

JMU Department of Psychology

2016 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 financial 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.



Allison Piotrowski

Allison has been highly active in JMU's Psychology Department in the past four years. As a Psychology Peer Advisor, she has aided at Advising Fests and worked on the "Tech Team," which uses social media to share important information with all psychology majors. She has spent four semesters working on numerous projects in Dr. Jaime Kurtz's positive psychology lab, and has presented her work at the National Academic Advising Association and the Virginia Psychological Association. She has also been a teaching assistant for Dr. Krisztina Jakobsen's team-based Developmental Psychology course, where she helps create assignments and facilitate in-class activities and discussion. Allison has been named to the Dean's List and President's List numerous times. A member of JMU Honors Program, she is currently completing her honors thesis with Dr. Bryan Saville, which is entitled, "Does Passion Predict Enjoyment and Performance in an Interteaching-Based

Course?" She will present her thesis project at the CAA Undergraduate Research Conference in April, 2016. In fall, Allison will begin graduate school at the University of Virginia for School Counseling.

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.



Daroon Jalil

Daroon is a Junior Psychology major earning a minor in Non-Teaching Exceptional Education. She has worked as the Diversity Educator for JMU's Center for Multicultural Student Services since the fall of 2014. She also worked as a summer camp counselor for EMU's Interfaith Peace Camp and the JMU's Furious Flower Poetry Camp. Her volunteer activities include mentoring and tutoring students at Kiester Elementary School. Daroon excels academically while also having served as a teaching assistant for Dr. Melanie Shoup-Knox's biopsychology course and conducting research in the labs of Dr. Vivien Chan and Dr. Jeff Dyche. She has prepared IRB proposals, analyzed data, edited manuscripts, and co-authored research presented at the national and regional level. Daroon was previously awarded the Junior Award for Distinguished Service, has earned recognition on the President's list for 5 consecutive semesters, is a Centennial

Scholar, and Psi Chi member.

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.



Allison Brandmark

Allison is a junior Psychology major. She works with Dr. Trevor Stokes in the Applied Behavior Analysis Parent-Child Interaction Therapy Clinic and the Inter-Professional Autism Clinic, researching a social interaction intervention and the effects of combined therapy. She is also working with Dr. David Daniel and Dr. Krisztina Jakobsen to examine effective teaching methods, for which she has received departmental research and travel grants. Allison volunteers in a special education classroom at Waterman Elementary Schools and was elected to be the Social and Service Officer for Best Buddies, which is an organization that matches JMU students with adults in the community with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

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.



Maria Camila Restrepo Chavez

Camila is a junior and member of JMU's Honors Program, currently beginning her honors thesis with Dr. Jaime Kurtz. This work will focus on perceptions of undergraduate well-being as portrayed on social media. She will present this research at the L Starling Reid Undergraduate Research Conference at UVA in April, 2016. In her time at JMU, Camila has also been actively involved in service-related activities such as the Psychology Service Organization, First Year Orientation, Gus Bus, and Safe Rides. She has served as a peer-mentor to a foreign exchange student and completed an internship at the JMU Counseling Center. This spring, she did a service-oriented spring break trip on the Mexico-Texas border. She works as a student assistant at the JMU Center for Assessment and Research Studies helping with the university assessment programs and assisting faculty in the graduate program. She has been named to either the Dean's List or the President's List

every semester, and she is a member of Psi Chi.

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.



Grant Pointon

Grant has been extremely active in multiple research labs during his four years at JMU. With Dr. Jeff Dyche, he has been involved in research on sleep deprivation and alcohol consumption in rats, which was presented at the L. Starling Reid Undergraduate Research Conference at UVA. With Dr. Claire Lyons, he has investigated cognitive flexibility practice, work that has direct implications for effective undergraduate teaching. His honors thesis, currently being completed with advisor Dr. Michael Hall, is examining cognitive coping strategies for managing pain. Grant has also been a teaching assistant for Dr. Janna Taft-Young's General Psychology course. A competitive snowboarder, he has volunteered with Overcoming Barriers, an organization that aims to teach sports and exercise techniques to young adults with intellectual disabilities. Grant has been named to the Dean's and President's Lists multiple times and is a member of Psi Chi, for which he also serves as Membership Coordinator. Previously Grant has won the Junior Award for Achievement in Research. This fall, Grant will begin a Ph.D. program at the University of Utah, studying cognitive psychology and enjoying the snow.

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.



Michael Keiter

Michael is a senior majoring in Psychology and Biology as part of the Pre-Medicine Pre-Professional Program. He is involved in Dr. Kethera Fogler's human cognitive psychology lab as well as Dr. Melanie Shoup-Knox's animal behavioral neuroscience lab. He has co-authored research posters that have been presented at international, regional, and local conferences as well as developed several research proposals. Additionally, he serves as a teaching assistant for Professor DuVall, a Psychology Peer Advisor, and the Operations Director for Virginia21, a non-partisan political advocacy group for young adults. He has previously worked a PASS Instructor for the JMU Learning Center, an Orientation Peer Advisor for incoming students, and laboratory technician for an environmental microbiology lab. After graduation Michael hopes to attend medical school or pursue a Ph.D. in Cognitive Neuroscience.

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.



Rachel Youssef

Rachel is double major in Psychology and Economics. She has conducted research with Dr. Dan Holt on the topic of delay discounting and with Dr. Bryan Saville on the topic of passion for academic activities. Rachel has been on the Dean's list numerous times and has also served as a PASS (peer-assisted study session) instructor for Introduction to Macroeconomics. In addition, she has worked with Dr. Saville for the past 2.5 years, serving as a teaching assistant for Psychological Research Methods (two times) and for Psychology of Learning (three times). Over the past year, Rachel has become very interested in teaching and hopes to pursue graduate education in the area of behavioral economics and a career in academics.

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.



Rebecca McCallister

Rebecca McCallister completed her Field Placement Capstone at The Mercy House, an organization that works to provide services to local families that are homeless, under the supervision of Mr. Jacob Russell. Rebecca served in the role of Volunteer Coordinator and was responsible for recruiting volunteers for The Mercy House's after school program. This program is intended to offer an opportunity for homeless child residents of The Mercy House to complete homework and also engage in fun activities after school while their parents work. However, the program had struggled to recruit volunteers who could help consistently each week and to provide structured activities for volunteers to use with the children. Rebecca took it upon herself to recruit reliable volunteers for the afterschool program, and made sure that volunteers were scheduled for every day of the week during the semester. Rebecca then spent the majority of her time creating activities for the program – she ultimately created 144 distinct activities so that volunteers would be able to engage children in a different activity every single day during the academic year. Rebecca then, without being asked to do so, took the initiative to organize a fundraiser to collect

craft supplies for the activities that she had created. Unsurprisingly, she earned the highest praise from her supervisor for her work during fall 2015. Rebecca also excelled academically during her Field Placement experience. As part of this work, Rebecca conducted a literature review examining the ways in which poverty can contribute to instability in children's lives, and argued for the importance of finding innovative ways to create stability under such circumstances. The paper concluded with ideas for providing structured mentoring programs for children who are homeless, much like the after school program she brought structure and stability to at The Mercy House. Rebecca will be attending the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program at James Madison University in fall 2017, and will undoubtedly have much more to contribute to others both during and after pursuit of her graduate degree.

Senior Award for Achievement in Research

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



Nikole Gregg

Nikole Gregg is a senior Psychology major who already has an impressive research history that includes presentations at national, regional, and local conferences. Under the supervision of Dr. Bryan Saville, Nikole has examined passion for general and academic-related activities and how these variables are related to intelligence mindset and competitiveness. She has also worked with Dr. Tracy Zinn investigating the efficacy of interteaching in statistics, the effects of in-class application questions on academic behavior, and was instrumental in developing assessment measures for written communication skills and sociocultural awareness. All three of these projects resulted in presentations at national conferences. Nikole's interest in quantitative psychology and assessment has led her to pursue a graduate level degree in quantitative psychology

where she hopes to positively impact student learning and achievement. Her interests also extend to positively impacting the work life of teachers by using mindfulness to reduce stress and increase teacher retention.



Akyla Joseph

Akyla Joseph is a very active senior Psychology major who has been involved in teaching and service, as well as making a substantial contribution to Dr. Tracy Zinn's research lab. Akyla has been involved in multiple projects throughout her time at JMU, including presenting research at national and regional conferences, and has been especially busy her senior year with several projects in Dr. Zinn's lab, including investigating perceptions of pregnant women based on their race and drinking habits. She is also involved in work regarding rape myth acceptance and expanding the traditional body of research by incorporating male rape myths, an area that has previously received little attention. Akyla also hopes to raise sociocultural awareness by assisting in the research on improving sociocultural awareness in undergraduate and graduate students. Akyla plans to attend graduate school where she hopes to pursue a degree in clinical psychology, focusing on

treatments for trauma victims (e.g., PTSD), especially active duty military, veterans, and their family members.



Richard "Ben" Krause

Ben Krause is a senior psychology major. He is not only a dedicated student, but also an innovator in every lab in which he participates. Working with both Dr. Jeff Dyche and Dr. Dan Holt, he consistently displays a higher level of understanding of research ideas and frequently assists in the design and modification of both undergraduate and graduate level research. His comprehension, especially in the experimental analysis of behavior, shows the breadth and depth of a dedicated student of experimental psychology. Ben frequently uses his knowledge to pose analytical and theoretical questions about the research in which he is involved. He often acts as an informal mentor to students, carefully explaining complex topics and scaffolding the understanding of his lab mates. His interpersonal skills are evident in lab through interactions with both graduate students and undergraduate peers. Those who have had the opportunity to work with Ben know him as an asset both

inside and outside of the lab.

Kathleen Owens

Katy is a senior Psychology major and Criminal Justice minor. She is currently a member of the Honors Program and completing her 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 6 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, the influence of sleep deprivation on substance choices, and the influence of rhetoric on food 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). Katy is a member of Psi Chi, has served as Vice President of Committees for Student Ambassadors, and she volunteers at Second Home. Katy plans to attend graduate school in the Psychological Sciences MA program at JMU and will ultimately pursue a Ph.D. in child clinical psychology.



Lily Takahashi

Lily is currently a research assistant in two labs. She has been a member of Dr. Matthew Lee's Cultural and Racial Diversity Studies (CARDS) Lab since spring 2015. Lily has been involved in a Campus Climate study that explores student perceptions of diversity and inclusivity on the JMU campus with regards to multiple aspects of one's identity. She has also been involved with a study researching Feminism and those who do not identify as feminists as well as an international student engagement study. Lily has been part of a team who analyzed the Campus Climate data, presented findings to numerous groups on campus, including at the JMU Diversity conference and upper administration, will present at APA in August and is helping to write a technical report of the findings. Lily has been a member of Dr. Krisztina Jakobsen's Cognitive Development Lab since spring 2014 and is currently the lab manager. Lily has been involved in studies that examine the own-species bias in infants, toddler, and adults using an eye tracker. Across her lab experiences, Lily has contributed to developing new ideas for studies, preparing IRBs and stimuli, programming tasks, analyzing data and disseminating finding, and has participated in JMU and community outreach. Lily has seven presentations at local, regional, and national conferences. Lily will be attending graduate school for Forensic and Legal Psychology at Marymount University in the fall.

Senior Distinguished Service Award

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



Eliana Segal

Eliana has been active across a variety of service activities both on and off campus. She has been involved in the Big Brothers Big Sister's "We Read to Succeed" program since the Spring of 2014. In this program she serves as mentor to an 8-year-old child for whom she facilitates reading support, bilingual literacy, and participation in social experiences in the community. She served as the Fundraising and Sponsorship co-chair for MadiTHON, JMU's 12-hour dance marathon, that fundraises for our local Children's Miracle Network Hospital, the UVA Children's Hospital that helped raise \$89,000 dollars this year. Eliana also volunteered in Peak View Elementary school where she utilized translation and tutoring skills to assist Spanish-speaking English Language Learner students. During her semester abroad, Eliana volunteered in an elementary school where she provided small-group assistance in a 6th-grade English class, facilitated group recreational educational activities in after school Pre-K English class, and aided with classroom management in the Pre-K class. Eliana also worked for JMU's Academic Success Program as a Peer Instructor co-facilitating and co-designing classes on how to be successful in college to JMU students on academic probation. She has worked as a counselor at social skills day camp for children and adolescents with social cognitive deficits and has worked as a one-on-one to a child with autism and Fragile X Syndrome as a part of an overnight family camp. In addition, since her sophomore year, Eliana has contributed valuable time and skill to assist in assessment and therapy services for children with autism and their families, who have been served through the Baird Attention and Learning Disabilities Center.

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.



Emily Davis

Emily Davis is a senior Psychology major with a minor in Nonprofit Studies. She has been involved in research in Dr. David Szwedo's social relationships lab and has been a teaching assistant for Dr. Vivien Chan's Statistics and Research Methods courses. Emily has also been active in service at JMU by being a Peer Advisor and outside of JMU by completing an internship abroad in Haiti working with Streethearts, an organization that provides a safe house for homeless boys. Emily has maintained impressive academic standards. In addition to consistently being on the President's List, Emily has previously received a department award for Outstanding Achievement in Statistics and Research Methods. She is a member of Psi-Chi and Phi Kappa Phi and hopes to be a government consultant in the area of assessment and leadership development.



David Deck

David Deck is a senior psychology major with a minor in criminal justice. He has conducted research with Dr. Ashton Trice and has been a teaching assistant for Dr. Janna Taft Young's General Psychology course. David has also been involved in service activities, including the Boys and Girls Club and Second Home. In addition to these activities, David has an impressive academic record, including being a recipient of the Thomas Dingleline Endowment Scholarship. He has consistently been on the President's List and is a member of Sigma Alpha Lambda and Psi-Chi.



Garrett Simkins

Garrett is an exceptional student majoring in Psychology and minoring in Creative Writing while pursuing the Pre-Medicine Pre-Professional Program. He has earned recognition on the President's Honors List for all semesters of JMU attendance. In addition to managing a rigorous course load, Garrett is conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Melanie Shoup-Knox. He is responsible for daily animal care, surgery preparation, animal behavior testing, data collection, and project design. Garrett regularly volunteers with multiple programs including Overcoming Barriers, Day with the Dukes, Adapted Sports Day, Helping Hands, and the Harrisonburg Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program. Following graduation, Garrett intends to apply to medical school and pursue a career as a child and adolescent psychiatrist.

Junior Award for Overall Performance

This award is given to juniors who have demonstrated significant achievement in undergraduate research, service, and academics.



Alyssa Skelly

Alyssa is junior Psychology major who has demonstrated excellence across a variety of domains. Alyssa is currently working in Dr. Irons' research lab and was asked to lead two experimental protocols for which she helped to draft IRB proposals, wrote small grants, and trained other RAs for data collection, in addition to many other duties involved in running these studies. Alyssa has collected biological, behavioral, and self-report data across a range of research protocols in the lab in addition to the studies that she leads. She has served as teaching assistant for Dr. Irons' Research Methods course and currently serves as a Psychology Peer Advisor and a Program Assistant for the JMU Counseling Center. Alyssa is a member of Psi Chi and the Psychology Service Organization. She volunteers at the LGBT and Ally Center of JMU and Our Community Place in Harrisonburg."

Junior Award for Achievement in Research

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



Nancy Mack

Nancy is a junior Psychology major earning a minor in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. For two years she has worked in the animal research lab of Dr. Jeff Dyche and for one year she has worked in Dr. Melanie Shoup-Knox's animal and human research labs. Twice Nancy co-authored research that was presented at the Society for Neuroscience international conference. Recently, she proposed her own research protocol to investigate the long-term effects of cocaine exposure on impulse inhibition and dopamine receptors. She has also served as Dr. Tracy Zinn's statistics and research methods teaching assistant, which included a research component on the effectiveness of interteaching. Nancy plans to pursue a Ph.D. in neuroscience and become a college professor.

Junior Award for Academic Achievement

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



Maria Camila Restrepo Chavez

Camila is a junior and member of JMU's Honors Program, currently beginning her honors thesis with Dr. Jaime Kurtz. This work will focus on perceptions of undergraduate well-being as portrayed on social media. She will present this research at the L Starling Reid Undergraduate Research Conference at UVA in April, 2016. In her time at JMU, Camila has also been actively involved in service-related activities such as the Psychology Service Organization, First Year Orientation, Gus Bus, and Safe Rides. She has served as a peer-mentor to a foreign exchange student and completed an internship at the JMU Counseling Center. This spring, she did a service-oriented spring break trip on the Mexico-Texas border. She works as a student assistant at the JMU Center for Assessment and Research Studies helping with the university assessment programs and assisting faculty in the graduate program. She has been named to either the Dean's List or the President's List

every semester, and she is a member of Psi Chi.

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.



Eryn Donovan



Christina Shulman



Austin Vasallo