

# **47<sup>th</sup> Annual Honors Award Program**

**Department of Psychological  
Science**



**Central Connecticut State  
University**

**May 2020**

## Program of Events

Many of the awards in this program have video or audio remarks linked to them (in addition to written remarks). These include the chair's welcome immediately below, the salutatorian and valedictory addresses on the next page, and many of the awards on the pages that follow. Please click the links to hear more from faculty and students about the achievements of the awardees.

[Welcome Remarks](#)

Dr. Carolyn Fallahi, Chair

Salutatorian Address

Chelsea Grzyb

*Presented by Dr. Joanne DiPlacido*

Valedictory Address

Catherine Moran

*Presented by Dr. Jason Sikorski*

Departmental Awards

Faculty Award

### Salutatorian Address

**Chelsea Grzyb**

*Presented by Dr. Joanne DiPlacido*

**Chelsea** as one of our top students has achieved a great deal in her academic career. She has maintained an overall GPA of 3.94 and a Psych Major GPA of 4.0. She has been on the President's list, and Dean's list multiple times. In addition to exceling in academics she also has sought out field experience, one at the Prime Time House, where she was a counselor working closely with adults with severe, chronic mental illness at a community-based psychosocial Clubhouse program for adults with mental illness. She also has a certification from Clubhouse International where she completed a two-week intensive training program greatly enhancing her professional development learning leadership skills, community integration, program development, and issues surrounding mental health. Further she received the Susan B. Anthony Project Volunteer Certification and completed a 40-hour training program at the Sexual Assault Crisis Service to work with survivors of sexual and domestic violence. She remarkably has accomplished all of this while being a devoted mother to her son Lucas. She is planning on pursuing her MA in Public Health.

### Valedictory Address

**Catherine Moran**

*Presented by Dr. Jason Sikorski*

It is an honor to summarize some of the accomplishments of our 2020 Central Connecticut State University Department of Psychological Science Valedictorian, **Ms. Catherine Moran**. Catherine is a graduate of the Honors Program at Central Connecticut State University. She has presented her research at peer-reviewed regional conferences on multiple occasions as an undergraduate and has won multiple departmental awards for her research acumen and productivity. She is also a former winner of The Brittany Mariani, Rich Royster, and Matthew Piedescalzo Award for Promising Undergraduates and multiple other scholarships for her community service and academic excellence. If that was not enough, Catherine is an active member of Psi Chi: The International Honor Society in Psychology and the Central Connecticut State University Psychology Club. She also finds time to volunteer at her local church. As you can see, Catherine has accomplished a great deal as a Psychological Science major at Central Connecticut State University. With that said, it is who Catherine is as a person that sticks out most to the family, friends and professors who know her best. Catherine is inherently kind, humble, compassionate and thoughtful. She is fiercely determined to succeed, but not at the expense of relationships with family, friends, professors and colleagues. Catherine cares about people. She wants to use the science she has learned about to improve the lives of children and their families in a meaningful way. Catherine will continue her education in the School Psychology Graduate Program at the University of Hartford in the Fall of 2020. The faculty members in the Department of Psychological Science at CCSU are certain that Catherine will be giving back to others and learning for a lifetime.

## Departmental Honors

**Vaishali Belamkar**

***Presented by Drs. Silvia Corbera Lopez, Jason Sikorski, and Bradley Waite***

Each year at Central Connecticut State University, each academic department is asked to select one superior student to nominate as a Departmental Honors Award Recipient. The student must have amassed an impressive grade point average and excelled in areas pertaining to research, work productivity or community service. The decision on which student to select was not easy, as we are lucky enough to have many outstanding students as majors within our department. **This year our department has chosen our Department Honors Award to go to Vaishali Belamkar.** Vaishali is a prolific researcher as an undergraduate student, having won a national research award and multiple regional research awards. She has pursued multiple internships and has always been willing to support and serve her fellow students in the Department of Psychological Science. She has been a peer tutor in our Department and has worked in the Dean's office as a peer advisor in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. Below are comments about Vaishali from three members of our faculty who have worked closely with her.

**Dr. Jason Sikorski:** Vaishali was on my research team focusing on assessing levels of toxic masculinity in men and measuring outcomes associated with the construct. She was accepted to present her poster entitled 'Varying types of hypermasculine men: The differential impact of socialized gender roles' at the annual Eastern Psychological Association Conference in March of 2019. She and the other students on my research team were recruited by faculty members at the University of New Haven to talk about their research and advocacy regarding the prevention of interpersonal violence at a regional conference entitled 'Understanding, Preventing and Responding to Violence in Interpersonal Relationships' later in March of 2019. I have always found Vaishali to be kind, humble, compassionate and brilliant. I think she is amongst the very best and motivated students that I have worked with at CCSU to date.

**Dr. Silvia Corbera Lopez:** If there is any student that without hesitation deserves to receive the Departmental Honors Award is Vaishali Belamkar. She worked closely with me during the year 2019 and her work was beyond exceptional. During the Spring of 2019 she did an Internship at the Autism & Functional Mapping (AM-FM) Laboratory at the Olin Neuropsychiatry Research Center (Institute of Living-Hartford Hospital). During this internship she worked in a complicated project in which individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Schizophrenia were examined with several Neuroscience techniques, such as EEG, Eye Tracking and fMRI. Her skills were beyond extraordinary. Besides being an incredible team player, and having enormous social skills and an extraordinary work ethic, her research skills shined during the whole experience. She assisted organizing and analyzing behavioral, clinical and EEG data, also she conducted complex statistical analysis with SPSS and R. She assisted with manuscript preparation and bibliographies. In addition, she learned and assisted with EEG and Eye Tracking procedures. She does not shy from any challenges and her initiate and

problem-solving skills are beyond expectations. The quality of her work is at the graduate level without any doubt. Then on the Fall of 2019, she successfully completed a subsequent internship at the Yale Child Study Center, Yale School of Medicine at Dr. Crowley's laboratory. In that internship, she was part of a team that included graduate students, post-doctorate fellows and Ph.Ds. involved in the research of the clinical and social neuroscience of self-regulation in children and adolescents. Her skills shined again. She furthered her knowledge by assisting trainings and helping on the use of the EEG technique and performed amazing literature reviews and she assisted with conceptual preparations of new potential protocols.

Each semester, I am faced with the responsibility to select the best CCSU candidate students for these Internships at these eminent research institutions and choosing Vaishali has been one of the best decisions that I have made while CCSU. I was proud to have a student with such caliber as the representing face of the Department of Psychological Science from CCSU and I am convinced that she will excel at any endeavor that she decides to pursue. She set the bar very high! THANK YOU VAISHALI!

**Dr. Bradley Waite:** Vaishali Belamkar was one of the most outstanding students I've ever had the privilege of teaching in my research methods classes. She sought out additional research experience following those courses and she and I have had productive and collaborative experiences since that time in the media psychology lab examining the impact of media in our collective lives. She is one of a kind.

I've commented elsewhere in this program on some of the current projects that we are working on in the lab now including studies of media use and multitasking, creativity, even the role of media and other factors in influencing our attitudes and behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaishali is a leader on these projects in the lab and a sort of preternatural force...an advanced doctoral student in the guise of an undergraduate.

In 2019 Vaishali won a major national award from Psi Chi, the international honor society in psychology for a study of media multitasking and learning that she presented as first author at the 31st Annual Convention of the Association for Psychological Science in Washington, D.C. This award was a wonderful honor as it was one of only two Psi Chi APS Convention Society Research Awards that go to undergraduate students. She is currently preparing a manuscript for publication of that study. The year before that, she found a way to get to San Francisco for the APS national conference to co-present another study of media use, multitasking and academic performance. Vaishali possesses an outstanding mind and tireless energy and despite multiple demands of work, classes, internships she always finds a way to get the job done...and not just done, but done at the highest level! And...as if that is not enough, she is also one of the genuinely nice people that I know. She is very deserving of this award and I wish her well in her continued pursuits at the graduate level where she is planning to study clinical psychology. I believe her future to be bright!

## Henry Barnard Distinguished Student Award

**Hannah Rodrigues**

**Presented by [Drs. Carrie Andreoletti and Andrea June](#)**

We are so proud of **Hannah Rodrigues** for being selected for the prestigious Henry Barnard Distinguished Student Award. As a Psychological Science major and Gerontology minor, she has demonstrated intellectual curiosity and scholastic commitment at CCSU. Hannah has also been an active leader on campus, devoted to the betterment of the CCSU community. She is kind, resilient, and dedicated to improving the lives of those around her. We look forward to her continued success in our master's program!

### **[The Brittany Mariani, Rich Royster, and Matthew Piedescalzo Award for a Promising New Undergraduate in Psychology](#)**

**Ashley Dana**

**Presented by Dr. Jason Sikorski**

**Ashley** is a Division I Cross Country Student Athlete at CCSU. She has been named to the Northeast Conference Academic and Commissioner's Honor Roll. Ashley volunteered to tutor students at her area high school and to support early childhood exercise and wellness initiatives through the *Go Far Go Fast Program*. She is a tireless worker who routinely participates actively in class, visits her professor's office hours to ask meaningful questions and thinks critically about complex topics in the field of psychology. She is kind, humble and well-liked by her peers.

**Isabella Feast**

**Presented by Dr. Jason Sikorski**

**Bella** is a student in the Central Connecticut State University Honors Program. She is an active member of the CCSU Psychology Club, Philosophy Club and PRIDE Club. She speaks Spanish, is CPR First Aid certified, plays the violin, volunteers at her church and is passionate about social justice and equity. In short, Bella is a compassionate, talented and versatile evolving professional in our field.

**Megan Clabby**

**Presented by Dr. Jason Sikorski**

**Megan** is a student in the Central Connecticut State University Honors Program. She has spent the last several summers working within the Parks and Recreation Department of her area town creating developmentally appropriate learning and recreational activities for campers of various ages. She is passionate about dance as a means of expression and is a member of the *CCSU DanceCentral*. She has also

volunteered her time to read to children through her area library. Megan is quiet yet determined to succeed. She hopes to work to improve the lives of children and their families as a school psychologist or counselor in the future.

## **Rich Royster and Brittany Mariani Endowed Scholarship Awards**

**Rhiannya Byrne**  
**Taya Gwizd**

**Jack Politz**  
**Liliana Villar**

## **Academic Excellence Awards**

<b>Lina</b>	<b>Allam</b>	<b>Aaron</b>	<b>Morabito</b>
<b>Mikaela</b>	<b>Baril</b>	<b>Catherine</b>	<b>Moran</b>
<b>Vaishali</b>	<b>Belamkar</b>	<b>Emalee</b>	<b>Ormond</b>
<b>Heather</b>	<b>Bernier</b>	<b>Olivia</b>	<b>Patoka</b>
<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Blaney</b>	<b>Alyssa</b>	<b>Pawloski</b>
<b>Maximilian</b>	<b>Borst</b>	<b>Hannah</b>	<b>Rodrigues</b>
<b>Dayna</b>	<b>Briante</b>	<b>Shayna</b>	<b>Shattelroe</b>
<b>Heath</b>	<b>Chapin</b>	<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Smith</b>
<b>Madison</b>	<b>Flanagan</b>	<b>Melanie</b>	<b>Taub</b>
<b>Grace</b>	<b>Fredricks</b>	<b>Aaron</b>	<b>Tiscione</b>
<b>David</b>	<b>Friedman</b>	<b>Brittany</b>	<b>Tulchin</b>
<b>Allison</b>	<b>Gauthier</b>	<b>Victoria</b>	<b>Wallington</b>
<b>Chelsea</b>	<b>Grzyb</b>	<b>Cassandra</b>	<b>Wheeler</b>
<b>Adriana</b>	<b>Lugo-Cotto</b>	<b>Crystal</b>	<b>Woike</b>
<b>Emily</b>	<b>MacVane</b>	<b>Sarah</b>	<b>Zsembik</b>

## Eastern Psychological Association Conference Accepted Presenters

The Department of Psychological Science would like to acknowledge students who were accepted to present at the Eastern Psychological Association's Annual Conference. These individuals took the initiative to pursue research in addition to their courses. They have each gone above and beyond the expectations of an undergraduate student. Their dedication to exploring their interests and challenging themselves has in turn enriched their personal college experience. We hope that each of these individuals take this time to reflect on the lessons they have taken away from completing research. We hope that it has inspired them to continue to be research producers in their futures. Thank you to all of the professors that have provided these students with the opportunity to immerse themselves in the process of research. This extra step has allowed these students to deepen their own knowledge and passion for Psychological Science.

We would like to acknowledge the following students:

<b>Rhiannya</b>	<b>Byrne</b>	<b>Michaela</b>	<b>Pontacoloni</b>
<b>Cassandra</b>	<b>Camilli</b>	<b>Olivia</b>	<b>Patoka</b>
<b>Julien</b>	<b>Gagnon</b>	<b>Kevin</b>	<b>Rodriguez</b>
<b>Megyn</b>	<b>Jasman</b>	<b>Samantha</b>	<b>Rogers</b>
<b>Dawn</b>	<b>Masterson</b>	<b>Adam</b>	<b>Stryjewski</b>
<b>Alexis</b>	<b>Mayi</b>	<b>Aaron</b>	<b>Tiscione</b>
<b>Shannon</b>	<b>McMahon</b>	<b>Liliana</b>	<b>Villar</b>

### **Outstanding Research**

#### **Media Psychology Lab**

*Presented by Drs. Laura Bowman and Bradley Waite*

**Cali Salafia**  
**Vaishali Belamkar**  
**George Atalla**  
**Katelyn Byrne**

**Cali Salafia, Vaishali Belamkar, George Atalla and Katelyn Byrne** worked with Dr. Laura Bowman and Dr. Bradley Waite on research examining the validity of self-reports of media use, and on media use and well-being. These were student driven projects, designed by Cali and Vaishali with input from all. George and Katelyn were instrumental in all aspects of the work and were tireless in their efforts in collecting data, one participant at a time! Regrettably, we had to shut down data collection early due to the campus closure, however we believe we have obtained enough data to move forward with the analyses for the studies.

**Cali Salafia, Vaishali Belamkar, and Katelyn Byrne were coauthors**, along with former students Nicolette Bailey and Vanessa Figueroa, and Drs. Laura Bowman and Bradley Waite on a study of media multitasking, mindwandering, creativity and learning that was peer reviewed and accepted for presentation at the 32nd Annual Convention of the Association for Psychological Science, Chicago, IL. Regrettably that conference was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, we will be presenting the research at the APS Virtual Poster Showcase starting in June 2020.

**Cali Salafia, Vaishali Belamkar** and Drs. Laura Bowman and Bradley Waite are in the midst of data collection on a study examining risk perception and protective health behaviors associated with the coronavirus pandemic. We are examining how factors such as media use, employment status, political beliefs and anxiety might relate to these perceptions and behaviors during the Covid-19 crisis. The four are also completing a manuscript for publication of a study on multitasking via social media and its impact on learning.

After in person data collection was stopped, **George Atalla** has been conducting a large scale review of research on Artificial Intelligence and Reinforcement Learning and **Katelyn Byrne** has been working on a large scale review of research on Media Use and Health.

All of these students have been excellent leaders, collaborators and significant contributors to the ongoing projects in the Lab and are deserving of this honor!

### **Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience Lab**

Presented by [Dr. Silvia Corbera Lopez](#)

**Angela Koerber**

**Hannah A. Rodrigues**

**Angela M. Almeida**

**Amy E. Collier**

**Liliana M. Villar**

**Grecia A. Zaldivar**

I am so proud to nominate the members of the Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience Lab (SCAN-LAB) for the Outstanding Research Award. During this past year, the SCAN-LAB members have tirelessly worked to put together, develop and conduct an exciting research project at the CT Science Center in Hartford. I could not have had a more motivated, hard-working and exceptional research team at the SCAN-LAB. With the relentless work from **Angela, Amy, Angela, Hannah, Liliana** and **Grecia**, we were able to start a project in which we are validating a new test of Emotion Recognition Skills in children from 3 years to 18 years old.

In order to conduct this project at the CT Science Center, the SCAN-LAB members have shown amazing team-work, social and great research skills. We worked hard at creating protocols for a proper and a reliable delivery of the test, we practiced hard before the big day of starting the project at the CT Science Center and finally, these students were able to conduct the study at the CT Science Center.

In order to conduct a project with such a wide range of ages, these students proved to be exceptionally gifted at accommodating and making sure that everyone was able to do the study with high professionalism. Great Team Work!

In addition to their rigorous work, these students shined at showing their scientific knowledge and skills presenting their work at the SCAN-LAB and assisting with data entry and monitoring. I am so delighted and thrilled to have had such talented, hard-working and professional team. I could not have asked for a better team to carry on this amazing project. Thank you so much for your work!!

### **Community Psychology Graduate Program Research**

*Presented by [Dr. Nghi Thai](#)*

**Nicole Brown** is a graduate student in the Community Psychology MA program. She has been an outstanding researcher in various community-based participatory research projects with Dr. Thai. Nicole is currently collaborating with New Britain's East Side Community Center on her thesis project to evaluate an after-school program and examining out-of-school time data for a local community foundation. In addition, she previously served as database and impact intern at the Women's Business Development Council.

### **Toxic Masculinity Research Team**

*Presented by [Dr. Jason Sikorski](#)*

**Julien Gagnon**

**Shannon McMahon**

**Olivia Patoka**

**Samantha Rogers**

**Adam Stryjewski**

From June of 2019 to March of 2020, **Shannon McMahon, Olivia Patoka** and **Samantha Rogers** have participated as members of the Toxic Masculinity Research Team. All three have emerged as passionate social justice warriors willing to speak up to critique policies designed to protect and support victims of various types of interpersonal violence. In addition, all three members of this research team were accepted to present their research at the annual Eastern Psychological Association Conference that was to be held in March of 2020 in Boston, MA. Their research will be delivered in a virtual format in June of 2020. Olivia Patoka is the first author on a project

entitled 'The roles of toxic masculinity and gender role conflict in alcohol use and aggression in college men'. Shannon McMahon is the first author on a project entitled 'Perceptions of friendship-based social support predicts negative outcomes in college-aged men'. Congratulations students! We wish you continued success in the future.

**Julien Gagnon** and **Adam Stryjewski** have been working with Dr. Sikorski over the last year to collect data examining how varying informants rate men differently on their levels of toxic masculinity. The goal of this line of research is to best decipher whose reports of men's adherence to toxic hypermasculine gender standards best predict elevated rates of health problems, criminal activity and emotional dysregulation in men. Julien was accepted to present his research at the annual Eastern Psychological Association Conference that was to be held in March of 2020 in Boston, MA. Adam, a graduate student, supervised Julien in his efforts and obtained authorship credit. Julien's project presentation will be delivered in a virtual format in June of 2020 and is entitled 'Rape myth acceptance and it's relationship with PID-5 personality types in men'. Congratulations gentlemen!!!

### **American College Health Assessment Research Team**

*Presented by [Dr. Jason Sikorski](#)*

**Rhiannya Byrne**

**Michaella Pontacoloni**

**Liliana Villar**

**Rhiannya Byrne, Michaella Pontacoloni** and **Liliana Villar** worked with Dr. Sikorski to collect data across the university population to assess the health and wellness of college students. These students visited classrooms across the university and administered a 25-minute survey assessing a range of physical health, mental health and personal history variables. Data was collected from a sample of almost 800 CCSU students. The students then reviewed relevant literature and analyzed the data. Each of them emerged as first authors for poster presentations accepted at the annual Eastern Psychological Association Conference that was to be held in March of 2020 in Boston, MA. Their research will now be delivered in virtual format in June of 2020. Rhiannya Byrne's conference project was entitled "Correlates of emergency contraception use in women attending college'. Michaella Pontacoloni's project was entitled 'Hidden correlates of body image disturbance: Differences between men and women'. Liliana Villars's project was entitled 'The psychosocial consequences of body image disorders among men and women'. This group never missed a meeting or arrived late to a meeting. They always came prepared to work hard and learn as much as they possibly could. It was a pleasure to work with these students and I know that their futures are bright.

**Cali Salafia**

Presented by [Dr. Joanne DiPlacido](#)

**Cali** has been a research intern at Connecticut Children's Medical Center since June of 2019. She has worked on the PANDA project (predictors of anxiety and depression in adolescents). The project focused on predictors of vaping, social media and internalizing symptoms, and the role of social support. She has been first author on poster presentations and manuscripts in preparation for publication. Currently Cali is finishing her MA Thesis "Social Media and Vaping: The Role of Social Norms and Motives". In the Fall she will be attending UCONN's Ph.D. program in Human development with a focus on Health Psychology.

**Courtney Taylor**

Presented by [Dr. Joanne DiPlacido](#)

**Courtney** completed an internship at Connecticut Children's Medical Center, working on two research studies, "The Predictors of Anxiety and Depression during Adolescence Project", and "Understanding Pain-related Stigma in Adolescents with Chronic Pain using Focus Groups". Courtney currently is working as a research assistant at Hartford Hospital on the project "An Examination of Pain Pre and Post Bariatric Surgery". Courtney is currently working on her MA thesis, "The Relationship Between Political Climate Stress and Health Outcomes: The Roles of Stigma Consciousness and Coping Among LGBTQ+ Adults". In the Fall she will be attending Ohio University's Ph.D. program in Experimental Psychology/Health Psychology Specialization.

**Megyn Jasman**

Presented by [Dr. Joanne DiPlacido](#)

**Megyn** has participated in several research projects. Her first research project she presented at the Eastern Psychological Association (EPA) annual conference, and also the University Research & Creative Achievement Day (URCAD) in 2019. This past year, Megyn co-authored a research project with Dr. Bragg, along with CCSU Psychology alumni Courtney Prestwich and Helena Swanson, in which the poster was accepted to be presented at EPA's 2020 conference. Currently, Megyn is conducting an independent study with Dr. DiPlacido on her own research project entitled "The Relationship between the Impact of Campus Mass Shootings and Physical Health: The Role of Fear and Resilience among College Students." She plans to present this research at a national conference and pursue publication.

**Jessica McKenzie**

Presented by [Dr. Joanne DiPlacido](#)

**Jessica** as an intern at Connecticut Children's Medical Center worked on a project on interpersonal violence (IPV) by developing relationships among Connecticut salons as a resource for IPV intervention. She was a CCSU Graduate Research Associate working on a study to provide insight into the work-life balance challenges facing CCSU's MBA

graduate-school students attending night classes. She is finishing her MA thesis, "Work-Life Conflict and Wellness: Examining Coping Strategies & Life Satisfaction among Graduate Students". Currently she is a Research Associate at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center: where she is working on several projects one of which is the first clinical trial on *Convalescent Plasma in The Treatment of COVID 19*.

**Skye Gallagher**

Presented by [Dr. Joanne DiPlacido](#)

**Skye** completed a clinical research internship at Connecticut Children's Medical Center assisting with coordinating the "Fibromyalgia Integrative Training Program for Teens", a multi-site R01 clinical intervention combining cognitive behavioral therapy with specialized neuromuscular training. Currently she is completing her MA thesis "An Exploratory Study of Adaptive and Maladaptive Stress Coping from a Health Behavior Change Perspective: The role of General Self-Efficacy." She currently is a Clinical Research Analyst for the Department of Neurology at the Yale University School of Medicine.

**Sonia Shahid**

Presented by [Dr. Joanne DiPlacido](#)

**Sonia** during her internship at the Injury Prevention Center (IPC) at Connecticut Children's Medical Center worked on a project on motorcycle helmet laws in Connecticut and was part of the efforts to mandate that motorcyclists of all ages wear helmets as a vital safety precaution. Along with guidance from the staff at IPC she is completing her thesis "Health Outcomes of Intimate Partner Violence: The Mediating Role of Perceived Stress among South Asian Women".

## Shanette Washington Distinguished Service to the Department Award

### Psychology Club Executive Board

Presented by [Dr. Silvia Corbera Lopez](#)

**Megyn H. Jasman**  
**Rhiannya G. Byrne**  
**Heather L. Bernier**  
**Madison K. Oquendo**  
**Hannah A. Rodrigues**  
**Angela M. Almeida**

I am honored to nominate the Psychology Club Executive Board members for the Outstanding Service Award. As the Psychology Club advisor, I have had the opportunity to see countless examples of the amazing work of **Angela, Heather, Rhiannya, Megyn, Madison** and **Hannah**. Thank you so much! I am very proud of you.

These students, without any doubt, deserve this precious award for devoting hours with important service work to Psychology majors, and hence to the Department of Psychological Science and to CCSU. These hard-working, professional and devoted members of the Executive Board have shown through the whole semester, their complete commitment to the responsibilities in Psychology Club. I cannot picture a year with more challenges than this 2019-2020, especially this Spring 2020 semester, and the Psychology Club Executive Board has raised to the occasion, without any doubt.

This Psychology Club Eboard has made possible for Psychology Major students, the opportunity to have their unique place in which they can further their knowledge in Psychological Science, to get informed about important academic and professional opportunities, to meet and network with other fellow students and to provide funds to attend the Eastern Psychological Association (EPA) conference.

In addition, and importantly, they have been a source of great support for students, especially given the events of the Spring 2020. They have shown great leadership and support in these challenging times. Just to name a few of the amazing activities that they have created and organized: invited Professors as speakers on campus, organized movie-nights with movies relevant to Psychological Science, organizing relevant workshops for Psychology Majors and they put together and organized the opportunity for Psychology Majors to apply for and receive funds that would allow them to present their research at the EPA conference.

Despite the challenging Spring 2020 semester, the Eboard Members greatly adapted to the current events, with one of them being the cancelation of the EPA conference. They consistently showed professionalism and hard-work in every step, not shying away from any challenge!

Your work has been beyond remarkable. Thank you!

## **Psi Chi Officer Team**

Presented by [Drs. Carolyn Fallahi](#) and Marianne Fallon

**Hannah Rodrigues – President Psi Chi**  
**Tamia Thomas – Vice President Psi Chi**  
**Olivia Patoka – Secretary Psi Chi**  
**Tori Wallington – Treasurer Psi Chi**  
**Megan Jasman – Student Faculty Liaison**  
**Heather Bernier – Public Relations**  
**Anna Finkle – Webmaster**

This 2019-2020 executive board has had an exciting and productive year. Despite finishing their year “early” due to the coronavirus, they still managed to do a lot of service for the department and our majors! They hosted an undergraduate panel, offering advice to students starting their college career. They provided the department with a monthly newsletter, *Central Psychology News*, providing interesting and timely stories! They helped to advance research by providing a forum to present their research. They held an internship night to help students learn more about the benefits and opportunities for internships in our department. And they did this all while maintaining high GPAs! Congratulations to our executive committee.

## **Psychological Science Graduate Assistants**

Presented by [Dr. Jim Conway](#)

**Cali Salafia**  
**Courtney Taylor**

Our department’s two stand-out GAs are **Courtney Taylor** and **Cali Salafia**. Under the best of circumstances we count on our GAs to keep the department running by doing a lot of behind-the-scenes work that isn’t always that much fun, but is absolutely necessary. Faculty count on them for help with maintaining records, making copies, making sure exams run smoothly, and many other things. Students probably do not even know they are there most of the time, but their work allows faculty to work efficiently and provide the best education to students. Courtney and Cali have always been remarkably professional and organized, displaying excellent communication skills and time management, and establishing strong working relationships.

Then the pandemic hit and campus closed, and wowie-wow, were our GAs helpful. There were suddenly many challenges for faculty with new applications and processes to learn, and Cali and Courtney stepped in to assist with WebEx, exams in Blackboard, and basically anything faculty needed. As always, our GAs excelled in their work while maintaining very high academic performance. We are very grateful for their service and we wish them well as they both move on to doctoral programs in the fall!

## Psychological Science Peer Tutors

Presented by [Dr. Caleb Bragg](#)

<b>Hannah</b>	<b>Rodrigues</b>	<b>Katelyn</b>	<b>Byrne</b>
<b>Tamia</b>	<b>Thomas</b>	<b>Lejla</b>	<b>Abidovic</b>
<b>Angela</b>	<b>Almeida</b>	<b>Grecia</b>	<b>Zaldivar</b>
<b>Julianna</b>	<b>Vass</b>	<b>Paige</b>	<b>Spiewak</b>
<b>Angela</b>	<b>Koerber</b>	<b>Melanie</b>	<b>Taub</b>
<b>Megyn</b>	<b>Jasman</b>	<b>Courtney</b>	<b>Keane</b>
<b>Aaron</b>	<b>Morabito</b>	<b>Emily</b>	<b>Lewis</b>
<b>Anna</b>	<b>Finkle</b>		

Being a peer tutor is an under-thanked, under-appreciated, yet invaluable service to Psychology Students everywhere at CCSU. These peer tutors have taken it upon themselves, without any expectation of compensation or recognition, to hone their skills in data analysis and research design, and passed that knowledge on to their fellow undergraduate students, and even the occasional graduate student! The following direct quote from a former student of mine exemplifies the dedication and importance of these peer tutors: "I never would have passed research methods without the peer tutors. [Peer tutors] never got annoyed or frustrated with me, always helped me stick with until I got it. I am so grateful, because of [peer tutors] I can graduate!"

## Virtual Psychological Science Peer Tutors

Presented by [Dr. Caleb Bragg](#)

<b>Angela</b>	<b>Almeida</b>	<b>Cassandra</b>	<b>Wheeler (Guidetti)</b>
<b>Angela</b>	<b>Koerber</b>	<b>Sara</b>	<b>Courtemanche</b>
<b>Megyn</b>	<b>Jasman</b>	<b>Hannah</b>	<b>Rodrigues</b>
<b>Julianna</b>	<b>Vass</b>	<b>Emily</b>	<b>Lewis</b>

Times of upheaval and chaos have a way of showing us some of the best that our students have to offer. These tutors -- already among the elite of our students **AND** dealing with the uncertainty and changes wrought by COVID-19 in their own classes and personal lives -- stepped up to learn how to use technology to remotely tutor our Psychology Undergraduates often learning how to help with new challenges on the fly. **Julianna, Megyn, Hannah, Angela A., Angela K., Cassandra, Sara, and Emily**, we could not have done this without you! Thank you for going above and beyond to serve our department and CCSU!

## **Faculty Award**

**Dr. Julia Blau**

*Presented by [Psychology Club](#)*

The CCSU Psychology Club would like to take a moment to recognize the 2019-2020 Professor of the Year. Each year, this faculty award is presented to a professor in the Department of Psychological Science who demonstrates a passion for teaching, and fosters their student's growth and success in their studies of psychology. With the support of a professor, students have the ability to explore their interests and expand their knowledge with new learning experiences. The students that are inspired by their professors are the individuals who nominated this year's deserving recipient of the Professor of the Year Award.

On behalf of the CCSU psychological science students, we would like to congratulate Dr. Julia J.C. Blau for this year's faculty award. Dr. Blau has been recognized by her own students for her dedication and proficiency in the art of teaching psychology. Thank you for all you have done for the students in the Department of Psychological Science.