

Faculty Excellence Award Application Form



Name: Whitney L. Heppner

Rank: Associate Professor

Department: Psychological Science

Award applying for:
(Check one)

	Excellence in Teaching Award*
	Excellence in Online Teaching Award*
X	Excellence in Scholarship & Creative Endeavors Award*
	Excellence in University Service*
	Excellence in Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Award*
	Department/Program Excellence Award^
	Irene Rose Community Service Award^
	Laurie Hendrickson McMillian Faculty Award^

*college selection required before being forwarded to university

^university awards

A&S College nominations are due November 30, 2018 to the college Dean.

A&S College selectees notified by the college dean February 1, 2019.

A&S College nominees' final applications received by Center for Teaching and Learning (ctl@gcsu.edu) by March 1, 2019.

Please insert the required documentation in the pages below for the award category you have noted above. Detailed information associated with each award is available online at the Academic Affairs Intranet Forms Page >Forms>Faculty Awards Criteria and Documentation.

<https://intranet.gcsu.edu/system/files/users/matthew.buchanan%40gcsu.edu/FacultyAwardsCriteriaandDocFINAL201718.docx>

February 21, 2019

**Excellence in Scholarship & Creative Endeavors Award –
Dr. Whitney Heppner**

RE: Nomination Letter and Department Chair Letter of Support

As Chair, I am sending this letter as both the Nomination Letter and the Department Chair. Dr. Heppner's scholarship and her influence on undergraduate research in the Department of Psychological Science through her lab and the required courses she teaches is remarkable in the time she has been here (since Aug 2012). She balances her own research – primarily in mindfulness and health related matters – with numerous students' interests in their own research ideas as part of her research lab.

Her published or *in press* work is substantial for someone carrying the teaching load she carries. In the last five years, Dr. Heppner has fifteen published works, the majority of which (12 of 15) were peer-reviewed empirical papers, and three of which she was the first author. These publications include highly respected outlets such as *the Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* (impact factor = 4.536), *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* (impact factor = 3.118), *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* (impact factor = 3.322) and *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors* (impact factor = 2.543). Given her area of expertise centers on mindfulness and meditation, it is also notable that she has two publications in the journal *Mindfulness* (impact factor = 3.692), a burgeoning resource for mindfulness and meditation scholarship, as well as two book chapters in edited works on meditation. Many of these publications also include underserved and/or minority populations, where mindfulness and other positive psychological perspectives have been lacking. Clearly, Dr. Heppner's research on mindfulness, meditation, and health/wellness is on the cutting edge of scholarship in this area.

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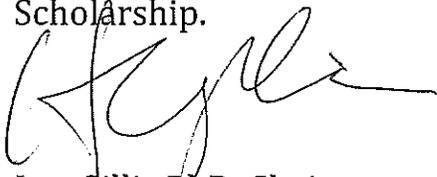
Georgia College, the state's designated public liberal arts university, combines the educational experience expected at esteemed private liberal arts colleges with the affordability of public higher education.

In addition, although they are not included in this award packet due to the timeframe, I would also add that currently Dr. Heppner has one additional first-authored manuscript that is undergoing revisions by co-authors; one manuscript which is currently under review at *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, and one manuscript that has been accepted but has not been published.

In addition to her research that is highly relevant to the state of the discipline, Dr. Heppner also remains active in research mentorship. In the last five years (from 2013 to 2018), Dr. Heppner can list approximately 30 scientific presentations (talks and posters), but importantly 19 of those are with undergraduate students in our Department. Presentations at professional conferences with students and mentoring them on how to conduct themselves in these settings is where Dr. Heppner excels. Anecdotally, at conferences, I have witnessed her students being mistaken for graduate students due to their professionalism, depth of knowledge on the subject matter and the accompanying statistical analysis.

Finally, Dr. Heppner has played a critical role in research being conducted across Georgia College. In the last five years, Dr. Heppner has been Vice-Chair, Chair, and now Immediate Past Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) so has been able to educate many students and faculty on protocol for ethical and responsible research. Additionally, for most of her colleagues in the department, including myself, she is the “go to” professor for questions of advanced statistical analysis and research design.

She clearly exceeds all qualifications for this Excellence Award in Scholarship.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Gillis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lee Gillis PhD, Chair



Claire Adams Spears, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Department of Health Policy & Behavioral Sciences
School of Public Health, Georgia State University
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February 20, 2019

Dear Faculty Excellence Award Review Committee:

I am absolutely delighted to write in support of **Dr. Whitney Heppner** as an ideal candidate for the Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Endeavors Award at Georgia College. Dr. Heppner has worked with colleagues on research examining health (and health risk) behaviors and psychological well-being among Latinos. Moreover, Dr. Heppner's innovative research has significantly improved our understanding of the effects of mindfulness on mental and physical health, as well as the underlying mechanisms of these effects, in diverse populations. I am an Assistant Professor in Health Policy & Behavioral Sciences in the School of Public Health at Georgia State University, and given that my research also focuses on mindfulness I consider myself qualified to speak to the impact of Dr. Heppner's work. In addition, I have had the pleasure of collaborating with Dr. Heppner on several research projects. Thus, I can also speak to her qualities as an inter-disciplinary researcher and scholar.

Dr. Heppner's work investigating the links between health, health behaviors, and psychological well-being among Latinos is adding knowledge to the keys to health and wellness among a minority and underserved population. Moreover, as a social psychologist by training, and with an expertise in positive psychology, Dr. Heppner's research incorporates a positive psychological perspective on this issue, answering a recent call to diversify the study of positive psychology and wellness (Rao & Donaldson, 2015). For example, Dr. Heppner's recent manuscript (Heppner, Correa-Fernandez, Strong, & Castro) explores basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness as potential buffers of the negative impacts of perceived discrimination on psychological well-being. Latinos in this sample who were especially high in relatedness (having valued close relationships with important others) reported fewer decrements in wellness as a result of "everyday" discrimination. In addition, Dr. Heppner has contributed to published work with Latino samples that investigates health literacy and acculturation (Housten et al., 2018) and multiple aspects of acculturation and smoking status (Flores et al., 2018). In addition, Dr. Heppner and colleagues (Castro et al., 2018) examined the relationship between bicultural identity among Mexican Americans and prospective smoking abstinence. On top of this, and in line with the teaching mission of your university, Dr. Heppner also contributed to a teaching-focused journal that utilized a study with bilingual Latinos as a case study in research methods and the use of technology in community research (Reid et al., 2018). In summary, this aspect of Dr. Heppner's research is contributing new and valuable knowledge to the area of Latino health and wellness.

Dr. Heppner's well-established line of research focuses on mindfulness and mindfulness meditation. Mindfulness (defined as purposeful, nonjudgmental, present-focused attention) has gained increasing attention in American culture. However, mindfulness research is still in its early stages, and there is a critical need to further our scientific understanding of: 1) effects of mindfulness on specific aspects of

mental and physical health, and 2) mechanisms underlying these effects. Dr. Heppner's research has been highly important and influential in addressing each of these issues.

First, historically Dr. Heppner has published scientific articles on benefits of both dispositional mindfulness (the tendency to be mindful in daily life) and mindfulness-based treatment with regard to emotional experiences and emotion regulation, self-esteem, relationship functioning, aggressive behavior, smoking behavior and cessation, and substance use disorder treatment. Dr. Heppner has truly been at the forefront of this research (e.g., Heppner, Adams, et al. 2016). Dr. Heppner's most recent work continues this line of inquiry by involving students in projects investigating mindfulness, impulsivity, and binge-watching behaviors (Blackwelder et al., 2018) and linking induced mindful states to enhanced attentional control (Groark et al., 2017). In addition, her recent first-authored publication (Heppner and Shirk, 2018) serves to advance the research on mindfulness even further by reviewing brief mindfulness meditations and their impacts across a wide variety of outcomes (cognitive, interpersonal, and health).

Second, Dr. Heppner's research has not only examined effects of mindfulness, but it has enhanced our understanding of how mindfulness "works" (i.e., the underlying mechanisms). In previous work, Dr. Heppner has explored negative affect, social support, and emotion regulation as mechanisms for how mindfulness might aid smoking cessation and curb interpersonal aggression. Dr. Heppner's contributions to investigations with me (Spears et al., 2018) have continued to examine how mindfulness relates to early smoking cessation using intensive longitudinal designs. By improving our understanding of underlying mechanisms, Dr. Heppner's work will be important for informing future interventions (e.g., capitalizing on the most "potent" treatment ingredients to increase effectiveness).

In the last few years, Dr. Heppner has published in many of the highest-impact journals in our field, including the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* and *Health Psychology*. Additionally, with her most recent publications, she has continued her pursuit of dissemination in high-impact outlets including *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* and *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*. Moreover, her publication outlets now reflect a diversity and interdisciplinary focus, including outlets such as the *Journal of Latina/o Psychology* and *Health Literacy Research and Practice*. She regularly presents her work at major scientific conferences including the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Society for Behavioral Medicine, and Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco.

Dr. Heppner is an exceptional inter-disciplinary researcher and scholar. She has collaborated with top researchers who study mindfulness from different perspectives. She is an excellent writer and has made the effort to learn and implement cutting-edge statistical techniques (e.g., multilevel and structural equation modeling). She is a team player with whom researchers (including myself) truly enjoy working. She is clearly dedicated to teaching and mentoring undergraduates, and has provided students at Georgia College tremendous opportunities to become involved in her research, as evidence by her long listing of scholarly presentations that include Georgia College student first-authors. Dr. Heppner's genuine enthusiasm for her research and its potential for improving mental and physical health is infectious.

In summary, I am extremely pleased to recommend **Dr. Whitney Heppner** for the Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Endeavors Award at Georgia College. She has amassed an impressive body of innovative research. Her work has been critical to improving our understanding of the effects of mindfulness in diverse populations. Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,



Claire Adams Spears, Ph.D.



College of Humanities and Social Sciences
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February 19, 2019

Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Endeavors Award Letter of Support – Dr. Whitney Heppner:

I write this letter in support of Dr. Whitney Heppner for the Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Endeavors Award at Georgia College. As a previous student who studied under and was advised by Dr. Heppner, I can attest to her commitment to utilizing rigorous and advanced research techniques as well as her dedication to fostering interest and developing well-rounded research skills among undergraduate students. Though my personal research interests diverged from those of Dr. Heppner, she fully assisted me in the development and implementation of my senior thesis, from the beginning phases of formulating my research question through the oral defense in front of my thesis committee. In addition to supporting my personal research interests, Dr. Heppner invited me to collaborate with her and a fellow student on her work that investigates psychological factors associated with smoking behaviors among Latinx samples. Under her guidance, I was able to merge my interest of studying marginalized populations with her expertise in positive and health psychology. Together, we conducted advanced statistical analyses and presented research at a national conference. Opportunities such as these are not extremely common at liberal arts universities, and it is only through Dr. Heppner's dedication and commitment to research and students that I was able to take part in these projects. As a current Master's student in an experimental psychology program, I entered the program with knowledge and experience above that of my peers because of the work I had done with Dr. Heppner.

In addition to guiding my skills as a researcher, Dr. Heppner guided my journey to graduate school. Not only did she mentor my work as a student, whereby I developed a thesis, engaged in multiple research projects, and attended a national research conference as an undergraduate student, she supported my career aspirations by helping me find and apply to programs to continue in the field of research. Dr. Heppner truly values both rigorous research practices as well as student interests. Aside from her large teaching load, she is dedicated to conducting and publishing pertinent research findings in her field while also mentoring students to care about and conduct similarly respected research. I greatly admire Dr. Heppner's ability to balance these two important responsibilities, on top of her other commitments. I can truly say that she is one of the main reasons I am pursuing a career in the field of social psychology and research, as she was one of my earliest and most central role models. I fully support her in consideration for this award as I believe she is most deserving.


Rachael J. Waldrop

PUBLICATIONS

(copies or evidence of each included)

1. **Heppner, W. L., & Shirk, S. D. (2018).** Mindful moments: A review of brief, low-intensity mindfulness meditation and induced mindful states. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 12(12). 10.1111/spc3.12424
 - Submission and review process: Manuscript submitted for blind review process.
 - Selectivity and scope: Impact factor of journal = not available. “The ideal *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* article is an intervention in the field or sub-field, showing its present state and direction in the future.”
2. Flores, R. T., Cano, M. A., Correa-Fernández, V., Field, C. A., **Heppner, W. L.**, Strong, L. L., & Castro, Y. (2018). Associations of multiple acculturation domains with smoking status among Latino adults. *Journal of Latinx Psychology*. 10.1037/lat0000112
 - Submission and review process: Manuscript submitted for blind review process.
 - Selectivity and scope: Impact factor of journal = 1.375. This journal “is committed to publishing scholarly writing on research, practice, advocacy, education, and policy relevant to Latino communities. The journal publishes empirical, theoretical, methodological, and applied research.”
3. Castro, Y., Vinci, C., **Heppner, W. L.**, Cano, M. Á., Correa-Fernández, V., Wetter, D. W. (2018). Revisiting the relationship between acculturation and smoking cessation among Mexican Americans. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, kay029. 10.1093/abm/kay029.
 - Submission and review process: Manuscript submitted for blind review process.
 - Selectivity and scope: 5-year impact factor = 4.444 (current year 3.118). This scholarly journal “aims to foster the exchange of knowledge derived from the disciplines involved in the field of behavioral medicine, and the integration of biological, psychosocial, and behavioral factors and principles as they relate to such areas as health promotion, disease prevention, risk factor modification, disease progression, adjustment and adaptation to physical disorders, and rehabilitation.”
4. Reid, E., Castro, Y., Strong, L., **Heppner, W.** & Correa-Fernández, V. (2018). Researching cancer risk behaviors among bilingual Latinos using technology and an intensive longitudinal design. *SAGE Research Methods Cases*. 10.4135/9781526429346
 - Submission and review process: Manuscript submitted for blind review process.
 - Selectivity and scope: “SAGE Research Methods Cases is not a journal, but rather an online resource for teaching and learning. New case studies are published once annually. As a result, cases do not carry an impact factor; however, each published case study is assigned its own ISBN and DOI. Case studies are different from journal articles in that the primary audience will be student readers, rather than the wider academic community.”
5. Vidrine, J. I., Spears, C. A., **Heppner, W. L.**, Reitzel, L. R., Marcus, M. T., Cinciripini, P. M., Waters, A. J., Li, Y. L., Nguyen, N. T., Cao, Y., Tindle, H. A., Fine, M., Safranek, L. V., Wetter, D. W. (2016). Efficacy of Mindfulness Based Addiction Treatment (MBAT) for smoking cessation: A randomized clinical trial. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 84(9), 824-838.
 - Submission and review process: Manuscript submitted for blind review process.

- Selectivity and scope: 5-year impact factor = 6.247 (current year 4.536). This scholarly journal publishes research findings on “treatment and prevention in all areas of clinical and clinical–health psychology and especially on topics that appeal to a broad clinical–scientist and practitioner audience” as well as “theory–based interventions, studies that investigate mechanisms of change, and studies of the effectiveness of treatments in real-world settings.”
6. **Heppner, W. L.**, Spears, C. A., Correa-Fernández, V., Castro, Y., Li, Y., Reitzel, L. R., Vidrine, J. I., Mazas, C. A., Cofta-Woerpel, L., Cinciripini, P. M., Ahluwalia, J., & Wetter, D. W. (2016). Dispositional mindfulness predicts enhanced smoking cessation and smoking lapse recovery. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 50(3), 337-347.
 - Submission and review process: Manuscript submitted for blind review process.
 - Selectivity and scope: 5-year impact factor = 4.444 (current year 3.118). See listing #3 for scope.
 7. Russell, K. C., Gillis, H. L., & **Heppner, W. L.** (2015). An examination of mindfulness-based experiences through adventure in substance use disorder treatment for young adult males: A pilot study. *Mindfulness*, 1-9.
 - Submission and review process: Manuscript submitted for blind review process.
 - Selectivity and scope: Impact factor of journal (2014) = 3.692. This scholarly journal “publishes peer-reviewed papers that examine the latest research findings and best practices in mindfulness.”
 8. Spears, C. A., Houchins, S., Stewart, D. W., Chen, M., Correa-Fernandez, V., Cano, M. A., **Heppner, W. L.**, Vidrine, J. I., & Wetter, D. W. (2015). Nonjudging facet of mindfulness predicts enhanced smoking cessation in Hispanics. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 29(4), 918-923.
 - Submission and review process: Manuscript submitted for blind review process.
 - Selectivity and scope: Impact factor of journal (2016) = 2.543. This journal publishes “peer-reviewed original articles related to the psychological aspects of addictive behaviors.”
 9. **Heppner, W. L.**, Adams, C. E., Vidrine, J. I., & Wetter, D. W. (2015). Mindfulness and emotion regulation. In B. D. Ostafin, M. D. Robinson, & B. P. Meier (Eds.), *Handbook of mindfulness and self-regulation*. New York: Springer.
 - Submission and review process: Invited to contribute; chapter reviewed by editors
 - Selectivity and scope: Impact factor = not applicable. However, according to Bookmetrix, this book has 65 citations and over 60,000 downloads. “This empirically robust resource examines multiple ways mindfulness can be harnessed to support self-regulation, in part as a real-world component of therapy” and “in domains such as letting go of harmful habits and addictions, dealing with depression and anxiety, regulating emotions, and training cognitive function Publisher link: <http://www.springer.com/us/book/9781493922628>
 10. Adams, C. E., Cano, M., **Heppner, W. L.**, Correa-Fernandez, V., Stewart, D., Li, Y., Vidrine, J. I., & Wetter, D. W. (2015). Testing a moderated mediation model of mindfulness, psychosocial stress, and alcohol use among African American smokers. *Mindfulness*, 6, 315-325.
 - Submission and review process: Manuscript submitted for blind review process.
 - Selectivity and scope: Impact factor of journal (2014) = 3.692. See listing #7 for scope.

11. Castro Y., Cano, M.A., Businelle, M.S., Correa-Fernández, V., **Heppner, W.L.**, Mazas, C.A., & Wetter, D.W. (2014). A cross-lagged path analysis of five intrapersonal determinants of smoking cessation. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, *137*, 98-105.
- Submission and review process: Manuscript submitted for blind review process.
 - Selectivity and scope: Impact factor of journal (2017) = 3.322. This journal “is an international journal devoted to publishing original research, scholarly reviews, commentaries, and policy analyses in the area of drug, alcohol and tobacco use and dependence.”
12. Adams, C. E., Chen, M., Guo, L., Lam, C. Y., Stewart, D. W., Correa-Fernández, V., Cano, M. A., **Heppner, W. L.**, Vidrine, J. I., Li, Y., Ahluwalia, J. S., Cinciripini, P. M., & Wetter, D. W. (2014). Mindfulness predicts lower affective volatility among African Americans during smoking cessation. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, *28*, 580-585.
- Submission and review process: Manuscript submitted for blind review process.
 - Selectivity and scope: Impact factor of journal (2016) = 2.543. See listing #8 for scope.
13. Adams, C. E., **Heppner, W. L.**, Houchins, S., Stewart, D. W., Vidrine, J. I., & Wetter, D. W. (2014). Mindfulness meditation and addictive behaviors. In N. Singh (Ed.), *The Psychology of Meditation* (Chapter 14, pp. 311-343). New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Submission and review process: Invited to contribute; chapter reviewed by editors
 - Selectivity and scope: “This book brings together a diverse group of experts who collectively provide a nuanced view of meditation from a variety of perspectives. This book offers a single-source authoritative guide to an ancient practice that is coming into its own in the Western world.”
14. Babcock, J. C., Sharp, C., Teten Tharp, A., **Heppner, W. L.**, & Stanford, M. (2014). Similarities and Differences in Impulsive/Premeditated and Reactive/Proactive Bimodal Classifications of Aggression. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *19*, 251-262.
- Submission and review process: Manuscript submitted for blind review process.
 - Selectivity and scope: Impact factor of journal (2014) = 1.912. This journal is a “bimonthly peer-reviewed scientific journal covering the study of violent behavior.”
15. Martin, L. L., Sanders, M. A., Kulkarni, A., Anderson, W., Edwards, R., Jun, C., & **Heppner, W. L.** (2014). ID compensation: Exploring the relations among mindfulness, a close brush with death, and our hunter-gatherer heritage. In A. Ie, C.T. Ngnoumen, & E. J. Langer (eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Mindfulness*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 290–311.
- Submission and review process: Invited to contribute; chapter reviewed by editors
 - Selectivity and scope: <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-1118294874.html>

Note: Impact factors (IFs) of the academic journals are provided when available as an index of selectivity and impact (although IF’s are not a perfect index of impact). For context, an IF 6.247 (e.g., listing #6), places this outlet in about the top 5% of journals, whereas an IF of 2.543 (e.g., listing #8), is in about the top 36% of journals. Also, scope descriptions throughout are quoted from journal or book webpage.

My program of research focuses on tasks, interventions, and personality factors that promote wellness, health, and the general ability to self-regulate in the pursuit of goals. These topics allow me to integrate research and teaching in the following ways: by employing my *research expertise and background* in my course design and coursework; by utilizing the particular *research studies* that my students and I pursue as a platform for teaching and mentoring; and by incorporating the *outcomes of my research* into my course design and mentoring.

Research expertise and background

My research is positioned in a burgeoning area of social psychology--the intersection of positive psychology and health--and the topics of my studies are intuitive and interesting to students. This allows me to consistently refresh the material in my upper-division social psychology (PSYC 3500) course, a required course for psychology majors. Moreover, using my own research as examples gives life to (sometimes stagnant) topics that are explored in the required introductory courses of statistics (PSYC 2700) and research methods (PSYC 2800).

In addition to the topics of my scholarship, I utilize my varied training background and diverse research experiences to teach students about the modern landscape of research, which is team-oriented and interdisciplinary. This diverse training background allows me to teach innovative and original courses such as my Advanced Social Psychology “Self and Health” class (PSYC 4500), where students learn how basic psychological processes and intrapsychic phenomena can apply to increasingly broad levels of analysis (e.g., family, community, region, etc.) and how the psychological perspective can complement epidemiology and public health. In addition, I offer a senior seminar (PSYC 4920) which uses the broad framework of my research interests in positive psychology (e.g., psychological well-being) as a platform for a capstone experience, allowing students to integrate and reflect on their learning in psychology. Within PSYC 4920, I have also invited faculty collaborators in my research (from within and outside of Georgia College) to speak to the class on various topics (e.g., meditation and cognition, health disparities, etc.), which directly models the team science approach to students.

Research studies

Perhaps the most tangible way my research is integrated with my teaching is in the research studies I conduct here at Georgia College. Every semester I mentor between 7 and 12 undergraduate students in research through an advanced research methods course. Students gain an in-depth, hands-on, immersive research experience. Students in the course read relevant empirical literature, propose original research study ideas with human subjects, develop study ideas from start to finish, and implement collection and analysis of their own data. Many students disseminate their findings at local and regional research conferences, and a few have even presented the research from this course at national outlets (see “Presentations” list). The students in this course are highly productive, conducting anywhere from 3 to 6 studies per semester, all student-led and student-managed.

In addition to active data collection projects with our undergraduate students, I utilize my collaborations with investigators at larger, research-focused institutions to continue to explore research questions that would not be feasible otherwise. This collaboration allows me to

incorporate secondary data analysis into my Georgia College research mentorship, and affords me the opportunity to participate in research that is published in high impact journals, bringing recognition to the importance of scholarship at Georgia College.

Direct supervision of undergraduate student-led research studies affords teaching and mentoring of broader skills and qualities as well. Students who conduct their own research studies under my supervision learn valuable problem-solving skills, for example, as they troubleshoot problems with a data collection software program, or as they learn how to manage participants across a challenging longitudinal study. In addition, the students I supervise in research learn marketable data management and analysis skills, as well as oral presentation skills for professional outlets.

Research outcomes

My health- and wellness-oriented research allows the unique opportunity to inform general strategies for students to improve their self-regulatory skills, stress management, physical health, and psychological well-being. The research my students and I conduct attempts to better understand how to improve self-control (e.g., how to say “no” to tempting, delicious cookies when you are hungry; presented at a conference with a student first-author) and what factors aid in resuming a goal when you fail or experience a setback (e.g., slipping and smoking a cigarette when you are trying to quit; see Heppner, Spears, et al., 2016, in “Publications” list). Students in all of my courses get an exposure to these evidence-based strategies for improving self-regulation and psychological well-being. For example, in “Self and Health” (PSYC 4500), students set a personal health or wellness goal, implement the strategies of effective self-regulation that we learn about from my research and the broader literature, and comment and reflect on how those factors identified in the literature have impacted their personal goals.

My students and I also empirically explore mindfulness as a personal trait and mindfulness meditation as a personal practice. In the broader literature and in my own research, mindfulness is robustly linked to myriad indicators of well-being, physical health, and interpersonal benefits. Sharing my research in this area, and the students’ own experiences conducting studies in this area, allows them to capitalize on these evidence-based strategies for improving health and wellness in their own lives. For instance, in my senior seminar course (PSYC 4920) centered on positive psychology, students learn some of the research literature linking a personal practice of meditation (or other contemplative practices) to cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal benefits, and we practice various meditation tasks together and discuss their efficacy in their personal lives. The research my students and I conduct is part of that empirical evidence base on which I draw for these activities. Thus, my research contributes to tangible strategies I can share with students on how to achieve their goals and improve health and wellness.

In summary, I attempt to integrate my scholarship and teaching from a variety of perspectives. My goal in this multi-faceted integration is to reinforce to students how absolutely indispensable scientific thinking is for success in their courses and future careers, as well as to demonstrate the value of using research and empirical evidence to enhance their own well-being.



Office of the Dean
College of Arts and Sciences
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Phone 478-445-4441
Fax 478-445-0873

26 February 2019

Dear Faculty Award Selection Committee,

I write to nominate **Dr. Whitney Heppner** from the Department of Psychological Science for the Excellence in Scholarship & Creative Endeavors Award. Dr. Heppner emerged from several strong candidates from the College of Arts and Sciences because of her extraordinary publication and scholarly activity record. Based on the strong letter of support from her department chair, I can recommend her without reservation.

In the last five years, Dr. Heppner has published fifteen works in several excellent journals within her field. She has established herself as a leading scholar of the emerging field of mindfulness and meditation and has two publications in the journal *Mindfulness*, as well as two book chapters on the subject. According to her department chair, "Clearly, Dr. Heppner's research on mindfulness, meditation, and health/wellness is on the cutting edge of scholarship in this area."

In addition to her faculty scholarship, she is heavily engaged in undergraduate research. Nearly two-thirds of her professional presentations over the last five years (19/30) have involved undergraduate students with whom she has conducted research. She clearly understands and practices what we as a university preach about the importance of and need for undergraduate research.

Finally, Dr. Heppner has served the Georgia College campus community in executive positions on the Institutional Review Board (IRB), thus helping others to establish clear ethical guidelines and pathways forward for research across the university.

Therefore, Dr. Heppner's entire body of work is truly preeminent and I believe merits the award for Excellence in Scholarship & Creative Endeavors for 2018-19.

Cordially,

Eric G. Tenbus, PhD
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Professor of History
eric.tenbus@gcsu.edu