

# ECU DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE FACULTY MENTOR AWARD DOCTORAL CATEGORY

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Robert Carels  
Department of Psychology  
Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences



Dr. Carels is a professor and a board-certified clinical health psychologist whose research focuses on developing more effective behavioral weight loss treatments through the application of theory-driven innovation and aims to better understand and combat weight stigma in its many forms. He is the Principal Investigator for a Health Resource Service Administration Graduate Psychology Education (HRSA GPE) training grant designed to train students in providing primary integrated care to the rural and underserved.

Dr. Carels is recognized for his ability to adapt his mentoring style to the specific doctoral students he mentors. One student wrote, “Dr. Carels is currently mentoring five graduate students...rather than requiring us to comply with his own style, Dr. Carels will adapt to our own individual preferences, becoming an ideal mentor for five different people.” The faculty who nominated Dr. Carels indicated he consistently puts his students first and does all he can to maintain the high academic caliber of ECU’s doctoral program in clinical health psychology.

# ECU DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE FACULTY MENTOR AWARD MASTER'S CATEGORY

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Virginia C. Stage  
Department of Nutrition Science  
College of Allied Health Sciences



Dr. Virginia C. Stage, PhD, RDN, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Nutrition Science and Director of the Food-based Early Education (FEEEd) Lab ([www.thefeedlab.org](http://www.thefeedlab.org)). She obtained her PhD in Nutrition Sciences from North Carolina State University, and her MS in Clinical Nutrition and BS in Nutrition & Dietetics from East Carolina University. Dr. Stage has received numerous awards including the Society for Nutrition Education & Behavior's Early Career Award and most recently, NC State's Outstanding Young Alumna Award. Dr. Stage's research is housed under the FEEEd Lab. From kitchen to classroom, her mission is to empower early childhood teachers' and families with evidence-based strategies to improve children's (3-5 year) dietary quality through early education, exposure, and access to healthy foods. After gaining a clear understanding of students' background, past experiences, and personal interests, Dr. Stage puts them to work in the community. She strives to help students identify their professional purpose, recognize their strengths, and refine the skills they need to be successful in graduate school and their future career. Dr. Stage is recognized for her "selfless, persevering, committed" mentoring style. One student nominator wrote, "Dr. Stage's mentorship turns mentees, like me, into future mentors. I know that if I had to count on one hand the most influential people in my life, she would be one of them. And I'm just one person, one story, one example of the powerful and life-changing result of Dr. Stage's mentorship." The faculty nominator noted that her mentoring always includes advocacy for important issues in nutrition science and her engagement with service-learning helps her students in immeasurable ways.