

Emma Frank Recognized as Paul College's Outstanding Researcher

Innovative studies explore overlooked workplace dynamics

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EMMA FRANK LEADS A CLASSROOM DISCUSSION AT PAUL COLLEGE. FRANK RECENTLY EARNED PAUL'S 2024 OUTSTANDING RESEARCHER AWARD.

When you ask Emma Frank about her research, you're sure to be intrigued.

Have you ever assumed that your childless coworker could handle a heavier workload? Or have you been annoyed by a coworker consistently bragging about how stressed they are?

These are precisely the kinds of workplace dynamics that fascinate Frank (<https://paulcollege.unh.edu/person/emma-frank>), an assistant professor of management.

"I do a lot of 'me-search,' where I'll ask, 'why did I do that?' And then I'll wonder if that's a phenomenon," says Frank. "People are interesting and complex. I like to figure out why they do the things they do."

Frank's work is highly regarded for its quality, uniqueness and frequency, which recently earned her the 2024 Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics (<https://paulcollege.unh.edu/person/emma-frank>) Outstanding Researcher Award.

"Sometimes with research, it can feel like no one outside the academic world cares, but it's exciting to get that positive reinforcement and be recognized by your peers," Frank says.

In nominating Frank for the researcher award, her colleagues Jennifer Griffith and Rachel Campagna noted her impressive scholarly record since joining the faculty in 2022, with four publications in premier journals such as *Organization Science*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Personnel Psychology* and *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

Additionally, they stressed the impact she's making on her research field.

"[Emma] investigates various aspects of interpersonal dynamics, emotions, and trust, offering insights into how these factors influence employee well-being, relationship quality, and leadership approaches," Frank's colleagues stated. "Her research contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced and multifaceted nature of human interactions within the workplace."

Exploring the Subtle Dynamics of the Workplace

Frank's research delves into everyday workplace issues that often go unnoticed or unexamined, even though they might occasionally cross your mind.

For example, Frank was involved in research about stress bragging (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/peps.12645>) — the growing trend of taking pride in how overscheduled and stressed one is — and found that those who stress brag are considered less likable by their coworkers, and this behavior can also increase stress and burnout among colleagues.

In more recent research called "Single and Ready to Work," Frank explores the workplace dynamics surrounding unmarried, childless employees, focusing mainly on how their family status influences their coworkers' perceptions and behaviors.

The study reveals that coworkers often assume single, childless employees, especially women, prioritize work over personal life, leading them to delegate more tasks to these individuals. This increased workload can negatively impact employee performance and heightens their intentions to leave the job due to dissatisfaction.



Frank is also working on an ongoing project on oversharing at work — how employees feel after sharing too much personal information with colleagues and the subsequent anxiety it causes.

"I think the research I focus on is important because it helps us understand how our minds work and how we make decisions. This understanding allows us to make better decisions for ourselves and become better people overall," Frank says. "No one is fully aware of their implicit biases until they learn about them through research. Once you understand these biases, you can take steps to prevent them from negatively influencing your behavior."

Sharing Her Passion for Research

Initially focused on teaching, Frank discovered her passion for research during her Ph.D. journey. Now, she's dedicated to not only igniting that same passion in her students but also preparing them to be future contributors to the field. By integrating her studies into the classroom, involving students in research projects and offering hands-on experiences in the behavioral lab, Frank makes research relatable to students.

"If it's my own research, I'm especially eager to share it, and I think that enthusiasm sometimes rubs off on them," Frank says.

WRITTEN BY:

Aaron Sanborn ([/unhtoday/contributor/aaron-sanborn](mailto:aaron.sanborn@unh.edu)) | Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics | aaron.sanborn@unh.edu
(<mailto:aaron.sanborn@unh.edu>)

PHOTOGRAPHER: Micky Bedell ([/unhtoday/contributor/micky-bedell](mailto:micky-bedell@unh.edu)) | Paul College

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