

GENA BELL VARGAS, PH.D., CTRS

Address

Rehabilitation Sciences
Temple University
1700 N. Broad St, Suite 301D
Philadelphia, PA 19122
215-204-7010 (O)
gena.vargas@temple.edu

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS:

- 2012-present Assistant Professor of Instruction: Rehabilitation Sciences, College of Public Health, Temple University
- 2006-2010 Instructor; Research Assistant: Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management, College of Health, Education and Human Development, Clemson University
- 2004-2006 Graduate Assistant; Research Assistant: Recreation and Leisure Studies Department, College of Health and Human Performance, East Carolina University

EDUCATION:

Ph. D. in Therapeutic Recreation

[Clemson University](#) (CU), Clemson, South Carolina, May 2010

Dissertation Topic: Self-determination theory and Therapeutic Recreation: The relevance of autonomy, competence and relatedness to participant intrinsic motivation.

M.S. in Recreational Therapy Administration

[East Carolina University](#) (ECU), Greenville, North Carolina, December 2006

Thesis Topic: Older women's outdoor recreation participation: Implications for recreational therapy and active lifestyles.

B.S. in Recreational Therapy with a minor in Psychology

ECU, Greenville, North Carolina, December 2003

Craven Community College, New Bern, North Carolina, May 1999

Concentrated on general education requirements for East Carolina University's School of Nursing.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING:

Certified Aromatherapist

[Essential Care Aromatics](#), Wilmington, Delaware, May 2016

This 235-hour Aromatherapy Certification Program included training to become professionally qualified in the therapeutic uses of essential oils, a complementary treatment in health care.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN INSTRUCTION:

Trainings completed at The Center for Advancement of Teaching, Temple University:

- Spring 2018 Discussion in the College Classroom (3 week book group)
- Fall 2017 Canvas Academy
- Spring 2017 Teaching with Technology Symposium (full-day conference)
- Spring 2017 Teach Students How to Learn (3 week book group)
- Spring 2017 Creating Engaging Video Lectures (3 session group)
- Spring 2017 15th Annual Faculty Conference on Teaching Excellence
- Fall 2016 Online Teaching Institute (4 week seminar)
- Fall 2016 Beyond Icebreakers: *Establishing a Community of Learners on the First Day of Class* (2 session group)
- Spring 2016 14th Annual Faculty Conference on Teaching Excellence
- Spring 2015 Teaching with Technology Symposium
- Spring 2014 12th Annual Faculty Conference on Teaching Excellence
- Summer 2013 Community-Based Research: How it can energize your classroom and your own research

Trainings completed at Temple University:

- Spring 2016 Disability Compliance Webinar
- Fall 2013 Writing Intensive Workshop (2 days)
- Fall 2012 Writing Intensive Workshop (2 days)

Outside trainings:

- Spring 2018 VoiceThread and Universal Design in Learning (online course)
- Spring 2018 Essential Oil Safety Masterclass; Tisserand Institute (6 week online course)

INSTRUCTIONAL COMPETENCIES:

A. Courses Taught

Temple University

- HRPR1201 Introduction to Health Professions (Fall 2013)
- HRPR2103 Health Psychology and Human Behavior (Spring 2015)
- THRC2103 Foundations of Therapeutic Recreation Practice (Fall 2012, Spring 2013, Fall 2013, Spring 2014, Fall 2014)
- THRC2104 Therapeutic Recreation Modalities (Fall 2012, Spring 2013, Fall 2015, Fall 2016)
- THRC3103 Professional Seminar in Therapeutic Recreation (Spring 2016, Fall 2016)
- THRC3185 Internship I (Spring 2013, Summer 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Summer 2015, Fall 2015, Summer 2017, Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Fall 2018)
- THRC3196 Research and Evaluation (Fall 2017, Fall 2018)
- THRC4185 Internship II (Spring 2016)
- THRC4196 Clinical Procedures in Therapeutic Recreation (Fall 2012, Spring 2013, Fall 2013, Spring 2014, Fall 2014, Spring 2015, Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Fall 2017, Fall 2018)
- THRC5102 Orientation to TR (Fall 2014, Fall 2017)
- RCTH5102 RT: Now and Then (Fall 2018)

- THRC5250 Special Topic In Recreation Therapy: Mental Health (Spring 2015)
THRC5250 Special Topic In TR Practicum: Aromatherapy (Spring 2018)
THRC8141 Conceptual Issues and Contemporary Status of Therapeutic Recreation (Spring 2017, Spring 2018)
THRC8142 Clinical Programming and Practice in Therapeutic Recreation (Spring 2016, Spring 2017, Spring 2018)
THRC9187 Graduate Practicum (Fall 2014)
THRC9382 Independent Study (Spring 2013)
THRC9995 Master's Project (Spring 2016, Spring 2017)

Clemson University

- PRTM309 Behavioral Concepts in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management (Spring 2010)
LS100 Facilitation of Group Initiatives (Fall 2009, Spring 2010)
PRTM311 Foundations of Therapeutic Recreation (Spring 2009)
PRTM490 Creative Inquiry: Examining the efficacy of recreation activities on the quality of life of older adults with dementia (Fall 2006, Spring & Fall 2007)
PRTM210 Serving Diverse Populations in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management (Spring 2007)

East Carolina University

- RCLS2601 Leisure in Modern Society (Online; Spring & Fall 2004)

B. Guest Lecturer

Clemson University

- PRTM418 Therapeutic Recreation Processes II (Spring 2008)
PRTM101 Introduction to therapeutic recreation (Fall 2008, Spring 2009)

PUBLICATIONS:

Snethen, G. & **Vargas, G.** (2017). Pilot outcomes of an online physical activity intervention for individuals with serious mental illnesses. *American Journal of Recreational Therapy, 16*(1) 17-25.

Vargas, G. B. (2015). Chapter 17: Assertiveness Training. In H. Porter (ed.), *Recreational therapy basics, techniques, and interventions*. Enumclaw, WA: Idyll Arbor, Inc.

Aybar-Damali, B., **Bell, G.**, Conti, A., & McGuire, F. (2011). Reality Orientation/Validation/and Reminiscence. In K. Kensinger & N. Stumbo (Eds), *Leisure Education and Facilitation Techniques in Therapeutic Recreation Services*. State College, PA: Venture.

Bell, G. & Williams, R. (2006). Older Women's Outdoor Participation: Implications for Recreational Therapy and Active Lifestyles. *Abstracts from the 2006 American Therapeutic Recreation Association Research Institute*.

**PRESENTATIONS/POSTERS AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS:
PEER-REVIEWED:**

Vargas, G. B., & Malcarne, B. (2017). Putting Together Your Evidence-Based Practice Toolkit. *Pennsylvania Therapeutic Recreation Institute*, Lancaster, PA.

Vargas, G. B. (2016). Aromatherapy: Passing Fad or Evidence-Based Practice? *American Therapeutic Recreation Association Annual Conference*, Lombard, IL.

Hsieh, P. C., & **Vargas, G. B.** (2016). How to integrate standardized assessment tools and data analysis into TR practice. *American Therapeutic Recreation Association Annual Conference*, Lombard, IL.

Snethen, G. & **Vargas, G.** (March 2014). ATRA's EBP Taskforce: Finding and Applying the Evidence. Presented at Moving Forward and Making a Difference: ATRA MidYear Conference, Rockville, MD.

Snethen, G. & **Vargas, G.** (October 2013). Student Attitudes Towards Individuals with Severe Mental Illnesses. Presented at Building Bridges of Possibilities: ATRA Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, PA.

Vargas, G. & Snethen, G. (October 2013). Stigma: The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing. Presented at Building Bridges of Possibilities: ATRA Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, PA.

Bell, G. (September 2006). Older women's outdoor recreation participation: Implications for recreational therapy and active lifestyles. Presented at the American Therapeutic Recreation Association Research Institute, Orlando, FL.

Bell, G., Haynes, A. & Estes, C. A. (March 2004). Student Perceptions of Leisure in Society as General Education. Presented at the 12th Annual Graduate Student Research Day, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC.

INVITED:

Snethen, G. & **Vargas, G.** (March 2013). Leisure and Recreation to Support Social/Emotional Wellness. Presented at the 2013 CSPNJ Annual Wellness Conference, Edison, NJ.

SERVICE TO THE ACADEMY:

Summer 2018

Faculty Search Committee

Chair

Led committee of colleagues in search to fill a non-tenure track position with the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences. Resulted in the hiring of 1 candidate.

- Spring/Summer 2017 **Faculty Search Committee**
Chair
Led committee of colleagues to seek out and engage candidates in a search for non-tenure track position with the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences that resulted in the hiring of 2 candidates.
- Fall 2016 **Faculty Search Committee**
Committee member
Served with colleagues to seek out and engage candidates in a search for on open rank position with the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences. Resulted in the hiring of 2 candidates.
- Spring 2016 – 2017 **Rankings Engagement**
Lead efforts in the department to engage in rankings improvement for the university.
- Spring 2015 – 2018 **College of Public Health Integrated Collegial Assembly**, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA
Faculty Senate Representative.
- Fall 2014 – Spring 2015 **College of Public Health**, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA
Undergraduate Recruitment Committee
- Fall 2013 – Fall 2014 **Temple University Collaborative on Community Inclusion**, Philadelphia, PA
Knowledge Translation Co-Director.
- Fall 2013 **Blackboard Feedback Team**, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA
Primary duties: Assist in the evaluation of the social and grade center aspects of the new Blackboard.
- Spring 2013 – Spring 2014 **Academic Quality Improvement and Outcomes Committee**, Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA
- Fall 2012 – present **TR Program Graduate Faculty Committee**, Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA
- Fall 2012 – Spring 2013 **Community Inclusion for Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities Lab**, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA
Faculty member.
Primary duties: Participate in research projects with faculty and students, mentor students on research techniques.
- Fall 2008 - Spring 2009 **Student Leadership Team**, Campus Recreation, CU, Clemson, SC
Clemson Outdoor Recreation Education representative.

Primary duties: Participate in decisions regarding campus recreation matters with other representatives from all sections of campus recreation (intramurals, program desk, etc.).

Fall 2008 -
Spring 2009

Graduate Advisory Committee, CU, Clemson, SC
Graduate student representative.

Primary duties: Participate in making graduate policy recommendations to the Graduate School.

Fall 2007 -
Spring 2009

Graduate Student Government, CU, Clemson, SC
Senator.

Primary duties: Represent Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management Department. Participate in creating and voting on policies and procedures regarding the graduate student body.

Fall 2004 -
Spring 2006

RCLS Graduate Society, ECU, Greenville, NC
Treasurer in 2005.

Primary duties: Plan and participate in volunteer events as well as fund-raising events. As Treasurer, manage all aspects of the budget including awarding travel monies to students per their applications.

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION:

Fall 2018 – present

Recreational Therapy Foundation Board

ATRA and University Liaison

Facilitate relationships between the Foundation and ATRA, as well as Universities, to promote & engage professionals, academics, and students.

Fall 2016 – present

ATRA Evidence Based Practice Committee

Committee member 2016-2017; Co-Chair 2018

Communicate with designated ATRA section to support their efforts towards integration of Evidence Based Practice. Develop webinar modules regarding EBP for ATRA.

Fall 2015 –
Summer 2018

Recreational Therapy Foundation Board

Member-at-Large for Grantsmanship

Cultivate opportunities for grants for the Foundation.

Spring 2015 – present

RT Wise Owls

Reviewer

Review submitted manuscripts to determine eligibility for publication.

Provide feedback to authors if revisions are needed.

- Fall 2013 –
Spring 2015 **ATRA Evidence Based Practice Task Force**
Co-Chair.
Develop and implement strategy for increasing accessibility to evidence based research in the field of recreational therapy.
- June 2013 **American Journal of Psychiatric Rehabilitation**
Reviewer.
Primary duties: Review manuscript.
- Fall 2008 **Journal of Park and Recreation Administration**
Reviewer.
Primary duties: Review manuscript submitted for Special Issue on Physical Activity, Health and Wellness.

PREVIOUS PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE:

- September 2010-
August 2012 **Franklin Square Hospital Center (Medstar Franklin Square Medical Center as of 2012), Baltimore, MD**
Recreational Therapist.
Primary duties: Assess all adult and adolescent patients admitted to the acute psychiatric units. Plan, implement, and evaluate group interventions. Appropriately and efficiently document patient treatment. Contribute insight on patients to the treatment team. Organize treatment supplies and restock as necessary.
- December 2005 -
July 2006 **Pitt County Memorial Hospital (Vidant Health as of 2012), Greenville, NC**
Therapeutic Recreation Specialist.
Primary duties: To assess, plan, implement, and evaluate treatments for individuals recovering from strokes, traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, orthopedic conditions, and neurological disorders while coordinating with other disciplines. Also, to conduct weekend aquatic therapy programs and treatment.
- Summers 2007,
2008, 2009, & 2010 **Team Ventures, Clemson University Outdoor Laboratory, Clemson, SC**
Senior Facilitator.
Primary duties: Facilitate groups (to include corporate, student, and special needs) through team building activities on low and high ropes courses and processing of the experience.
- Summer 2007 -
Spring 2010 **Clemson Outdoor Recreation Education (CORE), CU, Clemson SC**
Climbing Wall Attendant, Trip Leader.
Primary duties: Teach basics of rock climbing and belaying, check and maintain equipment, set up database for participants. Assist in planning and leading “CU Outdoors” trip for incoming freshmen.

- Summers 2007,
2008, & 2009 **Project WISE**, College of Engineering, CU, Clemson SC
PRTM Teacher.
Primary duties: Introduce the possibilities of PRTM to 7th and 8th grade girls attending the Project WISE (Women In Science and Engineering) summer camp, and facilitate group activities in team building.
- Fall 2007 -
Summer 2010 **Vickery Hall Student-Athlete Enrichment Program**, CU, Clemson, SC
Strategic Tutor.
Primary duties: Tutor student athletes with learning disabilities and/or a need for extra assistance in learning strategies to improve their academic performance in PRTM and all other classes.
- May – August 2003 **Horizons Day Treatment Program**, Greenville, NC
Group Leader.
Primary duties: Work with children with behavioral and emotional disturbances on treatment goals and objectives. Document daily on children's progress.
- September –
December 2003 **The National Institutes of Health**, Bethesda, MD
Intern.
Primary duties: Conduct patient interviews, assist on community outings, attend Grand Rounds, document treatment goals and objectives and discharge plans, assist with Progressive Relaxation sessions, work primarily with individuals in alcohol rehabilitation program and individuals with schizophrenia.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATION:

- 2016 Attended the American Therapeutic Recreation Association's Annual Conference in Lombard, IL.
- 2013 Attended the American Therapeutic Recreation Association's Annual Conference in Pittsburgh, PA.
- 2012 Attended the American Therapeutic Recreation Association's Mid-Year Forum in Baltimore, MD February 2012.
- 2007 Attended the American Therapeutic Recreation Association's Mid-Year Forum in Washington, D. C. March 2007. Visited and spoke with Senators Jim DeMint & Lindsey Graham regarding legislation relevant to reimbursement for Recreational Therapy services.
- 2006 Attended the American Therapeutic Recreation Association Annual Conference in Orlando, FL. September 2006.
- 2005 Attended the American Therapeutic Recreation Association's Mid-Year Forum in Washington, D. C. March 2005.
- 2003 Attended the American Therapeutic Recreation Association Annual Conference in Atlanta, GA. September 2003.
- 2002 Attended the North Carolina Recreation Therapy Association 12th Annual Conference. Wilmington, NC, October 2002.

CERTIFICATIONS, LICENSURE and HONORS:

2016 Certified Aromatherapist
2012 Certified in First Aid and Adult/Infant/Child CPR
2010 Achieved Tutor Certification Level 3 as defined by the College Reading & Learning Association
2006 Licensed Recreational Therapist in North Carolina
2004 Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist
2003 Certified Ai Chi Instructor
1999 Phi Beta Kappa Honor society at Craven Community College
1997 Certified Nursing Assistant