

Emerging Scholars Grant Progress Report

2025 - 2026 EMERGING SCHOLARS PROGRAM | HEST.NMSU.EDU



Overview

Four Emerging Scholars awardees submitted progress reports for the 2025–2026 program cycle, representing diverse research initiatives spanning public health, communication disorders, early-childhood intervention, and computational social science. All project principal investigators demonstrated meaningful progress toward their stated objectives, with strong preliminary outcomes, substantial student involvement, and active community and professional partnerships. Several projects are on pace to extend into 2027 for continued analysis and dissemination.

Program Summaries

Jodi Patterson - Culturally Informed Safety Planning for Immigrant Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence

Focus: Understanding the experiences and safety-planning needs of immigrant and Latino survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) in Southern New Mexico, in order to inform culturally responsive interventions.

Key Achievements:

- Obtained IRB approval in December 2025 and launched recruitment in January 2026 using multiple community-engaged strategies.
- Completed 10 participant interviews to date, with 5 additional interviews pending.
- Built an extensive community recruitment network spanning resource centers, public libraries, medical clinics, local businesses, the La Casa IPV shelter in Las Cruces, and the Empowerment Congress of Doña Ana, including attendance at Vecinos Unidos meetings in La Mesa, Vado/Cerrillo, Anthony, and Sunland Park.
- Generated early findings indicating that many survivors had no formal safety plan prior to escaping abuse, reinforcing the need for culturally informed safety-planning education and interventions.

Budget Status: \$5,549.48 spent to date; \$8,840.98 remaining of the award, with additional graduate research assistant salary committed through May 2026. Funds have supported graduate research assistant salary and fringe, participant incentives, refreshments, and transcription services.

Megan Young - Exploring the Career Development of Adults Who Stutter

Focus: A qualitative study of how stuttering influences the career decision-making process and broader career development of adults who stutter

Key Achievements:

- Completed all data collection as of June 2026: 24 interviews across 12 participants.
- Trained three research assistants in reflexive thematic analysis, scoring of clinical measures, and interview transcript preparation.
- Began analysis of Aim 1 (the influence of stuttering on career decision-making), with an estimated completion date of September 2026.
- Began drafting the introduction of the manuscript corresponding to Aim 1; transcript preparation for all 24 interviews is on track for completion by September 2026.

Budget Status: Projected spending will support research assistants for data management and analysis, PI and student travel to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Annual Convention, and open-access publishing costs. An extension into Spring 2027 is planned.

Program Summaries

Sarah Wiegand - Coaching Caregivers with Intellectual Disabilities in Early Intervention: A Professional Development Pilot Program

Focus: A pilot professional-development program designed to strengthen early-intervention providers' coaching practices when working with parents who have an intellectual disability.

Key Achievements:

- Completed a four-session curriculum grounded in Part C early-intervention best practices and evidence-based strategies for supporting parents with intellectual disability.
- Developed research measures and fidelity checklists, including a demographic questionnaire, facilitation fidelity checklist, a modified Early Intervention Self-Efficacy Scale, a provider satisfaction questionnaire, and a focus-group protocol.
- Received IRB approval on June 22, 2026, and began expert-reviewer feedback and multi-state provider recruitment across Georgia, New Mexico, and New Jersey, with the program set to launch in September 2026.
- Presented at the Conference for Research Innovations in Early Intervention (February 2026) and is preparing a proposal for AERA 2027.

Budget Status: \$1,222.19 spent; \$12,777.81 remaining of the award. An extension into Spring 2027 was requested to complete the curriculum pilot, data analysis, and dissemination.

Toni Rouhana - Computational Analysis of War Narratives Across Social Media Platforms

Focus: Building an analytical framework to study the evolution of war narratives across social media platforms, including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Telegram, and YouTube.

Key Achievements:

- Completed Phase 3 of the research plan by importing multi-platform JSON data into an unstructured MongoDB database.
- Employed two undergraduate research assistants central to initial data processing and quality-control testing across multiple languages and platforms.
- Hired a graduate research assistant to lead advanced technical work in Fall 2026, refining the database architecture into a schema capable of accommodating the project's complex, multi-dimensional data.
- Positioned the project to begin Phase 5 (Computational Analysis) in Fall 2026, including natural language processing to detect war-narrative themes, sentiment analysis, and structural topic modeling to trace narrative evolution over time.

Budget Status: Funds support undergraduate and graduate research assistants engaged in data management and computational analysis.

Cross Project Themes

Student Development

All four projects demonstrate significant undergraduate and graduate student involvement. Students were trained in advanced research methods (e.g., reflexive thematic analysis, clinical-measure scoring, database management, and quality-control testing) and took on substantive responsibilities within each study. Projects supported graduate research assistants and multiple undergraduate researchers, providing hands-on experience and professional-skill development.

Community and Professional Engagement

Projects involve partnerships on and off campus. These include community resource centers, public libraries, clinics, and the La Casa IPV shelter and Empowerment Congress of Doña Ana in Southern New Mexico; Part C early-intervention networks and coordinators across Georgia, New Mexico, and New Jersey; and clinical and professional communities in speech-language pathology. Together they extend the reach and relevance of the research well beyond campus.

Publication and Dissemination

Recipients are actively sharing their work through manuscripts in development, conference presentations, and professional convenings. Highlights include a presentation at the Conference for Research Innovations in Early Intervention, a forthcoming AERA 2027 proposal, a manuscript in progress on the career development of adults who stutter with planned presentation at the ASHA Annual Convention, and emerging findings from the IPV study that point toward culturally informed practice recommendations.

Challenges and Adaptations

Awardees encountered and adapted to several challenges:

- Recruitment barriers with sensitive and hard-to-reach populations, including stigma surrounding IPV, survivors' limited identification with IPV, distrust related to immigration status, and participants in acute crisis requiring sustained, trust-building community engagement.
- Sample demographics that diverged from expectations, prompting continued outreach to reach the intended study population.
- Complex, staged data pipelines requiring new technical infrastructure and specialized personnel, such as the transition from unstructured to structured data and the addition of a graduate research assistant to lead database architecture.
- Timeline adjustments as analysis and dissemination phases extend into 2027, with several awardees planning or requesting no-cost extensions into Spring 2027.

Key Takeaways

All four projects are positioned for continued success with clear trajectories toward completion. Awardees have already achieved meaningful milestones (e.g., IRB approvals, completed data collection, curriculum and instrument development, conference presentations, and the buildout of research infrastructure and teams). Anticipated outcomes include peer-reviewed publications, additional conference presentations, culturally informed practice and safety-planning recommendations, and new professional-development tools. Several projects are expected to extend into 2027 to complete analysis and dissemination.



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