

“Celebrating Psychological Research at Metro State”

Second Annual Psychology Research Colloquium

March 31, 2012, Library, Room 302 (EcoLab)

Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Glen Spielmans – “Benefits from Collaborative Faculty-Student Research”

By collaborating with faculty on research projects, students gain hands-on experience with the scientific method, enhance their critical thinking skills, improve their knowledge of research design, and boost their chances for graduate school admission. An overview of multiple faculty-student projects will be provided along with profiles of successful student researchers.

Dr. Spielmans is an Associate Professor at Metropolitan State University and has a Ph.D. in clinical/counseling/school psychology from Utah State University. Dr. Spielmans' interests and published papers are in areas such as: Psychotherapy outcomes; Methods of assessing treatment outcomes; Interface of science and marketing regarding psychotropic medications; Accuracy of pharmaceutical advertisements; Health psychology interventions; and Meta-analysis.

Student Research Presentations – Session I

Grant Mehrer – “Unrolling the Scroll: The Influence of Structure and On-Screen Scrolling on Reading Comprehension”

The variety of screen sizes and devices with which we view documents has increasingly required us to scroll in order to view the entire document. The current research evaluates the effects of scrolling text, suggesting that text structure leads to changes in comprehension.

Grant Mehrer is a Psychology major at Metropolitan State and expects to earn his B.A. in August, 2012. He is a Marine Corps Veteran (5 years) and plans to continue his education toward a Master’s degree in Applied Psychology or Human Factors.

Meghan Huck – “Psychological Benefits of Community Service and Gardening”

The beauty of a community garden is obvious. The deeply-rooted benefits of doing community service work in a community garden are lesser known but significant. Research shows that doing community service can improve an individual’s psychological well-being and strengthen a community. For the purpose of this research the emphasis of community service is on community gardening. The aim of my research is to further support the evidence that doing community service and becoming involved in community gardening is beneficial to not only oneself but also to the community.

Meghan Huck will earn her B.A. in Psychology at Metropolitan State in April, 2012. She will start work toward an MSW at the College of St. Catherine in the fall. She has 15 years of volunteer work experience, including a school garden at St. Paul Public Schools, Habitat for Humanity, and the Metropolitan State Community garden/orchard

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Melissa Heinz – “Qualitative Analysis and Assessment of the Personal Learning Assessment Tool”

This presentation provides a qualitative evaluation of the Personal Learning Assessment Tool (PLAT) for the Minnesota Center for Professional Development. The PLAT is currently used to measure the effectiveness of the Minnesota Child Care Credential courses; curriculum designed to support, inform and assist in the development of statewide practitioners providing quality care to children. This project will consider the advantages of and possible amendments to the existing tool while taking into consideration organizational psychology in a community setting.

Melissa Heinz is a student in the Psychology M.A. Program at Metropolitan State University. She received her B.A. in Biology and her graduate work has primarily focused on Community-Based Public Health. Melissa is currently a Registry, Data Integrity, and Audit Specialist at the Minnesota Center for Professional Development.

Student Research Presentations – Session I

Alexander Kempe & Kasandra Danielson -- “When Chaos Comes Home: An investigation into sensation seeking and reflective activity in combat versus non-combat soldiers”

American culture has a long history of soldiers returning from war and the complexities of readjustment to daily life. This is alarming, because veterans of war are exposed not only to extreme physical conditions, but also intense emotional and mental conditions, during their deployments. The environmental impact of combat zones requires an alertness and higher state of arousal than that of everyday life. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the influence of combat on risky thoughts and behaviors for soldiers.

Alexander Kempe is a sophomore at Metropolitan State working toward a B.A. in Psychology. A Veteran, he hopes to continue his research on the effects of deployment and combat on soldiers with the ultimate goal of obtaining a doctorate in psychology and working on the reintegration issues facing soldiers returning home from war.

Kasandra Danielson is a Psychology major at Metropolitan State who expected to earn her B.A. in 2012. She has presented previous research at the Minnesota Undergraduate Research Conference, and is interested in issues facing Veterans.

Cassandra Ruedy – “Emotions and Coping Strategies”

In my study I generated a survey to evaluate the relationship between emotional reactivity and coping styles. I compared the 15 strategies outlined by the COPE Scale (1997) with mood awareness, need for affect, emotional expressivity, affect intensity and repressive emotion. Findings reinforced the idea that various aspects of emotional reactivity are related to the coping strategies that individuals choose to use to manage stress in their daily lives. It was revealed that denial, humor, and disengagement were used most often to cope. Further, the more one seeks emotional support the less one represses emotional experience.

Cassandra Ruedy recently earned a B.A. in Psychology from Metropolitan State, and has been admitted to Metropolitan State’s M.A. Program in Psychology where she will specialize in Applied Social Psychology.

Suggested citation format:

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