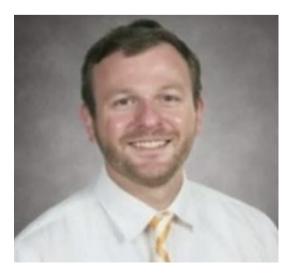
S. Nicole Jones - ESM PhD

Dr. Jones recently received the Best Faculty Engagement Strategies award for her virtual poster exhibit at the <u>Assessment</u> <u>Leadership Institute</u> hosted by the University of Hawaii. Jones is also an adjunct faculty member within our <u>Evaluation Methodology MS program</u>!

Anna Banks - ESM PhD

Dr. Anna Banks works for <u>NASA's Johnson</u> <u>Space Center</u> in Houston TX where she serves as the Engineering Directorate's Business Intelligence Manager. She recently received the Helen B. Watson Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award from the <u>College of</u> <u>Education, Health, and Human Sciences.</u>





Rolen Blaine - EDAM EdD

Rolen Blaine, a Fall 2024 ELPS graduate, who is currently the assistant principal at <u>Fountain City Elementary School</u>, was recently appointed principal of <u>New</u> <u>Hopewell Elementary School</u> and will become effective as of July 2025.

Stay Connected



Contact Us!

We would love to hear from you all! Please contact us and share your wonderful information by emailing **elps@utk.edu** or our Marketing & Communications Coordinator, Jonah Hall, **jhall152@utk.edu.**

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325 Bailey Education Complex 1122 Volunteer Blvd. Knoxville, Tennessee 37996 Phone: 865-974-2214 Fax: 865-974-6146 Email: elps@utk.edu

