

CARS News

Spring 2024



Andrea Pope and Ross Markle presenting at the workshop

Alumni return to host workshop

Ross Markle ('10PhD), Founding & Managing Director, and Andrea Pope ('20PhD), Director of Action, both from DIA Higher Education Collaborators presented a workshop on Friday, February 2nd. The workshop, *Build Your Own Theory of Action*, was attended by about 30 people from academic affairs, student affairs, university studies, university recreation, Libraries, and CARS.

They showcased how, when assessment becomes intervention, theories of action can be used to build and evaluate assessment programs (i.e., assessment measures plus any accompanying resources/infrastructure to support interpretation and use) that impact stakeholders in desired ways. They also demonstrated how theories of action can serve as a useful framework for conceptualizing, implementing, and organizing validity research.

We deeply appreciate when our alumni and friends present their real-world insights and projects to our graduate students, faculty, and campus partners.

Assessment Celebration

CARS recently hosted its first Assessment Celebration Luncheon to celebrate the outstanding assessment work carried out by Assessment Coordinators. About thirty-five Assessment Coordinators, Academic Unit Heads, and Deans from across campus came to network, unwind, and share best practices. Cara Meixner, PhD was the featured speaker offering insight on learning improvement for participants to ponder. We hope to make this an annual event.



The Center for Assessment
and Research Studies

Congratulations to our 2024 Graduates

Sarah Alahmadi, PhD
Yelisey Shapovalov, PhD
Sean York, PhD
Kyle Green, MA
Mason Jones, MA
Riley Herr, MA



Autumn Wild, Riley Herr, Mara McFadden, and Yelisey Shapovalov



Sarah Alahmadi, Christine DeMars, Yu Bao, and Brian Leventhal

Recent Activity

Using Recurrent Neural Networks to Predict Mastery Outcomes from Learning Journey Clickstream Data. Dissertation defense by Sean York. February 9.

Equity in Assessment Panel. Panelists included Judith Ofcarcik, School of Music, and Cynthia Martin, Writing, Rhetoric, and Technical Communication. February 26.

Improving Equity & Inclusion for International Students: Using Data to Guide Belonging Interventions & Student Success Programming. Presenters: Marlena Meikrantz Sharp, Center for Global Engagement; Riley Herr, and Sara Finney, both CARS. Friday, February 16.

The changing role of the modern psychometrician: A three-part talk. CARS Talk presented by Harold Doran, HumRRO. April 5.

A Qualitative Lens for Exploring Ethical Reasoning: Developing the 8 Key Question Codebook. Dissertation defense by Yelisey A. Shapovalov. March 21.

Making Assessment Useful, or: How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Learning Improvement. CARS Talk with Kurt Schick, Faculty Emeritis, Professor, The School of Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication. March 22.

Investigating the Direction of Item Parameter Bias in the Presence of Rapid Guessing. Dissertation defense by Sarah Alahmadi. Friday, March 29.

Reporting & Use of Results: Access & Progress Roundtable Series. Riley Herr, and Yelisey Shapovalov with Sarah Lawrence, all CARS, and Jonathan Stewart from JMU Student Affairs. Friday, April 5.

Assessment 101 (June 3-7, 2024)

Assessment 101 is a 5-day virtual workshop that explores topics such as: writing student learning outcomes; mapping the curriculum; creating instruments; examining implementation fidelity; analyzing data; reporting results; and using results to make evidence-based decisions. This is ideal for attendees who can focus intently for a week with little interruption. Each day has a mix of synchronous and asynchronous content.

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Some Recent Highlights

Awards

- Joseph Kush, 2024 Provost Award for Excellence in Research and Scholarship
- Nicolas Mireles, AERA Division D - In-Progress Research Award
- Nicolas Mireles, NCME 2024 Pipeline Scholarship

Publications

- Finney, S. J., Schaefer, K. E., & McFadden, M. E. (2024). Priming Examinees to Give Good Effort: Differential Utility Across Gender Identity. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 1–18.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.2024.2310678>
- Alahmadi, S., & DeMars, C. E. (2024). Comparing Examinee-Based and Response-Based Motivation Filtering Methods in Remote Low-Stakes Testing. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 37(1), 43–56.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08957347.2024.2311927>

Connect with CARS on LinkedIn

At CARS, we actively pursue fresh avenues to engage with our community. We're thrilled to announce the launch of our official [LinkedIn page](#) with special help from Barnabas Suva, SSLS student. Follow us and stay abreast of our latest news and initiatives.

Your dedication and hard work are the driving force behind our thriving community, and we're eager to celebrate and spotlight or share your impactful achievements, professional contributions, research publications, conference presentations, projects, or any information you deem valuable to our community. Please fill out the CAR LinkedIn showcase request form [here](#).

Thank you for being an integral part of the CARS community. Your contributions are invaluable, and together, we will continue to make a positive impact.

Kind regards,
Dr. Megan Good



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