



AGEP Student Success Conference

October 17-19, 2025

Theme: Keeping Momentum and
Moving Higher Through Education

MSU Multicultural Center
East Lansing, Michigan



AGEP Student Success Conference Schedule-at-a-Glance Day 1

Friday, October 17, 2025

Time	Topic	Location
9:00 AM - 9:30 AM	Welcome & Overview	Brody Hall Cafeteria
9:30 AM - 10:30 AM	Faculty Leadership Breakfast-Invite only	Brody Hall Cafeteria
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM	Tour 1: MSU Department Tours with MGI	BPS Building
11:00 AM- 12:15 PM	Strategies for Navigating the Dissertation	Virtual-Ring Central
11:00 AM - 12:15 PM	How to Maximize Your Summer Internship Experience	Virtual-Ring Central
12:30 PM - 2:00 PM	Tour 2: MSU Department Tours with Lunch (College of Human Medicine, College of Education, FRIB)	Various Locations
12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	Academic Job Search Panel	Virtual-Ring Central
12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	Why Public Engagement Matters Panel	Virtual-Ring Central
12:30 PM - 2:00 PM	Faculty Leadership Lunch- Invite Only	Brody Hall Cafeteria
2:30 PM - 4:00 PM	Career Expo 1 & Resume Clinic (Virtual)	Virtual-Ring Central
4:30 PM - 5:30 PM	Virtual Non-Academic Career Job Search Panels	
4:30 PM - 5:30 PM	Career Exploration for Life Sciences	Virtual-Ring Central
4:30 PM - 5:30 PM	Career Exploration for Social Sciences	Virtual-Ring Central
4:30 PM - 5:30 PM	Career Exploration for Engineering & Physical Sciences	Virtual-Ring Central
6:00 PM -7:30 PM	Faculty Leadership Reception-Invite only	Brody Hall Cafeteria

Virtual-Ring Central Event link: <https://bit.ly/AGEP25>

Direct Virtual Expo link: <https://bit.ly/AGEP25Expo>



AGEP Student Success Conference Schedule-at-a-Glance Day 2

Saturday, October 18, 2025

Time	Topic	Location
9:00 AM- 11:30 AM	Registration	MCC Workshop Room
10:15 AM - 10:30 AM	Opening Remarks	MCC /Ring Central
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Making the Most Out of Your Grad School Experience	MCC Workshop Room/Ring Central
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Personal Statement Writing Workshop	MCC Conference Room A/Ring Central
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	How to ethically use AI in the classroom	MCC Living Room/Ring Central
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Lunch Provided	MCC Workshop Room
12:30 PM - 2:00 PM	Career Expo-Session & Resume Clinic (Hybrid)	MCC Workshop Room/Ring Central
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Abstract Writing Workshop	MCC Workshop Room/Ring Central
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Making the Most out of your Post-doc Experience	MCC Conference Room A/Ring Central
2:15 PM - 4:00 PM	Hybrid Poster Session and Conference Mixer	MCC 2nd Floor/Ring Central
4:30 PM - 5:30 PM	Financial and Mental Wellness in Graduate School for Work/Life Balance	MCC Living Room/Ring Central
4:30 PM- 5:30 PM	How AI will affect the Job Market	MCC Workshop Room/Ring Central
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM	Recruiter & Networking Reception	MCC Workshop Room
8:00 PM - 10:00 PM	Student Bowling Networking Event	Zap Zone



AGEP Student Success Conference Schedule-at-a-Glance Day 3

Sunday, October 19, 2025

Time	Topic	Location
9:00 AM - 11:30 AM	Registration	MCC 1 st Floor Lobby
10:15 AM - 11:00 AM	Continental Breakfast	MCC Workshop Room A
10:00 AM - 10:45 AM	Career Expo Session 3 (Hybrid)	MCC Workshop Room A
10:45 AM - 12:30 PM	CrossTalks: Oral Presentations	MCC Conference Rooms A-C /Ring Central
12:45 PM - 2:30 PM	Keynote Presentation & Luncheon	MCC Workshop Room/Ring Central
2:45 PM - 3:30 PM	Intellectual Property: How to Take Your Ideas to the Next Level	MCC Living Room/Ring Central
2:45 PM - 3:30 PM	Leadership and Promotion Strategies	MCC Conference Room A/Ring Central
2:45 PM - 3:30 PM	Investing 101 for Students and New Workers	MCC Workshop Room/Ring Central
4:00 PM - 5:30 PM	Award Announcements and Musical Performance	MCC Workshop Room/Ring Central

Conference Welcome from MSU AGEP Director



On behalf of The Graduate School, I would like to welcome you to Michigan State University's 2025 Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) Student Success Conference. Over the years, participation in this program has motivated many individuals like you to pursue advanced degrees. Working in teams with investigators from diverse scientific, educational, and cultural backgrounds represents an important key to the progress of our nation's position, on which the global community depends. **We are delighted to launch our third hybrid version of this meeting from the MSU**

Multicultural Conference Center in East Lansing and using the RingCentral platform.

One of the unique aspects of the AGEP Student Success Conference is that the research presentations displayed will not only discuss technical aspects but also how they relate to social impacts. There are 9 areas of social impact based on this year's group of presenters, including Family Relations, Social Equity, Mental Health, Environment, Criminal Justice Reform, K-12 Education, Workforce Development, Higher Education, and Healthcare. The AGEP Student Success Conference hosted by MSU is a cross-disciplinary experience, full of scientists, engineers, social scientists, policymakers, community leaders, and students.

It is my sincere hope that your experience with us will enhance your knowledge and appreciation of the world of research as well as contribute to the development of your academic and career goals.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steven D. Thomas".

Steven. D. Thomas
MSU AGEP Program Director
Conference Chairperson



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Plenary Virtual Sessions (Friday, October 17)

<https://bit.ly/AGEP25>

Strategies for Navigating the Dissertation:

11:00 AM-12:15 PM ET

This seminar will focus on how to make the dissertation writing process smooth and will address issues such as negotiating with faculty committees and making progress despite the demands of the doctoral educational process. Though this seminar is ideally suited for graduate students entering or about to enter the dissertation process, those at other stages of their programs will also gain valuable information about academic writing in general and anticipated experiences with the dissertation.

Tabitha Hardy: Indiana University-Indianapolis



Dr. Tabitha M. Hardy's journey is a testament to resilience, academic excellence, and unwavering commitment to student success. Hailing from Meridian, MS, as the youngest of ten children and the groundbreaking first in her family to earn a bachelor's degree, Dr. Hardy's path is one of exceptional achievement. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology Education from Alcorn State University, followed by a Master of Science in Biology from Jackson State University, laying a strong foundation for her pursuit of advanced scientific inquiry. She culminated in her formal education with a Ph.D. in Microbiology and Immunology from Indiana University School of Medicine. Driven by a passion for research and mentorship, Dr. Hardy completed a prestigious postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, further honing her expertise. She then transitioned to academia, serving as an Assistant Professor of

Biology at Stillman College, where she began to cultivate her talent for nurturing the next generation of scholars. Currently, Dr. Hardy serves as the Assistant Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Assistant Dean for Student Development and Academic Affairs at Indiana University Indianapolis, wielding significant influence over graduate education and student success. Her multifaceted role extends to a faculty appointment in the Department of Biology, where she continues to engage with and inspire students.



How to Maximize your Summer Internship

11:00 AM-12:15 PM ET

This panel discussion will cover how to take full advantage of a summer internship program. The panelists will also cover issues of imposter syndrome and time management.

Jean Paul Sadia: Michigan State University



Jean Paul Sadia is a first year PhD student in the Computation, Mathematics Science and Engineering department studying quantum algorithms and error correction under Dr. Ryan LaRose and Dr. Dean Lee. He is interested in the stability and applications of quantum simulation in the sciences. Jean Paul is a two-time SROP alum. As an alum of student support programs, Jean Paul strongly believes in giving back and contributing to systems that supported him. He also enjoys basketball, photography, and live music. He received his bachelor's degree in mathematics from Rutgers University.

Zion Pettiford: Michigan State University



Zion Pettiford is a first-generation college student who earned his bachelor's degree from North Carolina A&T State University in kinesiology, concentrating in sport management. Zion is now pursuing his master's in kinesiology, concentrating in psychosocial aspects of exercise, at Michigan State University. His passions lie within health advocacy and athlete support. With that, he aspires to combine his sport management and psychosocial skills to create a training facility aimed at holistically developing athletes.

Devyn Hill: Michigan State University



Devyn Hill is originally from West Palm Beach, Florida, and earned her B.S. in Cell and Molecular Biology from Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University. Following graduation, she participated in the Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP), conducting microbial research in the laboratory of Dr. Evangelyn Alocija. This experience sparked her passion for research and helped her build strong scientific connections at Michigan State University (MSU). Devyn is now a second-year doctoral student in the laboratory of Dr. Jennifer Jacob, where her research focuses on breast cancer immunology. She investigates the role of the protein Glucocorticoid-Induced Leucine Zipper (GILZ) in triple-negative breast cancer. She is also a trainee in the Integrated Pharmacological Sciences Training Program and an active member of the Department of Physiology Graduate School Council. Beyond her academic and research pursuits, Devyn is committed to advancing diversity and inclusion in STEM. She serves on the Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) Steering Committee and regularly volunteers at STEM public outreach events. In her free time, she enjoys roller skating, cooking, and reading science fiction.



Academic Job Search

12:30 PM- 2:00 PM ET

This workshop will cover how a graduate student or postdoc should approach searching, applying, interviewing, and negotiating faculty positions.

Erica Cooper: Virginia Tech



Dr. Erica Cooper currently serves as the Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs at Virginia Tech. Previously, she was Associate Professor of Communication with tenure at Roanoke College, where she led the effort to create a Communication Studies major. With a passion for fostering inclusivity and promoting diversity in academia, Dr. Cooper has dedicated her career to advancing the representation of underrepresented groups in higher education. She earned her Ph.D. in Communication from Indiana University, where she specialized in the intersection between race, persuasion, law, and identity development. Her doctoral research focused on the role of legislators and courts in creating a rigid racial binary of black and white. Ultimately, this

discourse shaped public perceptions of race, legal and social rights, as well as societal attitudes and interpersonal relationships. This foundation has allowed her to develop an expertise in the intersection of communication, culture, and diversity, which she brought to her classroom and her new administrative roles. As a tenured Associate Professor, Dr. Cooper has designed and taught a range of courses in communication, including intercultural communication, interracial communication, communication ethics, and communication theory. In her current role as Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, Dr. Cooper serves as a faculty recruitment architect, developing pathways to faculty positions as well as a retention strategist. Among her accolades, Dr. Cooper served as the chief strategist for the Future Faculty Diversity Program at Virginia Tech, which has resulted in over 50 early-career faculty hires in a four-year period. Dr. Cooper also oversees a mentorship program for early-career faculty to create a more supportive academic environment.

Willie Rockward: Morgan State University



Dr. Rockward earned his Ph.D. in Physics from Georgia Institute of Technology. He currently serves as Professor of Physics and Department Chair at Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD. As a tenured professor at Morehouse College, he served seven (7) years as the Chair of the Department of Physics & Dual Degree Engineering Program (Physics & DDEP) and 20 years as the Research Director of the Materials and Optics Research & Engineering (MORE) Laboratory. His current research interests include micro/nano optics lithography, extreme ultraviolet interferometry, metamaterials, terahertz imaging, nanostructure characterization, and crossed-phase optics. Among his professional leadership

experiences, he served as the President of the National Society of Black Physicists (NSBP) and as President of Sigma Pi Sigma Physics Honor Society. Also, he has served a combination of 30+ years as Pastor and Associate Minister of Baptist Churches in metro-Atlanta, GA, and Baltimore, MD.



Why Public Engagement Matters Seminar 12:30 PM-2:00 PM ET

Public engagement can provide new points of view for researchers and increase your profile. Panelists will discuss best practices for interacting with the non-technical experts and the general public.

Kwesi Brookins: Michigan State University



Dr. Kwesi Brookins is University Outreach and Engagement's (UOE) vice provost and Ecological-Community Psychology professor at Michigan State University (MSU). Before coming to MSU in 2023, Dr. Brookins was a Psychology and Africana Studies professor at NC State University, where he founded the undergraduate Africana Studies program, established several global education and linkage programs in Africa, and served as the Center for Family and Community Engagement Director and Vice Provost for University Outreach and Engagement. As Vice Provost, Dr. Brookins leads a nine-unit enterprise that supports faculty, staff, and students across all colleges, centers, and institutes at MSU in support of the university's land-grant and engaged scholarship missions. Dr. Brookins' research and publications have centered on

community-university partnerships, community-based interventions, African American identity development, an African-centered worldview, and sociopolitical and critical consciousness. Dr. Brookins was an American Council of Education Fellow (2018-2019) and the 2023-24 president of the Society for Community Research and Action, Division 27 of the American Psychological Association. He currently sits on several local and international boards, including the Michigan Public Health Institute and the Alliance for African Partnerships at MSU.

Sheril Kirshenbaum: Michigan State University



Dr. Sheril Kirshenbaum is an Emmy Award-winning scientist and author in the Office of Research and Innovation at Michigan State University. She is also an assistant professor in the College of Communication Arts and Sciences, where her research explores how senior policymakers in the U.S. government make decisions about science and policy. She hosts and writes the [PBS](#) series, *Serving Up Science*. Sheril co-authored [Unscientific America: How Scientific Illiteracy Threatens Our Future](#) with Chris Mooney, chosen by Library Journal as one of the Best Sci-Tech Books of 2009 and named by President Obama's science advisor John Holdren as a top recommended read. She also wrote [The Science of Kissing](#), which explores the science behind one of humanity's fondest pastimes.

Her Substack, [Unelected Representative](#), focuses on scientific decision-making in the U.S. Congress. In 2007, Sheril co-founded Science Debate (now [Science on the Ballot](#)) and served as Executive Director from 2015-2022. She has been an International Affairs Fellow through the Council on Foreign Relations with Senator Gary Peters (2024-2025), a Presidential Leadership Scholar (2015), a Marshall Memorial Fellow (2012), a Next Generation Fellow through the Robert Strauss Center for International Security and Law (2012), and a John A. Knauss Fellow in the U.S. Senate with Senator Bill Nelson (2006). She speaks internationally about science communication and has appeared as a thought leader at events like TEDGlobal and Ciudad de las Ideas. In 2023, Sheril was awarded a regional Emmy by The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Sheril has been a guest on news programs like CNN and Fox News and interviewed in magazines such as Vanity Fair. She hosted blogs at Discover, Scientific American, and Wired, as well as the weekly NPR podcast *Serving Up Science*.



Virtual Non-Academic Career Job Panels

These panel discussions will cover various career options for students majoring in the life sciences, social sciences, and engineering-related fields.

Career Exploration for Life Sciences

4:30 PM-5:30 PM ET

Jennifer Watts: Nationwide Children's Hospital



Dr. Jennifer Watts is currently a Postdoctoral Scientist at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio. She is a 2015 MSU SROP alum and served as a MSU SROP graduate facilitator over several years in her doctoral studies between 2017-2020. Additionally, she was involved in AGEP and was the Editor-in-Chief of the inaugural Graduate Student Survival Guide in 2021. She graduated from MSU with a doctorate in Physiology, studying Zika virus-induced pregnancy loss. Jennifer now studies genetic neurodevelopmental disorders and gene therapy using mouse models.

Alexandra Colon: Genentech



Dr. Alexandra Colón-Rodríguez is the Principal Program Manager of the Postdoctoral Program at Genentech, a member of Roche. In this role, she leads initiatives that support the professional development, mentorship, and success of postdoctoral fellows, fostering a culture of growth, collaboration, and scientific excellence. She is also the founder of the nonprofit STEAM100X35, which amplifies the work of Puerto Rican women in STEAM and inspires the next generation through workshops, webinars, and scholarships. Dr. Colón-Rodríguez is passionate about empowering diverse scientists and advancing innovation in biotechnology. She holds a PhD in Comparative Medicine, Integrative Biology, and Environmental Toxicology from Michigan State

University (MSU) and is a proud alumna of MSU's McNair, SROP, and AGEP programs.



Nicholas Haughton: Microsoft



Nick Haughton is a purpose-driven leader who believes in the power of insight to unlock human potential. He is a Senior HR Business Partner supporting Data Center Operations across the US East and LATAM regions. With a Master's in Human Resources and Labor Relations from Michigan State University and a BA in Criminology from the University of Florida, Nick blends analytical rigor with deep empathy to architect people strategies that are bold, honest, and human. He has been at Microsoft for 6 years, and his HR career journey began with a transformative internship with the Xbox organization, where he helped drive cultural change during a strategic pivot to game streaming. He later discovered a passion for leadership coaching and empowering others with data-driven insights to help them grow and create lasting positive change.

Career Exploration for Engineering and Physical Sciences

4:30 PM-5:30 PM ET

Mudassir Hammeed: Autodesk



Mudassir Hameed is a seasoned Software Engineering Leader with over 15 years of experience driving large-scale software development, cloud transformation, and AI-driven productivity initiatives. Currently a Software Engineering Manager at Autodesk, he leads high-performing teams focused on building distributed, cloud-native systems that power next-generation design and collaboration platforms. With a strong foundation in technical architecture, DevOps, and agile leadership, Mudassir has a proven record of elevating team performance through mentorship, vision, and a culture of continuous improvement. His leadership philosophy centers on developing empowered, self-organizing teams and future technical leaders. Outside of work, Mudassir enjoys biking with his boys, long drives with his wife, and tinkering with personal tech projects.



Saturday Plenary Sessions (Saturday, October 18)

MSU Multicultural Center

Making the Most of Your Grad School Experience 11:00 AM-12:00 PM ET
MCC Workspace/Ring Central

This panel discussion will cover how to take full advantage of the graduate student journey.

Jordan Parker: Michigan State University



Jordan M. Parker (he/him) is a PhD Candidate in the School of Criminal Justice (SCJ) at Michigan State University, where he focuses on community-based violence interventions (CVI), program evaluation, firearm violence, juvenile justice, and police misconduct. Guided by a strong commitment to community engagement, Jordan's research focuses on collaborating closely with practitioners and systems-impacted individuals to drive meaningful, real-world outcomes. At MSU, he has been actively involved in the SCJ and the Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) Program. In the SCJ, Jordan has served as the Event Coordinator, Vice President, and President of the Graduate Student Association. Additionally, he has been an active participant in the AGEP Program, which has allowed him to travel to

Washington, D.C., and the Michigan State Capitol in Lansing to advocate for research funding and share the impact of his work with policymakers. Previously, he presented his research at the AGEP Student Success Conference. His AGEP experience has also enabled him to serve as a graduate facilitator this past summer for MSU's Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP), where he mentored undergraduate students from colleges and universities across the U.S. as they completed independent research projects. Jordan strives to be an active participant in any community he joins, driving systemic change and providing opportunities to others.

Dimitri Joseph: Michigan State University



Dimitri Joseph is a DO-PhD candidate at Michigan State University in Pharmacology & Toxicology. His research centers on mining public datasets to uncover novel, informative patterns in disease or drug-induced gene expression. His broad interests span pharmacodynamics, chemical biology, and biochemistry. Dimitri chose MSU for its DO-PhD program and the opportunity to train at the intersection of medicine and quantitative bioscience. Beyond academia and medicine, he enjoys exploring a wide range of art forms. After MSU, he plans to begin residency training in pathology and pursue a career as a physician-scientist, integrating data analysis, bioinformatics, and pathology to advance translational discovery and patient care.



Katie Wernick: Michigan State University



Kate Wernicke is a second-year PhD student majoring in Biosystems Engineering and Environmental Science & Public Policy at MSU. She completed her BS in Biosystems Engineering in 2024 and began graduate school as an MS-BS linked student, with the intention of defending her MS thesis in late 2025. Kate is an active member of the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering (BAE); she holds multiple committee positions within the department and works as a Teaching Assistant for a senior-level engineering design course. Kate has been a member of Dr. Jade Mitchell's Risk Modeling Lab since 2021, researching human health risk, chemical risk analysis, and quantitative microbial risk analysis (QMRA) in the water space. She is also a trainee in the WaterCube NRT Fellowship Program, working at the intersection of data science, water science, and social science. Her current research is focused on the prioritization of emerging contaminants in drinking water.

Personal Statement Writing Workshop

11:00 AM-12:00 PM ET

Multicultural Center Room A (2nd Floor)/ Ring Central

This presentation will cover common mistakes students make when preparing a personal statement for graduate school admissions and fellowship applications.

Jaleah Rutledge: Yale University



Dr. Jaleah Rutledge (she/her) is a postdoctoral fellow at Yale School of Public Health. Her program of research focuses on racial health disparities, health equity, and health promotion among marginalized populations. More specifically, she is interested in understanding and utilizing strengths-based approaches for the promotion and protection of Black women's sexual and reproductive health. Her long-term goal is to maintain a program of research that enhances understandings of health inequities and informs interventions that center the resilience, agency, and lived experiences of Black women and girls. Dr. Rutledge obtained her PhD in Ecological-Community Psychology from Michigan State University. She is also a proud alumna of Tuskegee University, a historically black college and university (HBCU) where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and a Bachelor of Arts in Communications. Her dissertation, which explored how Black women navigate and heal after a sexually transmitted infection diagnosis through narrative inquiry and Black feminist theory, was awarded the Society for Community Research and Action Dissertation of the Year Award for the best dissertation on a topic in the field of community psychology. Her leadership and scholarly contributions have also been recognized with the Bob & Betts Caldwell Land-Grant Values Award and the Graduate Student Leader of the Year Award. Recently, Dr. Rutledge, alongside faculty at Yale and Tuskegee University, was awarded a grant through Yale's ASCEND (Alliance for Scholarship, Collaboration, Engagement, Networking and Development) initiative, which supports innovative Yale-HBCU research partnerships. This collaboration is significant as an HBCU alumna and Birmingham, Alabama native, allowing her to honor her roots while advancing her commitment to equity and community-engaged scholarship.



How to Ethically Use AI in the Classroom

11:00 AM-12:00 PM ET

Multicultural Center Living Room/Ring Central

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming all dimensions of human society. For educators, trainers, and students, understanding how to use this evolving technology in various learning environments will be crucial to staying ahead and becoming responsible professionals.

CharMaine Hines: Wayne County Community College District



Dr. CharMaine Hines is a seasoned scholar, practitioner, and higher education leader with progressive leadership positions at public and private institutions across Michigan. A passionate steward of higher education, CharMaine's service work on various non-profit, regional, state, and national associations includes; American Council on Education's (ACE) MI-ACE Women's Network, American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Commission, City of Detroit Mayor's Workforce Development Board Career and Education Advisory Council(CEAC), Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) Peer Reviewer Corps, MI-Business Professionals of America statewide career, and technical student association, Presidents Roundtable (AACC Affiliate Council) and founding co-director of the MI-BPA Corporate Summer

Internship Program (CSIP). With a career shaped by a deep commitment to education, equity, and steward leadership, she has become a highly regarded regional and national authority, presenting on a wide range of topics related to academia, leadership, and communication. Scholarly publications includes the book, *Voices of Women of Color Community College CEOs* (2025); *New Directions for Community Colleges* (v Su'2023, I 202, pp.47-62); *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College* (v29;l, pp. 35-52(18), Spr'2022); *Great Leadership: Strategies for Leading High Performing Community Colleges* (2022); and *The EDU Ledger* (October, 2021). Dr. Hines is a proud King/Chavez/Parks Faculty Fellow and servant leader who is deeply committed and passionate about access to education and life-long learning.

Abstract Writing Workshop

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM ET

Multicultural Center Workshop/Ring Central

This presentation will cover common mistakes new researchers make when preparing an abstract for conference presentations and journal submissions.

Carmel Martin-Fairey: Harris-Stowe State University



Dr. Carmel Martin-Fairey is an Assistant Professor of Biology at Harris-Stowe State University (HSSU), where she leads an interdisciplinary research program at the intersection of neuroscience, circadian biology, and maternal-infant health. Her current work investigates how environmental disruptions—particularly artificial light at night—affect gestation, brain development, and transgenerational health outcomes. She is the founder and principal investigator of the *Lady Labsters*, a vibrant undergraduate research group committed to experiential learning and advancing diversity in STEM. Dr. Martin-Fairey teaches a range of courses, including neurobiology, genetics, and human anatomy and physiology, and she has been instrumental in developing a neuroscience minor/certificate pathway to increase students' marketability for graduate programs and careers. With a strong

commitment to inclusive teaching, Dr. Martin-Fairey integrates trauma-informed pedagogy, culturally responsive mentorship, and community outreach into her scholarship. She is a Taylor Geospatial Institute Fellow and an active collaborator with regional and national initiatives such as Black in Neuro, BRAINs, NeuroPrep (WashU), SLU Neuroscience, NeuroMatch, NeuroX, and the Dana Foundation.



Making the Most of Your Post-Doc Experience 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM ET **Multicultural Center Room A (2nd Floor)/Ring Central**

This panel discussion will cover how to take full advantage of the post-doctoral fellowship.

Kimberly Clarida: Michigan State University



Dr. Kimberly Clarida is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the College of Education at Michigan State University. Her research examines 1) the role of organizations (e.g., school districts) in shaping leadership pathways and support structures for Black principals and 2) the impact of education policies at the local, state, and federal levels on shaping students' access to social and academic success. She earned her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy from the University of Texas at Austin, with a portfolio in applied statistical modeling. Dr. Clarida's scholarship has appeared in *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *Teachers College Record*, *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, and *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Rural Education in the USA*. She

also brings extensive policy experience, having served as a Senior Policy Analyst and a Fellow for national, regional, and county-level agencies, where she conducted research, analyzed data, and provided policy recommendations. She holds a B.A. in Public Policy from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an M.Ed. in Educational Administration and Policy from the University of Georgia.

Aathmaja Anandhi Rangarajan: Michigan State University



Dr. Aathmaja Anandhi Rangarajan is a Postdoctoral research associate in the lab of Dr. Born. Born and raised in India, she did her BS and MS from India and moved to Germany to do her PhD in Microbial Genetics at the University of Cologne. She then moved to the University of Michigan to do Postdoctoral research with Dr. Julie Biteen before moving to Michigan State University. Dr. Anandhi Rangarajan has mentored numerous graduate and undergraduate students in research. Beyond her academic and professional roles, she is also a mother of two young children.

Aaron Reifler: Michigan State University



Aaron Reifler holds a Master of Education and certifications in K-12 French and Chemistry from Aquinas College, as well as a Ph.D. in Neuroscience from the University of Michigan. He stayed at U of M to pursue research in visual neuroscience, specifically investigating intrinsically photosensitive retinal ganglion cells (ipRGCs) and intra-retinal signaling using whole-cell patch-clamp electrophysiology, and spent two semesters as a lecturer in neurobiology in the Department of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology. In the fall of 2019, he became the inaugural Director of Michigan State University's Office of

Postdoctoral Affairs, which reports to the Vice Provost of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and aligns with the Graduate School at MSU. During his time leading the office, he has organized monthly orientations, provided professional development programs, and developed leadership initiatives, as well as serving on national boards and committees to empower the postdoctoral community at MSU and nationally.



This panel will cover psycho-social factors (e.g. mentorship, TA growing pains, networking, mental health, etc.) and financial concerns (e.g. funding, budgeting, insurance, etc.) that influence the success of students.

Courtney Boehm: MSU Federal Credit Union



Courtney Boehm, Certified Credit Union Financial Counselor, is the Financial Education Manager at MSU Federal Credit Union. She is passionate about a holistic approach to financial well-being, helping individuals identify their personal relationship with money and the financial impacts on mental and physical health. Under Courtney's leadership, the Financial Education Department focuses on providing financial literacy to all ages, aiming to eliminate the isolation and guilt associated with finances and empower our communities to reach financial goals. She has a BA from Western Michigan University in Special Education and Elementary Education, and she taught elementary education before transitioning to financial education. She enjoys spending time with her husband, two daughters, and rescue dog, as well as

volunteering in the community and her new hobby of bird watching.

Meg Moore: Michigan State University



Dr. Moore is the Director of the Graduate School Office of Well-Being (GROW). Her research interests include graduate student socialization, identity development, and leadership. Prior to her role with GROW, Dr. Moore served as a mental health counselor at MSU, with an emphasis on serving graduate students, college athletes, and non-traditional students. She also has a background working in the non-profit sector as a consultant for individuals and organizations, focusing on mental health and well-being, team dynamics, conflict resolution, leadership development, and emotional intelligence. She holds a PhD in Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education (HALE) from MSU, an MA in Counseling from Ashland Theological Seminary, and a BA in Psychology from the University of Michigan. She enjoys watching sitcom reruns (Office, Seinfeld, Parks and Rec, etc.), camping/hiking, and spending quality time with her wife, Ashley, their two adorable children, and their two cats.

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Multicultural Center Workshop Room/Ring Central

Participants will learn how AI is reshaping the job market and what it means for their careers. This session will discuss the essential skills employers are looking for, enabling professionals to thrive in an AI-driven economy.

Ovell Barbee: Ovell Rome & Associates



Owner/Principal of Ovell Rome & Associates, Ovell Barbee Jr., is a renowned, visionary human resources leader, consultant, and speaker with a passion for diversity, equity, and inclusion. He's held executive leadership roles at Fortune 500 companies in an array of industries, including Motorola, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, General Motors/OnStar, Spectrum Health (now Corewell Health), and Indiana University Health. In these roles, he drove sustained cultural change and reduced barriers for diverse populations with a "human-centered" approach that addressed systemic and unconscious barriers and bias. He implemented policies and practices that provide everyone with opportunities to thrive within a corporate culture. As a respected Human Resources and DEI thought leader, Ovell is an accomplished and sought-after speaker who chaired the National HR Healthcare Conference in 2022. He's presented at the Healthcare HR Management Institute's National Forum, the Becker's Healthcare Annual Meeting, the National Diversity Council's National Black Men in Leadership

Summit, and many other local, state, and national meetings. He's been featured in webinars, podcasts, and news articles on Human Resources and DEI topics. Ovell has received numerous leadership awards, including being selected as one of the Top-50 HR Professionals by OnCon, one of the Top-100 Chief Diversity Officers by the National Diversity Council, one of the Top-50 Under 50 Executives by the National Black MBA Association, and the recipient of the Grand Rapids Community College Public Service GIANT Award. Ovell received his bachelor's degree in Communications and a Master's degree in Social Work in the Workplace from the University of Michigan. He then went on to obtain a second Master's degree in Human Resources & Labor Relations from Michigan State University. He has also earned certifications as a Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) and a Senior Certified Professional from the Society for HR Management. He is a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity.



Sponsored by The Graduate School, the Recruiter and Networking Reception will provide students and potential candidates with the opportunity to speak with recruitment teams and speakers during this time.

Zillah M. Fluker: Collins Aerospace



Zillah Matare Fluker, PhD —known professionally as “Z” and in academia as “Dr. Z”—is a strategic human resources and higher education executive with a passion for leadership development and organizational growth. She currently serves as Director of Learning and Business Integration at Collins Aerospace, an RTX Company, where she leads global leadership development and team effectiveness initiatives. Dr. Z also serves as a Visiting Scholar at Michigan State University’s Graduate School, preparing undergraduates for Research I-level graduate experiences. Her career spans leadership roles at Alabama State University, Central State University, Miles College, and the UNCF Institute for Capacity Building, supporting 37 HBCU presidents. A dynamic keynote speaker and brand ambassador, Dr. Z is recognized for her signature blazer style and her ability to connect across corporate, academic, and community spaces through branding. Born in Zimbabwe and raised in London, she now resides in West Hartford,

Connecticut, with her husband and two sons. She lives by the motto: “Always extend beyond the usual and ordinary—especially when you have the opportunity to put good into action.”



Student Bowling Networking Event (8:00 PM ET) sponsored by MSU MGI Department will be held at the Zap Zone. AGEP Travel Awardees and other invited students are encouraged to attend this networking session with MSU graduate students. Bus transportation will be provided from the Kellogg Center hotel and back. Food will also be served at this event. Interested students should visit the MGI Recruitment table to RSVP.

Recruitment Sessions

Friday, October 17th 2:30 PM-4:00 PM (virtual ONLY on RingCentral.com)

Saturday, October 18th 2:15 PM-4:00 PM (Hybrid, Multicultural Center)

Sunday, October 19th 10:00 AM-10:30 AM (Hybrid, Multicultural Center)

Recruiters are looking to hire candidates for summer internships, full-time positions, and more!

Michigan State University
Indiana University Indianapolis
Yale University

The following MSU Units will be featured:

Microbiology, Genetics & Immunology

College of Agriculture

College of Human Medicine

College of Veterinary Medicine

School of Packaging

Postdoctoral Affairs



Saturday In-Person Poster Presentations

2:15 - 3:15 PM ET; MCC 2nd Floor

Presenter	Home Institution	Presentation Title	Social Impact
Amanda Fonseca-Irizarry	Inter American University of Puerto Rico	Defining the Molecular Pathway of Telomerase Assembly	Healthcare
Anamaria Acevedo Diaz	University of Central Florida	Receptor Landscapes: Sex and Species Variation in the Oxytocinergic System	Family Relations
Esther Chicou	Jarvis Christian University	Green Chemistry Synthesis of Silver Nanoparticles from Mint (<i>Mentha asiatica</i>) Extract and its Application on Cancer Treatment	Healthcare
Isabella Garcia	Michigan State University	Evaluating the Utility of the Family Nutrition and Physical Activity Screening Tool for Predicting Childhood Obesity in a Mid-Michigan Pregnancy Cohort	Healthcare
Jaycob Iglesias	Hunter College	Evaluating Biomechanical Changes in Elastic-Assisted Gait Using Motion Analysis: A Case Study	Healthcare



Saturday In-Person Poster Presentations

3:15 - 4:00 PM ET; MCC 2nd Floor

Presenter	Home Institution	Presentation Title	Social Impact
Makaila Parks	Spelman College	Mapping the Invisible: Modeling Nuclear Densities for Rare Isotope Analysis	Workforce Development
Malaiyah Shaw	Tulane University	Optimization of Fluorescent Dyes for Ex Vivo Microscopy of Fresh Tissues	Healthcare
McKenna Boykin	East Tennessee State University	Food Access and First Impressions: Understanding Spending Trends Among New and Returning Farmers Market Customers	Social Equity
Melanie Quiñones	Inter American University of Puerto Rico	Comparative analysis of Lipase activity of PLA ₂ in Coral Symbionts <i>Durusdinium</i> and <i>Cladocopium</i>	Environment
Osman Tholley-Braxton	Morgan State University	Enhanced Repackaging for Sensitive Oral Solid Dosage Formulations	Workforce Development
Ramin Areeb	Eastern Michigan University	Contrasting Disparities Between Desi Populations and the Michigan Healthcare System In the Metro Detroit Area	Social Equity
Savannah Slayton	University of Oklahoma	Is Learning the Priority? K-12 Educational Attainment and the Federal Education Policy Agenda	K-12 Education
Trenton O'Bannon	University of California, Berkeley	Quantifying Approximate Symmetry Using the Euler Characteristic Transform	Workforce Development



Saturday Virtual Poster Presentations

2:30- 3:15 PM ET; Ring Central

<https://bit.ly/AGEP25Expo>

Presenter	Home Institution	Presentation Title	Social Impact
Andrea Arce Rodriguez	Inter American University of Puerto Rico, Aguadilla Campus	The Influence of Isoflurane on the Gut Microbiome in a Rat Model Of Diet-Induced Hypertension	Healthcare
Angelina Saba	University of California, Irvine	Progress in PCOS Through Investigation of the Microbiome	Healthcare
Chris Lin	Hunter College	Comparison of Neuroplasticity Between Maternal and Non-Maternal Rats: Perineuronal Nets in the Basolateral Amygdala	Healthcare
Dan'Yale Wright	Central Michigan University	The Use of Looking While Listening to Examine Spoken Language Production in Children with Down Syndrome	Family Relations
Gregory Rodriguez	New York University	On the Weak Cop Number of Infinite Graphs	Workforce Development



Saturday Virtual Poster Presentations

3:15 - 4:00 PM ET; Ring Central

<https://bit.ly/AGEP25Expo>

Presenter	Home Institution	Presentation Title	Social Impact
Connor Gambla	University of Illinois	Improving VQEs Using PCS Guided Multithreading	Workforce Development
Ihfaz Islam	Wayne State University	Design of Low-Power Digital Wearable Healthcare Chips Using Intelligent Generative AI	Workforce Development
Isteaq Zim	Hunter College	The Impact of Housing Conditions on Mental Health: Evidence from New York City Neighborhoods	Mental Health
Jeanmarck Ceant	New York University	Dr. AI	Healthcare
Jeannie Correa	CUNY Hunter College and Northeastern University	Swipe, Match, Report, Repeat: Exploring Dating App-Facilitated Violence and Harassment	Criminal Justice
Jenika Scott	Washington University St. Louis	Culture, Stress, and Resilience: Health Outcomes of Afro-Caribbean Women in the U.S.	Mental Health



Sunday CrossTalks: Oral Presentations

10:45 AM-12:30 PM ET, MCC Conference Room A (2nd Floor) - Jean Paul Sadia

Time	Presenter	Home Institution	Presentation Title	Social Impact
10:45 AM	Solange Arias	Hunters College	The Social Determinants of Health that Shape the Lives of Women Immigrants at the US-Mexico Border	Social Equity
11:15 AM	Quincy Scott	Prairie View A&M University	Understanding the Effect of Acoustoplasticity on the Microstructural Evolution and Hardness of Titanium	Workforce Development
11:30 AM	Sara Sanchez	Siena Heights	The History of Capital Punishment in the United States and Its Diminishing Support.	Criminal Justice Reform
11:45 AM	Kunle Adeyemo	Michigan State University	Progressive Failure Analysis of Dissimilar Single-lap Bolted Joints	Workforce Development
12:00 PM	Unique Taylor	Siena Heights	How does childhood upbringing impact decisions within the workforce?	Family Relations
12:15 PM	Vanessa Bailey	Aquinas College	Optimizing the Isolation of Oral Bacteriophages from Saliva	Healthcare
12:30 PM	Arikka Franklin	Eastern Michigan University	Funding for Flint, Michigan	Family Relations



Sunday CrossTalks: Oral Presentations

10:45 AM-12:30 PM ET, Conference Room B (2nd Floor) - Antonio White

Time	Presenter	Home Institution	Presentation Title	Social Impact
10:45 AM	Carlos Gonzalez	University of Puerto Rico-Rio Piedras	POF1B, a Downstream Effector of PVT1 exon 9, Interacts with Androgen Receptor in Neuroendocrine Prostate Cancer	Healthcare
11:15 AM	Devyn Hill	Michigan State University	Unzipping GILZ: Exploring the Role of Glucocorticoid-Induced Leucine Zipper (GILZ) in Triple Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC)	Healthcare
11:30 AM	Joseph Ulasi	Michigan State University	Introgression and Pyramiding of Novel Resistance Genes for Diploid Potato Breeding	Environment
11:45 AM	Lillian Ruesink	Siena Heights University	The Effect of Soil Properties on the Distribution of Invasive Species	Environment
12:00 PM	Luke VanAssche	Siena Heights University	The Effects of Spaying and Neutering Before Two Years on French Bulldog Predispositions	Healthcare
12:15 PM	Montserrat Pacheco	Michigan State University	Butyrate: A Potential Driver of Aggressive Behavior	Mental Health
12:30 PM	Taylor Graham	Siena Heights University	Effects of Ocean Acidification on Space Invader Coral Cell Structures	Environment



Sunday CrossTalks: Oral Presentations

10:45 AM-12:30 AM ET, Conference Room C (2nd Floor) - Angelique Willis

Time	Presenter	Home Institution	Presentation Title	Social Impact
10:45 AM	Deborah Ugo-Omenukwa	Hunter College	Evaluating the Peace Brokers Project: A Mixed-Methods Study on Community Violence Intervention in East Harlem	Criminal Justice Reform
11:00 AM	Emma Frost	Adrian College	Activity levels and functional fitness of participants in adaptive fitness programs: an evaluation using the RE-AIM model	Healthcare
11:15 AM	Kimberly Delgado	Siena Heights University	What Barriers do Undocumented Latinx Immigrants Face When Accessing Healthcare, Housing, and Food?	Social Equity
11:30 AM	Kylie Spaulding	Siena Heights University	Caffeine Intake and Its Effect on Anxiety Levels in Undergraduate Students	Mental Health
11:45 AM	Manuela Montoya	Hunter College	Amplifying Refugee Youth Voices: Storytelling and Resettlement Experiences in the U.S.	K-12 Education
12:00 PM	Savannah Hammock	Aquinas College	Intersectionality Of COVID-19: Experiences of Minority Ethnic Backgrounds with Disabilities/Chronic Illnesses	Healthcare
12:15 PM	Shawn Witmer	Adrian College	Framing Gender: Representation of Women in Sports Broadcasting	Workforce Development
12:30 PM	Lani Cameron	Siena Heights University	Naturally Increasing Estrogen Levels in Geriatric Women	Healthcare



Keynote Speaker for Sunday Luncheon

1:00 PM-2:30 PM ET MCC Workshop Room/Ring Central

Theme: Keeping Momentum and Moving Higher Through Education

Kelly Mack: Association of American Colleges and Universities



Dr. Kelly Mack is the Vice President for Undergraduate STEM Education and Executive Director of Project Kaleidoscope at the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). In this capacity, Dr. Mack provides leadership for the organization's mission-level commitments to quality and inclusion through the delivery of world-class professional development aimed at empowering our nation's finest STEM faculty to train and educate a competitive number of STEM students. Before joining AAC&U, Dr. Mack was the Senior Program Director for the National Science Foundation ADVANCE Program while on loan from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, where, as a Professor of Biology, she taught courses in Physiology and Endocrinology for 17 years. Dr. Mack's holistic approach to STEM reform is grounded in a strategic vision that foregrounds inclusion as an immutable

factor for achieving excellence in undergraduate STEM education. Her leadership in STEM reform has led to significant increases in the capacity of STEM faculty to implement culturally responsive pedagogies, major shifts in how leadership development for STEM faculty is delivered, and the expansion of both physical and virtual convening platforms for knowledge generation, exchange, and dissemination.

Recognized as a national thought leader in higher education, Dr. Mack's work has been highlighted in *Diverse Magazine* and *U.S. News and World Report*. Currently, she is an advisor to several institutional transformation initiatives at NSF-funded ADVANCE institutions, as well as other national STEM reform collaboratives. She is also co-founder and chair of the board of the Society of STEM Women of Color, Inc., and has served as a member of numerous boards and national committees.

Dr. Mack earned a BS degree in Biology from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and, later, a PhD from Howard University in Physiology. She has had extensive training and experience in the area of cancer research, with her research efforts focusing primarily on the use of novel antitumor agents in breast tumor cells, as well as the use of bioflavonoids in the regulation of estrogen receptor-positive (ER+) and estrogen receptor-negative (ER-) breast tumor cell proliferation. Most recently, her research efforts have examined STEM leadership development and the impact of mindfulness on STEM faculty self-efficacy.



Intellectual Property: How to Take Your Ideas 2:45 PM-3:30 PM ET

MCC Living Room/Ring Central,

This presentation will introduce different aspects of faculty entrepreneurship. Topics for discussion will include technology transfer, commercialization of academic research, and consulting.

Jennifer Carter-Johnson: Michigan State University



Associate Dean Jenny Carter-Johnson (JCJ) focuses her interests on intellectual property law, food and drug regulation, and bioethics. She combines her scientific and legal training to investigate issues at the intersection of biological research and the law.

Dean Carter-Johnson joined Michigan State University College of Law in fall of 2010. Before joining MSU, JCJ was a visiting faculty fellow at Washington University School of Law in St. Louis, Missouri, and practiced law in Seattle, Washington, specializing in intellectual property licensing and representation of biotechnology companies.

Since joining MSU College of Law, Dean Carter-Johnson has served in a variety of roles including as the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the faculty lead for the development of the MSU Ethics Institute, Co-Associate Director for the Intellectual Property, Information, and Communications program, faculty mentor the first generation law student group (JCJ is the first in her family to graduate from college), and coach for the college's three intellectual property moot court teams. JCJ also served as the Council Chair for the Michigan State Bar Section on Intellectual Property Law.

Dean Carter-Johnson graduated with highest honors from Union University with a B.S. in mathematics and biology. She earned her Ph.D. in microbiology from the University of Virginia, where her research concentrated on immune system development. She then received her law degree with honors from the University of Michigan Law School, where she was an articles editor and symposium coordinator of the *Michigan Law Review*. A member of the Michigan State Bar, she is registered to practice before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.



Leadership and Promotion Strategies

2:45 PM-3:30 PM ET

This session will cover how to balance research/teaching duties with administration responsibilities, as well as how to leverage professional development opportunities after tenure.

Terah Chambers: Michigan State University



Dr. Terah Venzant Chambers is a professor of K-12 Educational Administration in the MSU College of Education. She joined The Graduate School as Associate Dean in Fall 2022 and is thrilled to contribute to a variety of programs that will foster graduate student success, including Emergency Fellowship Funding, Advance to Adventure (ATA), Academic Achievement Graduate Assistantships (AAGA), King-Chavez-Parks Future Faculty Fellowships (KCP-FFF), Prospective Doctoral Student Recruitment and Retention, Ruth Simms Hamilton TIAA Graduate Merit Fellowship, and the Edward Alexander Bouchet Graduate Honor Society (BGHS). She will also be working with Steven Thomas to support the Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP) and the Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) at MSU. Dr. Venzant

Chambers' research interests include post-Brown K-12 education policy and urban education leadership. Specifically, she is interested in the ways within-school segregation policies influence African American students' academic achievement and school engagement, as well as the price of school success for high-achieving students of color (racial opportunity cost). Her 2022 book, *Racial Opportunity Cost: The Toll of Academic Success on Black and Latinx Students*, is available from Harvard Education Press. Venzant Chambers is the past president of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA). She currently serves as co-editor of *AERA Open*. She has previously served as associate editor for *Educational Administration Quarterly*, the *Journal of Teacher Education*, and the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*.

Investing 101 for Students and New Workers

2:45 PM-3:30 PM ET

MCC Workshop Room/Ring Central

This session will cover why you should invest, how to invest for retirement, and what investment questions you should ask to determine which types of investments are right for you.

Jonathan Garrett: Enverus



Jonathan has worked in the oil and gas industry for more than 15 years. He currently leads the Customer Success organization as Senior Vice President at Enverus, the world's largest energy data and analytics company. An engineer by training, he's worked offshore on rigs in the Gulf of Mexico, on product development of cutting-edge engineering technology, as a commercial advisor and analyst, and now on the data & analytics side of the energy business. In his free time, he is passionate about personal finance and capital markets. He has undergraduate and graduate degrees in Industrial and Operations Engineering from the University of Michigan.



Award Announcements and Musical Performance

4:00 PM-5:30 PM ET

MCC Workshop Room/RingCentral

Closing remarks will be made by Dr. Terah Chambers, Cirea Strode (MDHHS), and MSU AGEP Program Director, Steven D. Thomas. Best presenter awards will be given at this time, along with recognition of winners from the MSU KCP, Ruth Hamilton, and Bouchet Society fellowships. This is an excellent opportunity to connect with recruiters and listen to our live performance musical guests.

Cirea Strode: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services



Cirea Strode serves as a Program Manager with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Juvenile Justice Bureau, where she leads statewide initiatives focused on quality assurance, data improvement, and system reform for youth in care. She is recognized for advancing cross-agency collaboration, developing performance metrics, and strengthening placement and treatment strategies that center on the needs and dignity of young people. With nearly a decade of experience in child welfare and juvenile justice, Cirea brings both professional expertise and personal passion to her work. She played a key role in implementing data metric decision-making and continues to champion efforts that bridge policy, practice, and outcomes for vulnerable youth. Elected in 2024, Cirea proudly serves as a Trustee on the Lansing Board of Education, where she advocates for student voice, transparency, and equitable opportunities across the district.





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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Microbiology & Molecular Genetics

- **Our department is at the forefront** of the new and exciting discoveries being made in microbial ecology, microbial pathogenesis, molecular genetics, virology, genomics, immunology and cancer.
- **Employment** of microbiologists and geneticists are projected to grow 2-8 percent from 2016 to 2026, about as fast as the average for all occupations.
- More scientists will be needed to **contribute to basic research and solve problems** of industrial production.
- Microbiologists and geneticists will be needed to research and develop **new medicines and treatments**, such as vaccines and antibiotics.
- The department is unique in that we serve three medical colleges (Osteopathic Medicine, Human Medicine, and Veterinary Medicine), the College of Natural Science, AgBioResearch, and other units on campus.

Contact Dr. Jeannine Scott at scottj21@msu.edu with questions or to schedule an advising appointment.

Research within the department falls under four focus fields:

- Microbial Evolution, Physiology, Ecology & Genetics
- Molecular Pathogenesis & Infectious Diseases
- Virology, Immunology, Cancer & Cell Biology
- Genomics & Genetics



Fellowship Support at Michigan State University

contact Dr. Terah Chambers (terah@msu.edu)

Edward A. Bouchet Graduate Honor Society - Michigan State Chapter

The Michigan State University chapter of the Edward Alexander Bouchet Graduate Honor Society, inducted on April 5, 2019, during the 16th Annual Yale Bouchet Conference, promotes a network of scholars exemplifying academic excellence, leadership, and service, especially among underrepresented students. Named after Edward A. Bouchet, the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Yale in 1876, the society recognizes scholarly achievement and fosters diversity in doctoral education. Applications are due by the end of the semester; preference is given to candidates with strong academic records, recommendation letters, personal statements, and contributions to diversity. For details, visit: <https://grad.msu.edu/Bouchet/nomination-application>

TIAA Ruth Simms Hamilton Graduate Merit Fellowship

The TIAA Ruth Simms Hamilton Graduate Merit Fellowship was established in 2005 to honor Dr. Ruth Simms Hamilton, a former MSU professor and TIAA Board member known for her leadership in African Diaspora studies. Dr. Hamilton founded the African Diaspora Research Program at MSU and mentored graduate students in Afro-Diaspora studies. This fellowship supports MSU doctoral students whose dissertation research focuses on the African Diaspora, continuing Dr. Hamilton's legacy. Eligible students must be full-time, in good standing, and have completed comprehensive exams. The fellowship provides \$45,000, with applications due October 30, 2025. For more information, visit : <https://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/tiaacref>

King-Chávez-Parks Future Faculty Fellowship Program (FFF)

The King-Chavez-Parks (KCP) Future Faculty Fellowship (FFF) at Michigan State University supports economically or academically disadvantaged doctoral students pursuing faculty careers. Funded by State of Michigan's Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity and the MSU Graduate School. Fellows receive \$35,000 and commit to at least three years of teaching or administration at a public or private postsecondary institution. Recipients who do not meet the service obligation will need to repay the fellowship as a loan. For more information, visit: <https://grad.msu.edu/fellowships/kcp>



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Conference Planning Committee

2025 -2026 Steering Committee

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Antonio White

Jean Paul Saida

Angelique Willis

Charles Whitehead Tillery

Danielle Cadet

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Raymundo Lopez

Program Assistants

Amber D'Mello

Marcelle Al-Zoughbi

Promise Robinson

Zion Pettiford

dee dubose

Program Director

Steven Thomas



Discussion Notes:



Discussion Notes:



What is AGEP?



The Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (**AGEP**) is a National Science Foundation program that supports the recruitment, retention, and graduation of underrepresented students in graduate programs of the natural and social sciences, mathematics, and engineering. Undergraduates, graduate students, post-docs, and faculty who participate in building the AGEP Community at MSU rise to meet the challenges at U. S. colleges and universities by nurturing and developing world-class STEM and Social, Behavioral, and Economic (SBE) sciences faculty members who fully reflect the variety of cultures and intellectual talent of the U. S. population.

AGEP at Michigan State University – Impact

The MSU AGEP Community represents 75% of doctoral students at MSU who are Black, Hispanic, or American Indian citizens in NSF-sponsored departments. Ninety percent of the AGEP Community graduate student participants complete an advanced degree. Over the past 10 years, the AGEP Community has grown from six graduate students in 2006 and faculty to over **250** participants annually, with over 400 alumni nationwide.

The MSU AGEP Learning Community began with support from NSF, and AGEP has become a self-sustaining component of the matrix of graduate student support provided by the MSU Graduate School. A cross-disciplinary AGEP Learning Community of graduate students and faculty meets monthly, discusses active research by participants using everyday language, and considers current topics of regional and national importance for public policy. MSU AGEP events are open to students who wish to participate. AGEP is a proven strategy for diverse recruitment, retention, and persistence in graduate education.

For more information, visit us at:

MSU AGEP website: <https://grad.msu.edu/agep>

MSU AGEP Program Director: Steven Thomas, msuagep@grd.msu.edu

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the individual presenters and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.





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