Michelle Miller Honored as a President’s Distinguished Teaching Fellow

Dr. Miller was awarded this distinction because of her positive impact and influence on student learning in a diverse student population, the reciprocal relationship between her teaching and scholarship, and her campus-wide leadership in undergraduate education. Congratulations and a huge thank you to Michelle for all the work she has done for undergraduate education.

Northern Arizona University has a historical and philosophical commitment to excellence in teaching and advancing student learning. Faculty commitment to continuously strengthening teaching is reflected in high student appraisal of NAU faculty, strong levels of student satisfaction in surveys such as the National Survey of Student Engagement, involvement of students in research, and attention to pedagogical innovation in support of student success. Faculty who are designated as the President’s Distinguished Teaching Fellows are teacher scholars whose teaching represents the highest levels of excellence (Quoted from the President’s Distinguished Teaching Fellow). The psychology department is happy to announce that Michelle Miller will start her term as departmental chair on July 1, 2011. We look forward to her leadership.

Laurie Dickson Honored with the President’s Award

Dr. Dickson was honored with this award for her active participation in developing strategies to retain students and was awarded an ABOR Learner-Centered Education grant to redesign Psychology 101: Introduction to Psychology.

A Word from the Department Chair

Welcome to Department of Psychology
Spring 2011 Newsletter!

Time flies when you are having fun! As my term as department chairperson comes to a close, I would like to thank all of the people involved with the Psychology Department, the students, faculty, staff, administration, alumni, and other friends. It has been a pleasure serving as the department chair. Much of the enjoyment has derived from the great group of people I have worked with for the last three years. I share my sincere thanks and appreciation to the faculty. It is because of them that we are the great department that we are! I thank SBS Dean Michael Stevenson and Associate Dean Bill Huffman, the SBS staff Zoe Lonetti, Diane Hoge, and Carlene Klein, the SBS Advising Team led by Pam Stinson-Tattersall, and the SBS IT team of John Cencioso and Tyanna Burton. You have made my job easier through your help and support! It has been a treat working with our departmental staff, Janina Burton, Delfina Rodriguez, and Julie Lambert. I appreciate all of their hard work, as their work makes the department run, and they help make the department fun! 

CONGRATULATIONS to the undergraduate and graduate students who are graduating this month! We hope you keep in touch with the department and share your accomplishments with us.

K. Laurie Dickson
and achievement, expand course capacity and reduce costs. As psychology’s department chair, she took the lead on a major curriculum revision of our undergraduate program, linking important learning outcomes with curriculum structure and opportunity for our department’s undergraduate students. This revision represented a total overhaul in the course sequence and also the overall vision for the psychology major, requiring the development of new course offerings and substantial expansion of existing course capacity, with no large-scale infusion of additional resources.

As department chair, Dr. Dickson has contributed to the psychology department by bringing about an unprecedented era of faculty engagement and productivity, including a mission to help faculty identify, develop and ultimately fulfill their professional potential. Dr. Dickson is very active in the advisement of students and is a successful scholar because her research, teaching and service are closely aligned, which extends to multiple positive outcomes in her instruction, mentoring, and student/faculty collaborative research.

**Student Award Recipients**

On April 29, 2011, The College of Social and Behavioral Sciences hosted an event showcasing student and faculty achievement. Faculty and students gathered at the High Country Conference Center. SBS Dean Michael Stevenson presented the college awards, and Laurie Dickson, department chair, presented the departmental scholarships and awards.

**Virginia Blankenship Undergraduate Research Award** is given to high achieving psychology students who have presented their research at a national or regional conference. Dr. Blankenship joined the NAU psychology department in 1990 as the department chair. She received the President’s Award in 1999 and the college Outstanding Teacher Award in 2008. Dr. Blankenship retired from NAU in 2009. She is known for her outstanding level of commitment and success mentoring undergraduate students in research.

**William Gibson Outstanding Student in Psychology and Public Service Award** recognizes a psychology student who has demonstrated high academic standards and desires to better the community through volunteer activity or public service. Dr. William Gibson joined the NAU psychology department in 1970 and retired in 2008. He has won the college Outstanding Teacher Award and is active in Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society.

**Vicki Green Graduate School Travel Award** supports psychology majors who have accepted an invitation to interview for placement in a psychology (or closely related field) graduate program. Dr. Green desires to facilitate student success and ensure equal access to opportunities that would enrich student educational progress.

**Dr. Sydeman and Dr. Miller Awarded Promotion to Full Professor**

Dr. Sumner Sydeman was promoted to Professor and was recognized at the President’s Award ceremony on April 20, 2011. Building upon his training as a clinical psychologist with expertise in clinical health psychology, Dr. Sydeman’s recent scholarly interests include the impact of negative affect (i.e., anxiety) on health, psychological factors associated with coronary heart disease, and the association of behavioral variables (i.e., exercise regimens and smoking status) to clinical and co-morbid outcomes. Congratulations!

Dr. Michelle Miller was promoted to Professor and was recognized at the President’s Award ceremony on April 20, 2011. Dr. Miller’s current scholarly interests include pedagogy, instructional technology, and applied psychology. Her national reputation as a redesign scholar is supported by the integration of her knowledge of cognition and learning and her expertise in redesign efforts. Congratulations!

---

**Dr. Laurie Dickson (Continued)**
Spring 2011
Fieldwork and Internships

Spring Semester was an exciting time for students enrolled in Psychology 408 (Fieldwork and Internship). Students served as interns in eleven community settings and, together, completed over 2800 hours of supervised psychological or behavioral-intervention services. Students were placed at a variety of sites around Flagstaff including The Guidance Center, Parenting Arizona, Victim Witness, the Women’s Shelter at Northland Family, and the Exodus Program of the Coconino County Sheriff’s Department. Students who enroll in Psychology 408 are placed in a variety of sites where both the client population and the daily tasks for an intern vary daily (and, sometimes, drastically!). This semester, interns worked on targeted interventions to prevent self-injurious behavior among children with autism, provided structured activities and life skill development sessions for women who had experienced intimate partner violence, and taught gymnastics to children in a residential treatment facility. As their final exam, students presented to their peers, faculty from the Department of Psychology, and internship site supervisors, a PowerPoint presentation on their internship experience. The luncheon celebrates the many accomplishments that psychology interns have completed during an intense – and rewarding – semester applying their psychology course work into an applied setting.

For further information on Psychology 408c (Fieldwork Experience), contact Dr. Andy Walters (andy.walters@nau.edu).

Student Award Recipients (Continued)

Vicki Green Thesis Award
provides funds to support psychology graduate students’ thesis work. Vicki Green, an emeritus professor of psychology, served as department chair at NAU from 1995 to 2000 and retired from NAU in 2005.

Edward C. and Mary E. Mills Scholarship is awarded to a psychology major who has a distinguished record in scholarship and leadership.

Outstanding Psychology Seniors

Kerisa Shelton and Gina DeNoble

Outstanding Psychology Juniors

Mica McGiggs and Miranda Minasian
Gold Axe Awards

Psychology majors, Ashli Benally and Nicole Greenough, were among the 40 seniors receiving the Gold Axe award. The Gold Axe Award has been presented since 1933 to seniors demonstrating outstanding achievement and distinguished service to the University and the community.

Ashli Benally is from Klagetoh, Arizona, and came to NAU for the Psychology and Criminal Justice programs. While at NAU, Ashli was involved in the Student Conservation Association and was a Native American Bible Study leader through the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship association. In addition, Ashli is a Native American Peer Mentor. Ashli reports that her experience in the Department of Psychology has enhanced her knowledge of the human condition and has given her critical intellectual skills.

In her own words, “NAU has changed my life. Being a student here has given me so many opportunities to work with and reach out to many Native American students, and to encourage them to continue higher education. I became involved in many organizations, and this has opened my eyes to new experiences and perspectives. I completely value what I have learned at NAU, and I will forever use the tools that I have been provided.”

After graduation Ashli will be fulfilling a life-long dream of moving to New York City. In New York, Ashli will begin preparing for entry into a graduate program. Her career goal is to obtain an advanced degree in counseling or clinical psychology and then to work in the mental health field on the Navajo reservation.

For Nicole Greenough, NAU offered a variety of new experiences. Coming from Laguna Hills, California, Nicole thought a medium-sized university in the mountains and forests would be a change from having grown up by the beach. Beyond her double majors in psychology and criminal justice, Nicole was involved in assisting with the annual HIV testing program offered on campus through the Coconino County Health Department and with PRISM, including serving as the organization’s president. During the Fall 2010 semester, she completed an internship at Victim Witness Services.

Of her time at NAU, Nicole believes she’s become more independent and – through her experiences with academic course work and a commitment to service organizations that help others – she has been able to realize her own potential to affect change for causes she believes in. Her commitment to excelling in both of her majors also has led Nicole to believe she’s become more organized; as she said: “It’s nearly impossible not to be organized when you’re taking five classes!”

After graduation Nicole will be entering a graduate program in forensic psychology at Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia. Marymount’s highly regarded forensic program offers elite internships at the FBI and the U.S. Justice Department. Nicole believes that her interests in both psychology and criminal justice can best be merged in a forensic psychology program where she will be trained in the psychology of criminal offenders. Eventually, Nicole would like to work for the Justice Department.

Both Nicole and Ashli will graduate in May 2011.

Congratulations to Nicole and Ashli on winning the Gold Axe Award!

Psychology Lab Hours
Fall 2011

Monday - Thursday 12:30 - 3:00
Undergraduate research students who have been working with Andrew Gardner presented a poster at the 4th Annual Four Corners ABA Regional Conference in Santa Fe, NM this month. This regional conference is an excellent opportunity to hear some about the latest services, social issues and research in the areas of autism, psychology, special education, and other various fields. These undergraduate students have been working over the past year formulating their research questions, collecting data, organizing and analyzing data, and writing up their results. As a culminating experience for our undergraduate researchers, two students had the opportunity to complete the research process with the dissemination of their results at this conference. Both students received excellent feedback and represented NAU in a professional manner. We also enjoyed visiting Santa Fe, NM for the first time! The following are student perspectives on their experience:

“It was an honor to present our research results at the Four-Corners Association for Behavior Analysis Annual Conference. As undergraduates, the conference gave us a glimpse of some of the discoveries Behavior Analysts have recently contributed to the field of Psychology and the questions they wish to answer in the future. Listening to the numerous presentations covering various disciplines of Behavior Analysis was enlightening and thought provoking.

Presenting our research project, titled Animal-Assisted Therapy in Autism Treatment, was a unique experience that resulted in making the acquaintance of several interesting people through discussing our findings. We had the opportunity to talk to the majority of the conference attendees and are proud to say that our feedback on the presentation was very positive. The conference was a great way to further our knowledge of Behavior Analysis and meet some of the leading members of the Association, while having a contributing role as well (Cheryl Robinson).”


If you've ever spent the night on the coach section of a train, you'll understand when we say that our foray into the unknown didn't exactly start with a bang. But despite the sore backs and possible frostbite, our trip to present at the 91st annual Western Psychological Association conference in LA was an unforgettable experience. An exciting and grueling year of research with Dr. Wayment culminated in this opportunity to present two separate posters, discussing the relationship of identity style and ego vs. eco system motivations with online social behaviors, at a regional conference.

While nervous, we were reassured that our presentations would be a fun, stress-free opportunity to share and discuss our research. The first person to approach us was a statistics professor from California State University, who proceeded to quiz us on the minute details of our actual and hypothetical processes. Though challenging, this unexpected grilling was an excellent start to the hour. However, the most exciting and enlightening aspect was not necessarily presenting our specific findings, but rather having the opportunity to discuss the broader topics as well and the implications for future research.

Though perhaps the most memorable moment of the conference was the final speaker: Phillip Zimbardo. With all the giggles and picture taking, walking into the conference room felt like we were about to meet the Marlon Brando of psychology. Once the clamor died down, he gave an enlightening yet humorous speech on the concepts of good and evil and how they change our perceptions of human behavior.
Undergraduate Researchers Ride the Rails to WPA (Continued)

This trip certainly expanded our academic horizons, but it expanded our personal ones as well. We had to rely on public transit, taking the subway for the first time in our lives. And as sad as this may seem, we finally learned how to successfully use a map. While some of our decisions may not have seemed overly intelligent (taking directional advice from the woozy kid asking for Clear Eyes may not have been our best move) the independence they provided was an unexpected bonus. In effect, our trip provided us with important and unexpected life experiences, and demonstrated practical abilities we never knew we had (an important lesson to learn with graduation and the real world looming so near).

Overall, presenting at this conference provided both academic and personal growth. Even the train with all of its eccentricities was a unique experience that we wouldn't have traded. Well, we might suggest one change: next time, bring a blanket.

Women’s Weight Management Program
Health Psychology Center, Department of Psychology, Northern Arizona University

Members of Dr. Suzanne Daiss’ research lab have had a busy year. After leading groups and collecting data with the Health Psychology Center’s Women’s Weight Management Program for an entire year, some of the data were presented at the Building Healthy Lifestyles Conference held in Phoenix in February. Both graduate and undergraduate students helped with everything from leading the groups to data input and analysis and poster preparation. We presented two posters:

Changes in physiological variables over a small change, lifestyle-based weight loss program: Results at 6 months.

Suzanne Daiss, Ph.D., Kendra Krietsch, University of Arizona, Sabrina Blackledge, B.S., Christina Anguiano, M.A., Matthew Anderson, B.S., Michelle Garrido, B.S., Kali Patterson, B.S., Crystal Becenti, B.S., Monica Casey, B.S., Kendra Marum, B.S., Mike Getchis, B.S., Heidi Wayment, Ph.D., Krista Pernitz.

The Social and Cognitive EEG Lab presented two posters in March of this year at a conference called Opportunities and Challenges in Social Neuroscience, Utrecht, the Netherlands. Organized by the Society for Social Neuroscience, the conference covered cutting-edge topics in the form of invited lectures and poster sessions. Second-year graduate student Nick Bilyk presented a poster titled Differences In Execution- And Observation-Related Mu Suppression Predict Empathic Ability. Adrian Andelin, also a second-year graduate student, presented a paper titled Dissociation of Central and Occipital 8-13Hz EEG Desynchronization. The posters described reported on relationships between mirror neuron-like activity in the brain and empathic abilities. Two of the coauthors on both posters, Lynne Cuellar and Ashanti Bragg, were interns in the summer, 2010 Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU). This program is administered by Dr. Larry Stevens and is funded by the National Science Foundation and helped to support conference travel. The conference trip enabled Dr. Woodruff and his students to discuss their research with leading European researchers in the social neurosciences, helping to build international academic ties and helping to fulfill Northern Arizona University’s global education mission.
Women's Weight Management Program (Continued)

Intuitive Eating Practices Among Female Participants in a Small Change, Group-based, Weight Loss Program: A Proposed Study

Jadi Engels, B.A., Dana Spinnler, B.S., Sangeeta Vijayagopalan, B.S., Suzanne Daiss, Ph.D., Sabrina Blackledge, B.S.

We will continue to analyze data from the follow-up period and will submit the findings for publication.

Students Present Research in San Diego

Hannah Hayes and Alex Marcus investigated romantic relationships and sexual behavior among young adults engaged in a Friends with Benefits (FWB) relationship. Alex and Hannah compared responses of persons with a FWB relationship to a matched sample of young adults without FWB relationships. As with other samples of adults reporting FWB relationships, Hannah and Alex found that, within their sample, men typically initiated FWB relationships with partners. However, highest levels of relationship and sexual satisfaction were reported among women in a long-term, dating relationship and who had no experience with FWBs.

Ivan Valenzuela conducted a qualitative-quantitative mixed-design exploring themes of masculinity and familism among 20 community-dwelling Latino men. The informants in Ivan's study narrated the importance of their partners and wives and spoke effusively about their commitment to family. Men addressed how the stereotype of the “Latin Lover” was disrespectful to their lives as family-oriented men. Ivan found that men were proud of their Hispanic heritage and believed the cultural legacy of familism channeled men to be supportive and caring husbands and partners.

Kateryna Sylaska examined the developmental progression of learning outcomes in a seminar course centrally based on themes of gender. Using a pretest-posttest design, Kateryna documented the solid progression of student learning over the course of the semester. In addition, using a qualitative methodological approach, Kateryna was able to dimensionalize the importance of discussion-based teaching strategies on students’ experience with learning about gender.

Psychology majors Hannah Hayes, Alexandra Marcus, and Ivan Valenzuela, and psychology graduate student, Kateryna Sylaska, presented their research at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors, and Therapists.
Ann Huffman and two NAU students (undergraduate Akiee Mayon and graduate Candice Perks) presented their research findings at the Society of Industrial-Organizational Psychologists annual conference.

Below are the research papers and posters that were presented:


Huffman, A. H., Muse, L., & Mayon, A. (2011). Organizational Players as Mediators of the Furlough-Turnover Intention Relationship. Poster accepted to 26th annual meeting of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Chicago, IL.


Brittney Van Der Werff graduated from NAU as a Psychology major in 2008 and will earn a masters degree in environmental science from the University of Michigan’s School of Natural Resources and Environment in May 2011. The University of Michigan is one of the top institutions in the conservation psychology movement, and Brittney relied heavily on her experience as a psychology major at NAU to pursue her interest in environmentally focused behavior, education, and communication.

She worked with four other graduate students on a masters thesis project focused specifically on assisting a reservation community in Arlee, Montana, develop effective educational materials for a local river restoration trail.

She also worked as an intern at the Valles Caldera National Preserve in New Mexico, where she created interpretative stations for visitors to learn about experimental land management practices, local ecosystems and habitat restoration. Upon graduation Brittney plans to return to the Valles Caldera National Preserve and expand the environmental interpretation
Environmental Science  Continued

program she developed during her internship. Eventually she would like to return to school to earn a Doctorate in environmental education and interpretation.

Halo House is Honored
Each spring the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences honors local community partners in our joint missions of student education and development, and creating an intersectionality between the University and community leaders. The Department of Psychology recognized Shawn Niece-Pendergast, Shelter Manager at Halo House, a children’s shelter in Flagstaff. Shawn is a graduate of NAU’s psychology program and is a known community advocate for the safety and well-being of children. Students enrolling in Psychology 408c (Field Work) intern with Shawn at Halo House. Interns work with children and adolescents one-on-one and in groups to facilitate their social and academic strengths. Shawn has served as an outstanding supervisor and mentor to many of our students. Our Department thanks Shawn for her commitment to the children at the youth shelter and for her continued work with Psychology majors. Congratulations, Shawn!

Conference Posters Award
Ivan Valenzuela won second place for his poster, “As Cool As I Am, I Still Need Friends To Be Happy.” Ivan presented his poster on April 8, 2011, at the 57th Annual Convention of Southwestern Psychological Association. Congratulations to Ivan.

Conference Posters & Presentations


Conference Presentations (Continued)


Student Announcements

Graduating Graduate Students: James Murray, Oz Rico, Stephanie Rojas, and Kateryna Sylaska.

Azucena Bravo was admitted to the school psychology MA program at New Mexico State.

Jen Christopher was accepted to the psychology doctoral program at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Jake Lackow will be attending the Ph.D. clinical program at Hofstra University.

Debra Marcus was accepted into the MA neuroscience program at Southern University of New York at Buffalo.

Jacob Miller was admitted into the European Graduate School MA communication program in Saas-Fee, Switzerland.

Justice Morath has been accepted into the experimental cognitive psychology program at Utah State University. His program is actually called the Experimental and Applied Psychological Science Program (EAPS) with an emphasis in Cognition, Brain and Behavior in Dr. Kerry Jordan’s Multi-sensory Cognition Lab.

Mike Purcell has been accepted into the Ph.D. program in Molecular, Cellular, and Integrative Neuroscience at Colorado State University.

Skye Schenck was admitted to the MA Counseling program at Arizona State University.

Melissa Scott will be attending medical school at Scott University.

David Shade was awarded a FY’ 11-12 Hooper Undergraduate Research Award titled Studying Abroad: The Changes that College Undergraduates Experience in regards to Cultural Awareness and Environmental Sustainability.

Samantha Wells will be attending the industrial/organizational MA psychology program at Florida Institute of Technology.

Matthew Young, a 2010 graduate of NAU, is currently working on a MA Degree in Human Relations and Labor Relations at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. He has just been accepted as an intern with McQuay International as an HR Generalist Intern.