

2015 UAB MHRC HDRTP SCHOLAR DIRECTORY



**Tomi Akinyemiju, PhD, MSc (Partnership)**  
 Assistant Professor, UAB Epidemiology  
[tomiakin@uab.edu](mailto:tomiakin@uab.edu)

Dr. Tomi Akinyemiju is an Assistant Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Alabama, Birmingham. She completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, and received her PhD in Epidemiology at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Her research has focused on understanding racial disparities in breast cancer screening, mortality and survival in the US. She has investigated the multilevel determinants of racial disparities by focusing on upstream factors such as individual and neighborhood level socio-economic status and healthcare resources. Currently, she is interested in examining the risk for young onset, highly aggressive breast cancer among women of African descent.



**Deloris Alexander, PhD (Partnership)**  
 Director, Integrative Bioscience & PhD Program, Pathology, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Tuskegee University  
[dalexander@mytu.tuskegee.edu](mailto:dalexander@mytu.tuskegee.edu)

Deloris Alexander, PhD, MS, is a native of Tuskegee, Alabama, and holds degrees from Alabama State University (BS in Biology; minor in chemistry), Tuskegee University (MS in Environmental Science), Meharry Medical College (PhD in Biomedical Sciences), and post-doctoral experience from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Cancer Genetics, Host immunity). Since arriving at Tuskegee University, Dr. Alexander has been intimately involved in the launching of Tuskegee's PhD Program in Integrative Biosciences (IBS), which seeks to address the lack of well-trained, graduate-level, U.S. scientists. Serving as the program Director, she has worked with integrative teams in procuring grants to cover student training and to improve institutional and research infrastructure. The IBS program has provided a mechanism for fostering a more intensive biomedical research and training atmosphere at Tuskegee and will have produced 20 PhD holders and 7 MS degree graduates in the last 9 years. Most of its graduates are from underrepresented minority backgrounds. The program has enjoyed phenomenal success with a time to degree of 5 years, low attrition, and an excellent productivity rate in terms of published articles per graduate.

Dr. Alexander has many research interests, all related to microbial ecology. This area of research has implications for biomedical challenges as well as agricultural and biofuels applications. Dr. Alexander, who also serves as the Deputy Director for Research for Tuskegee University's Health Disparities Institute for Research and Education (HDIRE), has additionally been actively involved in research that seeks to reduce health disparities as it relates to the Alabama Black Belt Counties (ABBC). Nearly every U.S. health malady presents as a health disparity/inequity in the ABBC. One of these maladies is colon cancer, the most frequent cause of cancer-related death in the U.S., if one controls the mortality data for smoking-related cancers. According to the SEER Database, the ABBC have the highest age-adjusted, annual, colon cancer mortality rates in Alabama. Only among African Americans is this rate increasing in the state.

Dr. Alexander is an avid researcher; she is a member of several grant writing teams; she is a joint faculty member with many institutions; she sings, writes short stories, and assembles genealogies.



**Foluke Alli, MD, NCMP (RCMAR)**  
 Assistant Professor, UAB Family & Community Medicine/Internal Medicine  
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I am a board certified family medicine physician with additional training in women's health. I currently work at the Family and Community Medicine center and the Continence clinic UAB. My area of focus include Menopause and menopause related medical conditions including hormone therapy, abnormal vaginal bleeding, urinary incontinence. My research interest is on Health disparities in women's health with focus on menopause and menopause related conditions.

Dr. Alli attended the University of Ibadan, Nigeria 1995-2002, Medicine, the Underwood Memorial Hospital 2006-2009, Family Medicine Internship and Residency, and the Cleveland Clinic, OH, Women's Health Fellowship.

Dr. Alli's publication is "Can the FRAX tool be a useful aid for clinicians in referring women for periodontal care?" She is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians and is certified with the North American Menopause Society.

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**Lori Brand Bateman, PhD (MHRC)**  
 Postdoctoral, UAB Preventive Medicine  
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Dr. Lori Brand Bateman is currently a Postdoctoral Scholar in the Division of Preventive Medicine in the UAB School of Medicine. Dr. Bateman holds a doctorate in Medical Sociology from UAB as well as master's degrees in both Religion (ethics) and Wellness Promotion from Baylor University. She did her undergraduate work in nutrition and her clinical home is as a registered dietitian. During the first part of her career she gained extensive experience in program development, nutrition education, and individual behavior change in both academic and clinical settings. More recently Dr. Bateman's interests have shifted to examining health and illness in the context of social structure. Her research has explored the ways in which narrative informs the perspectives of both patients and providers and how this influences provider-patient communication. Her most current work examines the impact of the social determinants of health on racial/ethnic health disparities.



**Amy Beasley, DNP, RN (RCMAR)**  
 Clinical Assistant Professor, University of Alabama, Nursing  
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Dr. Amy Beasley is an Assistant Professor at The Capstone College of Nursing (CCN). She earned her BSN from in 2008, a MSN in Rural Case Management in 2011, and a Doctorate of Nursing Practice in 2012. She began teaching at The Capstone College of Nursing in 2014. Dr. Beasley teaches in Fundamentals and Pharmacology in the BSN Program.

Dr. Beasley began her nursing career in the emergency room. She later received her certification as a Specialist in Poison Information. Dr. Beasley's main concentration in nursing practice involves hospice and palliative care. She worked as a hospice case manager and is a National Board Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse (NBCHPN). Her interests include pain and symptom management at the end of life and rural community healthcare access.



**Deepa Bedi, MD PhD (RCMI)**  
 Assistant Professor, Biomedical Sciences, Tuskegee University  
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Dr. Deepa Bedi is an Assistant Professor in the department of Biomedical Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine, Tuskegee University. She attended Tashkent State Medical Institute (Uzbekistan, Doctor of Medicine) and Auburn University (PhD, Biomedical Sciences). Her current research focuses on using combinatorial phage technology to develop anticancer targeted nanomedicines. Targeted cancer therapeutics has a distinct advantage over non-targeted as it considerably increases the concentration of drug near the site of tumor and amplify the therapeutic effect while minimizing the cytotoxic effect. Much efforts is been used to develop these targeted nanomedicines and the ligands used for this includes peptides, aptamers, antibodies and so on. In addition, her research interest also expands to the identification of biomarker in diseased state such as cancer and diabetes for early detection of the disease and evaluation of various treatments and therapeutics. She is also interested in delineating the role of nervous system in cancer progression



**Ellen Buckner, PhD, RN, CNE (University of South Alabama)**  
 Professor, Cancer, Asthma, Chronic Illness, University of South Alabama  
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Dr. Buckner has 40 years experience as a nurse educator. She is a Professor at the University of South Alabama (USA). She has more than 35 published articles in peer-reviewed journals, 5 book/monograph chapters, and numerous national, international, state and local presentations. She is a member of the USA Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Co-Chairs the Leadership Academy of the Alabama State Nurses Association. She is a Fellow and Board member of the Roy Adaptation Association and chair of the Alabama Asthma Coalition. She is a member of Phi Kappa Phi, The Honor Society of Nursing Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI), and past president of the Alabama Academy of Science. In 2005 she was awarded the Ellen Gregg Ingalls/UAB National Alumni Society Award for Lifetime Achievement in Teaching. She is a former Associate Scientist of the UAB MHRC and current member of the USA Health Disparities Research Group and USA Mitchell Cancer Center Cancer Control and Prevention Research Group. She is a steering committee member of the Alabama Health Action Coalition (AL-HAC) and a mentor for the STTI Nurse Faculty Leadership Academy. Her goal is to strengthen research skills applicable to state-wide initiatives in health sciences and health disparities.

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**Crystal Chapman Lambert, PhD, ARNP (MHRC)**

Assistant Professor, UAB Community Health, Outcomes & Systems, School of Nursing  
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Dr. Chapman Lambert is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Community Health, Outcomes, and Systems at UAB School of Nursing. She received her doctorate from the University of South Florida in Tampa Florida. Dr. Lambert is interested in health promotion and disease prevention in people living with HIV (PLWH). More specifically, she will focus on addressing health disparities related to patient engagement and adherence that exist among ethnic minorities and women. For her dissertation she recruited and administered a survey to 300 WLWH to assess their attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge regarding HPV and Pap smear testing. Continuing her passion to improve health outcomes for PLWH, she is examining multilevel factors associated with adherence and patient engagement among African American women living with HIV (WLWH). To merge her previous and current work, Dr. Lambert plans to evaluate the association between cancer screening, engagement and retention in care among PLWH. In addition to her research passion, Dr. Lambert is an experienced nurse practitioner with a subspecialty in HIV, and she currently has a faculty practice at UAB. Dr. Lambert's goal is to develop low-cost, high impact interventions to improve health outcomes for PLWH.



**Indrajit Chowdhury, PhD, MD (Partnership)**

Instructor, Morehouse School of Medicine, OB/GYN  
[ichowdhury@msm.edu](mailto:ichowdhury@msm.edu)

My goal is to pursue a successful career in an academic/biomedical research institution as an independent researcher and a teacher/faculty member. My research focuses on a broad spectrum of cellular, molecular, biochemical, genetic, morphological, and physiological approaches to understand how the molecular events that transpire during the ovarian follicular maturation and the mechanisms underlying hormone signaling that precisely regulate the interactions between hypothalamus-pituitary-ovarian axis. Ultimately, my aim is to use these discoveries in the treatment of menopausal women or those with hormone deficient diseases and in the field of cancer.

I joined Department of OBGYN at Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) as a Post-doctoral Fellow in 2003. At MSM, as research fellow or co-investigator, I have completed several NIH-funded grants. I carried out extensive research work on understanding prohibitin (PHB) roles in granulosa cell (GC) functions (proliferation, differentiation and survival) an *in vivo* and *in vitro* study, and, currently, we are using GC specific conditional knockout mice. While conducting studies on the PHB, we identified a gene product highly-expressed in preovulatory follicles known as Neuregulin-1 (NRG1). Initial preliminary studies by me have shown that NRG1 and ErbB receptors are important for GC survival and critical for ovulation. Currently we are investigating the role of ovarian NRG1 mediates preovulatory granulosa cells (PO-GCs) survival and anti-inflammation, which affects follicular maturation and ovulation.

I have a solid track record as a mentor of students at all levels from high school (Vivien Thomas Summer Research program at MSM), undergraduate from MSM, Morehouse College, Spelman College, Clark Atlanta University and Morris Brown College in the Minority Biomedical Research Support (MBRS), and graduate students and post-doctoral fellows from MSM. Moreover, my teaching occurs in the context of the above-mentioned program and M.D. program with fellows and students at MSM. I am also recognized as a national and international expert at various scientific societies and organization in the field of reproductive biology and endocrinology. I have served as a judge at various societies including [Research Centers in Minority Institutions](#), RCMI; Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students, ABRCMS; Curtis Parker Research Symposium, MSM, Atlanta; and Morehouse College Annual Research day, Morehouse College, Atlanta. I am also reviewer and editor for several reproductive and endocrine journal.






**Rochelle Cobbs, MS, M.Ed (Jackson State University)**

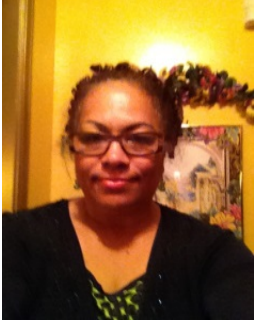

Assistant Professor, Department of Criminal Justice, Mississippi Valley State University  
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Rochelle E. McGee-Cobbs is an Assistant Professor of the Department of Criminal Justice at the Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU). She has been teaching at MVSU for about six years. Currently, she is also a Ph.D student with ABD status at Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU), and will complete her degree in 2015. She holds two Master Degrees: a Master of Science in Criminal Justice and a Master of Education with concentration in Sociology from Delta State University. She has approximately ten years of experience as a criminal justice practitioner serving in various capacities, including as Chief of Police in two Mississippi municipalities. She has also served as the Investigative Chief for the Department of Corrections in Parchman, Mississippi, which is one of the

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	<p>largest correctional facilities in the State of Mississippi. In addition, she is a certified Mississippi police officer and law enforcement instructor. Also, she has taught criminal justice and sociology courses at Mississippi Delta Community College, Moorhead, Mississippi for about ten (10) years as an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Criminal Justice. Furthermore, she has taught at Prairie View A&amp;M University, in the Department of Criminal Justice for approximately two (2) years as a graduate assistant. In addition, she has published scholarly articles/papers in some of the professional academic journals and anthologies.</p>
	<p><b>Shani Collins, PhD</b> (Jackson State University)          Visiting Assistant Professor, Alabama State University, School of Social Work  <a href="mailto:shanikcollins@aol.com">shanikcollins@aol.com</a></p> <p>Dr. Shani K. Collins is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Social Work at Alcorn State University. Dr. Collins' research interests relate to cancer health disparities; specifically, breast and prostate cancer. She is also passionate about rural health issues, obesity prevention, HIV/AIDS research, and ethnic minority populations. She has worked as a research investigator with The University of Kentucky's Mississippi Delta HPV Screening Project. The project sought to determine the effectiveness of self-swab analysis among women in the Mississippi Delta. The project also sought to determine the prevalence of the human papilloma virus (HPV) among women in the Mississippi Delta region. She also worked as project director for "The Mississippi Delta Crusade Against Breast Cancer," which sought to reduce the incidence of advanced cancers in the Mississippi Delta region through faith-based cancer awareness initiatives and participation in early detection screening programs.</p> <p>Her dissertation research examined "Barriers/Incentives to Mammography Screening among African-American and Caucasian Women in the Mississippi Delta." She has broad background in English, Africana Women's Studies, and Social Work with specific training in many areas including: research methods, data collection, data analysis, communication, leadership, policy analysis, advocacy, and organizing. A native of Greenwood, Mississippi, Dr. Collins earned a bachelor of arts in English from Tougaloo College, a master of arts in Africana Women's Studies from Clark Atlanta University, and both a master of social work and a doctor of philosophy in social work from The University of Alabama.</p> <p>Dr. Collins looks forward to collaborating with other Health Disparities Research Training program (HDRTP) researchers and groups in an effort to identify and achieve key health improvements for underserved and underrepresented communities across the state of Mississippi.</p>
	<p><b>Becky Davis, DNP, RN, APHN-BC</b> (Creighton University)          Assistant Professor, Creighton University, Nursing  <a href="mailto:rebeccadavis12@creighton.edu">rebeccadavis12@creighton.edu</a></p> <p>I am presently an Assistant Professor at Creighton University's College of Nursing, teaching undergraduate Community and Public Health Nursing. Prior to becoming a nurse educator, I practiced as a nurse for many years in a variety of community roles and settings. I enjoy learning, teaching and service activities. Public Health, nursing education, vulnerable populations, and health literacy are current focus areas. I am a member of several professional organizations and enjoy working with local community coalitions.</p>
	<p><b>Jacqueline Font-Guzmán, MHA, JD, PhD</b> (Creighton University)          Associate Professor, Creighton University, School of Law  <a href="mailto:jfont@creighton.edu">jfont@creighton.edu</a></p> <p>Dr. Jacqueline Font-Guzmán is associate professor in the Werner Institute, Creighton University Law School. She is a certified mediator and arbitrator by the Puerto Rico Supreme Court. She is a Fulbright Scholar who has actively participated in the field of conflict studies through national and international conferences and workshops, and has conducted a wide variety of trainings and seminars in the field, throughout the United States, the Caribbean, Europe, and Latin America. Some of the organizations she has provided mediation, facilitation and/or training services to include the: World Health Organization, U.S. Postal Service, Judicial Academy of the Puerto Rico Supreme Court, Spanish Supreme Court Judicial Council for Continuous Education for Judges, Venezuela Supreme Court, Johnson &amp; Johnson, and the Nebraska Bar Association.</p> <p>Dr. Font-Guzmán conducts qualitative research with a focus on the fields of healthcare, law, and</p>

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	<p>conflict engagement. Specifically, how people construct meaning at critical points in their lives about issues such as, their identity (e.g., professional and community), reflective learning/practice, and dying to explore the manners in which meaning-making leads them to productively engage with conflict. She also explores how marginalized individuals create alternate stories and counter-narratives to confront institutional injustices. You can view her research on her SSRN Author page: <a href="https://ssrn.com/author=623378">ssrn.com/author=623378</a> and follow her work on Academia.edu: <a href="https://creighton.academia.edu/JacquelineFontGuzman">https://creighton.academia.edu/JacquelineFontGuzman</a></p> <p>Dr. Font-Guzmán has a B.A. from Coe College, a Masters in Health Care Administration from Saint Louis University, her law degree summa cum laude from the Interamericana University of Puerto Rico, and her Ph.D. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from Nova Southeastern University.</p>
	<p><b>Lynette Gayle, JD (RCMI)</b>  Assistant Professor, Department of Allied Health, Tuskegee University  <a href="mailto:lgayle@mytu.tuskegee.edu">lgayle@mytu.tuskegee.edu</a></p> <p>Dr. Lynette K. Gayle is currently an Assistant Professor of Clinical Laboratory Sciences (CLS) in the Department of Allied Health Sciences at Tuskegee University where she has served since June of 2011. Dr. Gayle is an experienced Medical Technologist, Lab Manager, Attorney, and Educator. Dr. Gayle has served as the CLS Program Director at Tuskegee and Clinical Rotations Trainer for Tuskegee University, Auburn University at Montgomery, Adams-Bridger, The University of South Alabama, the University of Maryland, Johns-Hopkins University, and Old Dominion University. Dr. Gayle served as an Assistant Professor of Business Management and Law at Alabama State University and legal counsel to the Small Business Administration housed there. She was asked to serve the Alabama Public School System as a secondary science teacher with “real world” experience, and was certified as such from 2004-2012. As such, Dr. Gayle brought wet labs into the high school science curricula as an Alabama science in Motion (ASIM) teacher, UAB Bio Teacher, and Advanced Placement (AP) certified Bio Teacher from the University of Alabama.</p> <p>Throughout her career as a medical technologist (now MLS), Dr. Gayle served as a trainer, supervisor, lab manager, laboratory information technologist, generalist –including blood banking, and phlebotomist. Due to the many health issues in her family members that are disparate – diabetes, hypertension, and cancer, she is eager to apply her skills and background to improve the health and quality of life for those in her community and the population at large. Dr. Gayle is a national certified trainer in bioethics (Tuskegee University) and has been a foot soldier and defender of justice since 1965, throughout her legal career as a civil rights attorney and advocate. Her degrees are from the Argosy University, Faulkner University, and Kansas State University, the Mobile Infirmary Medical Technology Program and she has matriculated at Spring Hill College, Wesley Medical Center, George Mason University, the University of South Alabama, Alabama State University, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the University of West Alabama, and the University of Alabama for various certifications or training. She received numerous scholarships and awards and finished number 2 in her law class, which she completed a semester early.</p>
	<p><b>Adriana Harbuzariu, MD (Partnership)</b>  Postdoctoral, Morehouse School of Medicine, Microbiology  <a href="mailto:aharbuzariu@msm.edu">aharbuzariu@msm.edu</a></p> <p>I was born in Romania, where I attended medical school. I graduated with a medical doctor degree in 1996, after which I trained in Pediatrics Residency. I came to United States in 2001 and I worked in cardiovascular research at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN for 5 years, then at University of Pittsburgh for 2 years. I started to work at Morehouse School of Medicine in 2014. My research interests: relationships between obesity and cancers (pancreatic and breast) and health disparities research.</p>

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**Alethea Hill, PhD, ACNP-BC, ANP-BC** (University of South Alabama)  
 Assistant Professor, Adult Health Nursing, University of South Alabama  
[ahill@southalabama.edu](mailto:ahill@southalabama.edu)

Dr. Alethea Hill has been an advanced practice nurse in acute and primary care settings for over fifteen years. Her research interests include health disparities such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease in African American populations. Dr. Hill's passion drives her to continually find ways to empower individuals so that they can achieve optimal self-management skills, ultimately improving quality of life and health outcomes. Noting the impact of obesity and its association with sleep apnea, Dr. Hill hopes to refocus the lens of her research trajectory during the HDRTP experience toward geographic and racial differences. Further, she plans to evaluate the associations between sleep apnea, allostatic load and stroke risk among obese and non-obese African American women when compared to their male counterparts and Caucasians.



**Li Huang, PhD (RCMAR)**  
 Assistant Professor, Psychology & Sociology, Tuskegee University  
[huangl@mytu.tuskegee.edu](mailto:huangl@mytu.tuskegee.edu)

Dr. Li Huang received her Ph.D from Auburn University. She finished her post-doc training at the University of South Carolina. Her training and research mainly focus in the area of human development and family area of developmental psychology. Her current research focuses on the etiology of problem behaviors among immigrant and minority youth, academic achievement and retention rate for under representative minority students.



**Michelle Khan, MD, MPH (Partnership)**  
 Assistant Professor, UAB OB/GYN  
[mjkhan@uabmc.edu](mailto:mjkhan@uabmc.edu)

Dr. Khan is a board-certified Obstetrician-Gynecologist with sub-specialty training in Reproductive Infectious Diseases. She obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry and Spanish at Duke University then went on to complete a combined MD/MPH program at Rutgers Medical School. In between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years of medical school, Dr. Khan spent two years away to do research through the Howard Hughes Medical Institute-National Institutes of Health Research Scholars Program. During these 2 years, she worked at the National Cancer Institute carrying out epidemiologic research on human papillomavirus (HPV) and completing her MPH in Epidemiology before returning to medical school. Following medical school, she completed a residency in Gynecology and Obstetrics at the Johns Hopkins Hospital and a fellowship in Reproductive Infectious Diseases at the University of California San Francisco. During fellowship, she had training in HPV-related diseases and HIV in Obstetrics and Gynecology. After fellowship, Dr. Khan worked as a Clinical Instructor at UCSF in the Dysplasia and Anal Neoplasia Clinics prior to starting a faculty position at the University of Alabama at Birmingham in November 2013.

Dr. Khan is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Division of Women's Reproductive Healthcare at UAB. She is the recipient of a 2014 HSF GEF Clinical Care Initiative grant, through which she has opened an Anal Neoplasia Clinic in the Women's and Infants Center and in the 1917 Clinic, to evaluate and treat patients with anal cancer precursors. Her research is centered around Reproductive Infectious Diseases with a particular focus on HPV and HIV. She was awarded a Career Development Award through the Johns Hopkins-UAB Cervical Cancer SPORE, through which she is studying an alternative treatment for cervical pre-cancer. She is a K12 Scholar in the Patient Centered Outcomes Research program led by Dr. Kenneth Saag, through which she is studying treatment of vulvar neoplasia. Dr. Khan has a long-standing interest in minority issues including health disparities. Through the Health Disparities Research Training Program, she hopes to learn more about health disparities and how she can incorporate this focus into her research.

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**Jaegoo Lee, PhD, MSW** (Jackson State University)

Assistant Professor, Jackson State University, School of Social Work

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Dr. Jaegoo Lee is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work Program at Jackson State University. She earned her MSW from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities in 2007 and her Ph.D. in Social Work from the University of Georgia in 2012. Prior to assuming the faculty position at Jackson State, Lee served as an adjunct in the Department of Human Services and Social Work at Kennesaw State University where she taught social welfare policy and macro practice courses. Lee has engaged in international and domestic transracial adoption research, which resulted in several publications. Her research areas include transracial adoption parenting and its relationship to minority children's identity formation, health disparities, alcohol and substance use, and mental health/health issues among the minority population. In addition, Lee is interested in quantitative research and scale development. She is currently working on grant proposals, book chapters, and a number of articles.



**Lianna Li, MD, PhD** (Jackson State University)

Visiting Professor, Tougaloo College, Biology

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Dr. Lianna Li gained her M.D. from China Medical University in 1997 and her Ph.D. in North Carolina State University with a major in Functional Genomics and a minor in Bioinformatics in 2009. Her Ph.D. research was focused on protection role of type I interferon on reovirus-induced myocarditis. Dr. Li received her postDoc training in diverse biological/biomedical fields from Cancer Center of Tulane University and Cancer Institute of UMMC. Her research at Tulane University was focused on carcinogenesis of retroelement and molecular marker of colorectal cancer stem cells. Her research at UMMC was focused on mechanism of how NOTCH pathway is involved in carcinogenesis of breast cancer and correlation of TWIST1 gene with diabetes. Currently, Dr. Li works in the Biology Department of Tougaloo College as a visiting professor.



**Kimberly Martin, PhD** (RCMAR)

Assistant Professor, UAB Epidemiology

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Kimberly Martin, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the School of Public Health at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She graduated from New York University in 2004, and then received her Doctor of Philosophy in Chronic Disease Epidemiology at Yale University in 2009. Her dissertation investigated racial differences in the eligibility for and receipt of carotid endarterectomy in a large national sample of elderly ischemic stroke patients. Dr. Martin completed her postdoctoral training at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in 2013, focusing on the patient-provider relationship among minorities and other vulnerable populations.



**Gina McCaskill, PhD, MSW, MPA** (RCMAR)

Adjunct Instructor, UAB Gerontology, Geriatrics & Palliative Care

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Gina M. McCaskill, PhD, is a social worker and a junior researcher in Gerontology and Geriatrics. She completed her doctoral education at The University of Alabama with minor coursework in Gerontology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). She is a Southern Regional Education Board Doctoral Scholar and a John A. Hartford Dissertation and Pre-dissertation Fellow. She has a voluntary faculty appointment in the School of Medicine, UAB, as an Adjunct Instructor, Department of Medicine, Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics, and Palliative Care and has an affiliation with the Comprehensive Center for Healthy Aging at UAB. Dr. McCaskill is a VA Fellow in Advanced Geriatrics, Birmingham/Atlanta Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center and a John A. Hartford VA Scholar in Social Work at the Birmingham VA Medical Center, Birmingham, Alabama. Her research agenda is in the area of physical activity among older veterans with chronic conditions. She is currently conducting a qualitative study about facilitators and barriers to physical activity among older veterans. She practices social work in the Geriatric Assessment Clinic at the Birmingham VA Medical Center.

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**Hosik Min, PhD** (University of South Alabama)  
Assistant Professor, Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work, University of South Alabama

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Dr. Hosik Min is an Assistant Professor at the department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work at the University of South Alabama. He earned his doctoral degree from Texas A&M University in 2007. He is teaching Population Problems, Health Disparities, and Social Gerontology. His research interests focus on the health disparities and population aging. He currently studies racial/ethnic and gender-based disparities in colorectal cancer patients, obese people, and physical activities. His focus is the effect of these inequalities at the impact of an individual and an environmental level on these health outcomes.



**Douglas Moellering, PhD** (MHRC)  
Assistant Professor, UAB Nutrition Sciences

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Douglas R. Moellering, PhD. is currently an Assistant Professor at UAB in the Nutrition Sciences department, Co-director & Operational Director of the Diabetes Research Center's BioAnalytical Redox Biology (BARB) Core, Associate Scientist in the NORC, Scientist in UAB's: Comprehensive Diabetes Center, Center for Cardiovascular Biology, Center for Exercise Medicine, Comprehensive Center for Healthy Aging, Minority Health & Health Disparities Research Center, and Mid-South Transdisciplinary Collaborative Center for Health Disparities Research (Mid-South TCC). His research focuses on the adverse effects of 'Life Stress' on obesity that are mediated by diet quality and oxidative stress. He is an active collaborator, mentor, and educator providing expertise, training, and pedagogy in mitochondrial physiology, metabolism, and redox physiology and their contribution to healthy living, Type 2 Diabetes, obesity, health disparities, cardiometabolic disease, cancer, exercise and aging. Doug also avidly supports his community and has been an invited speaker in the 'Cities for Life for a Healthier Birmingham' program, the Birmingham-Jefferson Food Policy Council Summit, local grade schools, high schools, and other organizations.



**Sherill Morris-Francis, PhD** (Jackson State University)  
Assistant Professor, Mississippi Valley State University, Criminal Justice

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**Sherill V. C. Morris-Francis** received her Ph.D. in Juvenile Justice from the Prairie View A&M University in 2009. She is currently an Assistant Professor, and Graduate Coordinator in the Department of Criminal Justice at Mississippi Valley State University. Prior to joining the MVSU in the fall of 2014, she was the Assistant Dean of the College of Juvenile Justice and Psychology at Prairie View A&M University from January 2010 and August 2014. Her M.S. Degree in Social Work - Agency Administration and B.S. Degree in General Social Work are from the University of the West Indies, Jamaica. She has extensive experience working with teen mothers and young men "at-risk" in Jamaica, youths in therapeutic foster care and girls in detention facilities in Canada. Her research interests include Minorities and the Juvenile Justice System; Juvenile Mental Health Issues, Female Juveniles, Program Implementation and Assessment, School Factors and Delinquency, and Restorative and Community Justice.



**Alveta Reese, MSN, OCN, CPC** (Partnership)  
Assistant Professor, Nursing, Tuskegee University

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Born and reared in Columbus, Ga, She received her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from Auburn University in Nursing and Nurse Educator respectively- WAR EAGLE!!!

Currently Enrolled in a Doctorate of Nursing Practice Program at Chamberlain College of Nursing  
She has memberships in several civic and professional organizations: American Nurses Association, Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc., Oncology Nursing Society, Sigma Theta Tau Nursing Honors Society.

Alveta has been blessed to receive numerous awards: National American Cancer Society's Lane Adams Award given to only 10 nurses in the United States for their warm hands of service; First nurse at East Alabama Medical Center to receive the Daisy Award and 1<sup>st</sup> nurse to be certified as a Chemotherapy & Biotherapy Trainer; Hospice Nurse of the Year from Hospice of EAMC; Outstanding Woman of Lee County awarded by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.; Nurse of the Year by Theta Phi Chapter of Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc.; Alabama Hospital Heroes Award.



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	<p>She is currently serving as Assistant Professor in the Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine Nursing &amp; Allied Health in the Department of Nursing, and she is employed by the EAMC Cancer Center where she has served cancer patients there for the past 21 years.</p> <p>The most important part of her life is that she is married to the love of her life Mr. Kenny Reese for 24 years and they have 3 beautiful children: Vanessa, Shanntel, and Octavia, and 4 incredible grandchildren: Amber, Will, Kaitlyn, and RJ.</p>
	<p><b>Shilpa Register, OD, MS, PhD, FNAP (MHRC)</b> Associate Professor, UAB Optometry <a href="mailto:shilpa@uab.edu">shilpa@uab.edu</a></p> <p>Dr. Shilpa J Register is an Associate Professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She completed her Master of Science and Doctor of Optometry from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. During that time, her research focused on corneal endothelial cells under the guidance and mentorship of Dr. David Whitehart. She has served as a PI for the Optic Nerve Head Perfusion Study and as a masked examiner for the ACHIEVE Study. She went on to pursue and complete her Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Policy and Leadership from The Ohio State University. Her research focused on professionalism competencies in optometry students under the guidance and mentorship of Dr. Ada Demb.</p> <p>Dr. Register has ten years of academic experience, fourteen years of clinical experience, and two years of administrative experience. She has presented on interprofessional education, optometric education and optometric competencies at the Jefferson Center for Interprofessional Education, Health Professions Educational Research Symposium, World Conference on Optometric Education, and the Assessment Institute at IUPUI.</p> <p>In 2010, she received the AOF Michael G Harris Ezell Fellowship. Since 2011, she has been active in the ASCO Summer Institute for Faculty Development and the ASCO Future Faculty Program. She served on the ASCO Board of Directors from 2013-14. In 2014, she was honored to be inducted into the National Academies of Practice as a Distinguished Scholar and Fellow. She has been an active member in the American Optometric Association and the American Academy of Optometry.</p>
	<p><b>Sabita Saldanha, PhD (ASU/UAB)</b> Instructor, Biological Sciences, Alabama State University <a href="mailto:ssaldanha@alasu.edu">ssaldanha@alasu.edu</a></p> <p>Dr. Saldanha received her Ph.D. degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) in 2014, in Biology. She graduated with a Bachelor's degree in LifeSciences Biochemistry in 1994 and then a Master's degrees in LifeSciences, Biotechnology, in 1996, from India, from the University of Mumbai. She relocated to the United States in 1999 and obtained a second Master's degree in Biology in 2002 from UAB. Dr. Saldanha has 15 years of research experience and 12 years of teaching experience. She has been a STEM faculty mentor, MARC mentor, and Honor's program project director at ASU. Her passion for research and teaching is evident by the way she tries to incorporate research concepts in the classroom. She enjoys mentoring and steering undergraduate and graduate students in the scientific disciplines.</p> <p>Her research interest is in cancer epigenetics with a focus on colon, breast and prostate cancers. Currently, she is a faculty member at Alabama State University (ASU). She is also a member of the Cancer Biology Research and Training program at ASU. She serves as a senior personnel for the ASU-UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center partnership. Some of her publications are "Molecular mechanisms for inhibition of colon cancer cells by combined epigenetic-modulating epigallocatechin gallate and sodium butyrate," "Epigenetic dietary compounds on transgenerational prevention of human diseases," and "Pathway Modulations and Epigenetic Alterations in Ovarian Tumorigenesis."</p> <p>In her free time she enjoys painting and creative art.</p>

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**Martha Stovall, MA** (Jackson State University)  
 Assistant Professor, Rust College, Psychology  
[stovall\\_martha@yahoo.com](mailto:stovall_martha@yahoo.com)

My name is Martha Payne-Stovall I am an Assistant Professor in the Division of Education, at Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi. This is my second time at Rust College for over twenty years. I teach in the areas of Sociology and Psychology and I also work with the Annual Performance Review for State Accreditation in the Division of Education. I am married to Dr. A.J. Stovall who is the Chairman of the Social Science Division and we have seven children. My research interests are varied however I am most interested in two areas; Breast Cancer in African-American women and the perception of inferiority of African American children, depicted by negative imagery. As it relates to Breast Cancer, I am a co-founder of a Community Outreach Breast Cancer Program The Norma Washington, JRBC( Journey to Reduce Breast Cancer). We are involved in Annual Seminars and fundraising events. Our goal is to stop the silence and a save a life. My passion is to leave the world a better place than it was when I came. Being an educator has helped fulfill this dream.



**Shivani Soni, PhD** (ASU/UAB)  
 Associate Professor, Biological Sciences, Alabama State University  
[ssoni@alasu.edu](mailto:ssoni@alasu.edu)

Dr. Shivani Soni joined as an assistant professor in Department of Biological sciences in April 2010. Dr. Soni obtained her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Zoology from University of Delhi, India. She received her postdoctoral training with Dr. Manjit Hanspal at Tufts School of Medicine, Boston, Massachusetts. Later she joined as a senior postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Shiladitya Sengupta's lab at Health Science & Technology division of Harvard Medical School-MIT, Boston, Massachusetts.

Her research interests are in the area of Hematology and Oncology.

Her research has focused in the field of erythropoiesis (Red blood cell formation), where she demonstrated the role of a novel protein Emp (Erythroblast Macrophage Protein) in red blood cells and macrophage development. Emp was discovered by Dr. Hanspal in 1994 and Dr. Soni was the first one to characterize its function *in vivo* in 2006 This has resulted in multiple high impact publications and a prestigious travel award from American Society of Hematology. Additionally, she had also explored events preceding the release of malarial parasite from RBC's as an extension of her PhD work. She received her Ph.D. degree from University of Delhi in molecular parasitology, focusing on development of drug resistance in malarial parasites and their transmission. Her current research focuses on developing strategies that can be applied into clinico-pathological conditions related to abnormal erythropoiesis, cell-to-cell adhesion & migration. Another part of her research in the area of Oncology involves engineering concepts pertaining to biological systems. In collaboration, she has developed several novel polymeric hybrid nanoformulations for cancer chemotherapy and targeting aberrant signal transduction pathways which has led to many publications in peer reviewed journals as well as patents. She is a senior research investigator in program grant (P20) with UAB comprehensive center under the mentorship of Dr. Upender Manne. Their focus of research is to explore the role of Emp in colon cancer patient's prognosis and survival. Dr. Soni is the reviewer of many journals related to Hematology, Oncology and Biochemistry. Her Lab is a platform for inculcating basic research aptitude in undergraduate and graduate students of minority background.



**Irena Stepanikova, PhD** (RCMAR)  
 Associate Professor, UAB Sociology  
[irena@uab.edu](mailto:irena@uab.edu)

I am a sociologist specializing in health disparities. In my research, I apply socio-psychological theories to better understand mechanisms and processes underlying inequality in health. I also study the process of health care, and how physician-patient communication and trust contribute to disparities. I have experience using a variety of methodologies, including qualitative approaches (focus groups, in-depth interviews), experiments, and large population-based surveys.

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