



EKU Department Psychology Newsletter

Eastern Kentucky
University

Spring 2021

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Teri Nowak Retiring from Psychology Department



Dr. Theresa Nowak, known to faculty, staff, and students as Dr. Teri Nowak, is retiring this summer after 15 years at ECU. She came to ECU as a school psychology faculty member in 2006. After working for many years in education, corrections, and mental health, she moved to Kentucky to attend the University of Kentucky in order to obtain her doctoral degree in Educational Psychology (school psychology). As she puts it, "Getting my doctorate degree was my mid-life crisis." Her mid-life career change was her move to ECU shortly before her 50th birthday.

With a diverse professional background prior to joining ECU, Dr. Nowak integrated her varied professional experiences into her teaching to help make theoretical information and concepts real to students. In addition to school psychology practicum and internship ... pg. 2

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Dr. Incera Delivers Chautauqua Lecture on Bilingualism

On March 18th, 2021, **Dr. Sara Incera** delivered the Chautauqua Lecture: "Using Data to Uncover the Bilingual Mind." The recorded session is [available](#) to watch and includes the 40 minutes presentation and subsequent Q&A session.

Incera is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology and Director of the Multilingual Laboratory at Eastern Kentucky University. She is interested in research about cognition, bilingualism, foreign accents, second language acquisition, and language development across the lifespan.

In this personal talk, Incera discussed how studying abroad in Ireland deeply changed who she was. This life-altering experience set her on a path to investigate the fascinating world of the Psychology of Language. This lecture includes a mix of personal anecdotes and linguistic research that all point to the conclusion that language profoundly influences people. She argues that language changes how people respond (Incera & McLennan, 2018), think (Incera & McLennan, 2018), and feel (Incera et al., 2020). For example, when Dave first told Sara that he loved her, he did so in English, but she did not feel it .. pg. 2

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Cont. from p. 1: Nowak Retirement

courses, she taught advanced assessment and early childhood assessment to graduate students. On the undergraduate level, Dr. Nowak enjoyed developing engaging activities to excite students about the content for the introduction to psychology, infant and child development, and child psychopathology courses.

Most of Dr. Nowak's research, writing, and service have focused on children, particularly early childhood. She worked with faculty across campus who were interested in the early childhood population that resulted in a summer program for seven years that helped young children transition to preschool. Dr. Nowak facilitated the parent support group with psychology students while the children worked with faculty and students in the occupational therapy, communication disorders, and interdisciplinary early childhood programs. Consistent with her preference to experiential learning, for many years Dr. Nowak enlisted graduate students to participate in the annual Madison County Emergency Management Agency and Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program. Her work with crisis management also allowed her to work with a small team of people in assisting West Liberty School District to help teachers and staff to re-open schools after a devastating tornado in 2012. Much of Dr. Nowak's work also resulted in presentations with students at local, state, national, and international conferences. She mentored students who were in assorted programs including the Honors Program, McNair, Education Pays, and NOVA. In 2019, Dr. Nowak mentored four graduate and undergraduate EKU students on a trip through the University of Kentucky Shoulder to Shoulder Interprofessional Teamwork in Global Health program to Santa Domingo, Ecuador to work with teachers and students in schools.

When asked what her favorite part of working at EKU was, she quickly responded, "The students. I relish my interactions with students of not only getting to know them through teaching, advising, and mentoring but also learning from them."

Cont. from p. 1: Incera Chautauqua




same way as when he repeated it in Spanish moments later. Under Dr. Incera's guidance, research assistants at EKU's Multilingual Laboratory investigate how the language we speak influences the cognitive and emotional process that shape who we are.

If you enjoyed watching Dr. Incera's Chautauqua lecture and want to hear more stories about the Psychology of Language,



check out Sara's blog: [Blogueando en Español](#) (if you do not want to read it in Spanish you can always use the Google's translate function).

Letter from the Chair

It's been said a million times already: This year was unprecedented. There was no way we could have imagined how the virus would affect our lives. But the greatest thing about humans is that we can adapt to anything. And we have had to do a lot of adapting over the last year.

Fortunately, in the Psychology Department, we were already a little bit ahead of the game. People may point to the fact that our students and faculty were already familiar with using many technologies on which we came to rely. We were already experienced users of email, Blackboard, Google and OneDrive platforms, so it was easier to pick up Zoom, Collaborate, and the new apps we had to learn.

But to me, our strength was that we, as psychologists, already have an understanding of the human experience and how our brains work. We know that we can reframe obstacles as opportunities, hardships as challenges, and disruption as growth.

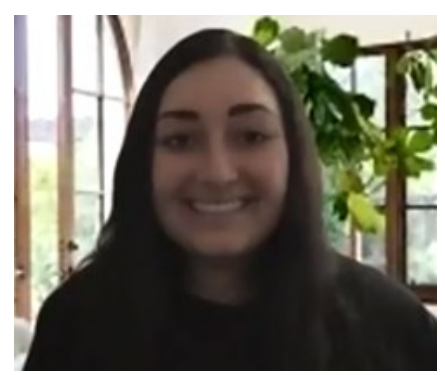
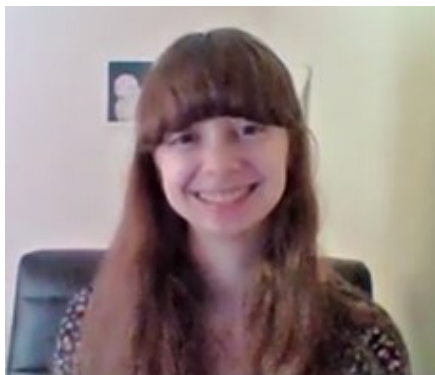
We also know that the most important things in our lives—loving our families and friends, caring for others, and learning new things—can never be taken away from us, no matter what the circumstances. The virus at its worst, and any other situation that may arise, is no match for the human spirit.

As we put a wrap on the 2020-21 academic year and we start planning to re-enter a world that is more similar to 2019, we should look back on the last year with a sense of pride and accomplishment. It is amazing to see what we did, and that gives us a glimpse of the tremendous potential that is inside all of us!

Scholars Week at EKU

University Presentation Showcase at EKU - Undergraduate

The Psychology Department had 20 Psychology and Animal Studies students present 10 different posters. The Psychology Department made up nearly 50% of the undergraduate entries. See descriptions of the posters at <https://encompass.eku.edu/swps/2021/undergraduate/>



Pictured—3MT Doctoral Award Winners (left to right) Megan Thomas, Reagan Overby, and Taylor Chille

Graduate Three-Minute Thesis videos

Seven of the 12 contestants in the inaugural 3MT contest are Psychology graduate students. These are well-produced 3-minute videos that discuss graduate research projects.

See the Youtube Channel homepage:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtRbSz2VIY24juV9MQm3bow>

Undergraduate Research Spotlight: Nekari Hill



Photo: Nikari Hill

Nekari Hill, ECU McNair Scholar and psychology major, is engaging in a collaborative research project with Dr. Myra Bundy, Dr. Shirley O'Brien, and ECU Psy.D. student Allison Simpson. Ms. Hill is studying aspects of Dr. Bundy's database from the Kentucky Office for Children with Special Healthcare Needs Autism Clinic. Hill is exploring whether there are differences in the profiles and needs of children and their families based on whether their home is located in a more rural vs urban area in the state and whether they attended a rural or urban autism diagnostic clinic.

Hill will be comparing sets of data acquired from an archival database of Dr. Bundy's and separating them according to children who received an assessment for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) at clinics located in a more urban area (Lexington) or more rural area (Somerset). She plans to incorporate a thorough review of the literature in this discipline, specifically geared toward sociodemographic factors that make it difficult for families to seek and find appropriate treatment or diagnosis. Hill will be analyzing to what degree the highest level of education attained by a primary caregiver, geographic location of the clinic, and gender of the child correlates with the age at which a child is assessed, diagnosed, and treated for ASD.

This research could bring to light a disparity in access to treatment services due to geographic location and other socioeconomic factors. Based on the literature, Hill is predicting that children who were assessed at the more urban clinic (Lexington) will be younger than children who were assessed at the more rural clinic (Somerset). The age at which children receive assessment for ASD is vital, as the sooner they receive a diagnosis, the sooner they can begin treatment. Appropriate diagnosis, understanding, support, and treatment improve the quality of life of people with ASD and that of their families. Hill's goal with this research is to

bring to light a disparity in access to treatment services due to geographic location and other socioeconomic factors. Based on the literature, Hill is predicting that children who were assessed at the more urban clinic (Lexington) will be younger than children who were assessed at the more rural clinic (Somerset). The age at which children receive assessment for ASD is vital, as the sooner they receive a diagnosis, the sooner they can begin treatment. Appropriate diagnosis, understanding, support, and treatment improve the quality of life of people with ASD and that of their families. Hill's goal with this research is to

Undergraduate Research: Thomas Morris

The research Thomas Morris presented at the Lincoln Memorial University Blue Ridge Undergraduate Research Conference compared machine voice to human voice in an online learning environment. Dr. Chen and Morris wanted to see how the voice used to present information would influence students' effort ratings and recall performance. This study was a continuation of a study they did in the past that examined how voice affected teaching perceptions and recall performance. In this study, the students listened to a 3-part audio lecture with each part presented by a different voice. The voices included an older machine voice, a modern machine voice, and a human voice. They also stressed the students cognitively by having them memorize a 5-digit number at the start of the lecture and then recall it after the lecture was over.



Photo: Thomas Morris

Chen and Morris found that when students are cognitively stressed, the students felt they exerted the least amount of effort listening to the human voice. They also have the best recall performance over the content covered by this voice. This result is interesting because their past study found that when students are not cognitively stressed, they perceive the human voice as a better teacher but have better recall performance with the older machine voice. This study highlights the role of cognitive stress in learning and it could have implications in the design of education technologies, screen readers, and voice assistants.

See Thomas present his research presentation - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMc7gdPntR0&list=PLZnkYHk_z7D4QF6I0dyvrDxZZhJTFsD09&index=42

Club Update: Psi Chi and Psychology Club

During this spring 2021 semester, the pandemic continued to put a stop to the EKU Psi Chi Chapter and the Psychology Club's in-person meetings, events and activities. They are optimistic about returning to in-person activities in the fall. They continued adding to membership roll and are planning a Fall 2021 Induction ceremony for new members. Currently, they are also in the process of electing new officers for the 2021-2022 school year. The Club wants to congratulate our current Psi Chi President, Samuel Aponte, who will be graduating this semester. They sincerely thank him for his dedication to the organization and his continuous efforts to keep everyone all remotely connected during these unprecedented times. One event that Sam helped coordinate occurred on February 25th. He made it possible for Psi Chi and Psychology Club to co-host a fundraiser for the WHAS Crusade for Children organization in partnership with the EKU Psychology Department. The platform was an online Jeopardy game night, during which game players made donations to WHAS.

The Club is looking forward to resuming the fulfillment of the organization's mission of recognizing and promoting excellence in the science and application of psychology. The theme for the fall semester will be "Rebooting for a Brighter Tomorrow" and will be focusing their energies and efforts on fulfilling their role as an active and productive organization, dedicated to the promotion of their field of study and a brighter tomorrow!

Club Update: Animal Studies Club



After a Virtual Colonel Craze in January, the Animal Studies Club began bi-weekly meetings in February. The Animal Studies Club members participated in events such as an online community research project called Snapshot Safari, which allows students to use camera traps to identify/quantify animals on African reserves. Other events included creating Vision Boards focusing on the important things club members had experienced in the ANS major and what directions they wanted to

head in next. Additionally, club members were able to go on a field trip to the Cincinnati Zoo (CZBG) and observe their animals and animal care procedures.

Dr. Radhika Makecha also was a guest speaker and club members were able to learn about her professional experiences in the world of animals and research. Additionally, our very own ANS Alumni, Lauren West, spoke to the club about her current internship at the CZBG!

The ANS Club even got lucky and were allowed to have a few in-person meetings, where dog toys were made to donate to local pet shelters, along with donations of pet food.

Finally, ANS Club members made origami animals for earth day, which were later compiled into a beautiful ANS Club Earth Day poster.



Graduate Program Update: Clinical Psy.D.

The 2020-2021 academic year has been a challenging year for the Psy.D. program to say the least! We have fully managed to move the program activities to remote formats to deal with the impact of COVID-19. Dr. McClellan's work at implementing telehealth activities really paid off and we were able to deliver a full range of clinical services in the Clinic. We had a great panel of program alumni (Dr. Alex Kuhl, Dr. Katelin Mullikin, Dr. Nicole Wozniak, Dr. Taylor Kutchen, and Dr. Lauren Young) talk to our current students about their experiences transitioning from the program to their professional careers since graduating. Everyone is excited for the upcoming fall term when we will be able to get back to in-person classes and clinical work.

The program continues to be full with over 50 students across 5 cohorts. We graduated our largest group of students (16) in August of 2020. Most of those students were part of the initial post-baccalaureate cohort that launched the program in 2015. All are already employed in either full time positions or post-doctoral training. This spring we matched 11 of our fourth-year students to internships! We placed students in North Carolina, Illinois, New York, Maryland, Virginia, Nebraska, Texas, Arkansas, Utah, and Missouri.

We had over 100 applications for the program last December. We have accepted 12 students to enter the program in August of 2021. For the first time in program history, all 12 of our initial offers of admission were accepted!

EKU Clinical Psychology Students Receive Cutting Edge Training

The EKU Telepsychology Clinic is thriving during the pandemic. As of December 1, 2020, the clinic surpassed 3,000 clinical visits through telehealth since the start of the pandemic. The clinic is staffed by advanced doctoral students in EKU's clinical psychology Psy.D. program and those students receive clinical supervision from faculty members who are also licensed mental health providers. In order to provide services in the Telepsychology Clinic, students complete graduate coursework where they learn how to provide therapy and psychological testing-related services. Students must also complete specialized training in teletherapy and teleassessment practice, telehealth-related laws, and demonstrate competency in using multiple telehealth delivery platforms.

The clinic was founded a year prior to the start of the pandemic, in March of 2019, by Dr. Michael McClellan. Dr. McClellan is an assistant professor in the psychology department, and he is in his sixth year at ECU. His research and clinical interests both include studying telehealth with rural populations. All 50+ students in the clinical psychology program receive this specialized training and it has allowed them to accumulate clinical hours when many programs around the country have had to pause their clinical training due to the pandemic. This helps make our students more marketable for top internship positions around the country and helps prepare them for employment after they graduate.

The Telepsychology Clinic has been so successful, it will continue after the pandemic is over. We have a number of clients scattered throughout Kentucky, many of whom cannot make the long drive to our Psychology Clinic located in the Cammack Building on the Richmond campus. In addition, the clinical psychology program is continuing to network around the state to look for ways to extend the reach of the clinic further and into new parts of the state.



Photo: Dr. Michael McClellan give telehealth guidance to Brandon Creech

Graduate Program Update: I/O Master's Program

The 2020 – 2021 academic year has been a busy one for the I-O Psychology Master's program. Several students have been working on their capstone projects, which will be completed over the summer. These projects include practical experience in developing evidence-based workshops on organizational practices for an R&D division of an organization, developing an employee handbook for an organization, creating a selection interview for a particular job in an organization, and developing a community and employee satisfaction survey for a local public service organization.



Photo: I-O Student Laura “Ashley” Rhodes takes a selfie in the French Quarter while attending the annual Society for Industrial-Organizational Psychology Conference, held virtually in New Orleans in April 2021.

Several graduate and undergraduate I-O students are currently involved in consulting projects through the Center for Applied Psychology and Workforce Development (CApP; <https://psychology.eku.edu/center-applied-psychology-and-workforce-development-capp>). I-O student Forrest Hull and recent graduate Fey Ogunleye (I-O MS, 2020) are working for program alum Ryan Bellone (I-O MS, 2011) to complete a job analysis project for a regional hemp testing laboratory. Additionally, I-O graduate students Tora Day and Bailey Bird have designed and delivered NINE virtual workshops for the CApP Profes-

sional Development Workshop Series!

In April, several students, along with Dr. Henning, attended the annual Society for Industrial-Organizational Psychology conference. Despite the virtual format, the students enjoyed the conference, gained knowledge, and engaged in networking opportunities. The I-O program also featured two alumni guest speakers during the Spring semester. Alysha Noorani (I-O MS, 2014), a Customer Success Strategist at CultureAmp, and Randy Lytes (I-O MS, 2017), an Equal Opportunity Analyst at the University of Cincinnati, presented on their work roles and how their degrees in I-O help them to be successful in these roles.

The program faculty have also had a busy year. Dr. Palmer has been taking Clinical Psychology graduate classes so he can work more closely with his wife, Dr. Melinda Moore. After this semester, he will have 36 hours completed! He has also re-developed the PSY 805 statistics course to use the free Jamovi statistical software. Meanwhile, EKU and many other universities are cutting ties to SPSS to save costs. Thus, switching to Jamovi is very timely. Dr. Palmer has already been approached by three campus groups to deliver workshops on Jamovi. He says Jamovi has many advantages over SPSS and this switch will greatly benefit our students.

In the Fall, a chapter co-authored by Dr. Nakai was published in the book, [Mastering Industrial-Organizational Psychology](#). The chapter details considerations for establishing and maintaining university-based consulting centers and draws on Dr. Nakai's experience directing CApP. In April, Dr. Henning was featured in an EKU e-Cast where she discussed careers I-O psychology and the effects that the pandemic may have on the workplace. [Listen to this eCast here.](#)

The online program continues to grow, and the Spring term saw our highest enrollment with over 60 students registered. After this summer, almost 60 students will have graduated from the online I-O program. We look forward to continued growth and always love to hear from our program graduates. Especially when they make comments like this one from a recent graduate: “This was such a rewarding graduate degree and has been well used over the past two years!”

Graduate Program Update: General Master & ABA Program

One piece of big news for the MS program in General Psychology is that Dr. Mitchell and Dr. Bundy completed and submitted the program review this semester.

In the ABA concentration, students have been working hard to complete their series of 8-week classes. Although the pandemic has brought a number of changes to student lives, this e-campus program has proceeded at a business-as-usual pace, since the students have always been learning in an all online format. We have appreciated the opportunity to socialize and learn together during our live weekly reviews, held in ECU's Blackboard Collaborate.

Among the graduate students in the Experimental Master's program, Inés Elena Martín completed her Master's thesis entitled "The relationship between cognitive and linguistic abilities in bilingual children," under the direction of Dr. Sara Incera. Inés has accepted a position to start in the fall in a Ph.D. School Psychology program at Tulane University, in New Orleans.

Youth Suicide More Complicated than Closed Schools

Dr. Melinda Moore published an Op-Ed in the Lexington Herald-Leader. It places work in the ECU Psychology Clinic within the context of the argument that is circulating nationally about youth suicide being caused by school closures. The New York Times front page article - <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/24/us/politics/student-suicides-nevada-coronavirus.html?referringSource=articleShare> – started the firestorm around this and then NPR has also done some coverage. While well intentioned, Dr. Moore highlighted how people locally might be able to use to make better choices and, hopefully, think about these issues differently.

The take-away of the Op-Ed was that Dr. Michael McClellan started something several years ago that absolutely became gold when this pandemic struck last Spring. Had it not been for his laying the groundwork of the ECU Psychology Telehealth Clinic, the suicide-focused treatment work (CAMS) being done by graduate students (two paradigm shifts in one) would not have been possible. The ECU Psychology Telehealth Clinic has become famous in suicidology circles (<https://cams-care.com/resources/events/treating-suicidal-college-students-telepsychology/>) for taking charge, not relying upon "telephone check ins" like other university clinics were doing with their suicidal clients, and actually immediately shifting to telehealth to do suicide focused work.

After they were able to launch that, then the clinic became 100% virtual, Dr. Bundy was able to do all of her fantastic work virtually, all of the ECU clinical doctoral students were seeing their typical therapy clients via telehealth, and a new age of technology in the clinic was launched.

Investigating Emotional Functioning on Post-9/11 Veterans

Dr. Wygant teamed up with ECU alum, Dr. Jaime Anderson (M.S., 2011), who is a professor at Sam Houston State University, to investigate the emotional functioning of Post-9/11 veterans. The study includes a battery of psychological measures, including the recently released MMPI-3, along with measures of trauma, post-traumatic growth, emotional resiliency, and internalizing and externalizing symptoms of psychopathology. In light of the COVID-19 situation, all data is collected by graduate students at ECU and Sam Houston on ZOOM. The study aims to collect data on 300 veterans (who are compensated for their time). About a third of the data has been collected so far. Hopefully the data will be useful in understanding this important group of veterans.

Veterans Study Program



Last year, Travis Martin was named Director of the Kentucky Center for Veterans Studies, a rebranding of the current Veterans Studies academic program that moved to the Department of Psychology in 2019. KCVS will focus heavily on service learning and community outreach. Learn more about the mission of KCVS in [this interview](#).

The Veterans Studies minor and university-level certificate are available to all majors, but the minor was designed specifically with Psychology students in mind. The beginning course – VTS 200 Intro to Veterans Studies – is a Gen Ed VI requirement. Other [courses in the program](#) are those likely to be taken by PSY majors anyway.

- Any student with scholarly or service interest can join the newly formed [Veterans Studies Alliance](#) student organization.
- The larger community has [taken notice](#) of interviews collected by VTS students for the William H. Berge Center's Veterans Studies project.

One graduate claimed, "I have yet to be interviewed by an employer who did not ask me specifically about my VTS Minor. It is usually the first question asked." That graduate was [Christopher Stanfield](#), a 2013 Pat Tillman Scholar.



The "official launch" of the Kentucky Center for Veterans Studies occurred in March. The instructors and students who have helped grow the program and make it popular since it became the first of its kind ten years ago, thank you for your support.

Dr. Wygant Delivers Chautauqua Lecture on Mental Diagnosis Over Time

Dr. Dustin Wygant, Professor of Psychology and Director of Clinical Training, delivered one of the spring 2021 Chautauqua lectures, the theme of which was Dealing with Data. Dr. Wygant's talk, entitled *Diagnosis at the Crossroads: Mental Illness in the 21st Century* examined the historical roots of mental disorders leading up the current diagnostic system in the DSM-5. Dr. Wygant's talk incorporated a clinical case example throughout to illustrate the limitations of the current diagnostic system. He discussed contemporary efforts to develop a more quantitative and evidence-based diagnostic approach. A recording of the talk can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXvhHGbhXag>



Photo: Dr. Erik Liddell introduces Dr. Wygant for his Chautauqua lecture.

Raising Funds for Children's Crusade

EKU PSY. D. graduate students, in coordination with Dr. Bundy and Dr. Botts created a fundraiser for the WHAS Children's Crusade. This Crusade funds services for children with special developmental needs throughout the state and is a long term supporter of social groups for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder at the ECU Psychology Clinic.

On February 25, 2021 we gathered with a number of graduate and undergraduate students and played a competitive game of Psychology Jeopardy! Game participants made donations which will be delivered to the Crusade.

Presenting at ASD Society of Bluegrass

On February 13, 2021, several current ECU Psy.D. students presented on the topic of "Autism and Anxiety" in an online workshop sponsored by the Autism Society of the Bluegrass. They enjoyed a Saturday morning of learning and discussion as they worked to understand the basic behavioral processes of anxiety as well as how autism-informed interventions can support individual goals and outcomes.

Presenters were: Tara Bord, Dr. Myra Bundy, Kristen Gibson, Molly King, Gabriella Martin, Khrista Neville

Faculty Teaching Awards and Honors

Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL) Award

Hung-Tao Michael Chen, Associate Professor, Psychology

Critical Reading Teaching Award

Adam Lawson, Psychology
Robert Mitchell, Psychology
Donald Varakin, Psychology

Critical Thinking Teaching Award

Matthew Winslow, Psychology

Foundation Professor

MyraBeth Bundy received Foundation Professor. The Foundation Professor is an award to recognize "creative, self-motivated exemplars of the ideal college professor." Dr. Bundy certainly has made a tremendous difference in the lives of the students, colleagues, clients, and families whom she serves, and this is wonderful recognition of all of her efforts.



Photo: Michael Chen with SoTL Award

EKU Grant

Dr. Myra Bundy has received (and is grateful for) a faculty research grant from ECU. She is collaborating with MS in Psychology, ABA concentration student Rhoman James, Dr. Jon Gore, ECU undergraduate psychology major Katelyn McClure, and with the Lexington nonprofit Alpha League. They are studying the effects of different incentive delivery schedules on attendance and participation at an online mentoring program by men of color for boys of color.

Brubaker Receives Chair Emeritus

Bob Brubaker retired in June, 2020, after serving the Department of Psychology for 17 years as chair, and working as a professor for 35 years. His retirement was well-earned after his many accomplishment that were highlighted in the Spring 2020 PsyQ. In his honor, the Senate of the Commonwealth of Kentucky issued a proclamation thanking him for his service to the state, ECU awarded him Chair Emeritus status (the highest status obtainable for a retiring chair), and the Mayor of Richmond declared that June 30, 2020, was Robert Brubaker Day. Thank you for your incredible service to the Department and the University, and enjoy your well-earned retirement, Bob!

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Let's Hear from Alumni



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