THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

PRESIDENTIAL FELLOWS

2017 - 2018 Program Directory

gradschool.sc.edu
2017-2018 Presidential Fellows at a Glance

- **70** current presidential fellows
- **25 states**
- **8 countries**
- **7** USC colleges & schools
- **33 graduate programs**

Most Popular Home States:
- South Carolina
- North Carolina
- California
- Illinois

Most Popular Programs:
- Experimental Psychology
- English
- Clinical-Community Psychology
- Exercise Science
- Geography
- School Psychology

PFs by Cohort:
- 1st years: 20%
- 2nd years: 34%
- 3rd years: 29%
- 4th years: 17%
2017-2018 marks the eighth year of the University of South Carolina’s award winning Presidential Fellowship program. To date, 173 students from 38 academic programs in 9 colleges have participated. This year, we welcome 14 new fellows to the program. We, at the Graduate School, are proud of your many accomplishments. We value the leadership you display in your academic disciplines, on campus, and in your communities.

I look forward to working with you to scale up your impact through the addition of a Presidential Fellows Advisory Council, which is being reconvened to provide input on the fellowship program. Representatives from each cohort of Presidential Fellows will contribute to a review of the program and set the foundation for the role and responsibilities of the Advisory Council. In addition, I will be offering small group meetings with Presidential Fellows to increase my connection to fellows and learn more about the important work you are doing.

I am excited to begin my second year directing the Presidential Fellowship program and facilitating GRAD 801, the seminar held on Fridays from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. in Jones 002 (or other designated location). If I can be of any assistance, please don’t hesitate to contact me. Along with Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, Dr. Cheryl Addy, and our colleagues in the Graduate School, we are always available to assist you.

I look forward to sharing an enriching and productive year.

e: hbrandt@sc.edu  |  t: 803.777.4243
What brought you to UofSC?: The research interests of my mentor were the primary draw to UofSC. I also enjoyed my visit to Columbia and was excited to be back in the Carolinas.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I am most looking forward to meeting people in different disciplines and learning more about the diverse research interests at UofSC.

Fun fact about yourself: I grew up in a military family and moved frequently. I ended up attending three different high schools in four years in Korea, Ohio, and Virginia.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I am primarily interested in the psychosocial and neurocognitive functioning of children diagnosed with a chronic illness, in particular, sickle cell disease. Specifically, I am interested in exploring the relationship between biological and psychological factors and their overall impact on quality of life.

Research Key Words: pediatrics, chronic illness, sickle cell disease, quality of life, neurocognitive functioning
SETH BRAKE-2015 Scholar
major & degree: Political Science, PhD
hometown: Denver, NC
contact: sbrake@mail.sc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: Conversations with UofSC faculty and recommendation from undergraduate faculty.

What do you hope to accomplish while you pursue your degree?: I want to become a more well-rounded scientist who has a grasp of the bigger (often interdisciplinary) picture of Political Science.

Fun fact about yourself: I love strategy games. I have a hard time thinking creatively if I haven't recently tried to outsmart someone or been outsmarted.

Research Key Words: trade, power, sanctions, growth, war, development, democracy, protectionism, globalization, stability
**What brought you to UofSC?:** Ultimately it was my advisor that brought me to UofSC. I was between two schools that had offered me PhD positions, and I felt that my advisor was a better choice for me.

**What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?):** My favorite thing about the PF program is the interdisciplinarity. I love being able to meet people from other programs that I never would come in contact with otherwise. Along those same lines, the 3rd year presentations are fantastic.

**Fun fact about yourself:** I was once told by a middleschool teacher I did not have the mind to be a scientist. I am now a scientist.

**Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!):** Climate change is causing many species to shift their ranges, which sometimes forces species to colonize ecosystems that they have never inhabited before (i.e. novel ecosystems). I study the impact of a novel ecosystem, the saltmarsh, on the range expanding mangrove tree crab. In particular, I focus on the ability of docks within the saltmarsh to provide a more favorable refuge habitat for these crabs within the saltmarsh ecosystem, which is suboptimal for these crabs, and the impact that this has for their range shift into, and survival in, the novel saltmarsh ecosystem.

**Research Key Words:** novel ecosystem, refuge habitat, climate change, mangrove tree crab, *Aratus pisonii*, range shift, saltmarsh, mangrove
CASEY COLE-2015 Scholar
major & degree: Computer Science & Engineering, PhD
hometown: Urbana, OH
contact: coleca@email.sc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: I received my undergraduate degree in Computer Science at the University of South Carolina. During my undergraduate degree I became engaged in a research project and was fortunate enough to carry the project over to the PhD program.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): My favorite part about the Presidential Fellows program is the opportunity that I get to network with other graduate students and learn about their research.

Fun fact about yourself: I enjoy playing soccer in my free time.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My primary research lies in the intersection of biology and computer science. I am developing algorithms to aid in elucidation of protein structure and characterization of internal dynamics.

Research Key Words: protein structure, computation, algorithms, bioinformatics, modeling
What brought you to UofSC?: I was drawn to UofSC because of the Linguistics department faculty that I will get to work with, the interdisciplinary nature of the department, and the welcoming grad students I met when I visited!

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I am looking forward to meeting the other Presidential Fellows!

Fun fact about yourself: I watched *Grease Live* at Corbin Bleu’s (Chad from *High School Musical*) house.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My research interests are language in interaction, gender, and identity formation within the queer and trans communities. I want to explore embodiment and gesture as tools for identity construction and for narrating the coming out experience.

Research Key Words: sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, language in interaction, gender, identity, queer linguistics, embodiment
**NICK DANNE** - 2015 Scholar  
**major & degree**: Philosophy, PhD  
**hometown**: Cedar Rapids, IA  
**contact**: ndanne@email.sc.edu

*What brought you to UofSC?*: I thought I would become an ethicist, but I have been humbled and so want to become a metaphysician of science instead.

*What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?):* Guest speakers about liberal arts jobs.

*Fun fact about yourself*: I was an engineer for 12 years. What a change!

*Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.):* If objects have colors, then numbers are flying through the air.

*Research Key Words*: John Maynard Keynes, mathematical indispensability, surface spectral reflectance, moving spotlight theory of time, probable relations, causal omniscience, Josiah Royce, Thomas Aquinas, Elizabeth Anscombe, Maurice Merleau-Ponty
ROBERT DE LEON-2017 Scholar
major & degree: Art Studio, MFA
hometown: Miami, FL
contact: robert.deleon84@yahoo.com

What brought you to UofSC?: This was one of the best schools in ceramics, and so I applied for my MFA.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I know that sooner or later my style of work or my concept will change, and that is what I’m hoping to see. I want my concept to not only change but also evolve.

Fun fact about yourself: When I was young, I always thought I could work for Pixar animation studios, but after I began to work with clay and follow the concept that I’ve been passionate about, everything changed for me.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My hope is to bring awareness to endangered species and animal cruelty to the public so we treat the animals with the respect that they deserve.

Research Key Words: endangered, species, animals, life, protect, defend
ADAM DENTON-2016 Scholar

major & degree: Experimental Psychology, PhD
hometown: Bristol, VA
contact: ardenton@email.sc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: Funding opportunities and the Presidential Fellows program.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I enjoy the opportunities to network with people outside of my own department.

Fun fact about yourself: I have ten years of experience across several styles of martial arts including aikido, kenjutsu, bojutsu and kodokan judo.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My research is directed toward finding efficacious pharmacotherapies for intervention and treatment of HIV-1 mitigated depression in a transgenic rodent model of HIV-1. I employ behavioral, electrochemical, neuroanatomical and molecular techniques to investigate the effectiveness of Escitalopram, a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor, in the treatment of HIV-1 mitigated depression.

Research Key Words: HIV-1, depression, apathy, pharmacology, behavioral neuroscience
What brought you to UofSC?: The esteemed faculty in my program and the warm weather.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): My favorite thing about the PF program is the warm community of scholars and the delicious luncheons.

Fun fact about yourself: I make DIY pop music.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I want to continue researching how today's music and its various digital platforms dissemble and (re)construct modern subjectivities.

Research Key Words: music, rhetoric, theory
SAHAR DERAKHSHAN-2016 Scholar

major & degree: Geography, PhD
hometown: Tehran, Iran
contact: saharder@email.sc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: After the Bam earthquake in 2003 in Iran, it became my passion to seek solutions for preventing a natural phenomenon from becoming a disaster. I went back to school to study Natural Disaster Management at the University of Tehran. I received my master’s in Public Policy from UC Berkeley in 2013 and started working as a researcher at the Pacific Earthquake Engineering Research Center (PEER).

What do you hope to accomplish while you pursue your degree?: I have been following the research done at the Geography department and the Hazards and Vulnerability Research Institute at UofSC, and I am very interested in learning from the faculty here.

Research Key Words: natural disasters, resiliency, vulnerability assessment, risk mitigation, GIS
LEWIS ELIOT-2014 Scholar

major & degree: History, PhD
hometown: London, UK via Cape Town, South Africa
contact: leliot@email.sc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: An attractive offer from my department, the Presidential Fellowship, and the chance to work with my advisor.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): Third year presentations.

Fun fact about yourself: I thought about opening a restaurant instead of going to graduate school.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My dissertation is about anti-slavery discourse from Europe in the early- to mid-nineteenth century and its impact on those of African descent in the Atlantic World. Abolitionists from Britain toured mainland Europe, Africa, and the West Indies to influence emancipatory ideologies. These efforts, however, were marred by their concentration on the benefits to whites for ending slavery and the continued transatlantic commitment to free market capitalism in both regions without slavery and those that continued to hold men and women in bondage.

Research Key Words: slavery, abolition, Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Atlantic, capitalism, imperialism, race, citizenship
SPENSER ESSMAN - 2016 Scholar

major & degree: Business Administration, PhD
hometown: Kansas City, KS
contact: spenser.essman@grad.moore.sc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: I came to UofSC to conduct research on human capital and strategic human resource management with leading scholars on these topics.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): My favorite thing about the Presidential Fellows program is learning about the research conducted by other fellows across campus.

Fun fact about yourself: I met my wife at Home Depot.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I am interested in the multi-level and dynamic nature of the relationship between human capital and competitive advantage and how human resource policies and practices affect this relationship.

Research Key Words: human capital, strategic human resource management, compensation.
What brought you to UofSC?: Primarily my mentor, Dr. Jane Roberts, and the research that she is conducting here.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): The chance to step outside of my tiny research bubble to build relationships with other researchers on campus.

Fun fact about yourself: I have visited 16 countries and 26 states. I take a trip to a new place every year!

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My research looks at early features of anxiety in high-risk children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). My thesis compares rates and predictors of anxiety disorders in low-functioning adolescent males with ASD and Fragile X Syndrome. My dissertation proposes to look at the rates of anxiety and the physiological mechanisms of anxiety in females with ASD.

Research Key Words: Autism Spectrum Disorders, Fragile X Syndrome, pediatric psychology, anxiety
JIEUN FANG - 2014 Scholar
major & degree: Mechanical Engineering, PhD
hometown: Shenzhen, China
contact: JIEF@email.sc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: A national renowned solid oxide fuel cell (SOFC) center along with a famous advisor in the field.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): Networking.

Fun fact about yourself: I like all types of challenging outdoor activities, like surfing, sky diving, etc. I like both engineering and fashion.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I work on developing a combined reactor for carbon capture and conversion from both experimental and modeling aspects.

Research Key Words: carbon capture, carbon conversion, electrochemical membrane, system modeling, experiment design, data analysis
What brought you to UofSC?: After completing my Doctor of Physical Therapy degree in 2014, I began work as a clinician in an inpatient rehabilitation setting. I was able to complete a Neurologic Residency Program, which provoked me to think deeply about my own practice as well as the broader practice of physical therapy. My interest is in motor behavior and learning as it relates to stroke rehabilitation. This aligned perfectly with work happening in Exercise Science and specifically in the Motor Behavior and Neuroimaging Lab directed by Dr. Jill Stewart. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to pursue a PhD in a program that is a leader in my field of interest.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I am looking forward to meeting other individuals with different backgrounds than my own. I believe that I will benefit from collaboration with other likeminded people who may not have the same specific interests as myself, but who share a commonality in broader goals and aspirations.

Fun fact about yourself: Five years ago, I would have told you I was more likely to become an astronaut than a researcher.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My research interests are in rehabilitation and recovery after stroke. I have a specific interest in utilizing neuroimaging tools to examine and further define the roles of brain structure, function, and connectivity during rehabilitation, recovery and learning of motor behaviors. I have additional interest in investigating motivational and attentional influences on learning.

Research Key Words: motor learning, stroke, functional magnetic resonance imaging, diffusion tensor imaging, motivation, attention, rehabilitation
JILL FOUND-2016 Scholar

major & degree: History, PhD
hometown: Warrenton, VA
contact: jillfound@gmail.com

*What brought you to UofSC?*: I chose to come to South Carolina because of the strong programs in history and public history and to work with my advisor.

*What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?)*: The Presidential Fellows program has been a great way for me to learn about the impressive work that graduate students in other disciplines are undertaking.

*Fun fact about yourself*: I have the same birthday as Thomas Jefferson.

*Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.)*: I am interested in the lived experiences of enslaved people on college campuses. I look at how the different people on a campus – students, professors, and staff – interacted with enslaved people and how enslaved people shaped their lives in the collegiate environment.

*Research Key Words*: slavery, colleges and universities, education, eighteenth century, nineteenth century
PAUL FRAM - 2014 Scholar

**major & degree:** Educational Research & Psychology, PhD

**hometown:** Reston, VA

**contact:** pfram@email.sc.edu

**What brought you to UofSC?** I decided to come to the University of South Carolina because I wanted to learn the research techniques that would enable me to meaningfully communicate about the inequities that I observed in my 25 years as a public school teacher. As a fifteen-year resident of Columbia, I was incredibly fortunate to have such an excellent program right in my backyard!

**What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?)** I enjoy the seminars – especially when I get to hear about my peers’ fascinating research projects. I have learned a great deal about subjects that I didn’t even know existed before these seminars, and I am looking forward to this year’s presentations.

**Fun fact about yourself:** I have played guitar for over 30 years and have performed and recorded as a family band with my children.

**Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!)** (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.) My dissertation examines the impact of factors such as race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender on rates of and reasons for subjective, low level school disciplines, such as lunch detention. Additionally, I will be examining the relationship between those punishments and higher level disciplines, such as suspension and expulsion, as well as the impacts of school discipline on student academic outcomes. The analyses will be situated within the framework of implicit bias research and the philosophies of Pierre Bourdieu, particularly Habitus and Symbolic Violence.

**Research Key Words:** school discipline, detention, suspension, implicit bias, disparity, symbolic violence
ENNAN GU-2015 Scholar

**major & degree:** Statistics, PhD

**hometown:** Harbin, China

**contact:** egu@email.sc.edu

**What brought you to UofSC?:** Appealing Stats Department (professors and courses) and the low living cost.

**What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?):** I love to know research from different majors and different areas, and how they would apply data analysis tools into research.

**Fun fact about yourself:** I have my own fashion and beauty social network that has more than 2 million followers. I also like playing pool.

**Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.):** My current research is on cure models, which take into account the proportion of subjects who will never experience an event of interest and a survival curve, which will eventually reach a plateau; I apply a semiparametric method into a population based cure model.

**Research Key Words:** survival analysis, variable selection, cure model, nonparametric, semiparametric
**MARK GUINTER -2014 Scholar**

**major & degree:** Epidemiology, PhD  
**hometown:** Lake Zurich, IL  
**contact:** mguinter@email.sc.edu

*What brought you to UofSC?:* The strengths of the faculty in the Epidemiology and Biostatistics department were a huge reason I decided to pursue my PhD at UofSC. I knew there would be plenty of opportunities to get involved in research that parallels my interests and that I would be able to get quality mentorship under Dr. Susan Steck.

*What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?)*: The wide range of professional development opportunities we get as PFs helps to keep an eye towards our future as we complete our degree programs.

*Fun fact about yourself:* I had never heard of epidemiology until about 6 months before I started my graduate education in epidemiology – here I am 6 years later!

*Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.):* My dissertation focuses on identifying points for primary prevention of breast cancer in postmenopausal women. I am developing a tool to characterize a woman’s diet based on its association with estrogen metabolism and subsequently am using this tool to investigate dietary associations with breast cancer.

*Research Key Words:* dietary patterns, breast cancer, estrogen, primary prevention, lifestyle, nutrition, behavior
MACKENZIE HART-2017 Scholar
major & degree: School Psychology, PhD
hometown: New Tripoli, PA
contact: mjhart@email.sc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: UofSC is home to many of the nation’s top professors and researchers in youth mental health, and I am especially excited to work with my advisor, Dr. Sam McQuillin. I was also drawn to UofSC because it offers a beautiful campus in a new part of the country that I can explore. The Presidential Fellowship was the icing on the cake that clinched my decision to attend UofSC.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I am most looking forward to meeting, getting to know, and working with diverse and talented scholars throughout the University’s academic departments.

Fun fact about yourself: The lab in which I worked as an undergraduate holds Erik Erikson’s old desk.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My research will focus on community partnership programs aimed to optimize academic, emotional, and behavioral outcomes for at-risk adolescents. Currently, this work is largely focused on developing and implementing a peer mentorship training model.

Research Key Words: adolescents, mental health, psychosocial influences, mentorship, program dissemination, positive behavior
What brought you to UofSC?: My most important graduate school selection criterion was finding a good match between the faculty's research interests and my own, which broadly concern applying what's been learned in implementation science to school mental health.

What do you hope to accomplish while you pursue your degree?: The usual goals of a graduate student: to gain a solid knowledge base from coursework, to get firsthand experience in the clinical sphere, to develop an efficient/productive personal writing process, to become deeply familiar with the research being done in my particular areas of interest, and to help bridge the research-to-practice gap in the "real world."

Fun fact about yourself: In high school and college, I was a message board moderator for a pole vaulting website called polevaultpower.com (along with the site's founder and some elite vaulters, coaches, and officials). Injuries cut short my actual pv career but not my love for the sport, so my natural response was to turn into an internet nerd about it.

Research Key Words: implementation science, school mental health, adolescent suicide prevention, public policy
CASSANDRA HORTON - 2016 Scholar

major & degree: Environmental Health Sciences, PhD
hometown: Charleston, SC
contact: cassie.l.horton@gmail.com

What brought you to UofSC?: The Environmental Health Sciences program brought me to UofSC. The course offerings and research done within the department are well in line with my own interests, and after speaking with some of the faculty, I knew it would be a good fit for me.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I really enjoy the student presentations and getting to learn more about other people’s projects, rather than just staying in my own little academic bubble.

Fun fact about yourself: N/A

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): Though I’m getting closer to defining a dissertation project, I don’t have one nailed down quite yet. My research interests are in the anthropogenic influence on antibiotic resistance in coastal water systems, particularly as related to legacy pollutants like heavy metals.

Research Key Words: ecotoxicology, environmental microbiology, antibiotic resistance
LAURA IREI-2015 Scholar
major & degree: Creative Writing-Fiction, MFA
hometown: Phoenix, AZ
contact: ljairei@gmail.com

What brought you to UofSC?: I came to UofSC because of the wonderful sense of community here.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): My favorite thing about the PF program is getting a glimpse into the work that the other fellows are doing.

Fun fact about yourself: I have a dog called Georgie, named after George Eliot, who loves taking long walks on the canal and watching reality television with me.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I am working on a short story collection for my thesis and am interested in contemporary short fiction and novels.

Research Key Words: fiction, writing, creative writing, literature, English, contemporary fiction, novels, short stories
**OWEN JENSEN-2015 Scholar**

**major & degree:** Geological Sciences, PhD  
**hometown:** Spartanburg, SC  
**contact:** ojensen@geol.sc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: UofSC offered me an opportunity to join a strong geochemistry program, do interesting research, and use state-of-the-art analytical facilities. Aside from that, I am a native of South Carolina and was eager to return to a warmer climate after finishing undergrad in northeast Ohio.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I enjoy learning about other members in the program, whether through overviews of their research during third-year talks, or short school- or life-related blurbs during weekly introductions.

Fun fact about yourself: In 2005, I asked a girl from another high school to be my date to the senior prom. The next day, I uninvited her. Luckily, she doesn’t hold grudges, and I married her nearly 12 years later.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): By examining patterns in concentrations and isotope ratios of the fluid-mobile element boron in volcanic rocks along the Aleutian arc in Alaska, I hope to learn about the role of water in volcanic processes at convergent margins (e.g., the Pacific “Ring of Fire”).

Research Key Words: geochemistry, volcanoes, petrology, mass spectrometry, stable isotopes
What brought you to UofSC?: I had a great undergraduate experience at UofSC, and when I was given the opportunity to return again as a graduate student, I was very excited. The faculty in my department are not only accomplished researchers, but they are also very willing to assist PhD students in whatever ways they can to help us be successful. Also, the department focuses on behavioral research, which aligns with my research interests.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): My favorite thing about the PF program is getting to meet and become friends with students in other disciplines.

Fun fact about yourself: I used to be a competitive jump roper!

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I am interested in judgment and decision-making related to auditing and financial reporting.

Research Key Words: accounting, financial reporting, audit, judgment and decision making, materiality
What brought you to UofSC?: First of all, professor Lakshmi who is my advisor brought me to UofSC. He shows kindness and affection toward me since I contacted him for my doctoral study in UofSC. Second, my wife is also planning to pursue her PhD at UofSC. Professor Lakshmi helped her to find a potential advisor. Third, the School of Earth Ocean and the Environment at UofSC has a reputation for great graduate programs and faculty members in geophysical research around the world. The dream of being one of the members in SEOE brought me to UofSC.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I am looking forward to meeting various students from different countries and getting to know them.

Fun fact about yourself: I came to UofSC with my lovely wife in order to pursue our PhDs. My wife is also going to start her doctoral study at UofSC. My wife and I met when we were 18 years old and finally got married last year on the 8th of October.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): The final goal of my research is making a better world for human beings. I am interested in climate change and natural disasters and their impact on our socio-economic losses and human health problems. For these analyses, I have been utilizing satellite-based and model datasets.

Research Key Words: remote sensing of environment; satellite datasets; climate; natural disasters; drought; dust outbreaks; land and atmospheric interaction
JOHN KINARD - 2014 Scholar

major & degree: English, PhD
hometown: Fort Mill, SC
contact: jandersonkinard@gmail.com

What brought you to UofSC?: The amazing faculty of the English department, particularly those who are now on my committee.

What do you hope to accomplish while you pursue your degree?: In addition to pursuing my own research, while I’m at UofSC, I hope to become a better and better teacher.

Fun fact about yourself: I saw the film Titanic seven times in the theater when I was a kid, and I do not regret a single screening.

Research Key Words: late Victorian, modernism, queer theory, the novel, camp
What brought you to UofSC?: There were plenty of Geography PhDs to choose from. UofSC’s Geography PhD program, however, was uniquely fitting for my academic interests; UofSC has strong coursework and research in geography education and geographic information systems (GIS). I am particularly interested in the intersection of these two topics, so UofSC was an easy choice!

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I am most looking forward to the professional development and networking associated with the Presidential Fellowship.

Fun fact about yourself: In my spare time, I enjoy reading about current events: world news, US news, political news, and science/technology news. I try to read the news at least once a day because if I go any longer than that, it drives me crazy.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My master’s thesis studied the inequity of geographic access to institutions of higher education. Although I do plan to continue that line of research, I envision my PhD dissertation being focused on the pedagogy of teaching geographic information systems (GIS).

Research Key Words: geography education, GIS education, critical GIS, big (geospatial) data
AMBER LEE - 2014 Scholar

major & degree: English, PhD
hometown: Irmo, SC
contact: ambermarylee@gmail.com

What brought you to UofSC?: The faculty in the Rhetoric and Composition program are fantastic, and I knew I wanted to work with Dr. John Muckelbauer.

What do you hope to accomplish while you pursue your degree?: I hope to gain the skills, knowledge, and self confidence that will allow me to be a good professor, as well as establish contacts with colleagues in my department and with people in other fields.

Fun fact about yourself: I can wiggle my ears.

Research Key Words: rhetorical memory, forgetting, amnesia, remembering, history, time, trauma
ADAM LUTZ-2015 Scholar
major & degree: Exercise Science, PhD
hometown: Baton Rouge, LA
contact: adam.d.lutz@gmail.com

What brought you to UofSC?: Prior relationship with research advisor and ongoing research opportunities.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): Community with fellow PhD students/candidates (my time is spent in Greenville, SC, for research/work...almost never in Columbia!)

Fun fact about yourself: I have been married > 10 years and have 3 children.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My primary research investigates the use of patient-reported outcomes as a quality metric of healthcare providers, something of increasing importance as healthcare delivery systems shift from fee-for-service to value-based reimbursement.

Research Key Words: physical therapy, performance measurement, benchmarking, health services, research
**CHELSEA LYNES**-2017 Scholar

**major & degree:** Epidemiology, PhD

**hometown:** Norfolk, MA

**contact:** clynes@email.sc.edu

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**What brought you to UofSC?** I moved to Columbia in fall 2013 to get my MSPH in Epidemiology, and after several Boston winters with over 9 feet of snow, I was ready for a change of scenery.

**What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?)** I am looking forward to making new friends!

**Fun fact about yourself:** I have six tattoos and am currently working on a half sleeve. Go see Stephanie at Indigo Rose in Five Points if you’re looking to get a tattoo; she’s the best!

**Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.):** My research interests are opioid addiction during pregnancy and adverse effects on mom and baby, as well as quality of care.

**Research Key Words:** opioid, maternal and child health, quality of care
**What brought you to UofSC?:** The impressive faculty in the political science department and the weather.

**What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?):** I enjoy the student presentations that introduce me to new and interesting issues and research.

**Fun fact about yourself:** I am an avid backpacker and enjoy taking public transportation, sleeping in grubby hostels, hiking, and whatever it takes to find new and unique experiences.

**Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.):** I am investigating the agenda power of interest groups through matching group support to bill text and tracking with computer text reuse techniques the text of failed bills to bills that subsequently pass.

**Research Key Words:** American government, interest groups, influence, agenda, legislation
What brought you to UofSC?: I was drawn to UofSC by the incredible public health work done here, specifically in global noncommunicable disease. People at the Arnold School emphasized the importance of doing meaningful work that moves public health forward, and their integrity and optimism were contagious. I was struck by the Arnold School’s focus on translating research into practice. Although I am still figuring out exactly what I want to accomplish here, I know that I want to conduct research that will be used to advocate for changes that will improve health.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I think the biggest strength of the PF program is how interdisciplinary it is. I’ve really enjoyed hearing from and getting to know students in other departments/schools, as well as making connections with students in fields closely related to my own.

Fun fact about yourself: I’ve been shark cage diving.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My research interests lie in understanding social and cultural influences on dietary practices and chronic diseases, such as obesity. I aim to understand the core social factors driving population health inequalities in the U.S. and abroad, especially among low-resource populations.

Research Key Words: public health, social epidemiology, health disparities, global health, noncommunicable disease
What brought you to UofSC?: I came to UofSC because the research interests of faculty members at UofSC aligned with my own research interests perfectly. I feel that at UofSC, I will be able to continue doing research that I am passionate about.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I enjoy the supportive atmosphere of the PF program. It’s nice to to know there are other people going through the same thing as you!

Fun fact about yourself: In high school, a piece of artwork that I made won 2nd place in a state-wide competition and was sent to hang in Washington, D.C., for a year.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My project focuses on an enzyme called UndA that utilizes a dinuclear iron cofactors to produce alkenes. My work will involve the spectroscopic characterization of the dinuclear iron center, investigation into substrate specificity, and elucidation of the mechanism of UndA. Upon characterization, we plan to engineer UndA into E. coli for the large-scale production of hydrocarbons for fuel.

Research Key Words: biofuels, dinuclear iron enzymes, bioinorganic chemistry
ALEXANDER MANZEWITSCH - 2017 Scholar
major & degree: Chemistry, PhD
hometown: Stanfield, NC
contact: alexmanzewitsch95@gmail.com

What brought you to UofSC?: The setting of Columbia, distance from home, and the outstanding financial offer.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I look forward to collaborating with specialists from a variety of fields, as well as learning from other more experienced people in chemistry.

Fun fact about yourself: I once wrote a 50,000 word novel. It is by no stretch of the imagination Pulitzer Prize material, but it was fun doing it.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My research interests currently are a spin-off of Dr. Lavigne’s research on the synthesis and analysis of boronate based polymers. These polymers have been theorized to be useful in creating self-repairing and environmentally friendly materials. Also, I am interested in looking into Dr. Benicewicz’s and Dr. Tang’s polymer development groups.

Research Key Words: organic, polymers, synthesis, condensation optimization, biodegradability, boronate
**Cameron Massey - 2014 Scholar**  
**Major & Degree:** Clinical-Community Psychology, PhD  
**Hometown:** N/A  
**Contact:** cmassey@email.sc.edu

**What brought you to UofSC?:** I was interested in attending UofSC because of the work being done with adolescents in clinical and community settings, specifically the work of the School Mental Health Team (SMHT) under Dr. Mark Weist. This program suited my research interests, and the offering of the Presidential Fellowship provided additional incentive to attend.

**What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?):** I enjoy learning about the other areas of research being conducted at the university. It is amazing to see all the creative and meaningful avenues of research, and it is very helpful to learn how others handle things, such as securing funding, balancing work and life, and successful tips for navigating milestones. The professional development offerings can be very helpful as well, particularly when they include non-academic career opportunities.

**Fun fact about yourself:** I used to work with tigers and other large, predatory cats when I was an undergraduate.

**Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.):** My research thus far (thesis, comprehensive examination, and dissertation) has revolved around understanding emotional and behavioral disorders in rural adolescents. I am working to understand specific precipitating and perpetuating factors that influence the development and maintenance of psychological disorders, taking into consideration some of the unique needs that rural populations face. I am also looking at the effectiveness of community-based interventions (such as school mental health) as they seemingly offer the best mechanism of service delivery in rural locations.

**Research Key Words:** depression, anxiety, conduct problems, adolescent, rural, school-based mental health
RICHARD MCCAIN-2016 Scholar
major & degree: Biomedical Sciences, PhD
hometown: Columbia, SC
contact: richard.mccain@uscmed.sc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: The neuroscience program.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): The seminars.

Fun fact about yourself: I fish.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): The goal is to determine the factors underlying neuroinflammation in a wide variety of disorders and possible avenues for treatment.

Research Key Words: neuroinflammation, ETC, oxidative stress, reductive stress, diabetes, neurodegenerative disease
**KELLIA MOORE-2015 Scholar**

**major & degree:** English, PhD  
**hometown:** Tampa, FL  
**contact:** kellia@email.sc.edu

*What brought you to UofSC?*: I was really impressed by the English program, and the campus and culture reminds me a lot of my undergrad at UF.

*What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?)*: I love learning about what grad students in different fields are researching!

*Fun fact about yourself*: Lately I’ve gotten a bit obsessed with making sourdough bread. If you want to debate levain vs. starter, let me know.

*Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.)*: I love 18th and 19th-century British novels, particularly by women writers. Right now, I’m also focusing on connections between late 18th and early 19th-century nature poetry (for example, William Wordsworth’s use of the picturesque). We’ll see where that takes me!

*Research Key Words*: 18th century, 19th century, British, novels, literature, women writers
ALECIA NICHOLS-2016 Scholar

major & degree: Linguistics, PhD
hometown: Charleston, SC
contact: alecianichols@gmail.com

What brought you to UofSC?: The ability to tailor my studies to fit an intersectional subfield within linguistics by combining psychological and sociological approaches.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): Getting to meet people from outside my own discipline.

Fun fact about yourself: A giant panda ate some of my hair one time in China.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): N/A

Research Key Words: sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, bilingualism, code-switching, feminism, LGBTQ+ studies
SAMUEL NIELSON - 2016 Scholar

major & degree: Geography, PhD
hometown: Irvine, CA
contact: samuelpnielson@gmail.com

What brought you to UofSC?: South Carolina’s geography program is top notch, and my advisor, Caroline Nagel, is one of the best in the field. I couldn’t be happier with my decision!

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): How it brings together scholars from all disciplines and forges connections between them.

Fun fact about yourself: I have three daughters, and a fourth daughter on the way this November. (I have all the luck.)

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My dissertation focuses on migrants in Europe and how churches and other religious institution become sites of integration into the European culture. My specific country of interest is Belgium.

Research Key Words: migrants, refugees, religion, integration, ethnic/religious minorities
CATHERINE NTUBE-2016 Scholar

**major & degree:** Poetry, MFA

**hometown:** Austin, TX

**contact:** cntube@email.sc.edu

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*What brought you to UofSC?:* I wanted the opportunity to work with the poetry faculty here working on a creative project.

*What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?):* I really enjoy the third-year presentations and the opportunity to interact with graduate students outside of my program of study.

*Fun fact about yourself:* I have travelled to 5 continents.

*Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.):* I’m working on a collection of poems, but my project is currently in flux. It will probably have something to do with researching, reclaiming, and retooling lost ancestral practices and histories.

*Research Key Words:* body, fat, Igbo culture, diaspora, blackness, familial heritage, trauma, recovery
What brought you to UofSC?: I realized that the University of South Carolina’s MFA Studio Art program would challenge me and be a place where I could research and explore ideas through my artwork, while being a part of a community where I can discuss and talk critically about art.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I’m most looking forward to joining and hearing from people of diverse fields.

Fun fact about yourself: I’ve hiked the entire WIDTH of the Appalachian Trail.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I’m interested in researching how art currently influences and has historically influenced both artists and viewers to open his/her mind to new ideas. My current body of work is a series of paintings that focus on the figure, the painting process, and color. The figure, abstracted by composition and scale, is a solution to my desire to resonate with the traditional and historical aspect of art, while simultaneously being a response to the modern world and contemporary art, commenting on society, and stretching the way human bodies are typically viewed.

Research Key Words: art, painting, optical-color-mixing, flesh, figure, abstract, traditional, Marilyn Minter, Jenny Saville, feminism
What brought you to UofSC?: I chose UofSC because they are effective in my research interests, and they have high impact publications on public health issues. Also, the chair of my department has worked on so many projects around the world, especially on health economics, healthcare financing, and health insurance coverage.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): The Presidential Fellow program is rich with activities that will enable students to excel outside the academic environment. The guest speakers, leadership presentations, and the 3rd year dissertation presentation makes it very interesting.

Fun fact about yourself: I love to travel and take pictures of beautiful locations.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My research interest will be focusing on healthcare financing and outcome research, which will be an evidence-based research that will improve health system around the world.

Research Key Words: healthcare financing, health economics, health insurance, outcome research, HIV, maternal and child health, electronic medical record, health system strengthening, impact evaluation, patient preferences, health informatics, hepatitis, cancer
What brought you to UofSC?: I came to UofSC to work with my advisor. I was interested in conducting clinical research pertaining to aphasia treatment and recovery, as well as neural mechanisms underlying speech and language, and my advisor is one of the leading researchers in the field. As a result, UofSC was my first choice for graduate school.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): My favorite thing about the PF program is having the opportunity to hear about research from other disciplines. Most of my time is spent working within a pretty narrow scope and speaking with people in the same field, so it is nice to learn about interesting topics from other areas.

Fun fact about yourself: I never learned how to ride a bike, but I plan to finally learn one of these days!

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My research and dissertation now are focused on examining the ability to detect errors in speech production and change that feedback into corrective motor commands in individuals who have aphasia, an acquired language disorder. I’m interested in what neurophysiological markers may exist that indicate a deficit in this ability, as well as how it may correlate with deficits in higher level language abilities, such as repetition and naming.

Research Key Words: aphasia, stroke, brain, speech, language, recovery, neuroimaging, treatment, assessment
Allie Pierce - 2014 Scholar

Major & Degree: Experimental Psychology, PhD
Hometown: Hickory, NC
Contact: Alliepierce07@gmail.com

What brought you to UofSC?: The primary reason I came to UofSC was to work with the mentor I am now working with. The research I am interested in is the research that she does. The other major reason was because of the Presidential Fellowship. This award made my offer at UofSC by far the most competitive one I had received.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I enjoy hearing about the research going on in other departments at UofSC.

Fun fact about yourself: In our spare time, my husband and I race go-karts at a local track in SC. As funny as it sounds, they’re actually a little scary (they go up to about 45 mph) but a ton of fun!

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I am studying some of the mechanisms underlying our ability to effectively search our environment for a target (e.g., finding your keys on a cluttered desk). One phenomenon within this area of research is that our attention appears to be temporarily inhibited from returning (Inhibition of Return; IOR) to previously searched locations, and this is thought to reflect a mechanism that facilitates efficient visual search. My research uses measures of brain activity recorded from EEG to better understand the different factors that contribute to IOR and efficient visual search.

Research Key Words: attention, EEG, fMRI, Inhibition of Return (IOR), visual search, visual cortex, multisensory integration
What brought you to UofSC?: Originally, my husband’s job brought us to Columbia.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I most look forward to learning from other fellows about their endeavors.

Fun fact about yourself: N/A

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): Research interests: teacher retention/attrition, teacher training.

Research Key Words: N/A
What brought you to UofSC?: The Exercise Science program and my advisor, Stacy Fritz. The program recognizes my clinical doctorate, making the PhD more achievable and less intimidating.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I love hearing about other students’ research, especially in the humanities, which is so different than my daily focus.

Fun fact about yourself: I teach yoga.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My research interests are in physical activity for those with permanent mobility impairments and the role physical therapists play in helping this population achieve physical activity goals. My planned dissertation project will evaluate an existing cardiac rehabilitation program for stroke survivors to increase physical activity and exercise capacity.

Research Key Words: physical activity, wellness, stroke, physical therapy
What brought you to UofSC?: My program.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): The food is amazing.

Fun fact about yourself: I danced hula for 10 years.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I am doing exploratory research on how children first become attracted and identified with sports brands and how that connection changes over time.

Research Key Words: children, identity, loyalty, sports, attachment, socialization
What brought you to UofSC?: After working as a speech pathologist in a school for three years, I decided to go back to school to pursue a doctoral degree. I was drawn to UofSC because of the faculty, specifically the reading-focused faculty in the Communication Sciences and Disorders department.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I am most looking forward to taking classes and learning again.

Fun fact about yourself: My husband and I are both speech language pathologists.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): The impact of hearing loss on literacy skills.

Research Key Words: literacy, hearing loss, deafness, dyslexia, reading development
What brought you to UofSC?: I had a great experience here as a research assistant during undergrad, and I wished to remain a member of that lab.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): It's a great way to meet new people, as well as learn professional development tips. Plus there is free food.

Fun fact about yourself: I play guitar.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): How are concepts represented in the brain? Does conceptual knowledge rely on a single anatomical ‘hub’ area, or are concepts reliant on distributed sensorimotor cortices?

Research Key Words: cognitive neuroscience, cognition, neuroscience, semantics, psychology, brain
What brought you to UofSC?: I came to UofSC because of the faculty in my area of study, late medieval and early modern literature, as well as the research opportunities and resources available.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): My favorite thing about the Presidential Fellows program is the interaction with academics in other fields, making connections, and being able to hold conversations that cross disciplines.

Fun fact about yourself: I’ve driven through every state and province on the east coast, from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, to Key West, Florida (though not in one trip).

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I’m interested in different conceptions of identity (communal, regional, national, historical, etc.) that circulated in Western Europe from roughly 1200-1600. Though real, these identities are essentially imagined, and are constantly in flux. More specifically, I’m interested in the ways certain literary texts variously reflect and/or modify these identities.

Research Key Words: imagined communities, cultural studies, medieval worldview
What brought you to UofSC?: I chose to come here to pursue my research interests of sustainability in sport with my advisor and be a part of a world-class sport management department.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): Having the opportunity to meet everyone and get outside of my research bubble is the biggest reward of being a part of this program.

Fun fact about yourself: While my name is Walker and people often make Walker Texas Ranger jokes to remember my name, I have never actually watched the TV show Walker Texas Ranger.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My research interests focus primarily on issues of the environment and sustainability in the management of sport events with a particular focus on facilities and the Olympic Games.

Research Key Words: sport, environment, sustainability, ethics, Olympics, FIFA, management, institutions, stakeholders, resources
LARA SCHNEIDER-2015 Scholar

major & degree: Epidemiology, PhD
hometown: Cincinnati, OH
contact: lrs@email.sc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: Weather, vacation memories, and scholarships.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): The career development information presented to us.

Fun fact about yourself: I was voted “most mischievous” of my high school class.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I will be examining the relationship between sedentary time (and physical activity) during pregnancy and how they affect birth outcomes for both mother and child.

Research Key Words: physical activity, sedentary time, pregnancy, birth outcomes, diet, nutrition, pregnancy complications
What brought you to UofSC?: The opportunity to work with my graduate advisor and this fellowship.

What do you hope to accomplish while you pursue your degree?: Be actively engaged in publishing and presenting research, as well as teaching.

Fun fact about yourself: I have a veritable zoo’s worth of animals: four cats, a dog, two guinea pigs, and a 10-gallon fish tank.

Research Key Words: psycholinguistics, spatial attention, auditory attention, visual attention, reference tracking, spatial indexing, discourse comprehension
What brought you to UofSC?: I was impressed by the amount of talent and research interests within the Geography department.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I’m looking forward to interacting with, and learning alongside, a diverse array of passionate students.

Fun fact about yourself: I’ve been told I bare an uncanny resemblance to Maui from the Disney movie Moana.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My research interests are in (applied) climatology, meteorology, hydrology, remote sensing, and technology.

Research Key Words: severe weather, micro-climatology, extreme events, remote sensing, computational methods, data science
MADELINE STEINER-2015 Scholar
major & degree: History, PhD
hometown: Dallas, TX
contact: Steinem@email.sc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: I was initially drawn to UofSC because of my advisor and the incredibly welcoming history department, but I was also very interested in living in the South – I’m thankful for mild winters here!

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I really enjoy the third year research presentations. It’s exciting to hear about others’ work in disciplines I’m not familiar with and wouldn’t have much exposure to otherwise.

Fun fact about yourself: I have an undergraduate degree in musical theatre performance.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I study traveling entertainment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, including minstrel shows, circuses, and freak shows. I’m interested in the ways in which showbiz entrepreneurs utilized the railroad to create a national entertainment industry and the ways in which this constant travel affected the form and function of these performance genres.

Research Key Words: history, popular culture, entertainment, mass culture, railroad, spectacle, race
What brought you to UofSC?: In addition to the opportunity to study at the Arnold School of Public Health, I selected USC to join Dr. Andrew Kaczynski’s Built Environment and Community Health (BEACH) Lab. My research interests align well with the studies and goals of the lab, and I look forward to continually learning from and contributing to the meaningful research it produces.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): Of the many benefits the Presidential Fellows program offers, two stand out: the opportunity to meet, learn from, and enjoy the company of other Fellows and the unique experiences we are fortunate to have with USC faculty and staff, as well as leaders both within and outside of academia.

Fun fact about yourself: My dogs, Indiana and McCoy, are named after two of my favorite franchises, Indiana Jones and Star Trek, as I am a science fiction and fantasy enthusiast.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My research interests focus on how health and well-being are impacted by the built environment and community design, particularly in regard to inequalities in access to healthy living environments and which characteristics of these environments – such as walkability and access to resources – may reduce or promote health equity.

Research Key Words: built environment, community design, greenspace, walkability, bikeability, physical activity, obesity, mental health, physical health
What brought you to UofSC?: The focus on research, innovation, and collaborative learning. Getting to talk with faculty as I was exploring my options for graduate school only cemented my decision; they were all so helpful in answering my questions and seemed genuinely interested in what I wanted to study and get out of the program.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I’m looking forward to gaining professional development skills, as well as the chance to interact with scholars from many disciplines, to have a sense of community on campus, and to learn from diverse perspectives.

Fun fact about yourself: I trained for and ran my first half marathon in 2016 and haven’t stopped since- it’s how I brainstorm, figure things out, and handle stress. I’ve come to realize there’s not a problem that can’t be solved by a good run!

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My primary interest is that of American institutions with an emphasis on the judiciary and legislative outcomes. Additionally, I enjoy exploring the intersection of policy and law with institutions, as well as the way institutions have evolved over time and play a role in today’s politics.

Research Key Words: slavery, public opinion, behavioral path dependency, institutions, heroin policy, institutions, policy, law, legislation, judiciary
Malik Tahiyat 2015 Scholar

Major & Degree: Mechanical Engineering, PhD
Hometown: Dhaka, Bangladesh
Contact: mtahiyat@cec.sc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: I was interested in the work of my research group.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): Information on funding/scholarship opportunities (notably SPARC).

Fun fact about yourself: My entertainment comprises an esoteric blend of vintage video games, anime, and choreography.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I am mostly working in plasma physics with previous experience in process control.

Research Key Words: plasma, kinetics, process control, CFD, nonlinearity
What brought you to UofSC?: I am interested in pursuing a career in the pharmaceutical industry. I was interested in the drug discovery research being performed at UofSC in combination with the business and entrepreneurship opportunities offered here.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): The best part of the PF program is the chance to interact with other highly motivated, yet multi-disciplinary scholars.

Fun fact about yourself: I have recently begun to learn to play golf.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): At this point in my PhD program, the direction of my thesis is still somewhat fluid. However, my research interests relate to the discovery of novel chemical entities, which have the potential to enhance the treatment of cancer. Specifically, I am screening natural, plant derived products for immunomodulatory and cytotoxic effects, focusing on their ability to reverse, multiple drug resistance, reduce tumor relapse and metastatic spread, and aid the immune system's natural ability to combat cancerous tissue.

Research Key Words: chemotherapy, immunotherapy, drug discovery, natural products, small molecules, cancer stem cells
What brought you to UofSC?: The expertise of faculty, mentorship opportunities, warm inviting relationships between students, and the long standing reputation for excellence in the School Psychology program. Not to mention the beautiful campus and opportunities for funding.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): My favorite thing about the PF program is the opportunity to learn and be enriched by like-minded individuals who are passionate about their different fields. I love the opportunities for personal and professional development and being able to collaborate across areas of expertise.

Fun fact about yourself: I'm still a kid at heart, and I think that's one of the reasons I enjoy working and advocating for the kids and students I've taught. I love karaoke, I have a newly developed love for salsa, and love amateur painting.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My research centers around the evaluation of under-researched universal screeners within the Response to Intervention Framework. Specifically, I am interested in exploring the predictive utility of reading measures in relation to high-stakes assessments as a criterion measure. I want to predict how well we can identify minority students who are in need of reading intervention based on measures being currently used in schools today. I plan to investigate the predictive and concurrent validity of these measures as compared to well established measures of reading.

Research Key Words: universal screening, predictive validity, concurrent validity, technical adequacy, reading measures, high stakes assessment, classification accuracy, prevention/intervention, and minority students
What brought you to UofSC?: I came to the University of South Carolina because of the excellent professors in my field here, the strong reputation of my degree program, the library’s great collection of rare books, and the financial support of the presidential fellowship.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): The financial support is amazing. I also enjoy the fellows’ meetings – particularly when we get a chance to hear from each other. I am always impressed by the work being pursued by the fellows.

Fun fact about yourself: I studied the cuneiform language of ancient Babylon for a year as an undergraduate.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I study eighteenth and nineteenth century English-language literature, and I tend to find new interests with every project I pursue. Currently, I focus on female-authored travel literature of the early nineteenth-century United States.

Research Key Words: transatlantic 18th-19th century literature, gender studies, digital humanities
What brought you to UofSC?: The nationally ranked School of Public Health and Exercise Science program, with its collaborative faculty and interactive research projects, greatly attracted me to the University of South Carolina. Additionally, I was interested in UofSC’s Behavioral-Biomedical Interface Program, as I desired to gain research experience in various labs and complete courses in multiple disciplines. Furthermore, I saw the Presidential Fellowship as an incredible opportunity to network with, share my ideas with, and learn from other graduate students across different departments. I was also attracted by the professional development opportunities offered, as professional development is a vital part of the graduate curriculum to me.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): My favorite aspect of the PF program is the opportunity to network with graduate students from disciplines across the University of South Carolina. As such, I appreciate learning from other Presidential Fellows as they present their research during Friday seminars.

Fun fact about yourself: I am an avid outdoorswoman! My favorite hiking adventure occurred while I was living in Germany on a Fulbright grant and went on a weekend hike in the Bavarian Alps. It wasn’t until the sounds of about 30 clanking cowbells in the early morning woke me up that I realized the tent was accidentally pitched in a free-roaming cow pasture.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I research how a type of receptor involved in fear learning, muscarinic acetylcholine receptor, regulates synaptic transmission and plasticity (the strengthening of synapses) in the brain. Specifically, I am studying how these receptors inhibit or facilitate neural transmission to the basolateral amygdala, a brain region involved in associating emotions with stimuli in our environment.

Research Key Words: amygdala, acetylcholine, plasticity, electrophysiology, optogenetics, receptors, synapses
FOTEINI TZACHRISTA - 2016 Scholar

major & degree: Economics, PhD
hometown: Ioannina, Greece
contact: foteini.tzachrista@grad.mooresc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: My passion to pursue Economic research at a PhD level.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): My favorite thing about the PF program is getting together with people from different departments yet with the same struggles and passion for research.

Fun fact about yourself: Baking and cooking helps me relax me from a busy day.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I am working on the ways risk differences among men and women affect their early career choices and the pay gap between them.

Research Key Words: gender differences, risk, job choices, skill mismatch, female and male jobs, pay gap
RYAN WALDMAN-2016 Scholar

major & degree: Geological Sciences, PhD
hometown: Simi Valley, CA
contact: rwaldman@email.sc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: I had collaborated with my advisor during my undergraduate studies, and after graduating I chose to transfer to UofSC to continue working on related projects.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): The PF program provides me with experiences, opportunities, and interactions I wouldn't get through my department alone. Also free food.

Fun fact about yourself: I collect rare and vintage astronomical equipment, especially classic star maps.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): I am interested in the geochemical evolution of subduction zones. Chemical changes in volcanic rocks provide insight into the tectonic history and inner workings of the Earth.

Research Key Words: geology, geochemistry, subduction, planetary science, the Aleutians, volcanology
What brought you to UofSC?: I decided to pursue my graduate education at UofSC because of the incredible work in neurodevelopmental disorders being conducted by my mentor Jane Roberts and her lab.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): The most exciting and unique aspect of the PF program is its interdisciplinary nature. Collaboration and diversity of perspective are critical to solving the complex problems scientists face today, and to that end, having the opportunity to engage with some of the best minds throughout USC is an incredible resource.

Fun fact about yourself: Giraffes are my favorite animals!

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): Broadly, my current research interests include the early identification of phenotypes in autism, as well as understanding the heterogeneity of symptoms in ASD and fragile x syndrome. I am most interested in early patterns of social attention and how impairments in this domain may help us characterize these populations. I also would like to further our understanding of the early nature of ASD and FXS in females.

Research Key Words: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Fragile X Syndrome, sex differences, social attention, eye tracking, early development
WILLIAM WARD - 2017 Scholar

major & degree: Business Administration, PhD
hometown: Boone, NC
contact: wbward@email.sc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: The faculty and the culture of the Management department brought me to UofSC. The faculty is distinguished in their research areas, and many of those areas coincide with my own. Also, when I was invited to campus, I felt at home with the faculty and students in my program.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): I am very much looking forward to the professional development sessions the PF program offers. Also, being surrounded by students from all different types of disciplines seems like an awesome opportunity to network and perhaps engage in cross-disciplinary research.

Fun fact about yourself: When I was much younger I used to spend my entire summers in Mexico.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): My research interests are on minorities, generational diversity, and first-generation college students in the workplace. However, I also have interests in topics such as staffing, recruitment, retention, newcomer adjustment, and turnover.

Research Key Words: staffing, recruitment, retention, turnover, diversity, faultlines
I received my bachelor’s degree in psychology from Eastern Connecticut State University, after also attending college in NYC. I’ve been passionate about psychology since I first took a course in high school, and I’ve had the opportunity to be involved in several independent research projects since then. I’m thrilled to continue my education in UofSC’s experimental psychology program and study how context influences behavior with Dr. Wedell. Outside of school, I love to read and spend time with my black lab.
What brought you to UofSC?: I was drawn to the program description and the reputation of the PhD program in Counselor Education & Supervision.

What is your favorite thing about the PF program? (Or, what are you most looking forward to in joining the PF program?): When it comes to the PF program, I appreciate the fellowship and accompanying assistantship opportunity. Both of those have provided funding so that I can learn more about research in counseling during each year of my program. I also appreciate the chance to meet with a community of scholars who have a variety of interests, the intentional luncheons, and the potential for future networking opportunities.

Fun fact about yourself: I like to play in the sandbox with my clients as often as possible.

Sum up your dissertation/thesis in 3 sentences (or less!) (Alternatively, describe your research interests in 3 sentences or less.): Quantitative inquiry into the strengths and difficulties of typically developing siblings (4-7 years of age) of persons born with lifelong disabilities.

Research Key Words: disability, counseling, families, siblings, strengths, difficulties
MELEK YILDIZ SPINEL-2015 Scholar
major & degree: Clinical-Community Psychology, PhD
hometown: Bogota, Colombia
contact: meleky@email.sc.edu

What brought you to UofSC?: The clinical-community psychology program at UofSC is very unique (there are probably no more than 15 programs in the country combining these two fields). Additionally, the research of my adviser, Dr. Lorenzo-Blanco, is a very good fit for my research interests.

What do you hope to accomplish while you pursue your degree?: As I pursue this degree I aim to become a skillful clinician, and well trained-researcher, developing my own line of research.

Fun fact about yourself: I went to a boarding school for two years (my last two years of high school).

Research Key Words: Latino mental health, culture, acculturation, immigration, gender, substance use, depression, quantitative, qualitative
This word cloud is a compilation of all the Presidential Fellows’ research interests in order to highlight common interests.