

JMU Department of Psychology

2018 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.

2018 Award Recipient

Cerella Chandra



- Completed an Honors Thesis titled: Interactions between Anxiety Subtypes, Personality Characteristics, and Emotion Regulation Skills as Predictors of Future Career Outcomes under the supervision of Dr. David Szewo
- Will present her thesis at the Virginia Association for Psychological Science in April, 2018
- Completed a 150-hour Field Placement experience at Western State Hospital under the supervision of a Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Dr. Jason Stout.
- Was subsequently hired at Western State Hospital as a Rehab Assistant on the strength of her Field Placement work
- Served as a tutor for the course Abnormal Psychology since Spring 2016
- Member of the Psychology Learning Community during her first year at JMU

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.

2018 Award Recipient

Amanda Powell



- Has worked in three research labs and presented research at multiple national, regional, and local conferences.
- Was awarded the Michael Serafino Award for Best Undergraduate Poster at the Society for Police and Criminal Psychology.
- Served as a TA for multiple sections of Biopsychology, Abnormal Psychology, and General Psychology
- Volunteers for the Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community and other organizations throughout Harrisonburg.
- Has earned President's List recognition since the Fall of 2016.

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.

2018 Award Recipient

Ashley Rininger



- Works with Dr. Jessica Irons examining cue-induced nicotine withdrawal in humans, the effects of alcohol priming on substance preferences (coordinates this study), and the effects of rhetoric exposure on health choices.
- Has served as a teaching assistant for Psychological Statistics and Integrated Statistics and Methods under the supervision of Dr. Tracy Zinn and Research Methods in Psychology under the supervision of Dr. Jessica Irons.
- Serves as a Psychology Peer Advisor and serves as the Training Liaison & Transition Specialist.
- Is a member of Kappa Alpha Theta, is a member of Active Minds, has volunteered with Open House, worked as an AVID tutor, and has attended and led Alternative Spring Breaks trips and serves as an Alternative Spring Break Student Coordinator.
- Serves as a statistics tutor in the JMU Learning Centers.

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.

2018 Award Recipient

Caleigh Strother



- Completed her 150-hour Field Placement with the Commonwealth Center for Children and Adolescents (CCCA), a short-term psychiatric hospital in Staunton, VA
- Worked under the supervision of Elizabeth Candido and Kandice Brown in the Recreation Therapy Department, creating and facilitating therapeutic activities for the purpose of improving self-esteem, coping, and social skills among patients
- Created a partnership with the JMU School of Music to bring JMU music student volunteers to CCCA to facilitate music therapy with patients
- Wrote and was awarded a JMU Student Engagement Grant to support this collaborative effort
- Was invited to present about her collaborative project to the JMU Board of Visitors

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.

2018 Award Recipient

Eryn Donovan



- Works with Dr. Jessica Irons examining cue-induced nicotine withdrawal in humans, the effects of alcohol priming on substance preferences, and the effects of rhetoric on food preferences.
- Was awarded a Psi Chi National Research grant to study the effects of rhetoric on food preferences.
- Has worked in Dr. Jeff Dyche's lab for several semesters. Her lab activities include daily care and handling of animals.
- Served as an undergraduate TA for Honors Introductory Psychology and Psychological Research Methods under the supervision of Dr. Jessica Irons.
- Won Outstanding Achievement in Statistics and Research Methods in the Department of Psychology and the Junior Award for Achievement in Research.
- Plans to attend The University of Michigan to earn her PhD beginning Fall 2018.

Joel D. West Senior Distinguished Service Award

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

2018 Award Recipient

Briana Craig



- Works with Dr. Jessica Irons examining cue-induced nicotine withdrawal in humans, the effects of alcohol priming on substance preferences (coordinates this study), and the effects of rhetoric exposure on health choices. She also works with Dr. Kevin Apple conducting research on student engagement in Higher Education.
- She was a recipient of a research award at the Virginia Association of Psychological Science, for her work on texting and driving with Dr. Natalie Kerr.
- Has served as a teaching assistant for Psychological Research Methods under the supervision of Dr. Jessica Irons.
- Serves as a student tutor in the Math and Science Learning Center.
- Has been a leader on two Alternative Spring Break trips.
- Has been on the President's list since Spring 2015.
- Has completed an Honors thesis on the psychology of superheroes, which she hopes to publish in book form.
- Plans to get her Masters degree in a statistics-related field after graduating from JMU.

Senior Award for Achievement in Research

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

2018 Award Recipients

Caroline Cole



- Completing an Honors Thesis titled, The Effect of Perceived Dissimilarity of Events on Change Deafness, advised by Dr. Michael Hall
- Has extensive research experience in three different labs, including Dr. Hall's lab, Dr. Andre's lab and Dr. Dyche's lab, with experience ranging from perceptual interactions between pitch and musical instrument timbre, change deafness, saccadic eye movements while reading, to the effects of sleep deprivation and caffeine administration on psychomotor vigilance tasks in rats
- Has presented at a national conference, the Society for Neuroscience in Washington DC, as well as regional and local conferences
- Has extensive research training in ERP software, computer-based eye-tracking devices, analysis of urine samples for norepinephrine, administration of injections in rats, operant boxes and sleep deprivation techniques; these skills span both human and animal populations

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.

2018 Award Recipient

Korinthia Nicolai



- President elect of Psi Chi, JMU Chapter.
- Has conducted collaborative research with three faculty members and presented research at regional and local conferences.
- Served as a TA for Developmental Psychology and Preparing for a Job in Psychology
- Volunteered to assist with local elementary school reading programs.
- Recipient of the Madison Academic Excellence Scholarship.
- Earned Dean's List recognition in 2016 and President's List recognition since 2017.

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.

2018 Award Recipient

Nicole Zapparatta



- Works with Dr. Suzanne Baker conducting research on personality and learning in deer mice. She received a Department of Psychology Research Grant for this work.
- Has been a teaching assistant for Dr. JoAnne Brewster in Abnormal Psychology, which entailed creating supplemental worksheets, constructing mini-lectures, holding review sessions, and providing one-on-one tutoring.
- Volunteered at Western State Hospital in Staunton, VA.
- Received the Department of Psychology Outstanding Achievement Award in Statistics and Research Methods.
- Plans to pursue a PhD in quantitative psychology.

JMU Leadership and Service Scholarship

This scholarship provides financial assistance to a junior-level student who demonstrates through their activities the core leadership values of service, attitude, teamwork, and excellence. This scholarship is awarded to a student committed to serving the greater JMU Community and/or the Harrisonburg/Rockingham County communities.

2018 Award Recipient

Kathia Bonilla-Amaya



- Has served as a research assistant under the Supervision of Dr. Kenneth Critchfield, studying Interpersonal Reconstructive Therapy, for seven semesters.
- Presented her research with Dr. Critchfield to the International Society for Psychotherapy Research, Toronto, Canada.
- Works with Dr. Kala Melchiori in her Gender and Intergroup Relations Lab for two semesters.
- Serves as secretary for the JMU chapter of Psi Chi International Honors Society.
- Completed an internship at the JMU Counseling Center.
- Volunteers at Keister Elementary in a Duo-lingo classroom.
- Completed a Field Placement at Western State Hospital.
- On-campus coordinator for the Psychology Service Organization.
- Received a competitive JMU Student Engagement Grant for her field placement work.
- Plans to pursue graduate work in clinical 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.

2018 Award Recipient

Kayla Pitchford



- Conducts research with Dr. Monica Reis-Bergan studying the identification of Grit in children's books.
- Will begin working with Dr. Szwedo to conduct research in Fall 2018.
- Has been accepted into the Field Placement program for Fall 2018.

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.

2018 Award Recipient

Lydia Florez



- Has conducted research with Dr. Lindsey Harvell-Bowman on perceptions of death in suicidal individuals and with Dr. David Szwedo on early predictors of juvenile delinquency.
- Has served as a teaching assistant in Dr. Kala Melchiori's research methods course. In this role, she led review sessions, proctored exams, and helped with student assessments.
- Has been involved in service activities at the Arc of Harrisonburg, the Fairfield Mediation Center, and the JMU Counseling Center.
- Worked with a local after-school program to help improve academic performance in at-risk and low-income middle-school students.
- Plans to pursue a career that combines psychology and law.

Junior Award for Achievement in Research

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

2018 Award Recipient

Not awarded 2018.

Junior Award for Distinguished Service

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

2018 Award Recipient

Not awarded 2018.

Junior Award for Achievement in Teaching

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

2018 Award Recipient

Not awarded 2018.

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.

2018 Award Recipients



Katherine Landes

(No Picture)

Nicole Shaffery



Emily Booker



Tatiana Swisher



Lauren Williams



Keiva Brannigan



Emily Isola