

JMU DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
2014 STUDENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

Eileen Nelson Scholarship for Senior Excellence

The Eileen Nelson Scholarship honors the contributions of emeritus faculty member Eileen Nelson, by recognizing a student who has exemplary involvement in the honors thesis program, vigor in research and service, excellence in academic achievement, and the intention to pursue graduate education in psychology. The scholarship provides \$1000 in scholarship assistance to the award winner during their senior year. This scholarship was made possible by the generous donations of the family and friends of Dr. Eileen Nelson.

You can contribute to this fund by making a [donation online](#) . When making your donation please specify that your donation is intended to contribute to the Eileen Nelson Scholarship in the "Other Designation" field on the form.

Carly Isakowitz



Carly is a senior currently completing her honors thesis with Dr. Jessica Irons. Carly's thesis is investigating the effects of alcohol on health-related choices, which may have important implications for understanding heavy episodic drinking. This project is an ambitious one for which Carly has developed the protocol, written an IRB that has been approved, received several thousand dollars in funding to conduct the study, and has collected data from nearly 50 participants (totaling about 200 hours of session time). In addition to her thesis, Carly has been involved in several other projects that focus on health behavior. She has been involved in studies related to examining the impact of an exercise intervention on substance use and she has been integral to a study involving large-scale data collection to examine relations between and among various health behaviors including substance use, sleep, and physical activity. Carly has also contributed to the development of studies relating to caffeine and alcohol choices and the effects of sleep deprivation on substance choices. Carly's preliminary thesis data were presented at the Maryland Association for Behavior Analysis conference last November and her final data will be presented at the Society for Behavioral Medicine this April. Carly was awarded the Junior Award for Achievement in Research in 2013. Carly has shown great promise as a researcher in addition to her outstanding classroom performance. She plans to take a year off before applying to graduate programs.

LeAnn Whitlock Memorial Scholarship

This award recognizes distinguished academic performance and service to the university by a minority student whose talents skills, and abilities enable them to enrich the JMU community. The scholarship was initiated by the Theta Nu Chapter of the Zeta Pi Beta Sorority, in honor of psychology major LeAnn Whitlock, a student at James Madison University from Roanoke, Virginia who was abducted from the Valley Mall in Harrisonburg and murdered on January 5, 1990. The scholarship has been enabled through generous contributions of LeAnn's family and friends, psychology faculty, several sororities, and matching corporate funding.

You can contribute to this scholarship fund by making a donation online. When making a donation, use the "Gift Designation: Other" field to specify LeAnn Whitlock Scholarship (Account: 25887).

Erik Simmons

Erik Simmons is a junior and a member of Phi Sigma Pi, a national honors fraternity. He serves as a teaching assistant for Dr. Krisztina Jakobsen's Developmental Psychology class. In this role he develops activities and facilitates discussions in a class taught using team based learning. Erik has also worked in Professor Kurtz's research lab for two semesters, studying communication styles in freshman roommate pairs, as well as strategies for better appreciation college life. He has been published in e-vision's academic journal and is currently co-authoring an article on savoring and leisure with Dr. Kurtz. He works in JMU's Writing Center as a tutor, and is also on their assessment team. Outside of JMU, Erik is the assistant head wrestling coach at Harrisonburg High School.

James J. Hart Memorial Scholarship

This award is named after faculty member James J. Hart, and for many years, has honored the outstanding performance among junior students. Donations to the James J. Hart Scholarship fund were sufficient in 2010 to award the first James J. Hart Memorial Scholarship. The recipient of this award is an outstanding Junior Psychology Major who not only has high academic achievement, but also, through their activities and aspirations, demonstrates a commitment to improving the human condition.

You can contribute to this scholarship fund by making a [donation online](#). When making a donation, use the "Gift Designation: Other" field to specify James J. Hart Memorial Scholarship (Account: 25473/65473).

Kerry Gaffney



Kerry is a junior Psychology major with a minor in Pre-Med Preparation. Kerry has engaged in research, teaching, and service endeavors while also maintaining excellent classroom performance. Kerry currently conducts research under the supervision of Dr. Catherine Franssen. Kerry has learned to many complex research techniques relevant to study in behavioral neuroscience. In addition, Kerry has served as a teaching assistant for a biology lab under the supervision of Dr. Hyman. She serves as a Psychology Peer Advisor and volunteers her time weekly as a Big Sister to a young child in the community. She plans to pursue a graduate degree in Behavioral Neuroscience or a Medical Degree upon graduation.

Thomas E. & Sherry Woodroof Rogowski Scholarship

This scholarship recognizes a single student who has a record of exceptional experiences and performance from among her or his peers. The award is made possible by the generous donations of JMU alumni, Thomas E. & Sherry Woodroof Rogowski.

Christopher Deitrick

Christopher is a junior who has demonstrated academic excellence during his time at JMU. Since arriving at JMU, he has immersed himself academically however possible. As a freshman, he was a member of the Psychology Learning Community and has assisted, designed and/or led over ten empirical studies, including three at Harvard University during a research internship last summer. Christopher currently conducts research in Dr. Jaime Kurtz's laboratory, where he has been a primary investigator on several studies on contributors to well-being, people's beliefs about happiness, and predictors of romantic attraction. He has presented four professional poster presentations, locally and nationally. He tutors writing at the University Writing Center and statistics at the Science and Math Learning Center and has conducted research benefiting both organizations.

Casey Mitschele Dorsey Scholarship

This scholarship recognizes a single student who has a record of exceptional experiences and performance from among her or his peers. The award is made possible by the generous donations of JMU alumni, Casey M. Dorsey and her husband Jeffrey.

Hannah Hardin

Hannah is an excellent student and has been involved in a variety of academic activities while at JMU including research and teaching experiences. Hannah has been on the President's List or Dean's List for every semester as an undergraduate student and is a member of several societies for high academic achievement including Phi Kappa Phi, Phi Beta Kappa, Psi Chi, and National Society of Collegiate Scholars. Hannah is also a member of Omicron Delta Kappa, which is a society recognizing exemplary character and leadership. Hannah has been a vital member of Dr. Dan Holt's Choice Behavior Laboratory for the past year where she has made important contributions on two separate research protocols investigating animal models of choice behavior. Hannah also conducted research with Dr. Trevor Stokes using Teacher-Child Interaction Therapy with small children engaging in maladaptive behaviors. Hannah has served for two semesters as a teaching assistant for both Psychological Statistics and the Psychology of Learning, Drs. Tracy Zinn & Bryan Saville respectively. Hannah is looking forward to starting graduate school in the fall where she will begin work towards her Ph.D.

Jerry O. Haynes Memorial Award for Outstanding Seniors

This award is named after faculty member Jerry O. Haynes, and honors graduating seniors who possess outstanding records of achievement in academics, service, and research.

Claire Eckenrode



Claire is a senior who has demonstrated excellence in academics, teaching, research, and service. Claire serves as the Teaching Liaison for Psychology Peer Advising, a role for which she was responsible for assisting in the training of the junior Psychology Peer Advisors. Claire also served as a teaching assistant for Psychological Statistics with Dr. Tracy Zinn. She has worked for several semesters conducting research on passion for academics with Dr. Bryan Saville and has contributed to research presented at local, regional, and national conferences. Claire co-authored a paper on Interteaching with Dr. Saville and others. In addition to research and teaching, Claire also engages in service activities including two Alternative Spring Break trips (one as a trip leader) and Orientation Peer Advising. Claire plans to attend graduate school to earn a masters in Higher Education and Student Affairs.

James O. Benedict Senior Teaching Award

This award is named for faculty member James O. Benedict, and honors a senior who has demonstrated interest in pursuing a career in higher education in the field of Psychology, or who has served as a teaching assistant in Psychology while an undergraduate student. Once endowed, this award will become a scholarship will provide funds annually to a deserving student.

You can contribute to this fund by making a [donation online](#). When making your donation please specify that your donation is intended to contribute to the James O. Benedict Scholarship (Account 25217) in the "Other Designation" field on the form.

Caroline Prendergast



Caroline is a senior double majoring in psychology and WRTC (writing, rhetoric, & technical communication) who has devoted an impressive amount of her time and effort at JMU towards teaching related endeavors. She serves as a both a Writing Fellow and a tutor in the writing center on campus. In addition, she has worked with Dr. JoAnne Brewster for 4 semesters as a tutor for Abnormal Psychology during a time when many new materials needed to be developed as a result of the publication of a new manual of psychological disorders. Caroline has also served as a teaching assistant for the Psychology Learning Community under the supervision of

Dr. Kenn Barron. Caroline has been a TA for Dr. Jessica Irons for Psychological Research Methods for 2 semesters and is currently conducting her honors thesis on the impact of the Writing Fellows program on student performance in that course. Caroline has been involved in research and pedagogy presentations at local, regional, and national meetings. Caroline plans to pursue graduate school in quantitative psychology and assessment with a particular focus on writing and educational assessment and measurement.

Joann H. Grayson Outstanding Field Placement Award

This award is given to students who distinguish themselves on the basis of their commitment, use of psychological theory, and professional performance.

Lauren Talbot



Lauren Talbot completed her Fall and Spring Field Placement experience at Lacey Spring Elementary School under the supervision of Brenda Robey. In the Fall semester, she developed an intervention plan to help with test anxiety. She presented this information to the faculty at the school. During the spring semester Lauren implemented the program. Lauren is a responsible, hardworking, and caring individual. She is a wonderful representative of the field placement program and the impact it can have on the community.

Senior Award for Achievement in Research

This award is given to senior students who have demonstrated significant achievement in undergraduate research projects.

Julia Brown

Julia Brown has worked for two semesters in Dr. Matthew Lee's CARDS Lab (Cultural and Racial Diversity Studies), where she has helped to run projects on attitudes towards affirmative action, and decreasing transphobia using classroom methods. Julia will be traveling this year to APA and to the Tarrytown Teaching of Psychology conference to present the lab's findings. She has also served as a teaching assistant for Drs. Zinn and Kurtz, as well as also assisting in Dr. Zinn's research lab. Julia is a member of Psi Chi and the Psychology Service Organization. Outside of JMU, she is a local snowboard instructor. As an advocate for social justice in institutional settings, she is proud to be attending graduate school at San Diego State University next year to earn a masters degree in industrial/organizational psychology.

Alexander Bureau

Alex has worked in Dr. Bryan Saville's lab for three semesters, where he has been involved in research on interteaching and passion for academics. He is currently working on his honors thesis with Dr. Saville, titled "Passion for Academics and Problematic Health Behaviors". Alex has presented research at national and international conferences, including APA and Association for Behavior Analysis, and is co-author on one publication in Teaching of Psychology regarding interteaching and recognition memory. In addition to research, Alex has teaching experience, having been a teaching assistant for Dr. Saville's learning class and tutoring 4th graders. He has served as a Psychology Peer Advisor for the past three semesters and served on the Dean's Advisory Council. After graduation, Alex plans to take a year or two off before potentially pursuing a career in sports psychology.

Caroline Cooke



Caroline is the founder and director of the "JMU Nap Nook" investigating how naps can improve health and performance in college students. Overall, Caroline has been involved in multiple lines of research during her tenure at JMU. After her sophomore year, she took a research internship at the University of Pennsylvania's Neuroendocrinology Lab where she learned several techniques in basic laboratory research. With this background, she joined Dr. Jeff Dyche's "Rat Lab" research team where she was involved in several projects that have been presented at regional and national conferences. Including a project on the effects of brief paradoxical sleep deprivation on learning in a radial arm maze and assistance to a project on investigating the effect of acute cocaine exposure on sensitivity to delayed reinforcers in a choice paradigm in rats. She is focusing on human research as research director in the JMU Sleep and Actigraphy Laboratory. Recently, she led an investigation in sleep and performance in home vs. away games of the JMU Women's basketball team. She is also lead investigator of an underway project titled

“the effect of a brief daytime nap on monetary discounting rates” which is a collaborative effort with Drs. Dyche and Holt as well as Dr. Hargens in the Dept. of Kinesiology. Finally, she is also heading a large survey of JMU students’ health and sleeping patterns.

Shannon Kovach



Shannon has done research for Dr. Bernice Marcopulos, Dr. Pam Gibson, and Dr. Trevor Stokes. Her research has focused on neuropsychology and her honors thesis is titled, “Thought Derailment as a Predictor of Verbal Memory Performance in People with a Serious Illness”. For this research, she has worked in collaboration with the head of the Neuropsychology Lab at Western State Hospital. She will be presenting her research at AACN later this summer. Shannon has also been a mentor for the Psychology Learning Community, a volunteer at Western State Hospital, and was an intern at Entertainment Industries Council where she assisted in ways for more accurate portrayals of mental health and social issues. She is also a previous winner of the Outstanding Achievement in Research Methods and Statistics Award. Shannon has accepted an offer from the University of Rhode Island’s Clinical Psychology Ph.D. program.

Elizabeth Smith

Elizabeth is currently a member of Dr. Matthew Lee’s Cultural and Racial Diversity Studies Lab, where she is involved in research that examines issues related to diversity and cross-cultural issues, such as two studies regarding the concept of stereotype threat and hypodescent, as well as a study examining the relationship between Asians’ facial features and reports of discrimination and mental health. She is currently a team leader on a project investigating the effects of classroom simulation on attitudes toward affirmative action. She has been very involved in the research going on in Dr. Lee’s lab, including research design, data analysis, and running participants. Additionally, she has helped prepare a manuscript of Dr. Lee’s that addresses homophobia across STEM and non-STEM majors. Elizabeth is completing her honors thesis with Dr. Tracy Zinn, and plans to pursue a graduate degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology, with a specific interest in ways to reduce discrimination and prejudice in the workplace.

Casey Williamson

Casey has worked with Dr. Kethera Fogler since the summer before her junior year. She was instrumental in setting up the Memory and Cognition Lab, for which she is currently the lab manager. During this time she helped develop a coding system used to analyze transcripts from capital murder cases in a study examining the effect of language use on jury decisions. She also developed an E-Prime program that is currently being used to study false memory. Casey is the primary researcher for a project that incorporates sleep consolidation and reaction times in testing different theories of the formation of false memory. She will be presenting her work at regional conferences this spring. Casey has also been very professional representing the Memory and Cognition Lab while working on adult participant recruitment. Additionally, Casey has worked with Dr. Jeff Dyche on behavioral pharmacology projects using SHR rats as a

possible model for ADHD by administering d-amphetamine across various responding rates in schedules of reinforcement. After graduation, Casey plans to go to graduate school and pursue a degree in experimental psychology, with a focus in cognition and neuroscience.

Senior Distinguished Service Award

This award recognizes seniors who reflect commitment to the field of psychology through their service activities.

Elissa Edwards



Elissa Edwards is an outstanding example of the engaged student. She completed 200 hours of work at Plains Elementary School through service in three different courses and three separate semesters. While at Plains elementary, she worked with Brenda Liskey's special education class providing individual assistance in an integrated classroom as well as individual support in the special education classroom. She is currently completing 150 hours of supervised work for her Field Placement course at Ashby Lee Elementary School under the supervision of Sandy Randolph. Elissa has combined her interest in psychology and education and will be attending graduate school in Exceptional Education in the fall.

Junior Award for Achievement in Research

This award is given to juniors who have demonstrated significant achievement in undergraduate research projects.

Erik Simmons

Erik Simmons is a junior and a member of Phi Sigma Pi, a national honors fraternity. He serves as a teaching assistant for Dr. Krisztina Jakobsen's Developmental Psychology class. In this role he develops activities and facilitates discussions in a class taught using team based learning. Erik has also worked in Professor Kurtz's research lab for two semesters, studying communication styles in freshman roommate pairs, as well as strategies for better appreciation college life. He has been published in e-vision's academic journal and is currently co-authoring an article on savoring and leisure with Dr. Kurtz. He works in JMU's Writing Center as a tutor, and is also on their assessment team. Outside of JMU, Erik is the assistant head wrestling coach at Harrisonburg High School.

Junior Award for Distinguished Service

This award is given to juniors who have demonstrated significant achievement in undergraduate service projects.

Ethan Bannar



Ethan is a junior who recently completed an internship with the Counseling & Student Development Center (CSDC) for which he completed 120 hours of service devoted to the advancement of the Center, including creating bulletin boards educating students about mental health issues around campus, assisting the Center's professionals, and writing a newsletter for the Sexual Trauma Empowerment Program (STEP). Ethan also coordinated passport wellness events around campus, which allowed him to interact with his peers on a more personal level. Ethan currently conducts research under the supervision of Dr. Matt Lee in the Cultural and Racial Diversity Studies Lab. He has been accepted to complete a Field Placement in the Fall of 2014 and he plans to pursue graduate study in clinical psychology.

Junior Award for Achievement in Teaching

This award is given to juniors who have demonstrated significant achievement serving as an undergraduate teaching assistant.

Julia Ricotta

Julie is a junior currently conducting her honors thesis project titled "Improving the quality of peer discussions for interteaching sessions" under the supervision of Dr. Tracy Zinn. In addition to conducting a teaching-related thesis, Julie also serves as a teaching assistant for Psychological Statistics with Dr. Zinn. Through these experiences Julie has helped to develop class materials, grade work, conduct review sessions, meet one on one with students. Julie serves as a Psychology Peer Advisor and a volunteer notetaker for the Office of Disabilities. She hopes to pursue graduate study in the field of applied behavior analysis.

Outstanding Achievement in Statistics & Research Methods

This award is given to students who showed significant talent in the methods courses through research creativity and diligence about good research design and data analysis strategies.

Lauren Argenbright
Kerry Gaffney
Kenneth Huynh

Martha Stewart
Allison Walker
Erik Simmons