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Bilingual: Spanish/English

Professional Experience

Extension Assistant Professor | Extension Specialist, Department of Food, Nutrition, Dietetics, and Health, College of Health and Human Sciences, Kansas State University – 2023-Present

- Nutrition and wellness across the lifespan
- Nutrition education
- Social Determinants of Health

Assistant Professor, Department of Health and Human Sciences, College of Health, Education, and Nursing, Colorado State University – Pueblo, 2021-2022

- Courses taught: Introduction to health professions; Foundations of public health; Personal health; Epidemiology, Health Program Evaluation, Research, Nutrition and Food Systems, Drugs and Healthy Lifestyles.
- Discovery Scholars: Undergraduate research mentor
- Senator and Secretary of Faculty Senate
- Faculty fellow for faculty professional development

Graduate research/teaching assistant, Department of Food, Nutrition Dietetics and Health, College of Health and Human Sciences, Kansas State University, 2016-2021

- Develop a nutrition education program online for people affected by Parkinson's disease. Creation of educational materials, videos, and recipes. Assist with grading and training of new teacher assistant.
- Trainer for the new Army/Airforce school menu initiative in the U.S and Germany. Food safety teacher, kitchen supervisor, training organization, data collection and analysis.
- Assist with grading and in-class activities. Tutor Students and conduct exam reviews. Teaching course material, exam writing and proctoring. Administer and manage course, i.e. updating the course platform (canvas). Assist with critical thinking activities for students. Developing a basic nutrition course in Spanish.
- Research focused on neurodegenerative diseases and nutrition. Assist with the meetings of Parkinson's group of Manhattan. Assist with the Speedy PD run (major fundraising of the PD group). Creation of educational materials for the Parkinson's Disease group in Manhattan.
Evaluation of an extension newsletter tailored for grandparent caregivers on SNAP benefits.

Basic language training instructor, International Student Center, Kansas State University, 2019-2020

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- Create curriculum for Spanish classes, teach basic and advanced Spanish, student management, assist with translations. Creating a safe community for speaking a new language.

Graduate research assistant, Department of Education, College of Education, Kansas State University, 2015

- Research focused on global citizenship, digital literacy, and multimodality in teaching.

Student worker, Center for Intercultural and Multilingual Advocacy, College of Education, Kansas State University, 2014

- Assist the Center for Intercultural and Multilingual Advocacy with diverse tasks like transcriptions, translations, creation of educational materials, and helping Ecuadorian students.

Food service manager, ASENSA, Costa Rica, 2012-2014

- Responsible for managing 3 cafeterias, supervising quality and food safety, staff management, menu design, inventory control, and administrative duties.

Education

Doctor of Philosophy, Food Nutrition, Dietetics, and Health, Kansas State University, 2021

Dissertation title: "Virtual nutrition education for people affected by Parkinson's disease"

Advisor: Professor Mark Haub

Emphasis: Public Health Nutrition

Master's in Public Health, Food Nutrition, Dietetics, and Health, Kansas State University, 2017

Field experience: Meadowlark Hills Retirement community, Parkinson's and Memory program

Thesis title: "Evaluation of a printed newsletter tailored to grandparent caregivers in Kansas"

Bachelor's of Human Nutrition and Dietetics, University of Costa Rica, Costa Rica, 2013

Other courses

- Facilitation micro credential (2023)
- Maximizing Success for Learners (2022). Arizona State University
- Teach Students How to Learn (2022). Intentional College Teaching
- Microcredential in Inclusive Teaching for Equitable Learning (2022). Association of College and University Educators
- Mental Health First Aid (2021). National Council for Behavioral Health
- Allied Team Training for Parkinson's (2020). Parkinson's Foundation, United States of America
- Workshop training and patient adherence to treatment (2014). University of Costa Rica
- Food Safety Supervision (2013). University of Costa Rica with the support of Iowa State University
- Sport Nutrition Seminar GSSI (2011). Costa Rica
- Food Safety (2009). National Ministry of Health, Costa Rica

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- I Induction Day for freshmen (2010). University of Costa Rica
- III International Congress on physical activity, health and life quality (2011). National University of Costa Rica
- Solid waste management and hospital medical surgical aseptic technique (2009). University of Costa Rica

Publications

Brenes, P., & Meck Higgins, M. (2021). Designing Educational Newsletter Interventions: An Example That Supported Grandfamilies' Physical Wellness Needs. *The Journal of Extension*, 59(3), 6.

Hanson, J. A., Cantrell, O., Paez, P., **Brenes, P.**, & Laursen, D. E. (2020). The impact of replacing breakfast grains with meat/meat alternatives: An evaluation of child nutrition policy. *Public health nutrition*, 23(6), 1136-1141.

Chaves Corea, A., Zamora Corrales, I., Vega Carmona, D., & **Brenes Mendieta, P.** (2016). The impact of a nutritional training on specialized nutrition for the foodservice staff of the Ministerio de Justicia y Paz. *Revista Costarricense de Salud Pública*, 25(1), 33-46.

Poster presentations

- KSAND/MOAND 2018 Joint Conference. Title: AN INFOGRAPHIC MENU: IMPROVING DECISION MAKING IN RESIDENTS WITH DEMENTIA
- APHA 2022. Title: Virtual nutrition education for Parkinson's disease: A pilot study

Awards, scholarships

- Nominee for Students' Choice Faculty Award 2022: Colorado State University - Pueblo
- Doctoral dissertation research award 2020 (\$470): Kansas State University
- Outstanding community outreach award 2020: Kansas State University
- Allied Team Training for Parkinson's: Scholarship from the Parkinson's foundation to attend training in Boston 2020.
- Outstanding teaching award 2019: Kansas State University.
- Brooks (Josephine E) Fellow (\$1,400): tuition scholarship, 2017-2018.

Grants

- Global Campus grant, co-designer (\$5,950): redesign of the Basic Nutrition course with a Spanish component, 2019.
- Virginia Peine Award Winner (\$4,300): Project on the development of an infographic menu for people suffering from dementia, 2017.

Public service, community involvement

- Advisor on data analytics for Vivamos Mejor – Guatemala (January 2022 – January 2023)
- Secretary of Faculty Senate (August-December 2022)
- Faculty Fellow for faculty professional development (August-December 2022)

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- Speaker for Ahead of the Curve Program from Parkinson's of the Rockies (August 2022)
- Partnered with UpRoot Colorado and CSU Extension to mentor a student on a food systems internship (May-August 2022)
- Student Success Data Analytics Team (2022) – Colorado State University - Pueblo
- Speaker at Centennial High School – Pueblo on our current health science programs
- Supporter of the Parkinson's support group in Pueblo, Co (November 2021 – Present)
- Member of the Faculty Senate at Colorado State University – Pueblo (May 2022-December 2022)
- Member of the Faculty Policies and Procedures from the Faculty Senate at Colorado State University-Pueblo (August 2021 – December 2022)
- Advisor for Community Engagement Alliance (CEAL) against COVID-19 Disparities (August 2021 - 2022)
- Speaker for Parkinson's Association of the Rockies (November 2020)
- Reviewer for Revista Científica del Colegio de Profesionales en Nutrición de Costa Rica (Scientific Journal of Nutrition Professionals in Costa Rica).
- Speaker for Neuro Challenge Foundation for Parkinson's group (September 2020)
- Volunteer at Poverty Simulation for USD 383 Early Learning (Spring 2020)
- Volunteer at the Parkinson's Program of Manhattan at Meadowlark Hills (2016-2018). Manhattan, Kansas.
- Dancer in National Water Dance. To bring attention to the fragility of water across the United States and the world (2018). Manhattan, Kansas
- Volunteer at church, with community outreach and leadership of teen groups (2017-2018). Manhattan, Kansas
- Dancer at the Spring Dance at K-State (2017). Manhattan, Kansas
- Volunteer at a long-term care facility (2015-2017). Manhattan, Kansas
- Management of teenagers focus groups on my community (2008-2011). Costa Rica
- Management of pre-school children's groups in my community (2012-2014). Costa Rica
- College health fair assistant. (2010) University of Costa Rica