Welcome to a new academic year!

I am thrilled to announce that we awarded four pilot grants this year and that this spring we had the opportunity to celebrate previous recipients at our first CHAD Symposium in six years.

In addition to celebrating CHAD pilot grants, this symposium was an opportunity to commend the ongoing work of our first CHAD research theme, Collaborations in Health, Aging, Research, and Technology (CHART).

Most excitingly, the CHAD Symposium served as the launch of our newest research theme, Collaborations in the Advancement of Research on Disability (CARD). CARD’s mission is to improve the well-being and quality of life for individuals with disabilities by conducting research, bridging knowledge gaps and engaging in outreach activities that foster collaboration between disability researchers, advocacy organizations and service providers.

In 2022, our grants staff supported 95 external grant submissions with AHS investigators as the lead PI. We had a banner year in terms of external funding with more than $18 million in external grant proposals funded in our college.

I would like to thank the CHAD staff, the CHAD Senior Faculty Committee, the CHART Steering Committee, the Age-Friendly Steering Committee, and all who worked with CHAD throughout the year.

This coming year, we eagerly anticipate continuing to support all the groundbreaking and exhilarating work taking place in AHS.

Welcome to back to campus!
The 2022-23 academic year was a busy and exciting one for AHS research and the Center on Health, Aging, and Disability (CHAD) as we supported the innovative research, education and public engagement work of the College of Applied Health Sciences (AHS).

Yours in Science,

Jeff Woods
Director, Center on Health, Aging, and Disability
Associate Dean for Research, College of Applied Health Sciences
Mottier Family Professor, Kinesiology and Community Health
CHAD is committed to fostering academic collaboration and knowledge dissemination by offering travel funding opportunities to faculty and academic professionals to present their work at conferences across the globe.

2023 PILOT GRANT RECIPIENTS

**Soyoung Choi**
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, KCH
Co-Designing an Alexa-Based Conversational mHealth System with Visually Impaired People to Promote Physical Activities.
This project was awarded as part of the Center for Research and Education on Aging and Technology Enhancement (CREATE) funded by the National Institute on Aging.

**Matthew Hanks**
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, KCH
Determining the Role of Physical Activity on Shoulder Musculoskeletal Adaptation, Biomechanics, Pain, and Pathology in Pediatric and Young Adult Manual Wheelchair Users.

**Nick Pitas**
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, RST
Examination of the Efficacy of a Community-based Leisure Walking Intervention to Promote Positive Mental Health in University Students through the Elicitation of Awe.

**Rachel Hoopsick**
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, KCH

We are proud to highlight the significant impact of CHAD’s support for AHS researchers.

With a total investment of $980,000 in pilot research grants, our talented faculty have successfully utilized these initial projects to secure larger funding from federal agencies, foundations, and corporate sponsors. Building on this success, we awarded four new pilot grants in 2023 to our exceptional faculty, fostering innovation and advancing groundbreaking research in the health sciences.

**Pilot Grants**

**Travel Grants**
Public Engagement

Throughout the year you may have seen our staff, faculty, and students at community events such as the Urbana farmer’s market and Urbana Park District events. This year, we welcomed six exceptional interns who made substantial contributions to our public engagement work and supported our impactful public engagement programs.

AGE-FRIENDLY CHAMPAIGN-URBANA

Our ongoing initiative, Age-Friendly Champaign-Urbana, has been instrumental in enhancing the quality of life for older adults in our community.

In the fall we had the pleasure of partnering with community organizations for Active Aging Week, and Champaign–Urbana Mass Transit District for a travel training event. The regular Age-Friendly column in Central Illinois Business magazine served as a platform to raise awareness and inspire action. We hope to see you at public events in the upcoming year!

CHAD Symposium

In March 2023 we hosted the first CHAD symposium since 2017. Central to this morning was a celebration of research accomplishments through our pilot grant program.

Dr. Wendy Rogers gave an update on the first CHAD research theme Collaborations in Health, Aging, Research, and Technology (CHART), highlighting the significant accomplishments of the theme and demonstrating their remarkable dedication to advancing successful aging and positively impacting the lives of older adults.

INTRODUCING CARD

The symposium also introduced Collaborations to Advance Research in Disability (CARD), a new research theme led by Laura Rice and John Kosciulek, focusing on improving the health and quality of life for individuals with disabilities through research and inclusive outreach.

CHAD Assistant Directors Alyssa Stanfield and Wendy Bartlo with interns Cecilia Lee and Vinh Vo at the CHAD Symposium.

CELEBRATING PILOT GRANTS

We celebrated the success of our CHAD Pilot Grant Program with presentations from past recipients, Drs. Sharon Zou, Brian Monson, and Naiman Khan.
In the past year, the first CHAD research theme—Collaborations in Health, Aging, Research, and Technology (CHART)—made significant strides in advancing research and community engagement.

Another major achievement was the productive meeting at the McKechnie Family LIFE Home with the Illinois Department on Aging (IDOA) leadership team in November 2022.

The purpose of this meeting was for IDOA staff to learn about CHART research, to share their initiatives for the upcoming year, and to identify opportunities for collaboration.

The establishment of CHART’s Community Advisory Panel proved instrumental in gathering insights from older adults in the community. A kick-off meeting in December 2022 allowed panel members to connect and gain familiarity with the goals of the panel. Subsequently, in March 2023, the panel explored the potential of robots in domestic settings and collaborated on research planning for the NIH-funded Center for Research and Education on Aging and Technology Enhancement (CREATE).

Thank you to the Community Advisory Panel members Bob Boucek, Sue Boucek, Marianne Downey, Urias Betoel Escobar, Jim Fawcett and Joan Zernich for your contributions this past year.
McKechnie Family LIFE Home

This past year at the McKechnie Family LIFE Home was full of groundbreaking research, education and outreach.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Blood Pressure Study
The purpose of the blood pressure study is to examine the potential benefit of a blood pressure technology system (app and website) to improve medication taking and blood pressure for older adults with cognitive impairment. This project is funded by the National Institute on Nursing Research.

Virtual Reality Study
The goal of this project is to design and evaluate an immersive Cognitive Activity Social Technology (CAST) virtual reality system. CAST will provide aging adults with a suite of applications that support cognitive activity, and social and technology engagement. This project is part of the Center for Research and Education on Aging and Technology Enhancement (CREATE), which is funded by the National Institute on Aging.

Stretch Robot Research and Development
The goal of the project is to advance the capabilities of a domestic robot called Stretch to provide physical and cognitive support for older adults. This project is a collaboration with Hello Robot Inc. and the ClarkLindsey life plan community, and is funded by the National Institute on Aging.

4-H AHS Illini Summer Academy
More than 20 high school students visited the LIFE home in June and were excited to learn about the potential of smart home technologies to support people in their everyday activities. They participated in interactive demos and met with the LIFE Home staff to learn about current research projects.

Warrior-Scholar Project
McKechnie Family LIFE Home staff hosted students from the Warrior-Scholar Project. The LIFE Home staff was excited to share the exciting research taking place at the LIFE Home. The visitors learned about the potential for collaboration and innovation and generated ideas for future research projects.

Virtual Reality Study
The goal of this project is to design and evaluate an immersive Cognitive Activity Social Technology (CAST) virtual reality system. CAST will provide aging adults with a suite of applications that support cognitive activity, and social and technology engagement. This project is part of the Center for Research and Education on Aging and Technology Enhancement (CREATE), which is funded by the National Institute on Aging.

Global Education and Training (GET) and Amideast
The LIFE Home staff enjoyed hosting Global Education and Training (GET) and Amideast and sharing research initiatives they might implement in their new disability service centers in Egypt. Information shared during the tour and discussion included examples of our interdisciplinary research to advance science and engineering innovations to support accessible solutions.
CARD: Collaborations in the Advancement of Research on Disability

In spring 2023, we launched our second research theme, Collaborations in the Advancement of Research on Disability (CARD).

Led by KCH Associate Professor Laura Rice and KCH Professor John Kosciulek, CARD aims to enhance the health and quality of life for individuals with disabilities. By addressing critical gaps in disability-related knowledge and engaging individuals with disabilities, we are committed to making a tangible impact.

THE SHORT-TERM GOALS OF CARD INCLUDE:

+ Establishing a Collaborative Working Group
+ Implementing Effective Communication Strategies
+ Organizing Outreach Events

IN THE FUTURE, CARD ASPIRES TO:

+ Host Symposia
+ Develop Supportive Resources for Faculty
+ Respond to Funding Opportunities
+ Nurture Junior Faculty Research
+ Facilitate Research Training for Students Living with Disabilities

We are excited to embark on this vital journey toward inclusivity and innovation.
Thank you to all the people who work hard to support the work of CHAD throughout the entire year.

CHAD SENIOR FACULTY COMMITTEE 2022-2023
Raksha Mudar (SHS), Chair
Naiman Khan (KCH)
Liza Berydchevsky (RST)

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