



# EKU Department Psychology Newsletter

Eastern Kentucky  
University

Fall 2014

**Inside this issue:**

**New Psy. D Program Comes to EKU!**

The University’s newly-approved Psy.D. program in Clinical Psychology, designed to prepare psychology practitioners, will focus on preparing practitioners to work in underserved rural areas when it launches in Fall 2015. The curriculum will provide opportunities for specialized training in substance abuse, mental health administration, school-based mental health, suicide risk assessment and prevention, and working with traditionally underserved populations. Additional specialized training opportunities will include forensic psychology and applied behavior analysis.

This will be the first practice-oriented Psy.D. program at a public university in Kentucky. Spalding University in Louisville offers the only other Psy.D. program in the Commonwealth; the University of Kentucky and University of Louisville offer research-oriented Ph.D. degrees in the field.

In its 2009 Grading the States report, the National Alliance on Mental Illness gave Kentucky’s mental health system, along with four other states, an “F.” “There is a great need for clinical psychologists, particularly in rural areas,” said Dr. Dustin Wygant, director of clinical training, who will head the program. “The specialization in rural mental health will prepare graduates to work in the areas experiencing the greatest need for mental health services. In addition, the program will increase the number of qualified doctoral-level supervisors required by Kentucky law to oversee the practice of master’s level psychologists. The scarcity of doctoral-level supervisors has been a significant problem for rural mental health agencies for many years.”

The program builds on EKU’s long-standing and highly successful master’s degree program in clinical psychology, which likewise has a long history of preparing students to provide behavioral health care services in traditionally underserved regions. The doctoral students will benefit from many partnerships the Department of Psychology already enjoys with sites providing practicum and internship opportunities.

The program and its students will also benefit from the guidance and support of a Psy.D. Program Advisory Board comprised of professionals representing such area agencies, organizations and institutions as the Federal Medical Center, Kentucky Department of Corrections, Pathways Inc., The Adanta Group, Lexington VAMC, Bluegrass Comprehensive Care, Eastern State Hospital and the EKU Counseling Center.

Wygant said the emphasis on rural mental health “will be attractive to students in our region who wish to learn advanced clinical skills and remain in the Commonwealth. Each year between eight and ten graduates of our current M.S. Clinical Psychology program go on to doctoral programs, typically Psy.D. programs. Most have ties to Kentucky and would welcome the opportunity to earn a doctorate at EKU.”

*New Psy. D Program*

*Meet Dr. Moore* 2

*Accomplishments  
Of Faculty* 3

*PASS Program* 3

*Animal Studies* 4

*Online Outstanding  
Senior* 5

*Student Research* 5

*Fellowship Award* 6

*Faculty Research* 6

*Alumni Highlight* 7

*Inner Space Camp* 7

*Keep in Touch* 8

## Dr. Melinda Moore Joins ECU Faculty

Dr. Melinda Moore, Assistant Professor/Licensed Psychologist, Department of Psychology, is new to ECU, having just joined the faculty in August. She currently serves as chairwoman of the Kentucky Suicide Prevention Group.

Dr. Moore holds a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where she also received a master's degree in psychology. She earned these degrees after having worked for a number of years and receiving a bachelor's degree from Ohio State University in Medieval and Renaissance Studies.



## ECU Psychology Department Ice Bucket Challenge



The psychology department joined in on the Ice Bucket Challenge as several faculty and staff participated. The students took to their job of dumping the ice bucket onto their professors with a certain amount of glee. The department passed the challenge to the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's office, the Office of e-Campus Learning, and the Instructional Design Center.

See the live action ice bucket dump - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTBokxrXlik&feature=youtu.be>

## Department of Psychology Hosts Its First Fulbright Scholar in Residence

Dr. Michael Pregowski, an assistant professor at the Warsaw University of Technology in Poland, will spend the 2014-15 academic year on the Richmond campus. While at ECU, he will be involved in a wide range of activities on campus and in the community. Pregowski will teach Introduction to Animal Studies this fall and is planning to teach the Senior Seminar in the Spring. He will also be conducting research on pet cemeteries, exotic pet-keeping and coping strategies of animal shelter personnel, all from a cross-cultural perspective.

Pregowski, whose research interests include animal studies and the sociology of human-canine interactions, will collaborate with ECU faculty colleagues on several research projects as well as involve ECU students in his work, training them in how to collect and analyze data. Beyond his teaching and research, he will be speaking to ECU student and community groups and to students at Model Laboratory School.

## Faculty Accomplishments

Two of the psychology faculty have received new positions and awards. Dr. Gore (right) has accepted the position of the Director of Undergraduate Research at EKU. Fortunately he will remain in the Psychology Department half-time and will keep his office in the Cammack Building. The department has benefitted as it recently hosted an undergraduate poster session the hallowed hallways of Cammack.



Dustin Wygant (left) is the 2015 recipient of the Society for Personality Assessment Samuel J. and Anne G. Beck Award. This Award is bestowed annually for outstanding early career research in the field of personality assessment. SPA is the premier professional organization in Dustin's area of research and this award is a big deal. Some of the previous Beck Award winners are among the biggest names in personality assessment research, including John Exner, Charles Spielberger (of state-trait anxiety fame), Irving Weiner, Lee Cronbach (of Cronbach's alpha fame). Dustin won a similar award from another professional organization a couple of years ago.



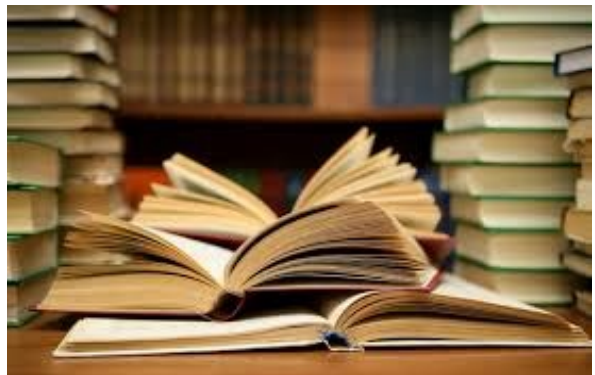
## New Teaching Enhancement Coordinator Position in the Psychology Department

The Department has created a new position, the Teaching Enhancement Coordinator (or TEC) whose job is to help our faculty improve their teaching. Dr. Matthew Winslow will be the inaugural TEC, starting this year. Dr. Winslow will lead workshops about new technology and various teaching techniques, keep the faculty up on the emerging trends in higher education, and consult with individual faculty. For example, Dr. Winslow will lead a workshop for faculty about how to make videos more engaging by adding interactive elements to them. Dr. Winslow has also created the Pedagogy Exchange, where faculty can submit teaching resources that they have created that they believe are especially creative, innovative, and effective. These resources will be shared with all the faculty in the Department so that we can all benefit from the hard work and expertise of our dedicated faculty.



## Psychology PASS Program Reaches Milestone

In only its' second year of operation, the Psychology Department's tutoring program (PASS) reached a milestone by being recognized as a College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) Certified tutoring center. CRLA is an international organization of student-oriented professionals active in the fields of reading, learning assistance, developmental education, tutoring, and mentoring at the college/adult level. This certification exemplifies the efforts of the department to provide support to all psychology students. It is also highlights the efforts of Dr. Ramey and the department's student tutors to provide the best support possible. So, make sure to take full advantage of the PASS program. Encourage your students to seek help.



## Animal Enrichment at ECU

Eastern Kentucky University students got up close and personal with 11 chimpanzees at the Primate Rescue Center in Nicholasville this summer. Dr. Radhika Makecha, assistant professor of psychology at ECU, taught a three-credit summer course about animal enrichment to seven animal-studies and psychology majors.

When animals are enclosed, like at a zoo or a farm, much of their natural behavior is lost, Dr. Makecha explained. Her students are keeping animals mentally and physically stimulated by providing them with specific objects and interaction, and observing the results of that stimulation.

The idea for the course, which is in its first year, came from a discussion between Dr. Makecha and psychology department chair Dr. Robert Brubaker. Students spent the first half of the course studying animal enrichment and researching the behavior of different species. In weeks five and six, they began designing objects for their species, in addition to data sheets. The final weeks of the course are designated for traveling to regional facilities such as the Louisville Zoo, where the students observed lions; and ECU's Meadowbrook Farms, where they observed pigs.

## Studying Abroad in the Psychology Department

For the first time at Eastern Kentucky University, the Psychology Department is now offering a Study Abroad course (PSY 497) on Cetacean Behavior, Cognition, and Ecology. The course has two components: 1) an 8 week spring seminar and 2) a field portion where the class spends 12 nights on the island of Bimini in The Bahamas. While in Bimini, students get to actively participate in wild dolphin research as well as swim near them in the water! The course, which will run for the first time in Spring/Summer 2015, is offered jointly through the Dolphin Communication Project (DCP), headed by Dr. Kathleen Dudzinski, and Eastern Kentucky University via Dr. Radhika Makecha. Dr. Dudzinski is the Editor of the scientific journal, *Aquatic Mammals*, and starred in the IMAX documentary: *Dolphins*.



## EKU Animal Studies Club brings 'Zoo To You'



Brady Wahl watches as Joseph Kilby holds a raccoon pelt during the "Zoo To You" event presented by the ECU Animal Studies Program. The children were encouraged to wear Halloween costumes.

During three hours of activities, the children interacted with a dog provided by the Lexington Humane Society and made animal stuffed toys from recycled material. They also got to feel wild animal pelts and participated in a craft time, face painting and learned about wild life management.

"The animal studies club is relatively new here at ECU, and one of the only ones in the country," said Radhika Makecha, the club's faculty adviser said. "We put on the day camp to raise money outside of our normal bake sales and to teach kids about the importance of animals and our interactions with them."



## Online Student Named ECU Psychology “Outstanding Senior”

Going back to school was not an easy decision, but it’s paying large dividends for Miranda Sturgill who decided, after being laid off from her job in 2011, it was time for a change. Now, as graduation approaches, Sturgill has a lot to celebrate, including being the first online student to receive her department’s Outstanding Senior Award.

Each spring, ECU’s Department of Psychology selects approximately 10 students to receive the award. This year, out of an estimated 800 majors, 175 of them were seniors, making the award extremely competitive. Students are nominated by faculty members, and winners are selected based on academic performance and involvement within the department.

“Miranda always worked very hard on her assignments, and it was clear that she thought very carefully about them,” said Professor of Psychology Dr. Matthew Winslow. “I know that she had many things competing for her attention, so I was very impressed by her dedication to her academic work. She was a pleasure to have in my classes.”

Sturgill is quick to highlight the accessibility and interest of ECU’s psychology faculty as an important factor in her success. As for Sturgill’s advice to other students, “When questions are hard, remember that the answers have been given to you in your materials. Don’t hesitate to ask questions, or to contact your professors and facilitators for help. They want to see you succeed as much as you do.”

Consistently recognized among the nation’s best online degree programs, ECU strives to make quality education accessible to everyone. ECU is an accredited, brick-and-mortar institution celebrating more than 100 years of student success. ECU Online offers more than 25 undergraduate and graduate degree options in a variety of fields, representing Arts and Sciences, Education, Justice and Safety, and Health Sciences.

## Student Research Accomplishments

Jennifer Watjen, Heather Clark, and Lana Dezarn are three examples of what our psychology majors can accomplish in their time at ECU. All three have co-authored different journal articles with Dr. Robert Mitchell. These include:

- Mitchell, R. W., & Clark, H. (In press). Experimenter's pantomimes influence children's use of body part as object and imaginary object pantomimes: A replication. *Journal of Cognitive Development*.
- Mitchell, R. W., & Dezarn, L. (2014). Does knowing why someone is gay influence tolerance? Genetic, environmental, choice and "reparative" explanations. *Sexuality & Culture*.
- Mitchell, R. W., & Sinkhorn, K. (2014). Why do humans laugh during dog-human play interactions? *Anthrozoös*.

An update on what the three students have done since graduating from ECU as Psychology majors:

**Jennifer Watjen** (left) - completed her master's degree in clinical psychology at Roosevelt University and is currently working as a residential counselor at a nonprofit, Rice Child & Family Center. Currently, she’s applying to PhD programs in counseling and community psychology, while also finishing the licensure process to become a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC).

**Heather Clark** (right) - works for the Cabinet for Health and Family Services as an Ongoing Social Service Worker.

**Lana Dezarn** (center) - is applying to UK College of Law for the coming fall.



## EKU GRADUATE STUDENT EARNS PRESTIGIOUS RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP AWARD

Competing mostly against doctoral students from better-known schools, a master's degree-seeking student at Eastern Kentucky University recently earned a prestigious psychology research award.

Second-year Clinical Psychology student, Chelsea Sleep of Louisville, was awarded the 2014 Student Research Fellowship Award from Section IX (Assessment Psychology) of the Society of Clinical Psychology (American Psychological Association Division 12) for her proposal.



Competing proposals came from a variety of other universities. Only one other student had not yet completed a master's degree.

"Awards like this are typically only won by students in Ph.D. programs," said Dr. Dustin Wygant, associate professor of psychology, director of clinical training and Sleep's mentor. "This award says you can get strong research training and mentorship at EKU. Some of our graduate students are producing top-quality research that is making it into the scientific literature."

Sleep attributed her success to her faculty mentors, both at the University of Kentucky, where she earned her undergraduate degree, and at EKU. Sleep, who boasts a perfect 4.0 GPA in her graduate classes, has already first-authored two research presentations at national conferences and is in the process of completing two research manuscripts to submit for peer-reviewed publication.

## Faculty Research

### Familial Tethering, University Connectedness, and the Appalachian Student

Dr. Jonathan Gore, Amanda Renfro (General Psychology graduate student), Eric Muncie (School Psychology graduate students) and Dr. Wilson completed a study in which they investigated the role of familial tethering in sense of belonging of Appalachian students at EKU.

Amanda developed and coined the term familial tethering, and it is defined as the pressure to frequently return home that is commonly felt by EKU students from the Central Appalachian region of Kentucky. It was found that students from Central Appalachia are more likely than students who are not from an Appalachian county to experience familial tethering. This in turn predicted less connectedness to the university, and indirectly predicted negative academic outcomes. They concluded that promoting connectedness to the university while allowing students of Appalachian origin to maintain their connection to their families should be a goal of universities with high numbers of Appalachian students.



Dr. Adam Lawson (above) displays his big brain during Halloween. See kids, if you study neuroscience your brain will

## Alumni Highlight - Andrew Davis

“I graduated spring 2011 and little while to find a job with my psychology degree. It took awhile but I was able to find a job with a behavioral hospital in Owensboro, KY. River Valley takes in and works with kids with behavioral problems. Many of the kids experienced abuse and neglect, and/or have special needs. Very often these things overlap. I got on in 2013 as a Mental Health Associate (MHA) working in group homes for kids who have been hospitalized and who are working their way to going back home. I recently transferred to the main hospital as an ABA line therapist where I am working with kids with severe autism.” -Andrew Davis

## Inner Space Camp Explore the Workings of the Mind



The psychology department hosted the third annual Inner Space Camp in June, and it was a resounding success! Twenty five campers from across the United States attended and discovered a wide range of topics in psychology from Forensic to Neuropsychology to IO. Campers dissected sheep brains, met with local therapy dogs, interviewed a psychopath, and hunted for the Blue Lady in Keene Johnson. In addition to our campers, we had eleven of our top psychology students participating as counselors—including four returnees and one graduate student! A terrific time was had by all. We can't wait for the next one!

## Clinical Psychology Students Enjoy the Fall with President Benson

Dr. Moore, the 2<sup>nd</sup>-year clinical students, and President Benson frolicking in the leaves in front of Cammack.





**Eastern Kentucky University**

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### **Let's Hear from Alumni**

We love to hear from our alumni. 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](mailto:dan.florell@eku.edu). You can also submit your updates to Dan Florell by accessing the Psychology Department at [www.psychology.eku.edu](http://www.psychology.eku.edu). This page will provide you with an Alumni link where the Alumni Questionnaire is located.