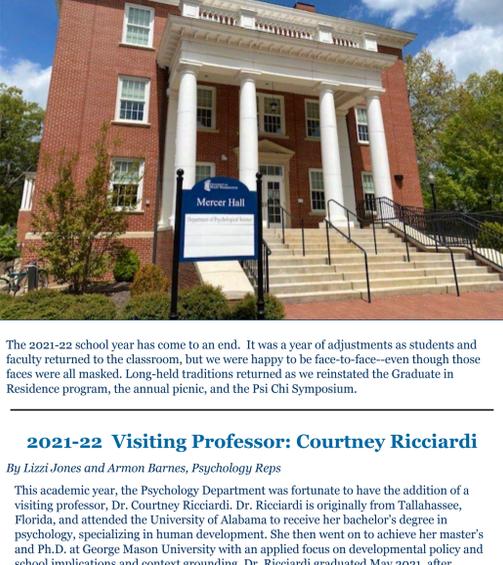


PSYCH Matters

a newsletter from the UMW Department of Psychological Science



The 2021-22 school year has come to an end. It was a year of adjustments as students and faculty returned to the classroom, but we were happy to be face-to-face—even though those faces were all masked. Long-held traditions returned as we reinstated the Graduate in Residence Program, the annual picnic, and the Psi Chi Symposium.

2021-22 Visiting Professor: Courtney Ricciardi

By Lizzi Jones and Armon Barnes, Psychology Reps

This academic year, the Psychology Department was fortunate to have the addition of a visiting professor, Dr. Courtney Ricciardi. Dr. Ricciardi is originally from Tallahassee, Florida, and attended the University of Alabama to receive her bachelor's degree in psychology, specializing in human development. She then went on to achieve her master's and Ph.D. at George Mason University with an applied focus on developmental policy and school implications and context grounding. Dr. Ricciardi graduated May 2021, after completing her dissertation and student teaching. She had the unique experience of finishing her graduate program virtually over Zoom, allowing her to see the perspective of both students and instructors during the COVID-19 pandemic. After such an impressive feat teaching and learning in a virtual academic setting, Dr. Ricciardi shared that, much like the rest of us, she prefers in-person instruction. She places emphasis on the difficulty of replicating interaction and conversations over Zoom, and how this had a large impact on her experience as a student and an instructor. Resilient and determined, Dr. Ricciardi was glad for the opportunity to be at UMW to refine her teaching skills, while gaining helpful skills from faculty in the department along with engaging with and getting to know students.

Dr. Ricciardi's psychology interests include examining research at the intersection of psychology and education. Specifically, she takes special interest with working to leverage psychological concepts for equity in the classroom, focusing on the importance of developing early cognitive and social skills and how those skills relate to access to accelerated programs and persistence in school. In simpler terms, she is interested in how the development of early skills relate to which children get into what classes/programs. Dr. Ricciardi notes that skills developed and gained as early as age 4 relate to academic performance in high school.

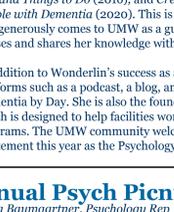


Dr. Ricciardi loves to read books from genres like contemporary fiction, mystery/thriller, and fantasy. She particularly likes the author Frederik Backman and recommends the novel *A Man Called Ove*. She also likes to watch Netflix and TV shows like Parks and Rec, Friends, and The Office. Some of her hobbies and interests of Dr. Ricciardi's are going hiking, playing board games, and interacting with students, staff, and faculty on campus.

Sadly, Dr. Ricciardi's tenure at UMW was only for one year. The Psychology Department is so grateful to have had Dr. Ricciardi join us this academic year. She has created meaningful relationships with both students and other faculty. We wish her well as she continues her career at the College of Idaho this fall.

Rachael Wonderlin Educates UMW Students, Faculty, and Community Members About Dementia Caregiving Communication

By Armon Barnes, Psychology Rep



For over 25 years, the Department of Psychological Science has invited an alumnus to share expertise in a psychology-related field as our *Distinguished Psychology Graduate in Residence*. After a year's delay due to the virus, Rachael Wonderlin spoke with both the UMW and greater Fredericksburg communities about her innovative approach to communicating effectively with people with dementia. Rachael graduated from the University of Mary Washington in 2011 and then went on to receive her master's degree in gerontology from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dr. Holly Schiffrin and Rachael Wonderlin, MS

Wonderlin grew up in New Jersey and came to UMW with an interest in studying medicine. After taking a Psychology of Aging class, she changed her mind and was inspired to pursue a career in dementia care and working with older adults. She encouraged other students to engage with senior citizens by creating an "Adopt a Grandparent" program through COAR (Community Outreach and Resources). While attending UMW, Wonderlin also took improv classes that helped her with her future experiences when working with older adults.

Wonderlin's public talk on September 23 in the Hurley Convergence Center drew students, faculty, caregivers, and senior care professionals from the community. She acknowledged the frustration that can occur when interacting with someone whose understanding of the world is clouded by memory loss and delusions. Rachael's unique approach is to "embrace their reality by living their truth." She emphasized that this method is more effective when working with older adults with dementia because you are understanding what is real for them and responding in a way that would make sense in their reality.

Wonderlin is renowned in her field as a dementia care consultant and as an author of two published books, *When Someone You Know is Living In Dementia Care: Words to Say and Things to Do* (2016), and *Creative Engagement: A Handbook of Activities for People with Dementia* (2020). This is not the first time Rachael has returned to UMW. She generously comes to UMW as a guest lecturer and speaker for Psychology of Aging classes and shares her knowledge with students in the same class that once inspired her.

In addition to Wonderlin's success as an author, she has a presence on multiple platforms such as a podcast, a blog, and a YouTube channel, all under the name *Dementia by Day*. She is also the founder of the consulting business, *Dementia by Day*, which is designed to help facilities working with older adults to create new dementia care programs. The UMW community welcomed Rachael back with open arms and excitement this year as the Psychology department's 2021 Graduate-In-Residence.

Annual Psych Picnic Returns!

By Elsa Baumgartner, Psychology Rep

On October 25, the Psychology Department held their annual Fall Picnic. For the first time in our department's history, we held the picnic on Ball Circle instead of on the side of Mercer Hall, providing a wonderful view of students dunking President Paino into a pool in the background, thanks to another event also on the circle. We had four tables covered in pizza, plates, pumpkins, and paint for an afternoon full of fall-themed festivities.

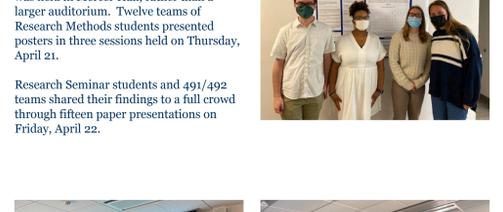


While students were painting faces, cartoons, or pretty colors on their pumpkins, others showed some department pride, depicting the symbols of Psi Chi, brains, and even EEG caps.

At the other tables, there were miniature pumpkins scattered about, where students and faculty alike could paint them. The pumpkin painting proved to be a big hit, with only a few bare pumpkins left at the end of the picnic.

While most students brought their artistic creations home, there were now plenty of pumpkins decorating various windowsills in Mercer.

Pumpkin painting wasn't the only fun activity at the picnic, however. The Office of Student Activities and Engagement kindly let the department borrow some fun, giant lawn games for us to play with. Both psych majors and faculty were engaging with giant Jenga and giant Connect 4. Some picnic-goers got into a few competitive rounds of cornhole, while others casually tossed a football back and forth. Overall, the Fall 2021 picnic was a resounding success, and we are all already looking forward to next year.



After a two-year hiatus due to Covid, the Psi Chi Symposium was back in person. To limit the size of the crowds, the symposium was held in Mercer Hall, rather than a larger auditorium. Twelve teams of Research Methods students presented posters in three sessions held on Thursday, April 21.



Research Seminar students and 491/492 teams shared their findings to a full crowd through fifteen paper presentations on Friday, April 22.



At the end of the presentations, Faculty Superlatives were granted.



Dr. Chris McBride was named *Faculty Member Most Likely to Have Good Snacks in Their Office*

Dr. Courtney Ricciardi was the *Faculty Member Most Likely to Be Called Mom/Dad/Parent*

The students chose Dr. Laura Wilson as the *Faculty Member Most Likely to Make a Sarcastic Remark in Class*

And Dr. Miriam Liss sang out in joy when named the *Faculty Member Most Likely to Break Out Into Song and Dance*

2022 Psychology Scholarship Recipients

At the end of the Psi Chi Symposium, the recipients of the this year's Department of Psychological Science scholarships were announced. They are as follows:

- J. Christopher Bill Scholarship in Psychology: **Nicole Alenber**
- Emily Cella Scholarship: **Renee Legger** and **Armon Barnes**
- Llewellyn Scholarship in Psychology: **Robert Oehler**
- Dr. Burney Lunch Parkinson Memorial Scholarship in Psychology: **Angie Cornejo**, **Claudia Hickey**, and **Sierra Hollingshead**
- Minnie Rob Phaup Scholarship: **Angeline Gaitan**, **Carla Kanupp**, and **Caitlin O'Leary**
- C. Jarrett and Hazel Smal Wilkins Scholarship in Social Sciences: **Jamie Pyles**



Elsa Baumgartner named "Outstanding Senior"

Elsa Baumgartner was named this year's "Outstanding Senior." Along with an impressive GPA, Elsa was very involved in the department throughout her career at Mary Washington. She has served as the Subject Pool Student Coordinator for 3 years, and this year was also a Psychology Rep. Elsa was on Dr. Erin Palmwood's 491/492 research team and did a separate honors research project entitled, *Borderline Personality Symptoms and Relationship Threat: The Moderating Role of Perceived Parental Rejection*.



After graduation, Elsa is beginning a position as a Research Assistant for the Veteran's Administration.

Psi Chi Inducts New Members

On October 19, a number of psychology majors were welcomed into the UMW chapter of Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology. The fall 2021 inductees were as follows:

- Elsa Baumgartner**
- Elizabeth Bryn**
- Kourtney Chiles**
- Rylie Cole**
- Meghan Comer**
- Aidan Finegan**
- Elizabeth Jones**
- Hannah McCarthy**
- Kaitlyn Ownbey**
- Emma Willis**
- Madison Shifflett**
- Teresa Siburn**
- Emma Snyder**
- Katharine Treichler**
- Caitlyn Valenza**
- Elizabeth Wooten**

The Psi Chi officers who served for the 2021-2022 school year were as follows:

- Co-president: **Christine Wehner**
- Co-president: **Vivan Hyatt**
- Secretary: **Amira Akam**
- Treasurer: **Mariama Haugh**
- Social Media Chair: **Nicole Altenberg**
- Fundraising Chair: **Hannah Hoffman**

Announcements

Please consider recognizing the Department of Psychological Science with a monetary contribution. Make checks payable to the University of Mary Washington Foundation, and specify that the donation is for Psychological Science.

Please send checks to the following address:
University of Mary Washington Foundation
Jeppson Alumni Executive Center
1119 Hanover Street
Fredericksburg, VA 22401-5412

Your donation will be used to support student scholarships and student presentations at conferences. We would appreciate your support!

Find us on the web: cas.umw.edu/psychology. Recent news and upcoming events are posted to the Psychological Science department website. Our current students will find information on, for example, program requirements, experiential learning opportunities, and Psi Chi happenings. Furthermore, alumni can keep in touch by following updates. Check it out!

Keep in touch with your psychology department and fellow graduates. Join the [UMW Psychology Majors](#) group or the [UMW Psychology Alumni](#) group on Facebook!