

WAGNER COLLEGE

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

New Faculty 2023-2024

Professor Zhexu (Edward) Ai, Tenure Track Assistant Professor Nicolais School of Business

Zhexu (Edward) Ai is currently an assistant professor in finance at Nicolais School of Business. He received his Masters degree in Finance from University of Maryland, and Ph.D. in Finance from the University of Connecticut. Dr. Ai is an enthusiastic finance researcher, teacher, and practitioner. His research focuses on financial distress and bankruptcy, labor and finance, and behavioral finance. He also has particular interests in using machine learning techniques in his research. During the Fall 2023 semester, he will be teaching undergraduate & MBA Introduction in Finance and Investment course. Dr. Ai is a husband, a father, and a son and loves doing handyman work, traveling, and watching sport games in his leisure time.

Giacomo DiPasquale, Ph.D., Tenure Track Assistant Professor Nicolais School of Business

Dr. DiPasquale holds a Ph.D. in Economics and Political Science, from the Department of Politics and Economics of Claremont Graduate University. He earned his M.A. degree in International Political Economy at Claremont Graduate University (May, 2018) and a M.A. in Economics and Finance at University of Pavia (December, 2014). His research interests are in the fields of Applied Microeconomics, Comparative Politics, and International Political Economy.

Dr. DiPasquale's research focuses on issues relating inequality, poverty, and migrations, and has been published on journals such as the Journal of International Migration and Integration and Social Science Quarterly. He worked as an Adjunct Professor of Political Science at Loyola Marymount University and California Lutheran University, and as Lab Manager at the Inequality and Policy Research Center. During the academic year 2021-2022, Dr. DiPasquale worked at the prestigious Ransom Everglades School in Miami, Florida and from August 2022 to May 2023, worked as a full time Lecturer in the Economics department at the University of Vermont. Dr. DiPasquale has lived in Italy, Germany and USA and speaks fluently five languages (English, Spanish, French, Italian, and German).

Adam Jadhav, Ph.D., Visiting Assistant Professor Department of Anthropology

Adam Jadhav earned his PhD from the Department of Geography at the University of California at Berkeley. Broadly, his research concerns critical agrarian and oceanic political ecology; his doctoral dissertation tracks the uneven unfolding of fishing and marine capitalism in British imperial and independent postcolonial India. He has collaborated with activists and civil society on conservation and development issues in India for a decade, and also taught students from elementary to graduate levels. He earned his master's degree in Global Environmental Policy from American University and his bachelor's in journalism from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Kayhan Koleyni, Ph.D., Tenure Track Assistant Professor

Nicolais School of Business

Kayhan Koleyni has been an assistant professor of Economics in Eastern New Mexico University for the last four years. He also served as the MBA coordinator for the last two years. Before joining Eastern New Mexico University, he taught economic classes at Pennsylvania Western University and Drury University in Missouri as a visiting assistant professor. He earned his PhD from University of Memphis, and his research interest is in International Macroeconomics and Monetary Economics with focus on banking and financial crises.

Yana Kosenkov, Ph.D., Tenure Track Assistant Professor

Department of Physical Sciences

Dr. Yana Kosenkov is an Assistant Professor specializing in Physical Chemistry. Her interdisciplinary research aims to unravel the chemical machinery of living cells. Her research program focuses on the integration of quantum sciences and artificial intelligence methods for drug discovery applications. Dr. Kosenkov follows the teacher-scholar model, implementing innovative techniques for chemistry laboratory automation and incorporating course-based undergraduate research experiences (CUREs) into her chemistry courses. She prioritizes student-centered learning and is guided by a commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, enabling her to design and facilitate transformative and inclusive undergraduate learning experiences for her students.

Before joining Wagner College, Dr. Kosenkov held a faculty position at Monmouth University. She completed her postdoctoral training at Iowa State University and earned her Ph.D. in Chemistry from Jackson State University, as well as M.S. and B.S. degrees from Dnipro National University in Ukraine.

Professor Richard Lahijani, Clinical Professor

Nicolais School of Business

Professor Lahijani's specialty and focus is Real Estate and Partnership taxation and he has been practicing for over 18 years. He has extensive experience delivering tax consulting services to REIT and private equity clients as well as assisting in annual and quarterly REIT reviews. Professor Lahijani has taught various accounting and taxation courses throughout his teaching career. He has a passion for helping students achieve their full potential and delivering career guidance and job interview skills. Prior to his teaching career, Professor Lahijani was a Tax Senior Manager at a Big4 accounting firm.

Professor Lahijani earned a Bachelors Degree in Accounting and Information Systems from Queens College-CUNY and a Masters of Science Degree in Taxation (MST) from Baruch College-CUNY. He is a Certified Public Accountant, and a Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA)

Melissa Lamanna, Ph.D., Tenure Track Assistant Professor

Department of Biological Sciences

Dr. Melissa Lamanna is fascinated in how social economic status, nutrition, transmission, and pathogenicity intertwine to form epidemics. For instance, how do proteins of the zoonotic pathogens function in disparate environments of various host species? With scientific curiosity in hand, she earned the necessary credentials (A.A. in Chemistry, B.S. in Biology from Indiana University Southeast, Ph.D. in Microbiology from Indiana University Bloomington) to unravel complex biological systems such as disease ecology and cellular division (proliferation and subsequent spread of bacteria).

During Dr. Lamanna's academia training, she has worked on a wide range of organisms (plants, viruses, insects, and bacteria), mastered several versatile techniques (microscopy, genetics, and biochemistry) and received both internal and external funding to support her research. Presently, Dr. Lamanna investigates division mechanisms of the bacteria. For the future, Dr. Lamanna will continue captain a productive and healthy research lab at the cross-section of molecular biology and disease ecology. As a teacher, she is committed to training and educating the next generation to the best of her ability. Resultantly, she proactively engages in pedagogy workshops and certification programs.

Professor David Lau, Academic Director

Physician Assistant Program

Professor David Lau is a proud graduate of the Harlem Hospital Physician Assistant Program in 1990 which is now called CUNY School of Medicine, The City College of New York - Physician Assistant Program. He received his MS from Touro University. He is a Distinguished Fellow of American Academy of Physician Assistants (DFAAPA). He works full-time as Academic Director in Wagner College Physician Assistant Program. Professor Lau loves to teach physician assistant students, especially in board preparation. His favorite courses are electrocardiography, procedural skills, and emergency medicine. He works per-diem as a clinical practicing PA in the emergency department at Woodhull Hospital in Brooklyn, New York. David Lau is an active BCLS, ACLS and PALS instructors. He volunteers with the New York Department of Health and Mental Hygiene – Medical Reserve Corps as medical personnel during the New York City Marathon. Furthermore, Professor Lau participates with American Heart Association in which he teaches community CPR.

Sidney Obas, Ph.D., Academic Coordinator

Physician Assistant Program

Dr. Sidney A. Obas has joined the Wagner College PA Program as a full-time academic coordinator. He recently held the position of full-time clinical coordinator at Wagner College less than 2 years ago and has now returned. Dr. Obas also previously served as academic coordinator at the Fairleigh Dickinson University PA Program and the University of Bridgeport PA Programs.

Over the past several years, Dr. Obas has been developing his skills in the clinical setting, specifically critical care physician assistant (PA) training prior to transitioning to academia. He was the chief PA in critical care at South Nassau Communities Hospital and was able to create a training program that allowed the hospital to employ new graduate physician assistants. He was responsible for PA training, developing a program curriculum and work schedules as well as an employee performance evaluation format for critical care physician assistants.

Dr. Obas is a graduate of Touro College Physician Assistant Program. He received his MBA from LSU at Shreveport and his doctoral degree from the University of Lynchburg. He is a board-certified physician assistant, who specializes in Pulmonary, and critical care and is certified in Sleep Medicine. Other certifications consist of ATLS, FCCS, RPsqt, and NIH stroke. His clinical experience includes Critical Care Medicine, Hematology, Oncology, Pulmonology, Neurology, Cardiology, and Emergency medicine.

Dr. Obas has been in academia for over 25 years, beginning as an adjunct professor in various colleges and universities, converting to full-time professor. He has taught various courses in clinical medicine and basic sciences. Courses taught include pulmonary medicine, cardiology, hematology, gastroenterology, ophthalmology, neurology, anatomy, physiology, medical microbiology, laboratory medicine, radiology, and electrocardiography. He has many interests in medicine and has published works on venous thromboembolism – <https://digitalshowcase.lyncburg.edu/dmscjournal/vol3/iss1/50/>

Dina Prisco, Ph.D., OTR/L, BCP, Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and Clinical Professor
Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program

Dr. Prisco is a clinical professor and acts as the doctoral capstone coordinator for Wagner College's developing doctor of occupational therapy program. In this role, she will oversee the development and implementation of a rigorous and comprehensive capstone program.

Dr. Prisco graduated from New York University with a master's degree in occupational therapy in 2012 and worked clinically for over ten years in pediatric practice. Her pediatric experience included hospital, school-based, and early intervention services. In 2021, Dr. Prisco earned a board certification in pediatrics from the American Occupational Therapy Association, which she maintains. Also in 2021, Dr. Prisco completed a PhD in leadership with a specialty in education from the University of the Cumberlands.

Dr. Prisco's dissertation focused on exploring the role of servant leadership within the occupational therapy profession. In line with her dissertation studies, Dr. Prisco believes strongly in service to her community and profession. Dr. Prisco currently serves as a peer reviewer for the American Journal of Occupational Therapy and on the Roster of Accreditation Evaluators for the American Council for Occupational Therapy Accreditation (ACOTE). She has research interests relating to pediatric interventions, leadership, wellbeing, best practices in higher education, and community practice. Outside of her professional ambitions, Dr. Prisco has two young children, Emily and Benjamin, who have inspired her tremendously.

Michael Rota, DHS, MS, PA-C, Assistant Director & Assessment Coordinator
Physician Assistant Program

Dr. Rota is the Assistant Director & Assessment Coordinator for the Wagner College PA Program. An alumnus of the program, he also obtained his Doctorate in Health Sciences (DHS) from Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences in 2019. He has taught a variety of courses including Pharmacology & Pharmacotherapeutics I and II, Mental Health & Wellness, and Technical Skills. Dr. Rota's research interests include active learning, gamified learning theory, early-clinical exposure, simulation learning, and competency-based medical education. He has presented on these topics at local, national, and international conferences. He currently serves as a content expert and item writer for the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA). Dr. Rota has participated in the design and evaluation of PA curriculums and is experienced with the PA accreditation process.

Siobhan Walsh, OTD, OTR/L, Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and Clinical Professor
Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program

Siobhan Walsh, OTD, OTR/L, is the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and Clinical Professor in the new and developing Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program at Wagner College. Siobhan transitioned to Wagner College in March, 2023 after spending ten years in the hospital setting as an occupational therapist and rehabilitation manager. Siobhan received her master's degree in occupational therapy from the University of Scranton in 2011, and her post-professional occupational therapy doctorate degree from Mary Baldwin University in 2021. Siobhan specializes in adult neurorehabilitation including stroke, brain injury, spinal cord injury, cognitive, perceptual, and visual rehabilitation. Siobhan is passionate about student and staff growth in the clinical and academic settings. Her scholarly passions include occupational therapy intervention selection in neurorehabilitation, peer mentorship models, and clinical and academic leadership. Siobhan and her family are native to Staten Island. Her husband, Dave, and her three beautiful daughters Isla, Helene, and Gwenyth provide endless personal and professional support. Siobhan is humbled to join the Wagner College family and is very excited to be a part of the Wagner College Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program.

Natalie Williams, DMA

Professor and Division Chair, Visual and Performing Arts

Natalie Williams is an Australian-born composer and United States Permanent Resident. Her works have been commissioned and performed by international ensembles including the Atlanta Opera, Omaha Symphony, the Berkeley Symphony, the Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Queensland, West Australian and Canberra Symphony Orchestras, Musica Viva, the Australia Ensemble, Adelaide Baroque, the Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne Youth Orchestras, the Australian Youth Orchestra, the Goldner String Quartet, British Cello soloist Natalie Klein, the Doric String Quartet (UK), the Pavel Haas Quartet (Czech Republic), Ensemble Liaison and The Muses Trio.

Dr. Williams' music has been championed by performers and toured throughout Europe, Australia and the United States. Composition prizes include; the Sue W Chamber Music Prize from the University of Sydney (2020), the 2018 Albert H. Maggs Award from the University of Melbourne, and the Judith Lang-Zaimont prize from the International Alliance of Women in Music (2016). She was a two-time winner of the Atlanta Opera Competition (2013 and 2015), winner of the Iron Composer competition (2010) and joint winner of the inaugural Schueler Awards for a new commission for the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra (2007). Professional development grants include funding from the Australasian Performing Rights Association, the British Music Society and the University of Sydney. As a teaching composer, faculty positions include the Australian National University, School of Music, the Hugh Hodgson School of Music at the University of Georgia, and teaching assistantships at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, and the Faculty of Music at the Melbourne Conservatorium.

Dr. Williams roles in artistic administration include the Australian National Academy of Music (library) and the Orchestra Victoria management team (education). Natalie serves as a panel member for the Fulbright Commission (USA) and for Australian arts councils including the Australia Council and Arts ACT, alongside academic administration positions in the United States.

Eric Dean Wilson, Ph.D., Tenure Track Assistant Professor

Department of English

Dr. Eric Dean Wilson joins the English Department of Wagner College in Fall 2023 as Assistant Professor of Creative Writing and American Literature. He earned his doctorate in English with a certificate in American Studies at the Graduate Center, CUNY for his work on environmental literature. His dissertation, "The Personal and the Planetal: Essaying the Ecological," examines how contemporary American personal essays in an ecological mode can help us better understand the boundaries of the self in literary nonfiction. Reading works by Robin Wall Kimmerer, John Francis, and David Wojnarowicz, Wilson's dissertation invokes queer ecology as a method for understanding the self as more varied and communal than Western liberalism assumes. His dissertation won the English Program's Alumni and Doctoral Faculty Prize for the Most Distinguished Dissertation of the Year.

Professor Wilson comes to academia as a working writer and literary artist. He holds an MFA in creative writing from The New School and is the author of *After Cooling: On Freon, Global Warming, and the Terrible Cost of Comfort* (Simon & Schuster, 2021). His essays, poems, interviews, and criticism have appeared in *Time*, *BOMB*, *Esquire*, *The Baffler*, the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and *Tin House*, among other publications. His work has been featured in the *New York Times*, the *Brian Lehrer Show*, NPR, *Citizens Climate Radio*, and elsewhere. He's currently working on a collection of essays that use the unique geographic history of Brooklyn in order to explore ideas about queer space and ecological mourning. Originally from Memphis, Tennessee, he now lives in Flatbush, Brooklyn.