Graduate and Undergraduate Awards (presented at Graduation, May 2018)

Graduate Awards

Dosier/Muenzinger Award for Basic Research: Erin McPherson
Erin’s work centers around social judgments that people use to navigate the world around them. Specifically, she’s been interested in the question of how students’ self-perceptions and perceptions of scientists relate to their interest in pursuing a science career and how biological information influences judgments of parents, as well as other topics. Dr. Bernadette Park states that Erin has been “a machine” in her work (even more impressive since she was only 20 years old when she joined Dr. Park’s lab). She already has a number of publications in well-regarded journals, and has presented frequently on her work.

Dosier/Muenzinger Award for Translational Research: Emily Carol
Emily’s work is focused on identifying behavioral and physiological measures that will enable early identification of individuals who are at high risk to develop schizophrenia, including the relationships between neuroendocrine markers, biological and psychological stress systems. She has been highly productive and has published a number of articles related to her work in high quality journals. Her primary advisor, Dr. Vijay Mittal, praised Emily for being well-rounded and "passionate about learning how stress and environment interact with underlying biology and applying those lessons to meaningful interventions...She is a serious young scholar.”

Dosier/Muenzinger Award for Teaching: Natasha Hansen, Marianne Reddan and Shana Stites

Natasha Hansen: Natasha was nominated for this award by a number of individuals, including faculty members and fellow graduate students who have benefitted from Natasha’s teaching skills in the Graduate Statistics course. Natasha is uniformly praised for her work as a Teaching Assistant in the Graduate Statistics course, and was noted by Dr. Joshua Correll to be “spectacular’ in this role, “carefully and accurately explaining delicate concepts to a crop of students who relied on her for guidance. Students were remarkably devoted to Natasha.” Similar experiences were noted in
several other letters we received from individuals who have worked with Natasha across a range of courses here in the department, including faculty who appreciated Natasha’s ability to make their own teaching better.

**Marianne Reddan:** Marianne received high praise for her teaching abilities as well, particularly with regard to her work in a challenging Cognitive Neuroscience course, but also in the context of other courses she has been a Teaching Assistant for. Marianne was praised for her ability to design and run labs independently, her commitment to doing all aspects of her job thoroughly, her gifts in providing effective and inspiring feedback for students and her skillfulness at handling challenging classroom situations effectively and with professionalism. She was also praised for her versatility and ability to use innovative technological approaches in the classroom.

**Shana Stites:** Shana has a surprising depth of teaching experience, having come to CU after 8 years of teaching at the secondary school level. She has engaged in numerous teaching activities since coming to CU, and has been involved in being a Teaching Assistant in some of the most difficult and challenging courses in our department, including Statistics and Research Methods. Her students have benefitted greatly from her expertise and her commitment to teaching. She has served as Head TA for these classes, and contributed a great deal to how these classes are currently taught. She has served as Lead TA within the University-wide Graduate Teaching Program. She is also working towards CU’s certificate in College Teaching, which is quite an undertaking in itself.

**Sean Hudson Leadership Award: Christina Metcalf**

Christina’s letter of support from her primary graduate advisor, Dr. Sona Dimidjian, notes that Christina is an excellent student whose work, values and leadership are well-aligned with the spirit of this award. Christina has provided important leadership and service by mentoring many teams of undergraduates, is involved in the Graduate Mentorship Program, has organized training for graduate student therapists, sustained a strong commitment to providing services to clients in need of low-cost care, which includes screening women at risk for post-partum depression at local hospitals, and provides clinical services to adolescents and young adult
women. She has also demonstrated strong interest in providing service for the field by providing peer review for journal articles in her research area.

**Peter G. Ossorio Award: Alex Kirk and Lindsay LaBrecque**

**Alex Kirk:** Alex was nominated by his mentor, Dr. Joanna Arch, for his record of overall excellence while a graduate student here, as well as impressive initiative in his research. His research spans clinical and health psychology, including a focus on anxiety, behavioral avoidance and inflammation. A 3rd year student, he has already a number of publications and conference presentations under his belt, attesting to his productivity and promise as a researcher.

**Lindsay LaBrecque** came to us after graduating Summa Cum Laude from Clark University, with quite a bit of research on couples already underway. She is also a 3rd year graduate student, was nominated by her mentor, Dr. Mark Whisman for this award. Her work is focused on sexuality in intimate relationships and their impact on individual mental health and well-being. Dr. Whisman notes that Lindsay has a number of publications and conference presentations, including work published in some of her field’s best-regarded journals.

**UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS**

**Imogene Jacobs Psychology Thesis Awards: Mason Eastwood and Chiara Nielson**

**Mason Eastwood:** Mason’s thesis, already submitted for publication, focuses on the potential benefits of taking a break during intellectual tasks and how the break may affect reading comprehension and reading speed. His elegant experimental design demonstrated no differences for participants who took a break or did not take a break while performing such tasks, which provides important information and motivation for initiating a body of research on break taking during cognitive tasks. **Advisor:** Dr. Alice Healy
**Chiara Neilson:** Chiara’s thesis was a longitudinal study designed to identify predictors of change in eating disorder symptoms in women during the transition to college, a period that poses unique social and academic stressors and that has been shown to be a high-risk period for the development of eating disorder behavior. Her thesis examined the influence of multiple psychological risk factors in first-semester college freshman women and sought to evaluate the degree to which these risk factors interacted with one another and with environmental factors (whether women rushed and whether they joined a sorority). Advisor: Dr. Mark Whisman

**Neuroscience Thesis Award: Laurel Todd**

Laurel’s thesis, currently being prepared for publication, focused on developing treatment strategies for long-term memory deficits associated with multiple sclerosis. She found that systemic administration of the toll-like 2/4 antagonist (+)-naltrexone blocked long-term memory deficits and associated inflammation in the hippocampus in a rat model of multiple sclerosis. Her results are the first to provide evidence that targeting toll-like receptor 2/4 may be a useful treatment strategy for the cognitive deficits experienced by multiple sclerosis patients and provide rationale for future clinical studies with toll-like 2/4 antagonists in human multiple sclerosis patients. Advisor: Dr. Linda Watkins

**David E. Drutz Award: Alexandra Montgomery, Bailey Staritt, Karen Uvina, Sarah Vacek**

**Alexandra Montgomery** is currently a junior with a major in Neuroscience. She’s a recipient of a UROP grant for the summer of 2017, which required that she design and execute an independent research project. Alexandra has been on the Dean’s list and has been actively involved in our department since her freshman year, and plans to attend medical school following her graduation. Dr. Michael Saddoris nominated her for this award, noting the complexity of her research as well as the fact that she has accomplished a remarkable amount in his lab, especially considering how many other aspects of student life she participates in.
Karen Uvina has been a Dean’s List student, a Learning Assistant, is involved in Color Guard as both an instructor and performer and recently started work as a research assistant for a project assisting depressed Latina mothers. She has a high GPA and, despite a number of obstacles and adversities, she has continued to work hard and accomplish a great deal as an undergraduate student. Karen is committed to developing the skills and abilities to allow her to help marginalized individuals who are in need.

Sarah Vacek has overcome a number of obstacles and adversities as well, and has become passionate about the field of psychology. She’s involved in a number of activities and clubs, including the Honors Residential Academic Program, and has been on the Dean’s List. Her recommender, Dr. Jennifer Stratford, notes that she is "intelligent and ingenious" has been an effective, and helpful learning assistant and is an insightful psychological researcher.

Bailey Starritt was the valedictorian of her high school class and has maintained a high level of academic excellence at the CU Boulder. She is passionate about psychological research, as evidenced by her working as a research assistant in two labs during her sophomore year. She has applied for UROP funding to conduct an independent research project during her junior year, which will provide the foundational research experience and data for conducting an Honors Thesis in her senior year.

Imogene Jacobs Award: Marrissa (Dani) Grant

Marrissa (Dani) Grant is currently a junior at CU. She a member of the CU Boulder Honors Program and Psi Chi and her CU GPA is a 4.0. She’s been a Learning Assistant and works in two research labs, Dr. Arch’s lab and Dr. Van Boven’s lab, who wrote very strong letters on her behalf. She has made a name for herself as an outstanding student, and an exceptionally capable research assistant who is also invested in mentorship. She has a promising future in this field!
Psychology and Neuroscience Leadership Award: Isabella (Bella) Conte

Dr. Brett King writes that as president of the Psi Chi/Psychology Club, Bella has proven to be an innovative leader who is outstanding at earning the full involvement of our officers and members. As passionate as she is dedicated, Bella is a natural team leader who also excels at behind-the-scenes skills. Our chapter has greatly benefitted from Bella’s energy, optimism, enthusiasm and creativity.