



## GREETINGS FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD

The fall semester brings a great deal of excitement to Knoxville, and our staff and faculty are working hard to serve our students and the education community more broadly. While each of us are doing our teaching, research, and service, we are united around three key goals for the year:

- Furthering our sense of community as a department as we have rapidly grown in size and have made major changes over the last several years.
- Updating policies and procedures to better support our graduate students and programs.
- Developing a new strategic plan to help ELPS reach the next level.

As the rest of this newsletter shows, the ELPS community is doing amazing things. I am excited to see what happens next in our department!

### **Robert Kelchen, Ph.D.**

*Professor & Department Head*  
Department of Educational  
Leadership & Policy Studies



# Welcome Our New Faculty!

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## **Dr. Caroline Bartlett, Assistant Professor**

Dr. Bartlett joined the ELPS Department this Fall from Michigan State University as an Assistant Professor within the Department!



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## **Dr. Allie McGuigan, Associate Professor of Practice & HEAM MS Program Coordinator**

Dr. McGuigan joined the ELPS Department this Fall from Pennsylvania State University as the new Higher Education Administration MS Program Coordinator!



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## **Dr. Ryan Miller, Professor of Higher Education & HEAM PhD Program Coordinator**

Dr. Miller joined the ELPS Department this Fall from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte as the new Higher Education Administration PhD Program Coordinator!



# ELPS Service Awards

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## **Dr. Pamela Angelle Recently Completed 20 Years at UTK!**

ELPS faculty member, Dr. Pamela Angelle, recently completed twenty years of service at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville!



## **Dr. Leia Cain Recently Completed 5 Years at UTK!**

ELPS faculty member, Dr. Leia Cain, recently completed five years of service at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville!

## **Tammy Knierim Recently Completed 5 Years at UTK!**

ELPS staff member, Tammy Knierim, recently completed five years of service at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville!



# CSP Program Update

## College Student Personnel (CSP) Program Renamed As Student Affairs and Higher Education (SAHE) Pending CRC Approval

- The CSP program tasked Dr. Chandra Myrick with leading a committee comprising CSP alumni, faculty, students, and campus partners to consider the possibility of changing the program name to better reflect current trends in the field.
- College Student Personnel is a name that was commonplace at the time of the program's founding. However, the field has moved away from student personnel language in recent decades.
- The program received feedback that some prospective applicants were unable to locate the program due to their unfamiliarity with the College Student Personnel name. After an intentional process of benchmarking and deliberation, the committee proposed renaming the CSP program to Student Affairs and Higher Education.
- This change reflects our program's continued evolution and its commitment to preparing future leaders in student affairs and higher education.
- The new name more accurately captures the breadth and depth of our curriculum, which integrates research, theory, and practice to support holistic student development and foster transformative educational experiences.
- Although the name has changed, our core values and mission remain unchanged. The SAHE program will continue to honor its legacy of preparing passionate and innovative practitioners while fostering an inclusive and collaborative learning community.

Questions? Contact Dr. Mary Dueñas at [mduenas@utk.edu](mailto:mduenas@utk.edu)

# News and Announcements



## ELPS Hosting Bogue Lecture on February 9, 2026

The Bogue Lecture will feature Dr. Kevin McClure from UNC-Wilmington discussing his book “The Caring University.” Held at 5 PM in the Student Union Auditorium, this lecture is open to all members of the university community!

## ELPS Welcomes New Staff Member, Samantha Dedrick

Samantha Dedrick joined the ELPS Department this Fall as our new Administrative Associate! Join us in welcoming Samantha to the department and the ELPS Staff!



## Morrow, Angelle & Cervantes Present at BELMAS in UK

ELPS faculty members, Dr. Jennifer Ann Morrow and Dr. Pamela Angelle presented artificial intelligence findings at the BELMAS Conference in Brighton England in July. Higher Education Administration PhD student, Abraham Cervantes, also presented at the conference!

# News and Announcements



## Dr. Ryan Miller Elected As National Chair of the CAHEP

New ELPS faculty member, Dr. Ryan Miller, was recently elected as National Chair of the Council for Advancement of Higher Education Programs for a three-year term which began in November 2025. Miller has been involved with CAHEP for a number of years, and this newest leadership role reflects his commitment to the profession and higher education graduate programs.

## Dr. Zahra Collaborates on NSF Grants to Improve Outcomes Through AI

ELPS faculty member, Dr. Fatima Zahra, was a co-PI on a recent grant surrounding AI Advancement in Health Research. The project will train participants on how to use high-performance computing, cloud-based AI applications, and open data tools in medical research and healthcare delivery.



## ACED PhD and MS Students Present at AAACE 2025 Annual Conference

Faculty and students within our ACED PhD and masters programs recently presented research at the 2025 AAACE Conference. AAACE is recognized as the leading international and national organization for adult education professionals. Pictured here are Dr. Jennifer Kobrin (left) and PhD students Dan Wang (center) and Lauren Davenport (right). Learn more here.



# News and Announcements

## Dr. James Martinez Taking on New Leadership Role as Associate Professor of Practice

Dr. James Martinez, has recently taken on a new leadership role as Associate Professor of Practice within the department. Dr. Martinez is focused on substantively preparing future school leaders, performing important service on campus, at the national level and in his local community, and advancing research related to levels of support and self-efficacy among school administrators.



## Dr. Zahra Elected to Serve on CEHHS Faculty Senate

ELPS faculty member, Dr. Fatima Zahra, was recently elected as a member of the faculty senate to represent the College of Education, Health, & Human Sciences. The College Senate serves as an advocate and voice for the faculty in matters that affect the academy of the college.

## Dr. Martinez's Continuing Efforts to Prepare Future School Leaders Across the State

Dr. James Martinez currently serves as the Clinical Fieldwork Supervisor for the Online Leadership Studies (OLS) Program, supporting aspiring school leaders, their field supervisors and assigned school mentors. In addition, Dr. Martinez is leading a collaborative effort across the CEHHS to formalize a sports coaching leadership program, emphasizing policy, ethics and resilience practices for coaches at all levels.



# Student Highlights

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## Billie McNamara - ACED PhD

Billie McNamara was recently selected to serve on the UTK Student Library Advisory Committee for 2025-2026. Composed of undergraduate and graduate students from across disciplines, the Student Advisory Committee to the Dean of Libraries' office (SLAC) provides invaluable contributions to the UT Libraries.

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## Richard Amoako - ESM PhD

Richard Amoako recently successfully proposed his dissertation titled: "Understanding Faculty Readiness for AI Integration in Higher Education: A Mixed-Methods Investigation of Knowledge, Attitudes, And Perspectives." This research study examines faculty preparedness for integrating artificial intelligence into teaching and learning in higher education.



## Kiley Compton - ESM PhD

Kiley Compton recently successfully proposed her dissertation titled: "Pre-Award Research Administrators' Professional Development Needs." This research study is a needs assessment designed to identify and analyze the professional development needs of pre-award research administrators in the United States.



# Student Highlights



## Shaunta Chamberlin - EM MS

Shaunta Chamberlin PharmD, FCCP is a Professor and Assistant Residency Program Director – Curriculum and Research in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center Graduate School of Medicine in Knoxville, Tennessee. She is completing the Evaluation Methodology program in hopes of furthering her work in medical education.

## E'Monica Booker & Liyah King - CSP/SAHE

E'Monica Booker and Liyah King, two master's students from the Student Affairs and Higher Education/College Student Personnel program, won first place in the graduate student case study competition at the SACSA Conference in Louisville, KY, on November 3. Their case study demonstrated an exceptional ability to use theory and research to inform student affairs practice.



## Allie Burns - HEAM PhD

In September, Allie and a colleague were awarded a UT System Wellness mini-grant to support improved graduate student wellness through programming and space alterations. The work is being piloted with students in the Bredesen Center's three PhD programs, but scalability and sustainability throughout the UT System are long-term goals. They will present their work in June 2026 at the UT Wellness Summit!

# Alumni Highlights

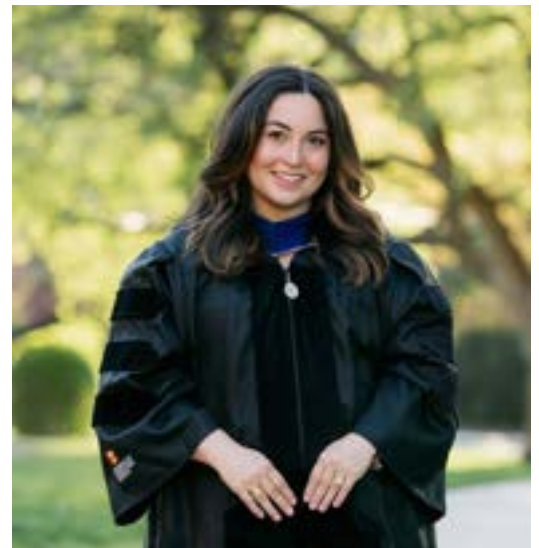


## Shannon Coulter - ESM PhD

Dr. Shannon Coulter serves as the Director of Research and Evaluation at the San Diego County Office of Education. He recently completed a fellowship with the Education Data Collaborative at Teachers College, Columbia University, a national initiative focused on advancing equity and data-informed leadership in education systems!

## Maria Martinez Weiss - HEAM PhD

College Student Personnel (now SAHE) alumni, Maria Martinez Weiss, recently completed her PhD within our Higher Education Administration Program! Her dissertation titled “Nuevo Narratives: Testimonios of Belonging By Latina/o/x College Students in the Nuevo South” explored how Latinx students make meaning of belonging within the cultural and institutional contexts of the U.S. South.



## Anthony Schmidt - ESM PhD

Since 2021, Dr. Anthony Schmidt has been a data scientist with Amplify Education, an Ed Tech curriculum and assessment company. Earlier this Fall, he transitioned into a new role as an AI Engineer at the company where he will be using machine learning, deep learning, and generative AI to build tools to enhance teaching, learning, and internal productivity.

# Alumni Highlights

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Meagan Booth and Casey Upson, Spring 2025 ELPS EdD graduates have quickly moved from research students to published researchers. Since graduating both Meagan and Casey have shared their work in a number of practitioner and research outlets. ELPS is proud of their work and look forward to future publications from Dr. Booth and Dr. Upson.

## Meagan Booth's Publications Include:

- ASCD Educational Leadership Magazine: The Myth of the Calling.
- Education Week: Educators Are Being Fired for Posting About Charlie Kirk. Is that a problem?
- Education Week: Gen-Z Isn't Lazy.
- Chalkbeat: The View from Central Office.
- Education Week: What Cell Phone Bans Are Really Telling Us About Staff Culture.

## Casey Upson's Scholarship Includes:

- Angelle, P. S., Knight, S. P., and Upson, C. (2026). By Māori, for Māori: Community Partnerships for Culturally Sustaining Schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*.
- Angelle, P. S., Upson, C. C., & Knight, S. P. (2025, November). Community Partnerships for Culturally Sustaining Schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration, Puerto Rico.
- Upson, C. C. Education Week. Schools are vulnerable to climate disasters. Principals aren't ready

# 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](mailto:elps@utk.edu) or our Marketing & Communications Coordinator, Jonah Hall, [jhall152@utk.edu](mailto:jhall152@utk.edu).

# Give To ELPS

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