

**Research Initiation Program (RIP)**  
**Award Recipients**  
**2018-2019**

The Research Initiation Program received an outstanding response to the call for proposals. After thorough review by the assigned reviewers, the following were awarded.

**Dr. Christina Criminger**  
**Physical Therapy**  
**Award Amount: \$9,500.00**

**Project Title: “Transcranial direct current stimulation before and during a novel task followed by dual task training in people with Parkinson's disease”**

**Abstract:** Parkinson's disease (PD) is a neurodegenerative disease characterized by progressive motor and non-motor impairments including cognitive deficits 1. Specifically, difficulty with attention and executive functions are regarded as the most common cognitive impairments in people with PD 1. Dual-tasking during walking requires divided attention and intact executive function through motor-cognitive interplay 2. Cognitive impairments in people with PD contribute to decreased walking performance 3, deteriorated walking patterns (i.e. decreased cadence, increased step variability) 4, and increased risk of falls 5. Nonpharmacological interventions including non-invasive brain stimulation techniques are emerging as potential complementary treatment approaches for people with neurodegenerative conditions such as PD 6. Transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS), a method of non-invasive brain stimulation, may have therapeutic potential as it is able to produce isolated facilitation of motor and cognitive processing in people with PD. Therefore, our objective in this study is to observe the influence of a bi-hemispheric tDCS protocol administered prior to performance of a novel task and concurrent while performing a novel task (WiiSports™ Golf game on a Nintendo Wii™), on walking associated dual task cost in people with PD. Each subject will complete four conditions including two active tDCS sessions (atDCS & atDCS + novel task) and two sham sessions (stDCS & stDCS + novel task) separated by 7(±2) days. The long-term goal of this research is to determine the best use of non-invasive brain stimulation to facilitate recovery from cognitive and motor deficits subsequent to Parkinson's disease (PD) in a clinical setting.

**Dr. Pandora Goode**  
**Nursing**  
**Amount Awarded: \$6,120.00**

**Project Title: “Analysis of a Pre-Test-Post-Test Control Group Design in a Culturally Faith-Based Diabetes Self-Management Program for African Americans: A Pilot Study”**

**Abstract:** Subject Population: A convenience and snowball sample of African Americans 18 years or older with type 2 diabetes will be recruited into the study.

Research Design: A pre and post-test control-group will be used to test a 12-week pilot study aimed at increasing diabetes knowledge, self-efficacy, symptom management and self-management activities.

Instruments: The Bayer A1C kit will be used to obtain A1Cs at pre and post, and the following questionnaires will be used for pre and post- data collection: The Summary of Diabetes Self-Care Activities (SDSCA) Scale, Diabetes Empowerment Short Form (DES-SF) scale, and the Diabetes Knowledge Scale (DKS) for participants to complete independently. The Diabetes Self-Management Participant Questionnaire will be used to collect demographic and diabetes related inquiries.

Methods: Participants in the intervention group will attend 6 weekly 1-hour sessions, facilitated by a faith-based nurse and a nurse practitioner. Sessions will be organized around the topics of the American Diabetes Association (ADA) guidelines. The control group will have 3 diabetes pamphlets directly mailed to their residents, published by the ADA. At the completion of the 6 weekly sessions, the intervention group and the control group will be asked to practice self-management behaviors independently for an additional 6 weeks.

**Dr. Edward Opoku-Dapaah**  
**Behavioral Sciences**  
**Amount Awarded: \$9,848.00**

**Project Title: “*HIV Vaccine Acceptability among African American Women: The case of Winston-Salem*”**

**Abstract:** Researchers, advocates and pharmaceutical companies have touted the HIV vaccine as the best strategy for ending the AIDS pandemic. In a 2008 address, Dr Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Health maintained that, HIV/AIDS can be fought by vaccines in such a way that carriers of the virus can be prevented from spreading it to others. Advocates have also maintained that the HIV vaccine can save millions of lives (Holland and Nicholls 2017). It has also been contended that an HIV vaccine could serve as a complimentary intervention in addition to existing non-vaccine preventive measures (Wang and Ze Yang 2015).

On the surface, an HIV vaccine certainly looks attractive; America spends huge sums annually in supporting those carrying the AIDS virus. However, the vaccine may be pointless if high risk populations do not accept the vaccine. One such group is African American women—a group that is disproportionately affected by HIV (CDC 2017), but who, due to historical and ethical controversies, have legitimate concerns about a prospective HIV vaccine. Little is known about whether African American women would accept the vaccine as the optimal protection against HIV; or the possible diverse vaccination positions of African American women.

Focusing on African American women resident in Winston-Salem, the study seeks to consider the following objectives: a) how the women perceive their vulnerability to HIV, and, b) their acceptability of a future HIV vaccine. Understanding the relationship between

vulnerability of African American women to HIV infection and acceptability of HIV vaccine can create possibilities for intervention that might differ from existing epidemiological strategies.

**Dr. Rashunda Stitt**  
**Psychological Sciences**  
**Amount Awarded: \$9,505.16**

**Project Title: “An Exploration of Academic Factors and their Impact on Academic Achievement and Reasoning in First Year College Students”**

**Abstract:** The transition from high school to college can place an enormous amount of pressure on first-year college students, who must take an increased initiative and become self-regulated all while negotiating their new identities as independent emerging adults. As a result of this transition, colleges and universities have created courses to address the needs of first-year college students. Typically, these courses address a variety of topics ranging from study skills to how to navigate the campus to occupational identity development. Although these topics are beneficial for the first-year college student, different students need different tools to be successful. Consequently, the current set of first-year experiences courses were designed for the Millennial generation. However, the youngest group of Millennials were born in 1996 making them post traditional college age. As a result, a new generation of students is gracing college campuses and need a different set of tools in to be successful. In order to successfully train this new generation of students, currently known as post-Millennials, colleges and universities need to design research studies to assess their needs and wants. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to explore the impact academic factors have on the achievement and reasoning of first-year college students in an effort to make recommendations for a redesign of first-year experiences courses at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

**Dr. Tanya Walker-Bethea**  
**English**  
**Amount Awarded: \$7,450.00**

**Project Title: “Lucy Mae Turner: A Forgotten Daughter of the New Negro Renaissance”**

**Abstract:** The New Negro Renaissance of the 1920s through the 1940s (also referred to as the Harlem Renaissance) produced a number of black female writers who experienced various degrees of recognition for their contributions to the movement. Like their male counterparts, many female writers such as Zora Neale Hurston and Georgia Douglas Johnson tackled subjects like lynching, socio-economic inequities, and sexual violence, subjects that consumed many black thinkers and other artists of their time. Yet, the women created their works to serve as platforms for emphasizing black women’s perspectives. While many of these writers were well-known among peers and credited with molding the New Negro Renaissance in some capacities, a number of other authors remain in obscurity. As a consequence, these authors are excluded, oftentimes, from the scope of student and professional researchers interested in black women writers. This project aims to address

the issue of under-representation in the study of black women writers by compiling primary and secondary data and creating of a multimedia database for researchers and students. As a digital humanities project, this work reaches beyond traditional ways of researching authors and texts. It blends the content of the English discipline with the innovation of technology, hence, increasing the accessibility of the content, beginning with poet Lucy Mae Turner.

**Dr. Uchenna Vasser**

**English**

**Amount Awarded: \$7147.00**

**Project Title: *"The Lost Locus Amoenus: The Intersections of Women and the Natural Environment in the Afro-Colombian Narrative"***

**Abstract:** The proposed project "The Lost Locus Amoenus: The Intersections of Women and the Natural Environment in the Afro-Colombian Narrative" appropriates the literary imagination of the Afro-Colombian writer Manuel Zapata Olivella as the premise to investigate the knowledge concerning Afro-Colombian women's lives in impoverished communities situated along the Atlantic and Pacific littorals of Colombia. The project raises new questions and develops a unique approach to how Colombia's legacy of slavery impacts the present by studying the marginalized spaces of Afro-Colombians as also the sites of environmental degradation. Theoretically, the project will engage an ecofeminist inquiry into the particularities of the symbiosis of women and the environment, and appropriate the more expansive ecocriticism (the study of literature and the environment) to interrogate the discourses of literature with an ecologically informed literary criticism of the merits of studying literature in relationship to environmental concerns. As a literary scholar I anticipate that my investigation of the convergence of environmental concerns and women's rights will lead to the discovery of their fictionalization in Colombian literature. In other words, who, like Zapata Olivella, is writing about Afro-Colombian communities and the conditions of women? Are there Afro-Colombian women speaking through their writings?