



Relationship Science Conference Held at CSU

Story by Anne Manning

Friendship. Romance. Sex. Parenting. Interpersonal conflict.

How people relate to and connect with each other is a hallmark of the human experience. To share the latest discoveries and inquiries into the science of human relationships, preeminent academics from six continents and more than 50 countries converged this summer at Colorado State University. The biennial [International Association for Relationship Research](#) conference took place July 12-16 at CSU in Fort Collins. This year, it was organized by a steering committee that included several Colorado State faculty.

"CSU is pleased and proud to be presenting this year's IARR conference, which will welcome experts on topics ranging from family studies to psychology to communication," said Psychology Associate Professor Jennifer Harman, co-chair of the conference steering committee. "We as scientists support the application of our studies and findings in helping society advance the ability to maintain healthy, stable relationships with each other."

This year's keynote speakers included:

• Tamara Afifi, professor in the Department of Communication at the University of California-Santa Barbara. Afifi's research includes how people communicate when they are stressed, and the impact of those communication patterns on personal and relational health.

• Kira Birditt, research associate professor in the Life Course Development Program of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. She researches interpersonal problems and how positive and negative aspects of relationships are associated with physical and psychological well-being.

• Guy Bodenmann, professor of clinical psychology at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. His research is in stress and coping in couples, relationship evolution, and impact of relationship functioning on mental disorder of partners and children.

• Jeffrey Simpson, professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Minnesota. He studies attachment processes; human mating and decision-making; empathic accuracy; social influence in romantic relationships; social development and health outcomes; and social development in parental investments.

Among the research topics invited speakers addressed: stress, conflict, and support; highs and lows of romantic relationships; sexual desire and attraction; daily social interactions; parenting styles and goals, and "How well do we know our partner?"

For more information about the conference, visit [Source](#) and the [conference website](#).



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



This year the College of Natural Sciences celebrates its 50th anniversary. All departments of the college were asked to reflect upon their history as part of the celebration, and I thought a few interesting tidbits would be nice to share in the

newsletter. The first psychology course at CSU was taught in 1881 by the University's first President, E.E. Edwards. There was no Department of Psychology for a long time at CSU, with courses being taught by the Department of English and History, and then by the Department of Rural and Industrial Education in the early 20th century. Until 1918, there was only a single course in psychology offered CSU, then known as the State Agricultural College, but by 1918 three new courses were added, including Experimental Psychology. An undergraduate major in psychology would not appear until 1948, the year following the department's formal creation. In 1947, a new Department of Psychology and Education was created, which eventually separated into a Department of Psychology and a School of Education in 1962. Ph.D. programs started in 1963, and we

granted our first doctoral degree in 1966 (Joel Gold, Ph.D., advisor: John Modrick, Ph.D.). Upon the split of the College of Arts and Sciences into separate Colleges of Liberal Arts and Natural Sciences, psychology faculty voted to join the college in 1967 by a narrow margin of 1 vote! Counseling Psychology received its first APA accreditation in 1972. Emeritus Professor Richard Suinn, a former Department Chair, was the first sports psychologist for the U.S. Olympic Team. The department has even produced two APA Presidents (Professor Suinn and former graduate student Barry Anton). For those interested in more history of the department, Professor Emeritus and former Department Chair Wayne Viney published an article on the history of psychology at CSU in 1988 (Viney & Panches, 1988). My summary here relies heavily on that article, as well as notes from Professor Viney's research that he was kind enough to share with me earlier this year over coffee. Please do call 970-491-5213 or send us an email at don.rojas@colostate.edu with your own recollections from the past 30 years since the publication of his article so that we can update our department history. Given 70 years with an undergraduate major and 55 years granting doctoral degrees, there should be plenty of alumni updates. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DRD".

Don Rojas, Ph.D.

Professor and Chair

DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

College of Natural Sciences Celebrates 50 Years



This academic year marks the 50th anniversary of the creation of the [College of Natural Sciences](#) at Colorado State University. Today, the college is [home to](#) more than 5,000 undergraduate and graduate students, more than 180 tenure-track faculty members, eight departments, and 13 majors. And its researchers bring in some \$35 million in research funding each year. All of this adds up to countless life- and world-changing discoveries. "We are proud of our college's and disciplines' long history of excellence at CSU," said [Jan Nerger](#), the fourth dean of the college, who has served in the role since 2009. "This past inspires us to even more greatness in the future." Read more on [Source](#).



Professor Silvia Canetto Featured by American Psychological Association

The research of Professor [Silvia Sara Canetto](#) was featured in a recent edition of the [American Psychological Association's Monitor on Psychology](#). The article "The Cultural Distinctions in Whether, When and How People Engage in Suicidal Behavior" focused on the cultural specificity of suicidal behavior. Professor Canetto was also the recipient of the 2018 [Denmark Reuder Award](#), an American Psychological Association [Division of International Psychology's](#) award that recognizes outstanding international contributions to the psychology of women and gender. Professor Canetto received the award at the recent 2018 APA convention in San Francisco. Read more on [Source](#) and the Denmark Reuder Award [website](#).

Bridges to Baccalaureate Helps Psychology Student Pursue Dream of Becoming a Counselor Story by Ben Harms



Thanks to a program known as [Bridges to Baccalaureate](#), Chis Goheen is pursuing his dream career at CSU. Goheen planned to go to college after high school. But when his dad traveled to Afghanistan on an extended work trip as a government contractor, Goheen stayed at home to help run his family's 80-acre farm near Greeley. For more than four years, he grew corn, applied pesticides when needed and maintained an irrigation sprinkler system. But he knew that farming wasn't for him.

When his dad came home with emotional problems from working in a dangerous environment for so long, Goheen watched his dad's difficulty in readjusting to life at home. Wishing he could help, Goheen had a realization – he felt a calling to help people with psychological trauma. So when his parents took over the farm again, Goheen moved to Fort Collins

Outstanding Grad: Chase Herring Story by Anna Nixon

Chase Herring knows firsthand that a battlefield can take many forms.

Herring enlisted in the United States Army shortly after graduation from Jenks High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 2004. After two deployments to Afghanistan and two deployments to Iraq, Herring enrolled in Front Range Community College in pursuit of a degree in business administration. While he was no longer at war physically, his mental state told a different story.

Herring pressed pause on his academic career and moved home to Tulsa where he worked as a contractor for the Department of Defense. He began rebuilding through weekly visits with a counselor at the Department of Veterans Affairs and resumed his education at Tulsa Community College, but the pull of the Rockies never ceased. With his spirits and grades lifted, he came to Colorado State University as a student of [psychology](#) in the [College of Natural Sciences](#).

Herring's academics thrived but left him drained. Thinking his battle with mental health had been won in Oklahoma, Herring turned to alcohol to cope. His downward spiral came to an end in the office of his Psychology 100 instructor [Karla Gingerich](#), where he reached out for help once more. Together, they enrolled him in CSU's intensive rehabilitation program for

and enrolled at Front Range Community College (FRCC) to pursue a career in counseling psychology.

However, he knew that to get a job as a counselor, he would need a bachelor's and then a master's degree in psychology – which would require transferring to a four-year university. That's where the Bridges to Baccalaureate program came in. B2B is a [National Institutes of Health](#)-funded collaboration between Colorado State University and Front Range Community College. The program [helps FRCC students like Goheen transfer to CSU](#) for a bachelor's degree in the [College of Natural Sciences](#).

Thanks to B2B, Goheen was able to transfer all of his community college credits to CSU – a process that can be difficult at other schools. This allowed him to get into more advanced psychology classes earlier. And thanks to the help of Heather Matthews, CSU's B2B program coordinator and transfer advisor, Goheen found his current part-time job at the front desk of the [Psychological Services Center](#).

Goheen is now in his fourth semester at CSU and is planning to go to grad school for counseling psychology after he graduates in spring 2019. After that, he hopes to work as a counselor to help college-aged people deal with psychological trauma.

Read more on [Source](#).



students facing drug or alcohol challenges, [Back on TRAC](#).

During these difficult times, Herring remained an engaged and devoted student. After graduating in May of 2018, Herring continues his passion for helping others at the University of Denver, where he is pursuing a master's in international disaster psychology.

"I know that I will still be faced with challenges ahead, but with the right intrinsic and extrinsic tools, I can not only take care of myself but possibly help others struggling with these same battles," said Herring. Read more on [Source](#).

Research on Stimulating Environments' Effect on the Brain lands NEA grant for CSU Story by Jeff Dodge



Laura Malinin, Lindsey Wilhelm & Deana Davalos

A group of CSU faculty studying the effect that engaging environments have on the brains of aging adults and people with dementia has received a prestigious grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to continue its work. It is one of only 10 [Research: Art Works](#) grants, worth a total of \$550,000, that the NEA is awarding this year to

investigate the value and impact of the arts. The grant will fund two years' of research data collection and program coordination to compare the effects of attending symphony, dance, or theater events.

The interdisciplinary research team from three different CSU colleges began to form as part of the [B Sharp program](#), in which people with dementia and their caregivers were given passes to concerts during the Fort Collins Symphony's 2015-16 season. The

study found that the majority of participants experienced an unexpected reversal of cognitive decline over the course of the program.

"We found that engagement in the B Sharp program resulted in improved performance on a series of cognitive tests after a nine-month period," said Deana Davalos, professor in the Department of Psychology and the director of CSU's Aging Clinic of the Rockies. "This happened in spite of including participants with a neurodegenerative disorder."

The "Enriched Environments for the Healthy, Aging Brain" initiative receiving the NEA grant is part of the [Catalyst for Innovative Partnership Program](#) funded by CSU's Office of the Vice President for Research. Overall, the NEA will award 1,070 grants totaling \$80.5 million in this second round of funding for the fiscal year to support programs that provide jobs to artists, administrators, and other creative workers and arts experiences for millions of people.

Read more on [Source](#).

FACULTY NEWS



Michael Thomas Hired as Assistant Professor

Assistant Professor Michael Thomas joined the psychology department in the fall 2018 semester. Thomas received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Arizona State University in 2011 and completed an internship and post-doctoral training at University of California, San Diego. Thomas is a licensed clinical neuropsychologist whose research combines psychometric theory, cognitive modeling, and neuroimaging in the study of neurocognitive disorders such as dementia and schizophrenia.



Assistant Professor Sara Anne Tompkins Hired as Graduate Coordinator

Assistant Professor [Sara Anne Tompkins](#) (Ph.D. in Psychology, CSU, 2006) is serving as the new graduate coordinator for the psychology department in the fall 2018 semester. Tompkins provides holistic advising to help graduate students navigate their experience from admission to graduation, including advising students through the process of making critical transitions, meeting graduate school requirements, and connecting with student campus resources. Tompkins also coordinates events within the psychology department, such as new graduate student orientation and networking events. Tompkins continues to teach the History and Systems of Psychology course as well as other courses in the department.

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Your support of the department is incredibly valuable. Please consider making a difference to today's students, faculty, facilities, and programs—at whatever level is right for you. Thank you!

For more information on giving, contact
Simone Clasen, Executive Director of
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