



# School Psychology Newsletter

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## Award Winners

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Students in our program were honored at the Department of Graduate Psychology's Spring Celebration held on Thursday, May 7, 2015.

The entire second year cohort received the Outstanding Graduate Student in Service Award for their many contributions to local service organizations and their work with the Autism Parent Support Group. Second year student, Alexa Fitcher, received the Outstanding Graduate Student in Teaching Award for her excellent dedication to her students' academic success in statistics. Second year student, Nahal Khalatbari, was awarded the Tina Kauten Memorial Service Award as well as the O. Trice Scholarship Award. Intern Maranda VanDyke received the Outstanding Scholarship Award for her research in suicide prevention with elementary children. Intern Caitlyn Reddy was recognized with the Most Distinguished Award for her stellar performance in teaching, research, and service.

The program awarded Laura Feitchinger McGrath, ESL Coordinator for Harrisonburg City Schools, the Community Partnership Award for her many years of continued support of student training in understanding the needs of ESL students.

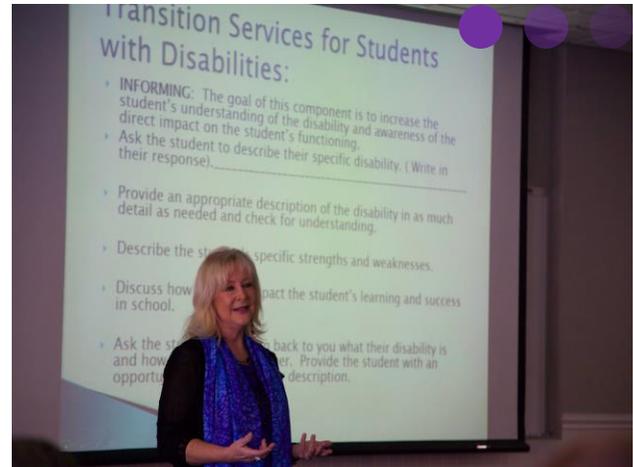
JMU was proud to host the return of all of the interns who received a special recognition at the ceremony before walking in cap and gown at the graduation ceremony that followed on Thursday evening. The interns are thrilled by their achievements!

Faculty member, Dr. Debi Kipps-Vaughn, received the Department of Graduate Psychology's Distinguished Scholar Award for the 2014-2015 school year. Congratulations, Debi!

Congratulations to all on your accomplishments and achievements!

# Annual Symposium in Research and Practice

The Department of Graduate Psychology held its annual research symposium on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015. This was a day-long event that offered a forum for students from across the department share their developing areas of expertise. The day started off with a Keynote Address from Dr. Debi Kipps-Vaughn, being honored as the Graduate Psychology's Distinguished Scholar. Debi's presentation was titled "Force Multiplied! School Wellness– Action that Strengthens from Within." Her address focused on transitional services for students with disabilities and a Response-to-Intervention approach to social and emotional learning.



The morning continued with oral presentations from the returning interns. Following a catered lunch for presenters, the sharing of research continued into the afternoon. First and second year students were in attendance throughout the day and gained wonderful insight and tips for structuring their own research. Topics presented on by our interns included:

- Suicidal Behavior among Elementary School Students: Current Needs in Prevention Practices, Mandy VanDyke
- Get Your Brain in Gear: The Benefits and Barriers of Implementing Mindfulness Curriculum for Urban Youth, Brittany Jones
- Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses Model for LD Identification, Ted Tynan
- Impacts of Mindfulness on Disruptive Behaviors Associated with Characteristics of ADHD, Joe Sims
- School Psychologists' Role in Informing Students about Their Learning Disabilities, Caitlin Reddy
- Transition Services in the Public School System for Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Krista Gieseke-Smith
- How Does Perfectionism Contribute to Anxiety in Gifted Middle School Students?, Kelsey Owens
- Satisfaction of Students with Visual Impairments within Different School Settings, Jeremiah Jordan
- The Effects of Mindfulness on Empathy and Emotional Control: Progress Report from a 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Counseling Group, Courtney Dameron
- The Evaluation of a Dual Language Reading Club for ELL Students, Sandra Gonzalez

## School Psychology Faculty and Students Engage in Mindfulness Research and Service

We read and hear about “mindfulness” in numerous domains lately – mindful eating, mindful walking, mindful breathing. It’s a popular phrase, and the intentional practice of mindfulness is proving very effective for students of all ages. Drs. Tammy Gilligan and Patti Warner have been involved in the integration of mindfulness practices in school settings for several years, providing trainings for teachers, counselors, school psychologists, and leading sessions with children using various curriculums. Tammy and Patti recently led a mini-skills workshop at the NASP conference in Orlando with over 100 participants! In addition, Dr. Gilligan has provided school based mindfulness programming for two years in Madison County Schools using the Mindful Schools Curriculum. Several graduate students have completed research in the area of mindfulness including alumnus Hannah Smith and current interns, Courtney Dameron and Joe Sims. Mindfulness matters to our faculty and our students!

## ASIST Training

First year students attended a 2-day Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) workshop on April 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014. They were originally going to attend this training in February, but due to one of the many snow days we have had this semester (six total and one two-hour delay), the training was postponed until April. Students enjoyed the training, even though it was a difficult topic matter and two intensive days of training. They found the training to be practical and reported that the ASIST model is very comprehensive. Students feel competent and comfortable to use the model.

## VASP Annual Spring Convention

### **“The Neuropsychology of Reading Disorders: Diagnosis and Intervention” Steven G. Feifer, D.Ed., NCSP, ABSNP**

The Virginia Academy of School Psychologists held its first independent conference in Charlottesville, Virginia on March 27, 2015. Students and faculty members attended a workshop presentation by alumnus, Dr. Steven Feifer, examining the process of reading from a brain-based educational perspective by classifying developmental reading disorders into four subtypes. Cognitive constructs such as orthographical processing, phonological processing, working memory, and executive functioning were discussed as the primary means to both assess and remediate learning disorders in children.



## NASP Annual Spring Convention

Faculty members attended and presented at this year’s NASP Annual Spring Convention in Orlando, Florida. We are already excited and looking forward to seeing students and Alumni at next year’s Spring Convention February 10<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup>, in New Orleans!





## Upcoming Summer Workshop

### WISC-V Insights

Please join us on June 12, 2015 from 9:00am to 4:00pm in the Madison Ballroom, located in the Madison Union, to discover the power of the newly revised WISC-V! This session will help you obtain a better understanding of the importance of cognitive functioning in the overall descriptions of a student's learning profile, as well as an overview of the modifications that were made to better represent the cognitive functioning of the child. If you need additional information, please contact Andee Henriqas at 540-568-5352 or [henriqas@jmu.edu](mailto:henriqas@jmu.edu) If you have not registered for this training workshop, you may register online at:

<https://commerce.cashnet.com/WISCV>

We hope to see you there!

## Students Support Services for Parents of Autistic Adolescents

Last June, a parent support group for parents of adolescents with autism was organized by the JMU School Psychology program and the Department of Nursing. Parents meet monthly to share their concerns and support in discussing issues that often present for adolescents with autism. The parents are invited to bring their children and the child care is provided by second year graduate students in the School Psychology Program. Students engage in activities with the children with autism and their siblings. The child care has been a critical aspect of service in supporting the success of the parent group. Some of the students who have supported this program on a consistent basis are Alexa Fatcher, Nicole Jones, Nahal Khalatbari, E'Lexus King and Kane Hamilton. The students will also provide child care at a special event being held for parents on May 19th when a community parent workshop will be presented by PEATC (Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center). The dedication and commitment of the students in providing this service is to be commended and demonstrates the heart students have for serving families and children with special needs.

## Incoming Students

We are proud and excited to welcome seven new students to the JMU School Psychology community this fall. These students come from diverse backgrounds and all have valuable experiences and knowledge to offer. New students are: Kaitlynn Carter (UVA), Alexis Morse (JMU), Katelyn Hughes (Murray State University), Rachel Larkin (JMU), Jessica Meeks (UVA), Ebony Mason (York College of Pennsylvania), and Shana Little (Virginia State University). In addition to these seven, two other applicants accepted admission and will defer for one year. We look forward to welcoming them all. Congratulations to the incoming class.

## Service Projects

Most of the service projects are initiatives that the students and faculty of the School Psychology Program continues to dedicate their time to year in and year out. These opportunities are presented during the first year in the program and participation is usually carried on into the second year. Students are encouraged to find and share new project ideas that interest them to add to the available opportunities. Because of these efforts, the School Psychology Program is able to support organizations in the community each year.

### Project Read

Project Read has had another year of awesome participation from the School Psychology Program as well as other students who attend JMU and dedicated members in the community. Beginning at 8:10 and going until 8:35, volunteer readers have the opportunity to bring the excitement of reading to K-3 students before school starts. Literacy Co-Chairs, Fred Fox and Keston Fulcher, work hard to continue develop of the program and ensure students are being exposed to a variety of books at any of the five elementary schools that are served in Harrisonburg City.

### 5K Run/Walk for Autism

The Shenandoah Valley Autism Partnership puts on an annual 5K run and walk to raise money for research and support of families with children who have Autism Spectrum Disorder. This year the event was held on April 11, 2015. It was a sunny day, and our program was represented by students and faculty. The day started with speeches given by individuals, raffles, and refreshments. The 5K started and ended at the EMU commons with an incredible turn out. Members of the community and students from other universities joined us on the walk/run and it was very powerful to see so many individuals passionate for this important cause.





## Walk for Hope

The fourth annual Walk for Hope was held on the blistery cold morning of March 28, 2015. Faculty and students from our program were joined by other JMU students, as well as students from EMU, Bridgewater College, and Blue Ridge Community College, each wearing Walk for Hope t-shirts. This event is put on to honor those who have been lost to suicide and to raise awareness of this ever-growing issue. This year, the walk started at Turner Ashby High School and ended at Bridgewater College. The speaker at the event this year was Kevin Breel, who is known for his TedTalk titled, "Confessions of a Depressed Comic." His presentation included humor and simple, yet important messages, such as, "We are not alone," and "Everyone has a story to tell." To watch his powerful TedTalk, visit this link:

[http://www.ted.com/talks/kevin\\_breel\\_confessions\\_of\\_a\\_depressed\\_comic](http://www.ted.com/talks/kevin_breel_confessions_of_a_depressed_comic)

# Support Future School Psychologists

To support the School Psychology Program and the training of our students, consider making a contribution to the JMU Foundation specifying Account Number 14789. We value your continued support in maintaining our educational excellence by providing funds that go

towards testing and materials for student research. Contributions can also be made specifically to the O. Ashton Trice Scholarship. Please refer to Account Number 1002149.

Please keep in mind, many Graduate Assistantships no longer cover the full 12 credits per semester or any of summer tuition.

**Please mail checks to:**  
Advanced Gift and Record  
James Madison University  
800 South Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 2280

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## *Contact Us!*

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Check out the JMU School Psychology Website at:  
<http://psyc.jmu.edu/school/>

Did we miss someone? Please send us **e-addresses** of colleagues who did not receive our newsletter.