Hongjian Cao Receives American Psychological Foundation Grant

Hongjian Cao is the 2015 recipient of the APF’s Roy Scrivner Research Grant for Cao’s doctoral research entitled “Experiences of Stress and Romantic Relationships among Same-Sex Couples: General Stress versus Minority Stress.” The Scrivner grant, award annually, provides a graduate student funding for empirical or applied research that encourages the study of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) family psychology and LGBT family therapy. Hongjian is co-advised by Professors Mark Fine and Roger Mills-Koonce. Here at UNCG, he is the recipient of the Rebecca McCulloch Smith Scholarship and the Virginia Morgan Dysard Scholarship. Before coming to UNCG, he was an outstanding student at China’s prestigious Beijing Normal University where he received several awards and graduated first in his class of Psychology majors. Hongjian is the author of over a half dozen refereed journal articles.
Kari Adamsons: 2015 HDFS Alumni Award Recipient

Kari Adamsons (PhD, 2006) has been selected as HDFS’ 2015 outstanding Pacesetter Award recipient. This award annually honors an outstanding HDFS alumnus who has attained local, state or regional recognition through their achievements in scholarship, leadership or service, during their career or through civic involvement. While a graduate student in our Department, Kari completed her doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Kay Pasley and received the Outstanding Graduate Student Award.

Kari is an academic for all seasons excelling in teaching, research and community service. In terms of teaching, her skills were apparent early: she received the HES Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award (2004). One of her recent University of Connecticut students wrote: “Kari is just awesome. She likes to start class off with a funny meme or interesting song lyrics, and is really able to connect with students. This class is incredibly interesting and applicable to life. Kari deserves all the praise she gets—my favorite professor!”

As a scholar, Dr. Adamsons is best known for her theoretical work and research about relationship processes with two noteworthy foci: a) fathering and co-parenting and b) application of bioecological theory to diverse problems (e.g., disability, conflict). Most recently, her theoretical expertise was recognized in her invitation (with Dr. Rob Palkovitz) to serve as a co-editor for a special issue of Journal of Family Theory and Review focusing on “theorizing about fathering.” Testifying to her scholarly excellence and judgment, she has been selected to serve as the Associate Editor for the journal Fathering.

In terms of community service, Kari is the Connecticut state coordinator for the American Psychological Association’s Adults and Children Together Against Violence. In this role she and the other volunteers she coordinates provide an anti-violence parent education program, ACT/Parents Raising Safe Kids. HDFS is proud of Kari’s accomplishments.

School of Health and Human Sciences Alumni Awards Ceremony & Reception

Elliott University Center, Cone Ballroom Saturday, April 12, 6-9 pm
Alumni of the School of Health and Human Sciences are invited to attend a reception honoring distinguished alumni. For more information call 1-877-862-4123
Natalie Hengstebeck: Bullard Award Recipient, Fulbright Nominee and Frequently Read Author

Natalie Hengstebeck is to be commended for three recent honors: first for being UNCG’s student recipient of the Gladys Strawn Bullard Award, second for being a candidate for a Fulbright Fellowship and third for having a highly cited journal article.

The Bullard Award is made to the one UNCG student annually who most provides outstanding leadership and service to the University that goes beyond the scope of students’ normal responsibilities. Natalie has provided service within UNCG, within her profession and within the community at large. Within UNCG, she is a member of two departmental committees, is a Senator for UNCG’s Graduate Student Association and is part of UNCG’s team for the Quint State Southeastern Symposium on Child and Family Development attended by graduate students and faculty from five southeastern universities. Within her profession, Natalie has been a highly praised graduate student member/representative for the Teaching and Mentoring Committee for the International Association for Relationship Research. Within our community, she has been Volunteer Coordinator for the Jones Spanish Immersion Elementary after school program in which she interviewed and linked current UNCG students to tutoring positions at the school located just a mile away from UNCG. Pro bono she co-authored a policy/practice brief geared towards practitioners serving Latino families living in emerging immigrant communities in the southeast that will be published/released nationally in 2015 by the National Center for Research on Hispanic Children and Families.

Her advisor, Heather Helms, has written that Natalie was a worthy candidate for the Bullard Award “not only as a recognition of all that she has done, but in recognition of HOW she has approached both her work and her service responsibilities. It is the how of Natalie’s accomplishments that aligns with the tenants of the Bullard award in that Natalie has never drawn attention to herself in any of these endeavors. Instead, she passionately, persistently, and joyfully finds ways to be helpful, to seek out areas of concern and work towards solutions, and is willing to put in countless “extra hours” for social justice causes she feels truly make a difference in the lives of children and families.

If awarded a highly competitive, highly prestigious Fulbright Scholarship, Natalie will work with Dr. Pearl Dykstra of Erasmus University in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Natalie will use data on social policies related to childcare subsidies from 19 European countries. She will test her belief that parents’
use of high quality, center-based childcare is related to parents’ higher personal well-being and relationship quality. If true, future investment in childcare would be expected to improve outcomes for couples, children, and future generations in Europe and the United States.

Natalie has also published an article identified by Sage Publications as one of the most frequently read during December 2014. Using internet download data, Sage ranks full-text and pdf views at the beginning of each month. This was how Sage identified the reader appeal of Natalie’s article “Spouses’ Gender Role Attitudes, Wives’ Employment Status, and Mexican-Origin Husbands’ Marital Satisfaction” published in the Journal of Family Issues. Natalie’s coauthors were her advisor Heather Helms and fellow student Yuliana Rodriguez.

Previous research with Euro-American samples has suggested that the most satisfied husbands would be either (a) less sex-typed and married to less sex-typed employed wives or (b) more sex-typed and married to more sex-typed nonemployed wives. In Natalie, Heather and Yuliana’s study of Mexican-origins husbands, the results were different and more complex. Husbands were happiest in their marriages when they were less sex-typed (and presumably more accepting of their wives’ employment) and married to employed, more sex-typed (traditional) wives. The authors’ reflect: “Among Mexican-origin couples, within-couple dissonance between attitudes and behavior may be better described as flexibility, which may be more adaptive during the process of cultural adaptation than both spouses rigidly conforming to sex-typed gender role attitudes and behavior.”

Alyson Cavanaugh Co-authors Loneliness Article

Alyson Cavanaugh and faculty member Cheryl Buehler have published an article on loneliness in the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships. Loneliness is important both because it is a gnawing discomfort for individuals who are lonely and it is associated with low levels of well-being (e.g., life satisfaction, mental health, etc.). This study tested whether social support from multiple sources (i.e., parental, interparental, peer, and teacher) was associated with decreases in youths’ loneliness and social anxiety during early adolescence (i.e., grades 6 to 8). As predicted, support during sixth grade was associated with decreased loneliness and social anxiety across the next two years, and it was found that the association with decreased social anxiety was stronger for boys than girls. Parental support was especially helpful for decreasing loneliness and peer support was especially helpful for decreasing social anxiety.
Three Undergraduates Present Their Research

Drs. Sudha Shreeniwas (HDFS), and Sharon Morrison (PHE) have mentored a number of students who have presented their projects at conferences promoting early involvement of undergraduates in the research process.

For Montagnard refugees from Vietnam, hypertension is a major contributor to morbidity. In their home culture, Montagnards use vegetation-based therapy as a key strategy for lowering blood pressure: they consume plants and herbs such as bitter melons, cassava, and hot peppers. The purpose of Oyediya Akaronu’s study, to be presented at the North American Conference on Refugee Health in Toronto Canada, was to compare plant and herbal use among Montagnards living in Vietnam and in Greensboro, North Carolina. Oyediya addressed her question using an innovative multi-method set of data collected earlier by other students. They had collected data through photography and digital cataloging of plants and herbs from household gardens, video-taping preparation for consumption, and audio-recording key informant interviews and focus group discussions with Montagnard adults living in households impacted by hypertension. Oyediya performed content and domain analyses procedures to organize categories and emergent themes. The results showed that traditional vegetation-based therapy is a key strategy for lowering blood pressure among Montagnards in both Vietnam and the United States.

Krishnaveni Balakrishnan reviewed information on Alzheimer’s disease (AD), focusing on why the disease has a higher prevalence in the United States compared to India. Several factors are believed to play a role in AD (e.g., genetics, environment, hypertension, and diet). Because there is a higher prevalence of AD in the United States compared to India, scientists have focused on the differing diets as a possible factor. Krishnaveni explored how polyunsaturated fats, Vitamin D, and Vitamin E, are all linked to brain health. She also examined turmeric, which is known to reduce inflammation, and plaque buildup in the brain associated with AD. These nutrients specifically are believed to play a role in the development of AD. From the research that she reviewed, there seems to be a correlation between diet and AD development. She presented her findings at the NC State Undergraduate Research Symposium (SNCURCS). Although there are only a limited number of studies, it appears that cultural differences in Americans’ vs. Indians’ diets could at least partially explain the higher rate of AD in the U.S. as compared to India.
S. Kayo Robinson is presenting a poster at the 65th Annual American Medical Student Association (AMSA) Convention and Exposition in Washington, DC. She reviewed existing studies on hypertension risks in the Southeast Asian refugee community. She found both indirect and direct factors. Indirectly, such factors as past trauma experience, on-going alienation, day-to-day stressors such as poverty, cultural assimilation, language and financial barriers, caused chronic stress among this group. Chronic stress is linked to hypertension, a risk factor for stroke, cardiovascular disease, and death. Directly, stressors due to poor family relationships, change in diet, and transnational relocation contributed to poorer health.

Four HDFS Graduate Students Receive HHS Research Grants

The purpose of Amy Johnson’s study will be to describe early childhood pre-service teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge about poverty and children and families in poverty. In addition, the study will examine how instructional strategies have influenced pre-service teachers’ learning and level of preparedness to support children and families in poverty.

In her dissertation study, Elizabeth King will examine the influence of teachers’ beliefs and knowledge about toddlers’ emotional development on teachers’ use of emotion language within teacher-child interactions, and will assess the association between teachers’ emotion language and toddlers’ social emotional competence in early childhood education classrooms. Data collection will begin this summer in Greensboro using classroom observations and teacher-report questionnaires, and will include approximately 50 teachers and 250 toddlers.

Jiayao Li is conducting a comparison of the early childhood education (ECE) Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRISs) in three countries the Unites States, China, and Singapore. Many countries use some version of such a system to foster better practice in ECE settings that support children and families. Comparing QRISs across the cultural and political contexts of the three countries is helpful for better understanding how the components of the QRIS work jointly as well as independently. Hopefully the work of this study will inform future directions for use of the QRIS in each country so
as to further improve the quality of care child receive.

In 2013, early childhood experts in North Carolina revised the state’s early learning and development standards (ELDS) and released *The North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development (Foundations)*. This document outlines what young children should know and be able to do prior to beginning kindergarten. The primary purpose of Teressa Sumrall’s study will be to examine North Carolina preschool teachers’ 1) familiarity with and knowledge of the revised *Foundations*, 2) implementation of *Foundations* in their classrooms and with families, 3) use of *Foundations* with children who are dual language learners and children with disabilities, 4) participation in *Foundations* professional development opportunities, and 5) professional development needs. Teachers’ familiarity with and implementation of the *Foundations* should foster children’s school-readiness and later-life success.

2014-15 HDFS Scholarship Recipients
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2014-15 HDFS Scholarship Recipients

Through the generosity of alumni and other interested persons, students in HDFS are very fortunate to have a number of scholarships awarded to them. Scholarships provide much needed financial support to students. Equally importantly they inspire and recognize the achievements of our students. HDFS is most grateful to all those who make scholarship funds available. For more information about making a donation see http://www.uncg.edu/hhs/donation_form.html or contact Barbie Wilkie, bjwike@uncg.edu, (336) 256-1272. Sincere thanks to our benefactors and congratulations to our students.

Hajar Boucteb, Undergrad
Dr. Nancy White
Undergraduate Scholarship

Cheyenne Brown, Undergrad
Mrs. John A. Kellenberger
Scholarship

Shakiera Causey, Masters
Miriam Scott Mayo and Hazeleene Tate Scott Scholarship

Angelica Dunbar, PhD
Rebecca McCulloch Smith
and Esther Segner Scholarship

Chantel Edwards
Dr. Nancy White
Undergraduate Scholarship

Tiana Green, Undergrad
Helen Canaday Scholarship
Amy Johnson, PhD  
Keister Scholarship and h Smith Scholarship,  
and Nell Wilborn Thayer Scholarship

Kadesha Kearns, Senior  
Betty Rowe Penny Scholarship

Tara Kidroske, Masters  
Edith S. Hinshaw Endowed Scholarship

Elizabeth King, PhD  
Mary Elizabeth Keister Scholarship

Natalie Lands, Junior  
E. York Kiker Scholarship

Kamilah Legette, PhD  
Child Development Scholarship

Jiayao Li, PhD  
Mary Elizabeth Keister Scholarship

Kelsey Myers, Undergrad  
Barbara Reynolds Todd Scholarship

Cydney Nicholson, Junior  
Julia Richman Scholarship
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