Research Fellows

Left to right: David Wanik, Allen Parrish, Melanie Loehwing, and Michelle Zhou

Melanie Loehwing

Dr. Melanie Loehwing is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at Mississippi State University. She co-founded the Civic Life Lab in 2018 as a home for her publicly engaged collaborative work on civic rhetoric and democratic culture. She is the author of Homeless Advocacy and the Rhetorical Construction of the Civic Home (Penn State University Press, 2018), which was recently awarded the National Communication Association's Diamond Anniversary Book Award. Her research has also been recognized with the Stephen E. Lucas Debut Publication Award from the National Communication Association and the Review of Politics Award from the Midwest Political Science Association.

Dr. Loehwing's research examines how the health of a democracy is tied to the quality of its rhetoric. She examines civic rhetorical practices such as advocacy, deliberation, and protest in order to investigate the power of communicative acts to address problems of injustice, exclusion, and polarization. With her colleagues in the Civic Life Lab, she conducts research that tests innovative communication tools designed to improve the quality of community deliberation. Her work has appeared in a variety of journals and edited volumes, including the Quarterly Journal of Speech, Philosophy & Rhetoric, and Enculturation.

Allen Parrish

Dr. Allen S. Parrish is Associate Vice President for Research and Professor of Computer Science and Engineering at Mississippi State University (MSU). He works with internal and external university constituencies to facilitate research collaboration and to enhance MSU's research portfolio.

Dr. Parrish was previously Professor of Cyber Science and Founding Chair of the Department of Cyber Science at The United States Naval Academy, where he helped to start the cyber operations program. During his tenure there, the program became one of the first four ABET accredited cybersecurity programs in the country and grew to be one of the largest programs at the academy.

Prior to his time at Navy, Dr. Parrish served for 26 years on the faculty at The University of Alabama in a variety of roles, including Professor of Computer Science, Associate Vice President for Research, and Founding Director of the Center for Advanced Public Safety. Throughout his career, he has obtained approximately well over 200 funded projects totaling over $100M from a variety of state and federal sponsors. He has published in refereed journals and conferences in areas as diverse as data science, software engineering, transportation safety and technology education. Dr. Parrish received a Ph.D. in computer and information science from The Ohio State University.

David Wanik

Dr. David Wanik recently joined the Operations and Information Management (OPIM) Department as an assistant professor-in-residence, based in Stamford, CT. He is an active researcher on risk analysis, remote sensing and smart cities. He is the former manager of the Eversource Energy Center at the University of Connecticut (UConn), where he managed research teams from UConn's Schools of Business, Engineering, and Agriculture/Health and Natural Resources. As a lecturer, he has developed two graduate classes on predictive analytics and deep learning. He has previously served as an Assistant Research Professor in the Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering at UConn, as an adjunct professor of business analytics, and as a data scientist at Hartford Steam Boiler/Munich Re.

Michelle Zhou

Dr. Michelle Zhou is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Mississippi State University (MSU). Her current research interests are mainly in the area of model diagnosis, model selection, survival analysis, and longitudinal data analysis. Prior to joining MSU, she was an Assistant professor at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, BC, Canada. Prior to that, she was a Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard School of Public Health working with Dr. Tianxi Cai and Dr. Xihong Lin. She obtained a Ph.D. from the University of Waterloo, Canada, in 2009 under the supervision of Dr. Mary Thompson and Dr. Peter Song. Previously, she completed a Master of Math at the University of Waterloo, Canada, under the supervision of Dr. Mu Zhu.

Since joining MSU, Dr. Zhou has been working with Dr. Angela Roberson on developing gender-specific prediction model of recidivism among DUI offenders, and with Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale and Dr. Mary Read-Wahidi to investigate the effect of receiving a Soybean Success Kit on soybean yield and soybean income using Soybean Uptake & Network Survey data.