

# Provost Digest

Mardell A. Wilson, EdD, RDN • Creighton University Provost



Sept. 23, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

My goodness, Creighton is a busy, productive place! There are so many programs and initiatives going on – many now in person and some still virtually – that there is no shortage of noteworthy events and experiences for faculty, staff and students.

And there is a lot to be grateful for (in addition to the delightful fall weather we are experiencing in Omaha). To note just a few accomplishments that make me especially proud: Our exemplary Creighton community vaccination rates and other protocols are keeping our campuses as healthy as possible, allowing us to return to near-normal functioning; we broke ground on an exciting new residence hall for freshman students; we opened our amazing campus in Phoenix to energetic, focused health sciences professional students; and we celebrated the Class of 2020 last weekend with unique events that allowed them and their families to experience some of the pomp and circumstance they missed due to the pandemic.

I want to remind faculty and professional staff to register for the upcoming [Center for Faculty Excellence development programs](#), and I urge all members of the Creighton community to take the confidential, [online Campus Climate Survey](#) before it closes on Oct. 8. The results of this survey will help Creighton truly be an environment that is welcoming and inclusive for all.

To stay in touch with all that is happening, I recommend reading *Creighton Today* each morning, as it is an excellent resource for all things Creighton. Finally, thank you for all you do for our students.

Sincerely,

Mardell A. Wilson, EdD, RDN  
Provost

## Student Readiness Presentation Available

Information was shared last month about Creighton's data-driven approach to supporting new undergraduate students in their transition to Creighton. If you were unable to attend one of the sessions offered to learn more about the efforts to assess student readiness – measuring social, emotional and intellectual readiness for Creighton – you can watch the presentation via a [Zoom recording](#) (passcode: X5W9x7#q). The presentation is also available on the [Provost website](#).



## Mullins Receives State Book Award

A new novel, *The Brightest Place in the World*, by English Department associate professor **David Philip Mullins**, MFA, just won the 2021 Nebraska Book Award for fiction. The award is given by the Nebraska Center for the Book and the Nebraska Library Commission, and a ceremony will be held in Lincoln in late October.

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## Students Earn Impressive Science Honors

Neuroscience undergraduate **Madeleine Urbanek** is the first author of a paper accepted for publication in the journal *Scientific Reports*, "Genetic predisposition to tinnitus in the UK Biobank population." She also received the prestigious Clare Boothe Luce Summer Fellowship and Academic Scholarship. Madeleine is the mentee of **Jian Zuo**, PhD, chair and professor, School of Medicine Department of Biomedical Sciences. Biomedical sciences MD/PhD graduate student **Justin Rudd** was awarded Best Graduate/Professional Student Platform Presentation in Basic Sciences during University Research Week. Justin is affiliated with the lab directed by **Laura Hansen**, PhD, professor of biomedical sciences in the School of Medicine.

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### Jewell Article Published in OT Journal

**Vanessa Jewell**, PhD, OTR/L, associate professor, and colleagues in other occupational therapy programs recently published "The Issue Is – Unpaid Caregiving and Aging in Place in the United States: Advancing the Value of Occupational Therapy" in the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*.

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## Institutional Review Board Staff Announced

**Joe Knezetic**, PhD, director of the Research Compliance Office, and **Juliane Strauss-Soukup**, PhD, associate vice provost for Research and Scholarship, are pleased to welcome Creighton's new Institutional Review Board (IRB) staff: **Kindra Cooper**, JD, MPA, MA, CIP, is the new IRB director; **Tim Ryan**, CIP, is a senior IRB administrator; and **Ethan Ankrum** is the IRB/IBC specialist. The Research Compliance Office will be hosting an open house from 8-10 a.m. on Oct. 7, on the first floor of the Criss I building. Please come meet the new staff – pastries will be provided. If you are in Phoenix or can't attend the open house in Criss, meet the staff virtually through [this open Zoom link](#) from 10-11 a.m. (8-9 a.m. Phoenix time).

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### Essner Named to Chair Department

**Mark Essner**, DDS, was named chair of the Department of Endodontics for the School of Dentistry. Essner joined Creighton as an assistant professor in 2015 following a 15-year career in private practice. He received two Creighton degrees: a BS in biology in 1995 and his DDS in 1999.

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## New Care Model for Student Counseling

Student Counseling Services is adopting a new flexible care model to meet the increasing mental health concerns among undergraduate and graduate/professional students. After extensive research, this new service delivery model is being implemented to help increase student access while also providing appropriate clinically relevant and multiculturally appropriate student care. Students will continue to have access to individual counseling and crisis and psychiatry appointments, along with a wide variety of problem-solving resources and supports. Please contact [Jennifer Peter](#), PsyD, senior director of Student Counseling Services for more information.

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## Robertson Receives Excellence Award

**Jack Robertson**, BSBA'18, marketing and communications strategist for Student Life, received a 2021 JASPA (Jesuit Association of Student Personnel Administrators) Award of Excellence. He was one of three recipients of the Ignatian Medal for the Outstanding New Professional in Jesuit Student Affairs. He received the award Sept. 17 during the virtual awards ceremony.

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## MPH Program Achieves Accreditation

Congratulations to all involved in the Master of Public Health (MPH) program achieving accreditation. On Aug. 26, the Board of Councilors of the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) voted to accredit the MPH program for a five-year term.

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## Brock Presents on Mergers

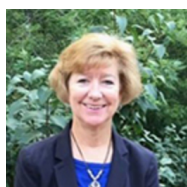
**Mary Lee Brock**, MEd, assistant professor and assistant director, Negotiation and Conflict Resolution program, Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Graduate School, was a featured panelist at the Nonprofit of the Midlands CEO Roundtable program: Mergers Don't Need to Be Painful. Brock discussed the process she used to guide two local arts nonprofits through a merger that resulted in one stronger, more vibrant agency.

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## SPAHP Trio Published in Rehab Journal

**Diana Feldhacker**, OTD, OTR/L, BCPR; **Helene Lohman**, OTD, OTR/L, FAOTA; and **Alfred Bracciano**, EdD, OTR/L, FAOTA, recently published "A Topic Paper on Flexor Tendon Repair: A Theoretical and Evidence-Based Approach" in the *Journal of Rehab Medicine*.

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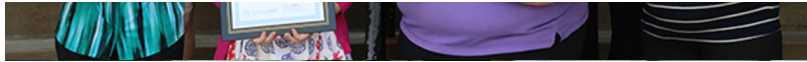


## Retreat Center Director Named

Student Life welcomes **Kathy Kemler**, director of the Creighton University Retreat Center in Griswold, Iowa. She is from Omaha and attended Wayne State College to obtain her bachelor's degree in music and communication arts; the University of Nebraska Omaha for her master's in industrial and organizational psychology; and Creighton for her MA in Christian spirituality and a certificate in spiritual direction. Kathy is a spiritual director and retreat leader with previous involvement in faith formation, Bible studies and small-group sharing. [Please reach out to her](#) to consider how you, your staff or your students might find respite, renewal and exposure to the retreat center.

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## OEE Awarded by National Association

The Office of Experiential Education (OEE) received the Award of Excellence in Experiential Education from the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP). The award recognizes a deserving group for outstanding contributions to the world of experiential education. The Creighton OEE is responsible for managing campus and distance-based students for 1,900 hours of experiential training as they progress through the pharmacy academic curriculum.

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## New Grad Receives Appointment in Spain

Class of 2021 College of Arts and Sciences graduate **Yasmine Jakmouj**, who majored in Spanish and cultural anthropology, has been appointed by the Ministry of Education in Spain as a cultural ambassador/English language assistant for the upcoming academic year. She will be in Alcalá de Guadaira (Sevilla), Spain. The program is similar to the Fulbright program, but is an award from the Spanish government.

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## Roddy Co-Edits Biblical Wisdom Book

**Nicolae Roddy**, PhD, professor of theology in Hebrew Bible/Older Testament, has published *Biblical Wisdom Then and Now* (Routledge, 2021), which he co-edited with Frances Flannery of James Madison University. The book examines the wisdom literature of the Bible in its historical context and explores how biblical wisdom may be applied to contemporary issues such as climate change, healing trauma, overcoming social divisions and more.

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## Kugler, Niski Named Emerging Leaders

**Katie Kugler**, PT, DPT, and **Jessica Niski**, PT, DPT, both assistant professors, received 2021 APTA (American Physical Therapy Association) Emerging Leader Awards. Kugler was nominated by APTA Acute Care and Niski was nominated by the Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy.

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## Nebraska Awards North Study Grant

**Brian North**, PhD, professor in the School of Medicine's Department of Biomedical Sciences, received an award for \$95,750 from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to conduct stem cell research.

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## Oltman, Bautista Book is Released

**Gretchen Oltman**, JD, PhD, associate professor and program director, BS in Leadership and MS in Organizational Leadership, and **Vicki Bautista**, EdD, NBC-HWC, assistant professor and assistant director, Integrative Health and Wellness, Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Graduate School, co-authored the recently released book, *What's Your Leadership Story? A School Leader's Guide to Aligning How You Lead with Who You Are*. It was published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

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