

SYMPOSIUM OF APPLIED RESEARCH (SOAR)

Critical Thinkers in Critical Times: Applying Research for the Common Good

Thursday, June 1, 2023 | 6:00 PM PD1

WELCOME MESSAGE

e are delighted to welcome you to the Seventh Annual International Symposium of Applied Research (SOAR)! Our symposium is an inclusive gathering that brings together academia, researchers, scholars, and the global community to share research results and applications across specialized and interdisciplinary fields. This year's theme, Applying Research for the Common Good, provides an ideal platform to showcase the amazing research and projects carried out in many fields of study.

Participating in this year SOAR, held by Westcliff University, is an excellent opportunity to network, exchange knowledge, and share research with others. We understand that employers highly value the ability to communicate ideas clearly, especially during presentations. Therefore, this event will provide valuable experience for honing these skills.

This academic event is an ideal platform for promoting new collaborations and building partnerships. Our aim is to create an open and welcoming environment where attendees can freely express ideas, ask questions, and learn from others. Our symposium offers a unique opportunity for all attendees to share ideas, present their research, and discuss the latest innovations, trends, and practical concerns and challenges in their respective fields.

Throughout the symposium, our presenters will share their expertise on Applying Research for the Common Good and welcome questions at the end of each session. We hope that this year's symposium will encourage the exploration of research that has the potential to make a significant positive impact on society.

Please feel free to contact us at symposium@westcliff.edu for information on this and future SOARs. We are excited to have you join us for this year's program and look forward to a productive and engaging symposium.

SOAR 2023 PLANNING COMMITTEE

SPECIAL THANKS

e would like to express our gratitude to the dedicated committees who worked tirelessly to plan and organize this event. Your unwavering commitment and efforts have made it possible for participants to have a remarkable academic experience.

Evelin Suij-Ojeda Jannette Flores Mary Broding Jocelyn Sorensen Jodi Consten

Mehri Aghaseyedhassanesfehan

Jinan Ziade Michelle Stewart Christa Bixby Jodi Crawford Sky Zhang

Thomas Santa Maria Jaylene Iannini

Jaylene lammin Jeanne Klockow Liana McWilliams Rachel Sieber Cynthia Chilton Jennifer Nguyen Lee Lawrence Rachel Saporito

Bianca Alonso Colleen Cooke Grace Camille Curtom

Bryant Iriele Shaun Spath Marko Nino Diana Siganoff

Geraldine Goodstone

Rich Loke Simin Hojat Jennifer Money Nicholas Becker Nima Salami

Mohammad Sharifzadeh Stephanie Kate Cruz

Abdurrahman Muhammad

Zhangchi Wang Kaan Baytar

Technology Department

Mary Allegra Karen Robinson Jackie Dubay

All SOAR Judges and support team

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the professors, students, staff, and academic leaders who generously contributed their time and expertise to make SOAR 2023 a success. Your valuable contributions were essential to the success of this event, and we recognize that without your collective efforts, this event would not have been possible.

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

OPENING REMARKS

SOAR Zoom Main Room | CR 113

PLENARY SESSIONS

SOAR Zoom Main Room | CR 113

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

SOAR Zoom Breakout Room 1 | CR 113

SOAR Zoom Breakout Room 2 | CR 109

SOAR Zoom Breakout Room 3 | CR 107

SOAR Zoom Breakout Room 4 | CR 111

CLOSING CEREMONY

SOAR Zoom Main Room | CR 160

Zoom: https://westcliff-edu.zoom.us/j/88589456496

All SOAR sessions will be held in one Zoom link. Each concurrent session will be in a Zoom breakout room. For an optimal Zoom experience, and the ability to move from room to room for the event, please be sure to update your version of Zoom.

ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS

- **1.** To move from room to room, look for the **Breakout Room** button on the bottom of your Zoom screen. *It may be in the "more" section.*
- 2. Once you see the breakout room options, hover over the number of participants (in blue), and it will change to "Join". Click Yes to Join SOAR Room.
- **3.** To **change rooms**, repeat steps 1 and 2.
- **4.** To leave the breakout rooms, go to **Leave Room** at the bottom right of the screen.
- **5.** Select **Leave Meeting** to leave the meeting entirely.
- **6.** Select **Leave Breakout Room** to go back to the welcome room.

For any questions about the **Zoom Breakout Rooms**, you can go back to the main room at any time to ask the SOAR Tech Support person there.

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

	ZOOM MAIN ROOM / ON CAMPUS CR 113					
6:00 PM - 6:15 PM	Welcome Remarks: Dr. Eve Suij-Ojeda & Dr. Mihaela Tanasescu					
6:15 PM - 6:30 PM	Opening Plenary: Van Lai-DuMone Using Creativity and Creative Problem Solving to Think Critically					
	ZOOM BREAKOUT ROOM 1 CR 113	ZOOM BREAKOUT ROOM 2 CR 109	ZOOM BREAKOUT ROOM 3 CR 107	ZOOM BREAKOUT ROOM 4 CR 111		
6:35 PM - 7:00 PM	The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Leadership Success For Women Prof. Jodi Consten (Dean of COE) Live on Campus	Job Satisfaction Among Community College Deans Dr. Maya Fernández (Faculty) Recorded	Managers Lived Experiences with Technology in the Mortgage Industry During the COVID-19 Pandemic Maria Gerbersgagen (Student) & Dr. Spath Shaun (Faculty) Recorded	ChatGPT: A Virtual English Tutor for Online Learners Dr. Doris Molero (External Faculty) Recorded		
7:05 PM - 7:30 PM	Exploring Latina Entrepreneurial Barriers to Growth and Creative Solutions Dr. Rocio Flores (Community Leader) Recorded	Investigation Into Using Machine Learning to Improve Project Budgeting Systems Dr. Ahmed Hashala (Alumnus) Recorded	Local Binary Patterns Validation Through Recognition of Side View Images and Deep Learning Prof. Elnaz Khatmi (Faculty) Recorded	Coaching Through Athletics: Mental Side of Athletics Prof. Vanessa Kellems (Staff) Live on Campus		
7:30 PM - 7:40 PM	Coffee Break					

ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS

	ZOOM BREAKOUT ROOM 1 CR 113	ZOOM BREAKOUT ROOM 2 CR 109	ZOOM BREAKOUT ROOM 3 CR 107	ZOOM BREAKOUT ROOM 4 CR 111	
7:45 PM - 8:10 PM	SMART™ at Westcliff University (Strategic Management of Applied Research and Technology) Dr. Raef Assaf (SMART™ Program Manager) Recorded	Identifying Effective Human Resource Practices to Drive Environmental Sustainability Inside Organizations Dr. Karen Robinson (Faculty) Recorded	The Use of AI Models for Healthcare Diagnostics Grace Camille Curtom (Student) Recorded	Tipping the Scales: Understanding the Disconnect Between Grades and Borders Tiffany McKinnon (Alumna) Recorded	
7:15 PM - 8:40 PM	HR to the Rescue: Navigating Organizational Downsizing the Right Way! Gold Olamide Lawal (Student) Live on Campus	The Detrimental Organizational Effects of Calling a Workplace a Family Dr. Nima S. Salami (Faculty) Recorded	Cloud- Controlled Sanitary- Pad Vending Machine: Stress-Free School days during Menstruation Shashank Shree Neupane (Student) Recorded	Graphic Novels in the COM 102 Classroom Dr. Jennifer Money (Faculty) Live on Campus Canceled	
	ZOOM MAIN ROOM / ON CAMPUS CR 113				
8:45 PM - 9:00 PM	Closing Plenary: Dr. Lourdes Ortega Using Multilingualism in Education for Social Justice				
9:00 PM - 9:15 PM	Final Remarks: Prof. Jocelyn Sorensen & Dr. Eve Suij-Ojeda				

OPENING PLENARY

USING CREATIVITY AND CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING TO THINK CRITICALLY

By Van-Lai Dumone



The use of creativity can help you think critically. This session will employ creative problem-solving tools that can be utilized in the workplace to problem-solve and think critically individually and within teams. Creativity is a capacity we all have, and utilizing it allows for a better way to share ideas and deepen critical thinking, so all ideas make it to the table, and the best collaboration of ideas makes it to the finish line.

BIOGRAPHY:

Van is the founder of Worksmart. A progressive team development and leadership training consultancy that utilizes creativity, play, and experiential learning to evolve mindset, skill sets, and behaviors in the workplace. Her work is built on the foundation that we are all creative, good ideas can come from any level of an organization, and by cultivating idea sharing, everyone has a chance to have their voice heard, and contribute meaningfully and effectively.

TIME: 6:15 PM - 6:30 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Main Room | CR 113

USING MULTILINGUALISM IN EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

By Dr. Lourdes Ortega

Language shapes us into who we are, education helps us reach who we want to become, and most people in the world live multilingual lives. So, language, education, and multilingualism are human

rights. The session will show where and why education needs multilingualism across ages, geographies, and walks of life. Opening the doors of schools and classrooms to multilingualism will nourish education, but only if done well, with social justice as a firm guide.

BIOGRAPHY:

Dr. Lourdes Ortega is a professor in the Department of Linguistics at Georgetown University, where she mentors undergraduate, master's, and



doctoral students conducting research on applied linguistics and multilingualism. She is also the Faculty Director of GU's Initiative for Multilingual Studies. Dr. Ortega's main area of research is in second language acquisition, particularly socio-cognitive and educational dimensions in adult classroom settings.

TIME: 8:45 PM - 9:00 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Main Room | CR 113

THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN LEADERSHIP SUCCESS FOR WOMEN

By Prof. Jodi Consten

Women possess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be effective leaders. Emotional intelligence plays a pivotal role in a woman's



ability to lead. Fostering the competencies of emotional intelligence, this presentation defines and analyzes the role of emotional intelligence in understanding successful leadership characteristics for women.

BIOGRAPHY:

Professor Consten is currently the Associate Dean for the College of Education at Westcliff University. With 26 years of education

experience, Professor Consten enjoys collaborating with industry experts to deepen learning, foster innovation, and transform leadership. She holds a master's degree in administration and a Bachelor of Science in political science and is currently enrolled in the DBA program at Westcliff.

TIME: 6:35 PM - 7:00 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Room 1 | CR 113

JOB SATISFACTION AMONG COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEANS

By Dr. Maya Fernández

During this session, participants will discover what job satisfaction means to them. Discussions will include what factors contribute to intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. Participants will be challenged to think about what keeps them satisfied in their roles. They will

explore ways to have more job satisfaction if there is job dissatisfaction. Finally, they will brainstorm together on tips and tricks to stay satisfied on the job.

BIOGRAPHY:

Dr. Maya Thomas Fernandez currently serves as an adjunct professor for Westcliff University in the College of Business. Dr. Thomas Fernandez is passionate about removing barriers to



student success. In her spare time, she loves to exercise, cook and bake, and do arts and crafts with her daughters.

TIME: 6:35PM - 7:00 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Room 2 | CR 109

MANAGERS LIVED EXPERIENCES WITH TECHNOLOGY IN THE MORTGAGE INDUSTRY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

By Maria Gerbersgagen & Dr. Spath Shaun



This presentation discusses the experiences of mortgage industry managers during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on technology usage. This session will also explore how technology can enhance mortgage management and increase sustainability by improving the integration of managers, structures, technologies, and tasks.

BIOGRAPHY:

Maria has a Master in Business Administration, as well as a Master of Science in Information Technology. Maria has

extensive experience in corporate operations, including IT support, data analysis, accounting, and HR. Maria has a passion for education and she enjoys reading and learning new subjects.

Dr. Spath has been a part of the Westcliff University faculty since December 2021. He is currently serving as Vice President of the Faculty Senate. He comes to us with a background in accounting and management within the construction and hospitality



industries, and most recently in government. He received his DBA in Data Analytics from GCU. He volunteers as a youth wrestling coach at his local club to foster renewed interest in the sport of wrestling in Virginia.

TIME: 6:35PM - 7:00 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Room 3 | CR 107

CHATGPT: A VIRTUAL ENGLISH TUTOR FOR ONLINE LEARNERS

By Dr. Doris Molero

This session explores the potential benefits of integrating ChatGPT into online English language learning programs. By leveraging the platform's capabilities, the presenter will demonstrate how teachers

can create personalized and engaging lessons that can enhance student learning and promote success in the classroom.

BIOGRAPHY:

Dr. Doris Molero (EdD) is an ESP professor at San Pablo Tucuman University. She combines teaching, educational technology, and peace education, with a passion for language learning and instructional design, specifically 3D virtual



environments. She won the Thinker VWBPE 2022 award and is a coordinator for TESOL/CALL-IS EVO 2023.

TIME: 6:35 PM - 7:00 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Room 4 | CR 111

EXPLORING LATINA ENTREPRENEURIAL BARRIERS TO GROWTH AND CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

By Dr. Rocio Flores

In this session, Dr. Rocio Flores will guide us through the findings of her research: Exploring Latina Entrepreneurs Barriers to Growth and Creative Solutions and share the impacts and importance of this research. Specifically, she will touch on how this topic expands beyond the economic landscape into communities and settings

across the country.

BIOGRAPHY:

Dr. Rocio Flores, advocate and champion for diverse local small business communities, brings 20+ years of experience in program development, community engagement, and administration across sectors. She owns BELLA Entrepreneurs Consulting, supporting companies and nonprofits through program

design, workshop facilitation, and serves as the Founder of Brillantes Emprendedoras Latinas de Los Angeles. As Chief Social Impact Officer at USC Credit Union, she drives community business development, fund development, partnerships, and financial education. Dr. Flores holds a Doctorate in Organizational Change and Leadership from USC, a master's in Public Administration from CSU Long Beach, and dual bachelor's degrees in Psychology/Social Behavior and Criminology Law/Society from UC Irvine.

TIME: 7:05 PM - 7:30 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Room 1 | CR 113

INVESTIGATION INTO USING MACHINE LEARNING TO IMPROVE PROJECT BUDGETING SYSTEMS

By Dr. Ahmed Hashala

This presentation introduces a machine learning-based budgeting system for project management. It highlights the importance of having an efficient budgeting system and how it can impact a company's success. The presenter will explain the process of building five regression models using machine learning techniques such as multiple linear regression, artificial neural network, support vector machine, k-nearest neighbors, and random forest. The session also covers how to assess the accuracy of the models and

how to determine which model is the best fit for a specific company.

BIOGRAPHY:

Ahmed Masry Hashala is an Industrial Automation Program Manager with a bachelor's in Electronic Engineering and an MBA from Edinburgh Business School. Recently earning a DBA from Westcliff University, Ahmed has a passion for continuous learning.

TIME: 7:05 PM - 7:30 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Room 2 | CR 109

LOCAL BINARY PATTERNS VALIDATION THROUGH RECOGNITION OF SIDE VIEW IMAGES AND DEEP LEARNING

By Prof. Elnaz Khatmi

This presentation discusses a face recognition algorithm that uses enhanced Local Binary Patterns (LBP) to identify faces from a side view. The presenter will also highlight the importance of



facial recognition systems in security and the advantages and disadvantages of using physiological techniques for security measures.

BIOGRAPHY:

Elnaz Khatmi is an esteemed instructor at Westcliff University. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Information and Communication Engineering from the University of Klagenfurt in Austria. Prior to this, she received her M.Sc.

in Computer Science from Cyprus International University in 2018 and her B.Sc. in Computer Engineering from the University of Near East in 2015. Elnaz's research interests span a diverse range of topics, including AI, face recognition, swarm intelligence-based algorithms, evolutionary algorithms, deep reinforcement learning, and web development.

TIME: 7:05 PM - 7:30 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Room 3 | CR 107

COACHING THROUGH ATHLETICS: MENTAL SIDE OF ATHLETICS

By Prof. Vanessa Kellems

This presentation explores how teaching strategies applied in athletic collegiate coaching can aid in developing success in

the mental aspect of the game for Westcliff University's softball team. The focus is on developing mental resilience coping strategies in student athletes by understanding their tendencies and subconscious behavior during challenges, leading to a growth mindset within their sport. Participants will reflect on their strengths and weaknesses to develop coping strategies and shift to a growth mindset through implementing challenges.



BIOGRAPHY:

Currently, she is the Head Softball Coach, Doctoral Candidate in the EdD program at Westcliff University, and a former D1 athlete, with 15 years of coaching experience. Prof. Kellems earned a BS degree in Health Education from South Dakota State University, followed by a Master of Exercise Science - Biomechanics earned at University of Northern Colorado.

TIME: 7:05 PM - 7:30 PM

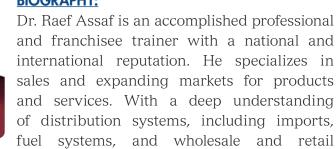
LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Room 4 | CR 111

SMART™ AT WESTCLIFF UNIVERSITY

By Dr. Raef Assaf

For almost three years The SMART™ program has provided the opportunity for students to work directly with startups and well-established companies on a variety of challenges and opportunities. This session explores how the SMART™ program provides students the opportunity to gain practical learning experience that is relevant, scalable, and holistic. The presenter will also discuss how WU students are well prepared to address the needs of employers in a broad range of fields whether seeking their first job, promotion or to establish a business of their own.





operations, Dr. Assaf brings a wealth of experience. Known for his excellent interpersonal and communication abilities, he fosters an empowering, supportive, and collaborative environment. With a well-rounded educational and personal background, Dr. Assaf integrates theory and practical examples to promote an inquiring, independent, and analytical approach to learning.

TIME: 7:45 PM - 8:10 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Room 1 | CR 113

IDENTIFYING EFFECTIVE HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES TO DRIVE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY INSIDE ORGANIZATIONS

By Dr. Karen Robinson

This presentation, based on a qualitative study, will discuss some of the challenges human resources professionals face in incorporating sustainable practices in their organization, as well as identify effective practices that deserve further research.



Dr. Karen Robinson, a PhD in Industrial/ Organizational Psychology, holds an MS

in Clinical and Organizational & Clinical Psychology and a BA in Psychology. Her postgraduate research includes Diversity & Leadership, Workplace Dynamics, and Sustainability. She has extensive experience as an adjunct faculty member, senior doctoral advisor, and research fellow, specializing in psychology, organizational behavior, human resources, and sustainability.

TIME: 7:45 PM - 8:10 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Room 2 | CR 109



THE USE OF AI MODELS FOR HEALTHCARE DIAGNOSTICS

By Grace Camille Curtom



This presentation outlines a research project that employs AI modeling techniques to enhance healthcare diagnostics. The presenter will discuss how AI models can be shared and combined to create more accurate diagnoses, without compromising patient data. The presentation also highlights the benefits of creating and sharing such models, including lower healthcare costs and aiding physicians in

making clinical decisions.

BIOGRAPHY:

Grace Camille Curton is currently a first-year student pursuing a Doctorate in Business Administration from Westcliff University. With more than eight years of experience in the healthcare industry, she recently transitioned to a career in marketing. However, her true passion lies in healthcare, digital marketing, and staying up-to-date with the latest technology trends.

TIME: 7:45 PM - 8:10 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Room 3 | CR 107

TIPPING THE SCALES: UNDERSTANDING THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN GRADES AND BORDERS

By Tiffany McKinnon

This presentation focuses on the challenges that students face when transitioning to new standards and policies in a new higher

education institution. The presenter will discuss the importance of having a resource database that compares grading scales and policies to a student's previous university to help them better understand grade conversion and adapt to their new environment. The session aims to educate participants on the publicly available resources, those that should be accessible online, and how to manage them digitally.



BIOGRAPHY:

Tiffany McKinnon, a story writer and illustrator in her off-time, graduated from the University of Minnesota where she studied Japanese and earned a bachelor's degree in English. After earning her master's at Westcliff University, she is currently enrolled in the Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development doctoral program at the University of Minnesota.

TIME: 7:45 PM - 8:10 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Room 4 | CR 111

HR TO THE RESCUE: NAVIGATING ORGANIZATIONAL DOWNSIZING THE RIGHT WAY!

By Gold Olamide Lawal

You've probably heard that employees who survive layoffs are the "lucky ones" and do not require any further motivation to keep them productive at work.

This presentation is designed to demystify that misconception and will explore the role of the human resource department in an organizational downsizing process, and their responsibilities to both surviving and affected employees.

BIOGRAPHY:

Gold Olamide Lawal is a strategic leader pursuing a Doctorate in



Business Administration at Westcliff University with five years of experience as an HR and talent acquisition consultant. As a senior consultant, she provides innovative recruitment solutions to clients in the renewable energy industry, offering life-changing career opportunities to talents across Europe and the US. She is passionate about the role of HR and leadership in shaping 21st-century organizations and has conducted several studies exploring the topic.

TIME: 8:15 PM - 8:40 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Room 1 | CR 113

THE DETRIMENTAL ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTS OF CALLING A WORKPLACE A FAMILY

By Dr. Nima S. Salami

In this session, the presenter will discuss how referring to an organizational culture as a "family" may have detrimental effects on productivity and effectiveness. The presentation will explain

why, instead of relying on the family metaphor, organizations should focus on building a culture of respect, collaboration, and professionalism while prioritizing the organization's goals and objectives.

BIOGRAPHY:

Dr. Nima Salami got his bachelor's and master's degree in business administration from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, and his



doctorate degree (DBA) from Westcliff University. Also, he did part of his studies abroad at Jonkoping International Business School (Sweden), Maastricht University (The Netherlands), and Malmo University (Sweden).

TIME: 8:15 PM - 8:40 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Room 2 | CR 109

CLOUD-CONTROLLED SANITARY-PAD VENDING MACHINE: STRESS-FREE SCHOOL DAYS DURING MENSTRUATION

By Shashank Shree Neupane



Why are female students absent from school during menstrual days in third-world countries? This presentation demonstrates the development and implementation of Cloud-Controlled Sanitary-Pad Vending Machines at Schools in Nepal that solve the fear of asking for pads. Participants will benefit technically from the innovation and be inspired by its social cause.

BIOGRAPHY:

Shashank Shree Neupane is an electronics engineer with an interest in IoT, Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, and Machine Learning. He is currently pursuing his MSIT at Presidential Business School, Westcliff University.

TIME: 8:15 PM - 8:40 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Room 3 | CR 107

GRAPHIC NOVELS IN THE COM 102 CLASSROOM

By Dr. Jennifer Money

Studies have shown that using comics and graphic novels in the college classroom leads to increased student engagement. This presentation will analyze how the integration of graphic novels to

teach basic research methodology and writing in the COM 102 classroom has impacted student learning and information retention.

BIOGRAPHY:

Dr. Jennifer Money is an Integrative Studies professor at Westcliff University who primarily teaches the core communication courses. She received her PhD in English Literature from Claremont Graduate University in 2011. She has



over 20 years teaching in the college writing classroom. Her interests focus on effectively integrating technology into the classroom, building collaborative learning environments that enhance student learning outcomes, engaging students in a meaningful and interesting way, and figuring out how to make them actually read a book or two along the way.

TIME: 8:15 PM - 8:40 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Breakout Room 4 | CR 111

NOTES

NOTES

FOLLOW US









@westcliffuniversity



@westcliff-university



@WestcliffU

SCAN QR CODE TO VIEW DIGITAL SOAR PROGRAM BOOKLET



17877 Von Karman Ave., 4th Floor | Irvine, CA 92614 westcliff.edu | 949-825-5999