Virginia Tech Graduate School Presents:

Diversity Scholars Showcase 2021

FRIDAY, MAY 7, 2021
3:00 PM EST
VIRTUAL: BIT.LY/21DSSSSHOWCASE
HOSTED BY:
THE OFFICE OF RECRUITMENT, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION
Meet the Dean
Karen DePauw, PhD
She/her

Karen P. DePauw currently serves as Vice President and Dean for Graduate Education and holds academic appointments as tenured Professor in the Departments of Sociology and Department of Human Nutrition, Foods & Exercise at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. Since her arrival at Virginia Tech, her major accomplishments include success in building a strong, diverse and inclusive graduate community; establishing the national award-winning innovative Graduate Life Center (GLC); and implementing the signature academic initiative known as Transformative Graduate Education (TGE), including the global perspectives and preparing the future professoriate programs. She also has been recognized nationally as a leader in the innovative use of technology in graduate education.

Dr. DePauw earned a bachelor’s degree in sociology from Whittier College, a master’s degree in Special Education from California State University, Long Beach, and a Ph.D. in Kinesiology from Texas Woman’s University.

The Office of Recruitment, Diversity, and Inclusion

The Office of Recruitment, Diversity, and Inclusion focuses on graduate student recruitment and on providing support to students as they get acclimated and adjusted to their graduate programs/certificates through the development of inclusive and diverse programming to meet students' needs. Our primary objective echoes Dean DePauw's goal of having students thrive, not just survive, during their graduate education experience. We focus on the importance of creating growing communities by providing frequent opportunities for students to participate in welcoming environments to maximize their success and degree completion.

What is the Diversity Scholars Program?

Diversity scholars are graduate students who specialize in and advocate for the awareness, knowledge, and skills associated with diversity and inclusion in the Graduate School and greater community. A diversity scholar’s goal is to create dialogue, provide advocacy, and implement change for a more diverse and inclusive experience for all graduate students, faculty, staff, and administrators. This involvement can take place in many forms and can be specific to a particular curriculum or department, or it can be more global.
Diversity Scholars Spotlight Program

3:00 PM  
Introduction and Welcome  
Dr. Justin Grimes, Assistant Director, Office of Recruitment, Diversity, and Inclusion

3:05 PM  
Introduction of Dean Karen DePauw  
Shania Clinedinst, Diversity Initiatives Support Specialist, Office of Recruitment, Diversity, and Inclusion

3:10 PM  
Welcome from Karen DePauw, PhD, VP and Dean of Graduate Education

3:15 PM  
Diversity Scholar Presentations  
in the following order (Jessica Resor, Jamie Dellinger, Courtney Swanson, Jing Ju, Mohammed Baaoum, Katrina Colucci-Chang, Muhammed Shah Shahjahan, Sarah, Jordan Westcott, Malia Pownall)

3:50 PM  
Audience questions

4:00 PM  
Thank you and closing
Meet Our Diversity Scholars

Jessica Resor
she/her
Jessica Resor is a 3rd year PhD Candidate in the Department of Human Development and Family Science. Her research is about family processes and how families use technology to communicate. Jessica just started a position with Purdue Extension.

Mohammed Baaoum
he/him
Mohammed is a fourth Ph.D. candidate in Industrial and Systems Engineering. His research focuses on improving the performance and quality of sociotechnical systems. Besides, he is interested in exploring engineering practices in unconventional humanitarian and global contexts. Outside academia, Mohammed enjoys intercultural and interfaith activities. He is the founder and president of Synergy Interfaith Collective at Virginia Tech, and he serves as an advisory member at the Interfaith Council. Before joining VT, he worked as a lecturer at King Fahd University and as a project engineer in ARAMCO. Mohammed holds MS in Industrial Engineering and MA in Social and Cultural Pedagogy from Arizona State University (ASU).

Jing Ju
he/him
Jing Ju is a second year PhD student in the Molecular and Cellular Biology program with a concentration in neurology and regenerative medicine. As a graduate student in the Department of Biomedical Sciences & Pathobiology, Jing currently focuses on brain vascular remodeling in response to ischemic stroke and whether peripheral immune system affects local microenvironment after brain injury. Outside of his academic research, Jing enjoys fishing, hiking, cycling, and drawing.

Courtney Swanson
she/her
Courtney is a current Ph.D. student in Psychology in the College of Science. Her project “Rainbow Road” is a graduate student organization for individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Jamie Dellinger
she/her
Jamie is a current Ph.D. student in the Marriage and Family Therapy program in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. Her project aims to create a systematic tutorial that will guide members of the Virginia Tech community in creating more gender affirming course content. The program will suggest language guidelines, which will promote inclusivity."
Meet Our Diversity Scholars

**Jordan Westcott**

she/her

Jordan Westcott is a second-year doctoral candidate in Counselor Education. She researches access to mental health care and resources for LGBTQ+ people and other marginalized groups. Jordan has taught or co-taught courses related to healthy relationships, counseling skills, and assessment. Outside of her academic work, Jordan enjoys spending time with her wife and cats, reading Marvel comics, and gardening.

**Katrina Colucci-Chang**

she/her

Katrina Colucci Chang is a 4th year PhD candidate in the school of Biomedical engineering. She is studying cardiac electrophysiology. She is understanding how different ion channels and ionic solutions affect current activation and propagation of the heart. She is heavily involved in many professional engineering organizations such as SHPE, BMES. A fun fact of Katrina is that she has been dancing for 15+ years now, these include but not limited to ballet, jazz, salsa and bachata.

**Malia Pownall**

she/her

Malia is a Masters student in the Department of Forest Resources and Environment Conservation within the College of Natural Resources and Environment. Her research is focused on culturally responsive teaching practices in environmental education to provide relevant and inclusive programs for all learners, but especially those from communities that have been traditionally underserved by the field. When she's not studying, Malia enjoys being in or around the water, exploring the mountains, and cooking/eating!

**Muhammed Shah Shajahan**

he/him

Muhammed Shah Shajahan is a second year PhD student in the ASPECT program with the concentration on political and cultural thought. He teaches in the Department of Religion and Culture courses on Asian culture, history and religion. He is largely interested in critical geography, urban studies, Afro-Pessimism, South Asian culture and religion and occasionally Turkish and French movies and Lebanese music outside the work.

**Sara Wenger**

she/her

Sara Wenger is a third year PhD candidate in the ASPECT program with a concentration in Political and Social Thought. As a graduate instructor in the Department of Political Science, Sara currently teaches or has previously taught courses on contemporary democratic theory, theoretical approaches to global order, and current events topics focusing on race, gender, and sexuality. Outside of her academic and professional interests, Sara enjoys reading science fiction, jogging, and debating which Star Trek series is the best.