

Annual Report
Center on
Health, Aging,
and Disability



**College of Applied
Health Sciences**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



Welcome to a new academic year!

Welcome to back to campus!
The 2023–24 academic year was a busy and exciting one for AHS research and the Center on Health, Aging, and Disability (CHAD) as we supported the innovative research, education, and public engagement work of the College of Applied Health Sciences (AHS).

The 2023–24 academic year was a year full of breakthroughs, discoveries, innovative research projects, and impactful publications for the College of Applied Health Sciences and the Center on Health, Aging, and Disability (CHAD) was here to support the important work of health sciences researchers.

In addition to funding **four CHAD Pilot Grants and 31 travel awards**, we were thrilled to launch a new funding opportunity this past year, the UIUC-UIC AHS Collaborative Grant Program. We awarded grants to two worthy projects this year and look forward to expanding research collaborations with our colleagues in Chicago.

Our two research themes, Collaborations in the Advancement of Research on Disability (CARD) and Collaborations in Health, Aging, Research, and Technology (CHART) continue to impress me with their groundbreaking research and their presence at community events. This year we were fortunate to add Carrie Wennerdahl to our team to support both research themes.

A personal highlight for me every year is the CHAD Symposium. This year's symposium in April was an invigorating morning highlighting the success of our research themes and pilot grant program.

In 2023, our staff supported **101 external grant submissions** with AHS investigators as the lead PI. We had an excellent year in terms of external funding with **more than \$15 million in external grant proposals funded** in our college.

I would like to thank the CHAD staff, interns, the CHAD Senior Faculty Committee, the CHART Steering Committee, the CARD Steering Committee, the CHART Advisory Panel, the Age-Friendly Steering Committee, and all who worked with CHAD throughout the year.

YOURS IN SCIENCE,

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Jeff Woods". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeff Woods

Director, Center on Health, Aging, and Disability
Associate Dean for Research, College of Applied Health Sciences
Mottier Family Professor, Kinesiology and Community Health

Pilot Grants

We are proud to highlight the significant impact of CHAD's support for AHS researchers.

With a total investment over \$1 million pilot research grants, our talented faculty have successfully utilized these initial projects to secure larger funding from federal, foundations, and corporate sponsors. Building on this success, in 2024, we awarded four new pilot grants to our exceptional faculty, fostering innovation and advancing groundbreaking research in the health sciences.

** This project was awarded as part of the Center for Research and Education on Aging and Technology Enhancement (CREATE) funded by the National Institute on Aging.*

2023 PILOT GRANT RECIPIENTS



Joelle Soulard & Yannick Kluch

RECREATION, SPORT AND TOURISM

Far Right or Far from Right? Examining Community Resilience to Right-Wing Extremism in German Leisure Contexts



Harshal Mahajan

HEALTH AND KINESIOLOGY

Robot Support for Individuals with Physical Disabilities*



Fatima Husain

SPEECH AND HEARING SCIENCE

Targeted Neurofeedback Training to Alleviate Tinnitus Distress*



Diego Hernandez-Saavedra

HEALTH AND KINESIOLOGY

Determining the Role of Physical Activity on Shoulder Musculoskeletal Adaptation, Biomechanics, Pain, and Pathology in Pediatric and Young Adult Manual Wheelchair Users

UIC-UIUC Applied Health Sciences Interdisciplinary Collaborative Grant Program

This year we were pleased to launch the new Collaborative Grant Program.

This program aims to foster and incentivize collaborations and equitable partnerships among faculty at UIC and UIUC, with the goal of creating and positioning cross-campus interdisciplinary teams. Two grants were awarded in the inaugural year.



***Shelby Keye (UIUC) &
Eduardo Bustamante (UIC)***

*Convergent Effects of Health Behaviors on Neurocognitive
and Academic Performance.*

***Emerson Sebastião (UIUC)
& Rob Motl (UIC)***

*Development and Testing of an Intelligent Square Stepping
Exercise System for Cognitive-Motor Rehabilitation in Older
Adults with Multiple Sclerosis*

Travel Grants

CHAD is committed to fostering academic collaboration and knowledge dissemination by offering travel funding opportunities to faculty and academic professionals to present their work at conferences across the globe.



CANADA

Vancouver, BC

UNITED STATES

Portland, OR

Alexandria, VA

Atlanta, GA

Baton Rouge, LA

Boston, MA

Chicago, IL

Denver, CO

Kansas City, MO

Long Beach, CA

Los Angeles, CA

Milwaukee, WI

Minneapolis, MN

New Orleans, LA

Newport Beach, CA

Phoenix, AZ

Scottsdale, AZ

Washington, DC

AUSTRALIA

Cairns

EUROPE

Krakow, Poland

Public Engagement

Throughout the year you may have seen our staff, faculty, and students at community events such as the Urbana Farmer's Market, the Disability Resource Expo, Dine with the Doc, and events with both Parks Districts.



SPRINGTIME SCIENCE COMMUNITY SEMINAR SERIES

This spring the two CHAD Research Themes (CARD & CHART) and the McKechnie Family LIFE Home partnered with the Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Institute, Illinois Extension, TechSage, to present the Springtime Science Community Seminar Series.

This series showcased research from TechSage, a research center focused on supporting persons aging with long-term disabilities, directed by Dr. Laura Rice. After each presentation participants attended a virtual tour of the LIFE Home.

ENGAGED UNIT PROGRAM

This past spring, AHS participated in the Engaged Unit Program through the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Public Engagement.

A dedicated team of AHS faculty and staff worked to develop an Action Plan to institutionalize publicly engaged research and teaching in our college.

AGE-FRIENDLY CHAMPAIGN-URBANA

Since 2016, CHAD has worked closely with a group of community leaders to support the AARP program Age-Friendly Champaign-Urbana.

This past year was a busy one, as the group collaborated to host Champaign County Active Aging Week, traveled to Springfield to meet with AARP and community and government leaders, and continued our bi-monthly column in the *Central Illinois Business Magazine*.



Interns

This year, we welcomed six exceptional interns who made substantial contributions to our public engagement work and research mission.

“I had a great time working at CHAD with Dr. Bartlo and my peer interns. We were completing important work and contributing to the local community. It was both a fulfilling and appropriately challenging opportunity!”

*Colleen Welch,
Interdisciplinary Health Sciences '24*



CHAD Symposium

In April we hosted the CHAD Symposium. Central to this morning was a celebration of research accomplishments through the Pilot Grant Program and the progress of our two research themes, Collaborations in the Advancement of Research on Disability (CARD) and Collaborations in Health, Aging, Research, and Technology (CHART).

We welcomed keynote Speaker, Garrett Grindle, from the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Grindle presented on how modern digital fabrication technologies have been used to accelerate and advance assistive technologies.



Collaborations in the Advancement of Research on Disability (CARD)

Over the past year, CARD has established several successful activities that will continue over the next academic year.

EVENTS



CARD Speaker Series

Emily Tarconish, Ph.D., Teaching Assistant Professor, Special Education presented two projects that aim to expand access in postsecondary settings.



Celebration

In December, CARD hosted an end of the semester get-together to celebrate, collaborate, and plan for the spring semester.



Symposium Keynote

CARD hosted and organized a lunch for CHAD Symposium Keynote Speaker, Garrett Grindle, who was welcomed and joined by many CARD members for conversations.



COLLABORATIVE WORKING GROUP

The CARD Collaborative Working Group met throughout the year to foster fellowship among UIUC faculty involved in disability related research, share ideas, support junior faculty, and facilitate the development of research teams.

The February meeting was hosted by Joshua Leonardis, in his Movement Analysis Laboratory. In April meeting was in the (dis)Ability Design Studio at Beckman Institute where host, Deana McDonagh, offered a tour of her lab space and Beckman.



CARD STEERING COMMITTEE

The CARD Steering Committee had a busy inaugural year offering feedback and guidance for current and future endeavors. We appreciate the time that these researchers and community members donated to our efforts this past year.

Collaborations in Health, Aging, Research, and Technology (CHART)

Formally launched in 2017, the Collaborations in Health, Aging, Research, & Technology (CHART) research theme continues to support research efforts that promote aging successfully with technology. The 2023-24 academic year was a productive year for CHART researchers and staff.



CHART organized a visit to Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) in Springfield, Illinois for CHART researchers, staff, and collaborators from our community partner, Clark Lindsey Village.

IATP offers access to assistive technology devices and services to promote independence and support an individual's participation in all aspects of life. The CHART team learned about this important resource for Illinois residents and solidified a partnership for future collaborations.

CHART VISITING SCHOLARS

CHART welcomed Drs. Jeannie Lee and Kathleen Insel (University of Arizona) to present on the Medication Education, Decision Support, Reminding and Monitoring (MEDSReM©) system development. Tongxin Sun (Tsinghua University) joined CHART for a year-long visit to learn about research on aging and technology. April Pereira (University of Waterloo) joined CHART for the 2024 spring semester to conduct research on robots helping older adults with everyday tasks.



AGE FRIENDLY UNIVERSITY

CHART is developing the Age-Friendly University (AFU) section of the CHART website. Spring CHAD Interns conducted a review of other universities' websites in the AFU network to offer recommendations for our web presence.



Age-friendly
University
Global Network



RECRUITMENT SUPPORT

CHART supports research study participant recruitment and works closely with community and university partners to share information with potential study participants. CHART students, faculty, and staff are often at community events promoting ongoing research studies.



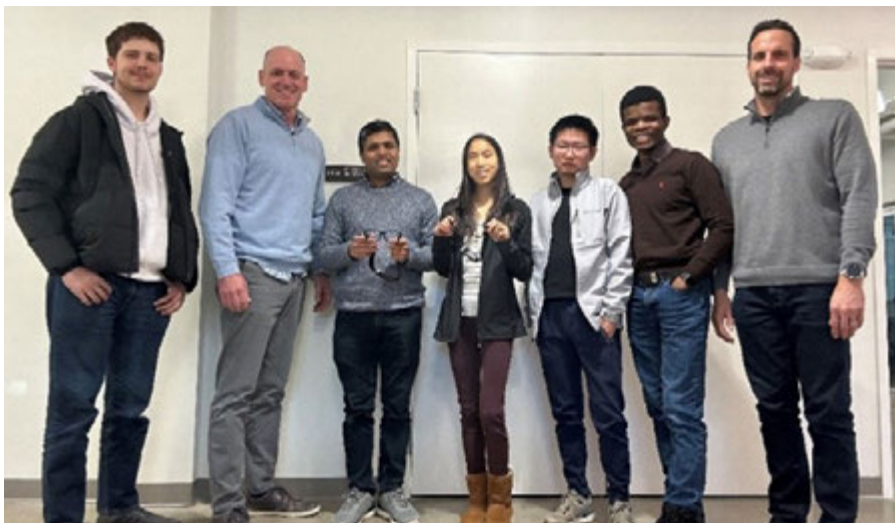
CHART COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL

The CHART Community Advisory Panel includes older adults and represents our commitment to the development research *with* older adults and not *for* them.

This spring Community Advisory Panel members met with CHART members to offer their expert feedback on two current CHART research projects and the recommendations for the upcoming Age-Friendly University website. We appreciate the Advisory Panel's thoughtful input and support for CHART.

McKechnie Family LIFE Home

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS



NEW RESEARCH COLLABORATION

Hourglass Medical, a company developing head-worn technology devices, is collaborating with LIFE Home researchers to enhance hands-free operation of the Stretch robot, aiming to provide physical support for individuals with motor impairment.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR RESEARCH

We welcomed three new robots to the facility: PARO (a therapeutic robot), Moxie (a social robot) and Stretch RE2 (a mobile manipulator robot).



COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

Open Houses

The McKechnie Family LIFE Home hosted two open houses this year. Attendees interacted with researchers, robots, and other technologies to learn about our cutting-edge research to advance health and well-being for people in their homes.



Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) conference

McKechnie Family LIFE Home researchers presented at the Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) conference. The team demonstrated technologies remotely from the event venue in our home simulation area.



People



Jeff Woods

DIRECTOR AND ASSOCIATE DEAN
FOR RESEARCH



Laura Rice

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
AND DIRECTOR OF CARD



Wendy Bartlo

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
OF RESEARCH SERVICES,
RELATIONS, AND
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



Wendy Rogers

DIRECTOR OF THE
MCKECHNIE FAMILY LIFE
HOME AND DIRECTOR OF
CHART



Harshal Mahajan

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF
RESEARCH, MCKECHNIE
FAMILY LIFE HOME



Heidi Krahling

GRANT PROPOSAL
SPECIALIST



Samuel Olatunji

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH
ASSOCIATE, MCKECHNIE
FAMILY LIFE HOME



Yvona Vlach

OPERATIONS
COORDINATOR,
MCKECHNIE FAMILY
LIFE HOME



Carrie Wennerdahl

RESEARCH COORDINATOR

Thank you to all the people who work hard to support the work of CHAD throughout the entire year.

CHAD SENIOR FACULTY COMMITTEE

Raksha Mudar (chair)

Liza Berdychevsky

Naiman Khan

John Kosciulek

Wendy Bartlo (ex-officio)

Laura Rice (ex-officio)

CARD STEERING COMMITTEE

Deana McDonagh

Emily Tarconish

Laura Mattie

Matthew Hanks

Michael Lotspeich-Yadao

Diane Husby-Gordon

CHART STEERING COMMITTEE

Liza Berdychevsky

Chelsey Byers-Gerstenecker

Tanya Gallagher

Kathleen Holden

Brian Pastor

Raksha Mudar

Deb Reardanz

Andiara Schwingel

Abigail Wooldridge

CHART COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL

Bob Boucek

Sue Boucek

Marianne Downey

Urias Betoel Escobar

Jim Fawcet

Joan Zernich

ENGAGED UNIT COMMITTEE

Wendy Bartlo

Sadie Braun

Caitlin Clarke

Mariela Fernandez

Amy Woods

CHAD INTERNS

Janet Azuma

Janaina Hernandez

Evelyn Morales

Hannah Norquist

Nicole Roddan

Colleen Welch

AGE-FRIENDLY STEERING COMMITTEE

Evan Alvarez

Amy Brown

Dennis Cockrum

Chris Diana

Joan Dixon

Nicole Dowling

Marianne Downey

Laura Gallagher Watkin

Jasmine Godia

Allison Haines

Sharon Harkness

Kathryn Johnson

Klentoria Lee-Clements

Lisa Miller

Nicole Mitchell

Janet Soesbe

Linda Tauber-Olsen

Carol Timms

Carrie Wennerdahl

Emma Woods

Jeff Woods



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