

## JMU Department of Psychology 2015 Student Award Recipients

### **Eileen Nelson Scholarship for Senior Excellence**

The Eileen Nelson Scholarship honors the contributions of emeritus faculty member Eileen Nelson, by recognizing a student who has exemplary involvement in the honors thesis program, vigor in research and service, excellence in academic achievement, and the intention to pursue graduate education in psychology. The scholarship provides assistance to the award winner during their senior year. This scholarship was made possible by the generous donations of the family and friends of Dr. Eileen Nelson.

#### 2015 Award Recipient Zachary Buchin



During his time at JMU, Zach has been active in research, teaching, and service opportunities. Zach is currently working with Dr. Krisztina Jakobsen on his honors thesis investigating whether different pedagogical methods can help to increase critical thinking in students during the course of a semester. Zach has also worked with Dr. Jakobsen in the Cognitive Development Lab studying the development of face perception during the first year of life and beyond. Zach has presented posters at several conferences and is a co-author on a paper on face perception in adults in the journal *Attention, Perception, and Psychophysics*. Zach has received several departmental grants to support his research and to travel to conferences to present. Zach was also one of the founding members of the James Madison Undergraduate Research Journal. In addition to research, Zach has been a teaching assistant for Dr. Vivien Chan for Cognitive Psychology and for Dr. Joann Grayson for the Tutoring at-risk students program, and has participated in experiences in that have an impact on the community, including volunteering in a fifth grade classroom and working with Dr. Grayson on the Virginia Child Protective Newsletter. Zach plans to pursue his Ph.D. in Cognitive Psychology.

### **LeAnn Whitlock Memorial Scholarship**

This award recognizes distinguished academic performance and service to the university by a minority student whose talents skills, and abilities enable them to enrich the JMU community. The scholarship was initiated by the Theta Nu Chapter of the Zeta Pi Beta Sorority, in honor of psychology major LeAnn Whitlock, a student at James Madison University from Roanoke, Virginia who was abducted from the Valley Mall in Harrisonburg and murdered on January 5, 1990. The scholarship has been enabled through generous contributions of LeAnn's family and friends, psychology faculty, several sororities, and matching corporate funding.

#### 2015 Award Recipient Akyla Joseph



Akyla is a junior, who is also a Peer Advisor and a member of Psi Chi. Akyla's superior academic record, service, and engagement exemplify the qualities upheld by the LeAnn Whitlock award. In addition to minoring in Spanish, Akyla has also been working in Tracy Zinn's research lab developing a scale to measure the acceptance of rape myth policies among college students in hopes of developing more effective sexual assault prevention programs, interpreting data on the effectiveness of the socio-cultural awareness courses in the psychology department, and creating a scale to measure the effects of "helicopter" professors on the development of college students. She will be attending two research conferences this spring and plans to pursue a graduate degree in counseling.

### **James J. Hart Memorial Scholarship**

This award is named after faculty member James J. Hart, and for many years, has honored the outstanding performance among junior students. Donations to the James J. Hart Scholarship fund were sufficient in 2010 to award the first James J. Hart Memorial Scholarship. The recipient of this award is an outstanding Junior Psychology Major who not only has high academic achievement, but also, through their activities and aspirations, demonstrates a commitment to improving the human condition.

#### 2015 Award Recipient Kathleen Owens



Katy is a junior Psychology major and Criminal Justice minor. She is currently a member of the honors program and completing her honors thesis investigating cue-induced withdrawal among smokers under the supervision of Dr. Jessica Irons. She has been a member of Dr. Irons' research team for 4 semesters. She has collected biological, behavioral, and self-report data across a range of research protocols including studies examining the priming effects of alcohol on subsequent substance choices, the impact of an exercise intervention on substance use, and the influence of sleep deprivation on substance choices. Katy has also served as a teaching assistant for both Introductory Psychology (under the supervision of Dr. Irons) and Learning (under the supervision of Dr. Dan Holt). She currently serves as Vice President of Committees for Student Ambassadors, and she volunteers at Second Home.

### **Thomas E. & Sherry Woodroof Rogowski Scholarship**

This scholarship recognizes a single student who has a record of exceptional experiences and performance from among her or his peers. The award is made possible by the generous donations of JMU alumni, Thomas E. & Sherry Woodroof Rogowski.

#### 2015 Award Recipient Briana Campbell



Briana Campbell is a first generation college student. Just three years ago, she was a first generation high school graduate arriving at JMU from Roanoke, VA. Studying psychology and sociology as a double major and being heavily involved in campus life has allowed Briana to impact many of her peers at JMU. To begin, she has been a Resident Assistant since her sophomore year where she helps formative freshmen adjust to college life. Her excellent work as an RA for two years did not go unnoticed by campus life administrators as Briana will be promoted this summer to Residence Hall director for her senior year. In addition to her campus life contributions to JMU, Briana is a summer volunteer as a student counselor, volunteers every Friday at a rural Rockingham County elementary school, and next year will join Dr. Jeff Dyche's Sleep Lab. Her busy extracurricular work does not stop her from academic excellence. In her spare time, she likes to paint, hike, travel, and practice "spoken word poetry". After completing her busy senior year of research and being a hall director, Briana plans to attend graduate school in either clinical social work or counseling psychology.

### **Casey Mitschele Dorsey Scholarship**

This scholarship recognizes a single student who has a record of exceptional experiences and performance from among her or his peers. The award is made possible by the generous donations of JMU alumni, Casey M. Dorsey and her husband Jeffrey.

#### 2015 Award Recipient Caroline Prendergast



Caroline is a double major in Psychology and Writing Rhetoric and Technical Communication (WRTC). Though Caroline has been active in research and service, a common theme across most of her academic activities is the craft of teaching and assessment. In particular, Caroline is interested in teaching and assessing scientific writing skills, and she specializes in APA style writing which is a perfect marriage of her interests in psychology, writing, and teaching. Caroline serves as a writing tutor in the JMU Writing Center and as a Writing Fellow on campus. She has served as a teaching assistant for Research Methods in Psychology and for Introductory Psychology under the supervision of Dr. Jessica Irons. She has also served as a tutor for Abnormal Psychology under the supervision of Dr. JoAnne Brewster. Caroline completed an assessment related internship, the first of its kind, at APA and she does sundry work with the Center for Research and Assessment on campus. She has served as a research assistant for Dr. Irons and is currently completing an honors thesis with Dr. Irons examining the impact of the Writing Fellows Program on writing in the Research Methods in Psychology course. Caroline has presented at national and local conferences and is currently working on manuscripts, both related to validity of measurements. Caroline is applying to graduate programs in hopes of earning a Ph.D. with emphasis in educational assessment.

### **Jerry O. Haynes Memorial Award for Outstanding Seniors**

This award is named after faculty member Jerry O. Haynes, and honors graduating seniors who possess outstanding records of achievement in academics, service, and research.

#### 2015 Award Recipient Erik Simmons

Erik Simmons has been highly active both in and out of the psychology department during his four years at JMU. He serves as a teaching assistant for Dr. Krisztina Jakobsen's Developmental Psychology course, and has done research with both Dr. Dan Holt and Dr. Jaime Kurtz for multiple semesters. He has presented his research at local and regional conferences and co-authored a book chapter on savoring with Dr. Kurtz. He has recently merged his interest in psychological research with his work at the University Writing Center, conducting a study on the biological markers of stress in tutors. Erik is a member of Phi Sigma Pi, a national honors fraternity, and is the assistant head wrestling coach at Harrisonburg High School. Next year, Erik plans to enter a Ph.D. program to study cognitive development.

### **James O. Benedict Senior Teaching Award**

This award is named for faculty member James O. Benedict, and honors a senior who has demonstrated interest in pursuing a career in higher education in the field of Psychology, or who has served as a teaching assistant in Psychology while an undergraduate student. Once endowed, this award will become a scholarship will provide funds annually to a deserving student.

#### 2015 Award Recipient Sarah Killian



Sarah Killian is a member of Psychology Peer Advising, and serves as the Training Liaison for that class and organization. She is also a member and officer with Psi Chi, serving as Treasurer this academic year. Last year, she presented research with Dr. Saville titled Passion, Impatience, and Risk Taking. Sarah has been recognized for academic excellence by the President's List for four semesters and the Dean's List for two semesters. In addition to serving as a teaching assistant for Professor DuVall with Peer Advising, Sarah also served as the Lead Teaching Assistant with Dr. Evans' Career Development classes during the past two semesters. After graduation, Sarah will work with City Year Philadelphia to explore her interest in teaching. She will be serving and tutoring Elementary-High School aged children

in a high risk school district. Sarah is also interested in graduate programs in College Student Personnel Administration.

### **Joann H. Grayson Outstanding Field Placement Award**

This award is given to students who distinguish themselves on the basis of their commitment, use of psychological theory, and professional performance.

#### 2015 Award Recipient Katie Werner



Katie Werner completed her Field Placement experience at Lacey Spring Elementary School under the supervision of Mrs. Brenda Robey. During her placement, Katie worked with students in individual mentoring sessions, conflict mediations, student study meetings, group sessions, and classroom guidance instruction. Her most significant responsibility was working with 12 at-risk students on an individual basis throughout the semester. Katie's efforts with these students was largely informed by research she reviewed and synthesized about the benefits of social and emotional learning for children. To this end, she created many novel materials to help facilitate such development. Some topics that Katie addressed with students on an individual basis included social skills, appropriate

classroom behavior, goal setting, and developing a positive self-image. In classroom settings, Katie facilitated lessons on different aspects of positive character building, during which she had an opportunity to develop skills related to classroom management and tailoring lessons to different developmental levels. Finally, Katie planned and led a 6-week long Friendship Group for 3rd grade girls. Noting the benefits of mentor continuity from her research on social and emotional learning, Katie elected to remain at Lacey Spring for the Spring 2015 semester. She continued working with individual students to help promote positive development of skills relevant to the classroom and broader interpersonal relationships. Katie's ingenuity, reflective nature, and dedication to her students over the past year suggest that she will be a wonderful asset to many people who may seek her counsel in the coming years.

### Senior Award for Achievement in Research

This award is given to senior students who have demonstrated significant achievement in undergraduate research projects.

2015 Award Recipient Kerry Gaffney & Kathryn Howard & Matthew Meccariello



Kerry Gaffney is a senior Psychology major who plans to pursue a career in medicine as an M.D. She has engaged in neuroscience research under the supervision of Dr. Catherine Franssen and Dr. Melanie Shoup-Knox. Kerry currently serves as the Coordinator of Psychology Peer Advising under the supervision of Kim DuVall and as a teaching assistant for Sensation and Perception under the supervision of Dr. Jeff Dyche. Kerry is a member of Psi Chi and serves as the President of the JMU chapter. She serves as a Big Sister in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program in Harrisonburg and she recently coordinated a blood drive through Red Cross. Last year Kerry was awarded the Hart Memorial Scholarship and she has also received an award for Outstanding Achievement in

Statistics and Research Methods.



Kathryn is one of our most talented students in the Department of Psychology. She is exceptionally busy and focused with two disparate majors (psychology and theater) while being heavily involved in several student and scholarly organizations. For example, she is treasurer of the local chapter of the Psychology Services Organization, is in Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, and is an active member of the JMU Honors College. She also is closely involved with the theater community and has performed in several plays in JMU's excellent theatre program. On her award winning research front, she has clearly excelled and has diverse interests and experiences. She is a pivotal member of Prof. Jeff Dyche's "Rat Lab" research team where she assists with biopsychology projects that

examine sleep deprivation, alcohol consumption, and decision making in rodent models. She also does research with humans. She is completing an honors thesis with Dr. Kevin Apple where she is examining social psychological constructs such as "mortality salience" and "terror management theory" in a well thought out experiment that she designed. She will defend her thesis in April. Having such broad research experiences from biological psychology to social psychology is a distinctive competency. After she graduates, if she doesn't land an immediate job on Broadway, Kathryn plans to pursue graduate education in experimental social psychology.

Matt Meccariello is currently a senior Psychology and Biology major. He plans to attend medical school upon graduation. He has conducted research under the supervision of Dr. Jeff Dyche, Dr. Bob Harmison, Dr. Tracy Zinn, Dr. Jessica Irons, as well as in an organic chemistry lab. He has worked with human subjects and animal subjects across an impressive array of research topics that require varied and, sometimes challenging, skill sets. Matt has volunteered his time in research labs nearly as often as he has received credit for this work. He has served as a Teaching Assistant for Introductory Psychology under the supervision of Dr. David Daniel and Dr. Jessica Irons. He works as a facilitator at the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Youth Council and has worked as a medical scribe at Rockingham Memorial Hospital. Matt has exemplary academic performance, despite regularly taking course overloads and volunteering in research labs. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and has been awarded the Hart Memorial Award for outstanding achievement as a Junior.

### **Senior Distinguished Service Award**

This award recognizes seniors who reflect commitment to the field of psychology through their service activities.

2015 Award Recipient Ethan Banner & Alexis Morse



Ethan Banner is a senior in the psychology department who goes above and beyond to serve the members of his community. Working for ORL for 3 years, 2 years as a Hall Director in first year residence halls, Ethan has gone beyond his responsibilities to provide a warm environment to meet the needs of his residents. As a senior member of Dr. Lee's CARDS lab, Ethan has lead studies in Affirmative Action, presented at national conferences, and taught current members of the lab. In his work with Dr. Brewster, Ethan has furthered the research of PTSD therapy in Law Enforcement Officers. In his field placement, Ethan led groups at Western State Hospital while also spending time building relationships with patients. Ethan has also spent his past two summers in service to others, an internship at the

Baltimore VA and an internship at a neuropsychology practice, assessing and interacting with clients. Ethan is going on to become a clinical psychologist with a focus on PTSD. He hopes to provide services to those struggling in his community, especially military veterans. Ethan was awarded the Department of Psychology Junior Award for Distinguished Service in 2014. This upcoming fall Ethan will begin a clinical psychology Masters program at Loyola University Maryland.



Alexis Morse is a senior psychology major who has been highly involved with service-oriented activities throughout her years at JMU. As a Psychology Peer Advisor, she has assisted with the departmental advising fest and is the advising symposium coordinator. She has also worked with the Arc of Harrisonburg, a center for adults with disabilities, and the Gus Bus, a local literacy program. She was chosen to be an Alternative Spring Break leader, taking a group of students to a youth residential psychiatric facility in South Carolina. Alexis recently completed a field placement at Turner Ashby High School. She has also completed four semesters of research with Dr. Jaime Kurtz, looking at factors that promote roommate satisfaction and appreciation of college life. She is a member of Phi

Sigma Pi, a national honors fraternity. Alexis will be entering JMU's School Psychology program in the fall.

### **Senior Award for Academic Achievement**

This award is given to senior students who have demonstrated significant overall academic achievement in their undergraduate studies, and especially in psychology.

2015 Award Recipient Matthew Meccariello

Matt Meccariello is currently a senior Psychology and Biology major. He plans to attend medical school upon graduation. He has conducted research under the supervision of Dr. Jeff Dyche, Dr. Bob Harmison, Dr. Tracy Zinn, Dr. Jessica Irons, as well as in an organic chemistry lab. He has worked with human subjects and animal subjects across an impressive array of research topics that require varied and, sometimes challenging, skill sets. Matt has volunteered his time in research labs nearly as often as he has received credit for this work. He has served as a Teaching Assistant for Introductory Psychology under the supervision of Dr. David Daniel and Dr. Jessica Irons. He works as a facilitator at the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Youth Council and has worked as a medical scribe at Rockingham Memorial Hospital. Matt has exemplary academic performance, despite regularly taking course overloads and volunteering in research labs. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and has been awarded the Hart Memorial Award for outstanding achievement as a Junior.

### **Junior Award for Achievement in Research**

This award is given to juniors who have demonstrated significant achievement in undergraduate research projects.

2015 Award Recipient Melissa Grant & Grant Pointon



Melissa Grant is a junior with an interest in behavior analysis. She has collected data at the Inter-professional Autism Clinic and conducted research at the Baird Center, supervised by Dr. Trevor Stokes. Her work with Dr. Stokes included research investigating the impact of Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) on skill improvement for developmentally delayed children. In addition to her research at the Autism Clinic and Baird Center, Melissa has also investigated factors affecting student learning and post-graduation success. She worked on a project with Dr. Megan Good and Dr. Keston Fulcher in using a team-based approach to increase student learning. She will be presenting research at a regional conference this spring regarding a project conducted with Dr. Megan Good and Dr.

Michael Stoloff, which used archival data to find predictors of success among alumni. Melissa's career goals include obtaining a Ph.D. in behavior analysis and opening her own Autism clinic.



Grant Pointon is a junior Psychology major. He has engaged in research with several professors across an array of topic areas. Grant is conducting his honors thesis examining the Cognitive Modulation of Ischemic Pain under the supervision of Dr. Michael Hall. Grant has also worked with Dr. Claire Lyons on the effect of cognitive flexibility on casual attributions for human behavior. He has also worked on a project examining risky decision making and sleep deprivation with Dr. Jeff Dyche's "Rat Lab" team. He has worked with both human and animal subjects. Grant also serves as a teaching assistant for Dr. Jana Taft-Young for her Introductory Psychology course. He plans to pursue a graduate degree in cognitive psychology.

### **Junior Award for Distinguished Service**

This award is given to juniors who have demonstrated significant achievement in undergraduate service projects.

2015 Award Recipient Daroon Jalil



Daroon Jalil works extensively with every aspect of Dr. Chan's research project and she also serves as a Teaching Assistant for Dr. Shoup-Knox. These experiences have taught her much about the preparation and rigor that research and teaching require, and also how to think creatively and critically. Also, she states that her ability to work in groups and handle big responsibilities have increased tremendously as a result of these experiences. As a Centennial Scholar, Daroon is required to complete 100 hours of community service every year. She has bypassed this goal each year with the Centennial Scholars Program. Her community service takes place at Kiester Elementary School where she helps her former teacher with her 1st grade class, mostly helping the children who are struggling with math and

reading concepts. She also helps with the gifted children who need more challenging material and instruction. Daroon states that her trips to Kiester Elementary School are always the favorite part of her week. She has been recognized for academic achievement with the President's List for the past three semesters. Regarding her future in graduate school, she is leaning towards remaining at JMU for the psychological sciences program for neuroscience.

### **Junior Award for Achievement in Teaching**

This award is given to juniors who have demonstrated significant achievement serving as an undergraduate teaching assistant.

2015 Award Recipient Shane Herr & Mikala Morrow



Shane Herr is currently a junior Psychology major. He has conducted research with Dr. Dan Holt studying delay discounting among pigeons. Shane has served as a Teaching Assistant for Dr. Tracy Zinn for two semesters and as part of his TA role he attends classes, assists in facilitating interteaching paired discussions, holds office hours, and holds review sessions for exams. Shane also serves as a model of a student who struggled with statistics but persevered and accomplished an advanced understanding that he now uses to help others as a statistics teaching assistant. Shane also assists his fellow students as a Peer Advisor and plans to attend graduate school.



Even by her junior year, Mikala has an impressive record of teaching, research, and service experience. She has been mentored in teaching by both Kimberly Duvall and Hillary Wing Richards, serving as a teaching assistant in several of their courses. In addition to grading exams and reflection papers, Mikala has helped teach students study skills and has coordinated with site supervisors to monitor student service projects. She is also the coordinator of the Peer Advising organization and has been involved in advising fests and symposiums. Mikala's research with Megan Good has centered on the use of assessments to improve the functioning of academic departments and to increase alumni success. Additionally, Mikala has done volunteer work with survivors of domestic abuse and has worked with Campus Assault Response. She hopes to pursue a master's degree in clinical and mental health counseling, with the goal of having her own practice in addition to being a psychology professor.



**Outstanding Achievement in Statistics & Research Methods**

This award is given to students who showed significant talent in the methods courses through research creativity and diligence about good research design and data analysis strategies.

2015 Award Recipient

**Taylor Coats**



**Emily Davis**



**Cayla Evans**



**Nikole Gregg**



**Madeline Massari**



**Caroline Morris**



**Nancy Windsor**

