

Summer 2019

Psychological Sciences Newsletter



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Graduation Day 2019

Graduation Day 2019 was held Saturday May 11th under cloudy skies but with bright futures. The full university graduation kicked off at 8:30 a.m. in Zable Stadium with Glenn Close '74 as commencement speaker. She opened her remarks by referring to William & Mary as “A community that challenged me, prepared me and inspired me. A community whose passions and philosophies became part of my DNA, giving me strength and resilience, as I stepped out into the world.” The student commencement speaker was Neuroscience Major, Rhea Sharma. The graduation ceremony had all the requisite dignity and formality as President Katherine Rowe presided over her first graduation ceremony as William & Mary’s 28th President. As the ceremony drew to a close President Rowe announced “I hereby close William & Mary’s 2019 commencement” and to the delight of all, proceeded to throw Frisbees from the podium to the graduates below.

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The Department of Psychological Sciences Diploma Ceremony

The actual awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees by the Department of Psychological Sciences was scheduled for 1:00 in the Sunken Garden but with threatening skies was moved to the Student Recreation Center.



Department Chair Professor Josh Burk welcomed all students, families, and faculty and he introduced each faculty member. The Director of Graduate Studies, Professor Danielle Dallaire, outlined the graduate program and announced two graduate awards: The S. Laurie Sanderson Award going to Maria Larrazabal-Carrillo, and the Award for Excellence in Scholarship in the Natural & Computational Sciences going to Sarah Blumenthal. Professor Joanna Schug recognized members of the Psi Chi National Honor Society in Psychology, as well as Phi Beta Kappa inductees, and Monroe Scholars. She also announced this year's Alumni Association Prize going to Giselle Ferguson and the Williams Prize for Outstanding Psychology Major being shared by Elizabeth Gallery and Sara Franklin-Gillette. The Galano Award for Community Service and Engagement in Psychology went to Daniel McNeil.

There were 140 undergraduates participating and receiving either their BA or BS degrees, including Psychological Sciences, Interdisciplinary, and Neuroscience. Of these, 17 had completed two-semester honors projects in their senior year and were awarded their degrees with Honors.

The Department of Psychological Sciences Diploma Ceremony (continued)



Following the ceremony several of the Honors students privately shared their experiences. Danny McNeil did his Honors Project under the direction of Professor Janice Zeman, with his research on emotional reluctance in adolescence. They presented their results at the annual meeting of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies. Danny is headed to Marshall University for medical school and an intended career in Psychiatry.

Elizabeth Gallery worked with Professor Catherine Forestell to investigate how various sensory characteristics, such as color, texture, and odor, influence children's responses to new foods. Following graduation, she is headed to a career in consulting for Deloitte Consulting.

Katelyn Birchfield did her Honors Project as an interdisciplinary study under Professor Heartley Huber of the School of Education and Professor Harvey Langholtz of Psychological Sciences. Her thesis was titled Peer-Mediated Interventions for Middle School Students with High-Functioning Autism and was based on data collected while student teaching at Matthew Whaley Elementary School in Williamsburg. Following graduate school next year at William & Mary's School of Education, Katelyn will pursue a career in education of children with autism.

The Department of Psychological Sciences Diploma Ceremony (continued)

Giselle Ferguson, also under Professor Catherine Forestell, investigated how social norms affect implicit and explicit responses to healthful and unhealthful foods. In the fall, Giselle will begin pursuing a Ph.D. in Social and Health Psychology at Stony Brook University, where she has been awarded the Graduate Council Fellowship.

Sara Franklin-Gillette joined Professor Zeman's research lab during her freshman year and worked on a longitudinal study of peer emotion socialization and presented her research at the Society for Research in Child Development. In the fall, she will start a Ph.D. program in School Psychology at Lehigh University, researching school-based interventions for disruptive behavior disorders.



MS Graduates (Left to Right): Sarah Blumenthal, Repairer Etuk, Lauren Howard, Maria Larrazabal-Carrillo, Rachel Scrivano, and Kelsey Shaffer.

There were six Master of Science candidates participating in the graduation ceremony. María Larrazábal Carrillo worked with Professor Christopher Conway using a daily diary study to test whether distress tolerance—a target of many psychological interventions—promotes healthy emotional management. They presented the results of their research at the annual conventions of the Association for Behavioral & Cognitive Therapies (2018) and the Annual Convention of the Association for Psychological Science (2018). They also presented at the International Convention of Psychological Science (2019) held in Paris, France. They published their findings in the *Journal of Personality Disorders*. This fall María will continue her studies at the University of Virginia, where she will study cognitive and emotional factors implicated in anxiety.

The Department of Psychological Sciences Diploma Ceremony (continued)



Professor Chris Conway and MS graduate Maria Larrazabal-Carrillo

Sarah Blumenthal worked with Professor Josh Burk, studying the orexinergic system and its role in attentional function. Her thesis focused on using an orexin-2 receptor agonist to assuage attentional deficits induced by loss of cortical cholinergic projections. They co-authored one article published in the European journal of pharmacology, and a book titled, *The Orexin/ Hypocretin System: Functional Roles and Therapeutic Potential* with Academic Press. Starting in August, she will begin Emory University's Ph.D. in Neuroscience program where she intends to research the neural mechanisms underlying addiction and reward-seeking behaviors.

Rachel Scrivano worked with Professor Paul Kieffaber, researching inhibitory function in older adults to better understand inhibitory function and investigate differences between older and younger adults by measuring brain activity. Rachel will continue her education in Ohio State University's Social Work Ph.D. program where she will design, carry out, and evaluate health and wellness interventions for the older adult community.



Professor Paul Kieffaber and MS graduate Rachel Scrivano

Repairet Etuk studied under Professor Cathy Forestell and presented his research at the W&M Graduate Research Symposium on cognitive biases in food neophobic children. In the fall he will be attending the Clinical Psychology program at the University of Nevada Las Vegas where he plans to research binge eating habits in adults. Lauren Howard worked with Professor Joanna Schug and will begin work in an academic research position. Kelsey Shaffer studied under Professor Lee Kirkpatrick and Professor Joanna Schug and will start a private sector position following graduation.

NSF Announces Grant for Professor Schug's Research on Social Ecology

The National Science Foundation Division of Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences recently announced a grant to support the research of Associate Professor Joanna Schug of William & Mary's Department of Psychological Sciences. The title of her funded project is Social Ecology of Relational Mobility.

The focus of the research will be how cultures vary globally in their social behaviors and cognition. Cultures show different levels to which people demonstrate trust of others, cooperation across group boundaries, and how pro-social behaviors are enforced in communities. The project will focus on the nature of social environments, or social ecologies, and how they vary from one culture to another.

The research will focus on two primary questions. The first will be an examination of the patterns of daily social interactions across cultures, with the goal of determining the extent to which patterns of relational mobility and social interactions coincide with historical and environmental factors. The second will be the use of experimental approaches to examine to what degree changes in relational mobility may lead to changes in social behavior within and across cultures.



Professor Joanna Schug

Would You Be Willing to Share Your Success?

Here in the Department of Psychological Sciences we try to show our undergrads some of the various paths to professional success for psych majors and of course that success can be within psychology or in a variety of other areas – public service, education, health care, law, etc. Once or twice each academic year we bring alumni to campus to meet with undergrads to discuss their own professional development to help students see various opportunities. Would you be willing to be considered for this? If so, please submit your CV or resume to psychology@wm.edu.