

# 2024 RISE SYMPOSIUM



PROCEEDINGS OF THE RISE SYMPOSIUM  
APRIL 8-12, 2024

# CONVERSE

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## ABOUT THE COVER

The cover art, entitled *Outlook Good*, was submitted by **Mia Easler '25** and chosen by a panel of judges as the cover art. Mia says, "I shot this image with my film camera in my front yard in spring of 2023. It was part of a photo book I made in my class, which focused on good/bad luck symbols and motifs. This image represents good luck as it contains seven (lucky #7) railroad spikes and a magic 8 ball saying 'Outlook Good.'"

Honorable mention photos are featured on page 4 and the back cover.

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# MESSAGE FROM RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT

Dear Converse Community,

On behalf of the Program Committee, I welcome you to our 3rd Annual RISE Symposium! We are delighted to see the continued growth of the RISE Symposium with each passing year. The 2024 RISE Symposium will host a record number of students and new categories. This year we had 106 Valkyries submit 98 unique projects and performances. This robust participation is compelling evidence of the vibrancy of high-impact practices in creative and scholarly disciplines at Converse. In addition to our usual categories of Internship, Research, Photography, and Music Performance, this year, we are showcasing projects in Creative and Playwriting, Dance—Original Choreography, and Dance and Theater Performance. We nearly tripled our graduate student participation, allowing us to create two new graduate subcategories in Music Performance and Research. I believe in the coming years, we will continue to attract students from less-represented fields and even grow beyond Converse.



The success of the RISE Symposium is largely a result of the tireless contributions of the Converse faculty and staff, the unwavering support of student families, and the generous participation from our internship partners. Our mentors have devoted countless hours to nurturing students and ensuring the academic and scholarly excellence reflected in the work presented here. We thank our mentors for their commitment! Thank you, judges, for volunteering your time and expertise to identify the most impressive of our high-achieving students for awards. To the families of our students, we thank you for your encouragement and support!

Valkyries, you are the shining stars of this event! You embody the spirit of innovation and excellence that defines Converse. Your creative and scholarly achievements here are just the beginning. We believe in you, and we look forward to hearing the great things you will do as future leaders. Thank you for letting us be a part of your journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neval Ertürk".

H. Neval Ertürk, Ph.D.

Associate Provost for Research and Engagement  
Professor of Biology

Find and follow us on social media. Tag us on [Instagram \(@converse.research\)](#)  
and/or on [Twitter \(@Converse\\_RE\)](#).

# RISE SYMPOSIUM OVERVIEW

The annual **RISE** Symposium aims to celebrate student scholarly activities and achievements across all areas of study at Converse University – including the arts, music, humanities, education, natural and mathematical sciences, and social and behavioral sciences.

Open to all undergraduates, graduates and Converse II students, the RISE symposium empowers students to share their ideas, discoveries and artistic work with our campus and local community within a professional setting.

*Growth* by Sara Bailey  
Excellence in Photography Competition, Honorable Mention



# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## Thursday, April 11

### INTERNSHIP:

Internship Presentation to Judges . . . . . 11:15 am - 1:15 pm  
Montgomery Student Center, Second Floor Lobby

Internship Exposition and Networking . . . . . 5:30 - 7:00 pm  
*Drinks and appetizers will be served. Family and friends are invited to attend.*

Reception . . . . . 5:30 - 6:15 pm  
Montgomery Student Center, Second Floor Lobby

Presentation of Internship Awards . . . . . 6:15 - 7:00 pm  
Montgomery Student Center, Barnet Room

## Friday, April 12

### CREATIVE AND PLAYWRITING READING:

Presentation to Judges. . . . . 12:00 - 1:00 pm  
Carmichael Hall, Room 200

### RESEARCH, DANCE: ORIGINAL CHOREOGRAPHY, DANCE & THEATER PERFORMANCE:

Presentation to Judges. . . . . 1:00 - 3:00 pm  
Weisger Main Gym

### MUSIC PERFORMANCE:

Presentation to Judges. . . . . 3:30 - 5:00 pm  
Daniel Recital Hall

### RECEPTION AND AWARDS CEREMONY:

*Drinks and appetizers will be served. Family and friends are invited to attend.*

Reception . . . . . 6:00 - 6:30 pm  
Weisger Main Gym

Awards Ceremony . . . . . 6:30 - 7:30 pm  
Weisger Main Gym

# PROGRAM COMMITTEE



**Neval Ertürk**, Symposium Chair  
Associate Provost of Research and Engagement



**Cathy Gowan**, Symposium Co-Chair  
Director of Internships and Career Services



**Dr. Jeffrey Howard**  
Assistant Professor of English,  
Director of the University Writing Center



**Kristin Lacey**, Symposium Co-Chair  
Vice President for Operations and Strategic Planning



**Chris Vaneman**  
Awards Ceremony EMCEE  
Dean of the School of the Arts

# PROGRAM COMMITTEE



**Dr. Susana Lalama**  
Director of the Petrie School of Music  
Associate Professor of Music Education



**Amy Howard**  
Associate Program Coordinator



**Michelle Bowen**  
Associate Director of Marketing



**Evelyn Fitz**  
Student Intern  
Photographer, Marketing & Social Media Coordinator



**Dominique Pearson**  
Student Intern  
Office Assistant

# CREATIVE WRITING





# CREATIVE WRITING

**Author:** Graci Barga

**Faculty Advisor:** Susan Tekulve

**Title:** *What Remains*

“What Remains” is a fictional piece that centers around Amber, a young woman and older sister. She is given the news that her terminally ill father has passed, and now must travel back with her sister, Gloria, as they return to their childhood home. Amber must face her mother, an alcoholic, who will test all of Amber’s nerves as she tries to survive her final visit. Each sister must decide now what they will do with their mother after the funeral ends.

Addiction, specifically alcoholism, is a topic that has personally affected my life in multiple different ways. I have seen first-hand what it does to the addict themselves and the people who love them. I wrote “What Remains” to show how differently people can react to being related to an addict. It also broaches the topic of how much is too much for people who love an addict. My hope is that “What Remains” is not just a story to readers, but also a message to those in similar situations that they are not alone—that no matter what choice a person makes in their situation, it is their choice to make for their own peace.

**Graci Barga '26** is a Sophomore Creative and Professional Writing major and English minor from Fountain Inn, SC. After graduation, Graci is thinking about getting a Masters degree, but will definitely be seeking to work in her field of study.



# CREATIVE WRITING

**Author:** Kendall “Sunny” Bostwick

**Faculty Advisor:** Susan Tekulve

**Title:** *Handwritten Notes and Packed Bags*

As an artist, I’m told to draw what I see, not what I know, so it’s interesting when I have to take the opposite approach to write what I know. But, writing isn’t all that different from drawing; after all, the best advice with writing is to show, not tell. So, instead of telling all about my journey of self-discovery, I decided to show it through a different lens.

I wrote through the eyes of my long-established characters about my coming to terms with lying on the asexual/aromantic end of the queer spectrum. Of course, liberties were taken to detach myself from the characters, but, ultimately, I believe this was what I needed—an outlet to explore the emotions I haven’t let myself feel and an opportunity to let myself and others know that our feelings are valid and a shared experience. A long, hurtful shared experience, but a shared experience nonetheless.

Healing is all a part of the journey, and writing and creating is at the forefront of my own healing journey. Just like Elloise, I still have a long way to go moving forward. Navigating relationships, whether platonic or romantic, will never be the same for either of us, but I can’t wait to explore that and grow further.

**Kendall “Sunny” Bostwick ’26** is a Sophomore Studio Arts and Art History major and Creative Writing minor from Campobello, SC. After graduation, Kendall plans to go to grad school for archaeology.



# CREATIVE WRITING

**Author:** Mercedes Elliott

**Faculty Advisor:** Susan Tekulve

**Title:** *Chores*

My name is Mercedes Elliott, and I am a Creative and Professional Writing Major plus an English major. The reason I wrote *Chores* was because in class we were required to write a short story based on the prompts that we were given. The prompt I chose to write my short story on was creating a story where someone thought one thing but did something else. In the story, the main character, Mazie, thinks about doing what her parents told her because she is usually a rule-follower, but instead, she does something else.

When coming up with the plot for this story I thought about what I wanted to do with that plot. I thought about myself and my own childhood where I was riddled with anxiety, and I thought it would be a good idea to have a character go through the same struggles that I went through. Then I wanted that character to deviate from me and do something completely different from what I would do. I wanted her to break free from her anxiety and become a kid again. Then I wanted her to have a heart-to-heart with one of her parents as she finally tells them what she has been going through. I then added the winter elements because I loved snow days growing up, and I thought about what snow days would be like now that schools can do work online.

**Mercedes Elliott '27** is a Junior Creative and Professional Writing and English major and ASL and Dance minor from Roebuck, SC. After graduation, Mercedes plans on getting a job in either the publishing industry or the marketing industry and hopes to publish her own novel or novella one day.



# CREATIVE WRITING

**Author:** Pedro Landeros-Hernandez

**Faculty Advisor:** Susan Tekulve

**Title:** *Proverbs From A Drunken Boxer*

My name is Pedro Landeros-Hernandez, and this is my literary narrative submission, “Proverbs From A Drunken Boxer”. This story is about a young man named Hector who, after a difficult semester of college, decides to spend his winter break with his Uncle Leo. Hector was hoping for a stress-free vacation where he gets to get away from everything and simply relax, and much to his surprise, that is exactly what he got. This story touches on accepting our mistakes and recognizing our faults but also on allowing ourselves to grow for the better; we will never be perfect, but we shouldn’t wallow in self-pity because of it. I wrote this story for those of us who think of ourselves as being “other”. Whether it is because of our status, race, gender, or anything else, many of us feel like we cannot fit in or find our crowds.

In some cases, we internalize our abnormality and close ourselves because of it. That couldn’t be farther from the case; we should give others the opportunity to feel comfortable with us, but most importantly, we should allow ourselves to be comfortable in our own skin. Improvement is always possible; it is ultimately up to us to put in the effort. This story packs a punch, so I hope you can take and enjoy it.

**Pedro Landeros-Hernandez '27** is a Freshman Creative Writing major and Theatre minor from Greenwood, SC. Pedro is undecided on post-graduation plans.



# CREATIVE WRITING

**Author:** Pedro Landeros-Hernandez  
**Faculty Advisor:** Melissa Owens Kaley  
**Title:** *Where the Apple Falls*

My name is Pedro Landeros-Hernandez, and this is my playwriting submission, *Where the Apple Falls*. I crafted this script as part of my Playwriting class in January. This play is about a young man looking to pursue a college education in a different country. He must now break the news to his parents and watch as the conversation steers a more unfortunate direction. This play talks about purpose and what we as individuals wish to do in life; should we settle for a calm and simpler lifestyle, or should we dedicate ourselves to our work and attempt to reach a higher status in life? When writing this story, I wanted to tackle the idea of ambition vs apathy, as I believe that there is no “correct” way to live your life; everyone has different desires and goals that they hold dear, and what may satisfy one person may not be ideal for another. This difference in thinking can affect our happiness as well as the people around us; though we may disagree on certain subjects and walk different paths, those who are closest to us only wish the best for us, and vice versa. At the end of the day, this is an immigrant story that talks about family and planting our own roots, and I hope that you enjoy it.

**Pedro Landeros-Hernandez '27** is a Freshman Creative Writing major and Theatre minor from Greenwood, SC. Pedro is undecided on post-graduation plans.



# CREATIVE WRITING

**Author:** Logan Nichols

**Faculty Advisor:** Susan Tekulve

**Title:** *Dirty Laundry*

Writing has always come naturally to me, but I wasn't able to fully understand the art that comes with creative writing until I took a class at Converse University. This piece is one of my first creative writing pieces, and I fell in love with writing it. To have the power and control of a character you're writing about is the most exciting part of writing any story.

Being a senior in college has allowed me to realize the ridiculousness of high school. I had always hoped there would be better days ahead when in high school, but some people thrive in that environment. I did not. The protagonist Daisy was created considering myself in high school. I gave Daisy the freedom of letting the audience know how she really felt about her peers, her environment, and her small town around her. Having that freedom is something I wish I would've had—the courage to tell my peers how I was truly feeling about everything. Boys aren't the end of the world, and the community cares only for Friday night football.

While there's much drama in this little story, it provides an accurate description of high school in a small southern town. The beauty of this story is the ability for Daisy to share her truth with the audience. As she shares this truth with only the audience, it becomes clear that if she were to share that truth with her peers, she would have no one. High school can be a scary place. Since I've been out for a while, I wish I could go back and tell my younger self my voice and opinion should be shared. Some people may not like it, but your opinions and thoughts make you uniquely YOU, and should be expressed.

**Logan Nichols '24** is a Senior with an Individualized major from Monroe, NC. After graduation, Logan plans to pursue an MiM in Professional Leadership at Converse University while also beginning a full-time career.



# INTERNSHIPS



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Isabella Avant**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Jerome Gomez

**Organization/Business:** Wendi Gragg Interiors

I completed an interior design internship with Wendi Gragg Interiors in Shelby, North Carolina. The company is a sole designer, specializing in residential design, working all over the Hickory and Charlotte areas. I worked from late May to late June for the internship. I traveled with her to clients' homes, commercial projects, and to warehouses. With Wendi as the sole member of her team, I was her assistant. I especially aided her in the specification process that would later be sent to the contractors. I was with Wendi for each in-person walk-through of the spaces she had designed.

With Gragg Interiors, I was able to learn what the day-to-day life of an interior designer would look like, especially for a residential designer who does not use computer programs. I worked with her on a commercial dental project, a local church, and clients' homes. We traveled all across the Charlotte-Lincolnton area for the job sites. I learned that I do not have the patience to be a residential designer. The one-on-one client meetings where the client has to choose finishes instead of just approving them as they do with more commercial projects were too tedious for me. Overall, the internship was beneficial, especially for networking in the Charlotte-Lincolnton area. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work an internship with an interior designer who has been working and building a clientele for decades.

**Isabella Avant '24** is a Senior Interior Design major and Arts Administration minor from Shelby, NC. After graduation, Isabella plans to find a job in interior design in Greenville, SC.





# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Kayla Bailey**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Jerome Gomez

**Organization/Business:** McMillan Pazdan Smith Architecture

My name is Kayla Bailey, and this summer I had the amazing opportunity to intern for McMillan Pazdan Smith Architecture here in Spartanburg, South Carolina. I was with MPS from May 21st to July 28th. I am an interior design major at Converse University in my senior year. I wanted to intern with MPS because of their values and to be able to work with the brilliant minds behind the designs I see locally every day. They had chosen me to work in the Community area of interior design this summer, and I worked under designer Lynne Wilson.

McMillan Pazdan Smith (MPS) is a regional studio-based architecture, planning, and interior design firm. Their purpose is to create meaningful and lasting impact for the good of all. My responsibilities this summer were to work on specification books, furniture plans, renderings, etc. I worked on mostly higher-ed projects like Converse University, working on Cudd Hall. For that project, I worked on things like specifications, signage, fabric selections, construction documents, and more. I developed many skills working at MPS. I got to sit in on many client meetings for different projects, and that gave me insight into not only how these meetings work, but how we as designers should communicate with clients. This internship was an amazing way to see what it is like to work in an office of professionals and the day-to-day work life. I think one of my greatest accomplishments from working at MPS was working on the renovation of Cudd Hall. It was so special for me to be able to work on a project that took place at my school. This was a great experience to see the renovation on paper, and then see it come to life before my own eyes. It was also fun to be the first student at Converse to walk the building before anyone else.

**Kayla Bailey '24** is a Senior Interior Design major from Spartanburg, SC. After graduation, Kayla plans to work as a designer in the field.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Kathleen Beardsley**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Jerome Gomez

**Organization/Business:** Pond

Pond is a large international firm based in Peachtree Corners, Georgia, outside of Atlanta. Pond works in a variety of industries including federal, defense, energy, industrial, transportation, environmental, development, and more. The interior design division mainly focuses on hospitality, education, and federal projects. The Columbia office is small, with less than 15 total designers and 10 architects. Because of this, the experience is much more familiar and comfortable. Pond strives to create a meaningful relationship of trust. They do this through a client-driven approach with timely responses. Pond also strives to improve the world that we live in through sustainability.

During my time, I was tasked with ensuring specifications were completed accurately and completely. I oversaw ordering samples for an upcoming hotel renovation on the Gulf Coast of Florida. Being organized was essential for this task because if samples got mixed, then my inventory could be counted incorrectly. To keep track of which items I received, I created an Excel spreadsheet with color-coded labels. In addition to meeting with brand representatives and ordering samples, I also worked on assembling binders and creating specifications. Writing specifications was the most difficult assignment that I was given. It required me to connect previous projects, design presentations, and updated brand standards all into one. Pond uses a software called DesignSmart to compile specifications.

After several of these projects, I demonstrated my capability to understand specifications and problem-solve. One of the last tasks I was given was to make initial design presentations. I organized and thoroughly articulated the project plan and ideas for an upcoming client meeting. I also helped decide on the brand standards for Pond and Company offices. It was rewarding knowing that I was capable enough and trusted to make decisions on my own.

**Kathleen Beardsley '24** is a Senior Interior Design major from Lexington, SC. After graduation, Kathleen plans to work at an architectural and/or interior design firm.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Gracie Bennett**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Julie Jones

**Organization/Business:** City Lights Church

I have been interning at City Lights Church since January 14th and will be working there until May 2025. City Lights Church is a non-denominational church that is new to Spartanburg. Pastor Ben Gaulden hired me on as opening staff for January 28th. The church is located at Spartanburg Methodist College, in their chapel. I work in the nursery which is located in the building across from the chapel. So far, I have worked with a diverse group of children. Some come consistently, and some do not. Since the church is new, we have newcomers almost every Sunday. Overall, my responsibilities are to make sure these children are safe and well taken care of while also creating an environment centered around God and faith. For the smaller children in the nursery, that looks like music, play, and interactive books. I work in the classrooms, so before and after each Sunday service, I assist in setting up/breaking down and moving tables and chairs back into the classrooms.

Working with children is something I enjoy, and I love the positive aura of the church. There is usually a 1:2 ratio for each teacher/volunteer which allows us to develop individual relationships with each child and ensure a safe environment. City Lights Church is fairly new, so things are adapting and growing as time passes.

**Gracie Bennett '25** is a Junior Child and Family Studies major and Psychology and Women Studies minor from Joiner, Arkansas. After graduation, Gracie plans to pursue a Master's Degree. She will continue to work in Student Affairs at Converse University and maintain her internship at City Lights Church Nursery. These two positions will provide her with a great amount of experience and career readiness for helping children in need.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Karan Bhatt**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Cathy Gowan

**Organization/Business:** Carolina Software as a Service

During my tenure at Carolina Software as a Service (CSaaS), my primary objective was to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom and its practical application to real-world software challenges. At the outset of my internship, I encountered a significant obstacle: the programming language and software tools utilized by the company were entirely unfamiliar to me. With the invaluable guidance of my supervisor, I dedicated the initial weeks to immersing myself in understanding these technologies.

Once I grasped the framework within which CSaaS operated, I collaborated closely with my supervisor on various segments of their ongoing project. These tasks ranged from meticulously documenting developmental alterations to managing database integrations within Visual Studio, to coding specific functionalities for the company's website. Furthermore, I had the privilege of participating in client meetings alongside the CSaaS team. These engagements involved discussions on maintaining legacy products and occasionally exploring updates for prospective projects.

Through my internship at CSaaS, I not only had the opportunity to translate academic knowledge into tangible software development outcomes but also gained profound insights into the intricate facets of the field. From database implementation to network infrastructure, the experience broadened my understanding of software development complexities, enriching my skill set and professional acumen.

**Karan Bhatt '25** is a Junior Computer Science major and Data Science minor from Charlotte, NC. After graduation, Karan hopes to find employment through an internship out of college, however he will be applying to graduate school as well as a backup plan to the original.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Rebekka Braziel**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Julie Jones

**Organization/Business:** Student Solutions

For my internship, I was able to work with families and children who partner with Student Solutions in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Student Solutions is a facility that focuses on helping children with developmental delays or who need additional support. My experiences included assisting early interventionists with required service paperwork as well as file organization. I was able to observe different styles of early intervention to be able to adapt my professional skills to the needs of the client.

From this experience, I learned different methods of early intervention approaches, and how they help children at all levels build critical thinking and problem-solving skills. I can now identify the benefits of becoming an early interventionist. I was able to grow my problem-solving and creativity skills from an inexperienced level to a proficient level. I developed knowledge and experience in equipping, encouraging, and empowering parents. I have gained awareness for families who have children with atypical development.

During my internship at Student Solutions, I was able to meet and work with many wonderful and inspiring professionals. Through these interactions, I learned how to work cohesively with others in varied environments. I am most proud of how I have developed confidence in a professional setting involving families and children.

**Rebekka Braziel '25** is a Junior Psychology and Child/Family Studies major from Pelion, SC. After graduation, Rebekka will be pursuing her master's degree at the University of South Carolina in Psychology. Rebekka's future goals include working with children experiencing developmental delays and helping empower those communities in South Carolina.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Dorothy Brogden**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Reed Chewning

**Organization/Business:** Shepherds Gate

My internship experience was very close to the heart for me. As one who has experienced homelessness and addiction, I was able to relate to the ladies at Shepherds Gate more than I imagined. After completing an addiction program through Miracle Hill Ministries, I chose to do a yearlong internship with this organization. It was during this internship that my director, Minda Shelton encouraged me to return to Converse and finish my degree. Because someone believed in me, I knew I had to continue on in this ministry and do the same. This is why I chose Miracle Hill Shepherds Gate as my intern experience.

The shelter provides assistance to over 50 women and children who are experiencing homelessness. It offers not only shelter and three meals a day, but also love and counseling to begin restoration in their lives. I was allowed to work side by side with case managers to see how through the help of them, as well as multiple agencies, a person's life can be changed. Shepherds Gate is a Christ-centered environment, which allows the ladies to have interactions with many of the local churches and volunteers throughout their stay at the shelter.

I am so grateful to say that I'm an employee of Miracle Hill Ministries now, and I look forward to completing my Child and Family Studies degree so that I may be a case manager and reach out to help others just as they did for me.

**Dorothy Brogden '24** is a Senior Child and Family Studies major from Greenville, SC. After graduation, Dorothy plans to work at Miracle Hill Shepherds Gate.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Anier Colon-Flores**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Julie Jones

**Organization/Business:** Converse University, Department of Student Development and Success

For my internship, I had the privilege to work in the Department of Student Development and Success at Converse University in Spartanburg, SC. I worked alongside Alexis Stoneburner throughout the entirety of the internship. I was able to develop professional bonds that have allowed me to learn more about the student development field using arts and advocacy for diverse students.

During my time here, I was able to develop confidence in professional skills that I had already developed. I was also able to reflect back on areas of growth and develop those professionally. I was able to create and complete goals within a given timeline. I was also able to work with a group of diverse college students that come from different backgrounds and engage with their respective families. This allowed me to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills to develop activities and engage with students that needed more external motivation and support.

I enjoyed my time here, due to the professional and interpersonal experience I was able to develop not only for myself, but for the people and students I worked with as well. I took this opportunity to analyze what it is like to work within higher education. I also saw the benefits of working with older students within an academic setting. Because of this experience, I now feel a lot more prepared to continue engaging within a career using arts advocacy skills and higher education upon graduation.

**Anier Colon-Flores '25** is a Junior Psychology and Child & Family Studies major from Ponce, PR. After graduation, Anier will pursue a career within outreach management for students focused in art programs and encourage students of low-socioeconomic backgrounds to continue pursuing education. Anier will also continue to work with students from diverse backgrounds and engage the arts with professional and interpersonal development skills.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author:** Kaylee Coudér

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Reed Chewning

**Organization/Business:** Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System

My internship at Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System proved to be an invaluable learning experience, providing exposure to various aspects of physical therapy across diverse settings. This experience encompassed rotations at the Thomas E. Hannah YMCA Rehabilitation Services Clinic, and Spartanburg Medical Center's outpatient pediatric rehabilitation services clinic, as well as their inpatient hospital rehabilitation services.

Over the semester, I accumulated observation hours in outpatient orthopedics, aquatic therapy, and pediatric outpatient care. Additionally, I delved into inpatient experiences, spanning the Emergency Room, Intensive Care Unit, Transitional Care Unit, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Long Term Care Unit, and Surgical Post-Op floors. This immersive experience allowed me to refine my communication skills by engaging with patients and their families.

The internship facilitated networking opportunities with professionals in the field, fostering meaningful connections. Many generously shared their insights, encouraging me to seek their guidance when needed. I seized these opportunities to inquire about cases, treatment methods, and the rationale behind decisions, enhancing my understanding of the intricacies of the physical therapy profession.

Witnessing firsthand the assessment, evaluation, and treatment techniques employed by experienced physical therapists enriched my skill set. The exposure to diverse practices also enhanced my passion for pursuing a career in physical therapy, reinforcing my commitment to obtaining a degree in the field.

I am grateful for this internship, where I discovered my love of pediatric rehabilitation and affirmed my interest in sports medicine. This experience has solidified my determination to contribute to the well-being of individuals, and deepened my enthusiasm for a career in physical therapy.

**Kaylee Coudér '24** is a Senior Child & Family Studies major and Biology minor from Port Orchard, Washington. After graduation, Kaylee plans to attend a Doctorate of Physical Therapy Program.





# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Uzziah Dawkins**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Julie Jones

**Organization/Business:** Spartanburg Day School

My internship at Spartanburg Day School was a great experience. I learned so many things during this process. I enjoyed getting the opportunity to observe a person who does what I want to do. In my internship I got the opportunity to observe a PE teacher/coach which is my desired career in the future. I got to assist PE classes and even taught my own lesson. I also gained many skills during the process of my internship experience. I gained many skills like patience, collaboration, initiative, adaptability, how to motivate others, and communication. All these skills I feel are needed to be a great PE teacher.

While doing my internship at Spartanburg Day School I learned that when you are working for a school that has high expectations for the students it has even higher expectations for the staff and faculty. Coach Bob was a great mentor for me during my time here. He allowed me to get great insight on how to lead a class and be a great PE teacher. This experience helped me realize even more that this is what I want to do in the future. I love getting the chance to motivate young kids on a daily basis.

**Uzziah Dawkins '24** is a Senior Child and Family Studies major from Spartanburg, SC. After graduation, Uzziah plans to teach.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author:** Bridget Dennehy

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Neval Ertürk

**Organization/Business:** Iowa Lakeside Laboratory

For my internship I went across the country to Iowa Lakeside Laboratory, which is a field station for the University of Iowa. I went there with few expectations on what my summer was going to look like and was blown away. I learned so many incredibly valuable skills and met so many amazing people. I learned how to collect and mount my own specimens, properly eradicate invasive species, collect and assess water samples for quality, track and tag an animal as well as monitor endangered species populations. On top of all of that, I was able to participate in a research project with a good friend of mine on the soil organic carbon content of patch burn grazing plots.

I also gained and further developed many core competencies. By working in a partially self-directed environment, I have furthered my critical thinking skills because I have to properly assess what needs to be done and how to do it. I have further developed my teamwork and communication skills by being in a live-work environment because I have to constantly make sure I communicate any qualms or work-related issues to avoid any intrapersonal or workplace conflict. I also gained a more diverse and global perspective by exploring and living in a completely new environment. This has all also tied in to my personal development. I have learned new things about myself and given myself new challenges that I could have never anticipated.

I gained a great wealth of knowledge and experience for my future career path. Not only that but I learned how to be an independent adult. I would not have traded the experience I had over this past summer for the world. I feel fully prepared to get out into the professional world.

**Bridget Dennehy '24** is a Senior Biology major and Environmental Studies minor from Greenville, SC. After graduation, Bridget plans to do field work in conservation.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Sha'Deashia Durant**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Julie Jones

**Organization/Business:** Spartanburg County First Steps

My name is Sha'Deashia Durant, and I am a senior here at Converse University. My internship is at Spartanburg County First Steps. First Steps is a company that provides families in financial need child care so that they are able to work, accomplish their goals, and gain stability. The children range from birth to three years old. It has been an amazing experience so far, and I have learned so much from it. So far, I have learned to provide quality care and educational opportunities to children within the framework given to ensure that all activities are grounded in positive, nurturing, and goal-oriented relationships with families and children. This internship has also helped me with my personal goals to be more open and outspoken, take initiative, model and encourage positive interactions and behaviors, and implement curriculum. It has definitely been an experience that I didn't realize I needed until after it started.

I have worked with children since I was 16 years old, ranging from an after-school program teacher, daycare assistant, substitute teacher, and now an early head start teacher. Even with all of those experiences plus having seven siblings, I have gained a much greater understanding of children, and I am forever grateful for this opportunity and experience.

**Sha'Deashia Durant '24** is a Senior Child and Family Studies major and Special Education Emotional Disabilities minor from Sumter, SC. After graduation, Sha'Deashia plans to continue working at First Steps, but in the corporate office instead of the classroom.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author:** Mary-Grace Durham

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Cathy Gowan

**Organization/Business:** Wipfli

Over the summer, I had the opportunity to intern at Wipfli in Atlanta, Georgia. Wipfli is a public accounting firm based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Wipfli provides services such as Tax, Consulting, Fraud and Forensic, Audit and Accounting. In addition, Wipfli was ranked in the top 20 of all public accounting firms in the world. I was drawn to interning at Wipfli to learn more about what an auditor does and what their day-to-day tasks were.

As an audit intern, I was tasked with preparing financial statements in accordance with GAAP. I also traveled to perform bank audits in different states while building a relationship with the clients. My responsibilities during branch audits included counting the teller drawers to verify what was actually in the drawer to what they reported in their system. Additionally, I completed safety deposit testing to ensure the client had proper paperwork. Finally, I counted the vault to ensure dual control and proper allocation of funds. One of the challenges I faced was when our client didn't have proper documentation resulting in a finding which is when there is an error in the design of an internal control. A finding results in additional documentation from the auditor on what they found and how the client can prevent this from happening again. Even though there are challenges to every audit, I learned how to build relationships with our clients and effectively communicate with them.

This internship expanded my knowledge in the accounting world, specifically in auditing. Furthermore, this summer confirmed my choice of auditing as my career path. In the Fall, I will be attending Kennesaw State University to pursue my Masters in Accounting. Finally, I have accepted a position to work for Wipfli as a Staff Accountant on their Audit Team in June 2025.

**Mary-Grace Durham '24** is a Senior Accounting major and Business Administration minor from Alpharetta, Georgia. After graduation, Mary-Grace will be attending Kennesaw State University to obtain a masters in Accounting.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Hailey Ellis**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Jerome Gomez

**Organization/Business:** Interior Elements

Interior Elements is a commercial furniture dealership that was established in 2008. The company specializes in creating plans, designing spaces, and ordering furniture for its clients. The executive team is based at the headquarters in Alabama, while the Charlotte office houses sales, design, and operations teams. The interior designers also serve as project managers for each project, working towards the mission of assisting organizations in designing meaningful spaces for their clients. The company's capabilities span from workplace strategy to developing furniture solutions and architectural product planning, all the way through project management, delivery, and installation.

During my time at Interior Elements, I was involved in various tasks and projects. Over the summer, I worked on approximately five projects spanning different industries, such as healthcare, education, and corporate offices. One of my highlights was a trip to Boston, Massachusetts, with five other designers, where we toured the manufacturing facility for AIS furniture. This visit provided insights into the furniture-making process and the manufacturing side of the industry. Another highlight was the weekly site visits. Collaborating with multiple designers on projects in the Charlotte area, I observed the work process through these site visits. My responsibilities included collecting information on furniture that needed replacement or modification after installation.

I thoroughly enjoyed my internship at Interior Elements, and it has equipped me with valuable skills and resources for the future. The experience allowed me to gain insights into budgeting, pricing, and furniture-related aspects. Additionally, it facilitated networking opportunities, enabling me to connect with companies and individuals in the design industry.”

**Hailey Ellis '24** is a Senior Interior Design major and Art Administration minor from Huntersville, North Carolina. After graduation, Hailey plans to work as a commercial or residential interior designer.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author:** Evelyn Fitz

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Neval Ertürk

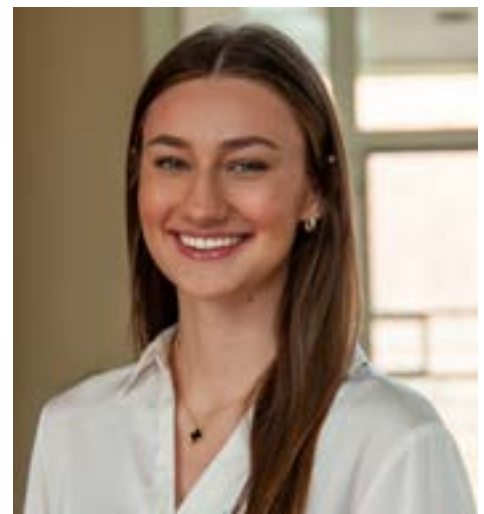
**Organization/Business:** Converse University, Office of Research and Engagement

In Spring 2023, I had the privilege of working for the Converse University Office of Research and Engagement as the Social Media and Web Coordination Intern. Stepping into this role, I was tasked with building a social media presence for the Office of Research and Engagement, essentially from the ground up. Thanks to the creative freedom I was granted, I was allowed to experiment with various photo, video, and graphic design software to create attractive digital content. With the guidance of my supervisor, as well as other Converse staff, I was able to formulate and execute a semester-long plan to build a strong social media presence, and maximize engagement, all while forming connections with students and faculty from all disciplines across campus.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this internship was the work I did with the 2023 RISE Symposium. From creating fliers and other promotional content, to taking professional headshots for students, and photographing the event, I was able to contribute to the behind-the-scenes work that goes into planning campus and community-wide events. Seeing the time and effort that was poured into an event dedicated to the professional development of students left a lasting impression on me.

After completing my internship in May 2023, I was delighted to continue in the role as Social Media and Web Coordinator for the 2023-24 academic year. It has been over a year since I first began this role, and to see my own personal and professional growth, as well as the success of the Office of Research and Engagement Social Media has been incredibly rewarding. This internship has been one of the most valuable experiential learning opportunities I have been granted during my time at Converse, and has opened my eyes to career paths I had not previously considered.

**Evelyn Fitz '24** is a Senior Biology major from Columbia, SC. After graduation, Evelyn plans to attend Physician Assistant School.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Danielle Fuller**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Julie Jones

**Organization/Business:** Lawson Academy of the Arts at Converse University

The Lawson Academy offers lessons in music and dance to Converse and the surrounding community. It has expanded to offer camps and events relating to the performing arts. My initial introduction to The Lawson Academy was exceptional as I met with the Director of the Lawson Academy, Janae O'Shields, spoke so highly of the program that she graduated from and introduced my family and I to. My purpose to enroll in the program at first was to be of service in any way that I could as they lost their work study student and didn't have the additional help. I learned, however, that not only do Janae, the instructors, and students enjoy the music and vocal lessons but also that this group becomes a family-like environment.

A lot of past students in the Fine Arts Day Camp program go on to become junior and senior counselors of the students they once were. I was able to help with a multitude of assignments consisting of shadowing the Director of the Lawson Academy; managing the day-to-day scheduling and payments; shadowing instructor's lessons; and working with the students in the fine arts day camps.

My goals were easily within my reach because my sight supervisor oversees every aspect of the programs that The Lawson Academy provides which made it easy in learning from her my leadership, professional, and communication goals as I shadowed her throughout her day-to-day processes. I can use these skills that I constantly see her exhibit, for example, the ability to work well with others and the ability to accept criticism and work well under pressure. These skills will follow me in the way that I currently help students navigate their financial obligations so that they can get the necessary education to help reach their goals and obtain their degree.

**Danielle Fuller '24** is a Senior Child & Family Studies major from Moore, SC. After graduation, Danielle plans to continue working in the Student Financial Services department here at Converse University to help improve student and family experiences as they navigate the financial process. She has received her acceptance letter into the Master in Management in Professional Leadership program and intends to enhance her leadership professional, and communication skills within the program.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author:** Lauryn Garaux

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Julie Jones

**Organization/Business:** Better Beginnings and Spartanburg Medical Center

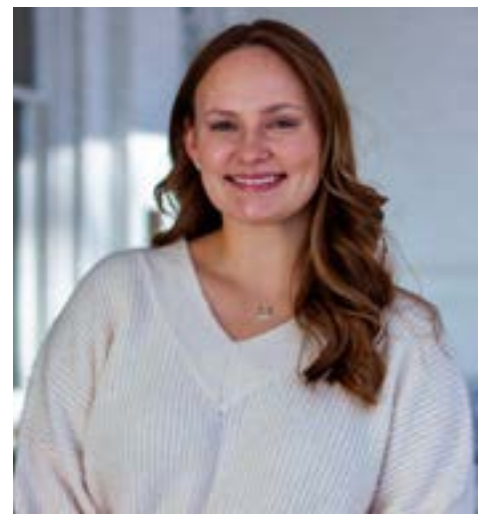
For my internship experience, I chose to split my hours between two different locations. I interned at Better Beginnings Therapy for my first set of hours, which is a private practice that offers speech therapy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy to ages 0-21. For my second set of hours, I interned at Spartanburg Medical Center, which is a level one trauma hospital. At both locations, I was an occupational therapy intern.

While at Better Beginnings, I would observe five therapy sessions per day. Shadowing included taking notes, assisting the OTs in retrieving treatment supplies, and discussing the patient's plan of care during each session. At the end of each session, I was allowed to work with patients on small goals they may have had. Since I interned on the same days every week, I was able to form relationships with the patients, which I really enjoyed.

At Spartanburg Medical Center, I would shadow five to ten patients per day in various departments of the hospital. Shadowing duties at SMC included taking notes, conversing with patients and their families, assisting the therapists in retrieving treatment supplies, reviewing charts and patient goals at the beginning and end of the day, and discussing patients' plans of care throughout the day. While I was not able to work directly with patients at SMC, I was able to gain valuable experience in charting and forming patient goals.

During my internship experience, I was able to gain and develop many skills. Of note, my ability to network with professionals improved greatly, as did my ability to communicate compassionately and effectively with patients. I cannot thank Dr. Jones and Dr. Chewing enough for setting up both internships for me, as well as the countless therapists who shared with me their knowledge and passion for occupational therapy.

**Lauryn Garaux '24** is a Senior Child and Family Studies major from Gaffney, SC. After graduation, Lauryn plans to pursue a postgraduate degree in occupational therapy.





# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Jasmine Humphries**

**Converse Internship Mentors:** John Jeter and David Berry

**Organization/Business:** City of Woodruff

From May to December of 2023, I worked as the Events Director Intern for the City of Woodruff. Throughout this internship, I helped the City of Woodruff put on concerts for the community at an amphitheater called McKinney Park. I booked vendors and food trucks for each of the concerts we held. I also contacted band managers regarding riders and provided hospitality for the musicians on the day of events. I learned about marketing by managing the City of Woodruff's social media accounts. I posted flyers and communicated with members of the community through social media to keep them informed about upcoming events. In addition to booking and marketing, I was able to make connections and open for the band July Moon at Heart and Soul Fest, one of the concerts I helped plan. I also helped plan a separate concert that was the highest attending and first firework show ever held at McKinney Park.

Because of this internship, I grew my communication skills by contacting vendors and band managers. I developed my technology skills and digital fluency skills by advertising through social media. I also grew my diverse and global perspective by working with outside companies such as Fox Carolina, WYFF Channel 4 News, and others.

This internship directly relates to my major, Contemporary Music with Media Applications, by exposing me to the music business and its language. I am actively learning everything that goes into putting on a successful concert. Originally, my internship only lasted from May to July of 2023, however, after presenting my internship work to Woodruff's City Council, they allowed me to extend my internship through December, and I am currently continuing this internship as a now part-time employee of the Events Department with the City of Woodruff.

**Jasmine Humphries '26** is a Sophomore Contemporary Music with Media Applications major from Union, SC. After graduation, Jasmine plans on going directly into songwriting in the music business in Nashville, TN.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author:** Ava Jerolaman

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Jerome Gomez

**Organization/Business:** H2R Interiors

Working at H2R Interiors with Beth Harley has allowed me to experience what my career path would look like after graduation. Being new to the design world, getting a job is very daunting and so having this experience allowed my confidence in the industry to grow. I worked with many different media types such as hand drafting and renderings as well as the technical aspects such as elevations, detailed drawings, and sections with the use of design programs.

I had the opportunity to work in commercial design with an oil company that wanted to remodel and upgrade the space they were utilizing. Beth and I went through the beginning stages of the design process by asking about the client's needs and wants and then gathering the information to help them visualize the ultimate outcome of the space. The schematic process is both color scheme and furniture selected to show the client, and it just helps them see the before and after and come to an understanding of the building as a whole. Now, most of the projects I worked on were residential, so it was nice to get both experiences. I had to go to many site locations for each residential project and take measurements so we could sketch the building accurately. Beth and I met with the clients occasionally and presented the progress that was being made or what needed to be changed and how the client felt about the work being done. Then we would gather the materials needed, and I would go to a tile shop and help choose out the kitchen tile our clients wanted. I would also go to a fabric store to find what kind of fabric we needed for the drapery we were doing.

All together the time spent at this internship has been an amazing eye-opener and made me fall in love with Interior Design even more.

**Ava Jerolaman '24** is a Senior Interior Design major and German Studies minor from Ft. Thomas, KY. After graduation, Ava plans to work in the design industry at an interior design firm or furniture dealership.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Caroline Klein**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Jerome Gomez

**Organization/Business:** LS3P

My internship experience at the architecture and design firm LS3P in Greenville, South Carolina was very positive. My internship focused primarily on corporate commercial spaces, multi-family residential complexes and educational facilities. Because of the wide variety of spaces that LS3P works on, my experience was very well-rounded. I was able to work on so many different spaces, budgets and concepts. I also appreciated that I was able to collaborate on projects at various phases, from the initial design concept to final walkthroughs.

We performed punch lists, which are meetings where the entire team from contractors to interior designers ensure the space is move-in-ready. We also performed one-year walkthroughs to ensure materials were holding up well. Additionally, the employees encouraged the interns to be very involved in the actual projects from the very beginning. We were not ever relegated to the sidelines to simply observe. I created material boards that were presented to clients and spent many hours working in various projects' Revit files.

I received an abundance of exposure to creating spaces that meet the American Disability Act, which was an incredibly valuable real-world experience. LS3P also included us in lunch-and-learn meetings and continuing-education-credits, both of which were great hands-on experience. I truly could not have asked for a more positive internship experience and would highly recommend LS3P for a design internship.

**Caroline Klein '25** is a Junior Interior Design major from Greenville, SC. After graduation, Caroline plans to work in residential design.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author:** Brianna Lee

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Jerome Gomez

**Organization/Business:** Teague Studio

This summer I interned in Spartanburg, South Carolina at Teague Studio. Teague Studio is a full-service architecture and design studio led by architect Meghan Teague, based in Spartanburg, South Carolina. It is a small studio focused on residential architecture, both new construction and renovations, as well as small commercial and community projects. I have been with Teague Studio since August of 2022 part-time while completing my bachelor's degree in interior design. This summer, I was able to continue at Teague while working more hours per week resulting in a lot of growth and learning.

At Teague Studio, every project is an opportunity to create a place at the crossroads of beauty and function, in perfect harmony with its setting and your vision. I have been able to work on projects ranging from new construction to renovations and additions. Teague Studio has recognized my strengths and has allowed me to pursue challenges that push me. My role as an intern includes various tasks like assisting with material selection and mood boards, hand sketching design solutions/floor plans, working on construction documents, attending client meetings, and measuring site locations.

With everyone's background in the office being architecture, I have gained a ton of insight on details that help bridge the gap between interior design and architecture. I am satisfied with my internship experience because I have been challenged with tasks that push my creativity while being supported by an amazing team along the way. Overall, Teague Studio has been incredibly beneficial to me as I look forward to starting my professional career after graduation.

**Brianna Lee '24** is a Senior Interior Design major from Spartanburg, SC. After graduation, Brianna plans to work in residential design in Spartanburg.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Lisbon Lopes**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Madelyn Young

**Organization/Business:** United Way of West Tennessee

Throughout my internship with United Way of West Tennessee, I have learned extensively how individuals can market their brand in order to effectively express what they do and who they are to the whole community. When creating content for my main project, The Read Team social media, it was important for me to make “modern-styled” posts that can be understood by everyone who follows United Way’s social media platforms.

The Read Team is a program that aims to reach students who need literary coaching and provide them with a tutor. I specifically enjoyed working on a post that stated statistics on why being able to read by the third grade is important for the child’s future high school graduation. With my supervisor, Ms. Chesire’s, direction, I was able to use technological sources I have never seen or heard of, such as ConstantContact and MetaSuite. These can help me further my future career in having a higher technological competency and knowledge of being organized in my communication with others in the community. However, most importantly it has been brought to my attention how much my timid and shy personality can close off opportunities for me; therefore, I plan to gain an abundance of experience where I am required to communicate frequently.

This will help me become more comfortable in a multitude of situations that may come in the work force and in everyday life. In the future, I hope to continue to learn about marketing a brand effectively through many technological resources while also growing personally with being more comfortable in situations where communication is essential.

**Lisbon Lopes '24** is a Junior Business Administration major and Marketing and Social Entrepreneurship minor from Greenwood, SC. After graduation, Lisbon plans to have an entry level job in the field of athletics.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Cristobal Lopez**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Cathy Gowan

**Organization/Business:** Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce

During my internship, I had the amazing opportunity to work as a Marketing and Event Intern at the Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce. My name is Cristobal Lopez, and I am pursuing a degree in Economics and also trying to get minors in Accounting and Marketing. My desire for a city environment and my belief that the Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce was the perfect fit for my skills and interests drove my decision to pursue this internship. With knowledge in Marketing, Event Planning, and Technology, I was eager to put my skills to use in fostering community connections and helping local businesses grow.

From July 7 to July 25, I undertook a rewarding experience that gave me the chance to explore various facets of the company's operations. As a Marketing and Events Intern, I had the honor of working with a passionate team dedicated to fostering community development and economic growth in the Greer region. The Chamber's mission to promote business prosperity was perfectly aligned with my own career goals, making this internship even more meaningful to me. With a strong background in Economics, I sought to bring a fresh perspective to marketing initiatives and event planning, leveraging my understanding of market dynamics and consumer behavior to contribute meaningfully to the organization's goals. For the marketing side I would assist with making posts using Canva and photo editors, make banners for our newsletters, help setup our camera rooms for interviews and news, and send all of our social media material to our head marketer. For the Event side I would attend event meetings and give input to our departments, help set up events, take photos, and help with general tasks that were given to me.

**Cristobal Lopez '25** is a Junior Economics major and Marketing minor from Spartanburg SC. After graduation, Cristobal plans to pursue a masters in urban resilient design.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Xion Makupson**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Julie Jones

**Organization/Business:** Project R.E.S.T.

During my internship at Project R.E.S.T., I was able to identify the benefits of working with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. I learned how Project R.E.S.T. is a prevention organization while working alongside the community services team. I have grown professionally in the positive environment of collaboration and trust used amongst the staff members. When I was able to work in this community to reach a common goal, I was able to see how much of a joy it can be to work at an organization like this.

I am most proud of how I have developed quantitative reasoning skills as I assisted my site supervisor with yearly statistical and data entry. The technical skills I was able to gain while working there are something I am most certain I will use in the future. I am also very pleased with the fact that I gained confidence while networking with professionals and used that confidence to make new connections. I was fortunate enough to meet many new people from different backgrounds from the confidence I gained, and I probably wouldn't have had the opportunity to do that if it weren't for my internship. I was also able to identify new ways to advocate for victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual assault.

The time I spent at Project R.E.S.T. taught me that there are many different ways to advocate for this demographic that are impactful. I'm very grateful to have experienced and learned what I did from this organization and I know that I will be able to use the skills that I gained during this time in the future.

**Xion Makupson '24** is a Senior Child and Family Studies major and American Sign Language minor from Moore, SC. After graduation, Miss Makupson looks forward to enrolling in a graduate program to obtain her master's in social work. After that, she wants to pursue a career in social work to support adults as they do what is needed to better their lives.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Frankie Malafronte**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Reed Chewning

**Organization/Business:** GirlUp GVL

GirlUp GVL is a nonprofit founded by Kim Mogan in 2019 to serve at-need middle and high school girls in Greenville, SC. Their goal is to help young girls reach their full potential by providing free mentorship, enriching learning experiences, and individual success planning. GirlUp strives to enhance the quality of life for young women by replacing obstacles with opportunities. Kim and the staff are so passionate and really put their all into serving the students and keeping their families and the community involved. They get to know each girl on a personal level so their individual needs can be met and their unique goals supported.

As a summer program intern, I worked with the middle school girls. Each day we provided them with breakfast and lunch, transportation when needed, and a variety of activities ranging from arts and crafts, reading and journaling, swimming and other outdoor adventures to volunteer work in the community. In addition to assisting with daily scheduling and tasks, I was able to develop and lead several reading, journaling, and creative activities. GirlUp has four main values that are upheld in everything they do: respect, aspire, connect, and lead. It was my responsibility to model these virtues for students and I made sure to incorporate them into the activities I planned.

I think adolescence is one of the most transformative periods in a girl's life. Her experiences during this time will play a huge part in shaping her adult self. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to provide young girls with positive experiences that help them embrace who they are and realize the power they have to become whoever they want to be. I hope to do similar work in my career and continue my involvement with nonprofit organizations like GirlUp.

**Frankie Malafronte '24** is a Senior Individualized Major: Studio Art, Psychology, and Child and Family Studies from Greenville, SC. After graduation, Frankie would like to gain experience in the mental health field before attending graduate school for either art therapy or counseling. Frankie plans to work as an inpatient mental health technician or at a wilderness treatment center for troubled youth.





# INTERNSHIPS

**Author:** Sarah Mintern

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Julie Jones

**Organization/Business:** Converse University, Career Services Department

From November of 2023 to May of 2024 I interned at Converse University's Career Services department as a career development intern, working closely with Tori Good and other staff members. My responsibilities included participating in student-led events and organizing information on applications like My.Converse and Handshake. I particularly enjoyed talking to the students at the different events and how they have benefitted from the information given to them.

At the end of my internship with Converse University's Career Services department, I grew from a novice to an emerging expert in my professional skill set. I had formed the competency to effectively and coherently communicate with different audiences like faculty, staff, students, and employers/community members. I have also acquired skills in leveraging existing connections with employers and community members and creating new partnerships through on-campus programming and events/workshops. My time in this department has assisted and encouraged me to become more confident in myself and my decisions.

Although I still have much to learn, I am grateful for the experience that I have gained and the strategies I have learned to better aid in my career in higher education. I plan to continue on this path of forever growing and learning to help better myself and others I encounter. I am grateful for my time in this department and the guidance that it has given me.

**Sarah Mintern '24** is a Senior Child and Family Studies major from Waipahu, Hawaii. After graduation, Miss Mintern will be pursuing her graduate studies education at Converse University in the Masters in Management Program. Proposed research includes equipping, encouraging and empowering future leaders through student affairs.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Madeline Modica**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Julie Jones

**Organization/Business:** Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System

After considerable contemplation, I have taken an interest in pursuing a career in physical rehabilitation. I am internally motivated and believe in the capacity for positive change I can make in other people's lives. I get excited about others' ability to grow and achieve their full potential. As a student-athlete, I take an immense amount of pride in the hard work and dedication I have devoted to getting to where I am today. I believe that physical health is the foundation of mental well-being. Motivating people to strive for excellence and promoting a healthy lifestyle is important to me.

As an intern observing occupational therapists, I had the opportunity to delve into what the world of rehabilitative care looks like. First-hand, I witnessed the impact these healthcare workers make on the everyday lives of children and adults. In addition to strengthening my interest in pursuing a profession in this field, my internship also left me with a profound sense of appreciation for healthcare workers.

I am leaving this internship with valuable lessons about what working in healthcare is like. I have developed an exceptional understanding of how child and family studies values are correlated to working with patients. I have demonstrated a thorough understanding of the major concepts that contribute to the development of a professional presence, including problem-solving, critical thinking, and communication skills which were all essential throughout my internship. I am confident in my ability to use these skills to help families and children reach their full potential. I would like to acknowledge the OTs at Spartanburg Regional, Stacy Mahaffey and Tabatha Brickley, for providing me with an immense amount of information and resources that have contributed to my skills and knowledge. They welcomed me with open arms and encouraged me to want to pursue this career path.

**Madeline Modica '25** is a Junior Psychology & Child and Family Studies major and Biology & Theater minor from Mooresville. After graduation, Madeline plans on taking at least two to three years to travel and explore a variety of jobs while continuing to build her resume. Following this time frame, She plans to apply to graduate schools to pursue a masters in Occupational Therapy.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Asa Murphy-Caldwell**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Julie Jones

**Organization/Business:** Cherokee County Department of Juvenile Justice

During my internship, I decided to work for the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) in Cherokee County (Gaffney, SC). I've had a great experience working for this company as I got a glimpse at what working the troubled youth looks like. As an intern, my tasks revolved around shadowing case managers, attending court hearings, reading psych evaluations, working alongside at-risk youth in the community garden, and observing daily tasks of the employees at the Cherokee county office.

While my duties were far easier than the employees of the company, I believe that I still put in effort and took my work seriously. After court, meeting with or interacting with youths, or observing their daily work routine, I would ask questions and write down their responses and assist employees in their daily tasks in any way I could. Shadowing the employees, asking questions, and experiencing the ever-changing work life at DJJ first hand significantly helped me in understanding the roles and responsibilities of working at DJJ.

My overall goal with this internship was to see if I was suited to work in an intense, emotionally draining, and at times fast-paced environment. I believe it's safe to say that having this internship solidifies my passion for working with troubled youth and becoming a licensed professional counselor.

**Asa Murphy-Caldwell '24** is a Senior Psychology and Child & Family Studies major from Bluffton, SC. After graduation, Asa plans to attend graduate school and certify as an LPC (Licensed Professional Counselor).



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Faith Nanna**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Cathy Gowan

**Organization/Business:** Mount Rushmore National Memorial

Last summer, I had the honor of being an interpretative intern at Mount Rushmore National Memorial. As an intern, I was able to utilize my skills of research and public speaking to curate my own ranger programs that engaged the audience by bringing them into the history of the site through my presentations. These opportunities allowed me to present my programs and continue to develop and sharpen my public speaking and interactive skills as I worked over the summer delivering these programs to new groups each time.

I was stationed at the visitor and information center desks for a few hours at a time at any given shift, answering questions and ensuring that all visitors were well aware of the programs and experiences on site and in the surrounding areas. At these stations, I was able to participate in the Junior Ranger Program where I was able to engage with young children and involve them in activity booklets. These programs allowed them to interact in their visit to Mount Rushmore, encouraging them to stay curious and keep exploring, growing the next generation of park rangers.

Beyond that, I was able to engage with visitors throughout the grounds and see first-hand how impactful our nation's history and our national lands are to the people who visit them every day. I was able to get a first-hand look at a variety of different and unique perspectives on our national lands and memorials. It allowed me to grow my own perspective and truly dive into the deep and often forgotten history of our nation. It was a phenomenal experience and it provided me with an outlet to utilize my skills and further grow myself as a student and as a person.

**Faith Nanna '25** is a Junior History major and Environmental Studies minor from Inman, SC. After graduation, Faith plans to join the National Park Service as a park ranger so that she can share the world's history with as many people as possible while exploring the great outdoors as well.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Mable Ni**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Mary Carlisle

**Organization/Business:** Artist Collective of Spartanburg

In the summer of 2023, I interned at the Artists Collective, a non-profit arts organization in Spartanburg, SC. Established in 2009, the Artists Collective houses the studios of multiple local artists. Through this internship, I met new artists and gained more connections to the Spartanburg Art scene. I shadowed under the operations manager, Merry-Beth Noble. The operations manager's general duties are assisting the retail administration which includes opening and closing the business, greeting guests that visit, and running the register.

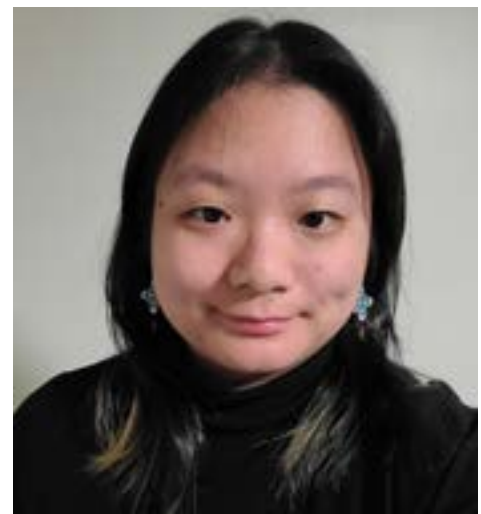
At the time, the Artists Collective was calling for artwork for their annual juried exhibition. I helped Merry-Beth find sponsorships and promote the show through sponsorship packets for individuals and companies and emails to artists. As a studio art major and an arts administration minor, those daily tasks taught me what goes into running a regional juried show.

In addition to working with Merry-Beth, I also worked with the exhibition team to install a group show in the Solomon Gallery featuring works from the Contemporary Print Collective, a group from Greenville. I really enjoyed being able to learn a different way to install work in another setting. I also love being able to work together and put up a beautiful show.

A challenge I had to overcome was grant research. Merry-Beth gave me the opportunity to find grants that related to accessibility and remodeling the facilities that would allow the Artists Collective to install a ramp. I had a difficult time trying to find real grants that fit that category. Eventually, I was able to find a few that the organization can apply for in the upcoming years.

In conclusion, this internship gave me a better understanding of what it means to work in a non-profit arts organization and what job opportunities I would like to pursue in the future. This internship also gave me the opportunity to network and find new friends and mentors.

**Mable Ni '24** is a Senior BFA Studio Art major and Music and Arts Administration minor from Spartanburg, SC. After graduation, Mable hopes to attend graduate school.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Logan Nichols**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Reed Chewning

**Organization/Business:** Union Power Cooperative

This past summer I had the opportunity to join the team at Union Power Cooperative (UPC), a not-for-profit power company, as the Communications Intern. Headquartered in Monroe, NC, UPC has the privilege to provide electricity to over 86,000 members and serve them with a 99.9% service reliability rate.

First, I was tasked with the marketing for UPC's Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting is an appreciation event held every year for members with a complimentary breakfast, the opportunity to chat with local vendors, win door prizes, and have an administrative voice to discuss the governance of UPC, as it is a co-operative. UPC prides itself on being a power company for the people, not for profit. Therefore, this event is crucial to return the co-op to the people. I was given the authority to market for this event such as organizing the Annual Meeting website page for internal and external communications.

Another project I was tasked with included the reorganization of UPC's internal crisis communications platform to allow for a more effective and organized way to locate vital information when needed. I was able to learn the true importance of crisis communications and developed a desire to work further in this type of communication.

Communicating is not something that you can do alone. It is a skill that is learned with practice and interactions with others, both formally and informally. The idea and act of "teamwork" solely revolves around how well each person is able to communicate with each other. When interning at UPC this summer, I was taught, shown, and able to practice what it means to work in an environment that radiates teamwork.

**Logan Nichols '24** is a Senior Individualized major from Monroe, NC. After graduation, Logan plans to obtain a full-time position in the communications field while pursuing an MiM in Professional Leadership at Converse.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Amaia Parkins**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Cathy Gowan

**Organization/Business:** Tudi Real Estate and The Children's Museum of the Upstate

As a Child and Families Major, I had the opportunity to experience a split placement, with both settings families experiencing new life changes. Working with Tudi Real Estate, I was able to educate first-time home buyers on the process of first-time buyers and developers, teach first-time buyers about the home ownership and development process, and identify the cultural differences between first-time buyers and multiple home buyers.

Through my internship with The Children's Museum of The Upstate, I learned the benefits of working with early childhood youth as well as developing reading readiness skills, and problem-solving skills for first-time parents.

**Amaia Parkins '24** is a Senior Child & Family Studies major and Philosophy minor from Charlotte, NC. Amaia will be graduating this spring of 2024. Upon graduation Amaia will pursue her graduate studies at Converse University in the Marriage and Family Therapy program while also using her last of year of NCAA eligibility with Women's Basketball.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Dominique Pearson**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Neval Ertürk

**Organization/Business:** Converse University, Office of Research and Engagement

My name is Dominique Catrell Pearson Jr, and I am the social media and event coordinator for the Office of Research and Engagement at Converse University. I have been working as an intern since June 2023. My major is psychology, and I hope to use me degree to counsel those who suffer from drug abuse. I have made many connections while working in my internship including Kristin Lacey, and Gail Reeves, Dr. Steele, Dr. Griffin, Cathy Gowan, and many more. In my initial interview, I wanted to be as honest as possible about why I wanted to get this internship. Dr. Ertürk saw my passion.

While working at this internship I have gained knowledge and competencies. While working with Dr. Ertürk I have learned a new perspective of her home country (Turkey); she has told me about the education system and how she was raised during her childhood. I have become more familiar with technology, for example, scanning documents, creating Excel sheets, and faxing documents. These are a few tasks I had difficulties with before I started this internship.

My critical thinking has only been sharpened since working with Dr. Ertürk because I had to adapt to unexpected circumstances. Some of these unexpected circumstances were late packages needed for certain events, canceled meetings, and locations for events. enthusiasm for the position. I also have experience in teamwork since I play basketball.

**Dominique Pearson '25** is a Junior Psychology major from Sumter, SC. After graduation, Dominique plans to pursue his dreams of receiving his masters by going to graduate school.





# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Janyia Pinckney**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Cathy Gowan

**Organization/Business:** Business Name

The main three competencies that I gained through my experience with the Spartanburg in Healthcare system were teamwork, technology, and communication. Teamwork is important in the healthcare field because you're not just working by yourself. There is a team of doctors, nurses, and other staff members with the same goal of helping the patient. Even though everyone's goal is the same, their ideas on how to care is different. Being able to come together and work in sync as a team is very important. Teamwork is also important because everyone's skills are different and to successfully treat patients, they need each other's expertise.

Technology in the hospital is highly important because it is used in numerous ways such as chart keeping, diagnostics, and basic life support care. Hospital technology keeps patients alive and breathing. Without technology the basic procedures in a hospital would be way more complex for both patients and staff members.

The third competency I gained was Communication, which is the most important area in healthcare. A patient can cycle through a number of employees in different departments, and without communication, patient care suffers. I was able to witness how different departments communicate with each other to adequately care for the patient.

The most important knowledge I learned in the healthcare field was to pay attention to the small details. This could be used in my everyday life when pertaining to paying attention. I didn't get much chance to use my academic coursework knowledge in my internship. This internship has brought up ideas and questions about what route I should take after graduating. I was able to see so much and enjoyed every second of it, so now I will have to decide what to do next. This experience has tremendously evolved my personal goals to work hands on with patients in a clinical setting.

**Janyia Pinckney '25** is a Junior Health care Administration major and Business minor from Columbia, SC. After graduation, Janyia plans to go back and receive credentials for Respiratory Therapy.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author:** Leslie Ramirez

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Cathy Gowan

**Organization/Business:** Converse University, Office of Research and Engagement

Throughout the summer of 2023, I completed an internship through Converse University. The internship was for the Converse Office of Research and Engagement where I fulfilled the position of social media coordinator. I had the unique experience of working during their summer research program which included the following mentored program groups: STARS BIORETS, and SCINBRE. In addition to doing work in the summer, I also attended the Southeast IDeA conference during the fall term.

My responsibilities throughout the internship involved planning content for the Office of Research and Engagement's media pages. Additionally, I captured images or generated graphics for the purpose of creating content. On top of the weekly posts that I was in charge of, I also had the interesting experience of creating content for the larger events that took place throughout my internship. One of these events was the lab coat ceremony. In this event I had the task of capturing images before, during, and after the ceremony. The lab coat ceremony was an event that allowed me to push my abilities and improve my content-creating skills.

Overall, throughout this internship, I learned what skills I lacked as well as what skills I excelled in and began to improve on the good and bad. Through the use of this information, I completed my internship confident in my networking, communication, time management, and content-creating skills. My main goal with this internship was to gain more social media coordinating experience and decide if that is the path I want to take. This internship has given me that experience and has directed my marketing path to a narrower route than I hoped it would.

**Leslie Ramirez '25** is a Junior Marketing and History major and Social Entrepreneurship minor from Spartanburg, SC. After graduation, Leslie plans to enter the marketing field.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Anna Scott**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Joe Dunn

**Organization/Business:** National Council on US-Arab Relations

Last year, I received an internship through a collaborative effort with the National Council on US-Arab Relations (NCUSAR) and Islamic Relief USA (IRUSA), for which I relocated for the summer of 2023 to Washington, D.C. My internship dates ran from May 22nd until July 31st, and each day provided a new, unique experience that I would not have otherwise been afforded.

My experiences with NCUSAR included attending a dinner and presentation for the Muslim World League, meeting high-ranking government officials from nations in the Middle East, being instructed in seminars by political leaders, and visiting the various museums that Washington has to offer to gain further insight into the history of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

IRUSA offered different, but equally important experiences that helped me develop my leadership abilities and further my professional network. One such event was a social mixer I helped organize for interns all over DC, from Congress to nonprofits like ours. This provided me the ability to talk with people in a wide variety of careers and educational backgrounds, helping further my understanding of what I may want to do when my education is complete. My favorite memory from this summer would have to be touring the Library of Congress with NCUSAR, as it provided me a glimpse into how pivotal literature and media is to our understanding of the world around us.

**Anna Scott '24** is a Senior History and Politics major and minor from Jonesville, SC. After graduation, Anna plans to Continue my education at the University of Georgia to pursue a Master of Historic Preservation.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Mack Smith**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Mary Carlisle

**Organization/Business:** Artist Collective of Spartanburg

Over the summer of 2023, I was given the opportunity to complete an artist residence internship with artist Chuck Bishop at the Artist Collective of Spartanburg. Chuck Bishop is one of the founding members of the Artist Collective of Spartanburg and manages the community ceramics studio. Because of his many, many years of experience, I was able to learn about ceramics and managing a ceramics studio from Chuck.

One of the biggest skills that I learned throughout my internship was the foundations of working the potter's wheel. Each week, I worked one-on-one with Chuck to learn the basics of wheel throwing. Working one-on-one with my instructor allowed me to have a much more personalized experience of learning, allowing Chuck to give me hands-on help when needed. I was able to create a large variety of forms through this approach from cylinders, bowls, plates, and much more. Outside of the one-on-one instruction time Chuck and I had together, I was able to throw on my own, allowing me to become very comfortable with working with clay on my own.

Another area of focus I was able to work in was with glazes. After creating and firing each work I created, I was able to experiment with a different variety of glazes, both homemade recipes and store-bought glazes. Chuck and I also worked together to create a few different homemade glaze recipes from raw materials. Working with raw materials allowed me to understand the chemistry behind ceramic glazes and why certain glazes work better with others.

Along with working in the ceramics studio at the Artist Collective, I was able to attend Art-walk over the summer. Attending this event allowed me to interact with other artists and ceramicists, creating a network of artists.

Overall, working with Chuck Bishop at the Artists Collective of Spartanburg was an amazing experience and allowed me to learn a lot about the world of ceramics!

**Mack Smith '25** is a Junior Studio Art major and Art History minor from Landrum, SC. After graduation, Mack plans to work in Graphic Design and Marketing.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Chance Spicuzza**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Cathy Gowan

**Organization/Business:** Spartanburg Day School

My internships in the Spartanburg Day School were extremely helpful in answering questions I had plus giving me experience. The staff were all extremely helpful. For my experience in the Upper School I would do a multitude of things. There wasn't a specific role I was given or specific things that I would do. The most consistent thing was shadowing classes to learn more about the teaching profession. Something else I would do was learn about being an administrator, which at first, I thought was boring, but was probably the most memorable experience in the Upper School. Another thing that was significant was learning how teachers work and their process of going day to day, lesson to lesson.

The most hands-on experience in the Upper school I got was either when I would help out in Photography with being their model for exercises or when I helped grade French tests on directions. My second internship was in the Lower School in Extended Day. In Extended Day I was in charge of two classes of students—The Fireflies, which is a kindergarten class, and The Spiders, which is a mix of second and third graders. Within these I gained skills of maintaining attention, problem solving, confrontation, and communication skills. I would have to help The Spiders with homework and make sure that they were learning to build full sentences in their poetry. To The Fireflies I would read a book every day while they got their afternoon snack.

The most significant thing that happened is when I had to have a full conversation with a parent about their child's behavior whether it improved or they had some behavioral issues within the class. The conversation with the parent about a child's negative behavior was hard, but they were willing to work with me on trying to help their child.

**Chance Spicuzza '24** is a Senior Child and Family Studies major and English minor from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. After graduation, Chance plans to continue competing for Esports or look for job opportunities in Spartanburg or in Pittsburgh.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author:** Lara Toranzo

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Julie Jones

**Organization/Business:** Converse University, Athletic Department

My internship was with the Athletic Department at Converse University in the Athletic Training Room. In this space, we ensured athletes received appropriate treatment and support to fulfill their athletic careers in a healthy and supportive way.

This internship helped me to develop skills as a peer mentor, confidence in myself while working in larger groups of people, and especially contribute to inclusivity and culturally responsive practices in a diverse athletic community. I also had an opportunity to explore careers at the intersection of mental health and athletics, both of which I value. For example, I realized how sports affect athletes in their daily life, and that was an extremely interesting opportunity. I never thought how much sports could affect someone, and this internship really helped me to realize it can be a big part of every athlete's life.

I also had the chance to experience working as an Athletic Trainer while helping with treatments for student athletes ranging from electrotherapy to rehabilitative programs. For example, I got the chance to prepare athletes for their home games which included taping, massages, and previous stretches. I am grateful for this opportunity to be involved in this important community at Converse University.

**Lara Toranzo '25** is a Junior Psychology, Child and Family Studies major from Lima, Peru. After graduation, Lara will pursue a masters degree in Child Psychology with a focus on working with children with special needs.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Jemma Van Jaarsveldt**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Cathy Gowan

**Organization/Business:** Glow Lyric Theatre

Willkommen! Bienvenue! Welcome!

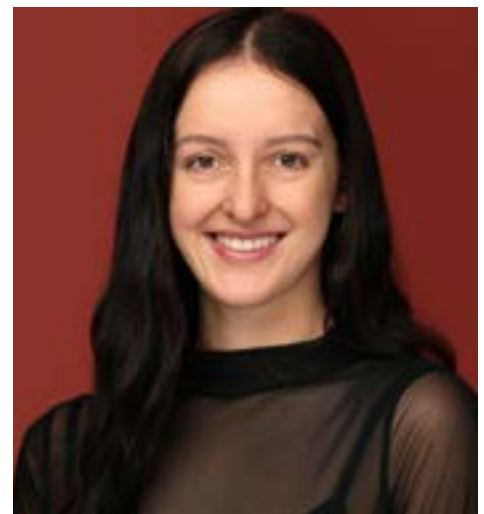
I'm cabaret, au cabaret, to cabaret!

From June 17 to August 6, 2023, I was an intern at Glow Lyric Theatre. During this time, I was cast as Frenchie/Rat in John Kander and Fred Ebb's Cabaret and given the responsibility of Dance Captain. As a musical theatre and dance major, this opportunity to perform in a professional theater was a dream come true!

I had the responsibility of learning the music, lines, and choreography for the show at our rehearsals, which were Tuesday-Sunday, 6:00-9:30 pm for 4.5 weeks. Once rehearsals were over and our show opened, it was my responsibility to perform! As Dance Captain, I was responsible for learning everyone's choreography so that when someone forgot something, I could assist them. I also worked closely with the choreographer, Allison Roux, in creating choreography and testing lifts so we could safely teach it to others. When the show opened and Allison was no longer available to assist the dancers, I took over the role of rehearsing choreography. Finally, my most important responsibility was running "Lift Call" before each show, which is practicing every lift in the choreography so everyone gets comfortable before doing it on stage.

Working on Cabaret this summer was an experience that allowed me to gain so many important skills needed in the professional theatre world, some being the ability to easily accept feedback, having awareness of my strengths and weaknesses, and being able to adapt to new environments and new ways of thinking. It also taught me new things about myself, like how I struggle to ask others for help when confused or how leadership requires more bravery than I thought. When working with the other theatre professionals, I felt out of place leading them as their dance captain. However, once stepping out of my comfort zone I stepped forward as a leader.

**Jemma Van Jaarsveldt '24** is a Senior Musical Theatre & Dance major from Betty's Bay, South Africa. After graduation, Jemma plans to pursue acting by audition and performing for theaters across America.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Breanna Weber**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Jerome Gomez

**Organization/Business:** SGA|NW (a GF Company)

I interned at SGA|NW in Greenville, SC for 3 months during the summer of 2023. SGA|NW (a GF Company) is an architecture/interior design firm that offers a spectrum of other design related services (such as landscape architecture, project managers, and specialists in planning).

During my time there, I helped work on commercial projects, did office maintenance, visited active sites, and assisted in furniture installs. I also participated in optional office bonding days, such as tubing down a river in Greenville and office lunches. Typically, once a week our office would have lunch and learn where representatives would come in, cater lunch, and inform us on their products and what they do. We also had specific material reps come in and show us new product lines in addition to this, which was exciting to see what was new and what was popular.

This internship gave me a great understanding of how offices work together in the real world and how cohesive a group should be when it comes to projects. This internship also helped my confidence in talking to people I am unfamiliar with. I also continued to improve my skills in programs we use at Converse along with some new programs including Bluebook.

I learned that commercial projects can still have fun and personal elements, which was a personal concern I had between commercial and residential design. This internship also showed me that I would enjoy working in a firm where other design types work as well (such as architecture, landscape architecture, and project managers) rather than strictly an interior design firm.

**Breanna Weber '24** is a Senior Interior Design major from Duncan, SC. After graduation, Breanna plans to get a job in Greenville related to Design.





# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Jennings Whitt**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Mary Carlisle

**Organization/Business:** Women's Caucus for Art Carolinas

Being an intern with the WCAC over the summer of 2023 I was offered so much helpful experience and insight to the world of arts administration. Working as a social media intern and keeping up with social media accounts like Facebook and Instagram enhanced my creativity skills. This internship improved my communication and technology skills within a professional environment. This experience familiarized me with the management of non-profit organizations and the art world. By holding interviews and gathering data about other non-profits within the Carolinas and having conversations with members, I formed more connections and widened my network professionally. I also gained more experience with teamwork while communicating with many different people within the organization and collaborating and working ideas for things such as social media, art exhibitions, and finding locations to hold exhibitions or put on events. Such an experience helped me understand the professional side of running nonprofits as well as see all of the behind-the-scenes inner workings that I may not have considered before.

This internship helped me develop many professional skills and refine them by working in an environment surrounded by people who wanted me to succeed and have a good experience. During my time at my internship my supervisor, Andy Steele, and faculty advisor, Mary Carlisle, were always available and helpful when I had questions or concerns.

**Jennings Whitt '24** is a Senior Studio Art BFA major and Arts Management and Art History minor from Waxhaw, NC. After graduation, Jennings plans to enter a job within the art world.



# INTERNSHIPS

**Author: Krystal Wilson**

**Converse Internship Mentor:** Dr. Julie Jones

**Organization/Business:** Hearts of Clay

Hearts of Clay is a special art studio that helps both children and adults learn how to make glass ornaments and pieces of art of pottery. Their goal is to offer imaginative play and allow kids to work on their creativity.

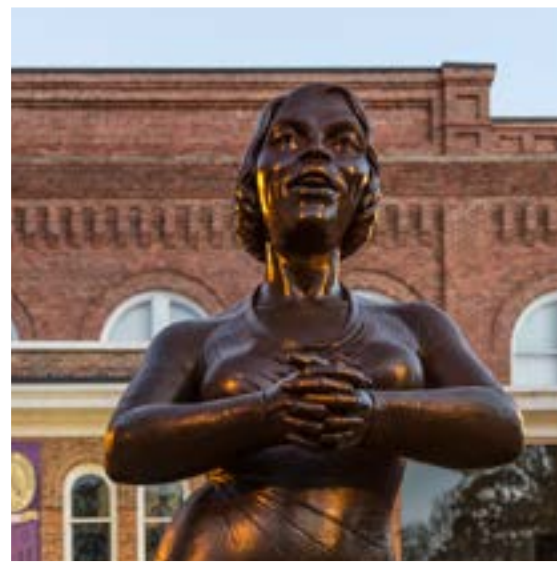
My role there is to help organize anything that is out of place. Regarding the skills that I am hoping to develop, I want to gain the skill of listening more and offering advice to people who are struggling with their work. I think that this internship is tied to my major because it is helping me gain experience in the mind of a child who is artistic in nature. I am enjoying my time over there and work with some amazing people.

My boss, Tamara is nice and is letting me share in the fun by giving me some coffee mugs to paint. She and her husband have two nieces named Mara and McKenna who are my age, and they treat me well. They also have a twenty-four-year-old cousin named Aleyah who helps out on the weekends. They each have special duties. For example, Mara is in charge of setting the clay pieces on the table for the kids to decorate while McKenna bakes them in the oven when they are finished. Aleyah is in charge of writing down the tickets for the parents that come in. However, my favorite person there is Tamara's husband, Jay. I find him to be funny and not afraid to poke fun at himself. He is always making me laugh and I am learning from him about not taking myself too seriously and letting loose once in a while. Overall, I think that this internship will be an interesting experience.

**Krystal Wilson '24** is a Senior Child and Family Studies major and English minor from Duncan, SC. After graduation, Krystal plans to get a masters degree in Child and Family Studies. Krystal hopes to get a full- or part-time position at Hearts of Clay helping out special needs children with their art projects.



# PERFORMING ARTS



# DANCE: Original Choreography

**Choreographers:** Rylie Budnick and Zoi Palmquist

**Faculty Advisor:** Allison Roux

**Title of Piece:** *Girlhood*

Rylie Budnick and Zoi Palmquist collaborate in the emotionally charged dance duet, “Girlhood,” a powerful exploration of abuse in relationships. Taylor Swift’s song, “Would’ve, Could’ve, Should’ve” reflects when Swift was nineteen years old and in a relationship with an influential musician who was over a decade older than her. Despite the relationship taking place ten years before the writing of the song, Swift narrates how the relationship still affects her to this day because of the imbalance in their power dynamic and how he used it against her. Through their artistry, Budnick and Palmquist shine a light on the uncomfortable realities of abusive relationships like the one Taylor Swift wrote about, offering a voice to those affected. “Girlhood” is a raw and moving portrayal, drawing audiences into the complexities of human connection and the strength found in vulnerability. The two drew from personal experiences and turned them into art. Dance has always been an outlet for both dancers and they want viewers and audiences to carry the messages conveyed with them in their hearts.

Art is healing, and that is exactly what this piece means to be. Budnick and Palmquist want everyone to know they are the creators of their own stories and paths to healing. The dance serves as a beacon of awareness. Rooted in powerful symbolism, “Girlhood” captivates audiences with its emotional depth and social commentary.



**WATCH THE  
PERFORMANCE**



**Rylie Budnick '26** is a Sophomore Business Administration with a concentration in Human Resources and Dance double major from Duncan, SC. Rylie does not currently have any particular plans for after college.

**Zoi Palmquist '27** is a Freshman Politics and Dance double major and Theatre minor from Indianapolis, Indiana. After graduation, Zoi plans to pursue either a masters or a doctorate.



# DANCE: Original Choreography

**Choreographer:** Mercedes Elliott

**Faculty Advisor:** Allison Roux

**Title of Piece:** *Stuck in Repeat*

The piece is called “Stuck in Repeat” and is choreographed and performed by Mercedes Elliott. There is no musical accompaniment to the dance. “Stuck in Repeat” was created during a dance composition class in February of 2024. In class we were to come up with these core phrases in which we had to hit twelve different goals. For example, we had to incorporate different levels in the dance—an aerial movement, a falling movement, a traveling section, etc. We worked on these core phrases for a couple of days and then when we had them solidified we started to add manipulations to them. For our chore phrases, we used about twelve manipulations and changed our pieces in almost every class. Sometimes we could see where someone got the movement from their original phrase and other times it looked completely different. When we were finished with the unit I decided to use it for the RISE Symposium. I took my favorite editions that I made to my chore phrase and put them together to make “Stuck in Repeat”. In class, my classmates commented that my piece looked as if someone was stuck. It was as if they kept trying to go forward but were being dragged back every time they made a step forward. I liked this image and decided to further it in my making of the dance.

I wanted to represent what it is like to be stuck inside your mind. You want to go forward and gain achievements for yourself, but your anxiety is holding you back. Eventually, though, you break free from this toxic mindset and set yourself free to go your own way, but the anxiety is still lurking in your mind, and it still holds a part of you.



**WATCH THE  
PERFORMANCE**

**Mercedes Elliott '27** is a Junior Creative and Professional Writing and English major and ASL and Dance minor from Roebuck, SC. After graduation, Mercedes plans on working in the publication or marketing industries. Mercedes also hopes to publish a novel or novella



# DANCE: Original Choreography

**Choreographer:** Eliza McManus

**Faculty Advisor:** Allison Roux

**Title of Piece:** *Solo*

This solo is set to the song “End of Beginning” by the artist Djo. The song speaks about a feeling that comes back to you when returning to a familiar place. The choreography I’ve created makes a point to resemble this nostalgic feeling. The dance switches between movements that are fast and sharp, and slow and fluid. This switch represents not only going in and out of the feeling of nostalgia when you leave and come back to the familiar place, but also how this feeling can often be conflicting or troubling.

My process when creating this piece was to start by improvising to the song to identify what came naturally to me. After improvising, I took out moves that stuck out to me, and that I felt worked with both the music and the message. I took into consideration different elements of the music by trying to utilize the lyrics of the song, the different beats in the music, the tempo, and the melody. I also played into the tone of the singer’s voice. When his voice sounds more intense I match that in my choreography with a movement that builds on the intensity. I hope that you enjoy my piece!



**WATCH THE  
PERFORMANCE**

**Eliza McManus '25** is a Junior Child & Family Studies and Dance double major and Psychology minor from Prosperity, SC. After graduation, Eliza hopes to become a dance teacher to share her love of dance with the next generation. Her goal is to educate young dancers and provide a safe space for them to express their creativity.



# DANCE: Original Choreography

**Choreographers:** Jemma Van Jaarsveldt

**Faculty Advisor:** Allison Roux

**Title of Piece:** *The Lines We Cross*

*The Lines We Cross* is a piece I created to reflect on the experiences of war. Humanity has always been violent; it is in our nature. We take, destroy, and hurt each other just as easily as we love and care for each other. This is why war is and always will be necessary, as someone will always choose violence and violence will be needed to stop that violence. It is easy for peacetime nations to sit and comment on the atrocities of war happening around the world, but we are no different than they are as we when “fueled with the terror of becoming prey, [...] quickly become predator” (*The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*). However, there is hope that by acknowledging this part of ourselves, we can make the conscious decision not to cross that line.

Until humanity can acknowledge how easily we act on the violence within ourselves and still choose peace, the tales of war I have shared in my piece, from soldiers to refugees to families, will continue to be told and experienced for generations to come.



**WATCH THE  
PERFORMANCE**

**Jemma Van Jaarsveldt '24** is a Senior Musical Theatre & Dance major from Betty's Bay, South Africa. After graduation, Jemma plans to pursue acting by audition and performing for theaters across America.



# DANCE PERFORMANCE

**Performer:** Ayrine Munguia Herrera

**Faculty Advisor:** Allison Roux

**Choreography:** Ha Soon Mi, G.NI Dance Company

**Music:** *Till Dawn* by ZAYN ft. Sia (2017)

The song I am dancing to is “Dusk Till Dawn” (ZAYN ft. Sia). This choreography was produced by Ha Soon Mi from the G.NI Dance Company based in Seoul, South Korea. I had the amazing opportunity to work with Soon Mi in Atlanta and learned so much from her! I learned several points from the Korean dance technique. She taught me that the technique mainly focused on a variety of raw, genuine emotions. The dance movements grow from breathing, regulated according to the tempo of the music. The series of movements follow a staccato-legato quality, alternating between tension and relaxation. I enjoy learning about the different techniques of dancing and how that’s different in every choreographer. The process of selecting this song was quite simple: Soon Mi loves the piano and loved the words from this song.

We listened to the song several times before she choreographed something to it. Something came out of nothing. That phrase is what I think best represents this choreography and why I love it. This song and piece to me feel like affection and love without speaking it. I hope my audience can relate to this somehow and think of a lovely memory. Thank you!



**WATCH THE  
PERFORMANCE**

**Ayrine Munguia Herrera '26** is a Sophomore Musical Theatre and Dance major and Arts Administration minor from Greenville, SC. After graduation, Ayrine plans on moving to New York to start a career. In the process, Ayrine will also be working towards opening a theatre company.





# DANCE PERFORMANCE

**Performer:** Emmalee Nutter  
**Faculty Advisor:** Allison Roux  
**Choreography:** Ryan Kirby  
**Music:** *Hero* by Regina Spektor (2006)

This piece was my high school senior year solo. The genre of this piece is contemporary. It was choreographed by Ryan Kirby and was performed at many competitions throughout my senior year. One of these competitions was Star Talent, and at their nationals, I won National Division Champion with this solo! It placed with high adjudications throughout the year, and placed in overalls every competition, which was my goal for the year because I had never placed overall throughout my career. I am incredibly pleased that I was able to meet my goal. The meaning of this piece is finding peace in being your own person and living your own life. It is about overcoming the anxiety of needing help throughout your life, and, as the song states repetitively, “I’m the hero of the story, don’t need to be saved.”

It is an emotional piece and has been my favorite performance so far in my dance career. I feel the meaning behind it made it “easier” to perform due to the personal connection I had at that time in my life, and I feel I was able to captivate the emotion behind it to perform it better. The video I am submitting for this performance was taken at Star Talent Nationals.



**WATCH THE  
PERFORMANCE**

**Emmalee Nutter '27** is a Freshman Business Administration and Dance major from Taylors, SC. After graduation, Emmalee plans to open her own dance studio.



# MUSICAL PERFORMANCE: Undergraduate

**Musician:** Claire Cathey

**Faculty Advisor:** Dean Chris Vaneman

**Title of Piece:** *Fish Are Jumping* by Robert Dick (1999)

Robert Dick's "Fish are Jumping", written in 1999, was titled based on lyrics from "Summertime" in George Gershwin's opera *Porgy and Bess*. The title provides imagery for this playful piece, written to mimic fish jumping in a summertime pond. The composition is organized based on the twelve-bar blues using glissandi (sliding up or down scales), multiphonics (playing two pitches simultaneously), and other extended techniques. An example of this is the frequent gliss from Ab to A, decorating the third of the F scale by flattening it—often called the "blue note". This piece incorporates drastic tonal and dynamic changes to enhance the spirited mood. For example, there is a *sotto voce* section, meaning "quietly, as if not to be overheard" and an improvised cadenza literally marked "Go wild!" near the end of the piece.

Robert Dick is widely considered to be the "Jimi Hendrix of the flute". He took inspiration largely from the sound of electric guitar, which can be mimicked on flute using harmonics and sliding one's fingers across the key holes. In this piece, Dick combines virtuosity found in classical music and an affection for jazz and blues to create a well-rounded blend of sounds often unheard of in classical training.

**Claire Cathey '26** is a Sophomore Flute Performance major and Arts Administration minor from Mt Pleasant, SC. After graduation, Claire plans to be a professional orchestral flute player.



# MUSICAL PERFORMANCE: Undergraduate

**Musician:** N. Simon Mishler

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Valerie MacPhail

**Title of Piece:** *Warm as the Autumn Light* by Douglas Moore (1956)

“Warm as the Autumn Light” is a captivating aria from the American opera “Ballad of Baby Doe” composed by Douglas Moore. Set in the backdrop of the Colorado mining boom in the late 19th century, the opera tells the compelling story of Elizabeth “Baby” Doe Tabor, a woman caught in a love triangle with Horace Tabor and Augusta Tabor. This aria, sung by Horace, serves as a poignant moment of reflection and longing within the opera’s narrative.

The aria opens with a gentle and melancholic melody. The beautiful musical lines reflect the emotional depth of Horace’s feelings as he expresses his yearning for a love that has faded away. The singer is challenged to convey both strength and genuine vulnerability.

The accompaniment in “Warm as the Autumn Light” is rich and evocative, and plays a vital role in painting the landscape that Horace Tabor is reminiscing on. The musical colors mirror the changing seasons, providing vivid imagery for Horace’s expressive delivery. The interplay between the soloist and the accompaniment is seamless, enhancing the emotional impact of the aria.

Lyricaly, this piece delves into the complexities of love, loss, and the passage of time. The poetry romanticizes the warm hues of autumn, symbolizing the fleeting nature of love and the inevitability of change. The bittersweet lyrics invite the audience to reflect on the universal themes of love’s transience and the longing for what once was.

Douglas Moore’s composition brilliantly combines elements of American folk music with traditional operatic techniques, creating a unique and captivating musical experience. “Warm as the Autumn Light” stands as a showpiece within the opera, and is a paramount example of how music can and should be used to convey deep emotion.

**N. Simon Mishler '24** is a Senior majoring in Music in Voice Performance from Spartanburg, SC. After graduating, Simon plans to advocate for arts and education within the community, while working in fundraising and development in hopes of giving artists the means and opportunity to create.



# MUSICAL PERFORMANCE: Undergraduate

**Musician:** Aidan O'Donnell

**Faculty Advisor:** Steven Graff

**Title of Piece:** *Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 21 in C major, Op. 53 movement 1*  
by Ludwig van Beethoven (1804)

Beethoven's sonata in C major, most commonly known as the Waldstein sonata, is one of the most beloved works of the famous composer. Comprised of three movements, this sonata uses a variety of forms that easily capture the well-known qualities Beethoven puts into his music. Today, I will be presenting the first movement of this work. I came across it long ago when I was still in high school, recognizing the beauty of the piece, but I hadn't yet considered learning it. It was not until my sophomore year here at Converse that I fell in love with the work. In my fourth music theory class with Dr. Scott Robbins titled Form and Analysis, we used this piece to study the form known as sonata form. The form consists of three main sections known as the exposition, development, and the recapitulation. In the exposition, we are introduced to the main theme which is then built upon with different ideas in the development and then restated in the recapitulation.

The time I spent studying this piece for that class really lead me to appreciate the complexity of the structure Beethoven put into its creation. I look forward to sharing this work with you, and I hope you leave today with the same love for this piece that I have.

**Aidan O'Donnell '25** is a Junior BA Music major and Chemistry minor from Spartanburg, SC. After graduation, Aidan plans to attend medical school.



# MUSICAL PERFORMANCE: Undergraduate

**Musician:** Santino Xavier

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Arthur “Art” Haecker

**Title of Piece:** *Concertino in Eb, Op.4 for Trombone and Orchestra, Movements 1&2* by Ferdinand David (1837)

Ferdinand David was a German violinist and composer who wrote a number of solo pieces for a variety of instruments. One of those pieces was his Concertino for Trombone and Orchestra, Opus 4, written in 1837 and dedicated to his friend Karl Traugott Queisser. Rumor has it that Queisser had asked the conductor of the orchestra he played in, Felix Mendelssohn, to compose a trombone concerto, but Mendelssohn claimed he simply did not have the time. Hearing about this, David volunteered to transform one of his unfinished violin concertos into a trombone concerto. The concertino has 3 movements: I. Allegro Maestoso, II. Marcia Funebre, and III. Allegro Maestoso. The first movement has triplet and 16th note runs, with much phrasing throughout; it's a grand opening for the piece. The second movement is much more somber. Having modulated into a minor key, this movement presents similar to a funeral march. Coincidentally, this movement was played at David's funeral. The last movement is very much like the first movement but is varied in that it is more complicated than the first movement. The ending is just as, if not more grand than the first movements'.

The concertino was premiered with the Gewandhaus Orchestra, with Queisser as the soloist and Mendelssohn as the conductor. The concerto was not only accepted but became a staple of trombone repertoire both in Germany and the rest of the world.

**Santino Xavier '26** is a Sophomore Music Education major from Boiling Springs, SC. After graduation, Santino plans to teach in the public school system.



# MUSICAL PERFORMANCE: Graduate

**Musician: Catherine Black**

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Steven Graff

**Title of Piece:** *Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op.16: I.*  
*Allegro molto moderato* by Edvard Grieg (1868)

Edvard Grieg (1843 - 1907) was a Norwegian pianist. A leading composer of the Romantic Era, he wrote his Piano Concerto in A Minor at only 24 years of age. In addition to being influenced by earlier composers, Grieg took inspiration from Norwegian folk music and dance. Music that was composed in the Romantic Era is known for expressing strong emotions and painting vivid pictures through a wide range of dynamics, rubato, and vibrant instrumentation. This concerto is no exception—the first movement opens with a dramatic timpani roll and chords falling across the span of the keyboard, which then develops into a piece where the piano and orchestra take turns with the themes. The second movement is remarkably similar to a romantic movie soundtrack, followed by the third movement which explodes into a wild dance with a lyrical theme sandwiched in the middle. This form is typical of the romantic concerto—in fact, the Piano Concerto by Grieg is a staple of piano literature.

Despite being well received immediately following publication, this piano concerto was the first and last one Grieg ever completed. Other composers held Grieg in high esteem, especially contemporaries such as Liszt, Tchaikovsky, and Brahms as well as composers from later generations such as Ravel. He remains an iconic composer today.

**Catherine Black '24** is a Master in Piano Performance student from Lexington, SC. After graduation, Catherine plans to work as a solo and collaborative pianist in South Carolina.



# MUSICAL PERFORMANCE: Graduate

**Musician:** Gryphen Blackwell

**Faculty Advisor:** John Holloway

**Title of Piece:** *New Kid* by Anna Baadsvik (2014)

“New Kid” by Anna Baadsvik is an emotional, yet exhilarating piece for the tuba, originally composed for Øystein Baadsvik, one of the most influential tuba soloists of the twentieth century. Anna Baadsvik is a gifted musician and composer, having composed her first work for solo piano at the age of five. Anna Baadsvik has also composed many other pieces for the Tuba/Euphonium community helping our small, yet special repertoire list grow bigger piece by piece. “New Kid” guides the listener from a depressed and emotionless feeling to an exciting and upbeat feeling. “New Kid” features a wide range of sound for the tuba and is a joy to listen to as the music takes the listener from the lowest notes, all the way to the highest all while maintaining clarity, lyricism, and technicality.

From my point of view, “New Kid” has a strong connection to a river and to the associations that it can give. Sometimes the river is powerful or sparkling and beautiful, sometimes bright and playful, and other times dark and quiet, but it never stops. Everything and everyone in it will always continue to pass through, and finally be swept away and forgotten. New life and clear water to come.

**Gryphen Blackwell '25** is a Master in Music Education student from Syracuse, NY. After graduation, Gryphen plans to work in the South Carolina public education system.



# MUSICAL PERFORMANCE: Graduate

**Musician: Sommerset Sewell**

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Valerie MacPhail

**Title of Piece:** *La Danse* by Pauline Viardot (1848); *Romance* and *Les Cloches* by Claude Debussy (1891)

The first piece I will be performing is *La Danse* composed by Pauline Viardot. She was born into a very musical family and had a long and successful career as a performer. Because of her close friendship with Chopin, she made several of his Mazurkas into songs. In this set of Mazurkas, where *La Danse* comes from, Viardot has adopted Chopin's original melody and supplemented it with her own motivic ornamentation. Additionally, she interspersed individual sections of the mazurkas with her own improvised cadenzas. *La Danse* is charming, playful and fun and embraces the story of going to a ball, dancing, and having a good time.

The last two pieces I will be performing are by French composer Claude Debussy. Unlike Viardot, his family was poor and had no interest in music. He started taking piano lessons at the age of 7, and at only 10 years old, he entered the Paris Conservatory. He was also one of the more prominent figures working within the field of impressionist music.

*Romance* is the first piece in the song set *Deux Romances*. It is based on a poem written by French poet Paul Bourget. *Romance* features a lilting melody with an impressive and elegant accompaniment. This piece follows a heartbroken woman as she is questioning why her lover has left her. This is a very somber yet beautiful piece.

*Les Cloches* begins with a brief piano introduction that mimics the sound of ringing bells. The idea of ringing bells is sown throughout the entire piano accompaniment. *Les Cloches* has a melancholy yet peaceful melody that really sets the backdrop for this poem that recalls memory.

**Sommerset Sewell '24** is a Master MM Performance student from Spartanburg, SC. After graduation, Sommerset will be teaching voice and piano privately at Studio Green in Spartanburg and then hopes to make her own studio business.





# MUSICAL PERFORMANCE: Graduate

**Musician:** Adriana Stamile

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Courtney Elise LeBauer

**Title of Piece:** *Barber Violin Concerto: Andante, Presto in moto perpetuo* by Samuel Barber (1939)

I will be playing 2 out of the 3 movements of Samuel Barber's Concerto Op. 14 for Violin and Orchestra. The first two movements of this concerto are lyrical and expansive, full of suspended energy. The last movement bursts into flames with a perpetual motion of never-ending triplets. Samuel Barber was commissioned to write this violin concerto for Iso Braselli, a graduate of Curtis Institute. He began work on it in 1939. Soon, he had the first two movements completed and gave them to Braselli. Braselli was disgruntled and complained that they were not virtuosic nor dramatic enough for a violin concerto. So, Barber set to work on the last movement—a measly 4 minutes, but full of fire. He wrote a moto perpetuo that consisted almost entirely of triplets. Braselli again was not satisfied and this time told Barber that it was unviolinistic, unplayable, and did not sit well with the other movements. Some stories say that he sued Barber for such terrible “unplayable” work. However, another violinist showed up and played it in court, proving that it was in fact playable, and he lost the case. He requested that Barber rewrite it, but Barber refused to change what he already considered to be perfectly fine the way it was.

Braselli chose to play the Dvořák Violin Concerto instead at what was supposed to be the premiere. Barber's Concerto was premiered instead by Albert Spalding. Enjoy this American concerto, a delight to play and listen to. Be enchanted first by a graceful, early movement with long lines, suspensions, and cadenzas with underlying intensity before the last movement arrives with the never-ending line of sizzling triplets. Enjoy the flames!

**Adriana Stamile '25** is a Master MM in Violin Performance student from Roebuck, SC. After graduation, Adriana has a goal of pursuing a doctorate degree in music.



# THEATRE PERFORMANCE

**Performer:** Serger Jimenez Sanchez

**Faculty Advisor:** Jenna Elser

**Title of Piece:** *Quien Soy? (Who am I?): BIOinstallation*

I am a Theatre artist focusing on Hispanic and Latino playwrights. I direct and act in plays where the characters represent me and my community. As a theater artist, I believe diversity and representation are important when practicing this art. Theater for many is a safe space for people of different backgrounds and has created an impact on human society for many centuries. As a person of Hispanic descent, it is important to lead by example and avoid stereotypes that provoke hate towards people of my background, while also addressing and confronting the issues we faced in the past and still face today. I believe theater artists are storytellers, and as storytellers, it is our job to speak for those who want to be heard and nurture the human spirit by creating a welcoming and open environment for all. Theater is not just meant for one person. It's meant for everyone. I take my inspiration from the stories told by families and the experiences they've lived, and also from the work of Hispanic/Latino playwrights whose work was a reflection of what they were living through. I wanted to shed light on the racial tension between the countries that form my identity and create an understanding between both sides through looking back at the past so we can understand the present and look towards the future.

This piece will cover the topic of identity and how it formed me into the person I am today. Growing up in an environment where my heritage was suppressed, I was forced to create two different lives and separate what goes on at home and school. After studying abroad a semester in Costa Rica, my view of my identity changed.



**WATCH THE  
PERFORMANCE**

**Serger Jimenez Sanchez '25** is a Junior Musical Theater and Hispanic Studies major from Greenville, SC. After graduation, Serger plans on working in theatre or at a Hispanic organization..



# THEATRE PERFORMANCE

**Performer:** JaPrincess Jones

**Faculty Advisor:** Jenna Elser

**Title of Piece:** “Lifeboat” from the musical *Heathers*

The piece that I will be performing is from the musical, *Heathers*. I am performing the song “Lifeboat” that is originally sung by the character Heather McNamara. This is a big turning point for McNamara’s character. Immediately before this, McNamara confessed her suicidal thoughts to the crowd of students, and Heather Duke ordered her to stay in line. In the song, she explains how she hates the cutthroat nature of the school just as much as the people on the bottom of the food chain, and that she lives in fear of being ostracized because she is the most timid of the popular crowd. She uses a lifeboat on a stormy sea as a metaphor for being in the popular crowd at Westerburg. Heather sings this song after three of her friends “commit suicide”. She is being very vulnerable in front of her entire school talking about how it seems that her high school life is not staying as perfect as she wants it to be.

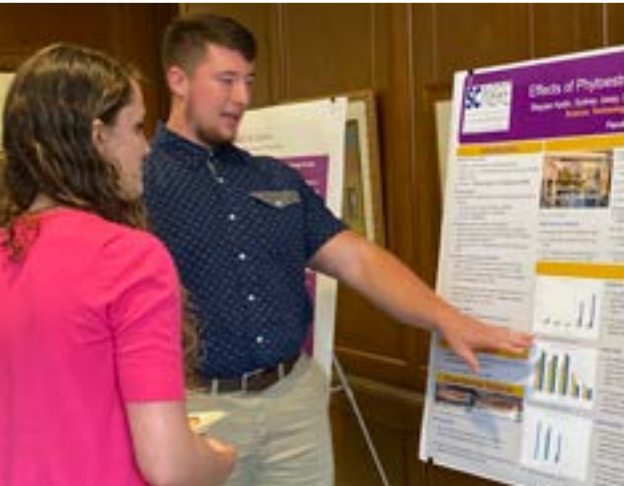
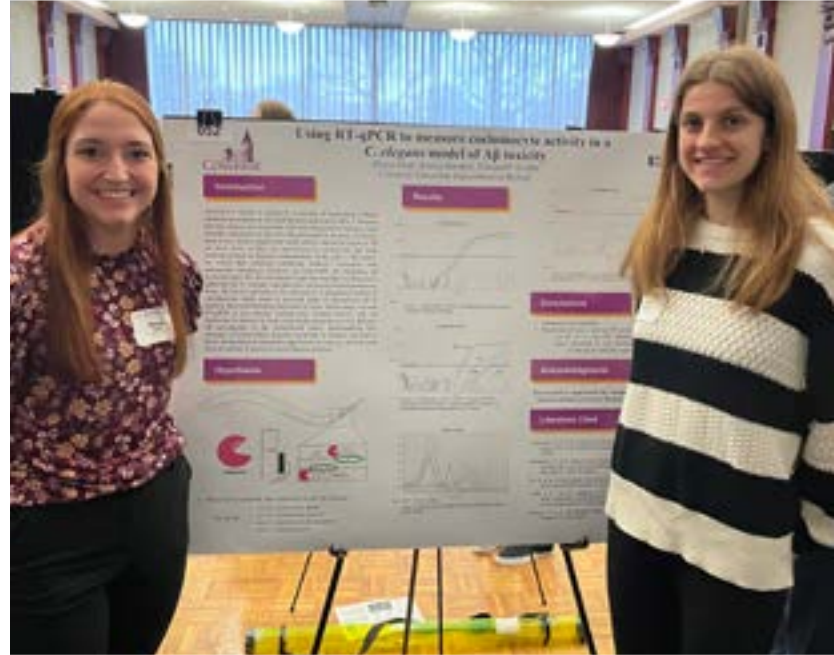


**WATCH THE  
PERFORMANCE**

**JaPrincess Jones '27** is a Freshman Musical Theater and Dance major from Anderson, SC. After graduation, JaPrincess plans to go to either Georgia or Canada to start an acting career.



# 2024 RESEARCH SUBMISSIONS



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## Model NATO Conference Research

**Researchers:** Andreas Barker and Kaylee Warner

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Joe Dunn

The military alliance, NATO, was founded in 1949 in response to the events of the preceding World War with the hopes of deterring future aggression from malicious nations. The introduction of weapons of mass destruction to the military arsenals of the United States and the U.S.S.R. caused the alliance to focus heavily on building a defensive line against potential nuclear aggression. While the alliance was founded with the intent to protect those select western powers that combined forces in the second world war, the issues that they deal with now affect a broader amalgamation of sovereign countries.

We were able to witness the broad-sweeping nature of NATO firsthand whilst debating on the behalf of Portugal in the ESC (Emerging Security Challenges) committee in Washington D.C. An example of the far-reaching scope of the treaty organization was through the topic of energy security we debated at the convention. We introduced a clause to the draft that was designed to gradually reduce dependency on fossil fuels. We argued that Russia's halting of pipelines that were previously used to export valuable fossil fuels into Western Europe, has brought the fragility of NATO's energy infrastructure to light in a way that has never been seen before. To shift away from reliance on Russian and other exterior energy resources, it is important for the alliance to work towards shifting the private sector towards clean energy such as Solar, Wind, Tidal, etc.

As a solution, we proposed the research and potential construction of fusion reactors on a NATO wide basis. With the recent breakthroughs in Fusion technology, we have been presented with a revolutionary new opportunity. Upon the conclusion of the weekend's debates, we were able to join our team in celebrating the well-deserved victories snagged by our teammates who were representing Bulgaria.



**Andreas Barker '25** is a Junior History major from Moore, SC. After graduation, Andreas plans to pursue a career in sales in the lumber industry.

**Kaylee Warner '27** is a Freshman History and Politics major and German Studies minor from Roebuck, SC. After graduation, Kaylee plans to attend law school.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## WiDS: HealthCare Inequities

**Researchers:** Maliah Barrett, Cameron McGahee, and Lara Toranzo

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Amanda Mangum

The class Datathon for Beginners (MTH 107.01) was hosted on a platform called Kaggle. Kaggle is a website that uploads various data sets with problems attached that participants must solve. For this WiDs competition, our goal was to determine which patients received a metastatic breast cancer diagnosis within 90 days. At first, our group was completely lost as we didn't have any experience but we quickly began to piece it all together when we created various visualizations to determine which of the factors provided within the dataset could influence the breast cancer diagnosis.

There were over 150 potential features so we couldn't visualize each one, because of this we used RFE (recursive feature elimination), a component of the logistic regression model. It is code that sifts through each of the features and determines which of them are influential in the diagnosis within 90 days. With this, we found 32 influential features. We created various models using these features, some as simple as a Decision tree and some as complicated as an ensemble that combines multiple models. Our final and most accurate model was an ensemble, it had an accuracy score of .759. At the beginning of the term when this class took place our first model was a decision tree that was scored to be .5 accurate.

We made significant progress by the end of the course. Not only did we learn how to use Python and Co-lab but we also learned how to create and train various models such as the decision tree classifier, logistic regression, and K nearest neighbors. We also learned how to split data sets into training and testing to properly create an accurate model and then test it. Further details will be discussed at a later date.

**Maliah Barrett '25** is a Junior Sports Management and English minor from Odenton, Maryland. After graduation, Maliah plans to coach competitive cheer and pursue a career in sports journalism.

**Cameron McGahee '24** is a dual Senior/Master Clinical Psychology major and History minor from Greenwood, SC. After graduation, Cameron plans to pursue a data science/analysis career.

**Lara Toranzo '25** is a Junior Psychology, Child and Family Studies major from Lima, Peru. After graduation, Lara will pursue a masters degree in Child Psychology with a focus on working with children with special needs.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## Soluble and Insoluble Amyloid-Beta in Relation to Alzheimer's Disease

**Researchers:** Grace Baum and Ashley Mazyck

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Edward Griffin

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is a progressive disorder that causes deterioration of the brain resulting in a loss of memory, thinking, learning and impaction of an individual's performance of daily tasks (Drachman 2014). Present in AD, there are soluble and insoluble forms of amyloid-beta protein that have an unclear relationship with neurodegeneration. It can be predicted that due to soluble oligomers of beta amyloid protein being the most toxic to glutamatergic neurons by internalization through endocytosis and formation of pores in the digestive compartments of the cell is the attribution for the accumulation of insoluble beta amyloid aggregates in the extracellular space.

Recent FDA drug approvals for treating AD by targeting insoluble amyloid plaques showed great success in smaller experimental studies of animals and humans, but when released to the public, the positive outcomes of treatment decreased significantly from the experimental groups before being released. Understanding the relationship between soluble amyloid-beta and AD could lead to a better treatment of progressive neurodegenerative diseases.

Though insoluble plaques and aggregates had long been considered the causative agents of disease in AD and Parkinson's disease, more recent evidence suggests that small soluble oligomers are the more toxic species of amyloidogenic proteins (Takahashi, 2002). Soluble oligomers of beta amyloid are hypothesized to be the most toxic to glutamatergic neurons, due to their ability to be internalized via endocytosis and form pores in the digestive compartments of the cell. This process contributes to the accumulation of insoluble beta amyloid aggregates in the extracellular space (Nilsson, 2013). However, it is unclear how this process occurs. It likely occurs through anterograde vesicular trafficking, mediated by components of the BORC protein complex and ARL-8 GTPase (Farias, 2017). We want to observe whether changes in anterograde trafficking alter soluble and insoluble species of beta amyloid.

**Grace Baum '25** is a Junior Biology major and Chemistry and Religion minor from Reading, PA. After graduation, Grace plans to pursue a PhD in biology and continue a career in research.

**Ashley Mazyck '25** is a Junior Biology major from Mt. Pleasant, SC. After graduation, Ashley plans to attend medical school to become a surgeon.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## Belle W. Baruch's Influence on Women's Rights

**Researcher:** Caroline Blair

**Research Advisors:** Allison Vick and Jeffrey Howard

Belle W. Baruch was the daughter of a well-known Wall Street broker named Bernard Baruch. However, Belle's life was full of extraordinary adventures because of her drive to prove that women should be equal to men within society. Throughout Belle's life, she would shatter glass ceilings in her efforts to prove her worth, which would help promote the cause of women's rights.

Belle would begin her efforts to advance women's roles by joining the American Red Cross and the Women's Radio Corps during World War I. Although Belle was unable to serve in the war, she did not waver in her support towards America's war efforts. She would continue her advancement of women's rights after World War I by becoming an active suffragist in the fight to gain the right to vote. In 1920, women would gain that right, which thrilled suffragists across the country, yet Belle's work on changing societal norms was not complete. With World War II on the brink of breaking out, Belle knew she needed to jump back into action, which included joining the Coastal Observer, sponsoring a submarine, and donating her planes to the U.S. Air Force, demonstrating yet again that women deserved a role within society that did not just consist of housework.

She was a determined young woman who used the time period during the World Wars to advance women's rights. Few women were able to stand up for the cause in the ways she did. To say that Belle was anything but extraordinary for her desire to change society would understate the influence of the work she performed on behalf of women.

**Caroline Blair '25** is a Junior History and Politics major from Penfield, New York. After graduation, Caroline plans to attend law school.





# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## Model NATO

**Researchers:** Caroline Blair and Jerome Harris

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Joe Dunn

In the International Model NATO (IMNATO), held in D.C, we researched the growing challenges in the international landscape and the importance of understanding the country's position. We were specifically part of the Partnerships committee, and we represented the delegation of Bulgaria and Portugal. The role of the Partnerships committee in IMNATO is to collaborate on the diplomatic relationships that NATO builds outside of their current members. During the 2024 annual IMNATO meeting we discussed two topics: 1. Our Taking forward cooperation with Asia-Pacific partners, and 2. Taking forward the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI).

The first topic displays NATO's commitment to help and collaborate with their Asia-Pacific partners. While in committee We drafted resolutions regarding which members of Asia-Pacific would be most beneficial to work with and how to deal with the emerging threats to NATO allies and members. Some of the barriers and challenges included the tension between NATO and China as an economic and physical force and increasing tension to Asia-Pacific allies if conflict arose on sovereignty or other matters.

In topic two we revised how we see our role as NATO in the MD and the ICI. This topic had much more tension within league members because members such as Turkey were vocal about the importance while other members simply did not find effective use in trying to extend the relations. Some of the topics discussed were: the importance of these initiatives, and if so, how could we expand into adding more countries; Immigration; and military exercises among many other topics that were discussed in great detail.

The research to actively play the role of NATO members took countless meetings beforehand. We learned the basics of researching and finding paths of communication with people who hold different viewpoints than the ones we present. "Compromise" was the word for this year's conference and made the committee productive and actively succeed.

**Caroline Blair '25** is a Junior History and Politics major from Penfield, New York. After graduation, Caroline plans to attend law school.

**Jerome Harris '25** is a Junior Politics major and Theater minor from Alexandria, Virginia. After graduation, Jerome plans to work in construction.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## Nuclear Planning Group: Portugal (Model Programs)

**Researchers:** Kendall “Sunny” Bostwick and Chelsea Palotta

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Joe Dunn

For the IMNATO Conference, or International Model NATO Conference, Chelsea Palotta, Steven Greer, and Sunny Bostwick researched Portugal (Palotta and Bostwick) and Bulgaria (Greer) following the topic guidelines of the NPG, or Nuclear Planning Group. Such guidelines included the research prompts of “Countering Proliferation” and “NATO Nuclear Burden Sharing”, which were mentioned as current issues regarding NATO’s nuclear policy within the 2023 Vilnius Summit declarations.

NATO’s long-standing nuclear policy states that as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world, NATO will be a nuclear alliance. In line with this core policy is NATO’s strong nuclear non-proliferation stance. Since NATO’s ultimate goal is to have a world without nuclear weapons, the alliance is opposed to the development of nuclear weapons both within and outside of the alliance. The alliance continues to work towards achieving diplomatic nuclear policies with global powers in order to reach this goal in the future.

NATO Nuclear Burden Sharing is an incredibly important topic as itself, but also in regards to NATO’s 2% GDP military spending goal, of which Portugal is behind on, while Bulgaria is nearing the goal of 2% in 2024. Burden sharing refers to each individual member country spending an allotted amount towards certain focuses. In this case, it would be what funded resources have gone towards nuclear modernization. Covering this topic, the students researched possible spending solutions for burden sharing, arrangements and agreements already in place, as well as various official NATO resources related to nuclear burden sharing.

**Kendall “Sunny” Bostwick ’26** is a Sophomore Studio Arts major and Creative Writing minor from Campobello, SC. After graduation, Kendall plans to apply to anthropological graduate programs.

**Chelsea Palotta ’26** is a Sophomore Politics major and Music minor from Simpsonville, SC. After graduation, Chelsea plans to pursue paralegal certification.

**Stephen Greer ’22** is a non-degree-seeking master Graduate Student from Spartanburg, SC. Steven plans to pursue further education.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## Effect of High Ambient Temperature on Appetite Regulation in Rats

**Researchers:** Josue Calvas-Santana and Alyssa Graf

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Mark Bohler

Exposure to high ambient temperatures has become increasingly prevalent around the globe, with detrimental effects being observed most often in agricultural species and humans. Short-term exposure to high ambient temperatures can lead to immunosuppression, reduced body weight, reproductive dysfunction, negative affect, and even death at extreme temperatures.

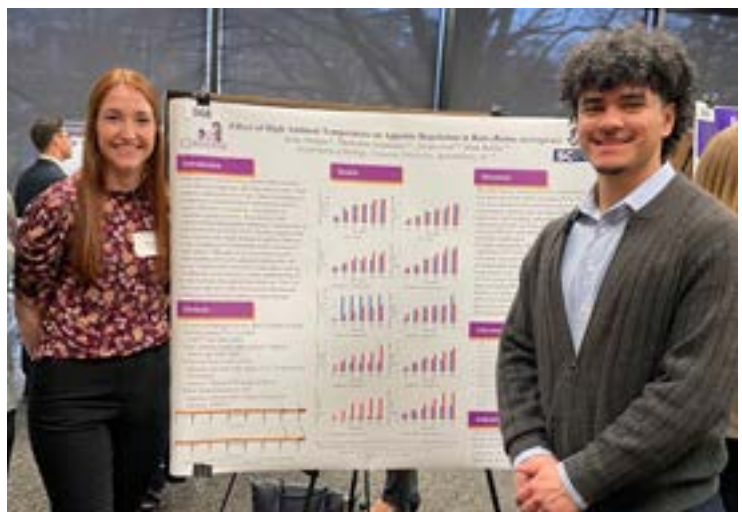
It is hypothesized that an overall reduction in food intake and increase in the stress response may be responsible for the aforementioned effects. Of all the species which experience thermal challenges, we best understand the neurocircuitry which detects and responds to temperature in rats. However, we only understand the mechanisms mediating physiological responses to heat, not behavioral.

In previous research studies, it has been shown that rats exposed to heat at 33°C entirely inhibited food intake. Also, female rats ate significantly more than males in the high ambient temperature of 33°C. In our research project, we wanted to expand on this previous literature and determine the effects that thermal challenges have on appetite behaviors in rats around 30°C and evaluate potential hypothalamic molecular mechanisms as these mechanisms may be the cause of decreased food intake in rats.

Due to some confounding variables, we had a few complications with evaluating our data but we were able to find a significant difference. Female rats exposed to high ambient temperatures increased in food consumption compared to males in the same environment. Once the results were evaluated, we have future plans for more experiments such as exposing the rats to three different high ambient temperatures 33°C, 36°C, 40°C (n=10/temperature).

**Josue Calvas-Santana '25** is a Junior Computer Science and Philosophy major and Data Science minor from Spartanburg, SC. After graduation, Josue plans to work in software development.

**Alyssa Graf '25** is a Junior Biochemistry & Psychology major from McHenry, IL. After graduation, Alyssa plans to attend medical school.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## The Effects of Adenosine on Temporal Perception in Laboratory Rats

**Researchers:** Chloe Cleland and Eseose Okoduwa

**Research Advisors:** Dr. Richard Keen and Dr. Neval Ertürk

Adenosine, a neurotransmitter found naturally in the brain, is associated with reduced arousal. Caffeine is an adenosine antagonist, meaning that it blocks adenosine from working. Temporal perception is how an individual experiences subjective time. Previous research has shown that caffeine has a clear effect in speeding up temporal perception, and that the A2A subtype receptor plays a larger role in temporal perception in rats than the other subtype receptors.

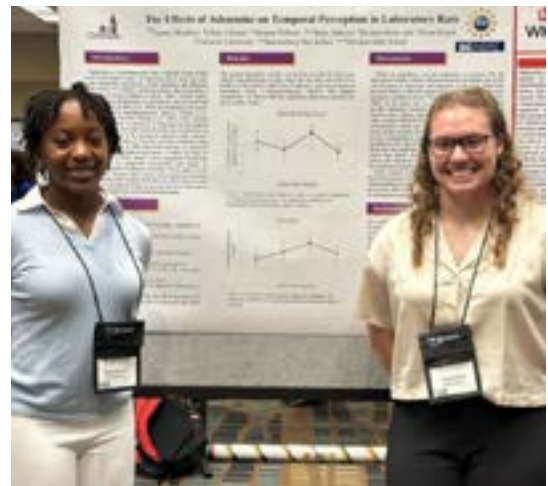
We hypothesized that an increased level of adenosine would slow down temporal perception. To test this hypothesis, researchers implemented the Stubbs timing procedure in operant chambers to teach the rats to differentiate between short and long light signals.

During the Testing phase, the rats were given IP injections of adenosine at different doses. Researchers did not find a significant change in temporal perception at any dose of adenosine. Although our hypothesis was not supported, we propose a novel mechanism to explain caffeine's effect on temporal perception. Dopamine is known to speed up temporal perception. In neural cells, the A2A receptor is often colocalized with the D2, receptor which can sometimes lead to their fusing, creating an inverse relationship on each other's effectiveness. We hypothesize that an increase in caffeine increases the effectiveness of the dopamine receptors (via inhibiting adenosine receptors), thus speeding up the temporal perception.

Future research on this topic should focus on testing at the receptor level to better understand this mechanism.

**Chloe Cleland '25** is a Junior Psychology, History, and Philosophy major and French and Women's Studies minor from Medina, OH. After graduation, Chloe plans to attend graduate school to earn a PhD in experimental psychology.

**Eseose Okoduwa '25** is a Junior Biology major from Columbia, SC. After graduation, Eseose plans to attend medical school.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## Community Waste Management

**Researcher:** Madeline Coleburn

**Research Advisor:** Douglas Jensen

Sustainability is a major concern in every industry today, as it becomes a more and more popular topic. It is especially important on a community level. One of the biggest aspects of how sustainability affects human health is how community waste management is handled. That can affect everything from the groundwater to the air quality, which can all be major factors in what affects human health on a day-to-day basis. I have conducted interviews at different facilities that handle community waste management and learned what current methods are being used to ensure safety and sustainability for the Spartanburg community, which can also provide a broader insight on the current systems on a national, and possibly even international level.

I have learned and analyzed the current methods in place and identified their benefits and drawbacks. I have also done additional research to determine whether or not the current methods can be adjusted with the resources that are available today, and what the costs and benefits of said change would be. With the research that is accessible today, there is not always an easy answer, but this research does propose potential experiments to conduct in order to further improve the current processes in place, even if that is done so one piece of information at a time.

**Madeline Coleburn '25** is a Junior BA- Biology major and Environmental Studies minor from Greer, SC. After graduation, Madeline plans to go to graduate school for environmental studies.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## Modeling Self-Assembly of DNA Nanostructures Resembling Bipartite Graphs

**Researchers:** Rosa Linda Cortez, Sofia Giraldo Jimenez, and Jordyn Rose

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Jessica Sorrells

The creation of nanostructures was created for targeting drugs to specific parts of the body instead of affecting the body as a whole. The bonding properties of DNA make it possible for star-shaped DNA molecules to self-assemble into various intricate nanostructures. These structures can be modeled as discrete graphs, and graph theory techniques can be applied to aid in the discovery of optimal design strategies for desired nanostructures resembling certain graphs.

Within the DNA self-assembly graph theoretical framework known as the flexible-tile model, previously known results include a variety of bipartite graphs, including cycle graphs, helm graphs, book graphs, gear graphs, and many more. We gather and compare previously published results for bipartite graph families to ascertain whether there are any trends among the bipartite graphs in this model. We also present new results for a few more bipartite graphs, which help to organize previously known data and new findings to facilitate the creation of future research.

Researchers working in the STEM field can use this to facilitate their work and expand their setup so that it will be simpler to present results in a lab setting, preventing and assisting in the production of waste and byproducts, which involves the development of novel drug forms.



**Rosa Linda Cortez '25** is a Junior Math major and Data Science minor from Inman, SC. After graduation, Rosa Linda plans to attend graduate school.

**Sofia Giraldo Jimenez '24** is a Senior Biochemistry major from the city of Medellín in Colombia. Sophia plans to Pursue a master's degree in engineering at Georgia Institute of Technology.



**Jordyn Rose '24** is a Senior Mathematics and Biochemistry major from Papillion, NE. After graduation, Jordyn plans to attend graduate school.

# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

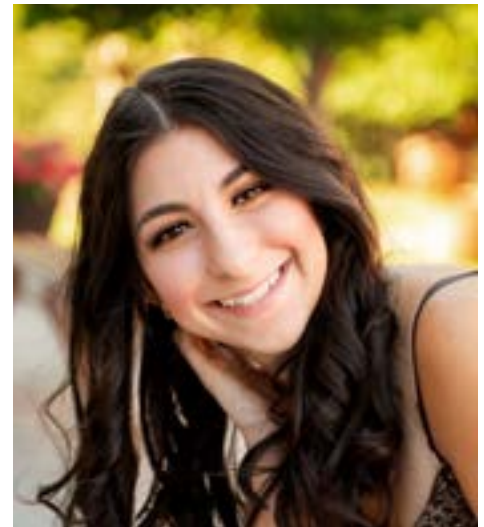
## IMModel NATO

**Researcher:** Ainsley Cua

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Joe Dunn

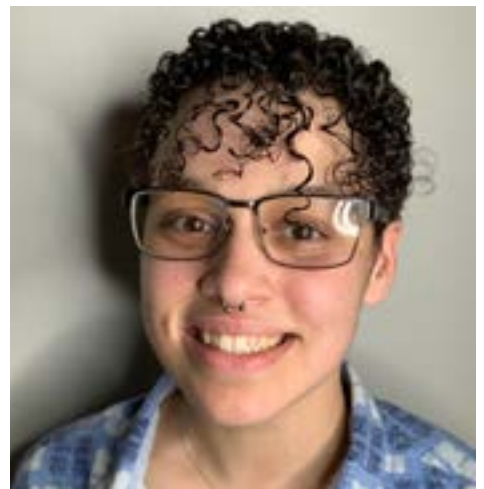
The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, commonly referred to as NATO, is a political and military alliance that formed shortly after World War II. It was founded by twelve nations in North America and Europe in response to the turbulent political nature of the world, much of which was caused by the increasing threat of the Soviet Union. Even though the Soviet Union no longer exists, NATO remains relevant. The Alliance has since expanded to 31 member nations. They are bonded together by their shared values of liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and remain committed to ensuring the safety and security of the alliance through deterrence and collective defense efforts. Russia poses the most immediate threat to the Alliance with the current war in Ukraine being so close to the Eastern European Allies.

Converse University participated in the 39th Annual International Model NATO, a simulation of a NATO summit. Students represent an assigned country on one of Model NATO's six committees, in which students participate in diplomatic debate of foreign policy through formal parliamentary procedure. The ultimate goal of the simulation is to write policy through draft resolutions, which must be passed through the consensus of the entire committee. This year, Converse represented Portugal and Bulgaria. On the Military Committee, Ainsley Cua and Tim Baerwalde represented Portugal, and S. Feser represented Bulgaria. The Military Committee is one of the two oldest committees, serving as the senior authority of military strategy and policy. This is one of the two most competitive committees in the simulation. This year, the three delegates debated the topics of Executing the Concept for the Deterrence and Defense of the Euro-Atlantic Area, Political and practical support for Ukraine, and Countering Cyber threats. Each were major contributors in debate and provided unique solutions to the draft resolutions.



**Ainsley Cua '26** is a Sophomore Biology and Math major from Anderson, SC. After graduation, Ainsley plans on getting a government job that deals with sustainable energy while furthering her education simultaneously.

**S. Feser '26** is a Master of Liberal Arts Candidate - Concentration in Political Science from Simpsonville, SC. After graduation, S hopes to obtain their Ph.D. in Political Science with a focus on Foreign Policy, and devote their career to serving their community and academia.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## Activity in a *C. elegans* model of AB toxicity

**Researchers:** Alyssa Graf and Jess Kochert

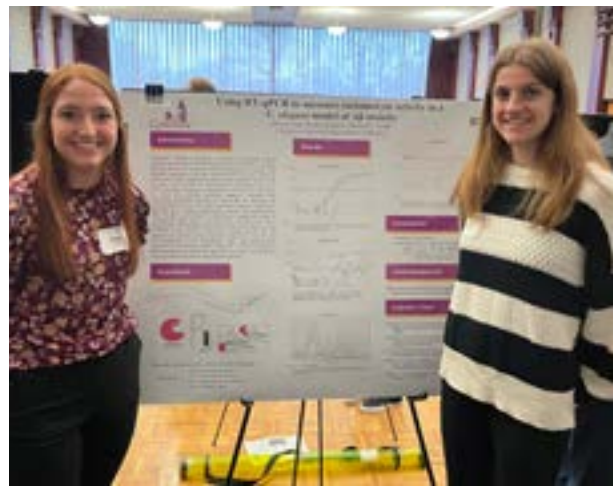
**Research Advisor:** Dr. Edward Griffin

Alzheimer's disease is caused by a cascade of homeostatic failures attributed principally to the small protein, amyloid- $\beta$  ( $A\beta$ )<sup>1,2</sup>. Because amyloid plaques are associated with neurodegenerative disease, large insoluble aggregates of  $A\beta$  were long presumed to be toxic. However, more recent studies suggest that small soluble oligomeric forms of  $A\beta$  are more toxic, as they are internalized by endocytosis and form perforating pores in digestive compartments of the cell<sup>1,3</sup>. Previously, we found that vesicular trafficking pathways associated with anterograde autophagic transport are responsible for mitigating  $A\beta$  proteotoxicity<sup>4</sup>. We also previously found that depletion of phagocytic capacities by *C. elegans* coelomocytes increased neurodegeneration.

Since  $A\beta$  can be internalized by endocytosis<sup>4</sup>, phagocytic failure of coelomocytes might result in elevated loads of internalized  $A\beta$  in neurons, thus overwhelming endosomal systems. In this study, we used RT-qPCR to test whether coelomocytes increase activity with  $A\beta$  expression in neurons to clear extracellular deposition of  $A\beta$ . Because  $A\beta$  accumulates in the extracellular space, understanding how clearance of extracellular deposits contribute to disease can lead to better immunological therapeutic approaches as well as a more holistic view of cellular responses to amyloidogenic proteins.

**Alyssa Graf '25** is a Junior Biochemistry & Psychology major from McHenry, IL. After graduation, Alyssa plans to attend medical school.

**Jess Kochert '24** is a Senior from Columbia, SC. After graduation, Jess plans to attend grad school for physical therapy.





# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## Nuclear Planning Group: Portugal (Model Programs)

**Researcher:** Kate Hanchon

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Joe Dunn

Founded in 1957, the Political Committee of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) serves to discuss and solve political and regional issues which directly impact the safety and wellbeing of the Alliance. The committee is tasked with solving non-military issues, with topics such as the selection of secretary generals and assisting Alliance partner nations within its southern neighborhood.

At the International Model NATO (IMNATO) conference in Washington, D.C, I was tasked with researching and representing Portugal, a founding member of the Alliance and a nation with particular interests in the topics I was assigned to debate. In the months leading up to the conference, I conducted research into Portugal's policies, using this research to enhance my understanding of the Alliance's purpose and envision potential solutions for the issues we were assigned. At the conference, I collaborated with other delegates to develop my own solutions and realize theirs, and received a great deal of support and feedback from my peers. At the conference's conclusion, solutions for the issues at hand included formalized selection processes and criteria for future secretary generals, green energy partnerships, and a task force responding to crises within the Alliance's southern neighborhood, among others. I was challenged to work diplomatically alongside my fellow delegates, finding solutions and compromises for country policies that did not directly reflect my own.

Ultimately, the conference was an excellent learning tool, teaching me to speak confidently, reach compromise, and both assist and receive assistance from peers.

**Kate Hanchon '27** is a Freshman Music and Art History major from Charleston, SC. After graduation, Kate plans to pursue a masters degree in art conservation.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## Using SIRD Models to Simulate the Black Death

**Researcher:** Ryleigh Henderson

**Research Advisors:** Dr. Jessica Sorrells and John Theilmann

The plague is a disease caused by the bacteria *Yersinia pestis*. Plague has been the reason behind many of history's most detrimental pandemics, including The Black Death. The Black Death traveled nearly the entire continent of Europe during the mid-1300s, wiping out entire populations in its path. This outbreak has always been accredited to the strain known as bubonic plague; however, in recent years researchers have begun to question whether another strain was involved. Pneumonic plague begins as bubonic that, if untreated, can mutate and infect the respiratory system of its victims. Pneumonic has a much higher death rate, the ability to be transmitted human to human, and spreads during winter months, making it a key contender of causing a pandemic with the severity of The Black Death.

In my research, I constructed a compartmental SIRD model based on differential equations for three different hypothetical outbreak scenarios: bubonic, pneumonic, and a combination model. I then created a stochastic, Agent-Based Model and ran similar scenarios to the SIRD models testing factors like population density and individual movement in the sample. After this, I began a deep analysis of the similarities, differences, and conclusions from the two model approaches.

From the research, it can be concluded that many factors can affect which strains and what percentage of those strains are present in the population. A combination of the two is the most probable to have caused the Black Death.

**Ryleigh Henderson '24** is a Senior Mathematics and Biology major and Data Analytics minor from Spartanburg, SC. After graduation, Ryleigh plans to enter the workforce and is currently on the hunt for jobs that relate to data analytics, statistics, environmental science, and public health. Eventually, Ryleigh will go back to school and get a masters in Public Health.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## Model NATO conference

**Researchers:** Victoria Hoyos and Isabella Moreno

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Joe Dunn

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is a military alliance between countries in Europe and North America. This alliance was formed to deter Soviet expansion, creating a strong North American presence in Europe to halt nationalist militarism and establish allies. Within NATO, there are five debating committees including the NAC or North Atlantic Council, which is the committee that Victoria Hoyos and Isabella Moreno were assigned to at this year's Model NATO conference. As a team, we represented Portugal.

At the 2024 International Model NATO conference the NAC topics were "NATO's '360 degree' Approach and Enlargement" and "NATO's Open Door Policy. Regarding NATO's '360 degree' Approach, Portugal proposed the reinvigoration of an already existing exercise, the Steadfast Jupiter 2023 exercise. This large-scale exercise tackles training in all military domains, which encompasses the '360 degree' approach and NATO making defense a priority. For Enlargement and NATO's Open Door Policy, a vetting process was also proposed for alliance membership, the Strategic Simulation Program (SSP) which partners with the Membership Action Plan (MAP), to clarify the membership of aspiring nations. Through a series of exercises and seminars, the program would ensure that the aspiring members align with the alliances' values and become familiar with protocols.

At the end of the Model NATO conference, the NAC committee was responsible for finalizing the Final Communiqué, which is a composition of draft language from all five of the committees. The NAC had the opportunity to review and amend any and all draft language to better suit the purpose of NATO as a military organization.

Nearing the end of the conference, every present delegation gathered to listen to the awards presented to each committee. Isabella Moreno and Victoria Hoyos received the Superior Delegation Award for their work in representing Portugal. The entire Converse delegation representing Bulgaria won Outstanding Delegation as a whole.

**Victoria Hoyos '26** is a Sophomore Politics major and Hispanic Studies minor from Woodbridge, CT. After graduation, Victoria plans to attend law school to become an immigration and human rights attorney.

**Isabella Moreno '26** is a Sophomore History and Politics major from Greer, SC. After graduation, Isabella plans on attending Law School.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## Flexible Tile Modeled DNA Self Assembly with Bonding Probabilities Dictated by Enzymes

**Researcher:** Sloane Kinley

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Jessica Sorrells

Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) has been proven to be a valuable building block for constructing nanostructures capable of targeted drug delivery. DNA is also characterized as self-assembling; when a sticky end is introduced to unbonded base pairs, they will hydrogen bond without any mechanical assistance. Graph theory can be implemented to model this phenomenon, and one such framework is referred to as the flexible-tile model of DNA self-assembly.

This model allows for symmetry and predicted bonding where it may not exist in the lab setting. We add to the flexible-tile model in order to calculate the probability of self-assembly of certain graphs. If a specific type of graph is desired, or even a single specific graph, the probability of this event occurring can be calculated. This theoretical experiment explores the possibility and probability that the cohesive end types, in the flexible-tile model, can bond to other end types when exposed to one another in the lab setting. This exploration specifically focused on small cycle graphs of order three and four.

These theoretical outputs demonstrated the occasional fallibility of the flexible-tile model, due the presence of imperfect hydrogen bonding. Imperfect hydrogen bonding allows for DNA sequences to bond that theoretically would not bond; these DNA sequences can bond to non-complementary DNA sequences. Further research should explore the most effective and efficient DNA sequences to be selected for cohesive-end types to eliminate the prospect of imperfect hydrogen bonding.

**Sloane Kinley '26** is a Sophomore Biology and Mathematics major and Chemistry minor from Spartanburg, SC. After graduation, Sloane plans to attend veterinary School.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## Trends of Depression, Anxiety, and Body Image Among Women Who Hike

**Researchers:** Tessa Kramer and Cameron McGahee

**Research Advisor:** Marie LePage

Many people hike because it is a cost-effective and easily accessible way to exercise while also spending time outside (Mitten et al, 2016). Women are highly underrepresented but are part of the hiking population. Past research has determined that hiking and being exposed to other natural environments are positively correlated with psychological well-being (Wolsko et. al, 2019) Women need to be included in these studies so that they too can share the benefits of hiking with their over-represented male counterparts. It is imperative that women feel comfortable and are represented while hiking so that they too can reap the mental and emotional health benefits of the outdoor activity. This lack of representation prompted us to create a study to determine the benefits of hiking specifically for women. Participants included 269 women.

The participants in our study were on average middle-aged ( $M=43.6$ ) with varying levels of education. Participants completed the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), and Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire (MBSRQ) to investigate trends in body image, depression, and anxiety. Participants also completed demographic questions as well as questions to explore specific reasons for hiking, effects on body image and eating habits, personal importance of hiking, and safety measures while hiking. For body image and related variables, we compared our sample with the population norms for women provided in the MBSRQ manual (Cash, 2000) and found that our sample had a less positive attitude towards their body appearance overall ( $t(1323)=3.21, p<.001$ ), but less focus on their body overall ( $t(1324)=19.23, p<.001$ ) and less worry and concern about being overweight ( $t(1326)=4.11, p<.001$ ). Specific individual experiences and differences will be further discussed at a later date.



**Tessa Kramer '25** is a Senior Psychology major from Fort Mill, SC. After graduation, Tessa plans to attend graduate school for physical therapy.

**Cameron McGahee '24** is a dual Senior/Master Clinical Psychology major and History minor from Greenwood, SC. After graduation, Cameron plans to pursue a data science/analysis career.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## The Role of Animals In Evenings at Home and Their Symbolic Messaging

**Researchers:** Abby Ledford

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Emily Harbin

Evenings at Home, and the dialogues surrounding it, perfectly encapsulate the debates and arguments surrounding children's education both at the time of its publishing and the contemporary counterparts as many children and parents continue experiencing the clash of ideologies in today's children's literature. This historical book provides an important perspective as it proves that these ideological conflicts present in children's literature have existed since the invention of children's literature itself. By studying the use of animals in Evenings at Home, readers are able to witness the ideological principles held by Anna Barbauld, while also hearing the criticisms from other authors of her day who stood on the opposite side of these ideological clashes. Through Barbauld's use of animals in Evenings at Home, readers can see not only the ideological clash between the literal and the symbolic, but also Barbauld's personal beliefs in a compassionate, imaginatively symbolic, and nature-based education for children. This project explores these themes through a close reading analysis of the text itself while also engaging with criticism from other authors at the time. By bringing in John Locke's "Some Thoughts Concerning Education" and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "Emile Or On Education," two seminal and revolutionary education texts, this project provides a historical literature analysis, exploring Evenings at Home in the context of its time.

**Abby Ledford '24** is a Senior English major and Secondary Education and Theatre minor from Augusta, GA. After graduation, Abby plans to work in technical editing.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## NATO 2024 Environmental Committee

**Researchers:** Ninel Martinez-Macedo and Keira van Zyl

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Joe Dunn

At the very heart of NATO's founding treaty is the principle of collective defense. At this year's International Model NATO, we represented Bulgaria, ensuring to accurately illustrate Bulgaria's viewpoints and position within NATO and within the world's current socio-economic environment. Our Committee, the Committee on Emerging Security Challenges (ESC), focused on the following topics: Space as a contested domain; NATO's role in energy security; and NATO's role in addressing climate change.

Space plays an important role in the security, prosperity, and success of our nations, and for effective deterrence and defense for the Alliance, it will be important to maintain secure use and unfettered access to space. One solution was to create a NATO Space Defense Doctrine that will collaborate with the NATO Space Centre of Excellence and focus on maintaining and securing the strategic advantage of NATO in the celestial realm. With regards to the second topic, energy supplies must be reliable and stable within the Alliance, which has been highlighted through current Russian aggression. Solutions were focused on the need for and importance of the diversification of routes, suppliers, and sources, such as creating a program that focuses on the research and development on current renewable energy sources and additionally focuses research and development on futuristic technologies like electromagnetic railguns and laser weapons systems. The third topic, NATO's role in addressing climate change, is very important.

Climate change is considered a "threat multiplier" and NATO is committed to becoming "green", while remaining energy efficient and secure. A solution was to hold a summit which will have a major focus on climate change and its impacts on security within the Alliance. After a challenging and entertaining weekend in Washington, D.C., the delegation of Bulgaria was awarded the "Outstanding Delegation Award", once again, upholding Converse University's winning streak.

**Ninel Martinez-Macedo '27** is a Freshman majoring in Politics as well as Creative and Professional Writing. After graduation, Ninel plans to attend law school and pursue her passion for law as an attorney.

**Keira van Zyl '25** is a Junior Biology and Mathematics major from Spartanburg, SC. After graduation, Keira plans to go into research & development, becoming a research scientist, or either going into data analysis or medical/pharmaceutical sales.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## Man as Woman's Tool in Louisa May Alcott's Sensation Fiction

**Researcher:** Mary Grace Owens

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Emily Harbin

Louisa May Alcott, famed writer of *Little Women*, is well-studied. There are thousands of articles discussing her popular pieces. However, her work as A.M. Bernard has gone relatively unnoticed. Alcott adopted this identity to publish pieces of sensation fiction, such as "A Whisper in the Dark," "Pauline's Passion and Punishment," and "Behind the Mask: A Woman's Power." In these stories, Alcott discusses the man as an extension of the woman. Her protagonists brandish their femininity to achieve patriarchal, societal, and sexual power by manipulating the men around them. They gain status by performing their gender and fulfilling the Victorian womanly role of wife. Often, their husbands are feminine and connected to other women.

Alcott depicts women as the only gender aware enough to realize they are performing it, meaning that the most genuine, fullest human connection can only be achieved woman to woman. The husband then becomes a literal extension of the woman's body as he engages in romantic affairs. Analyzing these pieces alongside their interesting history gives critics a more thorough and accurate view of Louisa May Alcott. Putting these works on a stage of their own will bring eyes to them which will inform further research around Alcott and bring greater depth to analyses of *Little Women*.

**Mary Grace Owens '24** is a Junior English & Psychology double major from Summerville, SC. After graduation, Mary Grace plans to pursue a graduate degree in Library and Information Sciences.





# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## Healthcare Communication Experiences in Young Adults 18-25 with Chronic Pain Conditions

**Researcher:** Lanah Parker

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Laura Feitzinger Brown

Few chronic pain resources exist to help young people, their parents and teachers. There is an absence of support groups and a lack of resources that educate children and young adults about chronic pain in general, and specific chronic pain conditions, which are meant for use by parents and teachers. Only a handful of articles specifically orient towards pediatric providers when talking about chronic pain, and most of them are hard to understand if you do not have a medical background or higher education. There are few resources for children to understand things themselves, and little is available for parents and teachers to use.

The goal of this study was to obtain more information about healthcare communication with young adults ages 18-25 about their experiences with chronic pain. After receiving Converse University's IRB approval (Protocol #: CUIRB23\_26), surveys were distributed to a number of approved healthcare offices, businesses, schools, and organizations, and 135 valid survey responses were obtained. Of the 135 respondents, 41 of them experienced chronic pain before the age of 18, and they elaborated on their experiences and after literary analysis, coupled with approaching significance data, there were distinct feelings of isolation and loneliness amongst this population.

The results of this study suggest that there is a lack of proper and full education about the difference between acute and chronic pain, which could be the reason why amongst young adults ages 18-25, there are feelings of isolation and loneliness due to a lack of understanding from their friends and family. Further in-depth research should be considered with a larger sample of young adults with chronic pain conditions.

**Lanah Parker '25** is a Junior Biology Pre-Med major from Goose Creek, SC. After graduation, Lanah plans to attend the Medical University of South Carolina in order to become a pediatric oncologist.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## **Bernard Baruch: Tales of Hobcaw Barony**

**Researcher:** Caroline Stubbs

**Research Advisors:** Dr. Allison Vick and Dr. Jeff Howard

This project is a series of podcasts focused on the life of Bernard Baruch and his connection to Hobcaw Barony. Hobcaw Barony is located near Georgetown, South Carolina. The first episode looks at Bernard's history, influence on politics, and the legacy he left behind. This episode opens with how he gained the name the "Park Bench Statesman". Then it leads into Bernard's family history and how he made his way to New York and also looks at his career in finance and politics.

Bernard was such an influential figure that he advised Woodrow Wilson on his staff when meeting with him. This episode concludes by mentioning some of the lasting impacts that Bernard had. The second episode goes into depth on the history of Hobcaw and how it came into the possession of the Baruch family. The episode starts with my experience of touring the Barony and then goes into the native and colonial history. While also looking at how Bernard acquired the land and then how it landed in Belle's possession. The episode finishes by looking at what Hobcaw Barony does today. The final episode looks at the connection between Bernard and Hobcaw, starting with some insight into Bernard's wife and children. Then it looks at the types of guests Bernard hosted, such as Winston Churchill and Franklin De. Roosevelt, as well as some stories about guests' time at Hobcaw.

The culmination of these episodes concluded by asking the audience to think about the information I shared about Bernard and to try and make determinations about his influence in politics and place in society.

**Caroline Stubbs '24** is a Senior History major and Applied Computing - Web Design minor from Hilton Head Island, SC. After graduation, Caroline plans to intern in New York.



# RESEARCH: Undergraduate

## IMNATO NAC Findings: The 360 Degree Approach and Enlargement

**Researchers:** Samantha White and Kimberlain Williams

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Joe Dunn

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a consensus-based alliance that consists of 30 official member countries. In addition, observers and members in waiting are welcome to participate in debates. Composed of 5 committees, the North Atlantic Council is the top decision-making body, and also the body that we debated on at this year's conference. This year Converse had two countries represented: Portugal and Bulgaria. Kimberlain Williams and Samantha White were co-delegates representing Bulgaria at this year's conference.

At this year's International Model NATO conference, the North Atlantic Council debated two topics: The 360 Degree Approach and Enlargement and NATO's Open Door Policy. In regard to the 360 Degree Approach, representing Bulgaria meant focusing heavily on the Black Sea. Seeing as this is the natural barrier between Bulgaria and the Russian Federation, we rallied for a higher submarine presence in the region and a continuation and escalation of the demining efforts currently underway in the sea. We also wanted the alliance to upgrade the existing battle groups across Europe, and specifically the one located in Bulgaria, to brigade status.

For the topic on Enlargement and NATO's Open Door Policy, we focused our efforts on speeding up the admission of Bosnia and Herzegovina through a registration process with a database and revitalizing the MAP process, which is the process prior to admission into the alliance. NATO's ultimate goal is being a sound alliance, and focusing on admitting members that are committed to the alliance is vital. It is then the NAC's responsibility to debate over the compilation of these papers, the final communique. At this session delegates must consult with their fellow representatives and hash out any remaining issues. At the end, we were awarded the Outstanding delegation award for our efforts towards teamwork and consensus building.

**Samantha White '24** is a Senior History, Politics, and Hispanic Studies major from Colorado Springs, CO. After graduation, Samantha plans on working in international politics.

**Kimberlain Williams '27** is a Freshman History major and Secondary Education minor from Spartanburg, SC. After graduation, Kimberlain plans to attend graduate school.



# RESEARCH: Graduate

## The Correlation between Adverse Childhood Experiences (Aces) and Academic Success for First-Generation Undergraduates Enrolled in Private Four-Year Institutions in South Carolina

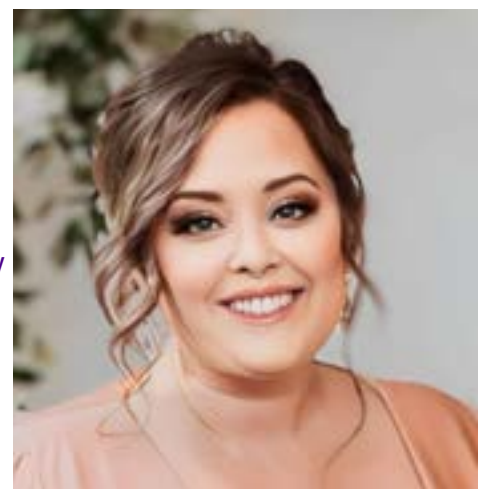
**Researcher:** Victoria Garrett

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Lee Givins

Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, have been shown to have an impact on an individual's mental, physical, and academic health. Specific individuals are more vulnerable to experiencing ACEs than others, and recognizing who these individuals are and when these experiences occur is critical in determining what supports were in place for at-risk first-generation students enrolled in a private four-year institution in South Carolina. The quantitative research study examines the correlation between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and academic success for first-generation undergraduates enrolled in private four-year institutions in South Carolina. Forty-five first-generation undergraduate students enrolled in private four-year universities in South Carolina make up the study's sample.

The research study explores the impact of ACEs, academic class, gender, and race on academic success using Pearson's product-moment correlation models. The research study's empirical findings show that there is no statistically significant correlation between ACEs and academic class, gender, or race factors that have an impact on students' academic success. However, the research discovers there is a statistically significant correlation between supports offered for at-risk (high ACE score) first-generation students as identified through ACE score methodology enrolled in a private four-year institution in South Carolina. Eighty-six percent of the sample had at least one ACE, with an average ACE score of 3.44.

**Victoria Garrett '24** is a doctoral candidate in Professional Leadership (EdD) with an emphasis in Special Education Law from Union, SC. After graduation, Victoria plans to continue her teaching career at Brookwood Academy and hopefully begin a college readiness program for at-risk students.



# RESEARCH: Graduate

## Women Engineers: How Golf Effects Their Careers

**Researcher:** Teresa Goins Curvin

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Jeff Martin

Women are underrepresented in executive positions. Standard and Poor 500 companies list women holding eight percent of Chief Executive Officer positions in the United States and two percent of those CEOs hold engineering degrees. Women working in engineering has steadily increased since the 1970s, yet they still lag behind men when earning those coveted C-suite levels. Golf has been shown to be an extension of the office. Ninety percent of male CEOs play golf, while twenty percent of female CEOs do. Eighty percent of CEOs said they have conducted or closed deals while playing a round of golf.

The long-term effects of female engineers' careers by not joining their male colleagues in golf are unknown. A study was designed to investigate if there was a correlation between a lack of playing golf and career progression for women. The study's primary research lens was hermeneutic phenomenology, allowing the researcher to interpret the narratives provided by ten female engineers who golfed for either business or pleasure and were executives at some point in their careers. Two secondary research lenses further supported the study of adaptive leadership and leadership labyrinth, looking at the women's pathways to achieve their executive-level positions.

The study aimed to understand better women's lived experiences to illuminate enhancers or inhibitors that may detract from women reaching their career goals. The study employed hermeneutic phenomenology data analysis of ten interview transcripts to illuminate four essential themes across the participant responses: (a) feelings of being left out, (b) golf helped their careers, whether directly or indirectly, (c) picked up golf for business and (d) career success depends on the ability to network. Also included are limitations to the study and recommendations for future research.

**Teresa Goins Curvin '24** is a doctoral candidate in the EdD-Professional Leadership program from Cleveland, TN. After graduation, Teresa plans to continue working with GREEN Charter Schools as their STEM Instructional Coordinator.



# RESEARCH: Graduate

## Evidence Based Design Impact on Emotional & Cognitive Wellbeing Within Higher Education Interiors

**Researcher:** Meirav Goldhour

**Research Advisor:** Dr. Jeff Martin

Interior and exterior environments are critical to physical and psychological comfort. Design elements within living, working, and human interaction settings trigger emotional and cognitive sensitivities. Elements such as daylight, view of nature, biophilia, color, materials, and space layout have a positive or negative impact.

Historically, numerous facilities were designed and structured to maximize square footage and structural functionality for the lowest cost. Assemblies such as schools, hospitals, and prisons were built similarly in their landmark and character, a situation identified as Isomorphism.

The researcher identified the impact of interior design on emotional and cognitive welfare in higher education facilities, particularly within communal and public spaces. The theoretical foundation was based on Maslow's hierarchy of physical needs and Luthans's hierarchy of motivational needs. The built environment influences both theories and creates a bridge between them.

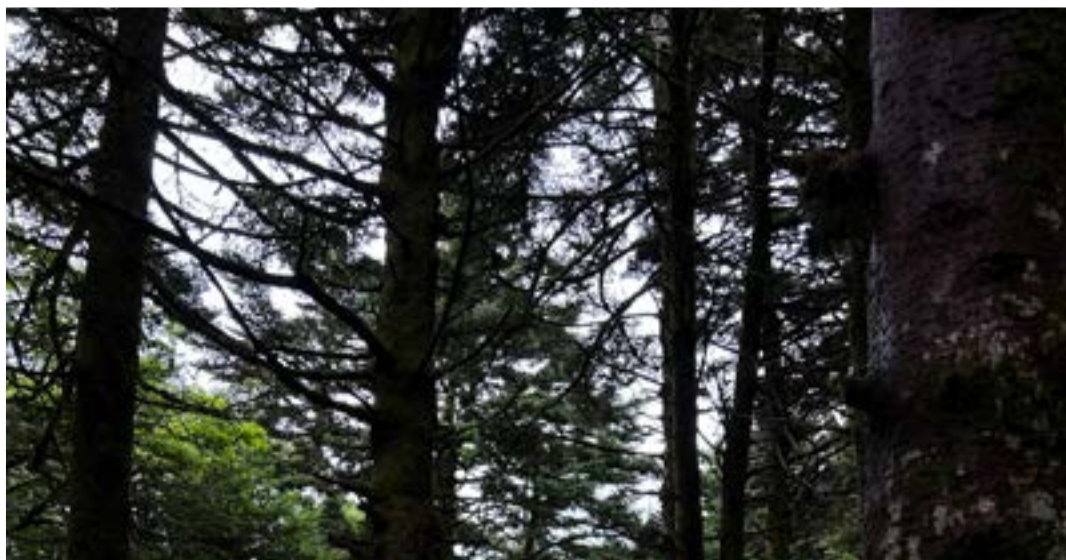
The study was conducted using a semi-structured qualitative methodology. Professionals from related fields were interviewed, including architects, designers, and furniture specialists. The researcher investigated the architectural and design elements that either enhance or inhibit deficiency needs, improve cognitive performance, and ultimately lead to higher levels of well-being for reaching self-fulfillment. Further, the data emerged to support commonalities between the participants and was not intended to compare between professions.

The researcher identified that design elements, themes, and concepts provide a basic human need for psychological growth. Design elements overlapped, concluding a vital aspect: to achieve enhanced psychological and cognitive well-being, one must look at all design elements cohesively. The understanding is that design features alone will not most effectively shape psychological and cognitive growth and lead to self-fulfillment.

**Meirav Goldhour '24** is a Doctoral candidate in Professional Leadership from Charleston SC. After graduation, Meirav plans to develop evidence-based design research and application at her company.



# PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST SUBMISSIONS



01/05/2024 18:18

# PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST



**Artist:** Sara Bailey

**Title:** *Decay (left)*

This is a black and white photo that depicts discarded and broken CDs left to rot in the dirt. With this photo, I wanted to bring a sense of organic decomposition to something completely inorganic. Growing up in the early 2000s, I have always had such a soft spot for CDs, but nowadays, they're rendered useless due to streaming.

## HONORABLE MENTION

**Title:** *Growth (right)*

This black and white photo depicts a circuit board from a piece of tech, growing out of a tree stump. The circuit is angular compared to the chaos of the weeds and overgrowth that surround it. This image was inspired by the ever growing role technology plays in our lives.



**Title:** *Moments (left)*

I took this photo of one of my best friends while we spent some time at a bookstore. The older I've gotten, the more I've realized the importance of these small moments of time spent together. As my friends grow up, get started on their own lives, finding time to spend together is more difficult, so I cherish the times we do have.

**Sara Bailey '26** is a Sophomore Studio Art major and Arts Administration minor from Spartanburg, SC.



# PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

**Artist:** Alyssa Bukszar

**Title:** *The Quarry (upper right)*

While visiting Daytona Beach with my mother and brother this past summer, we wanted to experience more of the beauty Florida had to offer than its beaches and people. Jumping into the endless ice water while the sun beamed down serves as a core memory for my family and I. I am thankful to have captured the view over the virgin part of the waters with all its charm.



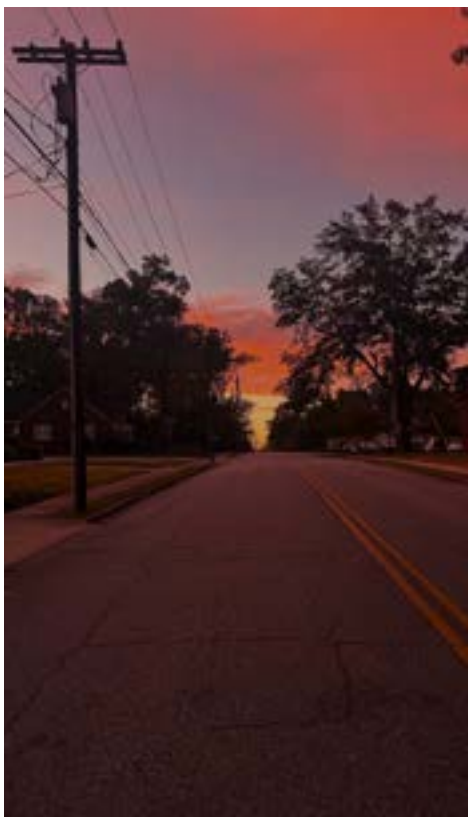
**Title:** *Prince Ritz Charming (lower right)*

The story behind this long haired perched kitty is a goofy one. I met this spunky and independent one when he was a kitten, abandoned in a bush across a busy street from a gas station in Spartanburg. After spending three hours convincing him that I was able to love him, we drove home eating the only thing I had left from my softball tournament day, Ritz crackers.



**Title:** *Where We Leave the Sidewalk (below)*

This photograph was a blessing, a breath of fresh air,



and just a sight that leaves me in awe every time I walk towards the athletics side of campus. Athletes walk across Fairview Ave. almost daily. The sunrises or sunsets on the way to or from practice hardly ever disappoint.

**Alyssa Bukszar '26** is a Sophomore Politics major from St. Matthews, SC.

# PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST



**Artist:** Mia Easler

**Title:** *It'll All Come Out in the Wash (left)*

**Title:** *Not Permitted (right)*



**Title:** *Outlook Good (left)*

**\*COVER ART CONTEST WINNER**

I shot this image with my film camera in my front yard in spring of 2023. It was part of a photo book I made in my class, which focused on good/bad luck symbols and motifs. This image represents good luck as it contains seven (lucky #7) railroad spikes and a magic 8 ball saying "Outlook Good."

**FIRST PLACE\***

**Mia Easler '25** is a Junior Studio Art and Psychology double major from Spartanburg, SC.

# PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST



**Artist:** Chesney Miles  
**Title:** *Legacy of the Gods:  
The Acropolis of Athens (left)*

**Title:** *City of Legends:  
Athens in the Light of Day (right)*



**Title:** *Overlooking Athens, Greece  
(left)*

**Chesney Miles '26** is a Sophomore Business Marketing major and American Sign Language and Psychology minor from Fleming Island, Florida.

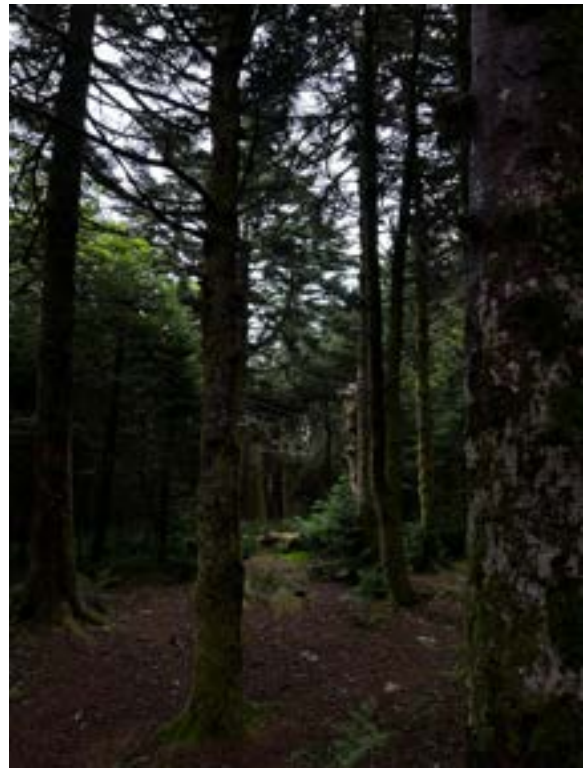
# PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST



**Artist:** Dominique Pearson  
**Title:** *Bright red Corvette on a sunny afternoon at Converse University (left)*

Bright red Corvette on a sunny afternoon at Converse University.

**Title:** *Cloudy evening in Glenville's dark green forest (right)*  
Cloudy evening in Glenville's dark green forest.



**Title:** *The infamous San Francisco Golden State Bridge on still blue waters (below)*  
The infamous San Francisco Golden State Bridge on still blue waters.



**Dominique Pearson '25** is a Junior Psychology major from Sumter, SC.

# PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST



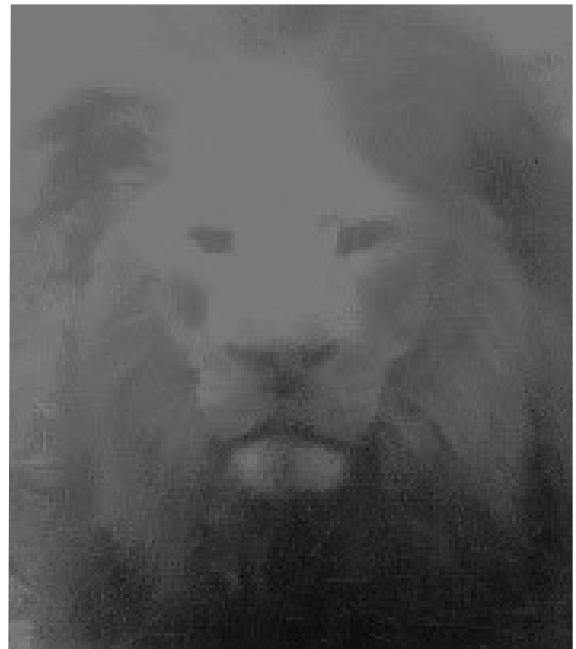
**Artist:** J. Pye

**Title:** *Rain* (left)

Rain on my windshield was reflecting light from a streetlamp in front of my car. Because the droplets were different colors, I took a picture of them with a 2022 Kyocera DuraXV Extreme. I moved the camera so they would streak and blur. I thought it looked like comets or a meteor shower.

**Title:** *Lion* (right)

This is Saied. He passed away 3/26/2024. He lived to fifteen years old, enjoying a comfortable and celebrated life at Greenville Zoo with his twin brother, Chuma. His magnificent presence and roar inspired and awestruck all. He was beloved by many and will be greatly missed until we meet again. Taken in 2023 with a 2022 Kyocera DuraXV Extreme flip phone camera.



**Title:** *Mushrooms* (left)

This is a picture I took of forty different species of Basidiomycota fungi, of which there are over thirty thousand. They were all collected in the woods in Inman, South Carolina in August 2018 after a rainstorm. I took the photo with a 2018 Kyocera DuraXV Extreme flip phone camera.

**J. Pye '24** is a Senior Biology major and Environmental Studies minor from Spartanburg, SC.

# PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST



**Patrick Treharne**

*Talk with the Past* (left)

Time to move forward for the past has already happened and you can't change its mind.

*Heart of a Valkyrie*  
(below)

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Walking through the buildings of campus reminds us of the beauty of our campus's exterior.



*Free Range Learning* (left)

Where students roam freely, studying knowledge from afar like curious sheep, and cultivating their minds in the wide open fields of education.

**Patrick Treharne '25** is a Junior Art Education major from Spartanburg, SC.

# SPECIAL CATEGORY SUBMISSIONS



# SPECIAL CATEGORIES: FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS

**Artist:** Isaiah Caston

**First Generation College Student Original Composition  
First Place Award Winner**

**FIRST PLACE**

**Title of Piece:** *Ascent*

Before attending Converse I was unable to read music, learning from my father and grandfather, and playing by ear. I never want to forget my roots, but attending Converse brought a fresh perspective to my craft, inspiring me to compose my own music. Being the first in my family to attend a university, study music, and soak up as much information as I can, is something that I am very proud of. This piece is the first classical composition I ever wrote. I started out as a melody in my head driving in Dallas, Texas. It unfolded to be something I love dearly and want to share with the world.



**SCAN TO  
LISTEN**

**Isaiah Caston '25** is a Junior Contemporary Music (BMA) & Composition major from Pauline, SC. After graduation, Isaiah plans to pursue a career in sound engineering, regularly performing, and composing.



# SPECIAL CATEGORIES: Underrepresented Minorities

**Artist:** Aniya Bell

**Title of Piece:** *Self-patience*

**Medium:** Acrylic paint, 16in x 20in

The quote “Keep Calm and Carry On” will permanently be sealed in my memories. Which also describes my artwork called “Self-Patience.” With acrylic paints, I portrayed the background flows, symbolizing sincere emotions, and my two favorite colors and Converse colors (purple and yellow), meaning welcoming fit in Converse College. I also portray myself as a self-portrait, allowing myself to open my heart and mind and willingly share my calming expressions with others with satisfaction.



**Aniya Bell '27** is a Freshman Studio Art and English double major from Spartanburg, SC. After graduation, Aniya will go to graduate school to get a master's degree in Library Science to become a librarian.

# SPECIAL CATEGORIES: Underrepresented Minorities

**Artist:** Mable Ni

**Underrepresented Minorities Contest  
First Place Award Winner**

**FIRST PLACE\***

**Title of Piece:** *Folding Gold*

**Medium:** Monoprint, 44in x 60in

In *Folding Gold*, the process of making dumplings shows the bonding that happens where people share in a mutual effort. I've found that Converse art students come together in much the same way. Similar to how my family would stay up late at our restaurant wrapping dumplings until we ran out of ingredients, I've worked side by side with the artists in our student body until the early hours of the morning. We supported each other and built a strong sense of community that I've cherished and celebrated throughout my journey at Converse.



**Mable Ni '24** is a Senior BFA Studio Art major and Music & Arts Administration minor from Spartanburg, SC. After graduation, Mable plans on attending graduate school.

# SPECIAL CATEGORIES: Underrepresented Minorities

**Artist:** Dominique Pearson

**Title of Piece:** *I Belong*

**Medium:** Original Essay

I belong at Converse University because Converse values hard work. In the summer of 2023, I worked as an intern for the Office of Research and Engagement. Our Office promotes university-wide engagement in research and scholarly creative work, helping faculty and students in their scholarly activities and academic outreach programs. During my internship, I was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Office of Research and for the setup and clean-up of research laboratories. I worked hard alongside my professors and undergraduate and high school researchers. As a student-athlete on the Converse basketball team; I have to wake up as early as 5 am and balance my academic responsibilities. I am proud to be a part of this hard-working community.

I belong at Converse University because Converse values knowledge. As a summer intern, I was trained in many technical competencies and soft skills. I have become more familiar with technology and learned to use it to achieve specific purposes, to increase productivity and engagement, and to work smarter. I have learned to adapt to unexpected circumstances and tackle unexpected difficulties. My contributions were valued and validated. As a psychology major, I have learned about various therapies and then applied this to real-world examples

I belong at Converse University because Converse values diversity. Our summer team was multicultural. We had students, faculty, and teachers from different countries, faiths, languages, and cultures. I have learned new perspectives and viewpoints different from my own and applied them to various situations. My basketball team has made memories on and off the court. One of my favorite memories was eating at a Mexican restaurant after the game. I have shared my perspectives and my identity and seen others apply those to various situations. We learned from one another and celebrated our diversity and unity.

I belong at Converse University because Converse values self-development. My internship did not only improve my competencies, such as organizational skills, time management, prioritization, efficiency, and goal setting. My department registrar has developed my technological skills. I have learned to use different software, for example, Jenzabar, Doc Master, and ESPON scan. My team has developed my character in the aspects of holding each other accountable. I am a student worker at the research and engagement office, this opportunity has allowed me to meet new people and fostered communication as the primary way to develop myself. My interpersonal skills have improved, too. Before attending Converse, I couldn't hold very long conversations with new people, whereas, after this internship, I could not just hold a conversation but also initiate the conversation.

I belong at Converse University because Converse values dreams and goals. My dream is to complete my Ph.D. and become a clinical psychologist. At Converse, my professors and peers believe in me and my education and training prepare me to realize this dream.

One of my favorite memories at Converse is receiving my white coat which has my name embroidered on it. When I wear my lab coat now, I realize that Converse is not only a place where I get my education and gain skills, but Converse is a place where I belong.

**Dominique Pearson '25** is a Junior Psychology major from Sumter, SC. Dominique would love to attend a master's program after graduating.



# JUDGES

*Many thanks to our panel of judges for the 2024 RISE Symposium Awards.*

## Special Awards

### **Photo Contest:**

Andrew Blanchard, Deb Peluso, Pamela Greenway, Dr. Jeffrey Howard, Laura Zeisler

### **First Generation College Students Award:**

Daphnie Glenn, Kala Hudson, Dr. JJ Lies

### **Underrepresented Minority Students:**

Danielle Stone, Dr. Andrea Kikkert, Dr. JJ Lies

**Model Programs:** Dr. Allison Vick

**Excellence in Historical Research:** Dr. Eddy Woodfin

**People's Choice:** Valkyries

## Category Awards

**Graduate Research:** Dr. Tori Good, Dr. Jack Knipe, Dr. Kelly Harrison

### **Graduate Music Performance:**

Dr. Erin Templeton, Joe Satava, Rachel Bani

### **Undergraduate Music Performance:**

Dr. Erin Templeton, Joe Satava, Rachel Bani

**Creative and Play Writing Reading:** Katelyn McCall

**Natural and Mathematical Sciences:** Dr. Sheri Strickland, Dr. Joe Barrera,  
Dr. Mark Bohler

**Humanities and Society:** Prof. Laura Zeisler, Dr. Eddy Woodfin, Dr. Rich Keen

**Political Science:** Dr. Allison Vick

**Dance-Original Choreography:** Macey Atkins, Carrie Preus, Prof. Allison Roux

**Dance and Theater Performance:** Prof. Jenna Elser, Prof. Melissa Owens Kaley,  
Prof. Allison Roux

## Internship

### **School of Business and Data Science:**

Randall Chambers, Nick Vourlas, Chunsta Miller '02

### **School of Liberal Arts and Sciences:**

Brittany Jones Wright '07, Taylor Dement, Lindsay Bartholomew

### **School of Arts:**

Jennifer Barksdale '16, Michel Smoak Stone '99

# CONVERSE ADVISORS & MENTORS



**Dr. David Berry**  
Professor of Musicology and Composition  
Petrie School of Music  
Student(s) Mentored: Jasmine Humphries



**Dr. Mark Bohler**  
Assistant Professor of Biology  
Department of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics  
Student(s) Mentored: Alyssa Graf, Josue Calvas-Santana



**Dr. Mary Carlisle**  
Associate Professor of Art and Assistant Chair  
Department of Art and Design  
Student(s) Mentored: Mable Ni, Jennings Whitt, Mack Smith



**Dr. Reed Chewning**  
Associate Professor; Director of Middle and Secondary Education  
Programs; Director of Clinical Experiences  
Student(s) Mentored: Kaylee Coudér, Frankie Malafronte, Logan  
Nichols, Dorothy Brogden



**Dr. Joe Dunn**  
Charles A. Dana Professor of History and Politics and Chair  
Department of History and Politics  
Student(s) Mentored: Caroline Blair, Kendall “Sunny” Bostwick,  
Chelsea Palotta, Ainsley Cua, S. Feser, Steven Greer, Kate Hanchon,  
Jerome Harris, Victoria Hoyos, Ninel Martinez-Macedo, Isabella  
Moreno, Anna Scott, Keira van Zyl, Kaylee Warner, Samantha White



**Dr. Jenna Elser**  
Instructor of Theatre  
Department of Theatre and Dance  
Student(s) Mentored: Ryan Colvard, Serger Jimenez Sanchez

# CONVERSE ADVISORS & MENTORS



**Dr. Neval Ertürk**

Professor of Biology; Associate Provost of Research and Engagement  
Department of Natural Sciences

Student(s) Mentored: Chloe Cleland, Bridget Dennehy, Eseose Okoduwa, Dominique Pearson, Leslie Ramirez



**Dr. Laura Feitzinger Brown**

Associate Professor of English, Director of Arts and Humanities and  
Nisbet Honors Program Co-Director, Chair of the English Department

Student(s) Mentored: Lanah Parker



**Dr. Lee Givins**

Assistant Professor of Education,  
Director of Professional Leadership Program  
The Graduate School

Student(s) Mentored: Victoria Garrett



**Professor Jerome Gomez**

Assistant Professor of Interior Design  
Department of Art, Design, and Letters

Student(s) Mentored: Isabella Avant, Kayla Bailey, Kathleen Beardsley,  
Hailey Ellis, Ava Jerolaman, Caroline Klein, Brianna Lee, Breanna Weber



**Cathy Gowan**

Director of Internships and Career Services  
Office of Career Development

Student(s) Mentored: Karan Bhatt, Mary-Grace Durham,  
Cristobal Lopez, Faith Nanna, Amaia Parkins, Leslie Ramirez,  
Evelyn Fitz, Janyia Pinckney, Chance Spicuzza, Jemma Van Jaarsveldt



**Dr. Steven Graff**

Assistant Professor of Piano  
Petrie School of Music

Student(s) Mentored: Catherine Black, Aidan O'Donnell

# CONVERSE ADVISORS & MENTORS



**Dr. Arthur "Art" Haecker**

Director of Converse Wind Ensemble, Adjunct Instructor of Trombone  
Petrie School of Music  
Student(s) Mentored: Santino Xavier



**Dr. Emily Harbin**

Associate Professor of English and Chair  
Department of English  
Student(s) Mentored: Abby Ledford, Mary Grace Owens



**Dr. John Holloway**

Adjunct Instructor of Low Brass  
Petrie School of Music  
Student(s) Mentored: Gryphen Blackwell



**Dr. Jeffrey Howard**

Assistant Professor of English, Director of the University Writing Center  
Department of English  
Student(s) Mentored: Caroline Blair, Caroline Stubbs



**Dr. Douglas Jensen**

Associate Professor of Biology, Chair  
Department of Natural Sciences  
Student(s) Mentored: Madeline Coleburn



**Professor John Jeter**

Adjunct Instructor of Music Business  
Petrie School of Music  
Student(s) Mentored: Jasmine Humphries

# CONVERSE ADVISORS & MENTORS



**Dr. Julie Jones**

Associate Professor of Child and Family Studies  
Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences  
Student(s) Mentored: Gracie Bennett, Rebekka Braziel,  
Anier Colon-Flores, Uzziah Dawkins, Sha'Deashia Durant, Danielle Fuller,  
Lauryn Garaux, Xion Makupson, Sarah Mintern, Madeline Modica,  
Asa Murphy-Caldwell, Lara Toranzo, Krystal Wilson



**Dr. Richard Keen**

Professor of Psychology, Associate Chair of Behavioral  
and Social Sciences  
Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences  
Student(s) Mentored: Chloe Cleland, Eseose Okoduwa



**Dr. Courtney Elise LeBauer**

Assistant Professor of Violin  
Petrie School of Music  
Student(s) Mentored: Adriana Stamile



**Dr. Marie LePage**

Associate Professor of Psychology  
Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences  
Student(s) Mentored: Cameron McGahee



**Dr. Valerie MacPhail**

Associate Professor of Voice and Assistant Director of  
Petrie School of Music  
Student(s) Mentored: Sommerset Sewell



**Dr. Amanda Mangum**

Associate Professor of Math  
School of Business and Data Science  
Student(s) Mentored: Cameron McGahee



# CONVERSE ADVISORS & MENTORS



**Dr. Jeffery Martin**

Assistant Professor of Education, Professional Leadership  
The Graduate School

Student(s) Mentored: Teresa Goins Curvin, Meirav Goldhour



**Dr. Melissa Owens Kaley**

Associate Professor of Theatre, Interim Chair of the  
Department of Theatre and Dance

Student(s) Mentored: JaPrincess Jones, Pedro Landeros-Hernandez



**Professor Allison Roux**

Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre Dance  
Department of Theatre & Dance

Student(s) Mentored: Rylie Budnick, Mercedes Elliott, Eliza McManus,  
Emmalee Nutter, Zoi Palmquist, Jemma Van Jaarsveldt,  
Ayrine Munguia Herrera



**Dr. Jessica Sorrells**

Dean, Associate Professor of Mathematics  
School of Business and Data Science

Student(s) Mentored: Sloane Kinley, Jordyn Rose, Rosa Linda Cortez,  
Ryleigh Henderson



**Professor Susan Tekulve**

Associate Professor of English  
Department of Art, Design, and Letters

Student(s) Mentored: Kendall “Sunny” Bostwick, Mercedes Elliott,  
Pedro Landeros-Hernandez, Graci Barga



**Dr. John M. Theilmann**

Andrew Helmus Distinguished Professor of History and Politics, Chair  
Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences

Student(s) Mentored: Ryleigh Henderson

# CONVERSE ADVISORS & MENTORS



**Dr. Chris Vaneman**

Dean of the School of the Arts; Associate Professor of Flute  
Petrie School of Music  
Student(s) Mentored: Claire Cathey



**Professor Allison Vick**

Assistant Professor of Political Science  
Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences  
Student(s) Mentored: Caroline Blair, Caroline Stubbs



**Dr. Madelyn Young**

Anne Morrison Chapman Distinguished Professor of International Study  
Associate Professor of Economics,  
Department of Economics, Accounting & Business  
Student(s) Mentored: Lisbon Lopes

# THANK YOU

*Many thanks to the Converse campus community for  
supporting the 2024 RISE Symposium,  
with special appreciation for:  
Award Category Judges  
Department of Career Services  
Campus Events  
Facilities Department  
Faculty Advisors and Mentors  
Internship Mentors  
Office of the Provost  
RISE Symposium Program Committee  
and our students, faculty, staff and Board of Trustees.*



**RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT**

# ABOUT CONVERSE

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 coeducational incoming class. The University encompasses the the School of the Arts; the School Business and Data Sciences; the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School; and the Converse College for Women.

Converse students experience deep scholarship, transformative mentorship, experiential learning, and 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.

**Discover more! [converse.edu](https://converse.edu)**

*Heart of a Valkyrie* by Patrick Treharne,  
Excellence in Photography Competition  
Honorable Mention

