Medallion Ceremony 2020

Thursday, May 7, 2020
Florida Atlantic University | John D. MacArthur Campus
Medallion Ceremony
Program 2020
Speakers:

DR. TIMOTHY STEIGENGA,
Interim Dean

DR. CHRISTOPHER STRAIN,
Chair of Social Sciences and Humanities

KENZIE WALDKOETTER:
2020 Class Speaker

DR. MICHAEL METZNER:
Wilkes Honors College 2020
Distinguished Alumni Award Winner
Vani Addepalli

CONCENTRATION: BIOLOGICAL CHEMISTRY

**ADVISORS:** Dr. Monica Maldonado, Dr. Ashley Kennedy

**THESIS:** An Exploration of Fertility Preservation-Related Decision-Making in Childhood Cancer Patients

One of the most novel and still widely unexplored fields of reproductive health is oncofertility, a field of medicine that aims to minimize the negative impacts of cancer treatment on fertility. For many childhood cancer patients, cancer treatment involves oncofertility-related discussions that involve their families, physicians, and many other people. This paper evaluates the quality of educational and clinical resources available to childhood cancer patients regarding fertility preservation and the current approach to these kinds of cases from an ethical perspective. I propose a procedure for treatment plan development and decision making that carefully considers the values and beliefs of the patient, his/her family members, physicians, and ethics board members involved with the case to help standardize the process.

**FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY:** Winning third place at Tug-of-War during ResFest my freshman year.

**AFTER GRADUATION PLANS:** I plan to attend medical school in pursuit of a career in Obstetrics and Gynecology.
Jason Baluja

CONCENTRATION: CELLULAR NEUROSCIENCE AND PSYCHOLOGY

ADVISOR: Dr. Laura Vernon

THESIS: Predicting the Viability of Expressive Writing Exercises as a Preventative Measure in Non-treatment Seeking College Students through Attrition Rates

Expressive writing (EW) is a writing disclosure technique about previous stressful life events. It has received increasing support from researchers and clinicians as an effective treatment of symptoms in a variety of psychological disorders but its effectiveness as a preventative measure remains an open question. Here, EW was tested on non-treatment seeking college students ages 18 - 25. Participants were divided into three writing conditions: expressive writing, modified expressive writing, and an active control group writing about any life event. We found that completion rates for the control group were about three times better than that of either the EW group or the modified EW group. The completion rates of the EW groups did not differ from each other. We concluded from the high attrition rates that EW may only serve as a viable protective measure in treatment-seeking populations.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: My favorite memories are from Junior year Thursday game show nights with the old squad. Whether we were binge-watching GOT or playing Mario Party, it was always a blast, although I cannot say the same about waking up early the next morning.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be attending NSU-KPCOM (medical school) starting July.
Katherine Banger

CONCENTRATION: BIOLOGY

ADVISORS: Dr. Erik Duboue, Dr. James Wetterer

THESIS: Trichome Function in Mentzelia floridana

*Mentzelia floridana*, known as Poorman’s patch or stickleaf, is an herbaceous perennial found in beach dunes and coastal strands along the coast of peninsular Florida and the Bahamas. One striking characteristic of *M. floridana*, is that its stems, leaves, and flowers are covered in tiny hooked trichomes. For a person brushing up against the plants, these trichomes act like Velcro, causing plant parts to stick to shoes, clothes, and even bare skin, resulting in hitchhiking leaves or flowers. I found that the leaves have a greater density of trichomes on the bottom of the leaf than the top. The morphological advantages of the trichomes and their density include sand and insect entrapment.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: The experience of being an RA is by far my favorite memory from the Honors College. It introduced me to so many wonderful, bright students and life-long friends.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I am searching for a job in wildlife biology and want to attend graduate school in 2021.
Amanda Barstow

CONCENTRATION: ECONOMICS

ADVISOR: Dr. Keith Jakee

THESIS: Title I Crowd-Out Affecting School Budgets: A Case Study of the School District of Palm Beach County, Florida

Due to the well-established gap in educational achievement between low-income students and their high-income counterparts, the Title I Federal Grant was introduced to fund the most in-need schools. Unfortunately, there has been evidence that these extra funds have not been used to supplement school budgets, but rather to replace funds formerly produced from local sources. In order to show this may be the case in Palm Beach County, I analyzed the per-pupil budgets of Title I and non-Title I high schools in PBC. I found the basic instructional costs per-pupil in Title I schools are not funded to the level that would be expected if Title I funds were being used appropriately.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: My favorite memories from my time at the Honors College are all the opportunities I’ve had to better myself, whether personally, academically, or professionally. Every moment with my best friends I met here, every public-speaking opportunity I took despite my doubts, every leadership position I went for, my time at my internship that solidified my passions, the opportunity to start my own non-profit, and every time my mind was blown in a lecture. I look forward to making more of those moments in the next phase of my life!

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I plan on completing an elementary teaching certification to begin a teaching career in addition to pursuing my non-profit, Daisy, which I hope will make a difference in the coming years in providing feminine hygiene products to homeless women. I also plan on attending graduate school at some point in the future for speech pathology in order to specialize in speech therapy for children.
Yarinez Batista

CONCENTRATION: PSYCHOLOGY AND FRENCH

ADVISOR: Dr. Julie Earles

THESIS: Which Move Is It Anyway? Manner of Motion in Noun and Verb Learning

One specialization of noun and verb learning is manner of motion. Typically, the inherent movement of an object is called an internal (intrinsic) manner of motion, and the directional outer movement of the object is called an external (extrinsic) manner of motion. We hypothesized that children would be more likely to link nouns with an intrinsic manner of motion and verbs to an extrinsic manner of motion. By watching a series of events with a creature-like object alternating motions and being asked if a certain creature’s motion aligned with that learned in a training phase, we can see how children are learning nouns and verbs in relation to motion.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: My favorite Honors College memory is the two-hour game of Twister I played at ResFest my sophomore year. So fun!

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: My plans are to attend an MA program followed by a PhD program.
Heather Butler

CONCENTRATION: BIOLOGY

ADVISORS: April Schimmel, Dr. Catherine Trivigno

THESIS: Sulindac and Metformin as a Therapeutic Target in Lung Cancer Cells

Sulindac and metformin selectively sensitive lung cancer cells to oxidative stress which stimulates significant lung cancer cell death.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Starting in Dr. Herbert Weissbach’s lab.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: Will be continuing current research project on drug combinations in cancer cells while preparing for graduate school.
Rabea Chaudhry

CONCENTRATION: LAW & SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

ADVISORS: Dr. Jon Moore, Dr. James Masterson

THESIS: Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian Water Wars: A Gateway to Peace

Often described as intractable, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is widely known yet rarely understood. An important factor behind this seemingly endless and bloody conflict is the limited amount of water resources. Both Israelis and Palestinians are located in one of the world’s most water-scarce regions. However, due to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Palestinians suffer the impacts of climate change more severely than Israelis. Climate and water insecurity are facilitating the conflict further. I argue that Israel’s illegal policies and practices have facilitated a severe imbalance of water usage and deny Palestinians their right to their basic human liberties and take advantage of their natural resources. Instead of being used as a vessel of conflict, access to clean drinking water should be treated as a human right and efforts to alleviate the detrimental consequences of climate change should be prioritized by both sides.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: The mini adventures I had with my roommates and friends. Those I will always be fond of.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be attending Law School.
Abigail Chavez

CONCENTRATION: CELLULAR NEUROSCIENCE AND PSYCHOLOGY

ADVISORS: Dr. Laura Vernon, Dr. McLean Bolton, Dr. Erik Duboue

THESIS: Morphological Characterization of a Novel Intercalated Cluster in the Amygdala

The amygdala, known as the center for emotions in the brain, has pathological implications in mental illnesses such as anxiety, fears, and autism. More specifically, it is known for its role in the fear circuit. Within the amygdala there is a GABAergic network, which is thought to modulate the fear circuit, composed of paracapsular intercalated clusters (ITCs) of neurons. Despite being broadly studied because of its implications on mental illness, there is still one cluster of neurons which had not been studied. This cluster is called the apical paracapsular intercalated cluster of neurons (apITC). This project aims to morphologically characterize the apITCs by employing biocytin staining, brain clearing, confocal microscopy, and neuronal reconstruction. These methods enable the visualization of outputs of the apITC neurons in the brain. The results showed that the apITC projected to the lateral amygdala and striatum which adds more complexity to the fear circuit. Further understanding of the amygdaloid circuitry will help us understand and treat certain mental illnesses.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Jupiter Donuts and sunrises.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be moving to NYC in July. Stay tuned. During my gap year before medical school I will be a Seton Teaching Fellow in the Bronx, New York! As a Fellow I will teach underserved intercity children in the Brilla Charter School Network which aims to equip their students with the necessary character and skills to excel in high school, college and beyond.
Giovanny Chery

CONCENTRATION: BIOCHEMISTRY

ADVISORS: Dr. Chitra Chandrasekhar,
Dr. Ashley Kennedy

THESIS: Brain Death

The definition of brain death is an important topic since death is an issue we will all have to face at some point. Currently, human death also includes brain death, which is an irreversible coma characterized by unresponsiveness, absent reflexes, and no respiratory effort once disconnected from ventilation for longer than three minutes.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: The long nights in the computer lab.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: Gap Year, then Medical School
Stefan Choy

CONCENTRATION: BIOLOGICAL CHEMISTRY

ADVISORS: April Schimmel, Dr. Eugene Smith

THESIS: Construction and Testing of a Functional Data Logger as a Cost-effective Alternative

Many scientific instruments are very expensive, ranging from several thousand to millions of dollars. However, not all instruments need to be expensive. Data Loggers are vitally important to processing data, and can be constructed from inexpensive parts and tested using inexpensive methods.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: I enjoyed discovering my love for teaching, which is something I have been able to foster as an FAU Honors College tutor.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: My plans have been somewhat interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but I intend to look into post-baccalaureates programs.
Carly Cook

CONCENTRATION: BIOLOGICAL CHEMISTRY

ADVISORS: April Schimmel, Dr. Chitra Chandrasekhar

THESIS: The History, Chemistry, and Regulation of Cosmetics

The objective of this thesis is to investigate the timeline of cosmetic use, to inquire into the compulsion to use cosmetics for embellishing the natural look, the introduction of artificial chemicals into cosmetics, the minimal protective legislative guidelines currently in place, and the necessary reforms required to ensure the safety of the consumer.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: My favorite Honors College memory is my Freshman year ResFest. I was participating in the hula hooping event for my floor, RH1 Floor 2. It was down to me and one other person and my whole floor was cheering and chanting my name. The sense of community I felt in that moment is indescribable and made me feel like I was more than just a resident of a floor or a student in a class. To this day, every ResFest I have participated in feels a little bit magical.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: Rosalind Franklin University Dr. William M Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine to pursue a D.P.M.
Ravenné Corea

CONCENTRATION: BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

ADVISORS: Dr. Rachel Corr, Dr. Ashley Kennedy

THESIS: Does the Way in Which Adverse Reactions about Vaccinations are reported affect a parent’s decision to vaccinate their child?

This thesis analyzes the way in which adverse reactions from vaccinations are reported and how this reporting affects a parent’s decision of whether or not to vaccinate their child. I will argue three types of stances a parent takes on the issue, the pro-vaccinator, the hesitator or the anti-vaccinator. Additionally, the way in which vaccine adverse reactions are reported does affect a parent’s decision to vaccinate their child based on the way that information is presented. So, both academics and parents should be encouraged to seek out information regarding vaccinations that is unbiased when deciding whether or not to vaccinate their child.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: My favorite Honors College memory is the late night breakfasts we had during exam week. These were always a lot of fun, especially after a long day of studying.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: After graduating, I will be applying to physician assistant Masters programs in Florida. I will continue to work as a scribe in the emergency department as I navigate the interview and hopefully acceptance process. The Masters program I would like to attend after graduation is NOVA Southeastern University.
Gianni Croci

CONCENTRATION: HISTORY, POLITICAL SCIENCE

ADVISORS: Dr. Christopher Ely, Dr. Mark Tunick

THESIS: Venetian National Identity: An Ethno-Symbolist Approach

Venetian national identity developed in three waves. First, the Myth was molded from a cultural explosion in the face of political decadence during Il Settecento (Eighteenth Century). Then, Venetian intellectuals idealized their past in order to join the Kingdom of Italy during Il Risorgimento (Italian Reunification). Finally, a conservative philosophy against modernization arose during the twentieth century in response to globalization and mass tourism.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Participating in Moot Court.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: Gap year, then law school.
Amber Davis

CONCENTRATION: CREATIVE WRITING

ADVISOR: Prof. Rachel Luria

THESIS: Creases and Folds

Creases and Folds is a magic realism piece that follows a small family as each of the three members navigate their fraying connections. The story employs magic realism as a tool through which the son, Teddy, interacts with, influences, and explores the world around him, framing the journey to reconciliation. The thesis project aims to produce a coherent and compelling narrative as its centerpiece and evaluate the work’s place in the established genre.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Having lunch with prospective professors alongside other students.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be taking a gap year to complete the novel I began working on for my senior thesis.
Jamsheed Desai

CONCENTRATION: BIOLOGICAL CHEMISTRY

ADVISOR: Dr. Monica Maldonado

THESIS: Wilkes Medical Scholar: Jamsheed completed his undergraduate degree in 3 years, as part of this accelerated program. He is currently attending FAU’s College of Medicine.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Games of “manhunt” all along the campus.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: A M.D. program at CESCROM.
Olivia Ducram

CONCENTRATIONS: ENGLISH LITERATURE, HISTORY

ADVISOR: Dr. Michael Harrwood

THESIS: Manifestation of Tragedy Through the Body and Power

Analyzes how tragedy manifests within literature when the male tragic figure’s physiology, race, and masculinity is set against the normative roles in his society, thereby, incapacitating him and regulating his power.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Trying to study with my roommates in our dorm, only to order food, watch Netflix, and fall asleep with a full load of work to do the next morning. It makes for an odd camaraderie because you’re bonded as friends through your ability to procrastinate but also, motivated by the fact that you can take these small moments for yourself because there is always going to be another assignment the next day but this moment is just for us.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be entering the education sphere, hopefully as an elementary school teacher who helps develop childhood reading, writing, and critical thinking in those who find it a challenge. I plan to enter graduate school for child counseling and general education. I will also be submitting my creative writing work to different magazines and publishers. All this while focusing on a voluntary ministry work that I’m dedicated to.
Aviv Elimelech

CONCENTRATION: BIOLOGICAL CHEMISTRY

ADVISORS: April Schimmel, Dr. Ashley Kennedy

THESIS: Should Cosmetic Procedures Be Considered Medicine?

Cosmetic procedures have become the new norm, and the question of whether they should be considered medicine is more relevant than ever. Reasons that cosmetic procedures should (in certain cases) be considered medicine is because they can be thought of as treatments for 1) mental health disorders that arise due to dissatisfaction with one’s physical appearance, and 2) abrupt physical changes that negatively impact one’s life; such as giving birth. In contrast, others argue that cosmetic procedures should not be considered medicine due to the social detriments they might cause, such as decreased individuality, high risk, and societal advantages. After exploring both sides, I determine that certain cosmetic procedures should be considered medicine if they follow the guidelines of 1) having a low risk-benefit ratio, and 2) helping to heal established mental health disorders.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Studying abroad summer of freshman year!

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be attending medical school in August and will become a physician in 2024.
Cheyanne Futral

CONCENTRATION: BIOCHEMISTRY

ADVISOR: Dr. Monica Maldonado

THESIS: The Effect of Rising Insulin Prices on Diabetic Patients

As insulin prices have increased drastically over the past century, a growing number of diabetic patients struggle to afford medication. The increase in prices has led many diabetic patients to ration or altogether skip their prescribed insulin doses, leading to dire health consequences. The purpose of this work is to analyze how the price of insulin increased remarkably over time as a result of extended pharmaceutical patents, federal regulations, and a lack of generic insulin alternatives on the market. To mediate the high prices of the essential drug, the use of biosimilar insulin alternatives, increased government intervention, and proposed healthcare policies are analyzed for their potential effectiveness to increase the financial access of insulin for diabetic patients.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: My favorite Honors College memory is going on a camping trip with Enviro Club and Dr. O’Brien’s class to Key Biscayne in the spring of 2018. The key was full of wildlife and was home to a neat historic lighthouse. I had so much fun being able to explore the park and make lots of s’mores and memories with my friends!

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be attending the University of Florida College of Pharmacy in Fall 2020 as part of their PharmD program.
Jeremy Garcia-Diaz  
CONCENTRATION: PHILOSOPHY

ADVISOR: Dr. Nicholas Baima

THESIS: Plato’s Rejection of Poetry: A Defense of Falsehoods and Imitations in the Republic

In various Platonic dialogues, Socrates appears to discredit myth and fiction. Most notably in the Republic, he seems to argue that poetry is harmful due to its false nature and its relation to imitation which misleads those who experience it about the nature of the good. Yet, in many of these same dialogues, Socrates makes multiple appeals to myths. I argue that Plato’s critical examination and restriction of myth and poetry is not an absolute rejection of them. Rather, Plato is rejecting that poetry ignorantly depicts falsehoods. This ignorance cultivates mistaken beliefs of what is most important; the good, right, and virtuous, and ultimately causes disharmony and harm in the souls of its audience.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: In my first year, even before I’d decided on becoming a philosophy major, I was able to attend a conference with some brilliant minds in the field of philosophy from around the world. For most of the two-day conference I had next to no clue what was being discussed but rather than be discouraged I found myself loving the lectures more, wanting to understand them better, wanting to one day be able to speak so confidently and passionately on a topic myself.

In my last year I was able to attend another lecture by a visiting professor and even got the chance to discuss his work and general philosophy afterwards. It felt very “full-circle” and I knew I was in the right field of study when I was just as excited and curious the second time around as I had been the first.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be taking some time off to work. The end goal is graduate school and a Ph.D. before returning to education as a professor but right now the plan is still very “Work-In-Progress”.

Yanliz Gonzalez

CONCENTRATION: BIOCHEMISTRY

ADVISOR: Dr. Eugene Smith

THESIS: Cyclic Voltammetry Utilizing a Bluetooth-Capable Microcontroller

Cyclic voltammetry is a technique used to measure the developing current of an analyte in a solution. This method is used to study the kinetics, mechanisms, and thermodynamics of chemical reactions. As this technique is not generally found in introductory chemistry courses due to limited budgets, building a functioning potentiostat will allow for instructors to include this topic in their curriculum. The construction of the potentiostat also includes data transfer from the electrodes to the program by Bluetooth for easy data transfer.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: My favorite memory of the Honors College was the first week of orientation before classes began in Fall 2016. All of the fun ‘get to know you’ events were great and helped me acclimate to the college.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I plan to attend graduate school and pursue an MA in Biotechnology. I currently work as a pharmacy technician and am considering becoming a pharmacist as well.
Sravya Gurivireddygari

CONCENTRATIONS: BIOCHEMISTRY, LAW AND SOCIETY

ADVISOR: Dr. Monica Maldonado

THESIS: Wilkes Medical Scholar: Sravya completed her undergraduate degree in 3 years, as part of this accelerated program. She is currently attending FAU's College of Medicine.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: My favorite Honors College memory was performing with the Owlettes, during the spring showcase.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I am currently in medical school at FAU’s Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine.
Sara Haman

CONCENTRATIONS: PSYCHOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY

ADVISORS: Dr. Laura Vernon, Dr. Kevin Lanning

THESIS: For the Love of My Country: Exploring Predictors of Anxious and Avoidant Attachment to the U.S.A.

Attachment is thought of in terms of interpersonal relationships. However, attachment objects are not limited to humans, and can include constructs such as social groups and God. Attachment to one’s nation has been conventionally studied in psychology within the paradigm of attachment to social groups, but there is little research on different styles of national attachment. I drew off literature in psychology, political science, and moral philosophy to identify four factors potentially associated with national attachment (attachment style in interpersonal relationships, moral concerns, theory of mind, and political identity) and designed an empirical study exploring the relationship between these factors and two dimensions of national attachment.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: My favorite Honors College memory is when all of the posters that my research group was working on were accepted at the APS 2019 conference. It was the first time I had a poster accepted at a psychology conference, and it was fun celebrating the acceptance as a team.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: Pursuing a Ph.D. in Social Psychology.
Ishfer Hasan

CONCENTRATION: CELLULAR NEUROSCIENCE

ADVISORS: Dr. Laura Vernon, Dr. Julie Earles

THESIS: Eyewitness Testimony Reliability

The thesis will compare whether eyewitness testimony memory reliability differs from older adults compared with younger adults. Subjects will be shown clips of different activities and then answer short questions regarding the videos. There will be an experimental question where the verb used will vary. The experiment will test if the word choice in the question stem changes someone’s memory and if the elderly are more susceptible to being affected.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Honors Convocation

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be taking an enrichment year of research and will be applying to medical schools.
Emily Heithcock

CONCENTRATION: ECONOMICS, ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

ADVISOR: Dr. Keith Jakee

THESIS: The Economic Impact of Cyanobacteria: A Case Study of Port St. Lucie, Florida between 2012 and 2017

My thesis analyzes the economic impact of toxic cyanobacterial blooms (blue-green algae blooms) on the Port St. Lucie, Florida local economy. Accomplished through surveying the literature and calibrating relevant studies to the Port St. Lucie economy between the years of 2012 and 2017, I estimate the impact on the regional economy through analysis of five distinct industries.


AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be moving back to my home state of Tennessee. I plan to enter the workforce soon after graduation but have not committed to anything specific yet.
Katherine Hernandez

CONCENTRATION: LAW AND SOCIETY, WOMEN STUDIES

ADVISOR: Dr. Mark Tunick

THESIS: Abortion Reexamined through the Lens of Morality

Drawing on the work of philosopher Mary Anne Warren, I argue that while the fetus is worthy of moral consideration it is not yet worthy of personhood and cannot be granted greater legal rights than the mother; and that Roe as it stands today already provides an appropriate compromise between the two sides of the debate, because it acknowledges a women’s freedom to control her reproduction, but also acknowledges interests the state may have in the life of the fetus, and should not be overturned.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: When I received my first 100 in a Tunick Paper and my roommates lost their minds.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be taking a gap year before applying to law school. During this gap year I will be working as a Family Case Manager for the corporate office of The Law Offices of Alex Hanna in Miami.
Daniela Jaramillo

CONCENTRATION: BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

ADVISORS: Dr. Jon Moore, Dr. James Wetterer

THESIS: A Literature Review of Vegan Diets in Domesticated Canine and Feline Pets

People should not project their own moral beliefs onto their pets and their diet if it could possibly be harmful to the pets’ health. Owners should give them the healthiest diet they can, whether it is vegan or not, to provide the best diet for their pet. Researching past studies on this topic will help decipher if a plant based diet for domesticated dogs and cats is the best option or even a plausible option for the animals’ health.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Studying and drawing at cute cafés in the hustle and bustle of the city during the London Arts & Literature Study Abroad led by Dr. Sourgen and Professor Lemehe.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: This summer, I have a job lined up with the Fellowship of Catholic University Students in Estes Park, CO, and in the fall, I will start veterinary medicine school either at North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine or at Royal Veterinary College of London.
Breanna Jomsky

CONCENTRATIONS: CELLULAR NEUROSCIENCE, PSYCHOLOGY

ADVISORS: Dr. Monica Maldonado, Dr. Seth Tomchik

THESIS: Loss of Neurofibromin Across Distributed Neuronal Circuits Drives Excessive Grooming in Drosophila melanogaster

Neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF-1) is a genetic disorder that occurs in about 1 in every 3,000 individuals worldwide. The symptoms of NF-1 range from nerve tumor formations, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and autism spectrum disorder-like traits. NF-1 is caused by a mutation in the nf1 gene which results in the loss of function of its encoded protein, neurofibromin. It is currently unknown how nf1 mutations drive NF-1-associated behaviors via effects on neuronal circuits. To learn more about these effects, a collection of neuronal subsets in the nf1 knockdown model of Drosophila melanogaster (dNf1) were assessed using the Gal4/UAS conditional expression system. The Gal4 lines were used to knockdown dNf1 in the various neuronal subsets and stereotypical grooming behavior of dNf1 flies were studied. Results suggest that broadly-distributed alterations in neuronal circuits may contribute to the NF-1 behavioral changes when compared to controls.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Dressing up as Zack and Cody with Liza for the Halloween Ball while we were living in the Marriott hotel together!

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I plan to go to medical school! At the time of writing, I still have not been accepted to any schools for this cycle. I will find a job, re-study for the MCAT, and re-apply to schools if I end up having to take a gap year or two.
Aubrey Jones  
CONCENTRATION: PSYCHOLOGY  

ADVISOR: Dr. Laura Vernon  

THESIS: A Brief Mindfulness Intervention Elicits Positive Effects on Recall and Recognition Memory  

Mindfulness has been of recent interest due to evidence suggesting its ability to elicit positive emotional and cognitive effects. However, little is known about the mechanisms by which this is achieved. Therefore, we investigated the effects of mindfulness memory for emotionally valenced stimuli. Within the mindfulness condition, recall of both positive and negatively valenced stimuli differed significantly from neutral stimuli. Within the control condition, the recall of negative stimuli differed significantly from both positive and neutral stimuli. Additionally, participants were better able to recognize negative stimuli when compared to neutral stimuli. Results also show a significant difference between the correct rejection of new negative stimuli when compared to positive stimuli within the control group.  

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: My favorite HC memory is from intramural soccer Freshman year. I love soccer, but this was one of my first few games back since high school, and I was still building my confidence on the field. I remember scoring a goal and having my team go wild with support. It was such a happy moment and I think it’s truly representative of the overall atmosphere at the HC. Everyone is so kind and supportive and it really makes all the difference when you’re struggling through college.  

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I am privileged enough to have been accepted into the Florida International University Master’s of Occupational Therapy Program beginning August 2020! Thank you for an amazing 4 years!!!
Makenna King

CONCENTRATION: ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

ADVISOR: Dr. Jon Moore

THESIS: Geographic Distribution of *Okenia hypogaea* and Soil Analysis Along the Coast of John D. MacArthur State Park

During my internship at John D. MacArthur State Park, I documented the GPS coordinates of all *Okenia hypogaea*, a rare vine-like dune plant, and created a map. I repeated this the following year in order to compare the growth patterns and geographic distribution of the population. I then collected twenty soil samples along the two-mile stretch of beach and analyzed their pH, salinity, and concentrations of various metals, petroleum products, and polyaromatic hydrocarbons that may have been released from burning coal, gasoline, or wood.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: My favorite memory is when Dr. O’Brien and Dr. Njambi took a group of students camping at Bill Baggs Cape State Park. We told stories around the campfire and collected trash on the beach during the day.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will continue to work at Jupiter Environmental Labs as a semi-volatile prep technician.
Brittany Kurland

CONCENTRATIONS: LAW AND SOCIETY, ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

ADVISOR: Dr. Mark Tunick

THESIS: Yes Mr. Husak, Drunk Driving is a Serious Offense.

Philosopher Douglas Husak argues that driving with a BAC of .08 is not a serious offense, because half of people with this level BAC are not impaired, and often no harm is caused. Drawing on an analysis of theories of punishment, I argue, contrary to Husak, that driving with a BAC of .08 is a serious offense even if the driver did not show any signs of impairment or caused no actual harm, relying on a deterrence theory of punishment.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Graduating.
Christy LaFlamme

CONCENTRATIONS: BIOLOGICAL CHEMISTRY, MATHEMATICS

ADVISORS: Dr. Chitra Chandrasekhar, Dr. Catherine Trivigno

THESIS: Investigating the role of mTOR signaling as a point of convergence for autism risk genes

Subsets of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) display alterations in brain growth that are heavily influenced by genetic risk factors. Mutations in DYRK1A disrupt many important neurodevelopmental processes resulting in severe morphological and behavioral consequences. However, the cellular and molecular mechanisms governing these alterations remain unclear. Previous work in the laboratory suggests that Dyrk1a deficiency is sufficient to cause cortical growth deficits and potentially decrease mTOR growth signaling. To investigate this in cellulis, primary cortical neurons were cultured from a conditional Dyrk1a mouse model, and immunocytochemistry was performed to characterize neuronal morphology. Sholl analysis of cultured neurons indicates that Dyrk1a deficiency is associated with significant deficits in neuronal arborization that can be rescued by active peptide (1-3)IGF-1, a known mediator of the mTOR signaling cascade. These results support mTOR as a point of convergence for autism risk genes and (1-3) IGF-1 as a potential therapeutic for DYRK1A deficiencies and related disorders.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: My favorite WHC memory was speaking at the 20th anniversary groundbreaking celebration! It really forced me to step out of my comfort zone, and I discovered that I love public speaking.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: Will start graduate school at the St. Jude Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences in the pursuit of a Ph.D. in the Biomedical Sciences.
Elizabeth Lanzon

CONCENTRATIONS: CELLULAR NEUROSCIENCE, PSYCHOLOGY

ADVISORS: Dr. Gregory Macleod, Dr. Alex Keene, and Dr. Seth Tomchik

THESIS: Mutations in the neurofibromin protein disrupt social behavior and sleep in *drosophila melanogaster*

Neurofibromatosis Type 1 (NF1) is a common genetic disorder that affects around 1 in 3,000 people worldwide and is caused by a loss of function of the neurofibromin protein. Patients with NF1 are predisposed to a range of cognitive/behavioral symptoms such as deficits in learning, attention and sleep, as well as autism spectrum disorder-like traits. *Drosophila melanogaster* is used as a model to investigate the cellular mechanisms of NF1 due to the conservation of the neurofibromin protein from flies to humans. In this paper, we find that flies with a targeted disruption of the NF1 gene in neurons tend to stay closer to their nearest neighboring fly compared to control flies. We also find that male NF1 mutant flies have decreased sleep and a reduced arousal threshold, indicative of lighter sleep. Together, these findings reveal the negative impacts that mutations in neurofibromin have on social interaction and sleep depth.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Looking back on my time at the Honors College, my favorite memories include the times I got to spend with my friends at school events, during meals in the dining hall, and during free time. I will also always cherish my time in the lab as well as time spent as a teaching assistant for Human Neuroanatomy.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: So far, having graduated in December, I have started working as a substitute teacher in Broward county. Although no definite plans have been made, I am searching for a program that will allow me to earn a teaching certificate and a Master’s degree in STEM education (grades 6-12). I plan on spending time teaching first before deciding what to study for a PhD.
Abigail Lenhart

CONCENTRATION: MARINE BIOLOGY

ADVISOR: Dr. Jon Moore

THESIS: Small Drones: A Novel Method for Studying, Monitoring and Identifying Florida Manatees (Trichechus manatus latirostris)

Species monitoring, population assessments, and behavioral observations of many endangered marine mammals are typically limited to surveys of animal surfacings due to the challenges of detecting and tracking individuals that usually live in remote areas. My study demonstrates the benefits of using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), or drones, as a noninvasive and low-cost method to monitor and observe Florida manatee populations.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Conducting independent research and attending Semester by the Sea.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I plan to continue my academic career by attending law school in pursuit of the JD degree.
Jean Lohier

CONCENTRATION: MATHEMATICS

**ADVISORS:** Dr. Terje Hoim, Dr. Warren McGovern

**THESIS:** Proving Gödel’s Theorem, a Set Theoretical Approach.

Gödel’s theorem is often referenced as the greatest achievement in logic since Aristotle. The theorem implies that inside of all axiomatic systems that are complex enough to formulate arithmetic, there are true statements for which there is no proof. This mathematical discovery is to Mathematics what quantum mechanics is to physics. It challenges the traditional notions of “truth” and “proof” which constitute the basis on which modern mathematical thought is established.

**FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY:** I will never forget how supportive Dr. Hoim and Dr. McGovern have been to me this year. I would go to their office with “random thoughts” and they would help me organize them into a purpose and a career choice. The uniqueness proofs were the best, you just have to prove that two things exist which circles you back to the fact that those two different choices are identical. In other words, math is weird.

**AFTER GRADUATION PLANS:** Masters in Computer Science (starting this summer), Ph.D in math next fall.
Mariana Lopes

CONCENTRATIONS: PSYCHOLOGY, LAW AND SOCIETY

ADVISOR: Dr. Julie Earles

THESIS: Thanks for the False Memories

False memories are very common. Two areas where the errors can occur, and where most experiments focus on, are memory encoding and memory retrieval. My thesis serves as a literature review on the subject, as well as a proposal for a study on actor-action effects on false memory that unfortunately had to be postponed.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: It’s hard to only choose one! A memory that stands out would have to be my time as an Orientation and Welcome Leader (OWL). I was blessed to help this past incoming freshman class transition to the adventure known as college, all while reliving fond memories of my past four years here.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be taking a gap year to work and intern at church ministries before pursuing a dual Master’s Degree in Divinity and Public Policy at Duke Divinity School.
Isabella Martin

CONCENTRATION: BIOLOGY

ADVISORS: April Schimmel, Dr. Jon Moore

THESIS: Hematology of the Florida East Coast Diamondback Terrapin

The purpose of this study is to establish baseline hematological data for the Florida east coast diamondback terrapin using protein electrophoresis and a basic reptile chemistry panel. Samples will be sent to University of Miami Miller School of medicine for analysis and results will be compared to values of two previous studies conducted with the northern subspecies of diamondback terrapin.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: My favorite Honors College memory was my room flooding in the Great RH1 Flood of 2017.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: After graduation I will be taking a gap year before attending medical school. During this gap year I plan to go on my birthright trip to Israel.
Sanscherley Melidor

CONCENTRATION: BIOLOGY

ADVISORS: Dr. Rachel Corr, Dr. Jon Moore

THESIS: Indian River Lagoon Water Quality

Since Summer 2019, I have monitored the water quality of the Indian River Lagoon at Brevard County’s highest point, Haulover canal, and at the lowest point - Dragon point. Water quality measures examined were the dissolved oxygen, nitrate and phosphate levels. This has allowed me to see to what extent the public education is functioning since the amendment to the Florida fertilizer ordinances; and if there should be a more proactive approach in place such as banning the use of phosphorus and nitrous fertilizer during the rainy months. I will also compare this data to other Florida counties that have implemented similar ordinances, and have deemed it successful within the same time frame. I expect there to be a slight increase in the water quality level as the months progress.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Late night study sessions in the all night study.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: Taking a year off to travel.
Abigail Nwiloh

CONCENTRATION: BIOCHEMISTRY

ADVISORS: Dr. Terje Hoim, Dr. Catherine Trivigno

THESIS: Can a Telehealth Coaching Intervention Improve the Diet and Nutritional Status of Family Caregivers (FCG) of the Older Adult with Dementia (OAD)?

My thesis is a peer review that delves into the factors that cause stress/burden of dementia patient caregivers. The paper highlights, specifically, the impact of the burden on the nutrition of caregivers. A suggestion for further research/studies that could shed more light on this issue is presented and discussed.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: My favorite memory would have to be the 2019 Halloween Ball. That was a really fun night.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be attending Meharry Medical College in Nashville to obtain my MD. I have truly enjoyed attending the Honors College for the past three years of my life. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to attend this school. Thank you to all the faculty and staff who have supported me throughout the years. I will incorporate all the values and skills that I have learned to my medical career and throughout my life. This is not a goodbye but a “see you later”!
Anita Nwiloh

CONCENTRATION: BIOLOGY; MINOR: ECONOMICS

ADVISORS: Dr. Terje Hoim, Dr. Catherine Trivigno

THESIS: Courtship and Mating in Drosophila Flies: The Effects of Social Behavior & Sleep Drive On Mating Drive

I studied courtship behaviors in several strains of flies including the Dahomey strain, the Canton S. strain, and the Drosophila strain. By scoring the videos of blinded flies mating, I was able to study the patterns of their mating behaviors and decipher the reason why Dahomey male flies attempted to mate with each other.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: I loved the Pre-Med Gala and having the opportunity to raise money with my club members. I also loved being able to perform with my sister at the event last year. I also enjoyed all my BSU members and getting to have fun at all our events.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be attending Meharry Medical College to obtain my MD. I will be starting the program this summer. I appreciate all the staff members and my professors for making me who I am today and teaching me all that I know now. I look forward to taking these memories and lessons with me as I move forward.
Kyle Owen

CONCENTRATION: HISTORY

ADVISORS: Dr. Christopher Strain, Dr. Christopher Ely

THESIS: The Salem Witch Trials of 1692: Bewitchment and Belief in 17th-Century New England

The Salem Witch Trials have perplexed historians for years. The true causes of these events remain uncertain. Causal theories have developed; around religious and occultist beliefs, ergotism, the Indian Wars, and village factionalism. My thesis explores each theory and concludes that religious and occultist beliefs were the main cause behind the hysteria that led to the bloodshed of the trials. Puritan theology involved belief in a literal Devil, which led to other occultist beliefs related to witches and witchcraft. Therefore, witchcraft and witch lore are a part of these occultist beliefs which were alive and well in Salem, 1692.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Besides the lifelong friendships I’ve made while here, knowing that all my hard work has culminated in me completing my thesis paper is by far my proudest achievement.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: Medical School (MD or DO)
Kelly-Ann Peart

CONCENTRATION: CELLULAR NEUROSCIENCE

ADVISORS: Dr. Chitra Chandrasekhar, Dr. Erik Duboue

THESIS: Reduced Stress Behavior in Mexican Blind Cavefish Compared to the Surface Fish

Stress responses vary between and within species. The level of stress response in a specific organism is dependent upon their ecology. This includes factors like food deprivation and the presence of predators. Comparing the stress related behaviors of two morphotypes (Mexican Blind Cavefish and the Surface fish) of the same species can provide the proof needed to further examine the evolutionary and genetic basis for these stress tendencies.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Working with the students in the Academy of Community Inclusion.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I plan to attend medical school in the year 2021. In the interim, I plan to work in research at a local mental health facility.
Rina Raad

CONCENTRATION: CELLULAR NEUROSCIENCE

ADVISOR: Dr. James Wetterer

THESIS: Dental Anxiety

Many people suffer from dental fear and anxiety, so through my thesis I wanted to explore how this can be managed.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: The classes and my friends.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: Dental School
Sunil Raju

CONCENTRATIONS: BIOLOGICAL CHEMISTRY, SPANISH LITERATURE

ADVISOR: Dr. Monica Maldonado

THESIS: Wilkes Medical Scholar: Sunil completed his undergraduate degree in 3 years, as part of this accelerated program. He will attend FAU’s College of Medicine beginning in Fall 2020.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Studying for general chemistry exams in the RH1 MPR with friends. We used to study hard but also tell great jokes and laugh a lot.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be attending the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine in Boca Raton.
Palak Shah

CONCENTRATION: BIOLOGY

ADVISORS: April Schimmel, Dr. Catherine Trivigno, Dr. Ashley Kennedy

THESIS: What Role Do Dental Prescriptions Play in the Opioid Crisis?

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 47,000 individuals died in 2017 due to an opioid overdose. Further, dentists are more likely to prescribe immediate-release opioids than other healthcare providers. In this thesis I examine the reasons for this, including the ways in which a patient’s sex, age, race, and ethnicity play a role in dental prescriptions, and conclude that dentists do not consistently use the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMPs) or the guidelines set by the American Dental Association. I argue that to help to prevent opioid misuse and abuse, dentists should do a risk assessment before prescribing opioids.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: All things Program Board

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be attending University of Michigan School of Dentistry.
Reilly Stanton

CONCENTRATIONS: CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES, DATA SCIENCE

ADVISOR: Dr. Kevin Lanning

THESIS: Religious Identities: Varieties of Online Linguistic Behavior

An analysis of linguistic behavior across online religious communities, emphasizing the role of identity in collective consciousness.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Dr. Lanning unintentionally convincing me to stay at the HC. When I originally told him I was thinking of transferring, he encouraged me to pursue my love of Data Science at another University where I would have more opportunities. Then, on what I thought was my last day I had a conversation with him wherein I realized what I would be leaving behind. The Honors College offers something that no other University really could: the opportunity to build lasting relationships with academics that I both respect and admire as human beings. I’m proud to say that these relationships have undoubtedly helped shape the person that I am today.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I am currently looking at research assistant positions to gain more experience before grad school and the chance to spend my free time building an online platform for academic content.
Tracey Tobkin

CONCENTRATIONS: BIOLOGY, BIOART

ADVISOR: Professor Dorotha Lemeh

THESIS: The Hummingbird: Infinite Wingbeats of the World

The hummingbird occupies a unique role within the biological, artistic, and literary disciplines. The hummingbird itself is an evolutionary wonder, and its outstanding qualities undergird its presence in the human consciousness as a symbol for life, death, rebirth, ephemerality, hope, and change. There is great intersectionality among the disciplines, and the hummingbird demonstrates this as it flits across the pages of journals, artworks, and novels.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: To give an idea of how numerous my treasured memories from the Honors College are, I have a jar filled to the brim with small slips of paper with a memory written on each. To choose just one, I had the great fortune to visit the English countryside during my study abroad program. And while there, I visited the Slimbridge Wetland Centre. Every solid, liquid, and gaseous surface of the preserve was filled with wild birds. There was every species from mute swan to common kingfisher. It was a truly dazzling sight to witness. My first thought was, “This is where I want to retire to.” Afterwards, my host family took me to a storybook-like tea kitchen located in the valley of the green rolling hills in Salisbury.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: In the year following my graduation, I will attend a premier field ecology course in Ichauway, Georgia through The Wildlife Society, and then complete an internship on the nesting and repopulating of Florida red-headed woodpeckers in North Florida. After my gap year, I plan to pursue my Ph.D. in Ecology & Evolutionary Biology at Cornell University. All the while, I will continue to develop my culinary skills in order to craft the perfect recipe for tiramisu.
David Torres

CONCENTRATION: BIOLOGY

ADVISORS: April Schimmel, Dr. Jon Moore

THESIS: Dietary Analysis of the Florida East Coast Diamondback Terrapin

My thesis will be a dietary analysis of the Florida East Coast terrapin subspecies (M. t. Tequesta) populating the Indian River Lagoon mangrove habitats. I will examine variation in individual species and abundances of prey categories typically found in the IRL habitats and how terrapin size class and sex may affect their dietary choices.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: One of my favorite Honors College memories was winning the Student vs. Faculty Softball game last year 2019. The Faculty said it was “rigged” or that they let us win, but we all knew better. Prior to the event happening there were quite a few complications (I was the rec Intramural Supervisor at the time) so it was incredibly stressful, but seeing everyone come together and play super well after all of our practices was well worth it.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: After graduating from the Honors College, I intend to continue my education and enroll in a graduate program to earn a doctorate degree in Physical Therapy. Before that, I will earn a physical therapist assistant license to gain valuable experience while also continuing my passion for my music and music production on the side. Although many times were rough, I truly appreciate the experiences and people I have come to know at the Honors College.

Thank you.
Dayana Torres Valladares

CONCENTRATION: NEUROSCIENCE

ADVISORS: Dr. William O’Brien, Dr. Lucia Carvelli

THESIS: Assessing Tolerance to Amphetamine in C. elegans

It is known that exposure to amphetamine (AMPH) may cause sensitization and/or tolerance. A behavior, termed Swimming Induced Paralysis (SWIP), was used to test whether C. elegans develop sensitization and/or tolerance to AMPH. Our results show that repetitive exposures to AMPH reduced SWIP suggesting, therefore, that C. elegans develop tolerance to AMPH. Since AMPH requires mainly five genes (dat-1, cat-1, cat-2, dop-3 and lgc-55) to generate SWIP, using mutant animals, we are investigating which of these genes are involved in AMPH tolerance.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: I have lots of great memories! One of my favorite experiences was to shadow a variety of doctors as part of one of my classes. I also loved learning about organ systems in Human Morphology and Function.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be applying to medical school, hoping to start in the fall of 2021. I plan to spend my gap year tutoring science in PBSC.
Shirley Trenche

CONCENTRATION: CELLULAR NEUROSCIENCE

ADVISOR: Dr. Erik Duboue

THESIS: The Genetic and Neuronal Principles Underlying Stress Responses

This experiment tested the genetic and neuronal principles underlying stress responses. Stress is the body’s natural response to a change. Two models were used in this experiment to measure stress: Drosophila melanogaster and Astyanax mexicanus. The Drosophila melanogaster, or fruit flies have a genome similar to humans, but can be easily genetically manipulated. The Astyanax mexicanus, or the Mexican cavefish have a similar neuroanatomy to humans. The fruit flies with a W118 genotype were tested in a heat-stress chamber while the Mexican cavefish were tested in a shock-stress arena. Throughout these experiments, it was determined that genes can influence the likelihood of developing a stress-related illness and exhibiting a stress response as well as the ability of neurons to directly affect stress levels through cortisol-release signaling.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: I enjoyed having fun with my friends at CarnivOWL!

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: Osteopathic medical school
Jeffrey Turn  
CONCENTRATION: BIOLOGY

ADVISORS: Dr. Shree Kundalkar, Dr. Catherine Trivigno, April Schimmel, Dr. James Wetterer

THESIS: Testing for *Batrachochytrium Dendrobatidis* and *Batrachochytrium Salamandrivors* Presence in Southeastern Florida’s Crayfish and Shrimp Populations

The presence of *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* and *Batrachochytrium salamandrivors*, chytrid fungi species known for their lethality in amphibians, was tested for in blue crayfish (*Procambarus alleni*) and eastern grass shrimp (*Palaemonetes paludosus*). For this project, crayfish and freshwater shrimp in southeastern Florida from twenty-one sites were collected, frozen, dissected, and swabbed with sterile swabs. Samples from the same site were swabbed together, so that one swab for each site was collected and sent to the San Diego Zoo Amphibian Lab for qPCR to verify the presence of chytrid fungi. The results from the qPCR returned negative for the presence of either chytrid fungi species. This potentially could indicate that chytrid fungus is not found at the sites tested, or that *Palaemonetes paludosus* or *Procambarus alleni* do not act as vectors for chytrid fungus in these regions.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: In pursuit of crayfish and freshwater shrimp for my thesis, I led a group of Honors College students into Dupuis Wildlife Management area. We set up traps and netted in the park’s fishing areas, starting at 3pm. The paths were very rocky for us to drive on and it was exhausting having to take off our boots and pack up our equipment every time we went to a new site in the park. We ended up staying in the park searching for crayfish and shrimp until 2 am, having difficulty finding our crayfish traps and avoiding the total of sixteen alligators (which we located by flashing our flashlights over the water in search for a red reflection of their eye-balls) and two water moccasins in the dark. When we finally left the park my car was completely encrusted with a thin layer of dirt, our boots were covered with mud, and the freshmen I recruited to help me were asleep in the back seat... We only found two shrimp during
that entire adventure, but the highlight of the trip was finding a two-toed amphiuma, a species of aquatic salamander. It was the first time the two-toed amphiuma was recorded in the park with the iNaturalist app, and we were glad it didn’t bite anyone because they have a very serious bite that can cause severe infection. Overall the trip was very entertaining!

**AFTER GRADUATION PLANS:** I will be attending veterinary school next Fall in pursuit of a career as a veterinarian at a zoo or aquarium. I have received acceptances from five different veterinary schools (University of Georgia, University of Tennessee, University of Wisconsin, Tufts University, and Auburn University) and am currently on the waitlist for a sixth (University of Florida).
Tracy Vandenbraak

CONCENTRATION: ECONOMICS

ADVISOR: Dr. Kanybek Nur-tegin

THESIS: How Commission Rates Impact Real Estate Agent’s Performance: An Economic Regression of Agent Performance in Jupiter

Real estate agents charge their clients a percentage on every property sold and this percentage, or commission, can range from 5 to 6 percent. The reason for this difference is unclear. Using an ordinary least squares regression, I attempt to find a connection between real estate agent performance and the amount commission which he or she charges. The premium realtor effect assumes that more efficient, or “successful”, realtors charge more for their services because they are overall better than the realtors who charge a lower commission. Through an ordinary least squares regression, I hope to support this hypothesis.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Late night hang outs at the Marriott Hotel!

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I plan to move to North Carolina and pursue a master’s in industrial organizational psychology.
Sanjay Venugopalan

CONCENTRATIONS: ECONOMICS, MATHEMATICS

ADVISORS: Dr. Keith Jakee, Dr. Kanybek Nur-tegin

THESIS: The Effects of Cash on Changes in Home Price: A Study of Cash Offers on Residential Real Estate in Jupiter, Florida

Using an ordinary least squares regression analysis, I assess whether home sellers are willing to concede discounts to buyers who offer to pay cash, in order to avoid the risks of transaction failure and delay of payment. I claim that, in contrast to a loan, a cash offer reduces the risk of a failed transaction, and this reduced risk is reflected as a discount on the price of the house. This paper will also assess the magnitude of any discounts by comparing the home’s last list price on the market to its final sale price.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Probably my favorite Honors College memory has been my time with Kingdom Club, our campus Christian club. I met so many great friends there who were gracious to share the gospel with me, explaining how there is nothing I can do to make myself right with God. God used this to help me realize my only hope is Jesus Christ. In his death on the cross he took the punishment that I deserved giving me a new life instead.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will begin starting a career at The Vanguard Group, an investment firm in Malvern, Pennsylvania.
Kenzie Waldkoetter

CONCENTRATION: BIOLOGICAL CHEMISTRY

ADVISORS: Dr. Eugene T. Smith, Dr. Chitra Chandrasekhar

THESIS: Cyclic Voltammetry: Inexpensive, Effective Potentiostat

The physical characterization of biologically relevant compounds is a cornerstone of research, but it is expensive. The objective of this project is to construct an inexpensive yet effective chemical instrument to evaluate the electrochemical properties of various compounds as a function of pH. A potentiostat will be constructed to meet this goal.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: All of the days I spent laughing with and learning from Dr. Kundalkar.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be attending Rosalind Franklin University's Dr. William M. Scholl School of Podiatric Medicine in North Chicago, IL to obtain my Doctorate of Podiatric Medicine in Spring 2024.
Camden Weist

CONCENTRATION: COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

ADVISORS: Dr. Monica Maldonado, Dr. Randy Blakely

THESIS: Forward Genetic Screening of Dopamine Signaling Pathways in C. elegans

I performed a genetic screen on a group of mutated C. elegans strains pulled from the million mutation project library. The screening process involves using a proven behavioral phenotype known as Swimming Induced Paralysis (SWIP) that is causally related to dop-3 D2 dopamine receptor functioning in the C. elegans nervous system. The main goal of this project was to discover novel genes/molecules in the dopamine signaling pathway. With these new discoveries, we can advance scientific knowledge and work towards new drug therapies for depression, schizophrenia and other dopamine related maladies.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: When Ishon, the head repair employee, would bang his fist on the door in the dorms and shout, “Maintenance!” Also, playing pickup soccer on campus.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be working towards applying to medical school with interest in Neurology.
Emily Willson

CONCENTRATION: BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENCE

ADVISOR: Dr. Julie Earles

THESIS: Infant Behavioral and Physiological Displays of Jealousy and Responses to a Social Rival

The emotion of jealousy is one of the most complex emotions in adulthood and even more so in infants. Expressions of jealousy have physiological and behavioral components, and the understanding of how they interact together has not been extensively examined. My research contributes to previous literature on infant jealousy and attachment in 12-month-old infants by examining their physiological and behavioral responses to social rivals.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: I will always say that orientation week freshman year is my most favorite experience at the Honors College. That week shaped the course of my college experience and led me to incredible friendships, growth, and experiences that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: For the next year, I have plans to enter the workforce to gain greater hands-on experience in the fields of psychology and neuroscience while applying to master’s programs.
Erica Yedwab

CONCENTRATIONS: PSYCHOLOGY, LAW & SOCIETY, WOMEN’S STUDIES

ADVISORS: Dr. Laura Vernon, Dr. Kevin Lanning, Dr. Mark Tunick, Dr. Wairimu Njambi

THESIS: Gender-Identity Protections Under Title VII: Beyond the Binary

Sex is a fuzzy concept that cannot be defined discretely, or solely by one’s chromosomes or anatomy. This is exemplified in the on-going debate in a current supreme court case, R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Homes vs. the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2019) where a transgender woman was fired from her job when she notified her boss of her plans to start dressing like her true self at work. This case could decide whether gender-identity is included under the sex discrimination protections of Title VII. The theoretical framework presented in this thesis can be used to support an argument that gender-identity should be protected under Title VII using an interdisciplinary approach that includes an analysis of current psychological research.

FAVORITE HONORS COLLEGE MEMORY: Walking into my first IDS class with Dr. Njambi and Dr. O’Brien as a freshman and them being surprised at the fact that (as a freshman) I had somehow gotten into their class. I didn’t know what was in store for me yet, but that Posthuman Studies class changed my entire perspective on life and convinced me to take more humanities classes.

AFTER GRADUATION PLANS: I will be taking a gap year before I apply to grad school for clinical psychology. During this year off from school, I hope to get a job working in a psychologist’s office and am planning to take my GRE so that I can begin to apply to grad schools in November.
FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY HONORS CONVOCATION AWARDS

Alyssa Payne
WHC University Scholar

Sunil Raju
WHC University Club Merit Award

Vineet Reddy
WHC Undergraduate Researcher of the Year

HARRIET L. WILKES HONORS COLLEGE AWARDS

Christy LaFlamme
Outstanding Scholar

Abby Lenhart
Outstanding Senior

Ken Kalzcuk
Outstanding Junior

Hillary Moran
Outstanding Sophomore

Breana Hanley
Outstanding First Year

Liza Lanzon
Distinguished Service

Kenzie Waldkoetter
Distinguished Community Service
Jeffrey Turn (Trivigno, Wetterer)
Christy LaFlamme (Chandrasekhar, Trivigno)
Abigail Chavez (Vernon, Duboue)
Dayanna Torres (Claiborne, Carvelli)
Olivia Ducram (Luria, Harrawood)
Amber Davis (Luria, Harrawood)
Makenna King (Moore, O’Brien)
Tracy Vandenbraak (Nur-tegin, McGovern)
Sara Haman (Baima, Lanning)
Katherine Hernandez (Tunick, Baima)
Gianni Croci (Ely, Steigenga)
Emily Heithcock (O’Brien, Jakee)