



# EKU Department Psychology Newsletter



Summer 2023

Inside this issue:

## Letter from the Outgoing Chair, Dr. Michael Chen

Dear Friends,

As we reach the end of another successful academic year, I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for your support. It has been an incredible academic year, filled with exciting milestones and achievements. I am thrilled to share that we have relaunched our summer Inner Space Camp and relaunched several in-person activities that have been on pause in the past few years due to COVID. Additionally, I am proud to announce that we are welcoming three outstanding full-time faculty members to our department. These accomplishments would not have been possible without your support.

I am writing this newsletter with a mix of emotions, as my tenure as the Chair of the Psychology Department is coming to a close this summer. I have decided to take another position with Kennesaw State University. It has been an absolute privilege and honor to serve as the Chair of the Department. I am delighted to pass the torch to Dr. Jaime Henning, who has graciously accepted the position of Interim Chair. Dr. Jon Gore, our current Associate Chair will continue his role.

As we move forward, I kindly ask for your continued support. Your contributions, be it through financial assistance or any other means, will make a significant difference in the lives of our students at EKU. Together, we can shape a brighter future for them and empower them to achieve their dreams.

With deepest appreciation,  
Michael Chen



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<i>Clinic Update</i>	2
<i>Data Science &amp; Department Activities</i>	3
<i>Inner Space Camp &amp; WALC Event</i>	4
<i>Graduate Program Updates</i>	5
<i>Psi Chi &amp; Animal Studies Updates</i>	7
<i>Introducing New Faculty Members</i>	8
<i>Department Awards</i>	9



## The Psychology Clinic

Our Psychology Clinic has been incredibly active this semester, engaging in various community events and expanding our services. One notable event we participated in was the Madison County Pride Event on June 3, 2023. The event, organized by the LGBTQ+ Commission for the Lexington Diocese, provided an opportunity for us to showcase our Trauma and Suicide Prevention Clinic. During the event, we set up a table and had the privilege of having Mahala Saylor (left), Eliza Laves (middle), and Brianna Jurosic (right) represent our clinic, as shown in the accompanying photo.

Looking ahead to the Fall 2023 semester, we are excited to announce the launch of two new specialty clinics within the ECU Psychology Clinic. These clinics will complement our existing offerings, such as the Trauma and Suicide Prevention Clinic and the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Specialty Clinic. The two new clinics are the Hispanic and Latinx/o Behavioral Health Specialty Clinic and the Black and African American Behavioral Health Specialty Clinic. These additions come in response to the growing need for culturally knowledgeable and responsive behavioral health services, aiming to promote greater equity and effectiveness in our approach.

Our primary mission is to develop and disseminate outreach training, therapy, and assessment services to these specific communities, both locally and across the state of Kentucky. We understand the importance of catering to the unique mental health needs of underserved populations, and we strive to bridge the gap by offering a wide range of outpatient services.



Whether through in-person appointments or Telehealth services, we are committed to providing comprehensive support.

Furthermore, our clinicians undergo specialized training to address concerns related to intergenerational trauma, race-based trauma, and microaggressions. In recognition of the diverse clientele we serve, we have clinicians who are fluent in Spanish in the Hispanic and Latino/x Clinic, ensuring effective communication and understanding.

With these new additions to our clinic, we are better equipped to meet the needs of our community, offering culturally sensitive care and support to individuals who may have previously felt marginalized or overlooked. We remain dedicated to making a positive impact and promoting mental well-being among all individuals, regardless of their background or identity.

## Data Science Initiative

Did you know that the Psychology Department houses a Data Initiative team that offers data analytics support to the campus community? Established in 2019 by Dr. Sara Incera, this program has been instrumental in serving over a thousand individuals. Students, faculty members, and staff can approach the team for assistance with survey, polling, and data analytics requests, all provided free of charge as a service to the EKU community.



The team comprises professors and graduate students from the department, working together to provide expertise and support. Additionally, the initiative prioritizes education, offering valuable training in data analytics to participating graduate students, and equipping them with skills applicable to their future careers.

The impact of the Data Initiative team within our community is noteworthy. Through their dedicated service, they have empowered individuals across campus by harnessing the power of data-driven insights. We are grateful to have such a team in our department, making a positive difference and establishing a legacy of excellence.

## Activities in the Department



The Psychology Department prioritizes student engagement and has implemented a range of initiatives to achieve this goal. Informal social activities, including a movie night and a Valentine's Day event, were organized. These events proved successful, with the addition of a popcorn machine for the movie night and goodie bags created by the Chair's office for the Valentine's Day event.

In addition to these informal activities, the department hosted a senior thesis seminar where more than ten seniors presented their research studies. This seminar provided a platform for students to share their findings and receive feedback from faculty members and peers.

The combination of informal social events and formal teaching activities showcases the department's commitment to fostering a vibrant and inclusive community while also promoting academic engagement and skill development among students.



## Inner Space Camp



Summer 2023 marks the first time we have hosted Inner Space Camp since 2019. A main revision of the camp this year was that we focused on recruiting local high school students instead of students from around the country. The hope is that the local students will be more inclined to choose EKU as their college of choice. A total of 14 campers signed up to camp this year. Students experienced many fun activities, including art design, rock wall climbing, and learning about various fun topics in Psychology.



## WALC event

The Whitlock Autism Learning Center (WALC) held its annual “WALC with us” event on April 29, 2023. This is the second time that the center has hosted this event. Drs. Bundy and Freeman worked with the multidisciplinary WALC team, and graduate assistant Bailey Hull organized the campus event celebrating autism and exploring supports to help people on the spectrum and their families reach their life goals. Psi Chi hosted a table at this event. Pictured in the photo from left to right are Drs. Freeman and Bundy.

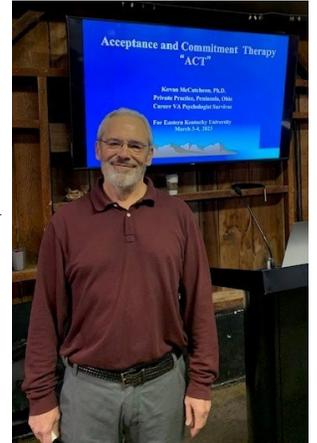


## Graduate Program Update: Clinical Psy.D.



Several exciting events and activities were held by the PsyD program this past year. The PsyD program held a program-wide Acceptance and Commitment Therapy training event for program students, faculty, and external clinical supervisors on March 2 and 3, 2023 at the Arlington Country Club. The training was sponsored by the EKU Psychology Clinic and was conducted by Dr. Kevan McKutcheon (picture on the right).

Another noteworthy event was that students and faculty from the EKU PsyD Program participated in the annual Psychology Day at the Capital Day Event to advocate for suicide prevention, LGBTQIA+ youth, and improving access to mental health services within the state (picture on the left).



## Graduate Program Update: General Psychology Master's Program

Two of our General Master's students are heading to Doctoral programs!

Katelyn McClure has been accepted to the Psychological Sciences program at Kent State University with a concentration in Cognitive Psychology. She will be working with Dr. Philip Hamrick and will mostly be focusing on language processes and how bilingual vs. monolingual individuals process accents and speech.



Katelyn McClure

Aaron Lankster has been accepted to the Applied Social Psychology program at North Carolina State University. She will be working with Dr. Laura Widman in her Teen Health Lab, exploring models and methods for improving sexual health education and access for teens.



Aaron Lankster

## Graduate Program Update: Applied Behavior Analysis & I/O Psychology

The Spring 2023 semester was a busy one for both the ABA program and the I-O Psychology Master's program. Both programs participated in our very first hooding ceremony for the Master's level students.

For the Industrial Organizational Psychology program, twelve new students joined the program this Spring, and 17 students completed their applied capstone projects for organizational clients. Several alumni and current students attended the annual Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology conference held in Boston this past April. Three program graduates presented at the conference and Dr. Henning was able to meet some of our online students and alumni in person for the first time! Drs. Nakai and Henning presented at the 10th annual Pedagogicon Conference held on ECU's Campus in May. The theme of the conference this year was, "Workforce and Employability Skills: Teaching and Learning for Future Careers." Together they presented a session on remote project-based learning, using the consulting project carried out in the program's capstone courses as an example. Dr. Nakai also presented a poster on Confidence in Employable Skills among Undergraduate Psychology Majors." The I-O program is graduating 13 students this Spring and Summer. This brings the total number of graduates from the online I-O program to 108 students! It is always great to meet our online students in person and we were fortunate to have two students attend the first Hooding Ceremony for the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences. Four students were able to join us for the Spring graduation ceremony.



ABA students at the Fall Spring 23 Hooding Ceremony



I-O student Natalie Meader at the hooding ceremony



Program alumni attend the annual I/O Psychology Conference



I/O students at the Spring 23 Graduation Ceremony

### Psi Chi and Psychology Club

Psi Chi was very active this past Spring with fundraisers, volunteering, and get-togethers. The fundraisers included several small but lively events, such as hot cocoa and sticker sales. Students also helped with mental health week and coordinated a potluck to accompany senior thesis poster presentations. Students had several social events and outings, including a board game night, the Louisville Zoo together with the Animal Studies club, and Malibu Jacks in Lexington to end the semester. Last, 30 new Psi Chi members were inducted at the Spring awards ceremony, with 11 additional Psychology Club members.



This year's ceremony was the largest induction ceremony for Psychology in recent times. During the award event, several Psi Chi members received department awards: Hannah Daugherty for Research, Psi Chi President Lauren (Alex) Schott for Service, Colton Grubbs for Writing, and Serena Bruneaux for Academic Achievement. Spring 2023 was a great semester for Dr. Adam Lawson & new President Serena Bruneaux and Psi Chi.

### Animal Studies Program & Animal Studies Club

**ANS CLUB FUNDRAISER  
IN LOWER POWELL**  
Ends @ 5:30

The Animal Studies Program hosted its first in-person Living With Animals conference since COVID in Spring 2023. Many scholars from around the country attended the conference. The club also hosted several in-person activities such as a hot chocolate fundraiser and a dog wash. Overall, the ANS program and the club had a busy and successful Spring semester.



Hot chocolate  
Stickers  
Cookies  
And more!



## Incoming Assistant Professor in I/O Psychology—Dr. Kristen Campbell



Dr. Kristen Campbell is a recent graduate from the University of Cincinnati where she earned her Ph.D. in Psychology with a focus in Community and Organizational Research for Action. She earned both her M.S. and B.S. degrees in Psychology from Georgia Southern University in 2016 & 2014, respectively. Her research interests have varied over the years and include student-faculty relationships, allyship, student success, leadership, diversity, stress, and resilience. Her dissertation investigated women's expectations, reactions, and outcomes of male allyship, and she intends to continue this line of research while at ECU from both a workplace and student perspective, with hopes to enhance student success and better the overall student experience. In her spare time, Kristen enjoys running, hiking, cooking new recipes, and spending time with her family.

## Incoming Assistant Professor in Social Psychology—Dr. Cassie Whitt

Dr. Cassie M. Whitt earned her PhD in experimental psychology (social psychology concentration) from the University of Alabama. Her research primarily focuses on open science and replicability. One line of her research is metascientific in nature and focuses on psychologists' scientific values (e.g., discovering the truth or making a difference) and their impact on the research process. A second line of her research examines whether teaching students about open science and replicability can help to foster critical thinking. If she looks familiar, you may recognize her as "Cosette" – a former student worker in the ECU Psychology Department!



## Incoming Visiting Assistant Professor in Developmental Psychology—Dr. Olivia Smith

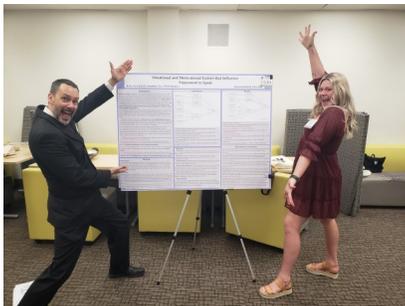


Dr. Olivia Smith graduated from the University of Texas at Dallas with her Doctorate in Developmental Psychology. Her research interests lie in how family relationships impact children's socioemotional development. Dr. Smith has served as part of the International Affairs Committee as the Student & Early Career Council representative for the Society for Research in Child Development from 2017 - 2021, and continues to be an active member of relevant professional organizations. Dr. Smith looks forward to working at Eastern Kentucky University and bringing her teaching and research experiences into her lectures as well as finding ways to collaborate with her colleagues.

## Department Awards and Honors



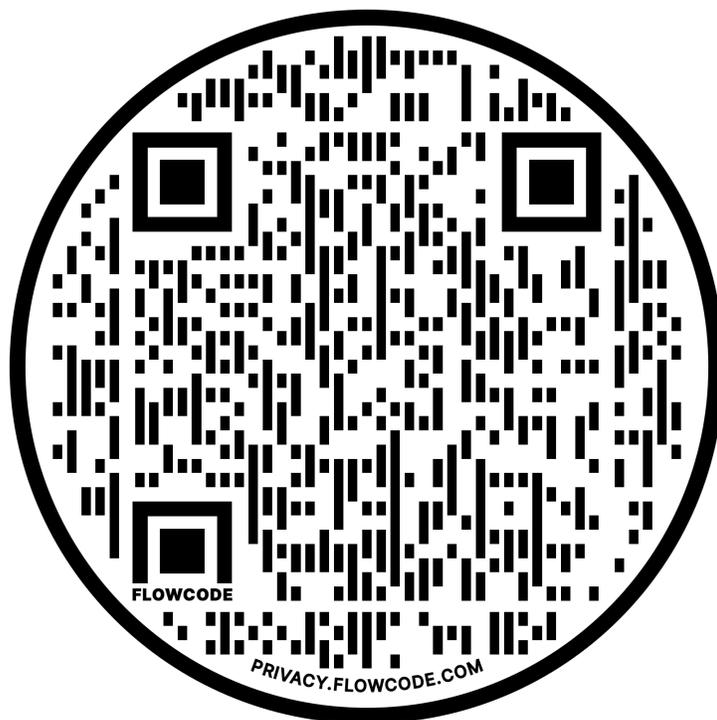
Dr. Dustin Wygant was named Fellow in the American Psychology-Law Society, Division 41 of the American Psychological Association.



The 2023 Kentucky Psychological Foundation Student Mentoring Conference was hosted at ECU and it was a big success! Dr. Jonathan Gore received the Outstanding Mentor Award for the Undergraduate Division. Keiley Sewell won first place and Hannah Daugherty tied for second place in the undergraduate poster competition. Serena Bruneaux won first place in the emerging research poster competition. All in all, there were six undergraduate posters, one graduate poster, and seven emerging research posters. These projects were mentored by a total of ten of our faculty!

Dr. Sara Incera (pictured right) is the recipient of the 2023 Scholarly and Creative Achievement Award.





Donate to ECU Psychology

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