



# EKU Department Psychology Newsletter

Eastern Kentucky  
University

**Spring 2018**

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## Living With Animals Conference and Update

The Animal Studies (ANS) program is thriving at ECU, with 92 majors. The ANS Club President, Jordan Johnson, involved students in several functions, including the Adopt-a-thon at PetSmart, tours of the Kentucky Reptile Zoo and the Cincinnati Zoo (including a sleepover), and learning about training dogs for disabled children. Animal Studies students worked with Dr. Stephanie McSpirit in Sociology and members of the Appalachian Horse Project to complete a population count of free roaming horses in eastern Kentucky. This project will continue this summer, with students traveling to the Elk Viewing Site in Breathitt County to catalogue the largest known herd in eastern Kentucky, and drafting a paper on developing best practices for monitoring these horse herds. Dr. McSpirit has also engaged other Animal Studies students to collect oral histories this summer concerning the Kentucky mountain horse or "Kentucky Saddler." Animal Studies graduate Lyndsey Alexander recently published with Dr. Mitchell her research on dogs' responses to human pointing during dog-human play, and Dr. Makecha received an ECU grant to study in India how people's learning about elephant psychology influences their attitudes toward elephant conservation. Over winter term, Dr. Benjamin Freed in Anthropology gave Animal Studies students hands-on experience studying lemurs at the Duke University Lemur Center.

ECU had its third Living with Animals conference in March 2017, with the theme of Co-existence. The 4-day conference included a day and a half devoted to "Seeing with Animals," which focused on art and animals, and a day devoted to "Living with Horses." Conference attendees from around the world discussed

a diversity of topics related to animals. Keynote addresses concerned the art of early animal advocacy campaigns (Keri Cronin), human-squirrel "entanglements" throughout history (Brett Mizelle), social practices of grief and commemoration around animals (Michal Pregowski), the philosophy of animal art (Steve Baker), and the future history of primate sanctuaries in the US (April Truitt). Animal Studies students met with researchers and scholars in their areas of interest, and presented posters about their own work. The next Living with Animals conference will be in March 2019.

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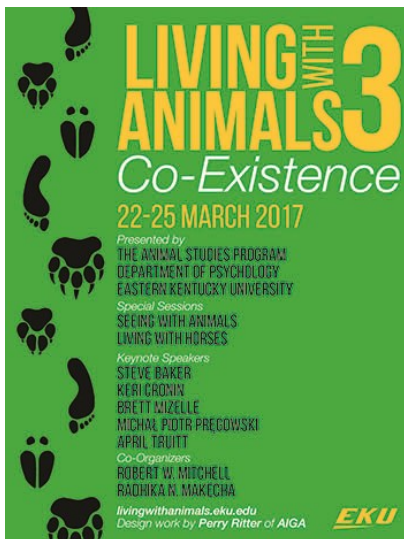
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## Bundy Receives Ronald J. Cutter Professional Service Award

Dr. Myra Beth Bundy recently received the 2018 Ronald J. Cutter Professional Service Award presented by the Arc of Kentucky, a group that advocates for the rights of citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



But she would “rather focus on the achievements of the individuals with whom she has been fortunate enough to work.”

In presenting Dr. Bundy with the award, Sherri Brothers, executive director of the Arc of Kentucky, said Dr. Bundy has “demonstrated the highest standards” in her work ethic, integrity, level of responsibility and commitment. The ECU professor, she added, has “provided significant support and services that have contributed to the development of individuals

with intellectual and other related disabilities. This award is a way of saying thank you so much for all your hard work and contribution.”

Dr. Bundy coordinates the ECU Developmental Disabilities Specialty Clinic, which provides opportunities for graduate students to work with children, adolescents and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other developmental disabilities. She collaborated with ECU faculty from psychology, occupational therapy, communication disorders and special education to create and coordinate the ECU Autism Spectrum Disorder Certificate Program, and works with Eastern students to conduct outcome research related to a variety of themed therapy groups for adults on the autism spectrum.

She serves on the Arc board and collaborates with it and other community agencies to provide educational opportunities, services and opportunities for individuals with special developmental needs.

While Dr. Bundy was proud of her accomplishments she had this to state for works of the future, “I want my students to keep trying, to keep going at whatever task they have taken up in the field of developmental disabilities and autism, whether it be achieving an evaluation that someone needs to obtain services, teaching a new skill, understanding a concerning behavior, and so on. I want my students to enjoy and respect the individuals with whom they work.”

## Psy D. Program Update & MMPI Presentation

The 2017 – 2018 academic year has been a busy one for the Psy.D. program! The program continues to grow and we have 50 students across 5 cohorts, with our most advanced cohort currently on internship. Students from this cohort will be participating in the May Commencement Ceremony, where they will receive their doctoral hoods! We have 12 incoming post-baccalaureate students coming in August to join the program as first year students, along with two advanced students coming in with their master's degree.

This summer, six students will embark on their final year of training on internship. Their internship experiences will take them to Akron, Ohio; Lexington, Kentucky; Phoenix, AZ; West Lafayette, Indiana; Gallipolis, Ohio; and Greeley, Colorado.

With respect to APA Accreditation, this past year has brought nearly to the finishing line. The program submitted our self-study back in May of 2017, which was reviewed favorably by APA last July. They were granted their first site visit, which occurred over a two-day period in November. The site visit included meetings with program faculty, students from each cohort, and university administrators. The site visitors provided feedback at the end of the second day, which was very positive. The APA Commission on Accreditation reviewed the program in April of 2018 and we were granted *Accredited on Contingency* status, which means that we are accredited but need to show outcome data on graduates within three years.

### EKU Students and Alumni Present at the 53rd Annual Symposium on Recent MMPI Research

EKU Department of Psychology was well-represented at the annual research symposium for the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) in Hollywood Beach, Florida. Dr. Dustin Wygant is the co-chair for the research symposium, which included two days of research presentations and a keynote address by prominent personality disorder expert, Dr. Christopher Hopwood (UC Davis). Students and alumni from ECU were prominently featured during the event, including a presentation by Dr. Jaime Anderson (Sam Houston State University, 2011 graduate alumna), on her risk assessment research. ECU alumna Jessica Tylicki (currently working on her PhD at Kent State University) presented her research on the association of psychopathy and suicide. Current ECU doctoral students, Katie Mooney, Brian Keller, Megan Semenick, and Haley Ingram presented two studies on assessing psychopathy and personality disorders with the

MMPI. Incoming ECU doctoral student Taylor Chille (University of California at Monterey Bay) presented research on assessing inconsistent responding with the MMPI. Taylor will be joining the doctoral program in the fall of 2018.



Photo caption: From Left to Right: Dr. Jaime Anderson (EKU alum, currently Assistant Professor at Sam Houston State University), Taylor Chille (incoming Psy.D. student), Haley Ingram (1st year student), Dr. Dustin Wygant, Brian Keller (1st year student), Meghan Semenick (1st year student), Katie Mooney (3rd year student), Jessica Tylicki (EKU alum, currently Ph.D. student at Kent State University).

## Graduate Students Present Research at OCALICON 2018



EKU Clinical Psy.D. students in psychology and Master's students in Occupational Therapy attended the 2018 Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence Disabilities Annual Conference in Columbus, Ohio, with professors Dr. Myra Bundy and Dr. Shirley O'Brien. Students presented research posters related to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and attended sessions featuring strategies for mood regulation in ASD (Incredible 5 point scale), social skills training, and other educational/social emotional intervention and support strategies.

## OCALICON 2018

### Tele-Clinic

Dr. Michael McClellan, an assistant professor in the department, is excited to announce the creation of a new Tele-clinic that will begin offering cutting-edge mental health services to ECU students, faculty/staff members and their dependents, as well as community members located in the Corbin and Manchester areas during the fall of 2018. The Corbin and Manchester communities are designated mental health provider shortage areas with a growing need for quality mental health services. The new Tele-clinic will operate out of the existing departmental psychology clinic in Richmond and will provide telepsychology services to patients in offices located at our ECU regional campuses in Corbin and Manchester. Advanced ECU clinical psychology doctoral students will provide a wide range psychotherapy services through a secure, HIPAA-compliant videoconferencing connection under the supervision of licensed ECU clinical psychology faculty members. The ECU clinical psychology doctoral program has a rural mental health emphasis and all doctoral students receive specialized training in providing service to rural populations and telehealth. This training experience will provide our doctoral students with real-world skills and experience that will better-prepare them for service in rural communities after graduation and will allow us to fill a huge gap in mental health services present in these rural communities.



## NAMI Visits the Capital



On February 15, 2018, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) at ECU Club attended the NAMI Kentucky Legislative Day Rally at the State Capitol. The group met with State Representative Jill York (R-Grayson) before the rally to discuss rural mental health issues. Dr. Sheila Shuster, well-known advocate for psychology and mental health issues, met with the group in the Capitol Rotunda. Decriminalizing mental illness, helping gain independence for people with mental illness, and increasing access to mental health care were legislative priorities areas for the day.

NAMI at ECU strives to raise mental health awareness within the campus community, address mental health needs of ECU students to promote positive college experiences, work to eliminate the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and help prevent suicide. If you are interested in joining this group contact Dr. Melinda Moore via email ([Melinda.moore@eku.edu](mailto:Melinda.moore@eku.edu)) or feel free to check out their Facebook page, NAMI at ECU.



## PASS Program



The Psychology Academic Support Services (PASS) program offers free tutoring in psychology courses. The PASS lab is located in the Cammack Building Basement, near the research rooms, and is usually open for walk-ins Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Appointments can be made by emailing Dr. Wickersham ([andrea.wickersham@eku.edu](mailto:andrea.wickersham@eku.edu)), or by visiting the lab. Our tutors consist of upper level psychology majors. Some of them specialize in certain courses such as 250, 309, 310, and 311. Other tutors can help with general study skills and test-taking tips.

## EEG Lab Update & Research Conference

Dr. Adam Lawson's Psychophysiology Lab has been very active during the 2017-2018 academic year. There are two projects in the data collection phase. One study is examining sensation seeking, drug use, and recognition memory. High sensation seekers are more likely to initially use and abuse illicit drugs, and this research will help us understand the memory mechanisms affected by drug use. Another project is a senior thesis with Morgan Price that is examining brain mechanisms of deceptive versus nondeceptive individuals when dealing with inaccurate information. Several studies are almost ready for data collection, including a study in collaboration with Dr. Lane in the Exercise and Sports Science department that will examine healthy eating habits. Also, Drs. Lawson and Florell are collaborating on a study that is looking at brain effects of bullying behavior in a Facebook platform. Dr. Lawson and student Megan Hurley are also setting up the lab to analyze cortisol from saliva. Cortisol is a stress hormone, and they plan on adding this physiological measure to their current physiological techniques available at ECU. Last, but not least, the addition of graduate student, Paul Sanford, has been helpful in making all of these projects feasible, and his Thesis will investigate the neuroscience of voluntary movement by comparing EEG activity with reports of conscious intention. At least three students/groups will be attending conferences and/or seeking publication in Fall 2018. During the summer, Dr. Lawson will be developing a study to investigate the use of deception during a gambling-style game.

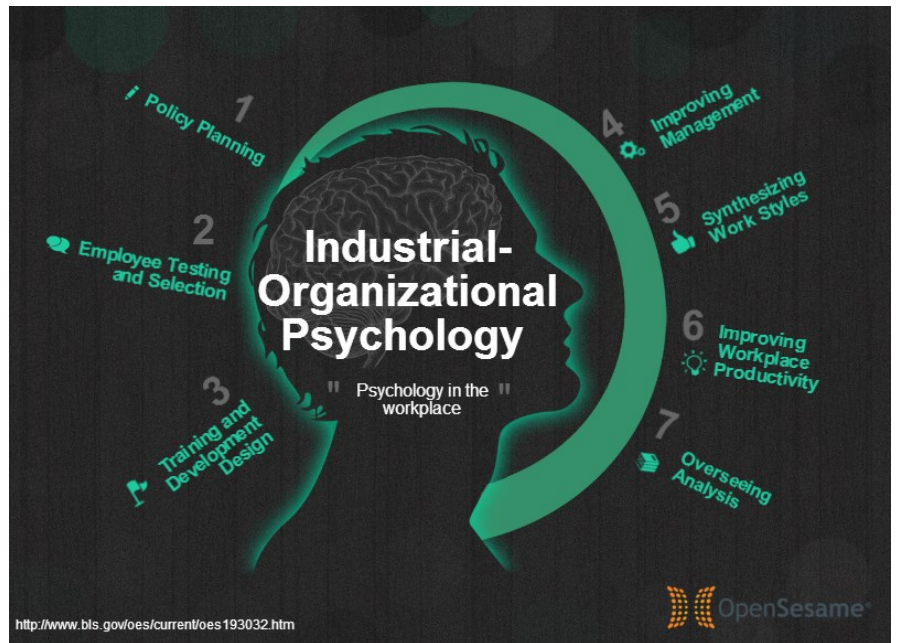


On April 21, Dr. Lawson and eight lab members attended the Mid-America Undergraduate Psychology Research Conference at Eastern Illinois University. Bailey McGuffin, Madison Rucker, Cole Plouvier, Amanda Kute, Jackson O'Daniel, Madison Major, and Paul Sanford presented two different posters for the ongoing sensation seeking study. Nicole King, who is collaborating with Morgan Price on her thesis, presented a poster with some of their preliminary findings.

## I-O Program identified as SIOP #15 Masters Program

The master's degree program in Industrial-Organizational Psychology at Eastern Kentucky University ranks among the nation's best, according to two recent articles published by the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP).

One of these articles ranks the ECU program 18th overall out of 69 such programs providing data, scoring 12<sup>th</sup> on faculty experience and 17<sup>th</sup> on student accomplishment. In another SIOP survey, Eastern ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in student perceptions of program culture and 12<sup>th</sup> in both student satisfaction and student perception of program resources.



“Our program curriculum is designed to align with SIOP Guidelines for Education and Training in Industrial Organizational Psychology, and we strive to provide a high-quality academic and professional experience for our students,” said Dr. Jaime Henning, coordinator of the master's degree program in I-O Psychology. “What stands out to me more than our overall ranking based on objective outcomes is our rankings based on student perceptions. What these ratings indicate about our program is that students perceive we have a positive, supportive program culture, and provide them with the resources necessary to be successful students and professionals.”

The SIOP rankings were based on data from ECU's on-campus program. “Our program is unique in the world of I-O Psychology master's programs in that we have transitioned to a fully online program,” Henning noted. “I believe this demonstrates our initiative and dedication to engaging a wider audience of prospective students who are seeking a high-quality graduate-level education in I-O Psychology. The faculty in our program are confident we can continue to promote a positive, supportive culture in our online program.”

The online degree provides schedule flexibility and features identical or similar classes, taught by the same professors as the on-campus program. By providing this degree online it allows ECU to meet the needs of working adults who may have many other obligations. Although, there are several “traditional” students who entered the program upon completion of their undergraduate degree.

Twenty-nine students are currently enrolled in the program, which is also ranked among the 25 Best Online Master's in Psychology Degree Programs.

## Student Researchers Shine at Conference

Every year, several students present their research projects as posters at the annual Kentucky Psychological Foundation (KPF) Spring Academic Conference and at the University Presentation Showcase (UPS). Often, the KPF conference is held at a neighboring university, but this is the first year in a long while that we were able to host it at EKU. The students braved the unseasonably icy weather, donned their professional outfit, and wrapped their posters in plastic bags to present their senior theses, meta analyses, and independent projects. It was inspiring to see the turnout, there were some of our graduate students presenting and more students presenting posters in the undergraduate division than from any other school!



A few weeks later, many of the same students returned to the EKU Library to present their work for the 17th annual UP Showcase. During this event, faculty, graduate and undergraduate students presented their posters from across the disciplines. This event also includes judging of the posters. On occasion, we get to see one of our students win the outstanding poster, but this year Psychology swept the awards. Josh Hansman won the Outstanding Undergraduate Research Project Award, and Derek McClellan won the Outstanding Graduate Poster Award (above picture). Congratulations to all of our students, to the Psychology Department, and to EKU for being the model of top-quality research experiences for students!

## Dr. Chen Wins Innovative Teaching Award

Dr. Michael Chen, a second year Assistant Professor in the Psychology Department, has recently received the 2018 Faculty Innovation Award in Teaching from Eastern Kentucky University. Dr. Chen employs a “Strategic Gaming Teams” strategy in his Statistics-Research Methods course (PSY 309W). The award selection committee was “impressed with Dr. Chen’s combination of creative gaming technology, peer-learning, and flipped classroom design”. Dr. Chen’s research centers on learning technologies and forensic accident investigations. He is currently recruiting undergraduate and graduate students to [join his lab](#).

Dr. Chen’s recent hobbies include watching kids’ basketball and edit-





## General Psychology Program Update

There were four General Psychology Masters students that graduated in 2017. Matthew Moran worked with Dr. Varakin on his thesis, “Going to the movies: Immersion, visual awareness, and memory.” Karrie Adkins completed her research concerned with “Service-learning faculty perceptions,” working with Dr. Osbaldiston. , Two students working with Dr. Botts, completed their theses: Brian Keller, currently in ECU’s Clinical PsyD program, researched “Posttraumatic growth as it relates to family environment”; and Emily Reed studied “The development of mental illness stigma: The role of perceived social support, social proximity, and help-seeking behavior.” Emily Reed also published her co-authored research with Dr. Mitchell and Lyndsey Alexander (an Animal Studies major) on “Functions of pointing by humans, and dogs’ responses, during dog-human play between familiar and unfamiliar players” in the journal *Animal Behavior and Cognition*.

## Library Research Award Winner

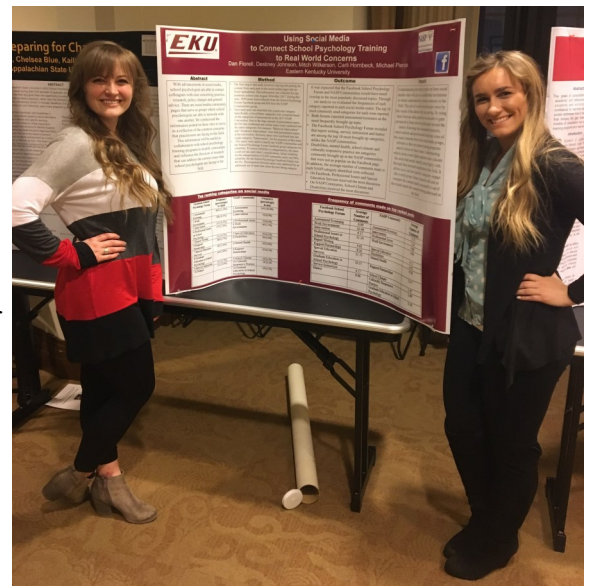
Justice Cundiff’s Honor’s Thesis, “Shakespeare and Psychology: Emotional Intelligence and Machiavellianism in King Lear and Othello”, won second prize – and \$500 - in the Library Research Award for Undergraduates. Justice concluded that Shakespearean villains succeed due to the cooperation of two key factors: Machiavellian personalities and higher levels of emotional intelligence, relative to their protagonist counterparts.

## School Psychology Update

The school psychology program welcomed 10 graduate students to the specialist training program at the beginning of the year. They along with several second year students made a pilgrimage in February to the National Association of School Psychologist annual conference.

In addition, second year students who included Destiney Johnson, Carli Hornbeck (pictured left), Mitch Wilkerson and Michael Pierce presented a poster with Dr. Florell at the Trainers of School Psychologists conference a study on using social media to connect school training to real world concerns. The poster was warmly received.

In the spring, the on-going budget cuts from the state impacted the school psychology program specifically. The specialist program was recommended for suspension and no new graduate students were admitted to the program.



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