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College of Education awards 2017 seed grants

May 2, 2017



Richard Cleveland, Ph.D.



Scott Beck, Ph.D.



Alma Stevenson, Ph.D.



Mete Akcaoglu, Ph.D.



Antonio Gutierrez de Blume, Ph.D.



Wendy Chambers, Ph.D.



Sabrina Ross, Ph.D.



Chelda Smith, Ph.D.

Five projects were awarded 2017 College of Education Seed Grants by the College's Research Committee in March.

Faculty members receiving grants included: [Richard Cleveland, Ph.D.](#), [Scott Beck, Ph.D.](#), [Alma Stevenson, Ph.D.](#), [Mete Akcaoglu, Ph.D.](#), [Antonio Gutierrez de Blume, Ph.D.](#), [Wendy Chambers, Ph.D.](#), [Sabrina Ross, Ph.D.](#), and [Chelda Smith, Ph.D.](#)

Cleveland received a grant for his pilot project titled, "Mindfulness-Based Tactical Instruction." The project is a collaboration between the College of Education's counselor education program, Georgia Southern University's Public Safety Department, Statesboro Police Department, Bulloch County Sheriff's Office, and the United States Pentagon Force Protection Agency. The pilot will explore how mindfulness practices help officers mitigate the physiological effects of high-stress when engaged in tactical situations. Specifically, the project will examine the effects mindfulness plays in officers' tactical proficiency in both live-fire and simulator scenarios.

“My hope,” explained Cleveland, “is that this pilot project will open up new opportunities for exploring how best to train and support officers and more specifically school resource officers primarily with their response to high-stress incidents, but then also in terms of officer resiliency through mindfulness.”

Beck and Stevenson were awarded funding for their research project, “Adult Migrant Farm Workers’ Responses to Children’s Picture Storybooks Regarding Migrancy.” This project focuses on the responses of current and former migrants to children’s literature intended to represent the lives of farm workers. During the project, two dozen participants met in small groups to read, and discuss nearly three dozen children’s picture storybooks such as *Going Home*, *Adventures of Connie and Diego*, *Hard-Times Jar*, *First Day in Grapes*, and *Harvesting Hope*.

“This grant will allow the recordings of the focus group conversations to be transcribed and analyzed,” explained Stevenson. Beck added, “Our findings will address questions about the accuracy of these books and how best to use them when teaching children about farm work, rural life, food production, and migration.”

Akcaoglu, Gutierrez de Blume, and Chambers received funding for their voluntary after school experience called the “Photography and Multimedia Learning Project.” The project asked students to consider some aspect of their environment (i.e., a problem from the natural, physical, school or social environment) and develop a media presentation about the topic, which included images that they took with iPads, as well as a narrative that described their observation, research, argument and/or experience.

“Through the use of technology and various other media, our purpose was to help these young learners improve their metacognitive planning and monitoring skills, as well as their problem-solving and reasoning ability, all foundational skills critical for success in high stakes assessments such as the Georgia Milestone Assessment,” explained Akcaoglu.

Ross was awarded grant funds for her proposal focusing on the high rates of attrition for doctoral students attempting to complete their dissertations. She will use an online survey and focus group interviews with doctoral students enrolled in Georgia Southern’s Ed.D. Curriculum Studies program to identify their experiences and perceived challenges. This project is set to begin in summer.

“By exploring barriers to dissertation completion in this group, I hope to identify intervention strategies that will encourage greater success among students in our program,” said Ross.

Smith received a seed grant for her undergraduate research project with former student Alyce Wells. Together Smith and Wells will research, present, and publish a study exploring the teaching and learning outcomes of their professional relationship. The project addresses the question: how can collaborative research between a teacher educator and a preservice teacher enhance faculty approaches to developing exemplary teachers able to meet the needs of traditionally marginalized youth?

“We will aim to understand pedagogical, curricular and programmatic reforms to enhance the capacity of Teacher Education Programs to develop asset-based pedagogues in initial licensure programs,” said Smith.

Seed Grants are funded by the College of Education for the purpose of providing initial, or “seed,” funding for research proposals that support the institutional research agenda of the College. This

includes the advancement of the COE's mission and conceptual framework commitments as well as having a significant impact on the College's outreach to P-12 and community constituents and enhancement of the College's capacity to conduct significant education research.

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