

Graduate Student Research & Creative Activity Conference



**Monday | May 13, 2019
Southern Connecticut State University**

It is our honor as members of the organizing committee to welcome you to the 3rd Annual Graduate Student Research and Creative Activity Conference, hosted by Southern Connecticut State University. This event is a celebration of scholarship and creativity in all forms, as well as a showcase for the leading minds of today's graduate community. As an educational institution, Southern seeks to promote interdisciplinary academic careers and both logic and creativity are key components in individual, economic, and societal success. The presentations highlighted in this conference demonstrate the diverse scope of subjects engaged by students from many disciplines as well as illustrating the parallels between them. This conference aims to not only encourage continued work as a community, but also to awaken individual curiosity and purpose. So it is with great pleasure that we present the scholarship and creative activity featured this year, and invite you to join in what promises to be an unparalleled demonstration of graduate accomplishment.

The Graduate Student Research and Creative Activity Conference

is proudly sponsored by:

The Office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs

Division of Research and Innovation

Graduate Student Affairs Committee

School of Graduate and Professional Studies

Center for Research on Interface Structures and Phenomena, CRISP

The Office of STEM Innovation and Leadership

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Conference Committee (in alphabetical order by last name)

Dr. Rosalyn Amenta	Carol Jenkins
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Dr. Christine Broadbridge	Christopher Sagar
Ellen Clinesmith	Elizabeth Schwartz
Rosalie Coriolan	Dean Manohar Singh
Judy Cullen	Dr. Victoria Zigmont



3rd Annual Graduate Student Research & Creative Activity Conference

Monday, May 13, 2019 | 5:00 – 8:30 p.m. | Southern Connecticut State University

4:00 – 5:00 Check-in, Presentation Set-up 3rd Floor Entrance

5:00 – 5:10 Welcome Remarks 3rd Floor Ballroom

Christine Broadbridge, Ph.D. | Executive Director, Research and Innovation

Robert Prezant, Ph.D. | Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Manohar Singh, Ph.D. | Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies

Rosalie Coriolan, MFT | President, Graduate Student Affairs Committee (GSAC)

5:00 – 6:00 **Session I | Poster Presentations** 3rd Floor Ballroom

6:00 – 7:00 **Session II | Oral Presentations** Rooms 301, 306, 308, 309

7:00 – 8:00 **Session III | Oral Presentations** Rooms 301, 306, 308, 309

7:00 – 7:25 **Session IIIA | Round Table Discussions** Rooms 303 & 305

7:30 – 7:55 **Session IIIB | Round Table Discussions** Room 303

8:00 – 8:30 **Awards Ceremony & *Just Desserts*** 3rd Floor Ballroom

P01 *Exploiting Underutilized Solar Panel Niche Markets*

Author(s): Joseph Amarante, Robert Page

Mentor: Dr. Robert Page

Department: Management

This paper examines the market potential for floating solar panel technologies and identifies an underutilized niche. While solar embraces air, ground and roof installations, these markets are saturated. Large floating solar arrays (on oceans, seas, and lakes) as well as small floating solar arrays primarily on pools are also extremely competitive. However, installations on medium-sized bodies of water such as reservoirs, small lakes and ponds are just beginning to be explored. After investigating the rapidly growing solar panel market, findings demonstrated that installation companies failed to differentiate themselves from their competitors, and did not look beyond their current customer base and product lines. This study conducted qualitative interviews with state and local government agents and regional water authorities that expressed interest in the emerging technology being applied to their reservoirs and restricted drinking water lakes. Private reservoirs, ponds and lakes often have restrictions on any installation that might reduce property value if deemed unsightly. Major public utility companies not bound by such restrictions have interest, but not as pioneers due to initial costs, lack of environmental impact data and implementation time – too much risk. This paper explores the feasibility of a small venture partnering with a local university to bridge this gap.

P02 *A Multicultural Competence Assessment: Do Training Programs Teach Enough*

Author(s): Megan Viento

Mentor: Natalie R. Starling, Ph.D., NCSP, BCBA

Department: Counseling & School Psychology

This study will examine the extent to which US school psychology training programs offer (or their webpage communicates offering) coursework that distinctly includes curriculum regarding the educational assessment of children who identify with one or more minority groups. Course sequences of 47 randomly-selected NASP- (National Association of School Psychology) approved US school psychology training programs will be analyzed. Findings will estimate the extent to which sampled school psychology training programs clearly communicate an education plan that includes assessment training in diversity. Findings will also estimate the extent to which programs potentially offer future school psychologists a baseline of knowledge on assessing children of minority groups. Because students who identify with minority groups are disproportionately overrepresented among children with disabilities, it is imperative that those training to become school psychology practitioners understand the implications of using and reporting on educational assessments with diverse groups. Suggestions regarding how programs can include such training, or, if already offered, how programs can better communicate this training will be discussed.

P03 *Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) in a High School Setting*

Author(s): Ethan Bourque, Margaret Generali, Louisa Foss-Kelly, Andrea Versillo

Mentor: Margaret M. Generali, Ph.D.

Department: Counseling / School Psychology

Funding: SCSU, GSGA

This study involved implementing and observing the effects of Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT), and evidence-based approach for substance abuse and risk, in a high school setting (Yuma-Guerrero, Lawson, Velasquez, Von Sternberg, Maxson, & Garcia, 2012). Schools are the ideal setting for the early identification and screening of substance abuse problems in adolescents (Burrow-Sanchez & Lopez, 2009). School counselors, trained by investigators, delivered classroom SBIRT-based guidance lessons as a universal prevention approach, provided brief intervention to identify students at risk and also provided referral services. This study will serve as a springboard for broader dissemination of SBIRT within schools across Connecticut.

P04 *Teacher Preparation Programs: How Prepared Are New Secondary Education Teachers for Urban Districts?*

Author(s): Danielle La Pan

Mentor: Dr. Emru Kiydal

Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

Many new teachers struggle in urban districts, which is part of the reason there are such high teacher turnover rates in those districts. As an educator in New Haven, a small urban district, this is a major problem because it negatively impacts the culture and climate in schools. One reason is because students don't consistently have adults they can count on, and another reason is that it takes a great deal of time and energy to induct new teachers into a district and school. The research will look at how teacher preparation programs in the area prepare future teachers to work specifically in urban districts, specifically the colleges/universities located in urban communities. There have been shifts happening within schools and districts, but there seems to be a disconnect between those changes and what future teachers learn in their teacher preparation programs. The goal of this research is to see what the potential gaps are and identify ways to close the gaps in order to send highly qualified and better prepared teachers into urban districts. Required courses, field study hours/requirements, reflection, and length/quality of student teaching will all be looked at, as well as the required amount of time students must spend in urban districts and urban communities.

P05 *Test Scores Indicate the Achievement Gap; They Don't Cause It*

Author(s): Jodie Lang

Mentor: Sousan Arafeh, Ph.D.

Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

Connecticut has one of the widest achievement gaps in the country. It is well-documented quantitatively by test scores, reading levels and AP classes. Less discussed, but equally as important, are the qualitative aspects of what happens on a daily basis in the schools. Spilt, Jantine, Hughes, Wu and Kwok (2012) looked at the way students interact with staff. Benbenishty, Astor, Roziner, & Wrabel (2016) studied the effect of classroom environments. Royer, Lane, Cantwell, and Messenger (2017) showed how important student engagement and choice is to achievement. Following these scholars, this research takes an exploratory qualitative look into two schools at opposite ends of the socio-economic scale and compares the physical environment, staff/student interactions and level of choice and engagement in classes. Achievement gaps are based on the 'end-product' of test scores, but we need to look more closely at the 'process' — the things that go on day-to-day, year-to-year, and generation-to-generation that created and sustain these gaps — and work on ways to fix them.

P06 *Accelerated Mathematics Classes*

Author(s): Caitlin Rickaby

Mentor: Sousan Arafeh, Ph.D.

Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

Accountability for schools in the United States has increased since legislative acts such as No Child Left Behind, (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, (IDEA) (Walker, 2013). The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), implemented in 2015 by President Obama, required all students in the United States to be taught to high academic standards to prepare them for college and careers, which previously was not a defined policy. These legislative decisions changed states' approaches to education and continue to impact teaching, learning, and students on a daily basis. As the expectations for instruction have grown, the student expectations have grown at a similar rate. Just as struggling learners are receiving more opportunities to succeed, so are high achieving students. Accelerated courses allow students to move through subjects at a faster pace than their classmates. There are many forms of acceleration which include grade-skipping, early entrance into kindergarten or college, Advanced Placement or dual-credit courses, and subject acceleration. Research shows these courses often exclude student populations including minorities, special education, and those with anxiety or other social/emotional issues. Parental involvement also plays a key factor in the placement of students in these classes. Many students and parents expect school systems to provide a wide array of courses and difficulty levels. This research informs school organizations and administrations charged with the decision of how to approach these expectations and their impact on the school system and its constituents.

P07 *Two Worlds, One State.*

Author(s): Khush Khan

Mentor: Sousan Arafeh, Ph.D.

Department: Doctoral, Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

When we think of the US education system, its primary goal focus is clear: to achieve high student academic performance. However, a deeper look into the system shows appalling inequity. Equity differences are obvious when it comes to diversity amongst students, technology within buildings, classroom sizes, relationships amongst students and staff, and even the overall culture and climate of each school. This poster presentation highlights the aforementioned areas noted through observation of two Bridgeport and Orange Publics schools. Studies have proven smaller class sizes support higher academic achievement as well as higher levels of student engagement, increased time on task, and teacher opportunities to modify instruction to the individualized needs of the students (Schanzenbach, 2014). Through smaller class sizes, teachers not only are able to increase student engagement, but they are able to build individual connections with their students. Previous studies have demonstrated the positive impact that teacher-child relationship quality and classroom emotional climate have on academic development (Rukinsi, 2018). In reviewing research, there has been a positive correlation between a positive school climate and student achievement (Ruiz, McMahon, & Jason, 2018). Building a positive school climate builds a sense of trust and safety for students, especially for those who may come from families of lower SES. The comparative observations of schools showed inequity that will be outlined; however, as educators it is our role to teach our students and allow them to meet their maximum potential.

P08 *Ten Lenses on School (In)Equity: An Analysis of Two Schools Less Than Ten Miles Apart*

Author(s): Fallon Daniels

Mentor: Sousan Arafeh, Ph.D.

Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

Despite the majority of high courts understanding that there is a positive correlation between student expenditure and educational opportunity, local governments continue to determine per pupil spending as a function of local taxable property wealth (Sebold & Dato, 1981). As a result of this function, towns like Westport, Connecticut, the 9th wealthiest city in the nation, are more likely to spend more on its students compared to a nearby urban city like Hartford, Connecticut, ranked #8 of the US's poorest cities. The gap in per pupil spending in Connecticut can differ as much as \$22,327 dollars per student. Research shows that widening gaps in wealth and opportunity have a profound impact on educational achievement (Steketee, 2019). To fully understand the context of how restricted funding influences the widening of the opportunity gap in education, we must understand the distribution of funding across school districts and how it affects schools today. Analyzing two disparate elementary schools within a 10-mile distance from one another, this paper empirically describes the different observable environments in each school and seeks to explore how funding amounts to each school can be indicative on the quality of teaching and learning even in a child's first few years of school.

P09 *Educational Equity Exploratory Study Between Public and Private School*

Author(s): Maen Adileh

Mentor: Sousan Arafeh, Ph.D.

Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

Attaining educational equity has been an ongoing concern of researchers in the past, as well as the present (Luke et al., 2010). Theoretical and empirical research has been conducted to answer the questions: how we can achieve educational equity and what factors are at play in the process? Issues such as funding, resources, socio-economic structure of educational systems, and schools' practices are cited frequently as key factors that impact the educational process, including the level of equity (Atchison et al., 2017). Because educational systems continue to be both discriminatory and inequitable on the ground, further empirical research is needed to identify the gap between theory and practice and further identify schemes of overlap and intersection between the above-mentioned factors. This poster shares findings from a comparative study between a DRG-I (Lower income/at risk) public neighborhood school and DRG-I private school (higher income/ little risk) within the same area. The results are based on direct observational data collected by the researcher regarding diversity, student achievement scores, facilities, funds, classroom environment and teachers in one public and one private school. The study findings indicate that government funds and donations play a major role in having better equipment and enhanced facilities; however, they do not necessarily result in better teaching quality or certain types of equity. Moreover, the data collected indicated that the presence of qualified teachers has a direct influence on the educational process and its outcomes, including, but not limited to, equity.

P10 *Hiring for Higher Achievement: Implications for School Leaders in Recruiting and Retaining Teachers of Color*

Author(s): Jonathan Berryman

Mentor: Sousan Arafeh, Ph.D.

Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

The United States Department of Education (USDE) has repeatedly called for a more racially diverse teaching staff to better reflect the diversity of the nation's student population. Empirical evidence concludes that teachers of color make a statistically significant difference in the achievement of students of color and in the socialization of White students; yet, the gap between the percentage of students of color and the percentage of teachers of color persists. This study investigates best practices in recruiting and retaining teachers of color and the implications for school leadership in their efforts to close the gap.

P11 *The Difference 14 Miles Makes*

Author(s): Daryl Ostapowicz

Mentor: Sousan Arafeh, Ph.D.

Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

The main goals of this project were to observe two schools in disparate district reference groups, to explore similarities and differences between schools, and consider what equity is and what it means within each school. I observed a high income DRG B school and a low income DRG H school. The project was designed to look holistically at several themes: the correspondence with individuals that are in charge of the school, the correspondence between teacher and student relations, the school environments themselves, the teaching practices within the two schools, and the overall teaching and learning process. My first-hand experience of the two schools was astonishing in that both schools are very close together geographically (14 miles of each other), while they had many significant differences within each of their programs. This can be attributed to many factors including the local environment, differences in student/family income, housing, home language, cultural backgrounds, etc. Two examples of differences observed were: 1) class size and 2. differing classroom management techniques. My observations supported research that suggests smaller classes allow for enhanced teacher/student interaction that supports student learning (Cromwell, 2006). It also supported prior research that stresses, “the need for teachers to develop culturally specific disciplinary techniques, particularly with culturally and linguistically diverse learners” (Milner, 2006).

P12 *Environment and Education Inequality in Connecticut*

Author(s): Cara McConnell

Mentor: Sousan Arafeh, Ph.D.

Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

Funding: SCSU

There is a great deal of inequality in the United States. “The differences are extraordinary between some of the country’s poorest central cities and richest suburban rings” (Orfield, 2015). Connecticut is home to some of the starkest inequality nationwide and this disparity translates into inequity in education (Sommellier, 2015). The Scheff v O'Neill case, represented in *The Children in Room E4* (Eaton, 2007), shows one stark case of how educational inequality has been managed in Connecticut; in the case of Hartford, as a legal battle for decades. As a visitor to two schools of different DRG's in Connecticut, the educational disparities are apparent. The school districts, only 30 miles apart, are separated by far more than miles. The grounds, maintenance, safety, staff, community engagement, classroom and office settings, and policies and procedures all speak to differences between the two schools and their districts. Where one school is rural and intimate the other is urban and sterile. The environment of the two schools speaks volumes as to the education presented to the students therein. According to Uline et al. (2008), “the aesthetic features of a school can foster a strong sense of belonging that, in turn, can generate an enthusiasm for learning.” This poster will share research on how the environment of each school reflects the education within. Keywords: Connecticut, education, environment, inequality

P13 *The Search for Equity: A Tale of Two Schools*

Author(s): Margaret DiMauro

Mentor: Sousan Arafeh, Ph.D.

Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

Historically, the American education system has been marked by repeated instances of inequity, discrimination, and bias. The disparities between suburban and urban school districts is well documented and research still points to gaps in opportunities for students (Logan & Burdick-Will, 2017, Rogers-Chapman, Thomas, Drew, & Luschei, 2013). From battles over budgets and resources, to institutional policies that discriminate against minority and low-income students, there is an ongoing struggle to create and sustain more equitable school environments. While most studies exploring equity issues in schools focus on these disparities (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Del Razo & Renee, 2013; Kozol, 2000; Lee, 2012), fewer recognize equity as a celebration of diversity, representation of a specific student demographic, or a valuing of the ties to the larger community. Through observations of the holistic environment of two different schools in Connecticut, these less recognized issues of equity were examined. The schools were selected based on their classification of District Reference Group, which categorizes school districts by a number of factors, including the population's socio-economic status. A DRG B school, recently recognized as a “School of Distinction” for their level 1 placement on the Smarter Balance test, and a DRG I school, considered a “Turn Around” school were analyzed. While the DRG B school had more resources like support staff, STEM initiatives, and programs for the special education population, the DRG I school was more effective at representing and celebrating their diverse student population and had a stronger bond with and understanding of their community.

P14 *Social Inequity Among Public Schools*

Author(s): Jennifer Rosser

Mentor: Sousan Arafeh, Ph.D.

Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

This poster will use a social equity lens to examine similarities and differences between two schools that are opposite on the socio-economic spectrum. They differ in location setting, facility lay-out and design, infrastructure condition, student ethnicity, racial diversity and placement within the “District Reference Group” (DRG) ranking system for Connecticut schools. More differences than similarities were found directly related to socio-economic inequity and race regarding access to resources. Research and referenced articles support a strong case for low academic performance, higher discipline and absences, as well as low morale in old and deteriorating inner city buildings and infrastructure. Such unacceptable conditions are unsafe, unhealthy, inefficient and lacking the necessary features to be an optimal learning environment with excellent school climate and morale for all staff and students (Berner, 1993; Roseman, 2017; Uline, 2004). In comparing differences, the observation of the DRG B 6-8 school reflected an extremely high performing school with little to no racial, ethnic, or socio-economic diversity and with most families economically well-off. In contrast, the observed DRG I school reflected a moderately low-performing, high-transient school with high racial and ethnic diversity and families with much lower socio-economic status (e.g., most are living just at or below the poverty line). The analysis of these two distinctly different schools showed wide socio-economic and racial diversity contrasts and provides a closer look into the lack of funding and resources as root causes for our poor and failing inner city schools.

P15 *Socio-economic Status Linked to Student Achievement*

Author(s): Michele DeLucia

Mentor: Sousan Arafeh, Ph.D.

Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

In Education, research provides evidence of an intertwining relationship between student achievement, socio-economic background, ethnicity, and race (APA 2019). Through a research project investigating equity issues influencing Connecticut schools, I collected data for the comparison of two DRG classification schools: (B) representing low socio-economic need suburban districts, and (E) representing higher socioeconomic needs. During my observations, I ascertained that there was minimal racial/ethnic diversity, with the student population 88% White at both schools. There is, however, reported substantial socioeconomic diversity and differential in test scores. I found a significant difference in students performing at or exceeding grade level between the two DRG sites, a reported 70% in ELA, and 63% in Math at the (B) DRG site, with the (E) DRG being 55% in ELA, and 45% Math (Kara, 2018). Through my observations and research of existing data, I found that the following socio-economic factors, excluding race and ethnicity, may be related to student success: parental education level, family income, and community support. Though I did not observe any differential in diversity among students or staff at either school site during my visits, I did notice a disparity in structural design and aesthetics between the two learning environments. This may support that higher level educated parents with a higher level incomes, purchase homes in towns/school districts with reported higher student achievement, leading to a community highly vested in education.

P16 *A Thirty Mile View at Inequity*

Author(s): Daniel Boocks

Mentor: Sousan Arafeh, Ph.D.

Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

Funding: SCSU

This poster shares research exploring inequities between two local Connecticut schools that are 30 miles apart. The objective was to look at the building, staff, students and curriculum and to identify specific inequities and then make observations or suggestions to aid in resolving those inequities. Observations were made by visiting each school for three hours each and utilizing data from the 2017-2018 school year found on edsight.ct.gov. Bellows (2013) states that "In every town and every city across the United States, Americans pursue the dream of freedom and equality-even with unrelenting obstacles." Despite Bellows' assessment, an analysis of collected data showed large discrepancies between school security, social issues, staff attrition rates, staff engagement and enthusiasm and parental involvement. While both schools had social justice issues, school A students were dealing with social issues related to family income, while school B students were dealing with more basic economic issues. EdSight (2019) data reports a large discrepancy between per pupil expenditures, student truancy and school-based arrests between the two schools. The underlying cause of almost all the inequities observed between these two schools was based on school funding and school expenditures. The majority of social justice inequities discovered between these two schools was based on faculty engagement and faculty perceptions of the students.

P17 *Health Maintenance and Obesity Management*

Author(s): Neethu Mathew

Mentor: Andrea Adimando, DNP, PMHNP-BC, BCIM

Department: Nursing

Obesity is one of the leading causes of mortality, morbidity, and disability in the United States (US). The prevalence of obesity was 39.8% and affected about 93.3 million US adults between 2015 and 2016 (Hales, Carrol, Fryar & Odgen, 2017). In 2008, the estimated annual medical cost of obesity in the US was \$147 billion (Finkelstein, Trogdon, Cohen & Dietz, 2009). Obesity is defined as having excess or unwanted body fat with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher (WHO, 2014). Despite the high prevalence of obesity and obesity-related illness, it is still under-diagnosed and under-treated by primary practitioners due to multiple barriers. This constructed case study presents the management of obesity in a 23-year old single mother with a 5-month old child. Nola Pender's Health Promotional Model (HPM) will serve as a theoretical framework for the analysis of the patient case being presented (Pender, 2011). This model will allow the nurse practitioner (NP) to assist and manage the patient's health through different strategies to support and best overcome the issue. A comprehensive care plan will be developed by following the current guidelines to maintain a healthy lifestyle in the US population. The constructive case study results can assist the nurse practitioners and other multidisciplinary members to develop a plan of care and treatment modalities for patients suffering from obesity.

P18 *Humanizing Substance Abuse: An Educational Project for Undergraduate Nursing Students*

Author(s): Hannah Roncallo

Mentor: Barbara Aronson Ph.D., RN, CNE

Department: Nursing

BACKGROUND: Healthcare providers, as well as healthcare students, have been found to harbor negative attitudes towards substance abusers, impacting the care they give, and subsequently creating poor patient outcomes. **PURPOSE:** Effecting attitude change is difficult, but educational exercises utilizing experiential learning have shown promise in the past to change attitudes towards other highly stigmatized diagnoses like schizophrenia and HIV/AIDS. **METHODS:** SCSU nursing students participated in a teaching intervention utilizing teaching modalities aimed at reducing bias towards substance abusers. This teaching intervention was developed using the Experiential Learning Theory and included teaching exercises in each of the four stages of the learning cycle: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, active participation. Prior to the intervention students completed a Medical Condition Regard Scale (MCRS), a valid and reliable tool, to determine regard towards patients with diagnoses of substance abuse, pneumonia, or GERD. After the intervention students filled out another MCRS for substance abuse only, as well as an evaluation tool for the debriefing portion of the intervention. **RESULTS:** Student nurses maintained the least favorable attitudes towards substance abusers in comparison to patients with pneumonia or GERD, there were significant differences in attitudes towards patients who abused substances prior to and after participation in the educational intervention, with post participation attitudes being significantly more positive than attitudes prior to participation. Students found the educational intervention and debriefing highly satisfactory. **IMPLICATIONS:** This educational intervention can provide a cost effective, easy to replicate, time efficient learning activity that could be added to undergraduate nursing curriculum.

P19 *Health Promotion and Smoking Cessation*

Author(s): Shanice Nevins

Mentor: Dr. Andrea Adimando, DNP, PMHNP-BC, BCIM

Department: Nursing

Smoking-related diseases and long-term health conditions associated with tobacco smoking are among the leading preventable causes of death in the United States (American Cancer Society, 2019). Smoking cessation interventions are essential endeavors aimed at promoting the health of tobacco smokers and mitigating tobacco-related lifestyle diseases. Smoking cessation is a critical problem to be addressed by the family nurse practitioner given the opportunity to counsel clients, provide preventive services, and implement interventions. It requires meticulous steps and a supportive social environment to encourage tobacco smokers to quit. This paper presents a constructed case study of an elderly smoker referred to the care of a family nurse practitioner for smoking cessation. This paper will highlight the patient's presenting health issues and appropriate approaches to facilitate smoking cessation. A detailed treatment plan for tobacco dependence will be executed by the nurse practitioner. Furthermore, additional implications on managing patients who have not yet expressed an interest in quitting will be discussed.

P20 *Weight Management in Individual with Eating Disorder History*

Author(s): Alexa Carolan

Mentor: Dr. Andrea Adimando, DNP, PMHNP-BC, BCIM

Department: Nursing

From 2015- 2016, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) determined that 93.3 million adults living in the United States were considered obese and at an increased risk for preventable, premature death from many conditions including heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and varying types of cancers (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). The two leading causes of death worldwide are heart disease and stroke both of which are prevalent in the obese population (American Heart Association News, 2018). Healthy People 2020 and The US Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) both present information for weight reduction in obese individuals, as well as ways to reduce chronic illness and improve overall health. The USPSTF recommends intensive multicomponent weight reduction behavioral interventions for adults with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater (US Preventive Service Task Force, 2018). Research suggests several barriers and facilitators remain that hinder or aid in patient participation in obesity management programs. In this case study, secondary prevention is discussed to provide this particular patient with information about her diagnosis and current comorbidities. Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Deficit Nursing Theory (SCDNT) and the Social-Ecological Model are discussed in detail in an attempt to provide information to aid nurses and NPs in identifying and diminishing barriers to a patient's self-care. Upon completing this special project more information will be revealed about treatment plans and obesity management in an obese individual with comorbid conditions and a history of disordered eating.

P21 *Academic Dishonesty in Higher Education*

Author(s): Katelyn Marullo

Mentor: Dr. Andrea Adimando, DNP, PMHNP-BC, BCIM

Department: Nursing

The prevalence of academic dishonesty among students in higher education is a problem that is seen all around the world. Throughout this paper the incidence, significance, and prevalence of cheating in higher education and specifically nursing education are discussed. The role of Academic Nurse Educators (ANE) is crucial in addressing academic dishonesty with students to help decrease the incidences. Relevant NLN Core Competencies for Nurse Educators that can be used as a reference for addressing these issues are discussed. The ethical and unethical behaviors are addressed through a review of the Southern Connecticut State University's Academic Standards and Code of Conduct. Kohlberg's theory is used as an exemplar and to explain how cheating behaviors develop based on conceptualization of moral development in young adults. The Southern Connecticut State University's Guideline for Addressing Academic Misconduct was used as an example on how an ANE should properly address cheating behavior. Recommendations on how an ANE should prevent cheating behavior are reviewed using studies and theories. Keywords: academic dishonesty, academic nurse educators, ethics, Kohlberg theory

P22 *A Constructed Case Study Experience: Obesity*

Author(s): Meghan Killilea Galli

Mentor: Dr. Andrea Adimando, DNP, PMHNP-BC, BCIM

Department: Nursing

Obesity, defined as a BMI greater than or equal to 30, is an illness that has become increasingly prevalent in the United States. Obesity is a dangerous condition that is associated with comorbidities such as cardiac disease, cancer, and diabetes (Buttaro, Trybulski, Polgar-Bailey, & Sandberg-Cook, 2017). The family nurse practitioner possesses the ability to incorporate national guidelines with a holistic patient approach. The USPSTF (2018) currently recommends screening of all patients and referral for intensive behavioral modification for patients identified to be obese. These recommendations lend well to the application of Roy's Adaptation Model in order to ensure a comprehensive approach to patient management. This case study will discuss the utilization of Roy's Adaptation Model by the family nurse practitioner in the care of an elderly obese male.

P23 *Comparing the Performance on the Math Inventory (MI) and the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT)/Practice Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT) for the Purpose of Monitoring Student Achievement*

Author(s): Michael McDonald

Mentor: Yulei Pang

Department: Mathematics

Abstract—In this paper we will discuss if there is a correlation between the SAT and the Math Inventory Test. The city of New Haven adopted the Math Inventory as a tool to measure student growth from grades kindergarten to high school. The Math Inventory is a computer administered test that gives students varying math problems spanning from counting to high school level math. When completed, the students are given a quantile measure, much like a Lexile score for reading skill. The purpose of this study is to figure out if success on the Math Inventory is a good indicator for performing well on the SAT. For most high schools around US, the objectives and lessons are aligned with that of the SAT. The goal of high school teachers is for students to excel on the SAT so that they can go to college and we want our tests to be aligned with that goal. If the Math Inventory is not, then it might not be a very good use of our time and resources. We will analyze data from the 2017-2018 school year from ten different New Haven high schools to determine the association between variables Math Inventory, SAT/PSAT and total score, math score, and sub score of SAT/PSAT.

P24 *Successional State of Benthic Communities in Temperate Coral Dominated Habitats in Rhode Island*

Author(s): Gabriella DiPreta, Sean Grace

Mentor: Sean Grace, Ph.D.

Department: Biology

Funding: SCSU, GSAC

Settlement tiles were deployed in a subtidal site in lower Narragansett Bay for 19 months (July 2017 to February 2019) to observe and document the patterns of recruitment and settlement of encrusting marine organisms in areas dominated by the temperate coral *Astrangia poculata*. Photos and videos were examined for percent cover of most common sessile invertebrates on horizontal and vertical substrates. Percent cover on settlement tiles in a vertical orientation showed a successional state of first encrusting algae (*Hildenbrandia spp.*) followed by the settlement of *Obelia sp.* and encrusting bryozoan (*Membranipora membranacea*) which collected sediment over the course of the study. Sediment impacted *Obelia sp.* and encrusting bryozoan continuously grew until both organisms began to compete with one another. The collected sediment on *Obelia sp.* changed the physical structure of the organism and continued to block the encrusting organisms growing underneath. Tunicates (*Didemnum vexillum*) then settled and were observed to outcompete the sediment impacted hydroids and encrusting bryozoans through lateral overgrowth. Analysis of percent cover of settlement tiles in a horizontal orientation displayed a settlement pattern of first encrusting algae (*Hildenbrandia spp.*) followed by erect algae and sediment from the water column. *Obelia sp.* then settled and were quickly impacted with sediment changing the physical structure of the organism, blocking the encrusting organisms underneath and prevented further species from settling Tunicates (*Didemnum vexillum*) and (*Didemnum candium*) then outcompeted the sediment impacted hydroids but quickly disappeared. No coral settlement was noted on any tiles.

P25 *Development of Microsatellite Markers for Fusarium Palustre, an Endophytic Pathogen Infecting Spartina Alterniflora at Vegetation Dieback Sites Along US Coastal Salt Marshes*

Author(s): Alysha Auslender, Dr. Robert E. Marra, Dr. Wade H. Elmer

Mentor: Rebecca Silady, Ph.D.

Department: Biology

Funding: SCSU, CAES

Fusarium palustre is an endophytic fungal pathogen of smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*), the predominant plant of salt marsh ecosystems along the eastern and gulf coasts of North America. Areas of cordgrass dieback, known as Sudden Vegetation Dieback (SVD) (Elmer et al. 2013), are found throughout the range of these salt marshes. *F. palustre* appears to be a necessary component of SVD, along with other environmental stressors. We sequenced the *F. palustre* genome, which was then used to develop a suite of 46 microsatellite markers which we then showed to be highly polymorphic among a screening population of 32 isolates collected from geographically disparate SVD sites from Louisiana to Nova Scotia, including one site on Chongming Island, China. Most loci exhibited a high degree of allelic diversity in the screening population, a surprising result given the absence of an observed sexual state for this fungus. There was no evidence of genotypic clustering correlating to SVD sites, an unsurprising result given that there were only 2-5 isolates per SVD site. This set of highly polymorphic and informative markers will inform future research regarding the possibility of a cryptic sexual cycle in *F. palustre*, as well as investigations into the dispersal of the pathogen at local and long-distance scales.

P26 *Gene Expression Analysis of Magnetotactic Bacteria*

Author(s): Eric Zanderigo

Mentor: JiongDong Pang, Ph.D

Department: Chemistry

Funding: SCSU

Magnetotactic bacteria utilize chain aligned vesicular organelles containing magnetite crystals, known as magnetosomes, to orient themselves along magnetic field lines. The many co-functional genes responsible for producing the magnetic organelle system exist within one specific and ubiquitous region of the genome commonly referred to as the “magnetosome island.” The cell line used in research was Magnetospirillum magnetotacticum MS-1. Cultures were grown both in a growth medium rich in bioavailable iron (Fe[+]), and a growth medium void of iron (Fe[-]). Theoretically, over time the expression of genes associated with magnetotaxis, specifically those involved in the proper production of a magnetosome chain, would diverge between the Fe[+] and Fe[-] cells. Four key documented magnetosome island genes with known functions were selected for biochemical analysis, and two sets of PCR primers were designed for each. To determine relative gene expression, reverse transcription Real-Time PCR (RT-qPCR) analysis is being used. This process begins with the synthesis of cDNA using mRNA extracted from cells, and then quantitative Real-Time PCR is performed using SYBR Green dye to determine the relative quantities of the expression of each target gene. The comparison of the RT-qPCR results for Fe[+] and Fe[-] cells will reveal any epigenetic alterations to magnetosome gene expression which result from the absence of iron, and transmission electron microscope imaging is being used to visually capture the manifestation of these differences.

P27 *Does Chronic Insomnia Predict Dispositional Paranoia?*

Author(s): Anthony Cifre, Christopher J. Budnick, Ph.D.

Mentor: Christopher J. Budnick, Ph.D.

Department: Psychology

Approximately 30% of individuals suffer insomnia symptoms and 10% chronic insomnia (Freeman et al., 2009; Ohayon, 2002). Importantly, insomnia and mental illness (specifically paranoia) associate (Mulligan, et al., 2016), perhaps because insomnia fosters negative affect that facilitates paranoia (Freeman, et al., 2009). Good sleep (especially rapid eye movement [REM] sleep) provides restoration benefitting emotional regulation (Van der Helm & Walker, 2012) but occurs near the sleep cycle’s end (Van der Helm & Walker, 2012). Yet, people generally prefer awakening earlier (morning people) or later (night people; i.e., circadian preference). For night people, insomnia might be especially detrimental as societal pressures dictate early awakenings that disrupt REM sleep (Preckel et al., 2013; Yam et al., 2014). Thus, night people experiencing chronic insomnia should exhibit higher paranoia. Using a between-subject cross-sectional research design, undergraduate students (expected n = 55) completed surveys in the laboratory assessing chronic insomnia (Jenkins et al., 1988), paranoia (Fenigstein & Varable, 1992), and circadian preference (Smith et al, 1989). Hierarchical linear regressions will examine the unique and interactive effects of insomnia and circadian preference on paranoia. Specifically, we expect chronic insomnia to predict paranoia but that relationship’s magnitude to be greater for night people. Data collection is currently ongoing but nearing completion. Little research examines circadian preferences’ interaction with insomnia to predict critical outcomes, like increased paranoia that could disrupt individuals’ adaptive functioning. Thus these findings will inform future research designs focused on understanding precursors to hostility, and interventions to attenuate sleep issues’ negative influence on individuals.

P28 *Open the Door, Stop Having it be Closed: An Analysis of Motivational Deficits of Japanese Hikikomori*

Author(s): Rachel Hara

Mentor: Cheryl C. Durwin, Ph.D.

Department: Psychology

Hikikomori is Japanese for "One who Isolates themselves" and over 1.5 million young men have done just that. For various reasons, Japanese men between the ages of 16-25 are locking themselves away in their rooms for years at a time. They rarely make any social contact with anyone existing as modern hermits. Although attempts have been made of understanding these young men no research has gone into the motivational aspects of why they've gone into a hermit state. I propose that understanding what happened to cause the Hikikomori state is necessary for helping these young men return to society. I performed archival research into the theories of motivation to try to understand the possible reasons why people become Hikikomori and why it's so hard to reintegrate into society.

P29 *Replicating the Treatment Fidelity of POWERED Strategies in the Dialogic Reading with Integrated Vocabulary Enrichment Intervention*

Author(s): Carrie Faber

Mentor: Cheryl C. Durwin, Ph.D.

Department: Psychology

Funding: GSGA

To improve the reading skills of at-risk first graders, we adapted Dialogic Reading (DR), a shared book reading technique that encourages language skills. We streamlined the original DR strategies into the acronym POWERED: Prompting frequently, Open-ended questions, Wh-questions, Expanding the child's responses, encouraging Repetition, Evaluating responses (i.e., praise), and Distancing (personal connection). Our previous research suggests that: 2-4 total hours of intervention improves reading comprehension; research assistants (RAs) consistently implemented the strategies with first and second graders with little variation. This study replicates the original research on RA behaviors, showing high treatment fidelity using the POWERED strategies with first graders.

P30 *Biomechanical and Anatomical Asymmetries of the Lower Extremities Associated with Curved Sprinting in Track Athletes*

Author(s): Christine Volz, Marc Robertson PT, MS, DPT

Mentor: Robert Gregory, Ph.D.,

Department: Exercise Science

INTRODUCTION: Sprinters perform curved running around a track; this has been associated with lower extremity muscle strength (MS) and range of motion (ROM) asymmetries. **PURPOSE:** To identify biomechanical and anatomical asymmetries between the inside (left) and outside (right) legs associated with curved running in track sprinters. **METHODS:** Seventeen SCSU track sprinters (experience: 6.4 ± 2.9 years) participated in this study. MS and ROM were assessed for 12 different joint motions in both lower extremities. Two maximal effort 150 meter sprints in lanes one and six of a 200-meter indoor track were performed to evaluate ground reaction forces (GRFs) of the inside and outside legs. **RESULTS:** There were no significant differences in MS, ROM, and GRFs between the inside and outside legs. However, significant ROM asymmetries were found when comparing both lower extremities regardless of inside/outside leg status. Additionally, MS asymmetries greater than 10% were found in over half of the participants for the ankle, knee, and hip joints. **DISCUSSION:** The lack of significant differences between the inside and outside legs indicates there is no generalized long-term adaptation to continuous running in the counter-clockwise direction around a curved track. The significant differences in ROM found do not favor one leg, indicating variability in ROM asymmetries. MS asymmetries greater than 10% are associated with increased injury risk; all individuals in this study with MS asymmetries greater than 10% have a history of running-related injuries. **CONCLUSION:** MS and ROM asymmetries do not demonstrate generalized patterns in sprinters, but may be associated with increased injury risk.

P31 *The Effects of Varying Postexercise Nutrient Timing on Substrate Oxidation and Energy Expenditure in Resistance Trained Men*

Author(s): Laura Mangone, Scott Talpey

Mentor: William Lunn

Department: Exercise Science

Funding: GSAC

It is well known that protein and/or carbohydrate consumption augments postexercise recovery. However, it is unclear whether the timing of protein and carbohydrate consumption interferes with postexercise fat usage and muscle protein breakdown. **PURPOSE:** To examine the effects of immediate versus delayed postexercise nutrition intake on postexercise recovery. **METHODS:** Resistance trained (≥ 1 y) men ($n=10$, 22 ± 2 y, 83 ± 10 kg) performed a resistance exercise bout (3 sets of 6 exercises that stimulate major muscle groups, 2-3 minutes of rest). Participants then consumed one of the three following postexercise nutrition interventions: immediate consumption of a protein (0.35 g/kg BW) and carbohydrate (1.0 g/kg BW) beverage (IMM), delayed consumption (2h) of a protein (0.35 g/kg BW) and carbohydrate (1.0 g/kg BW) beverage (+2H), or placebo (flavoring with water; PLA). Participants recovered for three hours while their expired carbon dioxide and oxygen were collected. Substrate oxidation (carbohydrate and fat) and energy expenditure were determined, in addition to muscle protein breakdown (via the analyses of the hormone cortisol and urinary protein excretion). **RESULTS:** Nitrogen balance was significantly lower in PLA (-0.02 ± 0.01 g) compared to +2H (5.21 ± 0.63 g, $p < 0.001$, $ES=11.61$) and IMM (5.21 ± 0.64 g) ($p < 0.001$, $ES=11.59$) during the three-hour recovery. Carbohydrate oxidation was significantly higher in IMM, compared with +2H, 60 minutes postexercise (0.213 ± 0.128 g/min vs. 0.110 ± 0.124 g/min, respectively) ($p=0.014$). There were no significant differences in salivary cortisol among groups (all $p=1.0$). **CONCLUSION:** Delayed nutrient intake causes higher fat usage without impeding protein retention. Thus, postponing postexercise nutrient intake may have implications in favorable body composition improvements.

P32 *Blood Lead Level and Blood Pressure in Adult African American Males*

Author(s): David Burnside

Mentor: Dr. Deborah Flynn

Department: Public Health

Blood lead is a problem generally monitored with respect to young children. It is understood to be an issue of housing and the places children live, go to school, and play. Outside of occupational exposure, blood lead in adults is generally not routinely monitored. Although the literature contains epidemiological studies reviewing the relationship between blood lead concentration and health effects in adults, generally speaking these studies stop short of making any recommendations for any sort of abatement of lead these adults are exposed to non-occupationally. This thesis will review the relationship between blood lead and blood pressure in African-American adult males. It will attempt to use public health theory to explain why this information is important to health promotion professionals. It is hoped that understanding that lead exposure is a lifelong problem will become one more piece in the puzzle of removing environmental lead exposures from the lives of all.

P33 *A Comparison of Trends in Tobacco Use for Undergraduate Male and Female Students Ages 18-35 in the Years 2016 and 2018*

Author(s): Jennifer Anziano, Kristen Dearborn, Elizabeth Schwartz

Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D. MPH

Department: Public Health

Funding: SCSU

Background: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released information confirming that smoking is the leading cause of preventable death (2016). It is important to recognize the prevalence of smoking on college campuses because this is a useful indicator of current and future health of the college-aged generations. In addition to smoking-induced illnesses such as lung cancer, stroke, and COPD, smoking is also associated with an increase in risky behaviors, especially in young adults (CDC, 2019). Purpose: The purpose of this analysis was to monitor the trends in tobacco use among SCSU male and female students in the years 2016 and 2018. Analysis: Our analysis focused on undergraduate students ages 18-35 who identified as male or female who completed the SCSU College Health Survey in the years 2016 (N = 724) and 2018 (N = 1018) using one-way Chi-square. Research Hypothesis: The SCSU Student Health Survey data will show that self-reported frequency and methods of tobacco use among SCSU students will change overtime from 2016 to 2018. Results of this analysis will be presented at the Graduate Research Creative Activity Conference.

P34 *Exploring the Relationship between Alcohol Use and Sleep Quality in Undergraduate Students*

Author(s): Brittany Trnka, Daniel Chicoine, Elizabeth Schwartz

Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D. MPH

Department: Public Health

Sleep quality is foundational to cognitive, psychomotor, and emotional functioning. These abilities are critical for college students to succeed, so it is particularly alarming that 20% to 60% of college students report poor quality sleep (Valerio, Kim, & Sexton-Radek, 2016). The purpose of this analysis is to explore the relationship between alcohol use and sleep quality in undergraduate students at a large, public university. The researchers hypothesize that students who report a higher use of alcohol use will also report poorer quality of sleep. The data being analyzed will be from the Southern Connecticut State University 2016 Health Survey. This analysis only includes traditional aged college students (ages 18-22) who are enrolled full time (12+ credits), which defines the study population of 596 students.

P35 *Dazed and SCS-used: Tracking Drug Use on Campus*

Author(s): Maya Polan, Dan Mozzochi, Elizabeth Schwartz

Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D. MPH

Department: Public Health

The United States is amidst a well-documented opioid use epidemic. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), opioid overdose death rates tripled between 2002 – 2015, with overdose deaths involving heroin alone increasing 20% between 2014 – 2015. Similarly, the yearly incidence of drug use and overdose deaths skyrocketed over the past decade, pushing Connecticut's drug-induced mortality rate far beyond national averages (National Institute of Drug Abuse, 2018). Young adults, including college students, are at particular risk of initiating or experimenting with substance use, which can lead to substance dependence, polysubstance use, and other adverse health behaviors (Healthy People 2020). This research therefore seeks to characterize and quantify reported substance use among undergraduates at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) between 2012 -2018, a period that coincides with what is considered, on the national level, the ongoing third wave of the opioid use epidemic (National Institute of Drug Abuse, 2018). Supporting data were derived from the 2012 (N = 942), 2014 (N = 1,303), 2016 (N = 831) and 2018 (N = 1,131) SCSU student health surveys and evaluated in the context of demographic variables using chi square independence tests. Our analysis provides a snapshot of student drug use at SCSU against the backdrop of this ongoing public health crisis, with the hope of guiding future research projects and campus intervention efforts.

P36 *Condom Use Among Undergraduate Students Based on the Year of Study*

Author(s): Toluwalope Adedugbe, Sharma Sumit, Elizabeth Schwartz

Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D. MPH

Department: Public Health

Sexually Transmitted diseases (STDs) affect all ages. While this is true, studies have shown that STDs are a greater health burden on young adults. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that young people between the ages of 15 and 24 year- old account for half of the 20 million incident cases of STDs that occur in the United States annually. The correct and consistent use of male and female condoms and other barrier methods can reduce the risk of contracting STDs, including HIV and Hepatitis B and C. The purpose of this study was to determine if a linear or inverse relationship exists between use of condoms and progress from Freshman through Senior year in students at Southern Connecticut State University. The population of interest was a total of 1131 undergraduate students in freshman, sophomore, junior and senior classes and analysis of data from the SCSU 2018 health survey was done using one-way ANOVA. The result from this study will provide insight on the potential need for increased sex education, by increasing perception of risks to contracting STDs and eradicating any barriers to implementing safe sex practice in a targeted effort to the people most in need of this knowledge.

P37 *Trends in HPV Vaccination Rates and Condom Use on College Campuses*

Author(s): Amanda Sanelli, Elizabeth Schwartz

Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D. MPH

Department: Public Health

Vaccinations are an integral part of public health and disease prevention. Vaccination rates on college campuses in the U.S. hover between 8-39%. Healthy People 2020 recommends a rate of 70%. The HPV vaccine protects against cancers and other diseases caused by the Human Papilloma Virus. 1 out of every 4 people are currently infected. Only ½ of sexually active college students are using condoms. The purpose of this study is to determine if college students who have gotten the HPV vaccination are less likely to engage in unprotected sex compared to students who have not gotten the HPV vaccination. This will be done by analyzing the data collected in the 2018 survey administered to undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in SCSU during the spring 2018 semester. The data was randomly collected in 68 class of the 173 scheduled class between January 22nd, 2018 and March 9th, 2018. A total of 1,222 students completed the survey. If there is a relationship between HPV rates and condom use, the SCSU Office of Health and Wellness should be informed. Trend information will assist the SCSU Office of Health and Wellness in educating SCSU students on university vaccination rates, the consequences of HPV infection, preventative measures, and information on available treatments.

- P38** *Meal Plans and It's Association with the Dietary Choices of College Students: A Cross Sectional Survey of Freshman and Sophomore Southern Connecticut State University Students*
Author(s): Ese Oghaghare, Jennifer Zbell, Elizabeth Schwartz
Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D. MPH
Department: Public Health
 Food insecurity, a growing concern among college students has been linked to their dietary choices. Access to meal plans as a potential resource and response to food insecurity among college students has received less or no attention in scientific reviews and literature. The aim of this study is to investigate the association between meal plans and dietary choices of SCSU students (fruits and vegetable and soda drink consumption respectively). A cross-sectional survey using secondary data from the 2018 SCSU Student health survey; the 2018 Student health survey sampled 1,224 students. For this study, we intend sampling only about 501 students from a sub-population of freshman and sophomore students (Male=39.92%; Female=58.08%). We shall re-categorize research participants who took fruit and vegetable into three sub-categories (0 servings, 1-2 servings, and ≥ 3 servings) and also those on soda drink consumption into three sub-categories (Low consumption, Moderate consumption, and High consumption). All variables for this study are measured in the categorical and interval level of measurement. Data analysis shall employ the Pearson's Chi-Square test to determine level of significant differences in the category of those who have meal plans as against two levels of dietary choices (Fruits and vegetable and Soda consumption respectively). Research findings shall quantify and elucidate the influence of access to meal plans in the healthy and unhealthy choices of SCSU's freshman and sophomore students and also inform new strategies and intervention to improve the dietary choices of SCSU students in general.
- P39** *Does Place of Residence Affect Binge Drinking?: An Analysis of Undergraduate Student Drinking Behavior at Southern Connecticut State University*
Author(s): Allison Mangles, Rebeka McKee, Elizabeth Schwartz
Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D. MPH
Department: Public Health
 The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recognize binge drinking as a serious but preventable public health problem and one that is most common for adults 18-34 years of age, including college students. The National Institute for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism defines binge drinking as a pattern of drinking that brings an individual's blood alcohol concentration to .08 grams or above. For females, this is typically four or more drinks over a period of two hours and for males it is typically five or more drinks over a period of two hours. The purpose of this analysis is to determine if binge drinking among undergraduate students is related to where students live: in a campus residence hall, at a parent/guardian home, or in other off-campus housing. Data will be used from the 2018 Student Health Survey conducted at Southern Connecticut State University. The analytic population for the study is undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 34 who identify their gender as either male or female. The population, totaling 1,036 students, is 36.7% male and 63.3% female with a mean age of 20.84. Information gathered from this analysis will inform wellness center staff and other campus health professionals about binge drinking behaviors. The results will determine the future direction of outreach and educational efforts to decrease binge drinking among undergraduate students.
- P40** *Examining the Relationship Between Exercise Frequency and Sleep Quality Among College Students at SCSU*
Author(s): Shaiona Williams, Elizabeth Schwartz
Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D. MPH
Department: Public Health
 College students often report high rates of sleep disturbances and poor quality of sleep, likely caused by a variety of factors that this population experiences such as irregular sleep patterns, living conditions and busy schedules. The consequences of poor sleep quality among this population can include poor academic performance, increased stress levels, decreased cognition and inability to focus. Previous research has found that 60% of college students were considered "poor-quality" sleepers (Lund, Reider, Whiting, and Prichard, 2009). In this study, it was found that poor-quality sleepers reported significantly more physical and psychological health problems than their peers who were considered to be "good quality" sleepers (Lund, Reider, Whiting, and Prichard, 2009). The health benefits of regular physical activity have been well-established including improved physical and psychological health and well-being, and decreased stress levels. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between various self-reported exercise frequencies and self-reported sleep quality among college students at SCSU. Analysis was conducted to determine if an increase in exercise frequency leads to better sleep quality. This study subpopulation included students at Southern Connecticut State University who completed the 2018 Student Health Survey and responded as being in their Freshman, Sophomore, Junior or Senior year of their undergraduate studies and below the age of 30. Participant's current residence status (on- or off- campus), gender, and how many hours worked per week were also analyzed to examine the effect that these factors may have on student's exercise frequency or sleep quality.
- P41** *Perceived Use vs. Actual Use: A Study Exploring if Age, Gender, and Ethnicity Influence the Risk Associated with Peer Perceptions of Marijuana Use Among Undergraduate College Students.*
Author(s): Ellen Clinesmith, Julia Masters, Elizabeth Schwartz
Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D. MPH
Department: Public Health
Funding: HHS/Dean Bulmer
 Marijuana is widely used by college students in the United States. Cross-sectional and longitudinal research studies have shown that perceived peer use of alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs can be a risk factor for actual use while in college. This research study uses data (N=921) from the 2018 SCSU Student Health Survey to examine the relationship between perceived peer use and actual marijuana use among traditionally aged (18-22) undergraduate college students. The purpose of this study is to assess if factors such as age, gender, and ethnicity affect student's perception and actual use of marijuana. Understanding the difference between perceived and actual use among groups can help develop appropriate messaging, programming, and interventions designed to reduce marijuana use among college students.
- P42** *An Examination of Substance Use, Depression and Anxiety among College Students*
Author(s): Monique Rochester
Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D. MPH
Department: Public Health
 High frequencies of alcohol consumption, smoking tobacco and marijuana use are perceived as normal behaviors among college students and widely encouraged within social settings. The medical consequences of substance use among college students have been thoroughly highlighted throughout the literature. However, more information is needed to determine the impact of alcohol use and smoking on mental health status. It is likely that substance use can have problematic implications for depression and anxiety among college students. The literature suggests that alcohol and drug use elevates problems in mood among individuals who are already at risk for depression. This study will investigate the association between substance use and anxiety and depression. The results will be shared on campus and used to develop mental health services for students.

P43 *Food Insecurity and its Impact on the Physical Health of Southern Connecticut State University Students*

Author(s): Maya Welfare, Kathryn Wall, Elizabeth Schwartz

Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D. MPH

Department: Public Health

Funding: SCSU

Background: Food insecurity is a lack of physical and economic access to nutritious food needed to fulfill one's dietary needs and food preferences to maintain an active and healthy life. Studies reveal that food insecurity is a public health problem among college students because food insecure students are at a higher risk for various life-threatening diseases including being underweight and obese. Food insecure students are a vulnerable population that is more susceptible to experiencing lower retention and graduation rates than food secure undergraduate and graduate students. This study assesses student food security and its impact on Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) college students' physical health—Body Mass Index (BMI). The results of this study can be used by SCSU to implement intervention programs to ensure student food security to prevent poor health outcomes. Methods: Research data were collected using the 2018 SCSU Student Health Data Survey. 1222 student responses (91% response rate) were analyzed to assess food security and physical health—defined as BMI. Stratified data reflect the four BMI categories (using CDC and NIH cutoffs): underweight BMI < 18.5kg/m², normal weight BMI 18.5 – 24.9kg/m², overweight BMI 25.0 – 29.9kg/m², and obese BMI ≥ 30.0kg/m². Results: Preliminary results show 45.4% of students are food insecure. Of these food insecure students, 2.4% are underweight, 48.9% are normal weight, 27.8% are overweight, and 20.9% are obese. Preliminary results reveal that food insecurity may or may not impact student physical health. Further results will be presented following inferential statistical analysis.

P44 *The Impact of Perceived Stress on Binge Drinking Among Undergraduate College Students in an Urban University.*

Author(s): Nwanyieze Jiakponnah, Anthony Lawson, Elizabeth Schwartz

Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D. MPH

Department: Public Health

The collegiate setting is laden with many stress provoking factors, and stress is a well-documented risk factor for substance misuse as a coping mechanism. Presently, alcohol is one of the most commonly abused substances in the form of binge drinking behavior among college students and has remained resistant to many interventions. This study examines the impact of perceived stress on binge drinking among traditional college-aged students in a northeastern urban university. This study was a cross-sectional study using secondary data from the 2016 SCSU student health custom survey. The sample for the 2016 cross-sectional survey included 919 students from randomly selected classes across the university. The subpopulation of focus for this current study includes 859 undergraduate students (69% females and 31% males) with differing levels of perceived stress who will be compared to determine if there is a variation in their levels of alcohol misuse. Findings from this study will add to the knowledge base on the predisposing factors to binge drinking among college students and also highlight the necessity for interventions that will enhance college students' stress management skills as a pathway to the reduction of binge drinking behavior in this population.

P45 *Examination of the Impact of Stress on Mindfulness on a Sample of Undergraduate University Students*

Author(s): Brittany Bard, Desiree Rondeau, Elizabeth Schwartz

Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D. MPH

Department: Public Health

College students who are experiencing high amounts of stress is increasing, which puts them at risk of mental health disorders such as anxiety. Sources of stress in college students include academics, and finding time to study, relax, and participate in recreational activities. Previous studies of the practice of mindfulness have shown that it is a promising method for reducing stress and increasing overall wellbeing. The Oxford Dictionary defines mindfulness as awareness of the present moment and one's thoughts, feelings, and actions. This study focuses on all undergraduate students from SCSU, between the age of 18-24 years old. The gender category will be narrowed to Male, Female, and Other (Trans, Genderqueer, Other). Individuals who do not meet this criterion will be excluded. The results of the analysis will be presented in a poster format. The hypothesis is students who practice a greater amount of mindfulness will experience a lower amount of stress than students who do not practice mindfulness. The data were collected from the 2018 SCSU Student Health Survey. The sampling method was probability sampling. A survey was randomly given to a total of 61 classes. A total of 1,148 people responded, which was a 91% response rate. The results of this study will guide potential interventions, such as mindfulness workshops, that can reduce student stress and improve their overall performance and well-being.

P46 *Southern Connecticut State University Students' Awareness of University Offered HIV and STI Testing and Students' Condom Use Over Time, 2012-2018.*

Author(s): Kelsey Corcoran, Sumaira Durrani, Elizabeth Schwartz

Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D. MPH

Department: Public Health

We have decided to investigate students' awareness that Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) offers HIV and STI testing and students' condom use from 2012 to 2018. We have decided to look at 2 different variables since there is no indication that either would have changed over the years the Student Health Survey has been given. A better understanding of both variables since 2012 could be helpful for SCSU targeting educational efforts relating to sexual health. We will determine if awareness of testing and/or condom use has changed throughout the years of the SCSU student health survey, we will conduct chi square testing for each variable (with year as the independent variable). In order to control for potential confounding variables, we will further analyze both students' awareness of testing and condom use using a logistic regression analysis that incorporates the covariates of age, gender, and ethnicity. To look further at our individual covariates and what effect they may have on students' awareness of testing and/or condom use, we will further analyze the 2018 survey data. Chi squared testing will be used to compare students answers to the questions on testing awareness and condom use based on their age, gender, and ethnicity. Chi squared testing will be used to determine if there are any differences in the answers that students reported to these sexual health questions based on their demographics. This may inform how to target educational materials, if any differences are seen. Results will be presented at the conference.

P47 *Mental Health and Physical Activity Among Undergraduate College Students*

Author(s): Allie Mirek

Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D. MPH

Department: Public Health

Purpose. The purpose of the current study is to uphold the findings from previous research studies and find an association between mental health and physical activity of college students at SCSU. This study also hopes to determine what other factors, if any, have a mediating effect on this relationship. **Method.** This study will use data from the SCSU 2018 Student Health Survey to determine the relationship between mental health and physical activity through a secondary data analysis. Students were considered to have a history of a mental health disorder if they responded “yes” to either having a diagnosis of depression or a diagnosis of anxiety. Students were considered physically active if they responded “yes” to the survey item “I regularly engage in physical activity”. **Results.** Chi-square analysis was performed to determine the relationship between mental health and physical activity, as well as the relationship between mental health and other target variables. **Implications.** Evaluating the relationship, if any, between mental health and physical activity will help students to be more mindful of their health and hopefully provide encouragement to engage in a more active lifestyle. Additionally, the information can be used by all members of the SCSU community to foster a healthier and more supportive campus that is more aware of the mental health of its students.

P48 *Is the Nutrition Facts Panel with Added Sugar Content Effective at Reducing Intention to Consume Added Sugar in College Students?*

Author(s): Peter Zapata

Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D. MPH

Department: Public Health

The compliance date for the revised nutrition facts panel has been extended. Companies have been given a two or three-year extension based on their gross annual income, two or three years in which consumers will not be as well informed about their food purchases as they would be with the revised nutrition facts panel, especially with respect to added sugar as it will not be required to be disclosed until the extension is over. In the meantime, college students, which are a group known to consume an excess of added sugar, will remain unaware of their added sugar consumption. Due to the detrimental effects of added sugar when habitually consumed in excess, this leaves college students in a vulnerable state for the next two to three years. This study examines the effect of added sugar content on the nutrition facts panel to determine whether the provision of such information effects the intention to consume added sugars in college students at a four-year university in New England.

P49 *Identity & Psychosocial Development in Women with Alcohol Use Disorder*

Author(s): Lori Brennan

Mentor: Jill Cretella, MSW

Department: Social Work

This is a qualitative research study regarding women in recovery for alcoholism. It investigates if psychosocial development is impeded by Alcohol Use Disorder in women, and if improvement to psychosocial development is made with sobriety. The study utilized the Ego Identity Scale (EIS), which has been used previously to assess ego identity with male alcoholics. A research gap existed in this tool’s application with female alcoholics. This study sought to enhance the knowledge for the professional community for the treatment of women with AUD by applying the EIS to a female sample. The research assesses for correlations between age of onset of alcoholism, years of sobriety, and identity development. Utilizing the EIS, a strong correlation was found between years of sobriety and psychosocial maturity, indicating that sobriety aids the development of maturity in women.

P50 *How do Positive Psychology Interventions Affect Anxiety Levels of Bachelor of Social Work Students in their Field Practicum?*

Author(s): Kelsey Laudano

Mentor: Lorrie G. Gardella

Department: Social Work

My sub questions are, 1. What are the effects of gratitude interventions on the anxiety levels of BSW students in their field practicum? 2. What are the effects of meditation interventions on the anxiety levels of BSW students in their field practicum? 3. What are the effects of humor interventions on the anxiety levels of BSW students in a field practicum? My thesis advisor is Lorrie G. Gardella, JD, LMSW, ACSW. This study is a quasi-experiment that uses purposive, cluster sampling. The participants consist of Bachelor of Social Work students from Southern Connecticut State University, who are enrolled in their field practicum. The participants are asked to implement one positive psychology intervention (PPI) into their daily routine for a period of one month. The Beck Anxiety Inventory scale is used to collect data on the students’ anxiety level pre and post implementing the positive psychology intervention. For purposes of this study, three positive psychology interventions are used: gratitude, meditation, and humor. Existing research on positive psychology interventions show that implementing PPIs can yield improvements on individuals’ subjective well-being, academic performance, and improve perceived anxiety.

P51 *Child Sexual Abuse and Trauma: Is There A Negative Correlation To Lower Quality Intimate Adult Relationships?*

Author(s): Dorian Williams

Mentor: Carmela F. Smith, Ed.D., LCSW

Department: Social Work

This analysis seeks the answer to the question “Is there a correlation between childhood sexual abuse (C.S.A) and declined quality of an intimate partner relationships?” Human beings are biologically, physiologically, and psychologically designed for meaningful companionship, and relational intimacy between themselves; and a partner of their choosing. However, when an individual experiences sexual victimization, is their ability to intimately connect with others affected? When an individual is violated, feelings of guilt, shame, fear, confusion, blame, mistrust, anger, may develop. Subsequently, the victim may dissociate themselves from their body as well as their emotions. Repercussions of unresolved trauma can lead to maladaptive coping skills and delay in social, emotional, physical, and or psychological development. This study wishes to analyze the potential negative effects and quality levels of intimate partner relationships of those who express a past history of sexual traumatization compared to non CSA persons. This research project concluded with a psycho educational presentation at the Center for Family Justice. This presentation hopes to bring awareness to the helping professionals as well as the individuals who suffer from sexual trauma that deserve to have fulfilling healthy relationship. Keywords: intimate partner relationship, sexual victimization, quality

P52 *School Refusal Protocol*

Author(s): Cameron Hotchkiss

Mentor: Lorrie Greenhouse Gardella, JD, LMSW, ACSW

Department: Social Work

This special capstone project identifies the main contributing factors for school avoidance and then uses that research to help create a protocol for the Human Services Department in the town of Cheshire, Connecticut. The main contributing factors identified by the research include bullying, separation anxiety, and social anxiety. The protocol created will help the Department of Human Services be able to accurately access the cause of the student's school avoidance, as well as establish a plan of action on how to go about supporting the student. Through a needs assessment, the researcher discovered that these guidelines are tools that are necessary for the department to have, but lack, as they were recently put in charge of dealing with the school avoidance cases. This project's implication on social work practice will be to provide a useful tool of measurement and standards on how to identify and support a client with school avoidance issues. It will also provide a precise guide for an agency lacking formal guidelines with this particular type of client issue.

P53 *Sensory Processing: Another Piece in the Stuttering Puzzle*

Author(s): Sarah Hammond

Mentor: Sujini Ramachandar Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Department: Communication Disorders

Developmental stuttering is a speech disorder that can make it significantly difficult for an individual to effectively communicate in everyday life. Speech that is both stuttered and nonstuttered is a multisensory activity that involves the sensorimotor system. Stuttered speech, however presents as a disruption between the motor and sensory systems. Therefore, the current study aims to examine the co-occurrence of sensory processing deficits and stutters. The researchers recruited twenty children who stutter and twenty aged and sex matched children who do not stutter to assess their sensory processing skills. The parents of the children were asked to complete the Sensory Profile 2 survey as well as a temperament and behavior scale: Children's Behavior Questionnaire or the Temperament in Middle Childhood Questionnaire for children aged 3-7 and children aged 7-10, respectively. It is expected that children who stutter will show a significant difference in sensory processing skills as well as in temperament when compared to children who do not stutter. The results of this study could provide crucial information to clinicians in the field of Speech Language Pathology in order to more accurately tailor the treatment of clients who stutter.

P54 *The Relationship Between Performance on Tests of Central Auditory Processing, Phonological Processing, and Reading Abilities in Children*

Author(s): Hannah Magliano

Mentor: Richard P. Zipoli, Ph.D., Jennifer McCullagh, Au.D., Ph.D.

Department: Communication Disorders

Funding: GSGA

Objective: Evidence has supported the relationship between central auditory processing (CAP) and children's phonological processing (PP) and reading capabilities in children. More recently, converging evidence from studies using more sensitive measures has revealed a consistent relationship between measures of temporal processing and phonemic awareness (e.g., Fostick et al., 2014; Mealings & Cameron, 2018; Murphy & Schochat, 2009; Murphy-Ruiz et al., 2013; Sharma et al., 2009; Walker, et al., 2011; Zaidan & Baran, 2013). The purpose of this study was to investigate whether these findings could be extended to a comparatively younger sample of seven and eight-year-olds. Participants and Methods: Participants included ten monolingual children ages seven to eight with average intelligence as measured by the Test of Nonverbal Intelligence-4 (TONI-4). Participants had no other co-occurring disorders, and they were recruited based on teacher or parent report of concerns regarding potential CAP difficulties and/or reading difficulties. For this study, data was taken regarding performance on CAP tests and performance on tests assessing reading and PP abilities. Standardized tests batteries used to assess PP and reading abilities included the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing-2 (CTOPP-2), the Test of Word Reading Efficiency-2 (TOWRE-2), Woodcock Reading Mastery Test-3 (WRMT-3) and The Gray Oral Reading Test-5 (GORT-5). Results: Significant correlations were found between auditory Frequency Patterns and both Elision (sound deletion) and the Phonemic Awareness Composite on the CTOPP-2. Implications of these findings will be discussed.

P55 *The Ins and Outs of Coming Out: What Youth Want You to Know*

Author(s): Kayla Shannon, Marcus Tart

Mentor: Rebecca Harvey, Ph.D.

Department: Marriage and Family Therapy

Research reviews current trends which affect coming out through the examination of the interpersonal and intrapersonal factors which influence when and how someone comes out in the individual, the family and larger social contexts. Using qualitative analysis of current research on the coming out process to find a relationship between interpersonal and intrapersonal processes. Results show there is a significant relationship between the internal and external factors that influence the success and coherency of the coming out process.

P56 *Attachment in African American Families: The Role of Emotional Language in Creating Secure Attachment*

Author(s): Rosalie Coriolan

Mentor: Sebastian Perumbilly, Ph.D.

Department: Marriage and Family Therapy

Research studies highlight the role of emotional language in establishing secure human attachments. While most previous research studies on this topic focus on Eurocentric populations, not much attention has been given to African American families and their processes. Psychotherapy in the United States is generally taught through a Eurocentric lens, which does not take into account the emotional language that is expressed in families of other races and ethnicities; and what those families may need in a therapeutic setting. Previous literature provides several limitations regarding studies of African American attachment and/or emotions because they either do not identify participants by race or specify the differences between races. To address this problem, the purpose of this study will be to explore the emotional language African American families use with one another and how this language influences secure attachment or other attachment types. Using a mixed-methods based strategy, data will be collected from African American participants through focusing exclusively on the relationship(s) between the African American parent(s) and child. This study will be beneficial to therapists because it will help them to better understand the differences between cultures and the impact of culture within the therapeutic setting; therefore, changing how they inform African American clients/patients on how to increase or change their family's emotional language.

P57 *Is Social Connection a Protective Factor for Wellness?*

Author(s): Jessica Lennington, Ph.D.

Mentor: Sebastian Perumbilly, Ph.D.

Department: Marriage and Family Therapy

Funding: GRF

Is Social Connection a Protective Factor for Wellness? Marriage and family therapy is oriented toward the systemic (relational) system; yet, support within systemic components (family, extended family, community) have shifted, with the former Surgeon General recently reporting on the “loneliness epidemic” and its contribution to physical illness (Murthy, 2017). As early 1988 researchers reported the data were already overwhelming: Wellness is inextricably linked to social connection (House et al., 1988). Nevertheless, three decades later bench to bedside progress is unclear. This work will (1) review the last several decades of quantitative research and summarize the collective findings; (2) explore the use of social connection in clinical practice; and (3) present ideas for future directions and best practices.

6:00 – 7:00 p.m. | Session II | Oral Presentations

Adanti Student Center Rooms 301, 306, 308, 309

301 *An Examination of the Impact of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program on Food Insecurity and Depression Among Adults Living in the United States*

1.01

Author(s): Tess Goldson

Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D., MPH

Department: Public Health

Multiple studies have identified the association between food insecurity and mental illness. Few studies have examined the impact of participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) on food insecurity and mental illness among adults living in the United States. The purpose of this investigation was to determine if there is a difference in the association between food insecurity and mental illness when comparing adults in the United States who receive SNAP benefits to those who do not. This cross-sectional study analyzed data from the 2009-2014 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). Adult food security status was measured using the 10-item U.S. Food Security Survey Module, and presence of depressive symptoms were measured with the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9). Associations between the different food security levels and depression were analyzed using multivariable logistic regression. Crude and adjusted models were created to examine the relationship between food insecurity and depression in those who receive SNAP benefits and those who do not. The results from this study will be used to close the gap in research regarding the impact of SNAP participation on food security status and depression.

301 *Examining Correlations between Quality of Life and Membership at the Willimantic Food Cooperative*

1.02 **Author(s):** Adrian Paulsen

Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D., MPH

Department: Public Health

Funding: GRF

A growing body of research and theory from a broad range of disciplines has begun to identify multiple benefits of co-operatives, yet very little research from a public health orientation has been conducted to assess co-operatives' potential impact on peoples' lives. The purpose of this study was to explore the connections between Willimantic Food Co-op (WFC) membership, Quality of Life, Fruit and Vegetable consumption, and Social Network status among WFC members and shoppers. Research questions were: 1) Are there significant correlations between WFC members' QoL scores and WFC index scores? 2) To what degree does WFC membership and participation serve as a moderating or mediating pathway between social network status, social support, and quality of life? 3) Is WFC membership and participation a factor in fruit and vegetable consumption? 4) What connections and relationships, if any, do WFC members and shoppers perceive between their WFC participation and membership, their social networks and social support status, and their QoL? Methods: This was a cross-sectional, mixed-methods study design consisting of an online cross-sectional descriptive survey and then two focus groups with WFC members. Survey questions were primarily taken from the SCSU 2016 custom survey, the EUROHIS-QOL index, and the Berkman-Syme Social Network index.

301 *With Us or Against Us? Student Engagement With Climate (In)Justice*

1.03 **Author(s):** Elizabeth Carlino, Michaela Garland, Stephen Axon

Mentor: Dr. Stephen Axon

Department: Environment, Geography, and Marine Sciences

Funding: SCSU

Climate justice is a rapidly emerging area of activism, given the disproportionate impacts that climate change has on the most vulnerable people within society. Increasingly, these vulnerable segments of the population comprise people of color, women, and low-income communities. The result is often a lack of resilience to the impacts of climate change, as little adaptation and support measures are provided by various stakeholders e.g. government; protection agencies; and businesses. At Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU), undergraduate geography and sustainability students are currently engaged in a participatory research and engagement project on campus to ascertain perceptions of climate justice, as well as inform the student body of its general principles. Turning our attention to these students, we explore whether their involvement in this project has altered their own attitudes towards climate (in)justice and what the resulting implications of any potential changes in perceptions may mean for the role they will play in future climate justice initiatives. In this paper, we outline the practical implications for universities that seek to engage their students on issues in social justice, particularly those relating to climate change and sustainability by designing their projects around participatory action research methods.

Keywords: Climate Justice; Engagement; Activism; Sustainability; Students; Participatory Action Research

306 *“Frayerization”: An Explicit Vocabulary Instruction Approach*

1.01 **Author(s):** Gregg French

Mentor: Yan Wei, Ph.D.

Department: Special Education

Studies indicate that explicit vocabulary instruction is an effective strategy for improving student success in acquiring new content knowledge. District curricular changes in recent years expect students to acquire tier III vocabulary within the context of content instruction. This study will address the use of the Frayer Model of vocabulary instruction as an intervention for a class of 18 vocational high school students. The quantitative results of a tier III content vocabulary pre-assessment will be cross-referenced with September and November STAR Reading scores. The data from both assessments indicates a need for explicit vocabulary instruction. After using the Frayer Model as an instructional method to deliver a vocabulary intervention, 88% of student vocabulary post-test scores increased above the target benchmark of 75%.

306 *How Schools Affect Transgender Students*

1.02 **Author(s):** Christian McCarthy

Mentor: Norris M. Haynes, Ph.D.

Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

Ten years ago, the number of openly transgender students was virtually insignificant. Today nearly every school has a significant transgender population, although some school cultures encourage concealment. Transgender students are a particularly vulnerable group. They are more likely than their peers to be verbally, physically, and sexually harassed. They are less likely to attend school regularly and to graduate. They experience anxiety and depression at significantly higher rates than average. They attempt suicide nearly ten times as often as their peers. Family support can mitigate these risks, just as a lack of support can exacerbate them. Second to families, schools have the greatest ability to influence the outcomes for this at risk group. I believe that most schools and most educators choose to include, support and affirm all of the children entrusted in their care, but the explosion of the population of this subgroup means that very few educators have any experience with gender identity nonconformity. My study will employ a concurrent mixed method design to describe the perceived experiences of transgender student in Connecticut schools. I will qualitatively analyze the stories of how school policies, practices and actions have affected transgender students from the perspectives of students, parents and administrators. I will also use quantitative data to provide a context for the stories and to summarize the data set as a whole. My hope is that the results of this study will provide school leaders with the information they need to best support all their students.

306 *The Paradox of Queer Leadership: Theory and Practice in Higher Education*

1.03 **Author(s):** Craig Canfield

Mentor: Sousan Arafeh, Ph.D.

Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

Presenting on preliminary results of an exploratory study of the phenomenon of queer leadership utilizing a qualitative grounded theory method, this dissertation research project aims to create a new theory of Queer Leadership. Examining existing research in queer theory, leadership theory, and queer leadership as well as drawing on the lived experiences of leaders in higher education who have an academic relationship with queer theory, this study provides a critical analysis of the history of leadership theory and contemporary leadership theories. It further analyzes queer theory, looking at both its historical commitments and current trends and, through these efforts, addresses and critiques issues of normativity within leadership. From interviews with queer leaders, this study interrogates the phenomenon that is the paradox of queer leadership in order to better understand and theorize its existence.

308 *Invisible Herstories: Feminist Re-Interpretations: Maria Stewart- A Foremother of Black Feminist Thought*

1.01 **Author(s):** Vanessa Parker

Mentor: Rosalyn Amenta, M.A.R., Ph. D.

Department: Women's & Gender Studies

The contributions to civilization by women of various world cultures have been excluded from history due to the traditions of misogyny and patriarchal ideology. Before the 18th century, women's intellectual thought was trivialized, ignored and dismissed by mainstream patriarchal culture, or so I thought. Many feminist thinkers emerged during eras of oppression and resisted their oppressors. There are feminist thinkers across the globe, the nation, and even in our backyards. During 1803 in Hartford, Connecticut, a feminist thinker was born: Maria Stewart. Stewart, a political theorist, was a foremother of Black feminist thought during the 19th century long before Patricia Hill Collins, a Black feminist sociology scholar, coined the term in the late 20th century. Stewart's ability to push for a radical transformation of systems of oppression that were deeply embedded in American institutions provides a narrative that articulated the specific forms of oppression that Black women uniquely faced in society. In this paper, I explore how Stewart's life-work laid the foundation for the evolution of Black feminist thought and why her scholarship needs to be recognized by other disciples that analyze race, gender, labor, sexuality, intersectionality, liberty and equality.

308 *Invisible Herstories: Feminist Re-Interpretations: Marilyn Monroe's Feminist Thought and Action*

1.02 **Author(s):** Kerstin Brunnen

Mentor: Rosalyn Amenta, M.A.R., Ph. D.

Department: Women's Studies

Marilyn Monroe. The stage name that Norma Jeane chose for herself in 1946 evokes a great number of associations until today. Approaching Marilyn Monroe's life in a class on the history of feminist thought is a challenge. Was Marilyn Monroe merely a sex object for male fantasies? How did she see herself, what values did she promote? Can we say that some of her thoughts were feminist thinking? Marilyn has been called "sex symbol" (Tan) and "the sexiest woman of the century" (People Magazine). However, some say about her that she was "a smart woman who put her career ahead of everything else" (Mann 21). We have difficulties placing her. In my research paper I gather and interpret information about Marilyn Monroe with regard to issues such as gender equality and the empowerment of women. Writing an in-depth analysis about Monroe's thoughts is rewarding: We can look at her as a popular female figure and as a role-model (for some). Analyzing her thoughts allows us to engage in discussions about Hollywood as an industry, too. This context affects how we look at her ideas, most of which she wrote on little pieces of paper in hotels. Denise Farren feels "uneasy" about seeing Monroe as a "coy, dumb and weak" woman, and she proposes that "a feminist reevaluation [...] has been long called for" (Farren 271). This is what I want to do: I argue that we can find traces of feminist thought in Monroe's actions and statements.

308 *Invisible Herstories: Feminist Re-Interpretations: History of Feminist Thought*

1.03 **Author(s):** Jessica Troy

Mentor: Rosalyn Amenta, M.A.R., Ph. D.

Department: Women Studies

Johnnie Tillmon, a welfare rights activist from the 1970's was a Black woman who spoke for national policy change. She was published in Ms. Magazine at the time, calling out middle-class white feminists who dominated the pages, as well as the feminist movement itself for its lack of inclusivity. Tillmon's writings not only awakened the feminist movement to the hierarchies of oppression, but presented what is arguably some of the earliest discussions around intersectionality. Tillmon went on to become the Executive Director of the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO). However, Tillmon's ideas are not widely known within contemporary feminist circles. This presentation will explore ways that Johnnie Tillmon mobilized women experiencing poverty and offer thoughts on how her work should be continued and expanded today, since poverty is and always has been a woman's issue.

308 *Invisible Herstories: Feminist Re-Interpretations: Anarcha-Feminism and Emma Goldman*

1.04 **Author(s):** Sierra Yanaway

Mentor: Rosalyn Amenta, M.A.R., Ph. D.

Department: Women's & Gender Studies

Emma Goldman stands at an intersection of invisibility as both a female political theorist and anarchist. While she is often forgotten and overlooked, Goldman remains one of the most notable and prevalent female political theorists to this day. Her essays continue to serve as a powerful critique and potent rebuke of social, cultural and governmental institutions, making an outline for a world of true equality for all. Goldman's essays provide the theoretical roots, structures, and arguments for anarcha-feminism. There is a simple art to the clear and concise consistent argument Goldman makes, laying out the root of all societal ills at the feet of capitalistic, patriarchal, governmental institutions. This research focuses on eight of Goldman's essays essential to understanding feminist anarchy: Anarchism: What it Really Stands For; The Individual, State and Society ; Marriage and Love; The Social Importance of the Modern School; On the Traffic of Women; The Tragedy of Women's Emancipation; What I Believe; and Women's Suffrage.

308 *Invisible Herstories: Feminist Re-Interpretations: Finding God - Where has She been hidden?*

1.05 **Author(s):** Justine Jarvie

Mentor: Rosalyn Amenta, M.A.R., Ph. D.

Department: Women & Gender Studies

Long before the rising of the Western major world religions, Christianity, Islam and Judaism, there were religions that were woman-centered, and woman-valued. The rise of these Western religions happened at the cost of the Goddess religions, with the pronoun for God changing from She to He. This paper is an exploration of the long forgotten feminine Goddess religions, the values of feminine creation stories, and the fall of the Goddess religions and destruction of their sacred spaces. What would a Goddess Temple look like today in 2019? How have the major world religions devalued and restricted women's agency and value? This paper will attempt to address these questions: "Where is God? Where has She gone?" and will include research based in anthropology and women's studies. To quote Ariana Grande's song, "When all is said and done/ You'll believe God is a Woman."

309 *Video Technology to Enhance Clinical Self-Reflection*

1.01 **Author(s):** Rebecca Spadory, Julia Schiano, Melissa Rubin, Kayla Bleau

Mentor: Barbara Cook, Ed.D., CCC-SLP

Department: Communication Disorders

University programs that have an on-site clinic have the opportunity to provide innovative pedagogy to support the education of their graduate student clinicians. Using video recording and editing technologies, a web-based video archive of clinical sessions can be generated to promote students' learning and clinical skill development. A preliminary report of a program utilizing video clip technology within the field of speech-language pathology evidenced a promising approach to clinical education. Baharav (2008) reported on a university clinic program that involved the creation of video clips by graduate student clinicians for weekly academic presentations and the development of an off-line departmental video library. The use of video technology to support learner outcomes was discussed in relation to Bloom's taxonomy using education objectives (Bloom, 1956). The current project expands on how video technology can be effectively implemented to support the clinical education of graduate student clinicians. Video taken from clinic sessions can effectively support the graduate student clinicians' self-reflection and self-analysis. As clinicians view the captured video, they are provided the opportunity to rewind sections to identify their areas of strength, as well as areas for continued growth. Session to session, the clinicians are afforded the opportunity to observe self-growth. In this session, preliminary results that include the impact of this approach on four graduate student clinicians will be shared. The clinician skills checklist and sample pre- and post-video to reveal the impact of video for self-reflection on three first semester clinicians will be included in the presentation.

309 *Media Framing of Antifa: A Content Analysis of Top U.S. Newspapers*

1.02 **Author(s):** Zachary Fox

Mentor: Dr. Gregory Adams

Department: Sociology

There is inconsistency in the academic literature and news media in the United States over whether to call anti-fascists, or Antifa, a group, a social movement, or a protest tactic. The journal Society recently published a symposium entitled What is Antifa? in which only one article (Copsey 2018) addressed this question. Given the lack of academic writing on a prominent movement in American politics, this study sought to determine how Antifa is framed by mainstream print media in the United States. Using content analysis, this study identified and defined frames which media actors deployed in describing an ill-defined movement. The most prominent framing device was the use of violence. Social actors utilizing violence as a tactic against far-right demonstrators were framed as members of Antifa absent any self-identification. The use of violence superseded any mention of the underlying issues or motivations of so-called Antifa members or any further definition of Antifa as a movement with a long history of confronting fascist politics and organizing. Findings suggest that there are two Antifas, loosely affiliated social actors with a concurrent aesthetic and ethos, and the Antifa created by the media, violent counterdemonstrators against the far-right.

309 *On The Effectiveness of Different Reject Region Techniques in Serial Fusion Based Biometric Verification*

1.03 **Author(s):** Jedrik Chao

Mentor: Md Shafaeat Hossain, Ph.D.

Department: Computer Science

Funding: GSGA

As more people rely on smartphones to store sensitive information, the need for robust security measures is all the more pressing. Because traditional one shot authentication methods like PINs/passwords are vulnerable to various attacks, biometrics based authentication has generated considerable research interest. Using a series of successive biometric verifiers, known as serial fusion, increases robustness of the security system. In serial fusion, each verifier scores a biometric sample and either makes a decision (ie. declares it as genuine or imposter) or rejects the sample. Here, 'reject' means the verifier is not confident enough to give a decision on the biometric sample. Each verifier has a reject region, where samples that score within it are rejected. A challenge when using serial fusion based techniques is determining the reject region for each verifier. The goal of this research will be to explore and evaluate 3 methods for selecting verifier reject regions in serial fusion techniques for behavioral biometrics in smartphone security.

309 *Evaluation of Sales Prediction Techniques Using Big Data*

1.04 **Author(s):** Vitaliy Buyar

Mentor: Prof. Amal Abd El-Raouf

Department: Computer Science

Big data is a term used to describe information assets which feature high volume, variety and velocity, veracity and which requires specific technology and methods in order to convert the assets into value. It is a process that is used when traditional data mining and handling techniques cannot reveal the insights and meaning of a company's data. A problem companies might have with big data is how to use it to their benefit, as having the data itself will not do much. A company might want to know their future sales numbers in a particular state. Or they might want to see how their particular product "is doing" overall. One of the ways the company can use their "big data" is to apply prediction algorithms to their past sales numbers, to make future sales predictions. Then act accordingly to increase their business value. The thesis will focus in finding ways of helping companies to get the value out their own data. Different statistical and machine learning techniques will be used to predict future sales for a large-scale pharmaceutical company using their real sales data. The prediction techniques will be evaluated based on the mean squared error and mean absolute percent error. These criteria will allow to compare the prediction techniques in their accuracy.

7:00 – 8:00 p.m. | Session III | Oral Presentations

Adanti Student Center Rooms 301, 306, 308, 309

301 *The Experiences of LGBTQ Individuals at Gynecological Wellness Visits*

2.01 **Author(s):** Rose Richi

Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D., MPH

Department: Public Health

Historically, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) individuals have experienced discrimination, dismissal, violence, and ignorance from providers while utilizing healthcare services. Individuals in the community face unique barriers to accessing quality, equitable health services compared to their cisgender and heterosexual counterparts. Although there are some studies that document these experiences in general healthcare settings, little is known about how LGBTQ individuals experience gynecological wellness visits. An annual gynecological wellness visit is an important part of every person with a vagina's sexual, reproductive, physical, and general health. Gynecologists play a vital role in engaging patients in reproductive and sexual health decisions, encouraging and providing resources about healthy behaviors, and counseling about a variety of preventive health measures. Through a comprehensive search and review of current literature, there were no studies to date that explored the experiences of LGBTQ individuals at routine gynecological wellness visits. This study looked to fill this gap in research. The PI interviewed 19 members of the LGBTQ community and documented their unique experiences at gynecological wellness visits. This study also explored participants' recommendations for gynecologists on how to improve their overall experience at visits. Interviews were recorded and transcribed by the PI, and then independently analyzed for themes by the PI and a current MPH student, both of whom are part of the LGBTQ community.

301 *Impact of the Affordable Care Act on College and University Health Insurance Policies*

2.02 **Author(s):** Shama Banik, Dr. Peggy Gallup, Preston Myatt

Mentor: Victoria Zigmont, Ph.D., MPH

Department: Public Health

Funding: SCSU

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) went into effect in 2010 and required all individuals to have minimum essential health care coverage either provided by an employer or the insurance marketplace. The ACA also made it possible for students under 26 years old to be covered as a dependent either under their parents' insurance plan, or marketplace plan. Although these new provisions are beneficial for some students, the majority of students have relied on comprehensive insurance coverage provided by their university. Furthermore, students have had the added benefit of using their financial aid to pay for health insurance provided by their university. Using financial aid as a payment method for health insurance wouldn't be possible if students had to purchase health insurance from the marketplace. The purpose of this study was to determine how health insurance offered to students by colleges/universities was affected by the ACA provisions from 2008-2018. This study was a cross-sectional study of a nationally representative sample of undergraduate university students that collected data on college health insurance plans from 2008 – 2018. Postsecondary education institutions in the United States from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) database were included in this study. A stratified random sample of the institutions were selected for this study (n = 346). Analysis will be performed to examine changes in insurance offerings at universities over the course of the ACA implementation from 2008-2018. Further analyses will be presented examining student insurance enrollment, university type, and geographic region type, and geographic region.

301 *Predictors of Obesity Among Asian Indian Immigrants in the United States*

2.03 **Author(s):** Radhika Patel

Mentor: Christine Unson Ph.D.

Department: Public Health

Obesity among adults in United States is a public health epidemic that has been addressed by the Healthy People 2020 recent data. Healthy People 2020 target to reduce the rate of obesity among adults has been reversed with 13.8% increase between 2013-2016. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in the United States approximately 39.8% (93.9 million) of US adult population was obese between 2015-2016. An individual is considered to be obese when one's weight is higher than what is considered as a healthy weight for a given height. Indian immigrants are the second largest immigrant population in the United States. Though several publications have addressed needs of various immigrant population there is paucity in data on Indian Immigrants. This study identified predictors of obesity among this diverse population using Biopsychosocial Model. After extensive review of the literature, we compiled various factors that predicted Obesity among other immigrant population in the United States and used them to identify factors that were relevant to Indian immigrants. The use of Biopsychosocial model will help develop strategies and plans that can be used at community, state and federal level.

306 *Is It Unwise to Remember?*

2.01 **Author(s):** Cole Depuy

Mentor: Vivian Shipley

Department: English

As a graduating MFA candidate and former Sandy Hook Elementary student, I will present six poems on the Sandy Hook School Shooting and the residual effects it has had on myself, community and my three younger brothers who sat in lockdown at nearby Newtown Schools. In an effort to translate regression, silence, and especially fear, these poems investigate the uncomfortable reality of a massacre which occurred almost six years ago yet still shapes thousands of lives today. These poems prod at humanity's relationship with memory and challenges the convenient and overwhelming gravity to forget and move on. On the other hand, suffering breeds compassion, and art can be a product of healing, offering release for those who crave spiritual realignment and communal resonance.

306 *The Space Between Your Fingers*

2.02 **Author(s):** Natalie Schriefer

Mentor: Jeff Mock

Department: English

"The Space Between Your Fingers" is a poetry collection examining the the intersect between astronomy/astrophysics and the act of being human, a reminder that space is closer than we often remember. Portions of this collection were presented at the University of Rhode Island in April 2019.

306 *An Exploration of How Initiation Patterns of Opioid Addiction Affect Attitudes to Recovery*

2.03 **Author(s):** Sherry Van Lange

Mentor: Aukje Lamonica

Department: Public Health

Funding: GSGA, federal grant funding

Currently, the United States is experiencing a public health crisis with respect to the increasing number of deaths and overdoses associated with opioid use. Data used for this presentation are obtained from an ethnographic study on opioid users who reside in the suburbs surrounding three major U.S. cities, Boston, New Haven and Atlanta. Participants were interviewed extensively and were obtained using targeted, snowball and theoretical sampling methods. Opioid users in our sample either give environmental or medical reasons for the initiation of opioid use. In this presentation, I explore the different reasons for initiation and how these can affect attitudes toward recovery. A variety of factors such as barriers to treatments will be investigated. Identifying motivators and barriers to treatment and recovery will allow us to make recommendations that can influence policy development

306 *Predictors of Depression Using the Socioecological Model*

2.04 **Author(s):** Emmanuel Ihekweazu

Mentor: Christine Unson Ph.D.

Department: Public Health

Depression, according to the American Psychiatric Association is "a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act." Depression impacts individuals in different ways. Depression affects adolescents. Currently, adolescent makeup 13.2% of the population and have been projected to reach about 45 million by the year 2050. The socioecological model of health promotion describes five levels of influence on an individual – intrapersonal, interpersonal, community, institutional and policy factors. The purpose of this study is to examine the predictive factors related to depression among adolescents in the United States using the Socioecological Model. The factors that were included in this study are Illicit drugs, smoking, education, parental support, family income, caregiver availability, the area of residence, health insurance and school policy on drugs. The 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health was used to examine these variables among adolescents aged 12 to 17 years in the United States. The participants were equally distributed by gender. Most of the participants were non-Hispanic whites. Majority of the participants were between the 6th and 12th grade. There were significantly different depression scores with smoking, oxycontin use, parental support, caregiver, health insurance, school policy, family income, the area of residence and education. Smoking, oxycontin misuse and education were significant in predicting adolescent depression. Smoking and oxycontin misuse were the strongest predictors of depression. In conclusion, intrapersonal factors such as education and risky behaviors were the strongest predictors of adolescent depression in this population.

308 *A Determination of M dwarf Multiplicity Rates Using High-Resolution Imaging*

2.01 **Author(s):** Frederick Hahne

Mentor: Elliott Horch

Department: Physics

Funding: GRF

The stellar multiplicity rate is defined as the percentage of stars with at least one stellar companion. There is a high interest in determining the multiplicity rate of M dwarf stars. They are the most numerous stars, so the rate at which they orbit one another gives important information about star formation. Additionally, it is easier to detect Earth-sized exoplanets orbiting M-dwarfs. Knowing if an M-dwarf exoplanet host is single or double is important in terms of understanding the radius of the exoplanet and if the light from the second star is not properly accounted for in the radius calculation, it will cause an error in the derived radius of the planet. An effort to determine the fundamental stellar parameters and stellar multiplicity rates of M dwarf stars are presented, mainly using the Differential Speckle Survey Instrument(DSSI) at Lowell Observatory's Discovery Channel Telescope(DCT). DSSI observes speckle patterns simultaneously at two separate wavelengths, allowing color measurements of the components of a binary system to be made in a single observation, and the data for this project are composed of observations which span from 2016 to 2018. In addition, the DCT's speckle analysis process has been supplemented with observations using Adaptive Optics(AO) at Palomar Observatory. This comparison helps us confirm the existence of a companion star or stars, and ensure highly accurate stellar parameters such as the magnitudes, colors and physical separations of each. The observed multiplicity rate is found to be $\sim 10\%$ for companions in the separation range our observations cover.

308 *Bloating in Wood Frogs in Roadside Environments: A Possible Evolutionary Maladaptation Caused by the Runoff of Road De-Icing Salt*

2.02 **Author(s):** Lauren Frymus

Mentor: Steven Brady

Department: Biology

Funding: GSGA

Road salt is widely applied to deice impervious surfaces during winter precipitation events. While effective, this practice has resulted in widespread salinization of freshwater habitats, posing diverse consequences on the many wild populations living in road-adjacent habitats. Roadside ponds and streams can accumulate salt concentrations much higher than their woodland equivalents, resulting in strong selection pressures that influence ecological and evolutionary dynamics. Wood frogs (*Rana sylvatica*) have been the focus of many recent studies considering these joint impacts. Results indicate that road-proximity causes maladaptation. Such effects include lower survival, delayed developmental rates, and increased malformations. Preliminary observations indicate that wood frogs from roadside compared to woodland populations also show higher incidence of edema following emergence from hibernation. Here, I report on the prevalence of edema, its physiological characteristics, its potential impact on locomotor performance.

308 *Development of Pulsed-Laser Technique for Thin Film Deposition*

2.03 **Author(s):** David Uhl

Mentor: Todd Schwendemann Ph.D.

Department: Physics

Funding: CSCU Center for Nanotechnology

Over the past few decades, thin films have emerged as an attractive class of materials due to the vastness of their applications. Thin films, materials with thicknesses ranging from a fraction of a nanometer to a few microns, are commonly used in optics, chemistry, mechanics, magnetism—and most notably, microelectronics. For this reason, several methods for depositing thin films of controlled thicknesses have been thoroughly explored in recent years. At the CSCU Center for Nanotechnology at SCSU, current methods involve depositing a thin film through thermal physical vapor deposition (TPVD). Despite the success of our TPVD method for depositing thin films with sub-monolayer control, our method is limited to depositing single elements, such as Fe or W. To overcome this limitation, the proposed work seeks to implement a pulsed-laser deposition (PLD) system through restoration of a solid-state, niobium-doped yttrium aluminum garnet (Nd:YAG), Q-switched laser from 1989. Development of a pulsed-laser deposition method would greatly widen the scope of materials available for deposition, such as complex superconducting materials or piezoelectric materials; therefore, a PLD system would provide an entirely new window for fabricating complex thin films of controlled thicknesses.

308 *Are Cells Grown In The Hippocampus Post-Neurogenesis More Likely To Survive In Response To Increased Learning Demands?*

2.04 **Author(s):** Neil Mascola, Rachel Jeffrey, Kelly Bordner

Mentor: Kelly Bordner, Ph.D.

Department: Psychology

Funding: GSGA

New progenitor cells are generated in the dentate gyrus of the hippocampus throughout life in a process known as adult neurogenesis. Here, we explore how task complexity mediates survival of these newborn brain cells after learning. Based on prior research, we hypothesized that tasks with greater cognitive demand would lead to greater survival of newborn cells, increasing the likelihood that they will differentiate into functional neurons. Sprague-Dawley rats were tested using the Morris water-maze (MWM) after being assigned to one of four groups: Standard MWM procedure (fixed platform location), a spatial working memory version of the MWM (platform location varies), or serve as time-yoked controls. Rats were injected with a marker for neurogenesis (BrdU) and NeuN, which labels those new cells that differentiated into mature neurons. This research attempts to provide further evidence for progenitor cell survival and neuronal differentiation relative to the demands of a cognitive learning task.

309 *The Crusades: an Arab perspective*

2.01 **Author(s):** Sayma Chakchouk

Mentor: Dr Nichole Gleisner

Department: World Languages

Funding: No funding was used to carry out this project

My project will focus on the Crusades from a different angle. This period of time is widely known from the Western perspective. For example, as I was reading *The Song of Roland*, I noticed a number of stereotypes at that time concerning the enemies, the Arabs. They were portrayed as pagans, barbarians and ignorant. I will attempt to examine how the same events were viewed from the perspective of the Muslims and Arabs, and if they had the same prejudices about the Crusaders, how they described them and how they reacted to the Crusades.

309 *L'Agnese va a morire: a translation*

2.02 Author(s): Delanie Cook

Mentor: Pina Palma

Department: World Language: Italian

L'Agnese va a morire is a novel written by Renata Vigano' in 1949. It has been translated in forty languages apart from English; while also enabling Vigano' to win il Premio Viareggio. The story follows a normal middle-aged woman named Agnese who comes to fight along side the partisans after the death of her husband eight months before the Italian liberation. Agnese's story represents that of many unassuming women who joined the Italian resistance movement in order to cast out the fascist and Nazi regime that occupied Italy during World War Two. Her story is important, and one that is not often studied or heard. My Graduate Thesis is a special project to translate Vigano's work into English so that this story can be shared on a broader scale. Over the past year I have been working on capturing the essence and heart of the story in the English language, searching to maintain the integrity of Vigano's original work. Agnese's experience during the war is important and not the least insignificant. Her story is one that deserves to be shared to all generations to never forget why that war was fought. In Vigano's own words "Per non dimenticare che cosa e' stata la Resistenza." (A novel to never forget what the Resistance was.) I will be presenting a particular passage that highlights the reason why I am pursuing this endeavor.

309 *Freedom in Bondage: Exploring the Subjectivity of Slaves in Southeast Asian*

2.03 Author(s): Michael Brown

Mentor: Professor C. Michele Thompson

Department: History

In this paper I argue that expanding our notion of freedom can help us better imagine the subjective condition of slaves and bondspersons in various Southeast Asia societies. Instead of thinking of freedom as freedom from restraints, we should imagine it as a freedom to reveal and fulfill possibilities for one's own existence. I survey the available literature on Southeast Asian bondage and examine several case studies that offer glimpses into the bondsperson's attitudes and responses to the various conditions of slavery. The systems of bondage in Southeast Asia tend to be quite varied and complex and one ought not to reduce them to any one rule. What does appear constant is the drive for meaningful engagement with one's world. While this work contributes to the broad historical project of giving a voice to the voiceless, it is also important for understanding how best to address the problems of modern-day slavery, both human trafficking and exploited labor.

7:00 – 7:25 p.m. | Session IIIA | Roundtable Presentations

Adanti Student Center Rooms 303, 305

303 *An Analysis of Sexual Abuse and Disclosure Through the Theoretical Framework of Feminist Theories*

3.01 Author(s): Judy Cullen

Mentor: Dana A. Schneider, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.

Department: Social Work

The goal of the analytical thesis is to review childhood sexual abuse (CSA) and the disclosure of childhood sexual abuse (DCSA) through the lens of feminist theories, in order to accurately understand the disclosure process and address what factors support an effective disclosure. CSA is an interpersonal trauma, and the implications of the disclosure experience can be far-reaching in the lives of the survivor, particularly in their subsequent relationships. Understanding theoretical perspectives as applied to DCSA can offer a broader, more robust perspective through which to view and understand survivors of CSA. A brief history and overview of feminist and relational-cultural theories will be provided for the frame of reference used in the formation of the thesis. Existing literature and empirical studies on the DCSA will be reviewed to understand the significance of disclosure experiences in survivors' lives, including what responses to disclosure were beneficial and which were negative. Application of feminist and relational-cultural theories around interpretation of disclosure experiences and how they impact survivors will be examined and interpreted. The analysis will conclude with a review to identify practical implications for clinical and interpersonal transactions as they apply to social work. Included is an identified need to inform parents, who are often the recipients of the first, informal disclosure. Educating them on survivor needs, the importance of their reaction and handling of the disclosure may better support them in supporting the survivor.

303 *A Support Group Protocol for Parents and Caregivers of Newly-Diagnosed Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder*

3.02 Author(s): Ariella Laskin

Mentor: Dr. William Rowe

Department: Social Work

In 2016, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), estimated that 1 in 58 children in the United States had been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network, 2016), a developmental condition that presents with a wide variety of presentations and no definitive cure. Moreover, the number of diagnoses in 2016 more than doubled that of estimates in 2002 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016), showing that ASD diagnoses in the U.S. are rising, and at an alarming rate. Parents and caregivers of children with ASD may face enormous challenges in obtaining care for their children, paying medical expenses, and finding support from other parents and caregivers in similar situations. Support groups have been shown to benefit parents and caregivers of children with ASD, and this special project creates a protocol for a support group for parents and caregivers of children between the ages of 12 and 24 months who have been diagnosed with ASD in the past six months. Topics covered in the ten-session program include: coping with grief and depression for parents and caregivers, how to access therapeutic and financial services, respite care and seeking out support from other sources, and navigating the educational process to receive appropriate services. Implications for this special project can be imagined on both a micro and macro level, with particular significance for those parents, caregivers, and medical and social services practitioners who will need to provide services for this growing population.

303 *The Unique Experiences of Aging Parents of Adult Children with Intellectual Disabilities*

3.03 **Author(s):** Michelle Guedes

Mentor: Dana A. Schneider, Ph.D., LCSW

Department: Social Work

This exploratory qualitative thesis aims to explore the unique experience of aging parents of adults with intellectual disabilities, the resources available to them, and their coping strategies. The main hypothesis is: The experiences of caregivers of adult children with intellectual disabilities have needs that are different from the experiences of caregivers who are not caring for adult children with disabilities. In order to explore this hypothesis, five main, open-ended questions will be asked: What is unique about your role as a caregiver? What are your strengths as a caregiver? What are your needs as a caregiver? Does aging play into your role as a caregiver? If so, how? What do you want others to know about your role as a caregiver? These questions are designed to gauge the needs of these caregivers, if there are any, and what resources they pursue to help them, as well as their perceptions of their strengths and well-being. Interviews were conducted with six parents of adults with intellectual disabilities. A semi-structured, confidential interview was conducted by the researcher and used to explore the experiences of participants that were selected through a snowball sampling process. Interviews were then coded for salient themes. Keywords: Adults, Aging, Parents, Caregivers, Intellectual Disabilities

303 *Writing for Depression and Anxiety: LGBTQIA+ Youth*

3.04 **Author(s):** Megan Wood

Mentor: Dana A. Schneider, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.

Department: Social Work

The contrast between adolescents in the LGBTQIA+ community and their heterosexual, cisgender counterparts when it comes to mental health problems is stark. LGBTQIA+ adolescents experience more depression and anxiety symptoms than their peers (LGBTQ, 2018). This could be in part due to a factor called social stress. When individuals are at high school age, there is often pressure to fit into what is considered the "norm." Not fitting into the norm can cause social stress that can lead to symptoms of depression and anxiety. The goal of this project was to explore the benefits of using writing as a therapeutic tool with youth in the LGBTQIA+ community. The purpose of this graduate capstone thesis was to conduct a systematic search of the existing literature to identify, summarize, and synthesize research on writing in therapy for LGBTQIA+ youth. This project explored the existing literature to answer the questions of 1) Is writing an effective method for improving the symptoms of depression and anxiety among LGBTQIA+ youth and, 2) How might writing as a therapeutic tool promote the well-being of LGBTQIA+ youth. The findings indicated the different forms of writing that encourage in depth analysis of feelings and emotions reduce the symptoms that negatively impact the well-being of LGBTQIA+ individuals. Given that LGBTQIA+ individuals may feel silenced due to their sexual and/or gender identity, writing may be a particularly effective tool for social workers to help mitigate symptoms of anxiety and depression in this population.

303 *Auricular Acupuncture and Substance Abuse Treatment: Using Needles for Good*

3.05 **Author(s):** Matthew Staniewicz

Mentor: Kyle O'Brien, Ph.D., DHSc, MSOT, LCSW, OTR/L

Department: Social work

The Opioid Epidemic is a pervasive public health crisis effecting the health and well-being of the nation's citizens. The limitations of conventional therapies and the need for cost effective treatments have resulted in efforts to explore complimentary therapies in the treatment of substance abuse. The National Acupuncture Detoxification Association (NADA) protocol is a somatic biopsychosocial intervention using 1 to 5 ear acupuncture points with potential to enhance treatment outcomes in substance abuse programs. The purpose of this study was to conduct a systematic review of relevant literature, to examine the implementation of the NADA protocol as a potential complimentary therapy for managing withdrawal symptoms, and improving treatment retention. Five studies met inclusion criteria for this review and findings were variable. Some studies showed promising results for decreased psychological symptoms, sleep disturbances, and patient satisfaction, while others that reported mixed results related to withdrawal symptoms, treatment retention, and healthcare utilization. This study serves to illustrate that there is a need to refine research practices used to examine NADA Protocol as an adjunctive treatment in substance abuse treatment. Additionally, the nonverbal and passive nature of this intervention, which offers no delay in the receipt of potential treatment benefits, should be considered by mental health providers. The effectiveness of NADA Protocol requires further extensive investigation to determine the benefits of this intervention."

305 *Learning Walks to Support Student Achievement and Teacher Self-Efficacy*

3.01 **Author(s):** Jeff Solan

Mentor: Dr. Olcay Yavuz

Department: Educational Leadership

Teaching is most often practiced in isolation with limited opportunities to watch others practicing the craft. This study engages teachers in observation and constructive conversations around teaching practice. Volunteers who are observed will also receive structured feedback about their practices. All of this work focuses on the district's goal of supporting students to become complex thinkers. The Smarter Balanced Assessment growth scores will be used to identify participants and to assess student growth. Teacher self-efficacy will be measured through pre and post surveys for teacher participants. Ultimately, the goal is to assess the impact that the learning walks have on student achievement and a teacher's comfort in being able to teach the critical life skills which comprise complex thinking for their students.

305 *Expanded Learning Time Effects on Academic Learning Time (ALT) and the Opportunity to Teach (OTT) In Elementary School Settings*

3.02 **Author(s):** Dawn Martorelli

Mentor: Sousan Arafah, Ph.D.

Department: Educational Leadership

The expanded learning time initiative (ELT) in K-12 schools was launched to combat a decline in student academic performance within the United States. This qualitative dissertation research explores the effects of ELT on academic learning time (ALT) and the opportunity to teach (OTT) in one urban school district in Connecticut. To date the study has gathered data regarding teachers' perspectives and experiences of their ability to successfully deliver academic learning within an ELT initiative within two schools to determine the factors that hinder and enhance ALT. It was anticipated that factors that hinder ALT & OTT will overshadow those that enhance ALT & OTT; however, findings are more variable. Information from this study could be used as a resource for educators who work in ELT schools, allowing them to anticipate and develop solutions so that they can have more opportunities to teach. It should also help policymakers better understand what is and is not working in ELT classroom settings so that policies related to classroom and school day instructional time are data-driven and context appropriate.

305 *A Case Study of a Connecticut High school's Implementation and Efficacy of a Teacher-Driven Professional Learning Model*

3.03 Author(s): Justin Lowe

Mentor: Sousan Arafeh, Ph.D.

Department: Educational Leadership

Professional development (PD) is an essential part of teacher growth and development. Due to the research linking teacher-driven models of professional learning to improved self-efficacy and student achievement, there is consistent and increasing interest in ensuring that teachers have access to engaging and impactful professional development. Using a case-based exploratory mixed-methods design, this study will investigate what occurs when traditional structures of PD are supplanted with a new teacher-driven models of staff development. Specifically, this research will examine the implementation and efficacy of a teacher-driven learning model of professional development at one Connecticut high school. The purpose of this case study is to find research on teacher-driven professional development, cultivate a school-based model of PD that is developed and led by teachers, and to evaluate the impact of this model on teacher self-efficacy and satisfaction with PD. Through the vehicle of a teacher-driven model of professional development, and exploration of its factors and efficacy, this case study hopes to provide a research basis for enhancing PD programming for teacher learning and professional growth.

305 *Analyzing the Learning Disability Identification Process Throughout Connecticut Districts*

3.04 Author(s): Meghan Pogonelski

Mentor: Sousan Arafeh, Ph.D.

Department: EDL

There has been a steady decline in the national incidence of Learning Disabilities since the reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 (Maki, Floyd, and Roberson, 2015). However, according to Connecticut's trend data, students identified with Specific Learning Disabilities have increased despite revamping the identification process in 2010 (EdSight, 2016; CSDE, 2010). Connecticut is widely impacted by the increased number of students identified with a Specific Learning Disability. The greatest implication increased identification has is on statewide and individual district educational budgets. There has been a 3.16% increase in district special education spending from the 2010-2011 school year to the 2014-2015 school year (EdSight, 2017). With legislation posing ways to create equitable funding, small districts that have had large increases of students with Specific Learning Disabilities will be greatly affected by decreased state aid. The purpose of this qualitative research is to establish whether or not districts throughout the state of Connecticut are consistent in their implementation of the Guidelines for Identifying Children with Learning Disabilities (CSDE, 2010).

7:30 – 7:55 p.m. | Session IIIB | Roundtable Presentations

Adanti Student Center Rooms 303, 305

303 *What resources support reentry into the community from the perspective of parole officers?*

4.01 Author(s): Jessica Halmeck

Mentor: Kyle O'Brien, Ph.D., DHSc, MSOT, LCSW, OTR/L

Department: Social Work

The rate of incarceration within the United States has increased significantly over the past 40 years. Due to recent efforts made in the last decade, more individuals are being released into the community under supervision by the criminal justice system such as on parole. Unfortunately, the rate of recidivism post release is extremely high namely due to risk factors such as substance use, mental health, and lack of employment. Four Connecticut parole officers were interviewed in order to understand what resources have been most helpful in addressing these risk factors. Additionally, this study aimed to understand the perspectives of CT parole officers regarding barriers faced by people on parole that need to be addressed in order to better support successful community reentry. Findings from this study suggest that difficulties of reentry are not limited to one barrier but multiple barriers that simultaneously affect the individual. Compounded, multiple barriers make for an even more difficult time reintegrating into the community. Participants described that while services are available, they are limited and difficult to access. All participants reported substance use relapse to be a common reason for reoccurring offenses. In addition, all participants suggested that more collaboration is needed between social service agencies and law enforcement. Future research could explore the relationship between social services and parole officers so that steps may be taken to address these barriers and promote collaborative relationships.

303 *Parental Incarceration and the Relationship to Their Youth's Substance Abuse: Systematic Review*

4.02 Author(s): Carly Jacques

Mentor: Mary Acri, Ph.D.

Department: Social Work

As the incarceration population grows, the number of youths impacted by the incarceration of a parent is also rising. Parental incarceration is associated with multiple psychological, social-environmental, and economic adversities among youth including problematic behaviors such as engagement in substance-use. The purpose of this systematic review was to examine the relationship between parental incarceration and youth substance abuse. 192 records were reviewed, and 4 were included in the study. Results found that youth impacted by parental incarceration have an increased rate of engaging in substance use. In fact, youth with a current parent incarcerated are at a higher risk for meeting DSM criteria for substance use disorders and dependency compared to youth with previously incarcerated parents. Implications for practice and policy include creating treatment options that are geared toward these youth and their complex experiences. Additionally, after synthesizing the collected data, a special project was created and disseminated to a local domestic violence agency. The special project was a comprehensive, informational pamphlet that educates caregivers about the impact of parental incarceration and the risks, symptoms and resources for youths struggling with substance use disorders and their caregivers.

303 *Consent Culture: Changing Rape Culture Through Micro-Consents*

4.03 Author(s): Jen Wilson (Hawkins)

Mentor: Yi-Chun Tricia Lin

Department: Women's & Gender Studies

This workshop will discuss and develop a culture of consent specifically within collaborative communities. We will look at the everyday actions that will cultivate mindful forms of consent, beyond sexual consent, within our communities. We will learn simultaneously to address the needs of those we serve and to set an example of how a consent culture might look. Participants will be invited to talk through daily scenarios regarding consent and look critically at their social media habits in order to equip themselves with a variety of ways to foster a consent culture in their areas of work and activism.

303 *Using Scripture as Affirmations to Promote Positive Religious Coping, Secure Attachment, and Posttraumatic Growth in Christian Clients in Psychotherapy*

Author(s): Diane Smith

Mentor: Dana A. Schneider, Ph.D., LCSW

Department: Social Work

The present study explores the possibility of mental health clinicians using affirmations drawn from biblical scripture to promote positive religious coping and posttraumatic growth in Christian clients. There is much literature in recent years that shows positive relationships among secure attachment, positive religious coping, and posttraumatic growth. There is also substantial research on how mental health professionals can ethically and sensitively incorporate religion and spirituality into psychotherapy with religious clients. However, there is little literature on how clinicians can help transform a client's negative religious coping to positive religious coping. Object relations theory posits the corrective emotional experience that occurs in therapy may help some individuals with insecure attachments develop secure attachments. Furthermore, the use of mantras and affirmations has been shown to decrease posttraumatic stress symptoms in various client populations. I theorize that in the holding environment of therapy, the clinician can help guide a Christian client with negative religious coping and/or insecure attachment to God to develop positive religious coping and secure attachment to God. Using scriptures as affirmations may facilitate this process.

303 *Understanding Transition Among Transgender Women of Color: A Digital Storytelling*

4.05 **Author(s):** Nadine Ruff

Mentor: Dana A. Schneider, Ph.D., LCSW

Department: Social Work

People who identify as transgender may choose to go through a series of medical procedures to align their physical bodies with their gender identity. These procedures may be legal or illegal, conducted by licensed medical providers or unlicensed community practitioners, and can result in self-affirmation or injury and even death. The transition is the word that is used to describe this process by which an individual begins to present and live as a member of a gender that is different from the one they were assigned at birth. Transition includes any physical, mental, or emotional change that a person makes to align their physical and emotional selves with their gender identity. Research has found that negative experiences with medical professionals, limited financial resources, and a lack of access to transition-related services and providers can all create barriers to a healthy transition. While these logistical issues have been described, there is limited research on individuals' emotional experiences including coping skills and the impact of interpersonal relationship and external supports on the transition process. The aim of the special project is to use Digital Storytelling (DST) to generate new knowledge and understanding about psychosocial aspects of the transition experiences of transgender women of color. Digital Storytelling is a community-based participatory project that allows vulnerable communities to create and tell their own stories using photos, artwork, music, and narratives. The final video produced through this special project will be shared with social workers and other interested parties in order to offer a new way of seeing, hearing, and understanding the transgender community that can inform practice.

305 *Perceptions of Second and Third Year MSW Students at Southern Connecticut State University on the Role of Social Justice in Their Education and Future Professional Social Work Careers*

4.01 **Author(s):** Timothy Rowe

Mentor: Kyle O'Brien, Ph.D., DHSc, MSOT, LCSW, OTR/L

Department: Social Work

Despite social justice being considered a main pillar of the social work profession, there does not appear to be a consensus on best practices for instilling this value among social work students in the classroom setting and its use for professional practice in the field. This research sought to understand the attitudes and perspectives of MSW students at Southern Connecticut State University regarding how social justice was taught in the program and how they intend to use it in their future careers. In this study four students participated in qualitative interviews. Students identified social justice as being addressed most consistently in macro-focused courses but did not perceive it as being discussed in clinical practice courses. They also identified possibly policy/political advocacy as way they would engage in social justice in their future careers but were unsure how they might incorporate it into their future clinical practice. This suggest that some students do not feel that they are learning how to incorporate social justice into their clinical practice. Suggestions are made for how MSW programs can best incorporate social justice into their curriculum, especially in clinical practice classes.

305 *Interpersonal Relationships of Masters-Level Social Work Students*

4.02 **Author(s):** Taylor Collins

Mentor: Kyle O'Brien, Ph.D., DHSc, MSOT, LCSW, OTR/L

Department: Social Work

This study sought to describe the qualities of interpersonal relationships for graduate social work students and examine whether social work students feel that their social work education and field experiences have impacted their personal relationships. This study included six participants and examined variables of control mutuality, trust, liking or affinity, commitment, perspective-taking, and conflict management style in social work students' private interpersonal relationships. This study used a combination of qualitative interview questions along with measures such as the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) and the Management-of-Differences Exercise (MODE). Results showed various positive qualities are present in interpersonal relationships of social work students, particularly perspective-taking in females. Conflict management styles of social work students were mixed, but avoiding and accommodating were the most identified conflict management styles, while competition was the least. Lastly, participants described their experiences in the program as impacting their interpersonal relationships in various ways both positively and negatively. Implications of the research provide evidence that personal relationship qualities may be impacted by engagement in graduate social work programs, and future research should consider the potential for a bidirectional relationship by examining whether individual relational styles and personal relationship qualities influence practice longevity and effectiveness.

305 *Leading a response to stress: Exploring the impact of a university mindfulness program on students' well-being*

4.03 **Author(s):** Suzanne DeLuca

Mentor: Elizabeth Keenan, Ph.D., LCSW

Department: Social Work

The purpose of this concurrent embedded mixed methods study was to examine the leadership conditions supporting a university mindfulness program and to explore the impact of the program on students' well-being. Results indicated the leadership conditions supporting the program aligned with several aspects of Kuk and Banning's Ecological Leadership model however, emergent codes were necessary to capture the conditions that created the need for the program. The Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale was administered pre/post intervention and paired sample t-tests results indicated there was a significant increase in participants' overall well-being, in addition, the domains of self-acceptance, environmental mastery and positive relationships showed significant increases. A short pre/post survey on stressors revealed emotional stressors were significantly reduced. This study appeared to be the first that utilized a concurrent embedded mixed methods design to explore the organizational leadership conditions for and impact of a mindfulness based intervention on student well-being.

305 *Increasing HIV Prevention Strategies in College-Aged Men who Have Sex with Men*

4.04 **Author(s):** Desiree Rondeau

Mentor: Jean M. Breny, PhD, MPH

Department: Public Health

Funding: GSGA

In the United States (US), young men who have sex with men (YMSM) increasingly represent the highest risk group for acquiring HIV. Contributing to this trend among college-aged YMSM is low engagement in cognitive, affective and psychomotor health protective behaviours. This qualitative study used in-depth interviews with twelve YMSM on a commuter-college campus in the northeast of the US to assess the HIV-related knowledge, perceptions and behaviours which contribute to these patterns, and to explore YMSM's thoughts and recommendations for increasing protective behaviours via-à-vis HIV acquisition. Thematic analysis of interview transcripts reveals that fear of sexual orientation- and serostatus-stigma are significant disincentives to knowing one's own HIV status, discussing serostatus with sexual partners, and using Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis. Culturally-relevant sexual education opportunities, culturally-competent clinical care, assurances of medical privacy, and targeted messaging through MSM-oriented dating apps were all identified as appropriate mechanisms for addressing HIV risk factors among these YMSM.

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