

## Liese receives Arnold School 2011 Research Award

Dr. Angela Liese, Professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, received the Arnold School of Public Health (ASPH) 2011 Research Award.

The award recognizes a faculty member's outstanding scholarly research achievement; their impact on the discipline; and their creativity in research. Nominations for the awards are made by ASPH faculty members.

"I am very honored to have received this award. The kind of public health research we do is really team science. So I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the colleagues, staff, and students who are contributing to the success of our research," said Liese.

Liese's research falls into three broad, overlapping areas, including nutritional epidemiology, diabetes epidemiology, and food access and the built food environment.

"My research interests include understanding the interrelationship of nutrition with obesity-related health outcomes from an ecological perspective, including individual behaviors, social relationships in households, neighborhoods and communities," said Liese.

Liese's most current research efforts focus on so called "food deserts." Several US federal and policy-relevant agencies have recently initiated efforts to combat poor access to healthy food choices in the country. Liese's research focuses on the key measures of access used for identification of food deserts. This research builds on projects funded by NIH/ NCI (National Institutes of Health/ National Cancer Institute). Access to food retail outlets is increasingly being thought of as a potentially significant determinant of dietary behaviors.

Since 2000, Liese has been involved with SEARCH for Diabetes in Youth, which is a multi-center study funded by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and NIDDK (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases).

Liese said, "The SEARCH study has greatly contributed to understanding the burden of diabetes in children and adolescents, including in all major race/ethnic groups in the US. SEARCH is likely the largest epidemiologic study of diabetes in the US." The SEARCH study developed a unique surveillance system for pediatric diabetes, designed explicitly to assess prevalence and incidence of all types of diabetes (including type 1 and type 2) in children and youth through data collected in six centers across the nation, including South Carolina.

"The SEARCH data present a truly unique resource for student and faculty-led research. Being part of the SEARCH study effort has allowed not only my own diabetes research to flourish, but several colleagues at the Arnold School with opportunities to receive federal grants and students with publication and fellowship opportunities," said Liese.

Liese values her opportunity to advise, mentor, and collaborate with as many junior colleagues as possible.

“I regularly review grant applications and have held various workshops on grant writing and budget development for my colleagues. I’m also always available for individual meetings. If there is a way for others to use my research as a springboard for their own research, I’m all for it,” said Liese.

Since 2008, Liese has served as the Director of the Center for Research in Nutrition and Health Disparities, part of the ASPH. The Center is comprised of an increasing number of Affiliated Scholars, which are invited colleagues interested in nutrition and health disparities.

To engage Affiliated Scholars, USC faculty, staff, and students, the Center hosts monthly seminar series featuring expert speakers, and this past spring Liese organized a scientific symposium entitled “Healthy Eating in Context: The Role of the Political, Physical, Economic, and Social Structures in Nutrition.”

“Opportunities for USC researchers to network around nutrition and health disparities issues are an important asset for the University. The symposium and seminar series facilitate an exchange of new ideas that have led to multi-disciplinary collaborations, which is essential for the development of innovative approaches to address public health concerns,” said Liese.

Liese now joins other Affiliated Scholars that are previous recipients of the ASPH Faculty Research Award: Drs. Russell Pate (1995), Beth Mayer-Davis (2002), James Hébert (2004), Andrew B. Lawson (2005); and Sara Wilcox (2007).