49th Annual Honors Award Program

Department of Psychological Science

Central Connecticut State University

Friday, May 6, 2022, 7:00 p.m.
## Program of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Dr. Carolyn Fallahi, Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome Remarks</td>
<td>Dr. Zulma Toro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>President of CCSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salutatorian Address</td>
<td>Taya Gwizd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presented by Dr. Andrea June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valedictory Address</td>
<td>Carissa Daigle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presented by Dr. Carolyn Fallahi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of Departmental Awards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of the Faculty Award</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psi Chi Initiation Ceremony</td>
<td>Dr. Amanda Marín-Chollom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing Remarks</td>
<td>Dr. Carolyn Fallahi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Departmental Honors

Victoria Brazel
Presented by Dr. Andrea June

Victoria Brazel was an exemplary student who showed consistent leadership at CCSU. She graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Psychological Science major and a Gerontology minor. She was also selected for the 2020-2021 Gerontology Student of the Year Award for her scholarship, as well as her service to promoting age inclusivity through her internship, club leadership, and various volunteer activities. The Department of Psychological Science is incredibly proud to call Victoria an alumna of our program.

Henry Barnard Distinguished Student Award

Carissa Daigle
Presented by Dr. Carolyn Fallahi

The Psychological Science Department is extremely pleased to honor Carissa Daigle as a Barnard Scholar. The Henry Barnard Distinguished Student Award is awarded annually to 12 outstanding college students from the four Connecticut State Universities who are honored for their academic excellence and community service. This year we have chosen Carissa Daigle as our nominee, and just recently received notification that she was selected! Carissa embodies all the tenets of the award including excellence in her major and minor, continually challenging herself academically, continually improving her academic skills, and giving back to the community. Carissa, on behalf of the Department of Psychological Science, congratulations!

The Brittany Mariani, Rich Royster, and Matthew Piedesbalzo Award for a Promising New Undergraduate in Psychology

Angela Douglas
Presented by Dr. Amanda Marín-Chollom

Angela Douglas hit the ground running once she transferred to CCSU. Even though she works part-time outside the university, she is involved on campus in the Psychology Club and LGBTQ Club. She maintains a GPA over 3.5 and deeply engages with the materials and discussions in all her classes. Her career goal is to earn a PhD in Industrial/Organizational Psychology.
Academic Excellence Awards
Presented by Dr. Carrie Andreoletti

Carissa Daigle
Taya Gwizd
Victoria Brazel
Courtney Keane
Francesca Palmer
Paige Dragon
Kelly Szwaja
Adam Martino
Alisa Detushev
Shelly West
Tyra Hultgren
Olivia Christiano
Sarah Gianetti
Stephanie Brown-Bieringer

Ashley Dana
Morgan Shearin
Alyssa Kaczynski
Rachel Curcio
Mark Mathena
Isabella Salazar
Mickayla Diffley
Samantha-Sue Hanson
Kaitlin Carollo
Madison Culpepper
Kyla DelVecchio
Krystal Nazario
April Violette

Outstanding Research

Carissa Daigle
Presented by Dr. Carolyn Fallahi

Carissa has been part of my research team for the past 2 years. Together, we have published 4 papers – two on the psychological effects of COVID-19, 1 review on infusing diversity into the curriculum, and 1 book chapter examining co-occurring addictive and mental health diagnoses in adolescents. We have also completed two additional studies examining how sexual minorities are faring with the pandemic and are working to get these published. Finally, she is helping with two additional studies that will be running this semester. To say that Carissa has been indispensable is an understatement.

Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience Lab (SCAN-LAB)
Presented by Dr. Silvia Corbera-Lopez

Olivia R. Christiano
Julianne Dolecki
Shakira Hashemisohi
Zhané A. Kelly
Olivia Knight
Alexandra A. Scatena
Liliana M. Villar
Paola Zayas Garcia

During this past year, the SCAN-LAB members have worked on a variety of research projects, and specifically, assisted in implementing a large online study that examines social cognition in individuals in the schizotypal and autism spectrum. This study started in the Fall and has been
continuing this semester and the team has worked relentlessly at preparing the databases and putting together the instruments. In addition, I am very proud to share that we were able to resume in-person studies, and we successfully started again our exciting research project at the CT Science Center in Hartford, examining emotion recognition in children from 3 to 18 years old, following all the required precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This study had to pause during the COVID-19 outbreak and after two years, we are back! The team was able to attend the necessary trainings at the CT Science Center and were able to conduct the project accommodating children within a variety of ages and their families with great professionality. In addition, the team has tirelessly worked on assisting developing new materials, and putting together scoring systems, creating their own literature reviews, and assisting implementing the new projects.

I am delighted and thrilled to have had such a talented, and hard-working professional team. Thank you so much for all your work!

Mental Health Research Team
Presented by Dr. Jason Sikorski

Jessica Casamassa  Abigail Larkin
Rachel Curcio  Caitlin Murphy
Isabella Feest

For the last year, Jessica Casamassa, Rachel Curcio, Isabella Feest, Abigail Larkin, and Caitlin Murphy have been members of Dr. Jason Sikorski’s Mental Health Research Team. Dr. Sikorski was awarded a grant to conduct research to evaluate a Suicide Prevention Research Program at CCSU. While collecting the data to evaluate this important program during a global pandemic, Dr. Sikorski had to quarantine. These students ran the data collection sessions while I was out with minimal assistance. It is rare for a professor to be able to trust student research assistants so completely. In fact, I have never been more impressed with a group of undergraduate researchers. These undergraduate students combed the empirical literature, wrote up literature reviews, collected and analyzed data, and wrote up their results. All five of these students were accepted to present their stellar work at the annual refereed Eastern Psychological Association Conference in March of 2022. Few undergraduate students present their work at peer-reviewed conferences and these students delivered their presentations with energy, poise, and skill. I have no doubt that Jess, Rachel, Bella, Abigail and Caitlin will be working in the field of psychology to help others for decades to come. I could not be more hopeful about the future of our field due to working with this amazing group of people.

Tess Atkinson
Presented by Dr. John Protzko

Tess Atkinson, a graduate student in our master’s program, has focused her research on the much-needed area of mental health among college athletes. She has worked tirelessly to set up conditions for research and intervention possibilities, and to understand the role coaches play in their athlete's mental health. She has also led efforts in joining international collaborations that
Heather Bernier
*Presented by Dr. John Protzko*

Heather Bernier, a graduate student in our master’s program, has focused her research interests on looking at the conditions of attempting to study aging related phenomena using large convenience samples. This includes scholarship on multiple domains, from cognitive ability to personality characteristics to happiness. She has investigated whether such popular convenience samples can illuminate aging related phenomena faithfully, including her Master's thesis on happiness and well-being throughout the life.

Raam Patel
*Presented by Dr. Amanda Marín-Chollom*

Raam Patel, a graduate student in our master’s program, dedicated so much time and effort to produce his outstanding capstone project titled, “Stress from Natural Disasters and Pandemics and Onset of Mental Health Problems: The Role of Coping Strategies,” that he will defend by the end of the Spring 2022 semester.

**Shanette Washington Distinguished Service to the Department Award**

**Psi Chi Officer Team**
*Presented by Dr. Amanda Marín-Chollom*

Liliana Villar, President
Olivia Christiano, Vice President
Maggie Yacovino, Secretary
Ana Luisa Brown, Public Relations
Francesca Palmer, Student Faculty Liaison
Steph Brown-Bieringer, Webmaster
Miranda Simao, Treasurer

This 2021-2022 the Psi Chi Executive Board has been busy on campus and in the community. They completely reconstructed their monthly newsletter, Central Psychology News, to provide better information for students. They were able to continue their support for the Alzheimer’s Association with Gerontology Club by attending the Walk to End Alzheimer’s in Harford, CT; together they raised $1235. They also endorsed Bruno’s 5k and fitness walk by donating and advertising the event. In addition to being active in the community, the Psi Chi Executive Board is active on campus, they hosted or cohosted several events on campus, such as movie night, guest speakers, a CV workshop, and a discussion session on psychological topics.
Psychology Club Executive Board
Presented by Dr. Silvia Corbera Lopez

Stephanie A. Brown-Bieringer
Olivia R. Christiano
Erin E. Galich
Zhané A. Kelly
Courtney Keane
Nicholas J. Ludwig
Madison K. Oquendo
Francesca N. Palmer

The Psychology Club Executive Board members students have worked extremely hard to provide an amazing program this year to support and enrich the life of all Psychology Majors and support the Department of Psychological Science and CCSU. They have devoted countless hours of work and have shown great professionalism, compassion, hard work and responsibility. This executive board was able to transition all the Psychology Club events, activities and meetings back on campus after a couple of years of having everything online because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in addition, implemented new procedures such as recording the events for the students that were not able to attend. These hard-working and professional members of the Executive Board have shown through the whole semester their complete commitment to the responsibilities in Psychology Club. This year the executive board made the hard decision of not attending the Easter Psychological Association Conference (EPA) as a precaution to not spread COVID-19 after thoroughly considering all the pros and cons. And despite not attending EPA, this eboard planned, organized, and implemented amazing events placing great emphasis to cultivate equity, inclusion and diversity in their programing as well as mental health awareness, organizing events and inviting speakers such as the one on Suicided Awareness from the Counseling and Wellness center, collaborated with the Office of Equity and Inclusion for the Sexual Assault Awareness Month, assisted with the creation of the CV writing workshop in the Fall with Dr. Fallahi; and they collaborated with the CCSU LGBT Center for History Month, and organized other celebratory events such as the Hispanic/Latino/a/x/e Heritage Month and Black History Month.

Psychology Graduate Assistants
Presented by Dr. Carrie Andreoletti

Heather Bernier
Max Borst
Hannah Rodriguez

We are so appreciative of the hard work of our graduate assistants (GAs), Heather, Max, and Hannah, who do so much of the behind-the-scenes work that keeps the department running. This year was especially challenging as our administrative assistant was on medical leave for several months this fall and then retired last month before the semester ended. In addition to their regular duties, our GAs jumped in to scan exams and take care of other things our administrative assistant would normally have done. As the new assistant chair, I was grateful I could rely on them to get things done with little oversight. They are the department’s unsung heroes, always willing to help out and handle even the most mundane tasks with a smile. They’ve been unbelievably willing to do things at a moment’s notice (which we try to avoid, but sometimes it happens) and we’re very grateful for their service this year! Thank you!
Psychology Peer Tutors
Presented by Dr. Caleb Bragg

Jessica Casamassa
Madeline Christensen-LeCain
Carissa Daigle
Ashley Dana
Courtney Keane

John Lux
Yuliya Polichsuk
Alexandra Scatena
Liliana Villar

Being a peer tutor is an under-thanked, under-appreciated, yet invaluable service to Psychology Students everywhere at CCSU. These peer tutors have taken it upon themselves, without any expectation of compensation or recognition, to hone their skills in data analysis and research design and passed that knowledge on to their fellow undergraduate students, and even the occasional graduate student! The following direct quote from a former student of mine exemplifies the dedication and importance of these peer tutors: “I never would have passed research methods without the peer tutors. [Peer tutors] never got annoyed or frustrated with me, always helped me stick with until I got it. I am so grateful, because of [peer tutors] I can graduate!”

Eastern Psychological Association (EPA) Annual Meeting Presenters
Presented by Dr. Andrea June

Jessica Casamassa
Rachel Curcio
Isabella Feest
Abigail Larkin

Caitlin Murphy
Alexandra Scatena
Courtney Keane

Faculty Award
Presented by Psychology Club
Psi Chi Initiation Ceremony
Presented by Dr. Amanda Marín-Chollom, Psi Chi Faculty Advisor, and Olivia Christiano, Psi Chi Vice President

Gerald Alena
Lisa Avery
Marcie Berman
Ana Luisa Brown
Stephanie Brown-Bieringer
Jesus Bueno
Jessica Denike
Alisa Detushev
Paige Dragon
Meg Dugas
Katie Erdos
Isabella Feest
Bridget Fehon
Sylwia Furdyna
Erin Galich
Sarah Gaudiana
Mark Glaser
Megan Hall
Matthew Hamill
Samantha-Sue Hanson
Tyra Hultgren
Zhané Kelly
Megan Kertesz
Olivia Knight
Nicholas Ludwig
Natalijia Marosz
Isabella Martin
Caitlin Murphy
Francesca Palmer
Amy Lana Rezende
Mckenna Rilley
Oliwia Rozio
Nicole Santoro
Carlie Shepard
Miranda Simao
Brianna Starkey
Erin Sullivan
Christopher Theriault

April Violette
Phoebe White
Janah Wright
Gustavo Xara
Margaret Yacovino
Gabriella Zyla