

**Valdosta State University's Graduate School presents
the Sixteenth Annual Graduate Student Research
and Scholarship Symposium**

April 5, 2024

- 3:00 – 4:00PM • Student Union Theater**
3MT Presentations
Audience votes on Peoples' Choice Award
GA of the Year Awards
- 4:00 - 6:00PM • Student Union Ball Rooms**

Welcome: Dr. Becky da Cruz, Associate Provost for Graduate Studies & Research

Opening Remarks: Dr. Sheri Noviello, Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Special Recognitions: Dr. Becky da Cruz, Associate Provost for Graduate Studies & Research

Please enjoy the Posters, 3MT Presentations, and Musical Performances!

Refreshments provided by the Office of University Advancement.



GRADUATE SCHOOL

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Musical Performances

College of the Arts

Music

Trio No 2 for two violins and cello, Op 12, Mov 1: Espressivo

Composed by: Karol Lipinsky

Performed by: Xin Yu Chang, violin, Felipe Romagnoli, violin, and Lidia Sanchez, cello

Dr. Joshua Pifer, Faculty Mentor

Department of Music

Performance starts at 4:30PM

Sonata No. 4-Allemande

Composed by: Eugene Ysaye

Performed by: Felipe Romagnoli, violin

Dr. Kristin Pfeifer, Faculty Mentor

Department of Music

Performance starts at 5:15PM

Posters

College of the Arts

Music

ELEGY FOR A LOST HOME: PAUL HINDEMITH'S *SONATA FOR OBOE AND PIANO*

Lindsay Miller

Dr. Susan Eischeid, Faculty Mentor
Department of Music

The use of music as a form of emotional expression can be seen throughout centuries of compositions and Paul Hindemith's *Sonata for Oboe and Piano* is no exception. It is very evident that the Nazi party affected the works of Hindemith at a seminal point in his career. Hindemith's music had already been labeled as degenerate ('entartete') by the Nazis in 1938 and, with a few exceptions, was prohibited from being performed in Germany as early as 1936. In private, Hindemith composed his sonatas for wind instruments. These sonatas were meant to be performed in the home and almost certainly functioned as a vehicle Hindemith used to escape the dim reality of the Third Reich under Hitler's rule. In this study I will examine the political realities in Germany in the 1930s and how they affected Hindemith's compositions and the compositional techniques used in his oboe sonata.

College of Education & Human Services

Communication Sciences & Disorders

HOW DOES FEEDBACK AFFECT THE SPEAKING INTENSITY OF INDIVIDUALS WITH PARKINSON'S

Lora Glover

Mrs. Katherine Walden, Faculty Mentor
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative disease that causes a loss of dopaminergic neurons in the substantia nigra. This disease has many treatment options, one being a behavioral treatment, such as SPEAK OUT!®. SPEAK OUT!® is a program for individuals with Parkinson's disease and related movement disorders. This program is designed to aid in maintaining and improving their communication. The purpose of this study is to determine if feedback affects the speaking intensity of individuals with Parkinson's. An individual with Parkinson's agreed to participate in this study and was the sole participant. Data from a clinical SPEAK OUT!® session with a clinician providing feedback was compared to homework data completed alone by the participant with no feedback. The results determined that decibel levels in clinical SPEAK OUT!® sessions with a clinician providing feedback were higher than in homework sessions with no feedback.

THE RAN/RAS TEST AND BILINGUALISM: AN ANALYSIS OF RAN-READING RELATIONSHIP AMONG BILINGUAL INDIVIDUALS

Sophia Guzman-Roman & Ana Wortham

**Dr. Matthew Carter, Faculty Mentor
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**

Automaticity, or the ability to perform tasks quickly and accurately, allows individuals to perform everyday activities with ease and in a timely manner. With an increasing rate of Bilingual individuals, it is important to study the impact of bilingualism on linguistic automaticity, since two languages must be stored and accessed. The Rapid Automatized Naming and Rapid Alternating Stimulus (RAN/RAS) test examines the ability to identify visual stimuli accurately and rapidly and is a predictor of reading development in individuals in different languages. By administering this test to 3 bilingual individuals in their native and secondary language, the automaticity of both languages was evaluated and compared. Results from the participants revealed that the first language that was acquired had minimal impact on automaticity. Instead, automaticity was most efficient in the individual's dominant language, which was not necessarily their first language acquired, but instead, the language they were more proficient in.

SIMULTANEOUS AUDITORY AND VISUAL READING MODALITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA

C. Annie Eilders & Hally Spikes

**Dr. Matthew Carter, Faculty Mentor
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**

The authors of this study aimed to determine the efficacy of reading silently while simultaneously hearing the material read aloud as an accommodation for students with dyslexia. The participant was a nine-year-old Caucasian male with an active diagnosis of dyslexia. The authors of this study administered a portion of the Gray Silent Reading Test (GSRT; Wiederholt & Blalock, 2000) twice to the participant. The first administration included only the material being read aloud by the examiner, and the second administration included the participant silently reading along while the examiner read the text aloud. The participant correctly answered 9/15 questions on the first trial and correctly answered 11/15 questions on the second trial. This indicates that concurrent silent reading and audible presentation of the reading material may have positive impacts on comprehension for students with dyslexia.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPEECH PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS & SPEECH IMITATION ABILITIES

Marla Barragan & Alexa Johanson

**Dr. Matthew Carter, Faculty Mentor
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between speech imitation and phonological awareness. The topics of the neurological basis of imitation, speech perception, production elements, accents, and phonological awareness were explored. Four monolingual native English speakers participated in an imitation task, rated by 52 communication sciences and disorders graduate students at Valdosta State University. Their phonological awareness was assessed using the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing - 2nd Edition (CTOPP-2). Results proposed a positive correlation between participants' mean imitation ratings and their overall phonological awareness scores. The findings suggest that individuals with higher phonological awareness exhibit better speech imitation abilities, implicating the importance of phonological awareness in imitation and potentially language development. The study's limitations highlight a need for further research with a larger and more diverse sample to generalize the relationship between speech imitation and phonological awareness.

ELECTROLARYNGEAL SPEECH VS. TRACHEOESOPHAGEAL SPEECH

McKynleigh Harrell & Hannah Schroeder

**Dr. Gorham-Rowan, Faculty Mentor
Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders**

The Assessment Intelligent of Dysarthric Speech is a test used to determine the intelligibility between single words and connected speech in someone with dysarthria. The purpose of this study was to determine the efficiency factors of intelligibility of a laryngectomee's electrolaryngeal speech and tracheoesophageal speech. The AIDS test was administered to an 82-year-old male who underwent a laryngectomy a few months after receiving a laryngeal cancer diagnosis. The interviewer was required to read 50 words and 22 sentences using both electrolaryngeal and tracheoesophageal speech. A group of judges then listened to the audio to determine if they could understand what the interviewee was saying. The results of the test showed the lowest percent of intelligibility was the word section of the electrolaryngeal scoring an average of 81%. The highest percent of intelligibility was the connected speech part of the tracheoesophageal speech scoring an average of 100%.

Human Services

EXPLORING HIDDEN TALENT: IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE'S TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Katherine S. Thornton

**Dr. Ophelie Desmet, Faculty Mentor
Department of Human Services**

This literature review explores the under-researched intersection of academic giftedness and hearing impairment within the hard of hearing community. The aim is to synthesize existing knowledge on the educational experiences, challenges, and unique needs of academically gifted individuals who navigate the complexities of hearing loss. The review examines a select sample of participants within the hard of hearing community, shedding light on the nuanced factors influencing their academic achievement and social development. The primary focus is on identifying key themes and gaps in current literature, encompassing studies published over the past two decades. Methodological considerations, such as sample selection criteria and assessment tools used in identifying academic giftedness within the hard of hearing population, are critically evaluated. The challenges of ensuring inclusivity and equitable representation in gifted education programs for hard of hearing students are also explored. Findings reveal a paucity of research specifically dedicated to this unique demographic, emphasizing the necessity for targeted investigations that address the intersectionality of academic giftedness and hearing impairment. While existing studies highlight the resilience and strengths of academically gifted individuals with hearing loss, they also underscore the need for tailored interventions and support systems. The abstract concludes with a call for future research to expand on the current understanding, advocating for a more inclusive and nuanced approach to gifted education that considers the diverse needs of the hard of hearing community. By elucidating the challenges and successes of academically gifted individuals within this population, this literature review aims to contribute educational strategies and policies that foster the intellectual growth and social well-being of these students.

Leadership, Technology, & Workforce Development

PUTTING UP BARRIERS OR BUILDING BRIDGES: EXPLORING HOW FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS ARE RISING UP TO MEET THE HUNGER NEEDS OF STUDENTS IN SELECT USG INSTITUTIONS

Abigail Easton

**Dr. Matthew Smith and Dr. Jamie Workman, Faculty Mentors
Department of Leadership, Technology, and Workforce Development**

Food Insecurity is an issue that was estimated to affect 1 in 3 college students nationwide before the pandemic. In the "post-COVID" environment food security in college students is worsening. This study aims to study how nonprofit faith-based organizations help to address food insecurity on college campuses by focusing on one institution of higher education in the University System of Georgia, Valdosta State University and the Episcopal College Ministry called Grace Cafe. For this research, I interviewed both the Director and a group of students who utilize the food pantry services were interviewed in order to understand how this organization can partner with their local universities to advertise to the student body, highlight how they work in providing access to food for students experiencing food insecurity in order to meet the food needs of the students. Furthermore, the findings of this study are effective in serving as a model for other campus ministries across the state of Georgia as well as the greater higher education community.

EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF FAT-BODIED STUDENTS WHO ARE AFFILIATED WITH OR WHO INTEND TO AFFILIATE WITH A NATIONAL PAN-HELLENIC COUNCIL FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES

Mya Curry

**Dr. Jamie workman and Matthew Smith, Faculty Mentor
Department of Leadership, Technology, Workforce Development**

Students at institutions of higher education desire to feel a part of campus. However, for fat-bodied students, their experiences are often lost in the influx of opinions from students, staff, faculty, and university system administration. The literature on the experiences of fat-bodied students in higher education, in general, is limited, with the literature on fat-bodied students participating in fraternity and sorority life being even more limited. The publications and sources that do exist with slightly more frequency tend to be blog posts or personal websites addressing the topic. This poster serves to highlight the emerging findings of a research study exploring the lived experiences and preconceived ideas of fat-bodied students' engagement with NPHC fraternities and sororities.

Industrial/Organizational Psychology

IMPOSTOR FEELINGS & COLLEGE

Denton Jones and Hunter Neal

**Dr. Christopher Downing, Faculty Mentor
Department of I/O Psychology**

The present study investigated factors contributing to imposter feelings among college students. Imposter phenomenon, characterized by feelings of inadequacy despite evident achievements, is a prevalent issue among college populations with potential negative implications for academic performance and psychological well-being. Through an electronic survey emailed to students at Valdosta State University, this study explored various factors such as psycho-social support, course engagement, and academic performance (i.e., GPA) in relation to imposter feelings. The findings shed light on the complex interplay between these variables and their impact on students' experiences of imposterism. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing targeted interventions and support systems to mitigate imposter feelings and promote student success in higher education settings.

WORKSPACE PERSONALIZATION: A SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY PERSPECTIVE

Jessica Erin Dailey, Samuel Nicolas, Katarina Noll, and Eric Zhu

**Dr. Christopher Downing, Faculty Mentor
Department of I/O Psychology**

We explore the impact of one's ability to personalize their workspace on an individual's presentation of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) as well as counterproductive workplace behaviors (CWB). This study aims to explore whether autonomy satisfaction is a significant mediating variable in the relationships between workspace personalization, job satisfaction, OCB, and CWB. We found that workspace personalization ($p=0.3979$, $=0.1703$) is positively related to increases in job satisfaction as mediated by autonomy satisfaction ($p=<0.00001$, $=0.6113$).

Social Work

PAINTING AWAY THE BAD DAYS: EFFECTIVENESS OF ART THERAPY FOR REDUCING DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS IN A FEMALE WITH DEMENTIA

Payten M. McCloud

**Dr. Hanae Kanno, Faculty Mentor
Department of Human Services - Master of Social Work (MSW) Program**

Dementia is a devastating disease that takes a large toll on an individual's mental and physical capabilities. In the early stages, diagnosed individuals are aware of their decline which can lead to depression, anxiety, and loss of hope. This single subject research design project focuses on a female with dementia at an Alzheimer's Day Care Center. The purpose of this project is to measure the effects of art therapy on her depressive symptoms. This SSRD is important because it highlights effective methods in preventing depressive symptoms in dementia patients. Two assessments are used the PRIME-MD: Patient Health Questionnaire (mood scale) and a Likert scale measuring satisfaction from participant. The findings of this research present that art therapy is effective in decreasing depressive symptoms in dementia patients.

THE EFFECTS OF ART THERAPY ON PERCIEVED STRESS AND ANXIETY OF A FULL TIME STUDENT WORKER

Codi Bennett

**Dr. Hanae Kanno, Faculty Mentor
Department of Human Services - Master of Social Work (MSW) Program**

Attending college while working as a full-time worker can be stressful. This Single Subject Research Design (SSRD) was created to see how effective art therapy was for a full-time student worker. The goal for the SSRD was to decrease symptoms of anxiety and stress in a full-time student worker with the use of an art therapy intervention. The Perceived Stress Scale was utilized to reflect her daily feeling of stress. The Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale was utilized to monitor her daily anxiety level. The data collected showed a decrease in stress levels and symptoms of anxiety based on the Perceived Stress Scale and Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale.

THE EFFECTS OF PLAY THERAPY ON REDUCING ANXIETY AND INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN AN ADOLESCENT ATTENDING OUTPATIENT GROUP THERAPY

Karla Timbang

Dr. Hanae Kanno, Faculty Mentor

Department of Human Services - Master of Social Work (MSW) Program

According to Koukourikos' article, *An Overview of Play Therapy* (2021), "the power of play can assist children with preventing or resolving psychosocial difficulties and achieve optimal growth." This therapeutic intervention enables children to express their emotions and react to activities naturally while simultaneously easing the pressure of therapy. This Single Subject Research Design (SSRD) studies the effects of play therapy on an adolescent's anxiety levels and participation in an outpatient group therapy. The subject completed a Likert-type scale at the beginning of each session to measure her anxiety. To measure the level of participation in the group therapy, the therapist recorded each comment the subject made and categorized them into two groups: relevant to lesson or extraneous. The results reflected a decrease in subject's anxiety levels and an increase in group participation.

COMBATING A CLINICIAN'S BURNOUT AND STRESS WITH MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

Lindsay Thomas

Dr. Hanae Kanno, Faculty Mentor

Department of Human Services - Master of Social Work (MSW) Program

Mental health clinicians spend their work lives supporting patients to such a degree that they often forget to prioritize their own well-being. Research shows that 35-54% of U.S. clinicians experience significant symptoms of burnout (National Academies of Sciences, 2019). It is imperative to identify methods that combat the issue of clinician burnout. This single subject research design study investigates the effects of mindfulness practice on a clinician's burnout and stress-level. The subject completed Maslach's Burnout Inventory (MBI) and a Perceived Stress Questionnaire (PSQ) at work daily. On predesignated intervention days, the subject performed her typical daily routine followed by a mindfulness practice exercise. The results reflected a decrease in the subject's stress-level and burn out on days of intervention.

THE EFFECTS OF MINDFULNESS THERAPY ON A SCHOOL COUNSELOR EXPERIENCING COMPASSION FATIGUE

Margaret A. Mizwa

**Dr. Hanae Kanno, Faculty Mentor
Department of Human Services - Master of Social Work (MSW) Program**

Compassion Fatigue is common among school counselors, due to constant exposure to trauma. The subject for my Single Subject Research Designs (SSRD) project, a school counselor, expressed feeling depressed, discouraged, and consumed with the guilt of not being able to do enough for her students. The goal of this SSRD is to give the school counselor the proper tools to cope with her new position through mindfulness practice. A Likert type scale measuring quality of sleep and a compassion fatigue scale were used to record her symptoms during baseline and intervention phases. Intervention included a self-care bath added to her nightly routine and coloring exercises. The results exhibited improvement. The loving-kindness coloring exercise decreased the total score on the compassion fatigue scale. Her nighttime routine of self-care increased restfulness.

THE EFFECTS OF RELAXATION THERAPY ON ANXIETY AND STRESS LEVELS OF A DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES COUNTY DIRECTOR

Celeste Brown

**Dr. Hanae Kanno, Faculty Mentor
Department of Human Services - Master of Social Work (MSW) Program**

A Division of Family and Children Services County Director is responsible for all of the employees in a county office and is ultimately responsible for all actions and decisions made by those employees. Due to these responsibilities, a County Director is at risk for high levels of stress and anxiety. The purpose of the Single Subject Research Design (SSRD) project was to determine if relaxation therapy was effective in decreasing a County Director's anxiety and stress levels. The Beck Anxiety Inventory and the Perceived Stress scale were used for a County Director to report symptoms of anxiety and stress before and after relaxation therapy. The data collected demonstrated that relaxation therapy was an effective treatment modality supported by decreased anxiety and stress levels for the County Director.

EFFECTIVENESS OF SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY BASED INTERVENTIONS FOR REDUCING AN ADULT MALE'S SEVERITY OF DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS AND INCREASING SENSE OF AUTONOMY, COMPETENCE, CONNECTION, AND ATTENDANCE OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH GROUP SERVICES

Jason Wilkerson

Dr. Hanae Kanno, Faculty Advisor

Department of Human Services - Master of Social Work (MSW) Program

Client retention and engagement have always been an issue for Community Service Boards (CSB) providing behavioral health services, and both have been negatively impacted by COVID-19. The purpose of this study was to identify the effectiveness of Self-Determination Theory based interventions used with an adult male client to reduce symptom severity, increase their sense of Self-Determination, and increase attendance of group services in a Day Program. Measures used included a modified form of the AIR Self-Determination Scale (SDS) to assess the client's senses of Autonomy, Competence, Connection, the number of days he was in attendance of group services, and a Likert scale to access severity of symptoms. A reconstructed baseline was used with both phases consisting of three weeks. Outcome measures indicated changes across all dependent variables, including an increase in overall self-determination scores, an increase in the client's attendance, and a decrease in the severity of symptoms.

College of Humanities & Social Sciences

English

MOTHERS AND MIRRORS: *THE END OF ALICE AND THE CITY SON*

Georgia Wynn

Dr. Adam Wood, Faculty Mentor

Department of English

Trauma is like a mirror, although victims' reflections may or may not look the same. Sexual trauma discourse often focuses on familial cases of sexual abuse involving patriarchal abusers and young female victims. This study explores two novels featuring male characters who suffer from sexual abuse at the hands of their mothers. Chappy in *The End of Alice* perpetuates his trauma onto girls while Tarun in *The City Son* fills a more traditional victim role. Using mimetic theory and psychoanalytic theory, this study aims to answer the question "How can we feel empathy towards both Tarun and Chappy despite one being ruined by his trauma and the other being a ruiner as a result of his trauma?" Although these novels are fictional, the topics with them are not. In reality there are men who suffer from sexual abuse, and they are much less likely to report their cases.

Modern and Classical Languages

THE ROLE OF PRIVATE SPEECH IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Sally J. Loughran

**Dr. Victoria Russell, Faculty Mentor
Department of Modern & Classical Languages**

This literature review examined several studies concerning private speech and its effect on second language acquisition. These studies show that private speech is integral to second language learning. This aspect has not been studied enough, according to some of the researchers. However, that trend is changing, as the current findings demonstrate the importance and connection between private speech and cognitive processes for learning. Private speech is shown to improve a learner's ability to internalize language and to become thinkers in the second language. While it can be difficult to capture learners' private speech during the language learning process, this poster includes a table with examples of how private speech may be captured for research purposes. Moreover, the poster includes key terms, a summary of the studies that were examined, and pedagogical implications for world language classrooms.

THE EFFECTS OF ACCENT AND IDENTITY ON SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Sarrah Taouil

**Dr. Victoria Russell, Faculty Mentor
Department of Modern & Classical Languages**

This literature review examined five research studies that investigated the effects of accent and identity on individuals acquiring a second language. In all of the studies that were reviewed, accent and identity were shown to have a large effect on second language acquisition. Moreover, the findings revealed that perception of one's own accent can inhibit or expand a learner's language journey. For some individuals, maintaining their accent is a sign of holding onto their identity; and for others, acquiring a native-like accent leads to social acceptance and integration into the second language culture. These studies, stemming from a sociolinguistic perspective, showed that identity can heavily impact a learner's success, motivation, and the perception of their own accent as well as the accent of others.

IS PROCESSING INSTRUCTION EFFECTIVE FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING?

Maria de Sousa Silva

**Dr. Victoria Russell, Faculty Mentor
Department of Modern & Classical Languages**

This poster reviewed five studies on processing instruction (PI), a research-based technique for teaching second language grammar. PI is a completely input-based technique, as students never produce the targeted grammatical forms during instruction. The goal of PI is to help learners make correct form-meaning connections, which is the connection between a grammatical form and the referential meaning that it encodes. PI has three parts: (1) an explicit explanation of grammar, (2) information on processing strategies, and (3) structured input activities. Language learners often engage in faulty or flawed input processing strategies that can create misunderstandings or delays in the acquisition process. With PI, learners are provided with information on how to avoid faulty input processing strategies in favor of more optimal ones. The findings revealed that PI is superior to traditional output-based instruction for interpretive tasks and equal to traditional output-based instruction for production tasks.

WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF LANGUAGE ANXIETY ON SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Mitch McPherson

**Dr. Victoria Russell, Faculty Mentor
Department of Modern & Classical Languages**

This poster presents a review of several studies related to foreign language anxiety (FLA) and the effect that it has on second language acquisition. The findings revealed that language anxiety is a phenomenon that affects all language learners to different extents and in different domains. The majority of the studies implemented the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to measure participants' perceived anxiety levels. Several key implications for classroom practice are detailed on this poster that will help world language teachers create classroom environments that are supportive and that reduce their students' language anxiety levels. Moreover, the studies suggest that students can lower their own language anxiety by studying abroad in a target language country.

THE OUTPUT HYPOTHESIS AND SECOND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Dalia Saldierna Ortiz

**Dr. Victoria Russell, Faculty Mentor
Department of Modern and Classical Languages**

The output hypothesis (Swain, 1985) has made a tremendous impact on the field of second language acquisition since its inception. According to Swain, learners' production of output is a key factor in the acquisition process because it prompts learners to notice gaps in their linguistic knowledge and seek ways to fill them. This process fosters self-awareness and encourages learners to actively participate in their language development journey, rather than being passive recipients of input. Closely tied to this hypothesis is the role of corrective feedback. When learners engage in output-based activities, they are exposed to potential errors or deviations from the target language norms. Therefore, receiving timely and constructive feedback, whether from teachers or peers, can help learners refine their language production and enhance their overall linguistic competence. Five studies were examined on this topic and their pedagogical implications are a key feature of this poster presentation.

Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice

THE RHYTHM OF AGING

Robin J. Foulkes

Dr. Ellis Logan, Faculty Mentor

Department of Sociology, Anthropology, & Criminal Justice

Disengagement Theory would have us believe that as we age as we age, we all do it the same way. How we age is neither universal nor is it intrinsic with the exceptions of the changes that take place both biologically and chronologically. Disengagement is not always a matter of choice but how we maneuver through this most natural process of life is what determines our rhythm. Certain key principals associated with the theory leave room for further study. A series of oral histories were conducted including certain members from the senior populations in our communities. These interviews can be a determining factor in how our senior population is viewed and whether or not some of the key principles associated with the theory are accurate.

A METHODS STUDY OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH AND THE WORKPLACE

Madeline M. Smetana

Dr. Ellis Logan & Dr. Anne Price, Faculty Mentors

Department of Sociology, Anthropology, & Criminal Justice

Workplaces often inform the importance of mental health to their staff, but too often workers are not receiving such support from their workplace. A survey was created asking participants about their connection between mental health and the workplace. The survey is to gain data and process whether companies truly care for their employee's mental health or if their main goal is running the company to make a profit. The main research question is if companies truly care for their employee's mental health and provide support when being presented to it. A hypothesis that can be formed is that companies tend to shut down or silence their employees when such a topic is presented to them. Another hypothesis can be formed that sex plays a role in whether the employee receives support or not, often women receive negative support or backlash. Mental health is important to the individual as well as their performance in the workplace, something that needs constant data collection to further improve performance.

SELF-CARE vs. SELF-CODDLING

Maya K. James

Dr. Ellis Logan & Dr. Anne Price, Faculty Advisors

Department of Sociology, Anthropology, & Criminal Justice

The objective of this research endeavor is to determine whether community-based mental health workers are more vulnerable to engaging in excessive self-coddling, which may have detrimental effects on their stress levels and burnout, in contrast to practicing effective self-care. Acknowledging the distinct obstacles encountered by these professionals within community environments, our objective is to reveal context-specific understandings of their self-care methodologies. Our research aims to investigate these dynamics to provide insights for the development of targeted interventions and support systems that can effectively mitigate burnout and enhance the overall welfare of mental health professionals who work in the community.

**COMMUNICATION BEHIND BARS:
AN ANALYSIS OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN
OFFENDERS AND CIVILIANS**

Morgan Kidd

**Dr. Ellis Logan & Dr. Anne Price, Faculty Mentors
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, & Criminal Justice**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between civilians and offenders via Reddit. This initial idea sparked with the view of violent offenders in the media and how some become celebrities based on media attention. Famous offenders and those who have committed unspeakable crimes have had contact with those outside the confinement of prisons and jails. Using Reddit, using content analysis, I reviewed 50 Reddit post from a community named "prison pen pals". Each post was coded based on presence of photo, contact information, preferred way to message, etc. My hypothesis is more females are in jail for Part 2 crimes and most people will prefer the app Getting Out over Jpay, mail, and phone calls. The purpose of this study is that it is a topic that is overlook as well as it is intriguing the comments, post, and rave about those who committed violent crimes.

**WHERE'S THE ART?
ART CURATION AND THE EXCLUSION OF
AFRICAN DIASPORIC ART IN MAINSTREAM MUSEUMS**

Dominique A. Pollard

**Dr. Ellis Logan & Dr. Anne Price, Faculty Mentors
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, & Criminal Justice**

Museums are essentially visual and interactive libraries that promote discourse and present physical history that is often discussed, but rarely seen in other areas. This is a significant place for African diasporic art as brings forth educational value to those who aren't aware of non-Westernized artists. This also gives young Black artists the representation needed to aspire towards this level of artistry. Art curation, being used to bridge the gap between artists and their audiences, has been beneficial to many and a detriment to others. With its standards situated within a Eurocentric mold, the permanence and impact of *progressive* African diasporic within museums struggles to move to the forefront, minimizing awareness of these artists. This project aims to discuss the role of the curator and its impact on African diasporic artists as well as the implications of racism and capitalism on the promotion of stereotypical representation of African diasporic art.

College of Science and Mathematics

Biology

FINDING MR. OR MS. RIGHT: SEAHORSE MATE CHOICE

Darshi Patel

Dr. Emily Rose, Faculty Mentor
Department of Biology

Algal-induced turbidity can alter several important aspects of reproduction and sexual selection. This experiment investigated the effects of algal turbidity on the mate choice of dwarf seahorses (*Hippocampus zosterae*) exhibiting distinct courtship displays. The experimental design consisted of two sex-biased treatments: female-biased (2F: 1M), and male-biased (1F: 2M) set up in clear and turbid water (n=7, 84 seahorses). The winner is designated as the fish that either received (male) or successfully transferred (female) eggs with the focal fish. Seahorse behaviors are related to courtship and competition prior to copulation. Our major finding shows males in turbid water choose mate regardless of courtship activity levels or body sizes unlike clear waters. Overall, courtship behaviors were higher when females are given choice between two potential males compared to female biased treatments with male mate choice. This study's results will help us better understand mate choice criteria for seahorses in eutrophic waters.

PLANT STRESS RESPONSE: HOW METHYL JASMONATE TRIGGERS DEFENSE MECHANISMS

Daniel Rincon Diaz

Dr. Ansul Lokdarshi, Faculty Mentor
Department of Biology

Plant growth and productivity rely on rapid energy management strategies designed to manage different environmental conditions (e.g., temperature, humidity and pathogens). Previous work by Dr. Lokdarshi identified a novel fast-regulatory switch in *Arabidopsis thaliana* that functions at the nexus of two fundamental energy management programs, cytosolic translation and reactive oxygen species (ROS) signaling. The General Control of Nonderepressible 2 (GCN2), a cytosolic serine/threonine protein kinase, is rapidly activated in response to ROS emanating from chloroplasts under a variety of stresses. GCN2 then phosphorylates its target, eukaryotic translation initiation factor (eIF)2 alpha, resulting in readjustments to protein synthesis for stress remediation. We now show that the plant defense hormone, methyl jasmonate (MeJA), requires light (chloroplast function) to activate the cytosolic GCN2-eIF2alpha module. Additionally, loss-of-gcn2 mutant seedlings showed increased sensitivity towards MeJA stress. In conclusion, we provide evidence that the GCN2-eIF2alpha module is critical for mediating survival responses towards MeJA stress.

3MT Presentations

College of Humanities & Social Sciences

Public Administration

A PLACE TO CALL HOME: TRANSITIONAL HOMELESS SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM EVALUATION

Diana M. Adams

**Dr. Hanae Kanno, Faculty Mentor
Department of Human Services
Dissertation Chair, Doctor of Public Administration Program**

Homelessness is on the rise around our nation, and homeless families struggle to become self-sufficient. In Brevard County, Florida, Family Promise of Brevard (FPB) has implemented a transitional housing model to provide support and services to families seeking self-sufficiency. To determine the program's effectiveness, secondary data from families who have transitioned to stable housing were analyzed to determine if the length of time a family spends in the program affected their self-sufficiency. Results indicate that two significant indicators of self-sufficiency are housing and employment, while demographic variables have a limited impact. Additionally, results indicate that families who stay longer in the program need more services and assistance to achieve self-sufficiency. Qualitative interview data from a family in the program indicates that relationship-building and life skills are important aspects of the program and time, compassion, and dedication of FPB staff have made a difference in breaking the cycle of homelessness.

Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice

HOW MEDIA AIMED TOWARDS YOUTH MAY AFFECT THEIR VIEWS OF SELF: A FOCUS ON ANIMATED DISNEY MOVIES

Taylor Harrison

**Dr. Ellis Logan & Dr. Anne Price, Faculty Mentors
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, & Criminal Justice**

This study investigates the complex relationship between media consumption, specifically Disney movies, and its influence on the perception of self in youth. It also seeks to uncover how Disney movies influence children's and adolescents' views of self, self-esteem, body image, gender roles, and cultural identity by relying on the theoretical research of George Herbert Mead, Charles Cooley, and Erving Goffman. The investigation also examines the evolution of Disney's responsiveness to changing societal norms and values. It assesses whether Disney movies have adapted to more diverse and inclusive representations of people and whether these changes have been positive in fighting against harmful stereotypes and encouraging positive self-perception among young viewers. By implementing content analysis, I will analyze various movies over the large span of Disney's movie-making career. The results of these analyses can be applied to inform parents, educators, and content creators in shaping media environments that support the positive development of young individuals and promote a more inclusive and empowering portrayal of self in media aimed at youth. For this research, I hypothesize that Disney movies harm youth's sense of self overall.

RELIGIOSITY vs. SPIRITUALITY

Jamie Shelton

**Dr. Ellis Logan & Dr. Anne Price, Faculty Mentors
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, & Criminal Justice**

The question that has gone unanswered for centuries is whether or not the concepts of religiosity and spirituality have the same implied meanings or if they are mutually exclusive. Historically, sociologists, including the early revered sociologists like Durkheim, Marx and Weber, have referred to religion as an institution in which individuals have shared consciousness and belief systems. Spirituality, on the other hand, seems to be an outlier composed of merely sentiments or maybe even superstition, which seemingly is unquantifiable. According to “Real Religion and Fuzzy Spirituality”, there are a plethora of inconsistencies in regards to the two, and consequently leads to confusion about how to even define them. However, the power that it holds over much of society is impossible to ignore, so I aim to peruse the significance the term has over so many people, whether or not it is relevant, distinguish religiosity, determine whether or not it is mutually compatible with religiosity, and to understand the effects of separating them both. Additionally, with further investigation, I will be able to measure the impacts it has on society both physically and emotionally.

COMBATING FOOD INSECURINITY WITH FOOD EMBEDDEDNESS

Sandra Stevens

**Dr. Ellis Logan & Dr. Anne Price, Faculty Mentors
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, & Criminal Justice**

Millions of citizens worldwide face food shortages due to unforeseen circumstances that are influenced by external economic, social, and political factors. Rates of hunger fluctuate with the economy and civilians are often left to face the worst effects of the policies and laws that are supposed to benefit them. For the sake of income, global companies and governments of larger/first world nations are permitted to exploit smaller nations, deplete their resources, and are hardly held accountable for the true cost of their actions. In addition to this, mono-crop farming and commodification only worsen the effects. By approaching the current issues surrounding food security from a socioeconomic angle this research aims to contribute to food stability worldwide. Although this is a global issue, starting with the United States allows for a diverse population where cultural and social conditions are brought into focus. With this in mind, the ultimate goal of this research is to provide sustainable food access for communities. Building up to that, this research also aims to provide a clear understanding of food insecurity as a collective issue and to reform current food and economic policies that hinder sustainable food development and production. To achieve said goals, this study aims to take a quantitative approach to observe general feelings on the available food sources. Considering that human behavior and attitudes have a significant influence on economic development, hopefully, this research will yield results that show how the general public feels about interacting with their local food system(s) and proves to be beneficial for both future populations and projects involving world hunger/food security.

DANGERS OF AI IN RELATION TO THE 2023 HOLLYWOOD STRIKES

Dylan Durham

Dr. Ellis Logan & Dr. Anne Price, Faculty Mentors
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, & Criminal Justice

With this proposal, artificial intelligence and the potential dangers that come with it will be evaluated in relation to the 2023 Hollywood strikes (Writers and Actors). A sample of forty news articles from various sources were collected for a content analysis. These articles discuss the 2023 writers and actors strikes and some of the uncertainties that AI presents for their jobs. These articles were examined to see if they mention certain themes such as “loss of jobs/human connection”, “reducing/impacting creativity”, and “legal/regulatory challenges”. A connection will look to be established between articles that primarily discuss the writers’ strike to see if the most common AI threat to their careers are the loss of their jobs and the impact on creativity. Conversely, articles that primarily discuss the actors strike will be evaluated to see if the most common AI threat to their careers are legal/regulatory challenges and their ability to be able to coexist with AI. More data will also be utilized to determine the reliability of each article as well as any potential political bias associated with the source.

College of Science and Mathematics

Biology

BROAD SCALE PHYLOGEOGRAPHY OF THE BANDED WATER SNAKE, *NERODIA FASCIATA*

Ali Ashraf

Dr. John G. Phillips, Faculty Mentor
Department of Biology

Geographic barriers to dispersal are a major cause of reproductive isolation, which can lead to divergence and speciation. It is hypothesized that during the last glacial maximum, many species were restricted to “refugia” in the southern U.S. Isolation is thought to have persisted during interglacial periods by major rivers. To test this hypothesis, I am using the banded water snake, *Nerodia fasciata*. I use both nuclear and mtDNA for phylogenetic analysis to test for phylogeographic structure and evaluate the impact of biogeographic barriers on evolution of this group. *N. fasciata* is a promising model for this research as its range spans several potential biogeographic barriers. I hypothesize distinct lineages of these snakes exist on opposite sides of the Mississippi and Apalachicola Rivers as research in other species has found. Studying diversification across landscapes in diverse taxa will promote the understanding of broad scale evolutionary processes.

GA of the Year Recognition

Lindsay Miller

Supervisor: Lindsay Leach Sparks
Department: Music

Lindsay Miller is pursuing a master's degree in music performance on the oboe. She completed her undergraduate degrees at VSU and was inspired to continue her graduate studies here because of the wonderful music faculty and incredible opportunities VSU offers. Lindsay's current assistantship has helped her further her skills as a teacher and oboist. Her experience teaching aural skills has been very beneficial and will continue to aid her in the future as a professional musician and teacher. Lindsay expects to graduate in May 2024. Her plans are to pursue teaching music in public and private settings and prepare for doctoral studies. She would like to thank Dr. Susan Eischeid, Dr. Carol Mikkelsen, and Dr. Kenneth Kirk for their dedication to helping her succeed during her time at VSU. Lindsay's interests outside of academics include board games, disc golf, and video games.

Jacob Funk

Supervisor: Dr. Anne Greenfield
Department: English

Jacob always loved telling stories and his passion grew into a love affair with writing. After earning his bachelor's in creative writing, he decided to further his craft with a Master's in English: Rhetoric & Composition. Terri, his superhero mom, was enjoying her MFT program at VSU and convinced him to try their English program. Working alongside VSU faculty, Jacob has refined his research, time-management, and leadership skills. His tutoring work, too, has been a masterclass in effective education. Jacob enjoys helping others love their writing which is why he's excited to teach college composition this fall. He doesn't know what post-graduation will bring, but he knows that the work continues. He's currently looking into teaching English overseas. When he's not rescuing students from run-ons or blazing through tedious articles, you can find him crafting universes at his Tifton home. Jacob is currently three drafts deep into his latest project: a children's novel about an herbalist in the war-hardened outback. He also helps run his family's pizzeria and harbors dreams of global conquest. Jacob would like to thank his loving family, wonderful friends, and amazing mentors for their support. He will (allegedly) graduate in spring of '25 alongside his mom.

Haydee Concuan

Supervisor: Dr. Connie Porcaro
Department: Communication Sciences & Disorders

Haydee Concuan is pursuing a master's degree in communication sciences and disorders. She found that VSU's CSD hands-on clinical experience is exactly what she needed and wanted to further develop her skills learned at the University of Georgia. Her assistantship has given her some financial stability, networking opportunities with college professors in her chosen field, and has been able to assist and learn from other students in her field. She is grateful for her assistantship and believes her experience at VSU would not have been the same without it. Haydee expects to graduate in December of 2024. After graduation, she plans to practice as a bilingual speech-language therapist in her hometown, Dalton, GA. She would like to recognize Dr. Connie Porcaro, the newest CSD Department Head, for her success. Haydee would like to thank Dr. Porcaro for believing in her as a graduate assistant, trusting her vision as social media coordinator, and overall support as a graduate student at VSU. Outside of academics, Haydee enjoys playing pickleball with her friends, reading, and watching reality tv shows.

Gabrielle Lamura

Supervisor: Holly Buglewicz
Department: Communication Arts

Gabrielle Lamura is pursuing a master's in communication. She came to VSU due to how supportive the faculty within the program and the skills they have helped her develop in undergrad. Her assistantship has helped her learn how to teach effectively within the classroom, as well as affectively reach her students. She will be graduating this spring 2024, and plans to pursue her PhD in communication. People instrumental in her success is her entire department but she would like to recognize Ms. Buglewicz, Dr. Seibert, Dr. Eaves, Dr. Nelson, and Dr. Stoll for taking the time to help her become a better student and cultivate her ideas. Some hobbies she has outside of her degree field is working at Georgia Beer Co., playing video games, and watching movies.

Katherine Thornton

Supervisor: Dr. Ophelie Desmet
Department: Human Services

Katherine earned a Bachelor of Science in Education in Communication Disorders from VSU in 2023 and anticipates graduating with a Master of Education in Communication Disorders in December. She chose to attend Valdosta State University in order to pursue a career path she is passionate about, while also having the opportunity to commute back home every day to be with her family. The Assistantship at VSU has been instrumental in her decision to stay, offering invaluable opportunities for growth. Through it, she gained hands-on experience, honed skills, and built connections, shaping her into a more capable professional. Mentor support has been crucial in her development. After graduation, she aspires to embark on a career specializing in adult clients as a speech-language pathologist within a medical environment. She is deeply grateful to her parents for their love and support, which have been the bedrock of her success. McCrae Stafford's unwavering presence means the world to her, and she feels fortunate to have him in her life. She extends heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Ophelie Desmet for her invaluable mentorship and guidance, without which she wouldn't be receiving this award.

Ethan Williams

Supervisor: Dr. Kate Warner
Department: COEHS Dean's Office

Ethan Williams is graduating with an M.S. degree in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) in May. VSU's affordability and GA opportunities made a master's degree possible for him. Additionally, the MFT program echoed his therapeutic philosophy, and it also had a built-in clinic that provided crucial services to people in and around Valdosta. His assistantship has helped make higher education accessible and aided his professional growth in unforeseen ways. Being the first in a role offers both unique challenges and unique opportunities in overcoming them such as learning to utilize resources to close gaps in training, establish best practices, and formulate creative solutions to problems plaguing the website, including larger systemic issues. All of these challenges helped develop his professionalism, aided skills in collaboration, and fostered his creativity. These skills are all important in the field of mental health, especially regarding talk therapy, which he is planning to pursue in Newnan, Georgia after graduation. He would like to thank his parents for supporting his pursuit of higher education. Outside of school and work, he enjoys making music, watching bad movies with friends, and playing a wide variety of games.

Daniel Rincon Diaz

Supervisor: Dr. Ansul Lokdarshi
Department: Biology

In his pursuit of a master's degree in biology, Daniel Rincon Diaz found himself drawn to VSU's Accelerated Masters in Biology, which offered the unique opportunity to complete both bachelor's and master's degrees in just five years. The prospect of early involvement in research, coupled with a supportive academic environment, solidified his decision to enroll at VSU. Daniel attributes much of his academic success to his assistantship, which provided him with the financial stability necessary to effectively balance his research and graduate-level coursework. Under the guidance of Assistant Professor Dr. Ansul Lokdarshi and with the support of the biology department, Daniel thrived both academically and personally. Dr. Lokdarshi's mentorship has been invaluable to Daniel, extending beyond the professional realm into personal growth. Looking ahead, Daniel plans to further his academic journey by pursuing a Ph.D. in biochemistry and molecular biology, with a focus on developing therapies for brain tumors, particularly Glioblastoma. Beyond his academic pursuits, Daniel finds joy and relaxation in playing and watching soccer, underscoring the importance of maintaining a well-rounded life outside of scholarly endeavors. His journey thus far has been characterized by a combination of passion, perseverance, and the support of those around him.

Jessica Dailey

Supervisor: Wendy Byrd
Department: Employee & Organizational Development

Jessica (Erin) Dailey is pursuing a M.S. degree in Industrial-Organizational Psychology. Her decision to attend VSU was partly influenced by the program advisors' outreach, the proximity to her family and loved ones, and a memorable campus tour that solidified her desire to become a Blazer. Erin's journey at VSU has been greatly impacted by the experiences gained in her Graduate Assistantship with the Human Resources & Employee and Organizational Development Office. Along with supporting her professional development, her Assistantship allows her to gain invaluable, hands-on experience in her desired field. Anticipating graduation in May 2024, Erin envisions a post-graduate career in Human Resources & Employee and Organizational Development, focusing on training, recruitment and retention, or data analytics. Key individuals, including her parents and loved ones, Mrs. Wendy Byrd (direct supervisor), Mrs. Jeanine Boddie-Lavan (VSU's CHRO), and Dr. Christopher Downing (academic advisor and professor), have played an instrumental role in Erin's success, deserving sincere appreciation. Additionally, her cohort members, Katarina Noll, Tiana Watts, Eric Zhu, Samuel Nicolas, and Marshall Stone have offered invaluable support throughout her journey at VSU. Erin enjoys spending time with her family and friends, playing with her dog, drawing and painting, and participating in various outdoor activities.

Vickie L. Everitte

Supervisor: Dr. Barney “Jay” Rickman
Department: History, INDS

Vickie Everitte is pursuing an M.A. in History with a concentration in Public History. She has an M.E. from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, where she studied Curriculum and Instruction, and an undergraduate degree in Secondary Social Science Education from Valdosta State College. Previously, she worked as an educator, researcher, and historic preservationist. Vickie returned to VSU because of the school’s location, faculty integrity, and small student-teacher ratio, fostering mentorship and quality of learning prospects. Vickie’s assistantship enabled her to attend full-time and presented invaluable opportunities for daily interaction with professors and students to discuss research and academic projects. Vickie will graduate upon completing her thesis, which is projected for this spring. After graduation, Vickie plans to travel and dig deeper into her research topic of regional history. Every instructor Vickie has taken classes from during this journey has been instrumental to her success and patience with her many questions. Vickie’s professors have challenged her to dig deep into the primary sources, read critically, question interpretations, and make her own assessments. They have presented her with opportunities to work outside the classroom and given her the skills to succeed. They have taught her how to be an historian.

Xin-Yu Chang

Supervisor: Dr. Beibei Lin
Department: Music

Xin-Yu Chang is currently pursuing a Master of Music Performance degree at Valdosta State University (VSU), drawn by the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra and the guidance of her applied professor. The assistantship at VSU has been instrumental, offering valuable experience in teaching violin, coaching chamber music, and performing a diverse range of orchestra repertoire and opera. The assistantship has solidified her decision to stay at VSU and has benefited her professional development. Xin-Yu expects to graduate in May 2024 and plans to pursue a career as an orchestral musician while considering further academic pursuits. She is grateful for the support and mentorship of Dr. Kristin Pfeifer Yu, whom they credit as a significant influence on their success.

Laura Starnes

Supervisor: Dr. Debra Gresham
Department: Human Services-MSW

Laura Starnes' field degree is in the Master of Social Work Program. She chose to come to VSU because of its great MSW program. While at ABAC, she and the Helping Professions Association visited VSU for a social work conference. That is when she knew she wanted to attend VSU's MSW program. The MSW Assistantship has allowed her to focus on her school workload and worry less about financial obligations. It would be impossible for her to work full-time and meet her internship requirements. The MSW Assistantship has provided a valuable mentorship with the MSW Program Director, Debra Gresham. She has gained valuable professional experience that will stay with her throughout her career. On May 3, 2024, Laura will graduate from VSU's MSW Program. Her current field instructor at the Vashti Center, Catherine Marchant, gave her a job offer, which she plans to start after graduation. Catherine will provide two years of MSW supervision to earn her LCSW. Dr. Debra Gresham is critical to her success. She is a first-year college student, and there were many things she did not know. For example, Laura learned that she should secure a job offer from her internship or ask for MSW supervision hours to be included. MSW supervision paid out of pocket can cost thousands, which she does not have and wants to avoid going into debt trying to obtain. Laura's future is bright, and she owes Dr. Gresham many thanks. Outside of academics, she loves to spend time with her family. They can be doing anything, and she's happy they are simply doing it together. Her children are 21 and 18 now so she is soaking up the time they have before they are too busy for mom. She also enjoys helping others in her free time. It is an innate part of her being. That is why social work is a perfect career choice for her. She participates in local outreach efforts, volunteers with various organizations such as CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate), and does what she can for those in her life.

Friend of the Graduate School

Honey Coppage

When the Graduate Student Service Coordinator position in the Graduate School became vacant, Honey volunteered to handle the hiring process of all the Graduate Assistants across campus. This was in addition to her already heavy workload. She has done an amazing job in making sure each of the Grad Assistants is onboarded in a timely manner. She reviews all of the Onboarding forms, processes the Graduate Assistants paperwork, and emails supervisors as well as the Grad Assistants. Honey works closely with the Graduate School as well as HR to make sure each step is complete. This is a very busy task for her, and she has handled this extra workload with ease. She has not only been a Friend to the Graduate School, but also a Friend to the whole campus because we all know departments depend on their Grad Assistants. We are honored that Honey Coppage has been nominated for this award.

Valuable assistance in support of the Symposium was provided by:

Graduate Research Symposium Subcommittee: David Nelson, Keith Lee,
Anne Price, Grazyna Walczak, Beibei Lin, and Kelly Davidson

GA of the Year Selection Committee:
Kyle Culpepper, Samantha Paul, & Terence Sullivan

Graduate Executive Committee

VSU's Graduate Program Coordinators, Advisors, and Faculty Mentors

Valdosta State University Office of University Advancement

The Graduate School Staff:
Darli DeVane, Rebecca Petrella, Jessica Powers,
A'Shondee Kinlaw, and Faith Crummy

Graduate Assistant: Kennise Wilcox and Diana Campos Pena

The Graduate School also wishes to thank the following for their support:

President Richard Carvajal

Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Sheri Noviello

VSU Catering

VSU Event Services

VSU Media Services

VSU Printing Services

VSU Creative Design Services



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