



DRURY UNIVERSITY

Letter from the Chair

Greetings from historic Pearsons Hall! It's a wonderful time to be at Drury because the campus is undergoing some remarkable transformations. Our new President, Dr. Jeff Frederick, has joined the DU community and in this issue, we introduce Melinda Fredrick, who has a long work history in behavioral health.

Drawing upon grants totaling over \$3 million, significant restoration has also begun on

the former African Methodist Episcopal Church located on the corner of Benton Avenue and Central Street. The restoration and improvements will provide space for exhibits that reflect upon the history of the church, issues of race and civil rights in Springfield, and struggles for justice and freedom across America. In addition to providing exhibit and classroom space, the greater Springfield community will have access

to meeting spaces and utilization of the historic church for educational purposes.

We are also proud to introduce our new outdoor recreation area, the Panther Pad, which features six pickleball courts. The facility, which is one of the first official pickleball courts on a college campus, was made possible by the generosity of several members of the O'Reilly family, including Austin O'Reilly,

Matt ('03) and Ashley O'Reilly, Justin French ('94) and Lindsay O'Reilly French ('02), David ('71) and Stacey O'Reilly, and Pamela O'Reilly.

So much is happening on Drury's 40+ acres, so please take a moment to read about the accomplishments of some of our students, faculty, and alumni. It's a great time to be a panther!

Dr. Vickie Luttrell, '86



Jarrod Smith, head coach of DU's pickleball program, is featured with our department's pickleball enthusiasts: Drs. Cecily Cornelius-White, Valerie Eastman, Jennie Long, and our administrative assistant, Lori Sechler. If you haven't seen the new Panther Pad, come check it out because it has transformed the center of campus!

The Voice of an Incoming Student: Audra Pasakarnis



My name is Audra Pasakarnis, and I am from Wollongong, Australia, which is a beautiful city by the ocean. Like many other high school students, I was asked the question: “What are you going to do when you graduate?” College basketball ended up being my answer.

After leaving high school, I committed to a junior college in Missouri. I just transferred to Drury this semester, and I can say that attending a 4-year liberal arts university is definitely an upgrade over a different type of college. The facilities are bigger and better, and my favourite facility at Drury is the O’Reilly basketball stadium, which is one of the best in Division II.

My major is Clinical and Behavioural Neuroscience, and I am earning certificates in Sports Leadership and Holistic Health and Well-Being. My favourite class right now is Biopsychology with my favourite profes-

sor, Dr. Luttrell. I also have Scientific Writing. It teaches all the details of APA formatting, which is handy for paper writing. My class on holistic health practices is also fun because the content is very applicable to any student’s life, and we are learning about ways to enhance our physical and emotional health and reduce our stress levels.

I am very grateful to get the opportunity of experiencing the life of a student athlete. Drury provides a unique environment where sport and school can be intertwined. You get to meet other student athletes and people from all over the world, and your peers become some of your biggest fans for games.

No matter how hard it is to wake up at 4:30 a.m. for a 3-hour practice after staying up until midnight finishing homework, I will never wish away these college years.

Judge Warren White Scholar: Erin Fick

Erin Fick is a sophomore from Rich Fountain, Missouri. She is majoring in Psychology and Criminal Justice with a minor in Law and Society. She is proud to be secretary for the Pre-Law Club, a senator in the Student Government Association, a member of Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society, and a member of Pi Beta Phi. After her freshman year, Erin was named a Judge Warren White Scholar for attaining a 4.0 GPA.

Drury’s rigorous academic programs and student-to-faculty ratio drew Erin to the campus. Particularly, she was attracted to the innumerable engagement opportunities that would provide her with real-world experience and engagement with the community. During Erin’s initial visit to tour Drury, she had the privilege of meeting Dr. Daniel Ponder, Professor of

Political Science, and from her initial visit through her first year, it was evident that faculty members had a genuine interest in her academic and personal growth.

Erin plans to participate in the 3 by 3 program with Mizzou and apply for law school next fall. This aspiration has been fueled by her strong interest in the legal field, which developed during her 8th grade year when she began attending court sessions with Osage County’s Prosecutor, Amanda Grellner.

Currently, Erin clerks for Attorney Randy Cowherd at Cowherd, Reade, Adair, and Laney in Springfield where she gains hands-on experience that further ignites her passion. Her position at the firm provides her with an opportunity to thrive in a field she truly enjoys while applying the knowledge gained from her studies at Drury.



Superstar Interns



Lydia Chapman

My name is Lydia Chapman, and I am a senior with a Psychology major, Community Health minor, and Holistic Health certificate. Throughout my studies, I have felt drawn to understanding the intricate inner workings of organizations and how that contributes to the mental health of community members.

On my search for an internship, I found the Circle on the Square. The Circle is an organization that highlights the skills of various practitioners in a holistic, whole-healing way. During my time as an intern, I worked on promotional objectives because I believe anyone can benefit by fitting a little more holistic healing in their day-to-day life. There are various practitioners that specialize in Reiki, sound healing, Kundalini yoga, massage

therapy, art therapy, Ketamine-assisted therapy and more.

I worked on articles and interviews highlighting the talents of the practitioners on the site. I attended monthly Kundalini yoga classes, which is a form of yoga that combines Kriyas (exercise) with meditation, breathwork, and chanting to move energy throughout the body. I also worked with a practitioner who offers Ketamine-assisted therapy, which combines a prescription of Ketamine with a guided use in a therapeutic session. Additionally, the Circle offers an Artistic Leisure class, in which participants can freely express themselves in any art form with guidance from an instructor.

My internship was not only extremely fun and rewarding, it helped me step out of my comfort zone to experience new forms of holistic health and well-being!

Taylor Engels

My name is Taylor Engels, and I am currently a senior at Drury University, a member of the National Guard, and a former player on the Drury men's rugby team. Though I was raised in the United States, I spent a significant part of my life, from age 10 to 18, living in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. This international experience deeply shaped my passion for understanding and helping others.

Since returning to the United States for college, majoring in psychology at Drury University has sparked a deep interest in holistic health and wellness, leading me to pursue a career as an occupational therapist. This summer, I had the opportunity to intern at OTEIM, a private occupational therapy clinic in Orange County, California that specializes in pediatric care.

There, I assisted both occupational and speech therapists in various settings, such as surf therapy, photobiomodulation, and preschool preparation for children with conditions like autism, ADHD, dyslexia, PANS/PANDAS, and developmental delays.

During my time at OTEIM, I supported children through activities such as learning to surf, managing tactile defensiveness, and developing communication and fine motor skills. I was also able to pick up some American Sign Language to better engage with the children and gain a deeper understanding of therapies like photobiomodulation.

This hands-on experience was incredibly rewarding, and while it was difficult to say goodbye, I am grateful for this immersive introduction to the impactful world of occupational therapy.



Superstar Interns



Rylee Kolb

My internship was with Mid-States Organized Information Center (MOCIC). MOCIC is a Regional Information Sharing Systems (RISS) Center. The mission of RISS centers is to assist local, state, federal, and tribal law enforcement partners in their investigations and assist in communication between many jurisdictions and law enforcement agencies. At MOCIC, I was an Intel Intern, so I was able to watch our Criminal Intelligence Specialists (CIS) work on different types of cases for the nine states and parts of Canada they serve and assist.

While I got to see some of our CIS agents at work, I also got to shadow the equipment team and work on 'cold' cases. The equipment team assists in equipment rentals to the member agencies and does special projects and

custom builds for members. It was so cool to see all the amazing things they can create to aid law enforcement agencies in their investigations.

While working on cold cases, I was able to delve through and scan hundreds of documents that eventually will be sorted through artificial intelligence (AI) software to generate a hypothetical timeline and possible suspects. I would suggest this internship to anyone who wants to see another side of law enforcement and investigation that is not shown in the classroom! After graduating in May, I started working for an insurance agency and I am working on getting my insurance license. My goal is to get my license and then become a paralegal or legal assistant working for the State of Missouri Prosecutor's Office in the Department of Commerce and Insurance.

Maizie Young

My name is Maizie Young, and I am a senior at Drury. I am a double major in Criminology and Psychology, with minors in Community Health and Advanced Scientific Analysis, and am completing the Justice Denied certificate. This summer, I interned as a Program Coordinator at the HALO Foundation in Kansas City, Missouri.

HALO is a nonprofit agency that serves homeless youth by providing resources and art-based programming that teaches life skills. As Program Coordinator, most of my time was spent facilitating programs directly with youth. Each program is structured differently to fit the needs of those they serve.

My favorite program was with an emergency shelter called ReStart, in which we did art projects with teens in crisis situ-

ations. I also spent office hours writing lesson plans, developing programming, and researching local resources and potential partnerships. The project I was most proud of was a three-part anger management program for teens I developed based on the principles of cognitive behavioral therapy, and I really appreciated HALO's prioritization and consistent implementation of trauma-informed care.

Getting hands-on experience at HALO led me to realize that I want to work with the teen and young adult age group facing challenges such as homelessness. Additionally, witnessing issues firsthand that I've learned about throughout my time at Drury allowed me to gain perspective that cannot be taught in a classroom. I enjoyed every day of my internship at HALO, which gave me confirmation that I am headed down the right path.



Students Travel to Conferences

Large Showing at MAUPRC



Continuing our tradition of attending an out of state conference, 26 behavioral science students presented their yearlong research or directed research projects at The Mid-America Undergraduate Psychology Research Conference (MAUPRC). The 43rd Annual MAUPRC was held at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana on April 13, 2024. Faculty mentors Drs. Callie Gibson, Mary Utley, and Cecily Cornelius-White were also in attendance.

Student presenters were as follows: Zacary Barbee, Anna Bartz, Erica Batson, Lydia Chapman, Rylan DeHaven, Megan DeWeerd, Victoria Enos, Benjamin Fiske, Lauren Hamm, Emma Hampton, Mia Harris, Colton Hazelwood, Tayte Kozlowski, Alyssa Ledbetter, Alexis Mann, Sophia Mora, Doss Nation, Jenna Peterson, Ryan Padberg, Mia Pelletier, Olivia Piekarski, Tara Simon, Serenity Sosa, Laci Varner, Garrett Weber, and Kiley Young.

Students presented on a wide variety of topics, such as effects of adverse child experiences and personality on risk taking; the impact of personal narra-

tives and celebrity influences on attitudes toward bipolar disorder; the dark triad, political extremism, and persuasion; education as a factor that influences attitudes toward alcohol consumption; and the effects of music types on test anxiety and performance.

Erica Batson ('24), outstanding student in Behavioral Sciences, remarked, "Go to the conference if you have the chance. It's an incredible experience to present research you've worked on for so long, to meet fellow students from other schools, and to hear about research others are doing ... and the trip was so much fun."

Ryan Padberg ('24) agreed and said, "my trip to Indiana for the behavioral sciences conference stands out as one of the most memorable experiences during my time at Drury. It provided an invaluable opportunity to connect with new peers, deepen my understanding of others' research, and significantly boost my confidence in presenting my own work. On top of that, I thoroughly enjoyed the fun shared with my ABR classmates."

Two Students Attend MBLGTACC

In October 2024, Crescent Brown and Grace Ropka attended the 32nd annual Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Asexual College Conference (MBLGTACC) at Northern Michigan University in Marquette. MBLGTACC is recognized as the nation's largest and oldest-continuously running conference for queer and trans+ college students.

The trip was made possible with a grant from the GLO Center, which is a nonprofit that serves the LGBTQIA+ community in the Ozarks, and additional funding from the Victor M. Agruso, Jr. Endowment for Behavioral Sciences. Crescent and Grace are active members of Drury's Allies group for LGBTQIA+ students and straight allies, which focuses on community building, activism, and service to "better ourselves, our university, and the larger

community of allies." Dr. Katie Gilbert and Dr. David Derosssett serve as co-advisors for Allies.

Crescent gave a presentation on the history, definitions, and implications of neuroqueer identity in a session entitled "Neuroqueerness: The Overlap in Neurodivergence and Queerness," a theory and academic field exploring the connection between disability and queerness.

Crescent (left) and Grace (right), featured below with former DU faculty member, Dr. Ginney Norton, described their conference attendance as an inspiring and empowering experience. Crescent commented that "I loved being around other queer people at the conference. It was refreshing to see so many people from different walks of life and how we could unite under the same umbrella of being queer."



Community Involvement

Girls on the Run



Girls on the Run is a non-profit organization founded in 1996, dedicated to improving the lives and well-being of 3rd to 8th grade girls during their pivotal time of development in elementary and middle school. The program involves a research-based curriculum designed to help young women understand and organize their own cognitive and emotional experiences, value themselves in the context of relationships and teamwork, and recognize how they can shape the world at large.

Lessons center around building social and emotional awareness and practicing kindness and critical thinking at every opportunity. Ultimately, GOTR helps girls develop into kind and thoughtful leaders and advocates who are empowered to stand up for what they believe in, and who, at the end of their training session, can run a 5k. So, when Drury Behavioral Sciences

faculty member, Dr. Cecily Cornelius-White, was offered the opportunity to partner with GOTR as a coach and board member, she grabbed it!

Dr. C has served as a volunteer coach for GOTR since 2014 and has loved every minute of it...even the 6am wake-up to go run the Bass Pro GOTR 5k. (Coffee helps!) She loves witnessing the profound sense of accomplishment and confidence growing in these diverse young women, and cannot think of anything more gratifying than helping them become the authors of their own brilliant stories. Especially when many of their stories include them becoming GOTR coaches, leaders, and mentors for future generations of young women!

If you'd like to get involved in Girls on the Run, contact Dr. C for details (Pearsons 219-A) or apply online to be a coach at <https://www.girlsontherun.org>.

Drug Court Team Awarded \$2M Grant

Methamphetamine abuse in rural Missouri is widely recognized, and deaths due to alcohol poisoning, drug overdoses, and suicide have increased at alarming rates in rural areas. To help combat these problems, Drs. Jennie Long and Vickie Luttrell serve as grant writers, co-investigators, and program evaluators for Adult Treatment Drug Courts (ATDCs) in the 39th Judicial Circuit, which includes Barry, Lawrence, and Stone counties in southwest Missouri.

The Circuit's ATDCs admit high risk and high need felony offenders, and funding allows the Circuit to employ substance abuse and mental health counselors, case managers, recovery support specialists, and others. Since 2010, the programs have served over 1,200 offenders, and evaluations show that program participation improves participants'

psychological and emotional health and social support systems, minimizes (or eliminates) a long list of maladaptive behaviors, and substantially lowers the Circuit's recidivism rate.

Drs. Long and Luttrell wrote the project narrative for another 5-year funding request through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Advised by the treatment court staff, they proposed to expand and enhance the delivery of ATDC services, to include substance use disorder and mental health treatments, primary care services, family engagement opportunities, recovery housing, peer support, and harm reduction measures.

We are pleased to announce that the Circuit's 5-year funding request for \$2 million was approved, and this brings the team's level of federal funding since 2010 to almost \$8 million.



Introducing: Ashley Freeman

Hello! My name is Ashley Freeman, and I am the newest faculty member in the Department of Behavioral Sciences. I am excited to be back at Drury! Drury has always held a special place in my heart. The professors in this department played a huge role in shaping who I am today, so I am happy to get the opportunity to be that person for future students.

I graduated from Drury in May of 2015 with a major in psychology and a minor in behavioral neuroscience. Additionally, I met my husband, Aaron Freeman, while at Drury who is also a graduate of the Behavioral Sciences. After graduation, I completed my master's degree in clinical child psychology at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville. After graduation, I worked for a little over a year in Mercy's Neuropsychology department as a psychometrist testing patients with traumatic

brain injuries and dementia.

Eventually, I realized how much I missed working with children, and I decided to go back to SIU-E where I graduated with my specialist degree in School Psychology. I went on to work for St. Louis County Special School District as a school psychologist for 4 years where I completed evaluations to determine eligibility for Special Education services. Putting all my skills to work, I am now teaching such courses as introduction to psychology, positive psychology, and psychopathology and clinical science, and it's been great!

I had my son, Charlie, in 2022. I love getting to watching him master all the developmental milestones and discover the world! A fun fact about me is that I am a big-time animal lover. I currently have two cats (one was rescued from Drury's campus) and two dogs.



Melinda Frederick: A Little About Me



When Dr. Vickie Luttrell asked, I gladly agreed to introduce myself and tell you about my work journey. I grew up in a small Florida town with my parents who were both in the medical field and two younger brothers. When I was young, our family went on medical missions to Honduras, and I have vivid memories of having people from our community come to our house for urgent care. These experiences gave me a taste of the impact we can have in helping others.

In college, as I learned about my strengths and passions, I narrowed my focus to behavioral health. I earned a bachelor's in Psychology and masters in Clinical Psychology and became a psychotherapist. I have been a licensed counselor in Florida, North Carolina and now in Missouri. I have provided counseling primarily in underserved communities

through community mental health. I have also worked in private practice, Hospice, and on a college campus.

After many years of trauma work, I pivoted to clinical training, supervision and executive leadership. I also served as CEO of a large organization that provides residential and community-based services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I returned to direct care 2 years ago and incorporated my rescue pup, Briggs, into my therapy.

Most importantly, I am also the proud mother of three sons and two daughters-in-law, excited grandmother of a brand-new grandson and wife of Jeff, a historian and president of Drury University. I look forward to getting to know everyone better in the weeks and months ahead and thank you so much for warmly welcoming us to Drury and to Springfield.

Outstanding Graduating Seniors: 2023-24

The following students were our outstanding graduating seniors for 2023-24. Students were selected based on demonstrated academic excellence and service to the department. Summa awards were given to students whose cumulative GPAs exceeded 3.95. Our Summa award winners were Emily Armour, Victoria Enos, Emily Hiebert, Tayte Kozlowski, and Sumeya Tummala. Our other department award winners were as follows:

Outstanding Student in Clinical and Behavioral Neuroscience:



Kiley Young

Kiley Young grew up in a small town in Ohio called Wooster and graduated from high school in Smithville, MO where she participated in the International Baccalaureate program. She chose to attend Drury due to its tight-knit community and beautiful scenery. At Drury, she double majored in Criminology and Clinical and Behavioral Neuroscience and completed a certificate program in Wrongful Convictions. Accelerating her academic timetable, she graduated after only 3 years. Kiley is currently working as a Substance Use Counselor with Heartland Center for Behavioral Change in Springfield MO while she continues to search for her calling.

Outstanding Student in Criminology/Criminal Justice:



Emily Armour

Emily Kathleen Armour graduated from high school in Nixa, MO. At Drury, she majored in Criminal Justice, minored in Advanced Scientific Analysis, and earned a certificate in Justice Denied: Wrongful Convictions. She is attending Washington University in St. Louis School of Law and will graduate in May of 2027 with her Juris Doctor. Her law interests include criminal prosecution, medical malpractice, and property law. In the long term, she would like to live and work in Switzerland or the United Kingdom and have her own sheep farm. If it is required, she will get a Master of Laws to allow her to practice in those countries.

Outstanding Student in Psychology:



Emily Hiebert

Emily Hiebert graduated from Park Hill High School in Kansas City, Mo. At Drury, she majored in Psychology, minored in Spanish, and earned certificates in Holistic Health and Well-Being and Professional and Visual Communication. Six months after finishing her B.A. in Psychology at Drury, she graduated with her 200-hour Therapeutic Yoga Teacher certification through the Therapeutic Yoga Institute at Lotus Care KC in Gladstone, MO. She has especially loved learning about how movement, breathwork, and meditation can support people's physical and mental well-being and looks forward to making yoga inclusive and accessible to all populations.

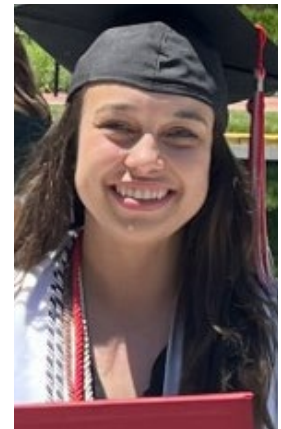
Outstanding Student in Sociology:



Mia Harris

Mia Harris graduated from high school in West Plains, MO. At Drury, she majored in Sociology, minored in Behavioral Neuroscience and Special Education, and earned the Neurodiversity certificate. Planning for a career in academia, she plans to pursue graduate school in Sociology but is also interested in urban planning and policy. She also has dreams of becoming a professional cyclist or continuing her career in triathlon. In the short-term, she has a one-way ticket to Australia right after she graduates in December where she will work and travel with old Drury pal, Mia Pelletier. Mia doesn't know exactly what's next, but the future is bright!

Outstanding Student in Behavioral Sciences:



Erica Batson

Erica Batson graduated from Parkview High School in Springfield, MO. At Drury, she earned the B.S. in Psychology, minored in Advanced Scientific Analysis, and earned a certificate in Professional and Visual Communication. She is currently in an M.S. program in Industrial-Organizational Psychology at Missouri State University and has a GA position. After she finishes her master's degree, she plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Environmental or Experimental Psychology. For career paths, she's keeping her options open as her interests evolve, but she has grown quite fond of studying research methods and statistics and would love to have statistician-level expertise someday.

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 Thank you for your support!