Optimal Aging Institute
Executive Board
2020 – 2022

Brent Archer, Ph.D., CCC-SLP: Dr. Archer’s clinical practice work primarily focuses on older adults. In this work, “I try to understand how communication and swallowing disorders can impact all aspects of living. I believe this holistic perspective can help to ensure that the work of the OAI is relevant to the lives of people living in NW Ohio.” Dr. Archer also has experience as a researcher, allowing him to provide counsel on this aspect of the OAI’s mission. Dr. Archer is also a member of the Research and Engagement Committee.

Samuel Burnett, MA: Mr. Burnett previously served as consultant to the Optimal Aging Institute and continues his service to the OAI and the Northwest Ohio community-at-large. He is a senior advocate, and is active with many agencies throughout the community, including the Kahle Senior Center, Friendship Park Senior Center, and the Northwest Ohio Area Office on Aging. Mr. Burnett is also a member of the Community Outreach Committee.

Tiffany Eckert: Tiffany Eckert is a junior at Bowling Green State University. She is majoring in Human Development and Family studies with a minor in Gerontology. Tiffany is passionate about the study of aging, advocacy for older adults and the idea that optimal aging is possible for everyone. She is thrilled to accept this one-year appointment with the Optimal Aging Institute. Tiffany is known for her vast philanthropic and motivational speaking background. In her free time, Tiffany enjoys coaching rowing and broomball for two private high schools in Toledo. She is also an avid writer and painter. Above all else, she cherishes quality time with her children Kaila, Marlee, Myles and Berkley.

Tom Gorman, MA: Mr. Gorman is Associate Dean for the College of Health and Human Services and previously served as Internal Advisory Panel to the Optimal Aging Institute. Mr. Gorman is a long-standing community member and BGSU staff person and is excited to provide a useful perspective to the OAI. He states, “I would like to focus energy on issues in aging, particularly advocating against agism as well as educating local merchants, landlords, health providers, etc., in making their establishments “visitible.” Moreover, he is interested in advancing intergenerational collaboration in local fine arts, music, and entertainment.

Lisa Gruenhagen, Ph.D.: Dr. Gruenhagen’s work aligns closely with the dimensions of the OAI, specifically in relation to the physical, social, environmental, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. Researchers in music and the arts have built a rich collection of literature that relates to the organizational goals and dimensions of the OAI with findings that emphasize the importance of optimal aging and the impact of the arts on health, wellness, belonging, and
personal agency. Previously, Dr. Gruenhagen was active in program design, planning, and implementation of community events with older adults to promote the OAI and make a connection to the community. Her work will continue on as Board Member and is also a member of the Research and Engagement Committee.

**Laura Landry-Meyer, Ph.D.:** Dr. Landry-Meyer is a family gerontologist by training and her research addresses family gerontology issues with special focus on grandparent and kinship care, family policy with a focus on domestic violence, and collaborative practice within formal social service delivery systems. She has experience collaborating with the Optimal Aging Institute in the past and fundamentally believes and practices collaborations “across disciplines to extend research-based information to the community (aka, public good).” Dr. Landry-Meyer has won Educator of the Year (2018) for the Ohio Associate of Gerontology and Education, among other leadership awards. She will continue her collaborations serving on this Board and is also a member of the Research and Engagement Committee.

**Robyn G. Miller, Ph.D.:** Dr. Miller is Associate Teaching Professor in the School of Human Movement, Sport, & Leisure Studies. She teaches physical education and her work aligns with the 8 dimensions of wellness, specifically physical activity. Dr. Miller has previously been a contributor to the Optimal Aging Institute serving on the Internal Advisory Panel. Moreover, Dr. Miller is a certified yoga instructor for the Senior population and works at 50 North, as well as the YMCA of Findlay, to help seniors achieve their fitness goals. Dr. Miller is also a member of the Community Outreach Committee.

**Vivian J. Miller, Ph.D., MSSA, LSW:** Dr. Miller is Assistant Professor in Social Work in the College of Health and Human Services. Her practice experience focuses on supporting older adults living in long-term care through interdisciplinary and interprofessional efforts. Dr. Miller values community-engaged research, specifically gerontological-social work and the unique various factors that impact the mental health of particularly vulnerable and isolated older adults, including opportunities for social connectivity and social supports of residents of nursing homes, low-income older adults, and racially and ethnically diverse older adults. Dr. Miller is serving as Director of the Optimal Aging Institute.

**Amy Morgan, Ph.D.:** Dr. Morgan is an exercise physiologist with a research focus in aging. She has served as an Associate Dean in the College of Education and Human Development as well as the Chair of the Institutional Review Board at BGSU. Her educational background, research experiences, and administrative roles have all provided her with the knowledge, skills and abilities to be a strong contributor to the Optimal Aging Institute. Her work focuses on the dimensions of wellness, particularly in relation to our aging population. She has completed numerous research studies that focus on functional ability and behaviors that can help individuals maintain independence. Dr. Morgan is also chair of the Rapid Access Grant Review Committee.
**Lindsey Murphy:** Lindsey Murphy is in her last year studying Gerontology: Long Term Care Administration. Outside of going to school, Lindsey is an older adult fitness instructor at the Student Recreation center where she teaches aqua fitness. She also is a caregiver at Brookdale Bowling Green and a Hospital Corpsman in the United States Navy Reserves. She is excited to help contribute to the opportunities and resources that the institute can provide for older adults in the community, as well as develop valuable knowledge she can take away as she finishes up her time here at BGSU.

**V. Jane Rosser:** V. Jane Rosser is Director of the Center for Public Impact at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). Her work at BGSU has focused on building and sustaining campus/community partnerships, grant writing and review, designing and implementing initiatives and educational programs, connecting the campus community with local, regional and national conversation in areas of focus. Her work is focused on finding new resources and connections that link BGSU’s research, teaching, and civic capacity to address critical community needs, aligning directly with the mission of the Optimal Aging Institute. She previously served as an Internal Advisory Board Panelist and will continue to leverage her passion for optimal aging as Board Member.

**Cynthia A. Spitler, Ph.D.:** Dr. Spitler is Associate Teaching Professor in the Gerontology program at Bowling Green State University, Board Member of the Ohio Living Swan Creek, as well as the Northwest Ohio Gerontological Association. She will utilize her knowledge of Gerontology to assist in helping address concerns of older adults and their caregivers. The courses she teaches align with the organizational goals and dimensions of the Optimal Aging Institute (OAI); she will use her knowledge in helping the OAI make decisions about research and projects to undertake. Dr. Spitler is also member of the Rapid Access Grant Review Committee.

**Stephanie Thurmond, PT, DPT, ScD:** Dr. Thurmond is Chair, Program Director, and Associate Professor in the new School of Physical Therapy in the College of Health and Human Services. She is a licensed physical therapist, trained to deal with the physical, environmental, and occupational issues involving aging. As new faculty at Bowling Green State University, she will leverage her skills and training, as well as directorship position to develop relationships with health care organizations in the area. Dr. Thurmond is also member of the Rapid Access Grant Review Committee.

**Jennifer Wagner, MPH, HSE, LNHA, CEAL:** Professor Wagner is Assistant Professor and Internship Coordinator in the Gerontology program at Bowling Green State University. She is also Certified LTC Ombudsman Associate II and Certified Medicare Counselor. Professor Wagner was of the original contributors to the OAI and has a history with the program along with the Center for Excellence for Health and Wellness across the Lifespan. She continues to incorporate the 8 dimensions of wellness into her course work. She maintains professional connections throughout Northwest Ohio and beyond and continues to meet new community partners for advancement, guest lecturers, and internship placements for gerontology students. Professor Wagner is also chair of the Community Outreach Committee.

**Jason Whitfield, Ph.D., CCC-SLP:** Dr. Whitfield is Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Bowling Green State University. He conducts research on the effects of Parkinson disease and normal aging on speech communication, motor learning
and control, and cognition. His work aligns with the physical, social, and intellectual dimensions of health and wellness. He previously received research funding from the Optimal Aging Institute (OAI) and spoke at a community event that sponsored by the OAI. He is interested in serving as a board member and to advocate for people who find themselves at the intersection of aging and compromised health.