

MSU  
DEN  
VER

## Sponsored Research and Programs Annual Report FY 2019-2020



Reimagine **possible**





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# MSU Denver

For more than 50 years, Metropolitan State University of Denver has pushed the boundaries of what is possible in higher education.

We empower Colorado's students to advance their lives and careers through high-quality, real-world education. And we power the state economy through our 95,000 work-ready graduates, more than 80% of whom stay in Colorado. Based in the heart of the Mile High City, MSU Denver provides unparalleled access to internships and professional networks that jump-start careers.

MSU Denver: The Model Urban University Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) believes that every student should have an opportunity to better their life. We know that real-world higher education is the key factor in upward economic and social mobility. MSU Denver students achieve their goals through a unique learning model that blends the theoretical and practical, balancing human and technical skills to cultivate graduates who have the traits today's employers want. Our career- and community-minded programs, partnerships and pathways have made us a leading innovator in preparing students to succeed after graduation while also developing workforce pipelines for high-demand Colorado industries. As a model urban university focused on opportunity, diversity, excellence and transformation, MSU Denver students mirror the faces of Colorado, embodying a wide array of backgrounds and cultures. The campus environment provides students the opportunity to develop multicultural awareness critical to thriving in today's workplace while embracing each student's individuality. With more than 85 majors and 70 minors, as well as seven (7) Master's Degrees offered in the areas of Business Administration, Professional Accountancy, Health Administration, Social Work, Arts in Teaching, Cybersecurity and Human Nutrition and Dietetics, MSU Denver enrolls more than 20,000 students annually and works to connect with more than 90,000 alumni.

More than

**95%**

Students are  
from Colorado

**46%**

Enrolled Students  
Receive Scholarships  
or Grants

**54%**

Undergraduates  
Transfer to  
MSU Denver

**56%**

Undergraduates  
are First in Family  
to go to College

**46%**

Undergraduates are  
Students of Color

## Opportunity

At MSU Denver, we see higher education as the foundation of the American dream. If you are willing to put in the work, you should have an opportunity to get ahead. Period. Regardless of where you've been, we can help you get to where you want to go.

## Excellence

MSU Denver offers high-quality education without the high-end price tag. Our classes are taught by noted academics, national experts and industry icons. And they build hands-on learning into every course, which helps students become career-ready, critical thinkers who companies want to hire.

## Innovation

At MSU Denver, we never settle. We believe that the key to great education is always adapting to meet the needs of today's students and the needs of society. That's why we connect classrooms to careers through cutting-edge learning spaces and partnerships with some of Colorado's leading companies.

**8,529**

Pell-eligible  
Students Served  
(more than any other  
public institution in  
Colorado)



**Nearly 80%**

Students Work  
Full or Part Time



**25**

Average Age of  
Undergraduates



## Diversity Champion

Diversity is a core value at MSU Denver. We believe our differences make us stronger and work hard every day to make sure that our campus is a welcoming and inclusive place for all people.



## Best for Vets

MSU Denver is regularly ranked as a top school for serving those who serve, with 1,207 current and former military members on campus.



## AACSB accreditation

Only 5% of business schools worldwide earn this distinction. It's one of many reasons our College of Business is the best value in Colorado.



## Hispanic-Serving Institution

MSU Denver was designated as an HSI by the U.S. Department of Education for its commitment to educating Latino students, who make up 30% of the total student population.



# A Hispanic Serving Institution

Since MSU Denver's federal designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in 2019, we continue to serve the highest number of Hispanic/Latinx students among institutions of higher education in the state of Colorado, at 5,476, representing 29.3 percent of MSU Denver's enrolled student body. We have been deliberate in our efforts to advance this work structurally, which includes becoming part of several national, state, and local organizations focused on addressing the advancement of Hispanic/Latinx issues in student access, support, success, and careers.

In October of 2019, MSU Denver was awarded a HSI Post Baccalaureate in Nutrition Program grant aimed at promoting opportunities for Latinx and other underrepresented students and encourages access and enrollment of these students to graduate school.

In December 2019, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) was awarded a Census Count grant in partnership with several community partners. Together, they facilitated the implementation of the 2020 Census grant to help educate the campus and broader hard-to-count local communities about the importance of the Census Count, including encouraging completion.

During AY 2019-20, the ODI created the DEIC (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council), a group aimed at examining and acting on diversity, inclusion, and equity issues at MSU Denver with respect to policy and practice from multiple perspectives and across different functionalities. This includes access, recruitment and retention, community mending and outreach to diverse constituents internally and externally, campus climate and institutional culture, and HSI synergy and integration efforts (a renewed and

restructured version of the HSI Task Force). These efforts are now anchored within conversations aimed at strategic thinking and diversity planning within the context of HSI. Part of the role of the HSI team is to remain current with and examine issues, trends, and advocacy pertaining to HSI initiatives, programs and services. This includes: (1) Gain awareness around laws, regulations, policies that have a potential impact on HSI funding and designation; (2) Strengthen process and criteria for the identification and prioritization of HSI grants; (3) Benchmark HSI effective and impactful practices for consideration. In June of this year, MSU Denver received MSI/HSI CARES Act funding to benefit minoritized and underrepresented students.

Dr. Michael Benitez serves as the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion at Metropolitan State University of Denver. Dr. Benitez is a nationally-acclaimed scholar-practitioner in higher education and a highly sought out speaker and workshop leader at universities, colleges and conferences nationwide. A diversity, equity and inclusion leader and strategist, Dr. Benitez has helped create, shape, and lead innovative equity and inclusion-based strategies, programs and practices to address some of higher education's pressing campus climate issues and challenges.

Dr. Manuel Del Real is the Executive Director of HSI Initiatives and Inclusion at Metropolitan State University of Denver. As a critical social justice scholar-practitioner, Dr. Del Real is committed to promoting access, diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education. As a student affairs practitioner for over ten years, he has effectively led initiatives focusing on underrepresented populations and increasing postsecondary access and success. As a former faculty member, he draws on critical and social justice to help redesign and transform curriculum and programming.







## Letter from Interim Provost

Rarely a day goes by when I am not amazed, excited, and humbled by the remarkable work carried out by MSU Denver faculty and staff. I am of the belief that our faculty and staff demonstrate a level of professionalism and commitment unrivaled in the state of Colorado. This report, highlighting work supported by external grants, confirms that belief. It documents the many ways in which our faculty and staff support the mission of this University—we reimagine what is possible, and we support students as they transform their lives. This vision of personal and professional transformation is the highest ideal of higher education.

The Office of Sponsored Research and Programs (OSRP) supports high-quality, externally-funded scholarly activities, community based research (CBR) and service projects, and student support programs at MSU Denver. The projects highlighted here provide clear evidence of the professionalism and expertise of the OSRP staff. I extend my deepest appreciation to each staff member for the remarkable work they do!

Scholarship, which entails the advancement of intellectual and creative enterprises, is central to the life of a University. Not only does the scholarship described here help faculty maintain currency in their disciplines, it provides a connection between MSU Denver and our community and raises the profile of the institution regionally, nationally, and internationally. Through the positive effect this work has on our faculty, staff, students, and community, these projects contribute to the greater good for all.

I congratulate each of you on the remarkable work you have accomplished in the past year and I extend my sincerest thanks to those who have participated in these successes!

**Bill Henry, Ph.D.**  
**Interim Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs**

**Reimagine** possible







**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR :**

**Dr. Dawn Matera Bassett**

**GRANT:**

**Child Welfare THRIVE Program**

Principal Investigator Dr. Dawn Matera Bassett received a \$129,619 grant from the Colorado Department of Human Resources, Division of Child Welfare, to support and implement the THRIVE Intervention Program with urban and rural counties across the state. The program provides vicarious and secondary trauma training and consultation for child welfare workers throughout Colorado — including supervisors, social workers, coaches and managers. Child welfare workers support children and families who have experienced trauma, interpersonal violence, and/or mental health and addictions. The repetitive exposure to traumatized individuals in crisis places child welfare workers at risk for vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, burnout and increases the likelihood they will leave the profession.

Susan Archuleta, the THRIVE Community Liaison and Thrive Coaches provide ongoing vicarious trauma (VT) training to help workers identify indicators of VT and techniques to mitigate it, both at work and at home. The team conducts organizational workshops, team coaching, debriefings and discussions related to current needs, trends and issues as they relate to supporting resilience and mitigating the impact of secondary traumatic stress. Supervisors and managers undergo training on how to supervise staff around VT, with emphasis placed on understanding the differences between task and clinical supervision. To respond to the emergent nature of child welfare services, the team staffs a 24-hour hotline open to all THRIVE participants to receive confidential support within 24 hours of a critical incident. The program is evaluated quarterly to assess the progress of the THRIVE program and to hear from managers on what is working and what is needed. In response to social distancing and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment recommendations, services are provided in virtual formats (i.e., Zoom, MS Teams, Skype) when requested.

Dr. Matera Bassett is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and an Associate Professor at MSU Denver in the graduate Social Work program. She has worked for over 25 years in mental health treatment settings with children, adolescents, and adults. She is the Principal Investigator on the THRIVE Colorado initiative and on three federal HRSA BHWET Projects. Her research interests focus on interventions to strengthen the efficacy of mental health treatment for clients and ways to mitigate the impact of vicarious trauma on treatment providers.







**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR :**

**Dr. Michael Benitez**

**GRANT:**

## **Census 2020 Outreach Program**

Principal Investigator Dr. Michael Benitez, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion who oversees the designation of Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), received a \$456,698 grant from The Colorado Department of Local Affairs' (DOLA) to administer and conduct the 2020 Census Outreach Initiative. The Census Outreach Program Grant was awarded to help increase community outreach, promotion, education and Census Count completion within Colorado communities considered hard-to-count in the effort to grow the response rate and accuracy of the census. The term "hard to count" refers to communities of color and populations that include recent immigrants, refugees, children, low-income individuals and families and people with disabilities.

To help ensure an accurate Denver Census Count, MSU Denver, in partnership with several community organizations and public entities, developed and implemented the "We All Count/Todos Contamos!" Program. The program focused on three pillars: Establishing MSU Denver as the "umbrella" anchoring institution; Determining subsequent hubs (physical places) where individuals already go and can use Census Stations to complete the survey; Leveraging culturally and linguistically appropriate People Power as Census Outreach Specialists, including MSU Denver students.

MSU Denver served as the umbrella organization and managed the infrastructure to provide sub-awards to partner agencies. In this capacity, MSU Denver oversaw project partnerships, ensured the proper allocation of funds and that the data requirements were met. Grant partners included: *ReVision; Una Mano, Una Esperanza; City and County of Denver; Lutheran Family Services; Denver Human Services; Denver Health;* and, *Montbello 2020*. The goal was to reach the many Denver residents who may otherwise go uncounted, which included 45,000 students on the Auraria Campus and approximately 375,000 people within the community.

Dr. Benitez is a nationally-acclaimed scholar practitioner in higher education, and a highly sought out speaker and workshop leader at universities, colleges and conferences nationwide. A diversity, equity and inclusion leader and strategist, Dr. Benitez has helped create, shape, and lead innovate equity and inclusion-based strategies, programs and practices to address some of higher education's pressing campus climate issues and challenges.







**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR :**

**Dr. Caleb Cohoe**

**GRANT:**

## **Peer Philosophy Leaders Program**

Principal Investigator Dr. Caleb Cohoe received \$3,578 in funding from the University of Notre Dame's (UND) Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Grant to create the pilot MSU Denver Peer Philosophy Leaders Internship Program which expands the Mellon Philosophy as a Way of Life curricular model. Many traditions of philosophy aim to help people think more deeply and rigorously about life. Notre Dame and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation have partnered with universities to help imagine new and higher impact ways to teach these traditions.

As a result, the Peer Philosophy Leaders Internship was developed. It introduced a peer-led discussion component to Dr. Cohoe's Introduction to Ethics course, which considers philosophy as a way of life themes in Aristotle, Susan Wolf, early Buddhist thought, and Blaise Pascal. Philosophy students were encouraged to apply for two leadership positions to share their experiences, further examine philosophical theories, and engage their fellow students, promoting the expression of many voices in the classroom. Dr. Paul Blaschko, Assistant Teaching Professor of Philosophy at UND, conducted a workshop in January 2020 for Dr. Cohoe and three potential peer leaders and shared techniques for leading discussion effectively. Blaschko also presented on pedagogy to MSU Denver's Philosophy Department. Selected students completed a three-credit academic internship in Spring 2020, in conjunction with MSU Denver's Applied Learning Center — this is the first-ever academic credit internship offered by the Philosophy Department.



Under the Peer Philosophy Leaders Internship Program, student interns were responsible for leading peer discussion groups of 9-14 students during class and for developing a distinctive exercise for students to complete. In addition to performing regular class readings and activities, they also conducted independent research focused on philosophy as a way of life principles. Based on the success of the pilot program, the Department of Philosophy is looking into offering other Peer Dialogue Leaders Internships in the future. Dr. Cohoe and intern Jordan Matthews were also recently featured in an online video discussion of peer-led dialogue and its role at MSU Denver for the Philosophy as a Way of Life Network.

Dr. Caleb Cohoe is an Associate Professor of Philosophy. He received his doctorate in Philosophy from Princeton University in 2012, where he was enrolled in the Program in Classical Philosophy. His primary areas of research are ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, medieval philosophy, and philosophy of religion. He has presented on pedagogy and philosophy as a way of life at national and international conferences and has two forthcoming papers on what it means to live philosophically.





**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR :**

**Dr. Megan Filbin**

**GRANT:**

**NIH R15 Translation Program**

Principal Investigator Dr. Megan Filbin received a \$388,762 Academic Research Enhancement Award (R15) award from the National Institutes of Health for her project, "Molecular Mechanisms of Cue-Dependent Translation Regulation." With this award, she aims to identify the fundamental ways in which neurons regulate localized protein synthesis in order to path find during development.

A well-designed circuit board contains intricately connected wires that propagate signals quickly with little interference. In a similar manner, neurons connect to transmit signals necessary for cognition, memory, movement, etc. To form these specific connections, environmental signals guide directional neuron growth (and cell-cell contacts) by initiating or thwarting local gene expression inside the cell. The ways in which external growth signals are transduced to immediate and localized responses (gene expression) inside the cell is largely unknown. Yet, if this operation does not occur, brain development and nerve regeneration after injury are disrupted, underscoring the importance of understanding this process.

The major goal of the project is to identify how the transducer, deleted in colorectal cancer (DCC), a cell surface receptor, binds to and regulates protein synthesis machinery inside the cell in the presence and absence of the environmental growth signal, netrin-1. Using protein and nucleic acid biochemistry, biophysics, and cell biology, student researchers will identify the interactions between DCC and protein synthesis machinery, model the structure of the complex and determine mechanisms that underly this regulation.

The funds provided by the AREA grant will significantly support the growing research environment at MSU Denver, particularly in the biochemistry subdiscipline in the department. Through our collaborations, we will foster strong ties between MSU Denver and the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

Dr. Filbin received her B.S. in Molecular Biology from the University of Denver, her Ph.D. in Molecular Biology & Biochemistry from the University of Colorado School of Medicine, and she completed a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Janelia Research Campus. Her interests include biochemical structure-function relationship in both RNA and protein biomolecules. She explores how our cellular protein synthesis machinery is hijacked, controlled and/or regulated by various biomolecules based on their structure.





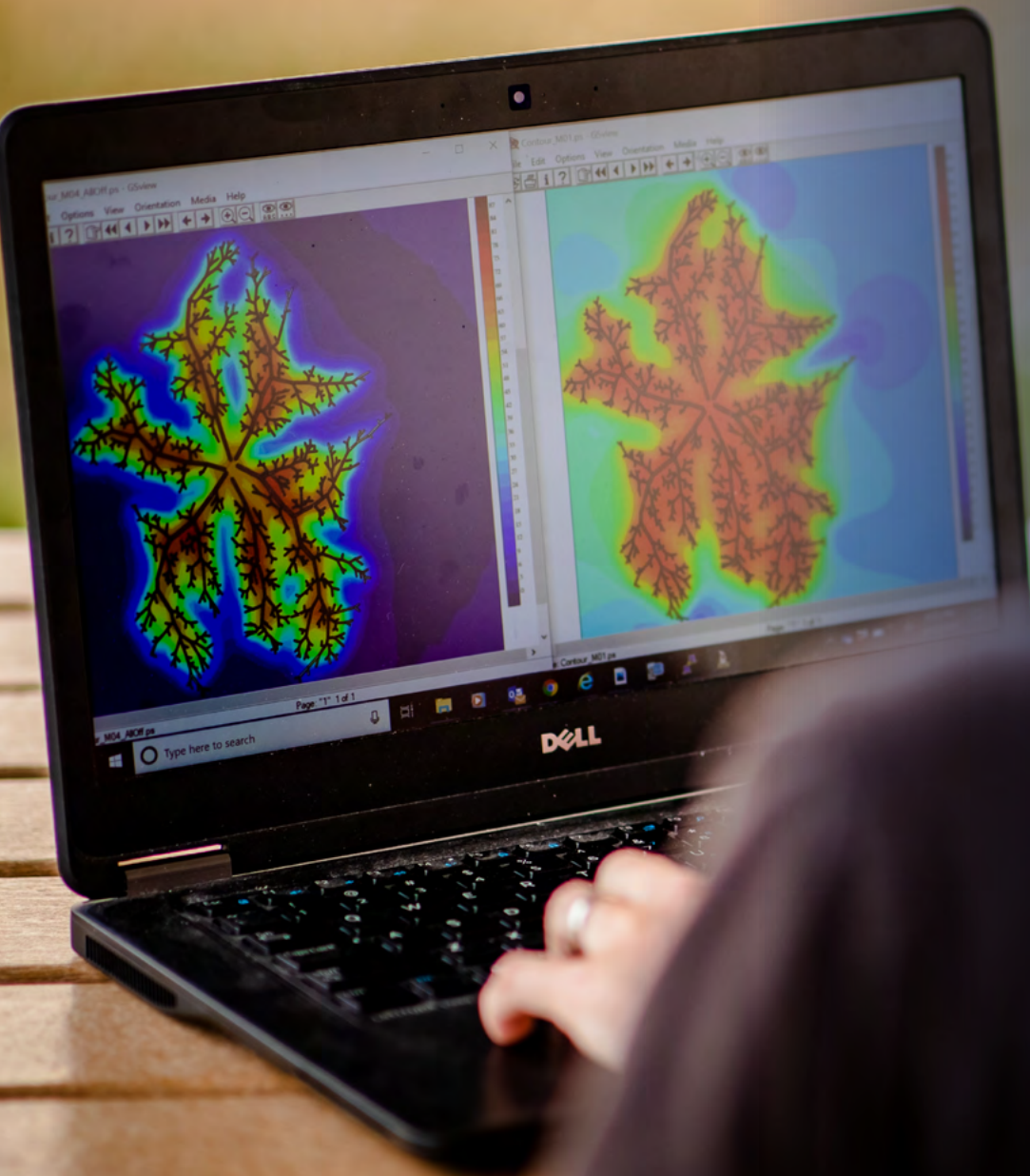


CO-INVESTIGATOR :

**Dr. Brendan Fry**

GRANT:

## **Integration of Clinical Measures and Theoretical Modeling to Quantify Sectorial Specific Changes in Ocular Structure, Function, and Hemodynamics**



Co-Investigator Dr. Brendan Fry received a \$132,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health to conduct a 4-year study to quantify the contributions of various biomarkers in the development of glaucoma. The main objective of the study is to integrate clinical measures with theoretical models to relate changes in tissue-specific blood flow and oxygenation to visual function and structure in healthy and glaucomatous eyes. This is a joint grant with Indiana University and the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, involving a team of both ophthalmologists and mathematicians.

Primary open-angle glaucoma is the second-leading cause of blindness worldwide and is characterized by progressive retinal cell death and vision loss. Recent studies have indicated that impaired blood flow and oxygen delivery in the retina are significant factors associated with glaucoma; however, a combined experimental and theoretical approach is needed to analyze the cause-and-effect relationships among retinal function, hemodynamics, and structure. The proposed work will use current state-of-the-art imaging techniques to measure structural elements, hemodynamic elements, and functional elements in overlapping anatomical regions of the eye. This study will also produce a mathematical model that can be used to predict oxygen transport and blood flow regulation in a heterogeneous description of the retinal microvasculature. Then, statistical and mathematical modeling approaches will be used to create predictive functions that describe the dependence of local retinal function on structure and hemodynamics. The ability to predict where vision loss is likely to occur has the potential to change the treatment strategies for glaucoma patients, leading to important breakthroughs in early glaucoma intervention.

Dr. Fry is an Associate Professor of Mathematics at MSU Denver and received both his B.S. and Ph.D. from the University of Arizona. His research focus is in an area called mathematical biology — specifically in developing theoretical models for simulating blood flow and oxygen transport in networks of blood vessels in various tissues. This research brings together various branches of mathematics with real-world biological problems, making it ripe for undergraduate student involvement.





**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR :**

**Dr. Amanda (Mandi) Schaeffer Fry**

**GRANT:**

**Representations in Castro: A Summer School Program**

Principal Investigator Dr. Amanda (Mandi) Schaeffer Fry received a \$10,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to support U.S.-based graduate student travel to attend the international “Representations in Castro: A Summer School” conference at the Centro Internacional de Encuentros Matematicos (CIEM) in Castro Urdiales, Spain, which she is organizing with collaborators Carolina Vallejo from Madrid, Spain and Olivier Dudas from Paris, France.

The conference is aimed at introducing early-career mathematicians and young researchers around the world to topics in the representation theory of finite groups (an abstract branch of mathematics).

Women and other groups underrepresented in mathematics will be especially encouraged to participate in order to encourage the expansion of diversity and thought in the field. Participants in the summer school will learn the basics of representation theory from multiple mathematical points of view and be introduced to some of the current hot topics in this thriving research area, which will encourage cross-pollination of theories. The conference has three organizers and five speakers, representing a total of six countries, and will consist of lectures, discussion, and problem sessions led by the speakers and organizers.

It is the hope that by exposing U.S.-based graduate students to international conferences that introduce more intensive courses and lectures on current topics, they will be motivated to continue to use their talents to advance the state of knowledge in math and science. In addition to increasing their opportunity to build a network of international peers. But most importantly, the students will be inspired and support a new generation of well-rounded representation theorists.

Dr. Mandi Schaeffer Fry, an Associate Professor of Mathematics, earned her Ph.D. in 2013 at the University of Arizona and did a brief postdoc at Michigan State before joining MSU Denver in 2014. Her research area is in the abstract mathematical topic of group representation theory. “Dr. Mandi” loves introducing students to mathematical research through projects related to her own research, which has also led her to serve as the Faculty Associate for Undergraduate Research.







**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR :**

**Carla Mirabelli**

**Grants:**

**Adams City High School Program**

**City and County of Denver Mayor's Office: After School Program**

Principal Investigator Carla Mirabelli has worked at MSU Denver for 11 years, during which time has secured grants and managed programs in partnership with various entities — including school districts, local government, state education agencies and the federal government. Carla serves as the Director of the Center for Urban Education (CUE) and TRIO Upward Bound, a federally funded program. Most recently, she was awarded a \$235,000 multi-year grant from the City and County of Denver Office of Children's Affairs to support out of school time initiatives at two Denver Public Schools; and \$30,000 in funding to provide credit recovery tutoring support both in-school and during the summer at Adams City High School.

Since 2012, CUE has partnered with Denver Public Schools and other area school districts to implement programs that ensure youth and their families have access to a continuum of educational support that extends beyond the school day. The programs provide a rich array of afterschool learning opportunities and resources at each of the partner schools that benefit middle and high school students, as well as their families. As a result, programs continue to build a bridge between MSU Denver and the public school systems. In doing so, these programs not only strengthen on-the-job training and preparedness of prospective teachers, counselors, and other education professionals but positively impact the academic outcomes of the youth who participate in their programs.

The continuum of support encompasses tutoring, intervention, and credit-recovery services help to increase student achievement in core academic areas required for school and college success. These enrichment programs and activities build student motivation to learn, encourages participation, and improves their ability to advocate for educational success. In addition, the goal is to help strengthen family engagement, which can impact and guide students and parents through college readiness requirements and processes. CUE takes pride in serving middle- and high-school students who are least likely to have access to academic support, but who stand to benefit the most.

Prior to her work at MSU Denver, Carla supported fundraising and development for a national education policy organization and has experience securing contributions for members of congress and non-profit organizations from corporations and individuals. In her twenty years of professional experience leveraging and managing resources from a variety of stakeholders, she has most enjoyed her work in higher education, supporting MSU Denver to positively impact the academic achievement of K-12 students and increasing professional opportunities for University students.





**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR :**

**Dr. Rachel Sinley**

**GRANT:**

**POHA-Denver Program**

Principal Investigator (PI) Dr. Rachel Sinley and Co-PI Dr. Melissa Masters received a \$2,005,792 grant from the US Department of Education to support the development and implementation of the five-year Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans in Denver (POHA-Denver) program. POHA-Denver will address the need in the US and Colorado for culturally diverse Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs). Housed in the College of Professional Studies' Health Institute — Department of Nutrition, the POHA Denver program seeks to increase the number of students from underrepresented ethnic backgrounds (most significantly, Hispanics) who enroll in and graduate from, the postbaccalaureate dietetics degree program.

The primary objectives of POHA-Denver are (1) to increase exposure and awareness for students at MSU Denver, at two-year institutions and in high school about the dietetics profession. (2) Increase university acceptance, enrollment and retention of diverse students in the MSU Denver Dietetics Program to create a pool entering into the industry. (3) Increase the number of applicants from minority populations to MSU Denver's dietetics postbaccalaureate program. (4) Increase the enrollment and retention rates of minority students in the MSU Denver postbaccalaureate dietetics program and (5) increase collaborative partnerships with community organizations that serve Hispanic communities.

POHA-Denver will award scholarships and funds to support research or teaching assistantships at the University and will also offer faculty professional development to increase cultural competency to better understand barriers faced by students of color. POHA-Denver will also establish a mentorship program for students to connect with RDNs in the community and a tutoring program to build confidence in required knowledge competencies. The goal is to create a more inclusive industry where students feel represented and also to improve minority access to nutritional care, reduce nutritional health inequities and improve culturally responsive nutrition care in Colorado. Thus, making MSU Denver the premier graduate program for minority students interested in dietetics.

Dr. Rachel Sinley is an Associate Professor and Chair in the Department of Nutrition. She has worked at MSU Denver since 2016, teaching classes focused on Careers in Nutrition, Global Nutrition and Community Nutrition. Dr. Sinley has partnered extensively with community agencies in the Denver metro area to develop and assess community nutrition intervention programs, allowing community members and students to engage in a symbiotic learning process.

Dr. Melissa Masters is an Associate Professor and Graduate Program Director in the Department of Nutrition. Dr. Masters started working at MSU Denver in 2014 and has been actively involved in undergraduate and graduate curriculum and program development. Her areas of teaching have focused on senior capstone and entry-level graduate courses. Dr. Masters has served as a mentor to several undergraduate and graduate students as they pursue scholarly activities in the field of nutrition.



**CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR :**

**Dr. Melissa Masters**







**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR :**  
**Katherine (Katie) Taft**

**GRANT:**  
**NEA - Young Artist Studio**

Principal Investigator (PI) Katherine Taft and Co-PI Cecily Cullen received a one-year, \$15,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for the Young Artist Studio (YAS). The YAS is a teaching apprenticeship program at the Center for Visual Art (CVA) that provides MSU Denver Art Education students with the opportunity to get hands-on experience teaching art before entering the workforce. The program leverages University assets to offer free, art-making programs for diverse and underserved communities. The YAS has the capacity for eight art education apprentices annually and serves the community surrounding the CVA. University students in the apprenticeship apply theory to practice, working in a contemporary art gallery. Apprentices learn from professional artists, experienced educators, and contemporary artwork from all over the world.



**CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR :**  
**Cecily Cullen**

The YAS is a keystone community program at the CVA and a learning lab for MSU Denver Art Education students, acting as a bridge between MSU Denver and young people in the Denver Metro Area. CVA exhibitions feature contemporary artwork by professional and emerging artists in a variety of media who are both local and international. YAS programs aim to deepen and broaden the impact of these exhibitions by creating multiple entry points for diverse audiences. Educators, youth, families, and scholars participate in authentic learning experiences in the YAS, and teaching apprentices take the lead in developing and facilitating community programs.

Katie Taft, Education Manager at the Center for Visual Art, has been making her life as an artist and educator in Denver since 2003. She studied Social Justice History at The Evergreen State College and Visual Art at Marylhurst University in Portland, OR. She has taught through a variety of community organizations such as DAVA, Think 360, and Working With Artists and was an artist in residence at PlatteForum in 2008. She studied education at Stanley British and taught in the Denver Public Schools as a visual arts classroom teacher for seven years.

Cecily Cullen, Curator at the Center for Visual Art, has curated and organized over 65 exhibitions, with a focus on urban, contemporary issues. Cecily has managed the traveling exhibition, Christo and Jeanne-Claude: Prints and Objects, since 2009. Additionally, she contributes to exhibition juries, festivals, publications and public art projects. An advocate for art in Colorado, she serves on Denver's prestigious Cherry Creek Arts Festival Board of Directors. Before joining the Center for Visual Art, she worked in the communications field both as a graphic designer and writer. Cecily earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Arts and Humanities from Colorado State University.







**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR :**

**Dr. Kathryn (Kate) Trujillo**

**GRANT:**

**DHS Core Services Program**

Denver Department of Human Services (DHS) Core Services Program contracted with MSU Denver so that Dr. Kate Trujillo, LCSW, could provide consultation to the Preparing for Reunification Through Empowerment in Parenting Time (PREPT) Team. The Core Services Program was established within the Colorado Department of Human Services in 1994 to offer strength-based resources that support families when children are at risk of out-of-home placement, to keep them in the home when appropriate and possible. The PREPT Team offers therapeutic supervised visitation to families who are receiving services. The goal is to increase family engagement and keep children from being placed in foster care or if they are in foster care, returning home as quickly as possible. The main aim of Trujillo's work with DHS is to support the PREPT team in building capacity to engage families more deeply within supervised family visitation.

Dr. Trujillo, LCSW, has practiced Social Work, with a focus on child welfare emphasizing animal-assisted interventions since 1999. Dr. Trujillo's work stems from trauma-informed and developmental perspectives. She has published and presented nationally and internationally on the innovations of partnering with animals in Social Work practice. Trujillo values how creative approaches can disrupt oppressive systems and create positive family outcomes. Her current partner, Nellie, is a four-year-old black Labrador.

Specifically, in PREPT with Paws, Dr. Trujillo works with her certified therapy dog, Nellie. Nellie helps people served by the PREPT program feel more at ease during their visits. Together, Dr. Trujillo and Nellie help take the pressure off of the families when discussing difficult topics. Nellie brings her playful and soft presence to the visits and is, in her capacity-building role, teaching other canines on the PREPT team to do the same.

The PREPT Team has hosted several MSU Denver student employees in their internships as part of their Social Work education. Trujillo understands that student-led educational programs not only can support traumatized children and families but can transform the work of social workers in facilitating healing, finding hope, and building healthy relationships. Her philosophy is to help students become excellent critical thinkers, be kind and effective practitioners, and leaders in the community.

Because of the pandemic, Trujillo and Nellie's visits were, like everything else, moved online. Dr. Trujillo and Nellie continue to meet with the PREPT team virtually. Nellie has also started sending "Notes from Nellie," which are regular email communications with tips and strategies for engaging families and support for professionals as they work to keep kids safe and families strong.





*OSRP Team from left to right: Stephanie Huber, Proposal Development Specialist; Tim Hawkins, Proposal Development Specialist; Kristin Baldwin, Assistant Director; Betsy Jinks, Director; Not pictured: Faith Fitzgerald, Post Award Manager.*

## Office of Sponsored Research and Programs (OSRP)

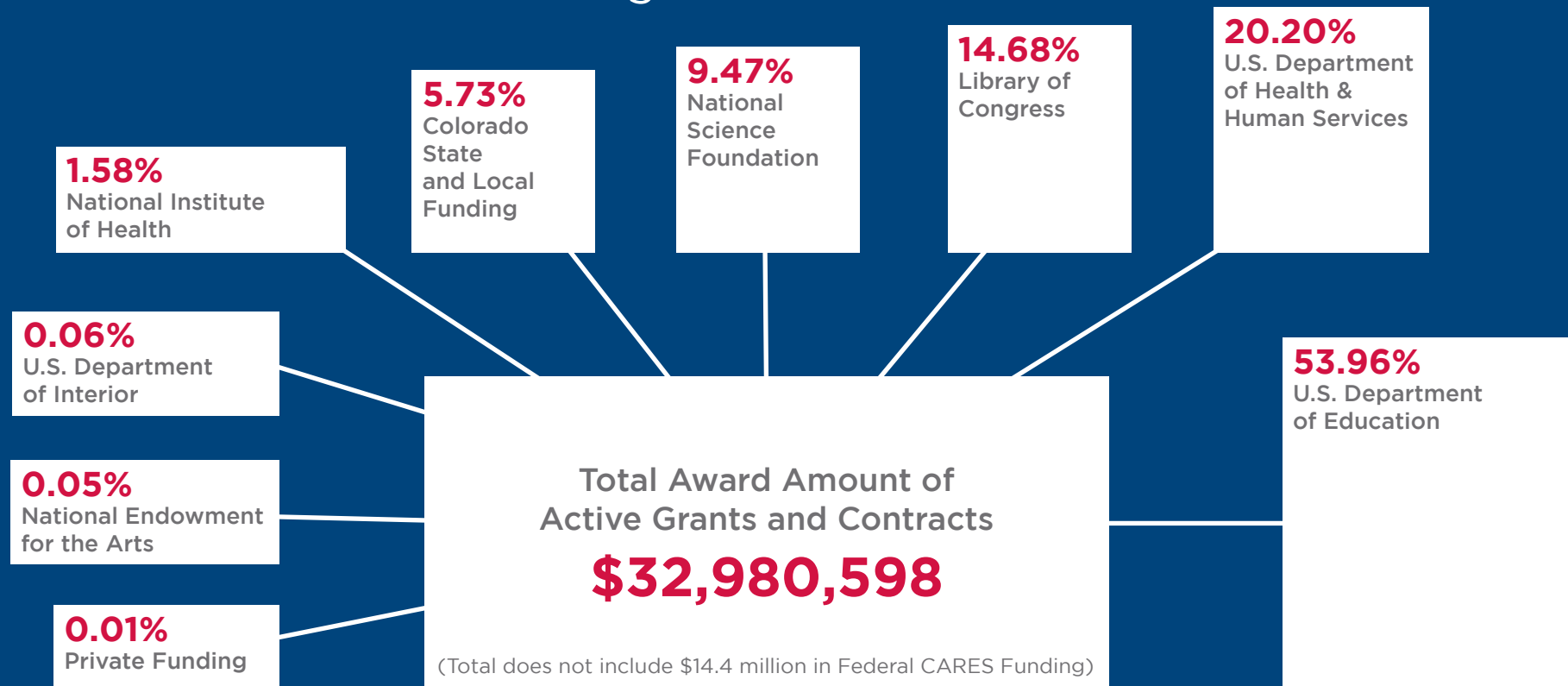
OSRP resides within the Office of the Provost and Academic Affairs, supports external funding pursuits by providing comprehensive and quality services to faculty and staff. OSRP looks to promote awareness of the intellectual life of the MSU Denver community while encouraging internal and external collaboration, supporting efforts to secure and administer sponsored funding, and ensuring compliance with sponsored funding and research regulations, policies and procedures. OSRP provides the highest quality of support to all faculty, investigators, and students to achieve excellence in research, scholarship, and the dissemination of knowledge. Our focus is on securing public awards from federal, state, and local agencies and assisting university investigators in identifying funding opportunities, conceptualizing and preparing grant proposals, securing institutional approval for proposals and submitting proposals for funding. The office also works to ensure compliance and oversight in coordination with the Institutional Review Board.

The Office of Sponsored Research and Programs is located at:

**Jordan Student Success Building, 890 Auraria Parkway, Suite 350, Denver, CO 80204 [www.msudenver.edu/osrp](http://www.msudenver.edu/osrp)**



# Total Grants and Contracts Funding FY 2019-2020



## Highlights of Awards for FY 2020-2021

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	AGENCY	GRANT TITLE	AMOUNT
Dr. Siva priya Santhanam	American Speech-Language-Hearing Association	2020 Advancing Academic-Research Career (AARC) Award	\$ 5,000
Dr. Adriann Wycoff	Colorado Department of Education	Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFLA) - Family Literacy Program	\$ 329,092
Dr. Rebecca Ferrell	Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment	Monitoring SARS-CoV-2 community infection rates in wastewater facilities	\$ 30,000
Dr. Adam Graves	Colorado Humanities	Colorado Humanities CARES funding for the Denver Project for Humanistic Inquiry (D-phi)	\$ 5,860
Dr. Margaret (Peggy) O'Neill-Jones	Library of Congress	Teaching with Primary Resources - Regional	\$ 880,000
Adriann Wycoff	State of Colorado - Department of Human Services	Colorado HIPPY and Parents as Teachers Program Site - Parent Possible	\$ 27,000
Caleb Cohoe	The John Templeton Foundation	How Cosmic Gratitude Works: Why Gratitude to Non-Personal Agents is Possible	\$ 84,980
Dr. Allyson Garcia	U.S. Department of Education	TRIO Student Support Services (Classic) at Metropolitan State University of Denver	\$ 1,829,735
Leila Armstrong	U.S. Department of Education	Metropolitan State University of Denver Fulbright-Hays Short-Term Group Projects Abroad - Morocco	\$ 80,859
Raquel Jimenez	U.S. Department of Education	Metropolitan State University of Denver College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)	\$ 2,125,000
Dr. Ann Diker	U.S. Department of Health & Human Services	MSU Denver Nutrition and Dietetics SDS Program	\$ 3,250,000



**That's possible here.**



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