



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Contact: Jordan Nussear, SNEB  
Phone: (317) 328 – 4627  
Email: [jnussear@sneb.org](mailto:jnussear@sneb.org)

**Dr. Melissa Olfert, DrPH, MS, RDN, LD to Receive  
SNEB Mid-Career Professional Achievement Award**

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (August 1, 2021) – The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) will honor Dr. Melissa Olfert, DrPH, MS, RDN, LD with the Mid-Career Professional Achievement Award in acknowledgement of her notable contributions to the field of nutrition during the 2021 SNEB Annual Conference presented virtually August 8-10.

Dr. Olfert is an Associate Professor of Human Nutrition and Foods at West Virginia University and the Principal Investigator for the Olfert Lifestyle Intervention Research Lab. Her research focuses on the prevention of chronic disease through lifestyle intervention approaches.

Dr. Olfert has a record of outstanding achievements with significant contribution to the nutrition education field. In her nomination it was noted, “Dr. Olfert is a collegial scientist who is able to lead and partner with others to tackle nutrition education and behavior projects with broad, reaching scopes. This characteristic is supported by her scholarly outcomes and the ability to garner more than 17 million dollars, both externally and internally, to support these projects. Most importantly, Dr. Olfert has personally focused her lab team in the dissemination of outcomes from these many projects especially in the Appalachian region. She has over 104 manuscripts with 47 as first or senior author.”

Reflecting on how the past past year impacted the focus of your research lab, Olfert explained, “This past year has put many unexpected, but yet important, components of my personal life and professional life into the spotlight. First and foremost, our health and safety and how much we as Americans, take it for granted. I believe this past year of experiencing the pandemic of COVID-19 has changed me in a real meaningful way. How we spend our time and the research questions we ask in my lab now have a focus on the pandemic impact. We are moving more into brain health, resiliency and addictive eating patterns as it relates to food insecurity and lifestyle choices. Considering multiple systems and how best to implement and disseminate our work in nutrition education with the aftermath of the pandemic is another focus.”

After becoming an SNEB member in 2010, Dr. Olfert became involved in several SNEB Divisions as an active member and serving in leadership roles. Additionally, she assisted in the 2016 update of the SNEB Nutrition Educator Competencies. She has presented on the competencies at the NNEdPro International Summit on Nutrition and Health in Cambridge, England and teaches the competencies in her graduate courses at West Virginia University. She is currently working on the writing team for the SNEB position paper on the need for competency-based training for nutrition educators.

When asked what role do you see the SNEB Nutrition Educator Competencies playing in the career development of nutrition education students, Olfert commented, “As an educator and researcher I know have a guide, a jumping off point is so important in curriculum development and implementation. Having dynamic, evolving Nutrition Educator Competencies is paramount to our success in launching consistency in our field.”

Her commitment to future nutrition educators extends beyond the SNEB Nutrition Educator Competencies. Dr. Kendra Kattelman, PhD, RDN, LN, FAND wrote, “She has diligently supported her students (56 undergraduate, 48 medical, 26 master’s, 12 doctoral, and 4 postdoctoral) in producing peer reviewed manuscripts which have catapulted their careers in nutrition education focused academic appointments.” Sarah Colby, PhD, RD adds, “What she gives is so beyond number of students. Outstanding quality and impact is evident as she commits her heart and soul to each of these young lives. She helps them become amazing young professional who will in turn go on to change the world for the better because of the outstanding training she has given them.”

---

#### ABOUT THE SOCIETY FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION AND BEHAVIOR

The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior advances food and nutrition education research, practice, and policy that promote equity and support public and planetary health. To learn more, visit [www.sneb.org](http://www.sneb.org).