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Converse University Announces New Faculty Hires for Fall 2022

SPARTANBURG, S.C. (May 17, 2022) – Converse University is pleased to announce seven new tenure-track faculty for fall 2022.

Dr. Mark Bohler will be an Assistant Professor of Biology (Physiology) in the Department of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. Dr. Bohler received his PhD in Animal Science (Neuroendocrinology) from Virginia Tech and his Bachelor's of Science from Virginia Tech. He most recently taught animal anatomy and physiology at Virginia Tech and his dissertation research focused on hypothalamic mechanisms mediating food intake in birds.

Dr. Ed Griffin will be an Assistant Professor of Biology (Genetics) in the Department of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. Dr. Griffin earned his Bachelor's Degree in Biochemistry from Saint Michael's College, during which time he was an undergraduate researcher and a self-proclaimed imposter in the Classics Department. He earned his PhD from the University of Alabama in 2018, using *Caenorhabditis elegans* to model neurodegeneration in Alzheimer's Disease. He acquired a postdoctoral fellowship grant from the American Parkinson's Disease Association in 2019, to investigate the role of T lymphocytes in a rodent model of Parkinson's disease at UAB Medical Center, and multiple internal grants to test preclinical PET/CT and antibody therapy. After his postdoctoral fellowship, he was instructor of Biology at the University of Alabama, teaching introductory courses, Microbiology labs, Evolution, and an introductory course on studying and metacognitive techniques. He also enjoys writing poetry and has had several pieces published.

Dr. Jeff Howard will be both an Assistant Professor of English (Rhetoric & Composition) in the Department of Humanities, Sciences, and Business and Converse's new Director of the Writing Center. Dr. Howard holds a PhD from Idaho State University, a Master's from Utah State University, and a Bachelor's from Brigham-Young University-Idaho. Dr. Howard's scholarly work has been featured in journals such as *Writing Lab Newsletter* and *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*. He is the founding editor and director of the digital resource [World](#)

Englshes: Linguistic Variety, Global Society and the NARWOL Project, a digital archive of literacy narratives.

Dr. James (JJ) Lies will be an assistant professor of Elementary Education and the mentor for Converse's new Call Me MISTER (acronym for Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models) chapter. Dr. Lies has a degree in elementary education from Anderson University and a master's degree in administration and supervision from Furman University. He comes to Converse from Spartanburg School District 6, where he was an assistant principal. While at Anderson University, Dr. Lies was a MISTER. He completed his doctorate in Professional Leadership at Converse under the supervision of Dr. Jeff Martin, and his research was on the Call Me MISTER program and its contributions to increasing minority K-12 classroom teachers in South Carolina.

Deneisha Scott-Poe will be an Assistant Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy. She comes to Converse from Virginia Tech, one of the strongest doctoral programs in Marriage and Family Therapy in the United States, and will be defending her dissertation in Spring 2023. Her master's degree is from Appalachian State University. She came to Converse in 2021 as a doctoral intern and her area of specialization is gerontology, which complements the research interests of other tenure track faculty members at Converse.

Allison Vick will be an Assistant Professor of Political Science in the department of History and Politics. She will defend her doctoral dissertation in June 2022. She comes to Converse from the University of Georgia where she studied political science and international affairs. She holds a Master of Public Administration and Bachelor of Arts from Augusta University. Her research interests include the U.S. Congress, legislative process, American political institutions, gender & politics, the Presidency, judicial politics, and public administration.

Dr. Adelaide (Addie) Watson, will be an Assistant Professor of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education. Dr. Watson received both her Bachelor's in Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education and Master's in Education at Converse. She taught at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind and recently completed her doctorate in Professional Leadership at Converse under the supervision of Dr. Lienne Medford, examining the trend in declining enrollment in residential schools for the deaf and offering suggestions for reversing it.

About Converse University

Converse University empowers students to become transformative leaders who see clearly, decide wisely, and act justly. Converse was founded in 1889 by citizens of Spartanburg, SC, who aimed to create an educational experience for women, and in fall 2020 it welcomed its first undergraduate co-educational incoming class. The University encompasses the School of Humanities, Sciences, and Business; the School of the Arts; the School of Education and Graduate Studies; and the Converse College for Women. Converse students experience deep scholarship, transformative mentorship, experiential learning, and wonderful support for and belief in each other. Through this unique formula, Converse is a creator of opportunity for its students through a personalized education that also includes the professional and technical skills graduates need to be successful in their careers.

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