



PSYCHOLOGY MATTERS

Salisbury
UNIVERSITY

SU Psychology Department Newsletter | Spring 2024



Leading Multicultural Psychologists Speak at Salisbury University

Dr. Jeffery Scott Mio and Dr. Melanie Domenech Rodriguez (pictured) visited Salisbury University on March 11, 2024, to deliver an invited public lecture on "Navigating Worldviews and Identities in a Multicultural World." They are co-authors of the textbook *Multicultural Psychology*, which is the primary textbook used in the department's course PSYC 410: Multicultural Issues in Psychology.

Dr. Mio is an emeritus professor from the Psychology Department at California Poly Pomona, specializing in multicultural issues and the use of metaphors in political persuasion. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois, Chicago, in 1984. He is the author, co-author or co-editor of 13 books, including *Multicultural Psychology: Understanding Our Diverse Communities*, published by Oxford University Press.

Dr. Domenech Rodriguez, a professor of psychology at Utah State University, focuses on health disparities, particularly in access, acceptability and effectiveness of treatment for diverse communities. She is a past president of Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology (2019-2020), and currently the editor-in-chief of the journal *Family Process* (2024 - Pres.).

During their visit, they took part in a meet-and-greet with current students of the PSYC 410 course. This was followed by a networking lunch social with the staff and students from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Disability Resource Center. Their day culminated with the public lecture. The talk was well attended, and the audience engaged in thoughtful conversations with the speakers. These dialogues play a crucial role in cultivating empathy by exploring diverse perspectives, thereby reducing stereotypes and prejudice, and promoting tolerance and cultural humility. The event concluded with a reception, providing an opportunity for community members to engage directly with the speakers. Their visit enriched our academic discourse and reinforced our commitment to inclusivity in a multicultural world.

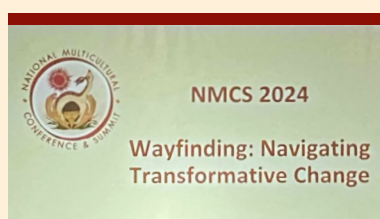


Psychology Students & Faculty Present at National Multicultural Conference & Summit

Dr. Yuki Okubo, with undergraduate students in the Racism & Coping Research Team (Joanna Mason, Saya Fernandes, Rochelle Brown, and Sarah Welch) presented at the National Multicultural Conference & Summit (NMCS) in Santa Fe, New Mexico in January, 2024. NMCS is a conference co-organized by 4 divisions of the American Psychological Association. This year's theme was "Wayfinding: Navigating Transformational Change." The team had a roundtable discussion titled "How to handle racist incidents on campus?: Undergraduate student perspective."



(From left) Dr. Yuki Okubo, Rochelle Brown, Saya Fernandes and Joanna Mason (Sarah Welch was also part of the presentation)



Racist Incidents on Campus

Mason et al., (2024) NMCS Presentation

Racism on campus exists as a constant threat to the mental, emotional, and even physical health of students of color (Okazaki, 2009)

Incidents Occurring at Higher Education Institutions



Statistics have shown an increase in hate crimes including racist incidents occurring on campuses, since 2011. (Nelson, 2019)

Addressing Racist Incidents

Many universities express commitment to diversity and inclusion, yet fail to address racist incidents on campus in ways that allow students of color to feel that their campus community is safe and inclusive. (Jones, 2019)

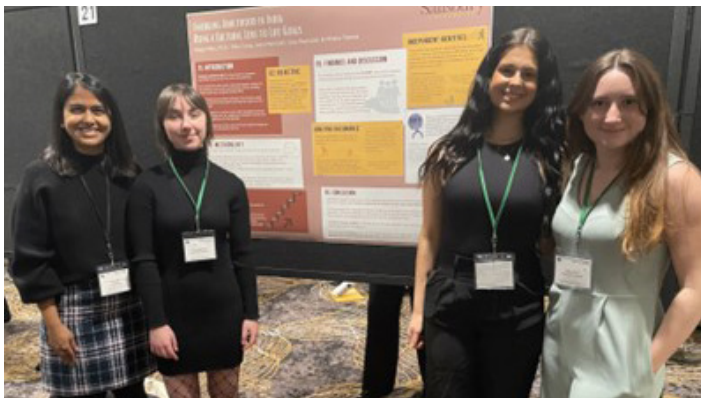
Importance of Safety and Belonging

The safety and sense of belonging a student feels has a significant impact on the mental and emotional health of a student, as well as their academic success. (Murphy & Zirkel, 2019)

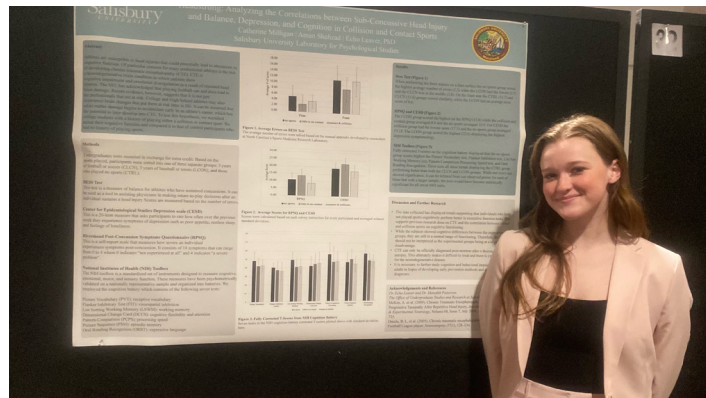


Psychology Students Attend the Eastern Psychological Association Conference

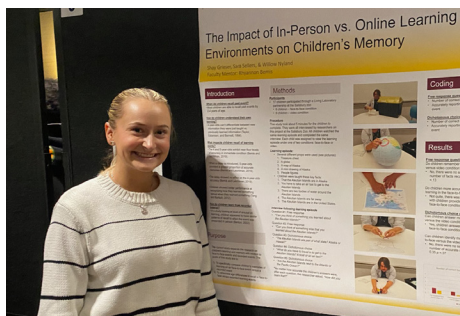
Drs. Rhyannon Bemis, Echo Leaver, Karl Maier, Deeya Mitra, Suzanne Osman, and Mark Walter mentored students who presented at the Eastern Psychological Association (EPA) annual conference in Philadelphia, PA, February 29 - March 2. Dr. Tom Tomcho also presented research. Students who participated included Willxi Alvarez, Mika Coyle, Benjamin Davis, Shay Grieser, Tiernyn Gingerich (SU Alum), Olivia Hawkins, Tyler Hummer, Xavier Jones, Hannah Loudon, Anna Martindill, Colleen McCann, Kavina McDonald, Catherine Milligan, Nikki Mondo, Caitlin Munson, Willow Nyland, Grey Reynolds, Walter Rodriguez, Sara Sellers, Aman Shahzad, and Mirielle Thomas.



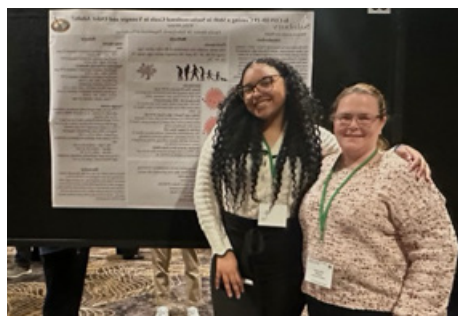
Dr. Deeya Mitra with the Emerging Adulthood(s) lab members Grey Reynolds, Anna Martindill and Mika Coyle presenting at the EPA conference. Their poster was titled "Emerging Adulthood in India: Using a Cultural Lens to Life Goals."



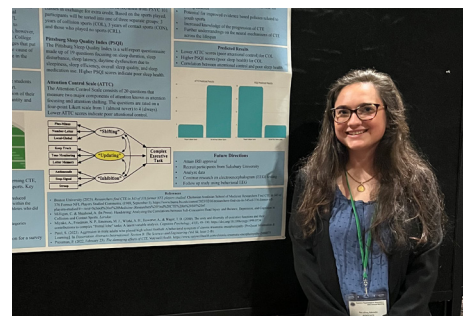
Catherine Milligan (pictured), a student working with Dr. Echo Leaver, presented a poster titled "Headstrong: Analyzing the Correlations Between Sub-Concussive Head Injury and Balance, Depression, and Cognition in Collision and Contact Sports."



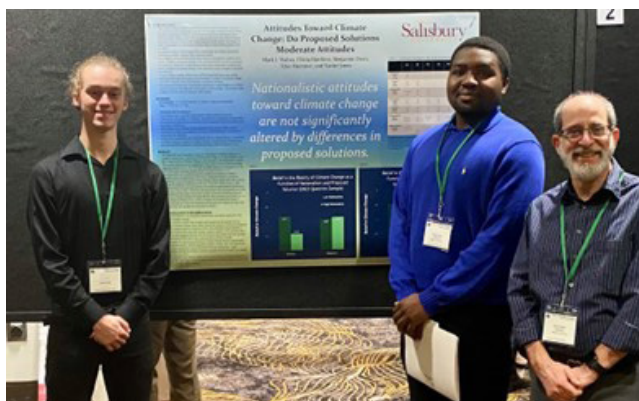
Shay Grieser (pictured), one of Dr. Rhyannon Bemis's students, presented a poster titled "The Impact of In-Person vs. Online Learning Environments on Children's Memory."



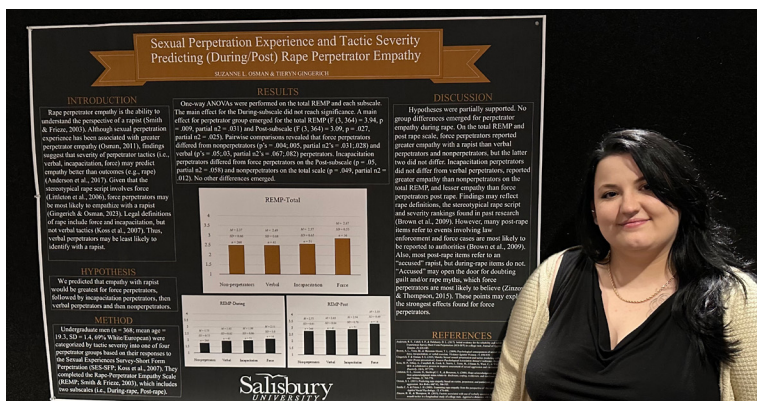
(Pictured) Willxi Alvarez, one of Dr. Echo Leaver's students, presented a poster titled "The Impact of COVID on Socioemotional Goals in Young Adults."



Nikki Mondo (pictured), a student working with Dr. Echo Leaver, presented a poster titled "Sleep and Cognitive Health in Sports."



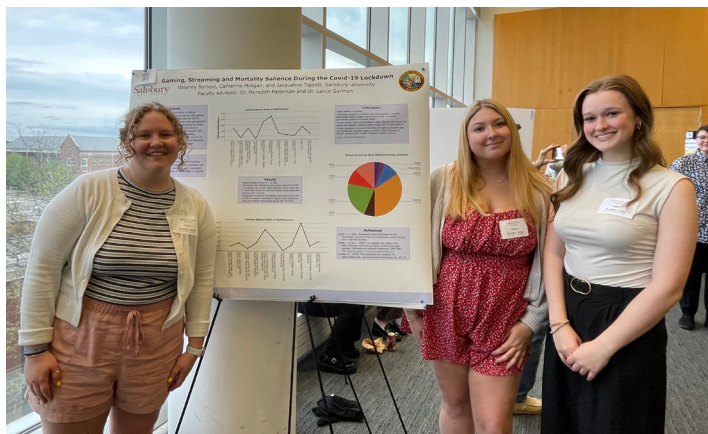
(Pictured) Dr. Mark Walter was joined by Tyler Hummer (left) and Xavier Jones at the EPA conference. Olivia Hawkins and Benjamin Davis were also involved in this research but were unable to attend the conference. The research that was presented assessed attitudes toward global climate changes as a function of nationalism and a type of climate change solutions that participants read.



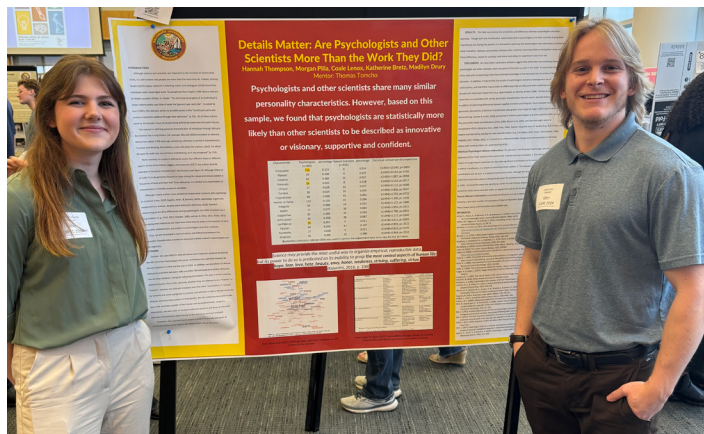
Dr. Suzanne Osman and SU alum Tiernyn Gingerich (pictured) co-authored a project that Gingerich presented at the EPA conference, titled "Sexual Perpetration Experience and Tactic Severity Predicting (During/Post) Rape Perpetrator Empathy." In addition, Colleen McCann and her research mentor Dr. Osman co-authored a project that McCann presented at the EPA conference, titled "Predicting Rape Victim Empathy Among Lesbian, Bisexual, Asexual and Heterosexual College Women."

Students Present at the Annual SU Student Research Conference (SUSRC)

Psychology students working with Drs. Rhyannon Bemis, Echo Leaver, Meredith Patterson, Suzanne Osman and Tom Tomcho presented seven posters at the 2024 SUSRC. Student presenters included Delaney Bartosz, Katherine Bretz, Madilyn Drury, Shay Grieser, Coale Lenox, Hannah Loudon, Colleen McCann, Catherine Milligan, Willow Nyland, Morgan Pilla, Sara Sellers, Hannah Thompson and Jacqueline Tippet.



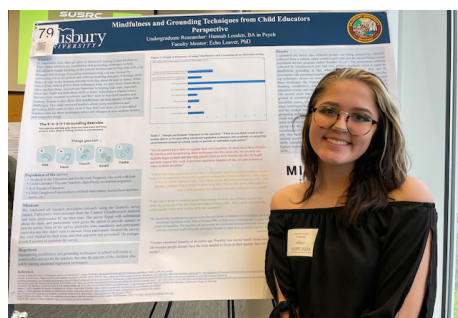
(Pictured) Jacqueline Tippet, Delaney Bartosz and Catherine Milligan, mentored by Dr. Meredith Patterson, presented a poster titled "Gaming, Streaming, and Mortality Salience During COVID-19 Lockdown."



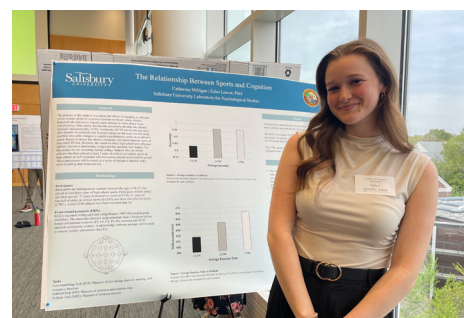
(Pictured) Hannah Thompson and Coale Lenox, mentored by Dr. Tom Tomcho, presented a poster titled "Details Matter: Are Psychologists and Other Scientists Lives More Than The Work They Did?"



Sara Sellers (pictured), mentored by Dr. Rhyannon Bemis, presented a poster titled "The Impact of In-Person vs. Online Learning Environments on Children's Memory."



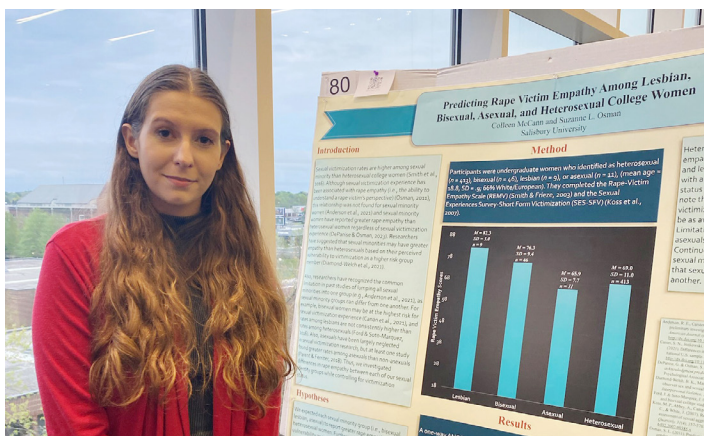
Hannah Loudon (pictured), mentored by Dr. Echo Leaver, presented a poster titled "Mindfulness and Grounding Techniques from Child Educators Perspective."



Catherine Milligan (pictured), mentored by Dr. Echo Leaver, presented a poster titled "The Relationship Between Sports and Cognition."



(Pictured) Madilyn Drury, Morgan Pilla and Katherine Bretz, mentored by Dr. Tom Tomcho, presented a poster titled "Shaping the Obituary Narrative: Does She, He, or They Bring Gendered Perspectives to Life?"



Colleen McCann (pictured), mentored by Dr. Suzanne Osman, presented a poster titled "Predicting Rape Victim Empathy Among Lesbian, Bisexual, Asexual, and Heterosexual College Women."

Annual Department Awards and Psi Chi Induction Ceremony

The Psychology Department hosted the Psi Chi Induction and Psychology Awards Ceremony on Saturday, April 27. The Salisbury University chapter of the national honor society in psychology celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. The current group of 54 inductees are joining over 1,300 current and former SU students who have been inducted into Psi Chi over the years. Additionally, Catherine Milligan and Morgan Pilla received Psychology Department Awards for academic achievement and outstanding contributions to the Psychology Department. Graduating seniors are invited to submit their name and accomplishments for nomination, and the awardees are selected by vote from the faculty. Shay Grieser received the William and Eva Anderson Award in Applied Psychology, an endowed award presented to an outstanding graduating psychology major who has been accepted into graduate school in an area of applied psychology or who has completed an internship or practicum in an applied psychology field. Congratulations to all inductees and award winners!



(Pictured) Dr. Rachel Steele (Psi Chi co-advisor) with Psi Chi officers Mika Coyle, Catherine Milligan, DeAsia Douglas, Syd Shannon, Grace Dear and Dr. Michèle Schlehofer (Psi Chi co-advisor)

New 2023-2024 Psi Chi inductees, officers and co-advisors



Psychology Students Join Effort for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Awareness

The Salisbury University Psi Chi Chapter co-organized the Out of the Darkness event with SU's Counseling Center. This annual event brings awareness to suicide prevention. The event started off with a speech by global award winner and advocate Matt Runnalls, followed by a 1.5-mile awareness walk around campus. Salisbury's team raised \$9,861 for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. DeAsia Douglas, Psi Chi officer and psychology major, served on the planning committee and Syd Shannon and Mika Coyle, Psi Chi officers and psychology majors, volunteered with Douglas on the day of the event. They had the honor of meeting Runnalls prior to the walk.

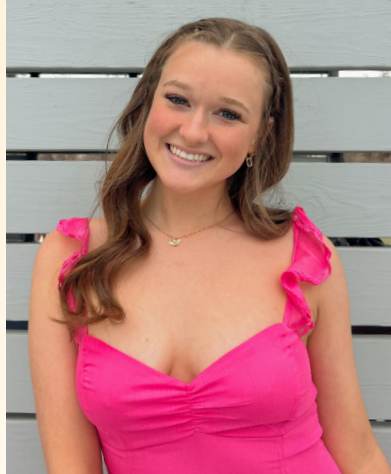


(Pictured) Psi Chi officers DeAsia Douglas, Mika Coyle and Syd Shannon with speaker Matt Runnalls.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Catherine Milligan

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

When searching for colleges as a high school senior, it was important for me to choose a place that felt like home. That is what Salisbury University feels like for me. I especially loved the feel of a smaller campus as it allowed me to form closer relationships with my professors, which immensely helped me when planning for graduate school. I also loved the location of the school. It is just far enough from home to be independent, but close enough for weekend trips to visit family.



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

My favorite memory at SU was attending the *Laridae* launch party where I published my first research study. I worked alongside Aman Shahzad (SU alumni) and Dr. Echo Leaver. I had a goal to publish research before my undergraduate career came to an end. It was an extremely rewarding feeling to provide meaningful research to the field of science. I am so thankful to the *Laridae* editing team and OURCA [Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity] for making the event so special for all the student publishers.

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

Throughout my time at SU, I have had so many amazing professors. However, I owe a lot of my success to my mentors Dr. [Echo] Leaver and Dr. [Meredith] Patterson. I have been a part of Dr. Leaver's research lab for three years. In her lab, I was able to publish my first project and start a second project that I am very passionate about. Dr. Leaver helped guide me through applying to graduate school. The process would have been extremely taxing and stressful without having her by my side encouraging me along the way. Dr. Patterson invited me to her lab where I am gaining more research experience in working with both younger and older adults. I have gained an immense amount of knowledge, skills and support through working in both labs. Dr. Leaver and Dr. Patterson have helped me grow as a research student in so many ways, and I can only hope that one day I become a mentor just as inspirational as them.

Outside of being a student, what are your interests?

Outside of being a student, I enjoy hanging out with my friends. Salisbury University has given me so many friendships that I will forever cherish. I enjoy going shopping, trying new restaurants and finding new places to explore in Salisbury.

What are your plans after graduation?

After graduation, I will be attending University of Maryland College Park. At UMD, I am pursuing a neuroscience and cognitive science Ph.D. I will be working under Dr. Mike Dougherty in the Decision, Attention and Memory Lab.

TELL US A FEW FUN FACTS ABOUT YOU.

- I am a sister of Delta Gamma here at SU. Through DG, I have been given numerous leadership and service opportunities and have made lifelong friendships.
- I used to make and sell my own jewelry! I have a passion for arts and crafts and have made it a hobby.

Dr. Larence Becker Retires from Salisbury University

I recently retired from my position as psychology professor at SU, but I would rather have stayed. Let me explain: In May 2023, I was diagnosed with stomach cancer. Since then, I have been in and out of hospitals receiving various forms of treatment. In light of this ongoing effort, I decided to retire so I could best focus on my health.

Regarding retirement, I'm 'only' 64, and I had expected to remain in my position till I was at least 70. And, why not—I had a terrific job! On a typical day, I would ride my bike the one mile from my home to my office in Holloway Hall. Along the way, I would pass the trees and flowers growing across campus and eventually enter Holloway via the back door, site of the blooming, buzzing secret garden. I would often note how fortunate I was to have such a short and beautiful commute.



Once at school, I'd brew some tea and then it was off to class. As a teacher, I thought my main job was not simply to pass on knowledge, but also to convey just how fascinating the subject matter was. I found this easy to do because I believed it myself – it's why I became a professor! As a cognitive psychologist, I wanted to spend my time discussing and trying to understand how the mind works – and I considered it an incredible

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privilege to be able to do this every day for my living.

About once a week, after class would be time for a lab meeting. The joy of the lab meeting was twofold. Firstly, I got to share research ideas with brilliant students, showing how science is actually conducted. Secondly, and most important, was the time we spent together, chatting about stuff other than science, like grad school, cooking, the Ravens, whatever. What fun I had hanging out with these wonderful young people.

Finally, at the end of a typical workday (or, to be honest, any time of day), I would often drop into a colleague's office to check in and see what they were up to. You know ... to schmooze! I could do this because I considered many of my colleagues to be friends as well. And how nice is it to work in an environment surrounded by friends?

To paraphrase baseball great Lou Gehrig, I may have been given a bad break, but I consider myself to be darned lucky. For all the reasons described above, I woke up each morning of my career, eagerly looking forward to coming to work. After all, it never felt like work – I was simply doing exactly what I wanted to do. And in this life, that is a very rare gift, indeed.

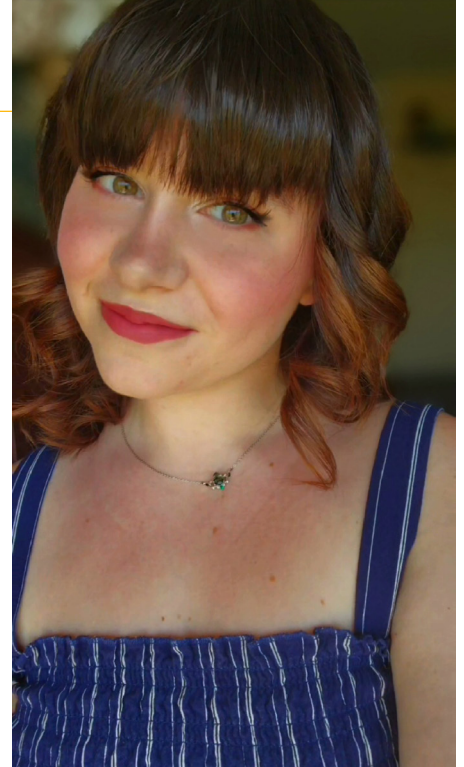
ADDENDUM:

At this point (I'm writing on April 2, 2024), my treatment is going well. I'm feeling good, and I have a strong appetite; not always the case for people receiving chemotherapy. I have rejoined the local ukulele group, and I bought a new guitar, which I am thoroughly enjoying. Finally, I am sitting in on Dr. Fritz' course, The Psychology of Happiness. It's a fabulous new course and I am reminded that I love being in the classroom – that will never change.

ALUMNI PROFILE: Emma Schmitt

This month, we are happy to feature **Emma Schmitt** for our alumni profile.

Emma Schmitt was a psychology major and cognitive science minor who graduated from SU in 2019. She worked in Dr. Echo Leaver's lab and in Dr. Meredith Patterson's lab. Schmitt was also a Psi Chi officer.



■ What are you currently up to?

I'm currently doing freelance writing and I have published a children's book, which I intend to become a series that teaches young children about different scientific topics. It's called *Rewild Your World* and it's in a series I'm making called "The Smallest Scientists."

■ What path did you take to get to where you are now?

After my time at SU, I took a break to grow my family and think about my next steps. I then enrolled in the Master of Science writing program at Johns Hopkins University, which I just graduated from this past December.

■ What was one highlight about your time in the SU Psychology Department that stands out?

During my time at SU, I was blessed to work with some of the best professors the university has to offer. My time doing research and traveling to conferences is what led me to the career I am pursuing now, because I learned how much I loved discussing science and making it understandable to a general audience.

■ What do you know now that you wish you had known as a student?

I wish I had known as a student that the field of careers that still technically fall under the umbrella of "psychology" is so large, and that you should never limit your choices when moving forward with your career.

■ Where do you see yourself in five years?

In five years, I hope to be part of a communications department for a larger scientific organization, preferably one focused on the brain or climate issues/nature.

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