



PSYCHOLOGY MATTERS



SU Psychology Department Newsletter | Spring 2022

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. RHYANNON BEMIS

Biography

I earned my bachelor's degree (psychology major, French minor) at Maryville College (Maryville, TN) in 2004. After graduating, I worked for two years as a research assistant at Boston University, School of Medicine on a large research project looking at language skills in children with autism and specific language impairment. I really enjoyed working in the lab and became increasingly interested in cognitive development. So, I decided to pursue my Ph.D. in developmental psychology. I earned my Ph.D. from the University of New Hampshire in 2011.

How did you decide to pursue a career in psychology education?

I actually didn't declare my major in psychology until the end of my freshman year. When I started college, I thought I wanted to major in English and be a journalist because I loved to write. However, I took introductory psychology in my first semester and I loved it so much I decided to take child development during my second semester. These two courses led me to decide to pursue a career in psychology. During my senior year in high school, I had worked with several children with disabilities and found the material I learned in my psychology classes to be very helpful in understanding their development.

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IN THE WORDS OF OUR CHAIR

In a good year, students have a multitude of responsibilities. Homework, papers, exams, clubs, sports, jobs, family obligations, activism, financial stress, social life and more can contribute to burnout. During a seemingly never-ending pandemic, these factors are compounded by continued uncertainty. Many students are struggling to revive their pre-pandemic motivation.

What is academic burnout?

Academic burnout includes feelings of exhaustion, inefficiency and cynicism. Common symptoms include feeling like you can't keep up, sleep disturbances, neglecting personal care, fatigue, and apathy. I recently spoke with students in my Developmental Psychology class about burnout and asked them how they prevent and cope with academic burnout. Some of the techniques mentioned include:

- **Get help from your support system.** Reach out to friends, family or the resources of the Counseling Center.
- **Take frequent breaks.** Space your study with frequent breaks rather than spending hours at a time cramming or writing a paper.
- **Socialize with others outside the University.** When students gather, they often discuss schoolwork, deadlines, professors, classes, etc. Spend some time with non-students to get a different perspective and detach from student life.
- **Focus on your efforts, not your outcomes.** Although grades are important and getting a high grade is a good personal achievement, it is also important to build resilience and to do your best, regardless of the outcome.
- **Exercise.** The benefits of exercise on mental health have been well-documented, and exercise is associated with increased energy, better sleep and decreased depression. Yoga, in particular, can be helpful in reducing anxiety.
- **Get out into nature.** Being in nature is a way of escaping the demands and stimuli often found in our indoor spaces.
- **Take care of yourself.** Eat healthy, get enough sleep and keep up with your personal hygiene.
- **Study with others.** This gives you a way to test your knowledge, get help from fellow students, and stay accountable for work and deadlines.

Decreasing burnout is not something that will happen overnight. You may need to practice some of the above techniques for several weeks, but once you begin to feel better, you can start to formulate a long-term strategy to keep burnout at bay during your college years and beyond.

– Dr. Meredith Patterson,
Psychology Department Chair

Throughout your time at SU, what has been your most fulfilling experience?

There have been so many amazing experiences at SU, it is really hard to pick just one! So, I am going to mention three. The first is helping to bring the “I Am Psyched” mobile exhibit to campus in 2018. This exhibit highlights the contributions of women of color to the field of psychology. While the exhibit was on our campus, many SU students and several high school groups came to tour the exhibit. Watching them interact with the different displays was really amazing. The second experience was establishing a Living Laboratory – first at the Delmarva Discovery Museum and now the Salisbury Zoo. Living Laboratory is a mobile lab where children and families can participate in research studies when they visit zoos and museums. This is a great way to engage the community in research and has been an awesome opportunity for students. I have had three students complete their honors research at Living Laboratory and local families have really enjoyed hearing about their work. The last is the opportunity that the students in my Childhood Disorders course and I have had to host sensory-friendly events at the Salisbury Zoo. It is wonderful to be able to offer inclusive events that welcome all children to enjoy a visit to the zoo.



Dr. Rhyannon Bemis

What research topics interest you most and why?

My own research is in memory development – I find that area fascinating. But recently, I have really been drawn to neuroscience research with infants. Due to improved neuroimaging techniques, researchers are now able to study the developing brain and it has been fascinating to see how these findings apply to behavioral findings that have been shown in the literature.

When you're not wearing your PSYC faculty hat, what are your personal interests?

I love spending time with my friends (many of whom I met when I started working at SU). This summer, my group of friends got our OSV permits and were able to drive on to the beach at Assateague Island for bonfires. As my students know, I also really love watching TV. I have multiple streaming services and am adding more! I also taught myself to knit recently and really enjoy that ... while watching Netflix!

Who/what/when/where inspires you?

I would say my students inspire me. The best part of being a college professor is to watch students at the beginning of what you know will be remarkable careers and lives. It is their energy that keeps me going.

If you could go back in time, with whom would you be most interested in having a conversation?

I would want to talk with my dad (David Bemis). He was a professor for over 40 years, but he was the remarkable kind of parent who made his children the center of his universe as soon as he walked in the door. So much so that it wasn't until right before he died, as we began hearing from his colleagues, that I realized how famous my dad was in his field (bacteriology) and that he was a revered professor. It wasn't until the end of his life that I spoke with him about being professor, a career we both love. I wish I could talk with him more about so many things, but definitely about our shared love of teaching and science.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: DANYEL SANDERS

Biography

I am a senior from Upper Marlboro, MD, and I major in psychology with a biology minor and an emphasis on pre-med.

What led you to decide to become a student at Salisbury University?

Being able to choose major that aligned with my career choice and was close to home but not too close.

Throughout your time at SU, what was your favorite memory?

My favorite memory is when I was able to have the opportunity to be a part of research with Dr. [Echo] Leaver's research lab because I am fascinated with neurology and want to become a neurosurgeon.

Did you have a favorite instructor or mentor and, if so, why?

I have greatly admired studying under Dr. Leaver because her specialty of neuropsychology aligns with my passion for neuroscience.

Outside of being a student, what are your interests?

My interests are that I am passionate about medicine. I love to watch movies and television, love to travel and experience the world, and love spending time with family and friends.

What are your plans after graduation?

After graduation, I will be immersing myself in the clinical field of medicine by shadowing doctors in different fields, and I also will be taking a medical course program.

Tell us a few fun facts about you.

I have three siblings, I have traveled to Europe twice, and I have a dog named Jango.





EVENTS & HAPPENINGS

■ Upcoming Psych Forums *Presenting at Academic Conferences*

Tuesday, February 22
3:30-4:30 p.m. • Zoom
salisbury.zoom.us/j/96108421765
Meeting ID: 961 0842 1765

Research & Internship
Monday, February 28
Research Opportunities: 6-7 p.m.
Internships: 7-8 p.m. • Zoom
salisbury.zoom.us/j/93807308172
Meeting ID: 938 0730 8172;
Passcode: 676165

Antiracism
Thursday, April 7
6-7 p.m. • Zoom
salisbury.zoom.us/j/99501814466
Meeting ID: 995 0181 4466;
Passcode: 631681

■ **AMP Information Session**
Tuesday, March 8
5-6 p.m. • Zoom
Link TBA

■ **AMP Event Showcase
on Social Justice**
Date & Event Info TBA

ACCELERATED MENTORING PROGRAM (AMP) UPDATE

The Accelerated Mentoring Program (AMP), co-directed by Dr. Yuki Okubo and Dr. Michèle Schlehofer, entered its second year with two students who continued on from the first year and 10 additional students who joined the program for the academic year 2021-22. The AMP is a comprehensive professional development program for students majoring in psychology who have interests in social justice and antiracism topics. AMP students engage in mentored, community-based, participatory-action research (CPAR) while receiving intensive professional development training.

AMP is currently recruiting for the 2022-2023 academic year, and eligible students are encouraged to apply. To find out more about AMP students and their activities, please visit: www.salisbury.edu/academic-offices/liberal-arts/psychology/accelerated-mentor-program.aspx and follow AMP on Facebook: @AcceleratedMentoringProgram.

For any questions or interests, please contact Okubo at yxokubo@salisbury.edu or Schlehofer at mmschlehofer@salisbury.edu.



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Tieryn Gingerich Heishman presents “Incapacitated and/or Forcible Rape Experience Predicting College Women’s Rape Victim Empathy” to Maryland lawmakers at Posters on the Bay in February 2022. Heishman is mentored by Dr. Suzanne Osman.

Soleil Darbouze was accepted into Stevenson University’s Clinical Psy.D. Program.

May 2019 alum **Domonique Bush** started a new position as a community health scientist for CARECG (Community Advocacy Research and Evaluation Consulting Group).

May 2021 alum **Ashley Shephard** was accepted into Chicago School of Professional Psychology’s Master in Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program.

Soleil Darbouze received the November 2021 Scholar Holler.

December 2019 alum **Jessica Harbaugh** secured a position at Johns Hopkins University as a research program coordinator.

Soleil Darbouze and **Stephon Mason** were both inducted into Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK), the National Leadership Honors Society.

FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

PUBLICATIONS:

Dr. Heidi Fritz published an article in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* titled “Caregiving in quarantine: Humor styles, reframing, and psychological well-being among parents of children with disabilities.”

Dr. Karl Maier published an article in the peer-reviewed journal, *Psychosomatic Medicine* titled “Equity, Environment, and the Biopsychosocial Ecology of the COVID-19 Syndemic.”

Dr. Suzanne Osman published an article in the peer-reviewed journal *Victims and Offenders* titled “Knowing a rape victim, personal sexual victimization experience, and gender predicting rape victim empathy.”

Dr. Suzanne Osman and her **student Halle Lane** co-authored an article published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* titled “Predicting college women’s self-esteem based on verbal coercion experience and verbal tactic items on the Revised Sexual Experiences Survey.” Lane is a May 2021 SU graduate.

Dr. Michèle Schlehofer, with Asia Eaton (Florida International University), Patrick Grzanka (University of Tennessee Knoxville) and Linda Silka (University of Maine), co-edited a special issue of *The American Psychologist* titled “Public psychology: Cultivating socially engaged science for the 21st century,” and co-authored the special issue’s introductory article.

With Diane Illig (Sociology) and Tara Taylor of ADRVantage, **Dr. Michèle Schlehofer** has a chapter titled “One Model, Multiple Locations: The Salisbury University Safe Spaces Program” in the forthcoming book *Affirming LGBTQ+ Students in Higher*

Education, published by the American Psychological Association.

With colleague Lori Cortez-Regan (Humboldt State University) and **former student Domonique Bush, Dr. Michèle Schlehofer** has an article, “Experiences of parent-advocates of transgender and gender non-conforming youth,” published in *GLBT Family Studies*.

With colleague **Dr. Yuki Okubo** and **former student Dominic Williams, Dr. Michèle Schlehofer** has an article, “Assessing feminist community psychology pedagogy,” published in *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice*.

Dr. Rachel Steele and her **students Gwynne Richardson, Mackensie Disbennett** and **Yasmeen Othman** co-authored an article published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Gender Studies* titled “Muslim women negotiating their identity in the era of the Muslim ban.” Richardson is a May 2021 graduate. Disbennett and Othman are May 2020 graduates.

PRESENTATIONS:

Dr. Deeya Mitra presented at the 10th Conference on Emerging Adulthood held November 4-6, 2021. She was an invited speaker at the Master Symposium Reflecting on the Rise of Emerging Adulthood and shared insights from South Asia. She also presented two talks: “Developmental Regulation During Emerging Adulthood” and “Established Adulthood and Emerging Adulthood(s) in India,” and a student poster presentation “Emerging Adulthood in Bangladesh.”

Dr. Suzanne Osman and her **student Halle Lane** presented their project titled “Verbal Coercion Experience and Verbal Tactic Items on the Revised Sexual Experiences

Survey Predicting College Women’s Self-Esteem,” at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality (SSSS) in November 2021. Lane is a May 2021 SU graduate.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS:

Dr. Deeya Mitra was an invited speaker at Emmanuel College, Boston, where she presented on “Cross-Cultural Research on Emerging and Established Adulthood” on October 18, 2021. She was also an invited panelist at the International Alumni Panel: Navigating U.S.-Based Careers held by the International Scholars and Students Office, Clark University.

BOARD APPOINTMENT:

Dr. Yuki Okubo was invited to join an Editorial Board of *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, an official publication of the Asian American Psychology Association and is dedicated to research, practice, advocacy, education and policy within Asian American psychology. She will be serving a three-year term.

“When we are open to new possibilities, we find them. Be open and skeptical of everything.”

—Todd Kashdan

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION ISSUES APOLOGY

Submitted by Dr. Rachel Steele

In October 2021, the American Psychological Association (APA) issued an apology for the role psychologists have played in upholding systemic racism (inequity embedded in laws and policies). Some lauded the APA's action as a step in the right direction. Others have critiqued the APA as doing too little too late. For the Association of Black Psychologists' response see: abpsi.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ABPsi-Full-Statement.pdf

What does systemic racism in psychology mean? Here are a few examples mentioned in the text of the apology: (1) Some notable psychologists supported school segregation during the civil rights era. (2) Psychologists were involved in eugenics, a pseudoscientific movement that used the idea of genetically desirable traits to promote the supremacy of white people. (3) Psychology as a field, and the APA as a governing body, were led by white men, and this leadership facilitated the exclusion and silencing of people of color in the field.

For the full text of the apology see: www.apa.org/about/policy/racism-apology. For more examples, see the full chronology of racism in the field of psychology: www.apa.org/about/apa/addressing-racism/historical-chronology.

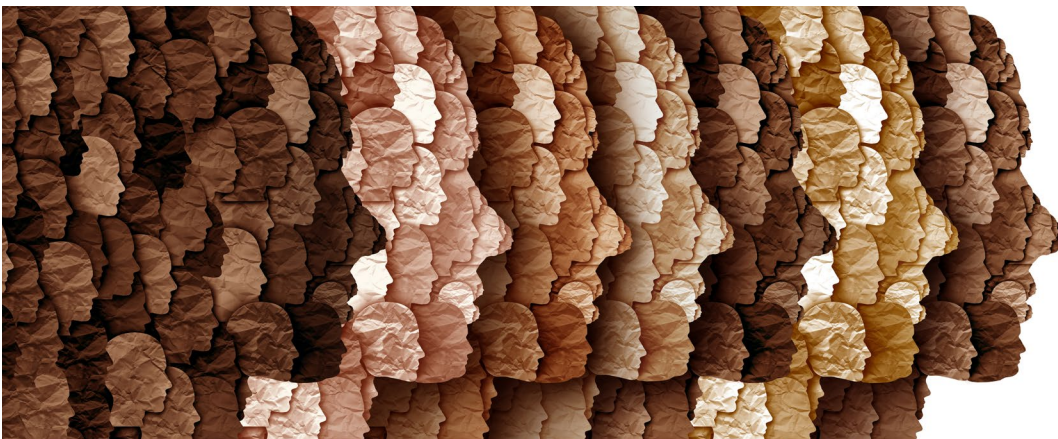
People of color have been underrepresented in psychology as researchers, research participants and students. Racial discrimination exists in leadership opportunities, distribution of funding and awards, and representation in the student bodies, particularly at the Ph.D. level. This often results in psychology faculty who do not represent the racial background of the student body. Trends in the U.S. and at SU show that psychology undergraduate students are becoming more racially diverse.

The Psychology Department at SU has been addressing diversity, equity and inclusion through multiple initiatives:

- In spring 2018, we hosted "I Am Psyched!," an interactive exhibit celebrating the contributions of women of color to the field of psychology. See: www.salisbury.edu/news/article/I-Am-Psyched-Exhibit-at-SU-April-28-May-10
- During the 2017-2018 academic year, focus groups were conducted to determine how the department could better meet the needs of students of color.
- In spring 2019, Dr. Jean Lau Chin, a highly respected psychologist and a leader in the field who is featured in the aforementioned exhibit, visited SU's campus to

present on "Global and Diverse Leadership."

- In fall 2019, the department established a diversity committee.
- Drs. Yuki Okubo and Michèle Schlehofer created the Accelerated Mentoring Program (AMP) to provide hands-on experience to students interested in social justice and antiracism topics. See: www.salisbury.edu/academic-offices/liberal-arts/psychology/accelerated-mentor-program.aspx
- In spring 2021, Dr. Okubo's Racism and Coping Research Lab students conducted a two-hour virtual, peer-led, antiracism workshop to inform other SU undergraduate students about antiracism concepts and how to engage in race dialogues.
- In 2021, the Psychology Department voted for a major curriculum revision that, among other things, would add a diversity course requirement for all psychology majors. The revised curriculum goes into effect fall 2022 for NEW psychology majors.
- As a department, we continue to reflect on our teaching and research practices and how we can best prepare future psychologists to work in a multicultural world.



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