



EKU Department Psychology Newsletter

Eastern Kentucky University

Fall 2011

Inside this issue:

PGSO Picnic Has Fantastic Turn Out!

Eastern Kentucky University's Graduate Psychology Department kicked off the Fall 2013 semester with their annual departmental picnic at Camp Catalpa. This was a good time for each of the four departments including School, Clinical, Industrial-Organizational, and General to socialize over some delicious food and a little competition. Each department participated in activities such as a trivia contest, cornhole,



a water balloon toss, and racing while balancing an egg on a spoon in order to claim the prize-winning trophy for their program. Though each department put forward great effort, the Industrial-Organizational Psychology Program came out on top as the winners. The picnic allowed students and professors along with their families to come together and get to know one another outside of the classroom. The Graduate Psychology Programs made a positive step in the direction of helping students feel more at home at Eastern Kentucky University during the first couple weeks of the semester.

Team I/O won the coveted Mr. Clean trophy for their winning effort in this year's Psychology Games at the Department picnic. The losing programs included General, School, and Clinical. The actual trophy is on display in the Department office



<i>New EKV Faculty</i>	2
<i>Study Abroad</i>	3
<i>Psi Chi Update</i>	4
<i>Dr. Lykins Awarded Grant</i>	4
<i>Ms. Piggy Goes Missing</i>	5
<i>Autism Certificate</i>	6
<i>Alumni Spotlight</i>	6

Dr. Redhika Makecha Joins EKU Faculty

Radhika Makecha was born and raised in Houston, Texas. After receiving a B.S. degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences from Texas A&M University, she went on to receive an M.A. and Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology, specializing in Comparative Psychology, from the University of Southern Mississippi. During her graduate career, Dr. Makecha studied play behavior in dolphins and tactile interactions in Asian Elephants. After graduating with her Ph.D., she taught at several universities before joining the Psychology Department here at EKU, where she teaches in both the Psychology and Animal Studies programs. Although moving to Kentucky after teaching in The Bahamas, Dr. Makecha is very happy to be part of the department and believes that this is her dream job. Her current research interests are elephant cognition and behavior, animal emotions, and incorporating animal cognition into educational programs centered on teaching the public about animals. In her spare time, she plays with her dog, Ipo (which means “darling,” in Hawaiian), plays Capoeira (a Brazilian martial arts), cooks, reads, and watches her favorite television shows.



Current EKU Psychology Department Faculty



Study Abroad in Japan

This past Summer, Dr. Steffen Wilson and three Psychology majors, Emily D'Italia, Jeremy Gibson, and Ashley Dickey were a part of the KIIS (Kentucky Institute for International Studies) Study Abroad trip to Japan. The trip included two weeks in Nara, five days in Tokyo, two nights in Hiroshima, and a week in Kyoto. During their time in Nara, students completed a week homestay with a Japanese family. Trip highlights included taking many rides on the bullet trains, an instructional Kabuki Theater performance, a visit to the International Manga Museum, sightseeing in Tokyo, a trip to see the floating shrine at Miyajima island, Japanese style Karaoke, and a visit to the Atomic Bomb museum.



Dr. Wilson taught two courses during the trip. One of her courses was entitled "Growing Up Japanese," where topics such as becoming literate in Kana (the Japanese alphabet), how Soroban (the Japanese abacus) influences math literacy, and Manga (Japanese comic books) literacy. Her other course was entitled "The Graying of Japan," where topics such as the Japanese health care and pension systems, hobby engagement of elderly Japanese, and factors that are affecting the extreme longevity of Japanese citizens.

Study Abroad in Spain

Earn three hours of credit while exploring one of the most picturesque cities in Spain. The Kentucky Institute for International Studies (KIIS) and ECU are offering a Psychology course during a two week 2014 May Session in Segovia Spain. The class will be called Introduction to Developmental Psychology and will cover core concepts of human development throughout the lifespan. Because we will be learning in Spain, we will also focus on the cultural aspects of development, including how Spanish culture may be influential. Our classroom will be in the beautiful and historic Plaza Mayor of Segovia. We will also travel to Madrid and other locations to live in and learn directly from our experiences. You do not need to speak Spanish to take this course. All instruction will be provided in English. If you are familiar with the Spanish language at any level, it will be a fun opportunity to practice and learn more. The dates of the program are May 10- May 24th. The cost (\$1795.00) includes tuition, ground transportation, room, and three meals a day. The class schedule allows us to have good in-classroom learning time as well as time for you to read and study on your own or just to explore your surroundings.



Psi Chi and Psychology Club Update

Psi Chi/Psychology Club have been extremely active since the last issue of Psy Q. Last year they had record attendance numbers for their meetings, fundraisers, community service events, and social events, and they are continuing to see an increase this year. This year they have already held two community service events, two fundraisers, and a social event. They expect to see an increased number in conference presentations as well.

New Fall 2011 Psi Chi Members:

Bridgette Allen	Jeremy Gibson	Whitney Peters
Amanda Chandler	Robert Hardin	Hella Robbins
Dustin Griffin	Sabrina McCain	Spencer Wardlow
Brittany Ford	Kelsey Roberts	
Jesse Jobe	Jessica Stout	
Amanda Renfro	Jennifer Wilson	
Michelle Rossi	Kayla Burdine	
Cassie Whitt	Jennifer Duke	
Cheyanna Boggs	Makenzie Feiler	
Ashlee Davis	Jason Hays	

New Psy Club Members:

Kasey Carlson	Emily Thomas
Megan Fuller	Karissa Anderson
Veronica Huddle	Robert Crockett
Brittany McDaniel	Jake Henry
Stephanie Sowders	Mary Mattingly
Rebecca Alsip	William Richards
Deshay Cooper	Sarah Turner
Kari Goodrow	Heather Bullock
Lauren Long	Brian Huybers
Steven Osborne	Rachel Marriman
Christian Toelke	Rachel Wireman

Dr. Emily Lykins Awarded Grant

Dr. Emily Lykins was recently awarded a grant from Eastern Kentucky University's Regional Stewardship Program. These awards are designed to promote effective stewardship of and community engagement in the 22-county, southeastern Kentucky service region from which ECU has primarily drawn its student body. With this grant, Dr. Lykins will provide multiple offerings of an 8-week psychotherapeutic workshop called Mindfulness-Based Strengths Practice (MBSP; Niemiec, 2013), which integrates education and practice in mindfulness and positive psychology/character strengths, to caregivers of individuals with dementia.

In 2012, the Alzheimer's Association determined that there are over 250,000 Kentuckians providing over 300 million hours of dementia-related unpaid care each year. Those providing care to family members, often spouses or parents, experience unusual demands and stress including emotional stress, financial strain, family strain, depression, and personal health difficulties. Based on basic research showing that use of character strengths results in reduced distress and increased overall well-being and applied research providing strong evidence that mindfulness-based interventions improve both psychological and physical health, it is anticipated that this program will result in beneficial changes for participants. While the MBSP program is a newly developed program that has not been examined in the caregiver population specifically, there is preliminary evidence that its specific combination of teaching about and providing opportunities to practice mindfulness and character strengths is beneficial in boosting well-being, engagement, purpose, and positive relationships in the program's participants (Niemiec, 2013).

With the assistance of Talia Bryant, Dr. Lykins will offer the MBSP program for free to caregivers with the goal to foster their ability to live the best life possible, even in the face of quite challenging circumstances. Dr. Lykins and Ms. Bryant received specialized training in character strengths from the VIA institute, a nonprofit institute focused on advancing the science and practice of character, in preparation for offering the MBSP program. (Continued on p. 5)

(Continued from p.4)

One offering of the MBSP program was successfully completed in Madison County in October, and two additional offerings in the service region will be provided in the Spring semester. While the original cohort of participants reported great appreciation and perceived benefits from the program, Dr. Lykins will be systematically and empirically evaluating the impact of program participation on things like psychological well-being and symptoms.

Ms. Piggy Returns to Department as Copier Czarina

After having left the ECU Psychology Department a couple of years ago, Ms. Piggy has returned. During her two years away, Ms. Piggy said that she was inspired by our own highly esteemed department chair, Pierre, to try her luck in France. While there, she became the editor of a high-end fashion magazine. However, the work-life balance was too difficult to maintain once she reunited with Kermit. She decided it was time to come back to the department this fall and take charge of a newly installed copier. Everyone in the department can see some subtle changes to Ms. Piggy's demeanor as she has decorated the copy area with a variety of unique animal paintings. We are glad Ms. Piggy is back and the copier has never run so smoothly.



Autism Certificate Students Conduct Training



On July 20, 2013 in the Perkins complex, Dr. Myra Beth Bundy and ECU Psychology Graduate students Kelsey Giurgevich, Nicole Wozniak, and Katibeth Lygrand, conducted a one day training for physicians on behalf of the Centers for Disease Control ACT Early for Autism campaign. These three students are also completing the ECU Autism Spectrum Certificate program.

Alumni Spotlight - Emmy Durall

Emmy Durall completed her specialist training in the School Psychology program in 2010 and worked for ECU as an adjunct instructor. Below are a few words from Emmy about what she has been up to recently.

After obtaining my Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology at the University of Kentucky and my Masters in Science in General Psychology and Specialist of Psychology degree in School Psychology at Eastern Kentucky University, I began working in the public schools as a School Psychologist. I completed my internship from 2009-2010 at Nelson County Schools in Bardstown, Kentucky and continued my employment for an additional year. I ended my employment at Nelson County Schools in 2011 to pursue other opportunities within the field of School Psychology. Beginning in January 2012, I began working as an Adjunct Instructor at Eastern Kentucky University instructing *Introduction to Psychology* courses and facilitating an online course. For a short period of time, March 2012 to June 2012, I worked as an Instructional Assistant in School Psychology in Jessamine County. I ended my employment at Eastern Kentucky University in May 2013 to pursue my Doctorate of Philosophy in School Psychology at the University of Tennessee.

As a student working to obtain my Doctorate of Philosophy in School Psychology at the University of Tennessee, my short-term goals are to gain additional knowledge into the field of school psychology. Through a graduate assistantship, I hope to gain practical, hands-on experience in the research field. From



the previous experience working as a School Psychologist, most of my research interests stem from observed obstacles concerning wrap-around care in the public school system. I am interested in participating in research concerning communication between home, school, and outside agencies to provide all around support for students with and without special education needs. I am also interested in the culture and climate of school districts regarding Special Education. I have interest in Autism Spectrum Disorders and the integration of Applied Behavior Analysis techniques into the general education classroom.

With the University of Tennessee, I hope to achieve both my short-term goals of earning my Doctorate of Philosophy in School Psychology and my long-term goals of working as a Professor of School Psychology at a university. I would like to help facilitate the love of learning and working with children in students hoping to pursue a career as a School Psychologist. I would also like the opportunity to continue to work in the public school systems as a School Psychologist. In addition to these goals, I would like to work in a private school psychological services setting.

Eastern Kentucky University

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Let's Hear from Alumni

We love to hear from our alumni. After a rough past couple of years in publishing the PsyQ, we want to know what you have been up to so that we can expand our alumni update section in the PsyQ. Please send us your updates by e-mailing Dan Florell at dan.florell@eku.edu. You can also submit your updates to Dan Florell by accessing the Psychology Department at www.psychology.eku.edu. This page will provide you with an Alumni link where the Alumni Questionnaire is located.