



PSYCHOLOGY MATTERS



SU Psychology Department Newsletter | Summer 2022

IN THE WORDS OF OUR CHAIR: Nature as Nurture



Americans spend, on average, 90% of their time indoors according to the Environmental Protection Agency. What effect does all that time indoors

have on our psychological well-being? Does spending time outdoors have a psychological effect on us? Research increasingly finds that it absolutely does. Being in nature is linked to a variety of benefits, including decreased stress, increased attention and an increase in empathy.

In a review of the effects of nature on cognition, Schertz and Bergman (2019) discovered that the proximity of green spaces to schools is positively correlated with cognitive development in children. Empirical studies have found that working memory, attention, and cognitive flexibility improve after participants have been exposed to nature. These cognitive improvements do not seem to be explained by changes in mood, as mood changes have not been found to correlate with these cognitive benefits.

Spending time outdoors also has emotional benefits. Evidence supports an association between nature experience and increased psychological well-being. A recent review of the literature (Bratman, et al. 2019) found that time in nature was correlated with measures of subjective well-being, happiness, positive affect, sense of meaning and purpose in life, as well as decreases in mental distress. Even looking at images of nature, listening to nature sounds or using virtual reality can be beneficial, though not as much as physically being in nature. Research has also found that exposure to nature can actually make people nicer!

We are very lucky that Salisbury University has so many beautiful green spaces. SU has been awarded the Tree Campus USA Award, Maryland PLANT Community Green Award, ArbNet Level III Accreditation, and is certified and registered by Monarch Watch as an official Monarch Waystation! Taking a study break to walk through our serene campus is a wonderful way to recharge your batteries. We

are also fortunate to have so many local natural spaces that we can visit. Assateague Island includes marshland, ocean waters and wild ponies. Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge has a huge variety of plant and animal life and is a perfect spot for birdwatching. At our local (free!) zoo, you can visit animals from the Americas and Australia. There are multiple local opportunities for kayaking, canoeing, fishing, swimming, hiking and biking.

As we begin our summer, I am planning to spend as much time as I can in nature. I hope you will do the same and return in the fall restored and rested.

Have a great (natural!) summer.

— Dr. Meredith Patterson,
Psychology Department Chair

References

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. YUKI OKUBO

I earned my B.A. in psychology with a minor in sociology from the College of William and Mary. Then, I went to Boston College and earned a master's degree (M.A.) in counseling psychology, mental health track, to become a mental health counselor. During that time, I was part of three different research laboratories, being exposed to projects on racism, racial identity and domestic violence. During the summer between the first and second year of my master's program, I decided to pursue a Ph.D. to gain more training in both research and clinical practice. I chose a scientist-practitioner model program so that I could be trained as both a researcher and a clinician. I earned my Ph.D. in counseling psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University in 2007.

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

I took two years of psychology classes in high school from Mr. Steve Welckle and LOVED it! Since then, I knew I wanted to major in psychology. My father was not so convinced that I was going to continue with this interest and suggested that I go to a liberal arts college so that if and when I decided to study something else, I could switch. I never changed my major, however. I enjoyed some of the sociology courses I took better than psychology, which translates into my interdisciplinary research interests now.

I was very active on campus as a student leader while at William and Mary, where I was the president of the Japanese Cultural Association; an active participant in an event called Taste of Asia where all Asian Student Organizations came together to showcase dance, music, fashion and food; and a founding member of FACES (Focus on Asian Culture Emerging in Society), a student organized conference, which was recently recognized at the Asian centennial celebration at William and Mary. I became increasingly interested

in working with college students as my career. During my senior year, with my friend's encouragement, I took a course in peer counseling that was taught by the associate dean, who held a counseling psychology Ph.D., and an assistant director of residential life who held a mental health counseling degree. I thoroughly enjoyed the class and that was my first exposure to counseling. This provided me with enough interest for me to investigate master's programs in counseling psychology.

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

There are three experiences that stand out to me. The first one is creating a Racism and Coping Research Lab. One of the major reasons I decided to join the Psychology Department at SU was to be able to dedicate my time on my own research. Previously, I trained doctoral students in clinical psychology and spent most of my professional time mentoring doctoral students conducting their dissertation research projects. Being able to focus on my own research projects has been amazing. As a result, I have been able to present with my research lab students at professional conferences such as Winter Roundtable and Association for Women in Psychology, where students have been able to meet and network with my colleagues.



The second experience is developing and co-directing the Accelerated Mentoring Program (AMP). I identified a need for more tailored mentoring to students of color and other marginalized students to meet the need of an increasingly more diverse society we live in. I developed this program with Dr. Michèle Schlehofer using a grant from American Psychological Association (APA). Its focus on social justice and antiracism topics, as well as the training we provide on Participatory Action Research (PAR), sets students up to be better prepared for graduate training in the field of psychology and other related fields. The third experience is developing and teaching a selected topics course: Helping Skills. I used to teach a similar course at a doctoral level, and I developed it specifically to meet the needs of students who have expressed interest in having more exposure to understanding what it is like to be a helper (inclusive of counselors, psychologists, social workers and other helping professionals). As I mentioned previously, it was helpful for me as an undergraduate student to be exposed to learning counseling skills and get a better sense of what it means to be a

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

continued

peer counselor. Developing this course and teaching it brought me back full circle by providing this educational opportunity that I received at the start of my professional career to undergraduate students.

What research topics interest you most and why?

I have a very broad research interest from the experiences of the marginalized, mentoring of students of color, to training. I do think that my discipline of counseling psychology with its dedication to clinical and research training and commitment to social justice captures the essence of my research interests.

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

I love to cook. It is a shared interest I have with my husband, and we try our best to wrap up our day's work to cook dinner together whenever we can. Our latest favorite has been a homemade pasta.

Who/what/when/where inspires you?

All the mentors I have had along my education and training have paved the way for me to do what I do today. I'm inspired by their dedication and hard work.

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

I would like to talk to my maternal grandfather. He was a man of few words and was loved by many. He passed away when I was 14, so I feel that I did not get to sit down and talk with him then. I would love to just talk to him about many topics and hear what he has to say.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: SYDNEY STEEVES

My name is Sydney Steeves and I'm a graduating psychology major! I'm from Cambridge, MD. During my time at SU, I have been involved in Dr. [Heidi] Fritz's and Dr. [Echo] Leaver's research labs, president of the SU Pep Band, and a member of Phi Mu.

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

I was looking for a smaller campus that was in state. Salisbury was close but still far enough from home that it just felt right.

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

I have two. The first being the day that I became a big to my little Alyssa and [the second being] every part of the past year living with my best friends.

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

Dr. Fritz – not only has she been my research professor, but also she was also my advisor and last fall I took Developmental Disabilities with her. She is one of the most understanding professors I have ever met and makes the content fun and exciting. It has been an amazing opportunity to work with Dr. Fritz.

Outside of being a student, what are your interests?

I love to create art and music, work on projects that involve yarn and string, and spend time with my cat Suki.

What are your plans after graduation?

[I plan to] go to graduate school for expressive arts therapy and become ASL and trauma certified.

Tell us a few fun facts about you.

I have learned to play six instruments and I'm originally from New Hampshire!



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Lindsay Remetz presented a poster in Philadelphia, PA, at the Northeast Regional Honors Council (NRHC) conference, April 2022, titled "Comparing Disparity: How Race and Mental Health Diagnoses Influence Treatment in American Correctional and Rehabilitative Institutions"

EVENTS & HAPPENINGS

■ Summer 2022 Research Fellowships

- Adara Turek will be working with Dr. Meredith Patterson
- Tiernyn Gingerich Heishman will be working with Dr. Deeya Mitra
- Amanda Niederland and Emily Bovard will be working with Dr. Yuki Okubo
- Catherine Milligan and Aman Shahzad willing be working with Dr. Echo Leaver

■ Spring 2022 Grad Walk

We were thrilled to cheer on psychology graduates at the spring 2022 version of Commencement – Grad Walk – on Saturday, May 21.



Cyndi Funkhouser, Dr. Kyoung-Rae Jung, Dr. Yuki Okubo, Dr. Rachel Steele, Dr. Echo Leaver, Dr. Charisse Chappell, Dr. Meredith Patterson, Dr. Heidi Fritz, Dr. Mark Walter, Dr. Larence Becker (kneeling), Dr. Deeya Mitra and Dr. Lance Garmon.

PSYC ALUMS PRESENTED AT MAY 6 PSYCH FORUM

Two psychology alums – Dr. Hailey Gibbs and Dr. Kate Rogers – shared with May Psych Forum attendees their experiences with earning advanced degrees and their respective careers in the field. Drs. Gibbs and Rogers offered the following advice.

Do You Want to Pursue a Ph.D.? Here Is Some Advice from Two SU Alums to Consider

- Pursue research with an SU professor. Rogers’ love of data analyses began when she was working in Dr. Lance Garmon’s research lab.
- Gibbs said to go to your professors’ office hours. They ALL earned Ph.D.s and can offer helpful insights.
- Ask yourself, why do you need a Ph.D.? Gibbs is the only person with a Ph.D. out of 142 employees at her organization. “There are many paths to the same goal,” she shared.
- When searching for programs, you should be able to answer the questions: (1) WHAT do I want to study? And (2) WHERE do I want to be?
- Go see Charles Endicott in Career Services for advice on resumes and interviewing.

When you are looking at graduate programs, ask what their graduates do after they finish. Ask if you can talk to some of them.

- If you can create an opportunity or a professional connection, do it. You never know what doors it might open.
- If you are going into a clinical Ph.D. program, it needs to be accredited by the American Psychological Association. See: www.accreditation.apa.org/accredited-programs
- If you apply for a Ph.D. program, you want to think about fit with a specific faculty member you are proposing to work with.
- Research your potential faculty advisor. Their social network will become your network. Look on Google Scholar, their CV or their publications.
- Send “cold” emails to potential faculty advisors. Tell them you are interested in their article you read (READ at least one article first) and ask if they are accepting new students.
- Writing and statistics skills are incredibly important every step of the way.



SU AT THE WINTER ROUNDTABLE CONFERENCE, COLUMBIA TEACHERS COLLEGE

(Article and associated photos submitted by Dr. Yuki Okubo)

Drs. Yuki Okubo and Michèle Schlehofer co-presented three talks at the 39th Annual Winter Roundtable Conference at Columbia Teachers College, Columbia University (<https://www.tc.columbia.edu/roundtable/>) in February 2022 with students from the Accelerated Mentoring Program (AMP) – Zoe Moreno, Gabrielle Swilley, Rachelle Watson, Ryan Devine, Ethan Lacy, Romona Harden and Soleil Darbouze – and recent graduates of Dr. Okubo’s Racism and Coping Lab – Jenny Welch and Catie Fell. The theme for the Winter Roundtable was “Collective Action and Liberatory Practices in Psychology and Education.” The full program is available at: <https://www.eventscribe.net/2022/winterroundtable/>

Welch, Fell and Dr. Okubo presented a roundtable discussion about a peer-led antiracism workshop that they facilitated last spring (for a summary of this project see the summer 2021 newsletter: <https://webapps.salisbury.edu/psychology/summer-2021/antiracism-training.html>). Moreno, Swilley, Watson and Dr. Schlehofer presented a roundtable discussion on the future of liberation psychology and social justice through photovoice. Devin, Lacy, Dr. Schlehofer and Dr. Okubo presented a roundtable discussion about faculty and student perspectives on teaching critical social justice content. Harden, Darbouze, Dr. Schlehofer and Dr. Okubo presented a roundtable discussion about the challenges and rewards they experienced working with youth in the Salisbury area as part of AMP (for a summary of the AMP’s work see the summer 2021 newsletter: <https://webapps.salisbury.edu/psychology/summer-2021/accelerated-mentoring-program1.html>).



Jenny Welch, Catie Fell and Dr. Okubo



Zoe Moreno, Gabby Swilley, Rachelle Watson and Dr. Schlehofer (with Jaedyn Messer and Ethan Lacy in the audience)



Ryan Devine, Ethan Lacy, Dr. Okubo and Schlehofer



Romona Harden, Soleil Darbouze, Dr. Okubo and Schlehofer

SU AT THE EASTERN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

(Article and associated photos submitted by Dr. Rachel Steele)

A sizeable SU Psychology Department contingent attended and presented in person at the Eastern Psychological Association conference in March 2022, including Drs. Larence Becker, Heidi Fritz, Echo Leaver, Jason McCartney and Mark Walter, and undergraduate students Josie Amberman, Gabrielle Atkinson, Gretchen Beernink, Regan Benton, Zoe Michelle Bradshaw, Tiernyn Gingerich Heishman, Justin Lazzarino, Mackenzie Nickle, Sydney Steeves, Alison Weeg and Samantha Walsh.

It was the first professional conference for many of the students. In addition to presenting seven research posters (for the program, see: [https://www.easternpsychological.org/files/DOCUMENTLIBRARY/EPA_2022_Program_fnl\(1\).pdf](https://www.easternpsychological.org/files/DOCUMENTLIBRARY/EPA_2022_Program_fnl(1).pdf)). Beernink won a Psi Chi Honor Society Student Research Award. She gave a terrific presentation at the awards ceremony.

Faculty and students explored New York City, ate delicious food and attended theatrical performances that the big city afforded. The excitement did not end at the conference. Unfortunately, a train derailment left many scrambling to find alternate transportation back to the Salisbury area.



Gabrielle Atkinson, Mackenzie Nickle, Justin Lazzarino, Dr. Walter and Alison Weeg at EPA



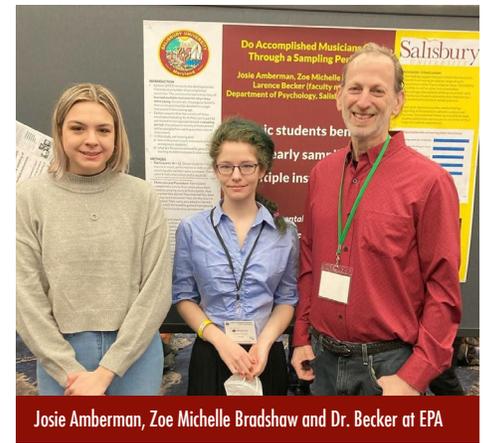
Tiernyn Gingerich Heishman at EPA



Samantha Walsh presenting her honors thesis at EPA



Gretchen Beernink giving a talk about her research for which she won the Psi Chi Honor Society Student Research Award at EPA



Josie Amberman, Zoe Michelle Bradshaw and Dr. Becker at EPA



Alison Weeg and Dr. McCartney at EPA



Sydney Steeves, Gretchen Beernink and Dr. Fritz at EPA



SPRING 2022 STUDENT AWARD WINNERS

- **Emily Thompsen** was the recipient of the **William and Eva Anderson Award in Applied Psychology**.
- **Tieryn Gingerich Heishman** and **Mackenzie Nickle** were the recipients of the **Psychology Award**.

PSI CHI INDUCTEES

There were 71 new Psi Chi inductees in spring 2022. Pictured are 32 who attended the honor society induction and awards ceremony held on Saturday, April 30.



PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT PRESENTATIONS AT SUSRC 2022:

- **Abigail Adkins** – “Coping During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Experiences of Women with Endometriosis.” (Oral Presentation)
- **Drevon Clark, Kierstyn Dixon, Ethan Lacy, Ryan Devine** – “Performative or Commitment for Diversity: Perspectives from Undergraduate Psychology Students using Photovoice.” (Oral Presentation)
- **Ria McCormick, Rachelle Watson, Soleil Darbouze, Gabrielle Charlot-Swiley** – “Self Care Strategies Through COVID-19.” (Oral Presentation)
- **Zoe Moreno, Jaedyn Messer, Stephon Mason, Romona Harden** – “Empower, Engage, Evolve: The Impact of Photovoice through Participatory Action Research (PAR).” (Oral Presentation)
- **Amanda Niederland, Dre’von Clark, Camille Sims, Angela Rusek** – “Who Has Racial Privilege? The Influence of Social Media on Beliefs.” (Oral Presentation)
- **Caitlyn Shannon** – “Does Wordle Play Lead to Wordle Recall?” (Oral Presentation)
- **Sydney Steeves, Gretchen Beernink, Erin Stiffler** – “Experiences of Students with Disabilities During the Pandemic: Mental Health, Microaggressions, and Barriers to Education.” (Oral Presentation)
- **Josie Amberman, Zoe Michelle Bradshaw** – “Do Accomplished Musicians Go Through a Sampling Period?” (Poster Presentation)
- **Gabrielle Atkinson, Mackenzie Nickle, Alison Weeg, Justin Lazzarino** – “Nationalism and Attitudes Toward Climate Change: Testing a Solution Aversion Hypothesis.” (Poster Presentation)
- **Regan Benton** – “Getting Ready to Learn: The role of agitation level on children’s learning.” (Poster Presentation)
- **Tieryn Gingerich Heishman** – “Incapacitated and/or Forcible Rape Experience Predicting College Women’s Rape Victim Empathy.” (Poster Presentation)
- **Sean Kelly** – “An Interdisciplinary Framework to Understand Climate Change in Organizations: A Review of the Professional Literature.” (Poster Presentation)
- **Camille Sims** – “Black Power! Are Black People Living in a Time of New Privileges?” (Poster Presentation)



Dr. Rhyannon Bemis – Civic Engagement



Dr. Charisse Chappell – Service to the Fulton School



Dr. Rachel Steele & Dr. Michèle Schlehofer – International Education



Dr. Michèle Schlehofer – Scholarship

FULTON AWARDS AY 2021-2022

Congratulations and cheers to the four psychology faculty members who won Fulton Excellence awards for AY 2021-2022!



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