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Education

- 2017 PhD James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA**
School of Strategic Leadership Studies
Concentration: Nonprofit and Community Leadership
Dissertation Title: Organizational Factors Associated with Perinatal Quality
- 2004 MS James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA**
College of Health and Behavioral Studies: Dietetics
Thesis Title: Reasons for Breastfeeding Cessation by WIC Participants in a Virginia Health District
- 2000 BS James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA**
College of Health and Behavioral Studies
Major: Dietetics

Professional Experience

Research Scientist, Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition (GSCN)
Omaha, NE | July 2023 – Present

- Lead and/or provide oversight for all scientific aspects of research and evaluation projects
- Develop evaluations plans that include research designs, participants, data elements, measurement tools, and deliverables
- Oversee the development of measurement tools with a human-centered design focus by participating in planning sessions, reviewing tools, and providing final sign-off
- Ensure integrity of sampling and data collection efforts
- Support qualitative data collection by conducting key informant interviews, focus groups, and other user/customer experience research
- Support data analysis by conducting analyses and reviewing all qualitative and quantitative output for accuracy
- Oversee project deliverables development by participating in storyboarding sessions, creating outlines, and reviewing drafts
- Provide scientific and technical expertise and support to project and sub-grantees and other partners
- Contribute to scientific knowledge by developing, submitting, and delivering conference presentations and publishing manuscripts

Associate Editor, Clinical Lactation (Journal)

Washington, DC | June 2011 – Present

- Assess manuscript quality
- Obtain peer reviewers
- Request revisions to manuscripts where appropriate
- Edit manuscripts
- Make recommendations to the Editor-in-Chief

Professional Experience (Continued)

Executive Director, Best for Babes Foundation

Little Silver, NJ | June 2017 – June 2018

- Oversee all aspects for an independent, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit foundation
 - Submit grants and contracts to both federal and local agencies, as well as private foundations
 - Hire, mentor, and supervise staff
 - Report and interact with the Board of Directors
 - Co-Lead the development of marketing and fundraising materials

Administrator and Managing Editor, Alliance for Nonprofit Partnerships

Harrisonburg, VA | July 2015– May 2017

- Collaborate with area nonprofit organizations to develop and implement professional development opportunities
- Manage bi-annual Nonprofit Management Certificate Program
- Recruit nonprofit organizations
- Lead and manage monthly meetings
- Maintain Word Press website
- Develop and distribute all publications for organization

Research Assistant, James Madison University

Harrisonburg, VA | July 2015– May 2017

- Develop and implement research projects for faculty
- Provide statistical guidance and reports for faculty

Program Manager/State Breastfeeding Coordinator, Virginia WIC Program

Richmond, VA | July 2004– August 2015

- Manage large federal USDA WIC budget ensuring financial health of local WIC agencies
- Supervise two direct Counsel pregnant women, breastfeeding women and postpartum women on proper nutrition for themselves and their children
- Teach group nutrition classes
- Manage breastfeeding promotion and support efforts for local health district reports
- Oversee breastfeeding promotion structure within the 35 local WIC agencies
- Oversee breastfeeding promotion and support efforts for Virginia Department of Health and the Virginia WIC Program
- Develop constituent responses for Virginia Governor
- Conduct program assessments
- Develop, implement, and evaluate statewide programming for local WIC agencies
- Develop and implement professional development programs for 400+ WIC staff
- Apply, secure, and manage large federal grants

Wellness Dietitian, Center for Integrative Medicine

Richmond, VA | August 2006– July 2008

- Provide medical nutrition therapy
- Document using proper medical documentation protocols

Nutritionist/Local Agency Breastfeeding Coordinator, Virginia WIC Program

Winchester, VA | October 2000– December 2003

- Counsel pregnant women, breastfeeding women and postpartum women on proper nutrition for themselves and their children
- Prescribe proper food packages
- Teach group nutrition classes
- Manage breastfeeding promotion and support efforts for local health district

Academic Appointments

2021-2023	Chair , Ed.D. Applied Nutrition and Health Education, Union Institute & University, Cincinnati, OH
2019-2023	Chair , M.A. Applied Nutrition and Dietetics, Union Institute & University, Cincinnati, OH
2017-2023	Chair , M.A. Human Lactation Studies, Union Institute & University, Cincinnati, OH
2017-2023	Chair , Health Education Certificate, Union Institute & University, Cincinnati, OH
2017-2023	Program Chair , B.S. Maternal Child Health, Union Institute & University, Cincinnati, OH
2017-2023	Graduate Faculty , Union Institute & University, Cincinnati, OH
2017-2022	Chair , M.A. Health & Wellness, Union Institute & University, Cincinnati, OH
2017-2018	Adjunct Professor , College of Health and Behavioral Studies, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA

Grants and Contracts – Current

July 2023- Current	FNS: WIC Online Ordering – United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and test a safe and secure plan for implementing online grocery ordering for participants of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).• Role: Research Scientist
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Grants and Contracts – Past

August 2016- July 2017	Jessie Ball DuPont <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop the Alliance for Nonprofit Partnerships• Role: Co-Investigator, Administrator
October 2013 - September 2016	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Public Health Actions 1305 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop programming for diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and obesity prevention through nutrition, physical activity, and breastfeeding• Role: Co-Investigator
October 2010 - September 2012	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and implement systems for employers to support breastfeeding employees during work hours• Role: Co-Investigator

Peer-Reviewed Publications

1. Dwyer, G., **Akers, L.**, & Akers, J. (2023). Experiences of women following a low carbohydrate diet while breastfeeding. *Clinical Lactation*. 14(2), 72-84. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/CL-2022-0015>
2. McRoy, J., **Akers, L.**, Edwards, E., Walsh, J., & Akers, J. (2021). The effects of exercise on breastmilk composition and supply: A brief literature review. *Clinical Lactation*. 13(1), 39-53.

3. **Akers, L.**, Thompson, J., Sloan, M., & Ford, K. (2019). Organizational factors associated with quality perinatal care. *The Health Care Manager*, 38(1), 61-70.
4. Kellams, A., Savla, J., **Akers, L.**, Eberly, T., Boutsalis, G., & Sriraman, N. (2014). The Impact of a Physician Performance Improvement Project for Maintenance of Certification on an Important Clinical Outcome: Exclusive Breastfeeding. *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions*, 34(S1), S30-31.
5. **Hamlett, L.**, Wagner T, & Brevard P. Reasons for breastfeeding cessation by WIC participants in a Virginia health district. *JADA*. 2004; Suppl 2:61.

Selected Presentations

1. **Addressing Gaps in Breastfeeding Disparities Offers Career Opportunities for Dietitians**, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Virtual. 2022
2. **Ethical Leadership: What does this mean for my organization**, United States Breastfeeding Committee. Virtual. 2020
3. **Ready-to-Use Materials for Counseling Pregnant Women on Breastfeeding Plus Strategies for Integration (Facilitator)**, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo. Chicago, IL. 2014
4. **L Akers**, M Sloan. The Reciprocating Effect of Nonprofit Hospital Community Development. Presented at the Association of for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action. Washington, DC. 2016.
5. **L Akers**, M Pattie. Improving Performance Standards: The Potential Impact of Ethical Leadership and Accreditation. Presented at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting. Boston, MA. 2014.
6. T Eberly, A Kellams, T Savla, **L Akers**, N Sriraman, G Boutsalis. The effects of a web-based performance improvement initiative on breastfeeding initiation, duration, and exclusivity. Forum on Organizational Quality Improvement: Fostering Best Practices and Research in Portfolio Programs and MOC. American Board of Medical Specialties, Chicago, IL. 2014
7. T Eberly, A Kellams, T Savla, **L Akers**, N Sriraman, G Boutsalis. The Impact of a Performance Improvement Project on an Important Clinical Outcome: Exclusive Breastfeeding. Presented at the Association for Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses Annual Convention. Orlando, FL. 2014.
8. **Virginia Breastfeeding Data**, Richmond Breastfeeding Commission. Richmond, VA. 2013
9. **Breastfeeding and Obesity Prevention**, Virginia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Richmond, VA. 2013
10. A Kellams, N Sriraman, T Eberly, **L Akers**, S Boyd, G Boutsalis. The effects of a physician-centered web-based performance improvement initiative on breastfeeding initiation, duration, and exclusivity. Presented at the 17th International Annual Meeting of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. Chicago, IL. 2012.
11. **Virginia's Breastfeeding Agenda**, Virginia Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics, Virginia Beach, VA. 2012
12. **Virginia Department of Health's Breastfeeding Efforts**, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. Richmond, VA. 2012
13. **National Maternal and Child Health Agenda**, Virginia Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics, Charlottesville, VA. 2011
14. **Weight of the State**, Richmond, VA. 2011

Selected Refereed Posters and Presentations

15. **L Hamlett**, T Wagner, P Brevard. Reasons for breastfeeding cessation by WIC participants in a Virginia health district. Presented at American Dietetic Association's Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo, Anaheim, CA. 2004.

Doctoral Committees

- Multicultural Representations: A Content Analysis of 10th Grade Literature Anthologies (2023)
- Can exclusionary disciplinary actions be predicted by race, gender, and/or socioeconomic status? (2023)

Master's Thesis Committees

- The Dietitian and Eating Disorder Treatment: Perspectives on the Therapeutic Relationship between dietitians and clients (2023)
- Instagram as a teaching module for a low FODMAP diet for healthcare professionals (2023)
- The Influence of Food Security Status on Breastfeeding Outcomes: A Mixed-Methods Study (2023)
- The Impact of Racial Bias and Cultural Competency of Non-Black Lactation Specialists on the Breastfeeding Experience of Black Mothers in the U.S. (2023)
- Breastfeeding Mothers and Infants Affected by COVID-19: Impacts of Neonatal Separation (2023)
- Exploring the Effects of Acculturation on Diet Patterns (2023)
- Adult Female Acne and Its Response to The Mediterranean Diet (2023)
- The Intercorrelated Factors of Food Perception: A Qualitative Analysis (2023)
- The Dietary Habits of the Missionaries for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (2023)
- Assessment and Comparison of General Nutrition and Sports Nutrition Knowledge, Beliefs, and Practices Among NCAA Division I, II, and III Female Collegiate Athletes (2023)
- Dietetic Faculty Perceptions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Curriculum and Instruction: A Mixed-Methods Study (2022)
- Added Sugar's Role in the Dietary Intake of Collegiate Athletes (2022)
- Pretest/Posttest Assessment of the Effectiveness of Brief Diabetes Education to Enhance Diabetes Self-Management: A Quantitative Study (2022)
- Diet and Depression: Investigating the Diet's Influence on Depression through the Gut Microbiota (2022)
- Army Nutrition and Physical training: Analyzing Satisfaction and Confidence of Current Practices within the United States Army (2022)
- Neonatal Congenital Heart Disease and Human Milk: Measuring Staff Knowledge and Confidence When Assessing Infant Feeding Capabilities and Implementing Evidence-Based Feeding Recommendations (2021)
- Effect of Support Systems on Initiation Rate and Exclusive Breastfeeding Duration in Women with a Pre-pregnancy BMI over 30.0 (2021)
- Perspectives of Prenatal Health Professionals on Transgender Lactation (2021)
- Breastfeeding Challenges Encountered by Mothers Following a Cesarean Section (2020)
- Improving Care for Women of Color During the Prenatal and Postpartum Periods to Increase Breastfeeding Initiation and Duration: A Qualitative Survey of Women of Color and Their Perception of Care (2020)
- Experiences of Women Following a Low Carbohydrate Diet While Breastfeeding (2020)
- Evaluating the effects of online, antenatal breastfeeding education on maternal self-efficacy (2020)
- Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices and Factors that Influence Breastfeeding for Black Women in the United States (2020)
- Contributing Factors to Low Breastfeeding Rates in the African American Community (2020)
- An Investigation of Breastfeeding Education, Knowledge and Intentions in Adolescent Mothers (2020)
- Breastfeeding in the Military: Bridging the Gap between Policy and Reality (2020)
- Baby Café Outreach Effect (2020)
- Breastfeeding Beyond Infancy in America (2020)
- Perceptions of Perinatal Care and Lactation Support by Different Care Provider Type (2020)
- Emotional Experiences that Nursing Mothers Encounter with Children over the Age of 12 Months (2019)
- The Truth about TOTs: Unpacking the controversies of diagnostics, treatment and impact of tethered oral tissues (2019)
- Infant Sleep Location, Bed-Sharing, and Safe Sleep Education (2019)

Committees

2013-2016 **Chair**, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Women's Health Dietetic Practice Group
2009-2015 **Chair**, United States Breastfeeding Committee, Reduced Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes
2001-2013 **Chair**, Virginia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Breastfeeding Committee

Honors, Awards, & Professional Associations

Honors and Awards

2022 Certificate of Distinction for Excellence in Teaching
2021 Faculty Award for Excellence in Scholarship
2016 Excellence in Practice in Women's Health

Board Memberships

2014-2018 International Lactation Consultant Association
2004 - 2006 Virginia Breastfeeding Task Force

Professional Association Membership

2021 - Present U.S. Lactation Consultant Association (USLCA)
2014 - Present International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA)
2004 - Present Women's Health Dietetic Practice Group, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (WHPG)
2004 - Present Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND)

Editorial Boards and Journal Reviews

Journal Reviews (2017 - Present)

Journal of Human Lactation
Clinical Lactation