

THE CAROLINA AUTISM AND NEURODEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTER

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER


UPCOMING EVENTS
FEB 27**2 - 3:30****Creative Science Translation Workshop**

Learn about how to creatively communicate your research to different audiences on pg. 3. Cookies & coffee provided!

MARCH 5**9:30 - 12:30****Disability Advocacy Day**

Join us at the SC State House to advocate for individuals with disabilities, featuring speeches, a rally, and a walk

MARCH 22**SCAND Research Symposium**

The SC Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders Consortium (SCAND) will host the annual research symposium in Charleston, SC. Sign up pg. 4.

SPRING COMMUNITY EVENTS RELEASED

This Spring, CAN will table at community events across South Carolina. Check out page 6 to see the list and sign up to volunteer!

JOB OPENING

Interested in Fragile X research? Dr. Jessica Klusek is hiring a research assistant and a project coordinator. Contact can@sc.edu to learn more!

**CAN SCIENCE MEETINGS****Wednesdays, 8:30 - 9:15 AM**

Share your work with colleagues, ask for input on ideas, learn about new research, and embrace the interdisciplinary nature of our work.

February Meetings [See the schedule!](#)

February 7: Discussion about community opportunity
February 14: Dr. Ana Pocviavsek
February 21: Dr. Katie Wolfe

Happy February!

Caitlin Hudac
CAN Steering Director
chudac@mailbox.sc.edu

Cheers,

Caitlin



Love is in the air...

Happy February! Whether or not you believe in the “industrial love complex” around February 14th, I wanted to send a quick message of praise and admiration for all of you. Several of my out-of-state colleagues were recently asked: “**What makes a strong autism center?**” Easy answers included funding support and resources -- both of which we appreciate from USC! But in my mind, the other clear answer is the

people and the community -- YOU!

One of the most exciting parts of my role in CAN is getting to see and listen to the ideas, science, and life that each of you bring to our community. Somewhat inadvertently, this month’s newsletter (see pop out) highlights and features this sentiment -- continuing to build and grow this amazing community. Keep up the good work! And keep connecting!



IN THIS EDITION


- Join our first **Creative Science Translation** workshop to learn and improve skills for sharing your work with the community.
- **Connect** with our SC colleagues at the annual SCAND meeting 3/22 in Charleston.
- Meet our **Community Advisory Board!** Our next CAB meeting will be next month.
- We will have a very busy few months at tables and events. Please **join us!**



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SCIENCE

CREATIVE SCIENCE TRANSLATION

WORKSHOP

*Led/Facilitated by the CAN
Community Workgroup*

Learn how to communicate your
research to the **community!**

Contact [Audrey](#) with any questions.



TUE, FEB 27



2 - 3:30 PM



**Institute for
Mind & Brain,
#115**

Coffee & cookies!

SOUTH CAROLINA AUTISM AND NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS CONSORTIUM

SCAND Research Symposium



Join our annual SCAND Research Symposium to learn about neurodevelopmental disorder research in South Carolina!



MARCH 22



Holy City Brewing
1021 Aragon Ave, North
Charleston, SC 29405

FREE EVENT

Talks

Discussions

Community

Posters

Due March 1



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Prizes will be awarded to top abstracts

Due March 13



RSVP



LEARN MORE

[HTTPS://WWW.SCANDCONSORTIUM.ORG/SYMPIOSIUM.HTML](https://www.scandconsortium.org/symposium.html)

JANUARY EXECUTIVE MEETING

RECAP

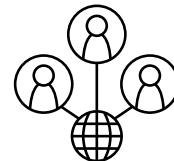
PRESIDENT'S HIRING INITIATIVE



President Amiridis is dedicated to hire 100 new faculty across the next few years. The CAN Research Center received an opportunity for five hires. More info to come soon as positions are posted!

- Psychology (Open rank)
- Biology (Assistant)
- School of Medicine
- Education

COMMUNITY



- CAN Community Workgroup Event on science translation (see pg. 3)
- Autism Connect (DDSN) event planning
- Pursuing methods (e.g., PeachJar) to increase state-wide visibility for Neurodevelopment Research Registry.

CAN INFRASTRUCTURE & PROGRAMMING

- We continued conversations about how to support CAN in the upcoming years. Discussed opportunities to interface with other existing university-wide initiatives.
- We are on track to submit a T32 application for interdisciplinary postdoc training in May.
- Discussed potential for external speakers. Will be soliciting CAN members to lead in organizing visits (e.g., arranging schedule, communicating with speaker).

Spring Community Events



The CAN Research Center will attend and table at multiple community events this Spring. Some faculty *may* offer lab hours for volunteers. **[SIGN UP HERE](#)**

FEB 10

Soda City
Columbia, SC

MAR 21

**Hopes and Dreams
2024 Conference**
Columbia, SC

FEB 16

**Edventure
Sensory Night**
Columbia, SC

APR 3

**National CONVERGE
Autism Summit**
Greenville, SC

MAR 5

**Disability
Advocacy Day**
Columbia, SC

APR 23

Autism CONNECT
Columbia, SC

MAR 9

**SCSM Disability
Celebration Day**
Columbia, SC

APR 27

Walk for Autism
Charleston, SC

MAR 16

SPARK in the Park
Charleston, SC



FACULTY GRANT AWARD



DR. FIONA HOLLIS

Assistant Professor |
Pharmacology, Physiology &
Neuroscience
School of Medicine Columbia

VA GRANT AWARD

Dr. Fiona Hollis was awarded a 2-year Veteran's Association (VA) BLRD Pilot grant, titled "**Validating an animal model of female veteran risk factors for postpartum depression**".



WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Postpartum depression affects female veterans at nearly double the rate of the general female population.

AIMS

This project aims to validate a rodent model of pre- and gestational stress that is based on the unique experiences faced by female veterans that might contribute to their increased rates of postpartum depression.

GOALS

The goal is to use this model to better understand the factors affecting female veteran postpartum health and to hopefully identify molecular signatures that may serve as potential biomarkers.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Research in Developmental Disabilities (RIDD)

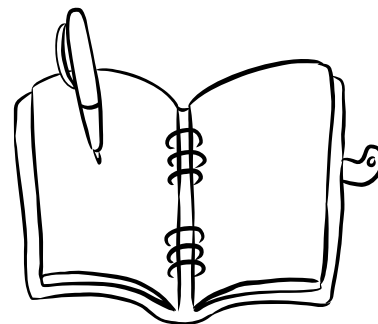
Special Issue: "Quality of Life in Developmental Disabilities"

This special issue welcomes contributions that advance our understanding of the quality of life of individuals with developmental disabilities. Topics of interest include

- Measurement of quality of life
- Interventions to improve quality of life
- Influential factors
- Methodological issues
- Challenges in quality-of-life research, among others.

Open until 9/30/24

Journal Submission Portal



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

NEW RELEASE

Department of Defense (DOD) Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Pre-Announcements

Although the FY24 Defense Appropriation Bill has not been signed into law, the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) is providing the information in this pre-announcement to allow investigators time to plan and develop ideas for submission to anticipated FY24 funding opportunities.

[View the pre-announcements](#)

Autism Research Program (ARP)

- Career Development Award
- Clinical Trial Award
- Discovery Award
- Idea Development Award

UPCOMING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Autism Science Foundation Undergraduate Summer Research Awards

Highly qualified undergraduates interested in pursuing basic and clinical research relevant to autism spectrum disorders during the summer are invited to apply.

DUE: FEBRUARY 29, 2024

Jerome Lejeune Foundation

Call to support fundamental, translational and clinical research projects that will strengthen the understanding, deepen the knowledge and/or explore new therapeutic approaches for Down syndrome and other genetic diseases with intellectual disability. Pilot or exploratory grants at 50.000 € over 2 years.

DUE: MARCH 4, 2024

Brain and Behavior Research Foundation Young Investigator Grants

Covers a broad spectrum of mental illnesses. Each scientist provided with up to \$35,000 per year for two years totaling \$70,000 to enable promising investigators to either extend research fellowship training or begin careers as independent research faculty.

DUE: MARCH 12, 2024

Organization for Autism Research Applied Research Competition

The annual Applied Research Competition is the most competitive line of funding offered by OAR. Researchers can now apply for 1-2 year grants of up to \$50,000.

LETTERS OF INTENT DUE: MARCH 18, 2024

Autism Field-Initiated Research Studies (Autism FIRST)

Supports empirical research that advances the evidence on early screening and interventions in developmental disabilities by testing the implementation of new and/or innovative strategies that addressing health issues, with a special focus on addressing the needs of underserved populations. Estimate \$600,000 will be available each year to fund 2 recipients, with a ceiling amount of up to \$300,000 annually. 3-yr period performance.

DUE: APRIL 3, 2024



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MEET THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

Our goal for the CAN Community Advisory Board (CAB) is to hear input about the alignment of (1) our research and community outreach activities with (2) the needs and values of the community.



Cameron Washington is a clinical genetic counselor at Greenwood Genetic Center and works in a medical genetics clinic, where he helps patients and families navigate the evaluation process for autism and neurodevelopmental disorders.



Kaelynn Partlow was diagnosed with autism at the age of 10. She is now a Lead Registered Behavior Technician. In 2022, Kaelynn was a featured participant in the Netflix series, Love On The Spectrum. She has been a guest on numerous national podcasts and published several articles, providing an autistic perspective.



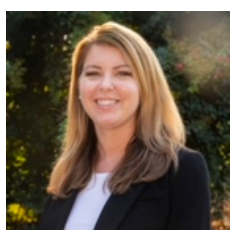
Kamania Wynter-Hoyte is an Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education at USC and has a five-year-old son who is autistic.



Dallas Nicholson is a mental health therapist at Moonbug Therapy, in which she uses an ecological systems perspectives and has experience working with children and families.



Kris Beard is a stay-at-home mother of two children, one of whom is autistic with high support needs. Before starting her family and journey into neurodiversity support and advocacy, she was a researcher and college instructor at Clemson and earned her PhD in Genetics in 2014.



Stephanie Turner is the Autism Division Director of the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN). She has worked in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy, and she is personally connected to neurodevelopment through her sister-in-law, who was diagnosed with autism as an adult.



Preach Jacobs is a DJ and artist in Columbia, SC and is passionate about advocating for autism and disabilities.

The Palmetto Accelerator for Autism Collaboration Taskgroup (PAACT)

PAACT is a group of autism providers, organizations, and governmental departments led by Tosha Rollins, a provider who specializes in autism services for adolescents and adults.



MISSION

To accelerate autism collaboration and communication in the communities of South Carolina.

FIRST QUARTERLY MEETING

On February 2nd, Tosha Rollins led the first PAACT meeting, which included an overview of the IACC from Dr. Susan Daniels, NIMH, and introductions from each organization.

Thirty-five groups are currently participating, including the CAN Research Center, NIH/NIMH, the SC Senate, and the DDSN. Over 50 participants were on the first call. The group plans to meet quarterly, with the larger goal of combining efforts to address autism needs across the state.

Slides from Dr. Daniels will be available to participants. If you are interested in receiving, please reach out to [Audrey](#).