Winners of the 2020 Dr. Michael Sullivan Diversity Scholarship are...
Diane Keister, Erica Peppers and Alec Smidt

The Michael Sullivan Diversity Scholarship Fund committee has selected three winners for 2020. They are Diane Keister of Idaho State University, Erica Peppers of the University of Tennessee and Alec Smidt of Yale University of Medicine and the University of Oregon.

DIANE KEISTER’S research research interests include disparities in the diagnosis and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder for underserved populations and the dissemination and implementation of culturally competent assessments and interventions for Autism Spectrum Disorder and underserved populations. Her current research studies are investigating factors influencing treatment-seeking attitudes for individuals with developmental disabilities within indigenous populations using a community-based participatory research model.

Keister, oringially from Richmond, Virginia, is a second year student of the Clinical Psychology PhD program at Idaho State University.

ERICA PEPPERS’ research interests explore the physiological impact of minority stressors on mental health and health inequities. Her current research aims to better understand the chronic stress of gendered racism by exploring its impact on salivary alpha amylase (sAA), for which there is emerging evidence for its use as a non-invasive and sensitive biomarker of chronic stress. She say, “I would like to understand how dysregulated physiological stress responses inform health disparities experienced by African American women.” Clinical implications of this work include potential contributions to deciphering what innovative methods could be developed and sustained to help mental health practitioners better meet the needs of African American women in a culturally relevant manner. My goal is to provide evidence to practitioners of the chronic nature in which gendered racism is experienced, to inform culturally competent care, and to improve psychotherapy outcomes for African American women.

Peppers is a fifth year counseling psychology doctoral candidate at the University of Tennessee.

ALEC SMIDT’S research focuses on the effects of interpersonal betrayal and institutional betrayal on those who have experienced these harms. Of particular interest to him is how institutional betrayal may exacerbate the effects of interpersonal trauma, and how certain groups (e.g., women, sexual and gender minorities) may be more at risk than others for experiencing both interpersonal and institutional betrayal in a variety of institutional contexts. Alec’s dissertation investigated how institutional courage (i.e., supportive, validating, and comprehensive responses to reports of harm) and institutional betrayal affect psychological and physical health, as well as workplace outcomes, for individuals who have experienced sexual harassment in their workplaces. Currently, he is focusing on adapting Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) for transgender and gender-expansive youth, as well as characterizing non-suicidal self-injury in this population.

Smidt is is a Psychology Fellow in the Department of Psychiatry at the Yale University School of Medicine. He is also a PhD candidate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Oregon.

About the Dr. Michael Sullivan Diversity Scholarship Fund
This scholarship supports research/training and community projects in the area of diversity/multiculturalism. Awards up to $500 per recipient are granted once a year, and the winner(s) are announced in March. Grants support or assist applicants in covering expenses related to their projects or research. The deadline for submission is the second Friday in January. The award application must be submitted electronically to the chair of the review committee by 4:30 p.m. on the day of the deadline.

The Dr. Michael Sullivan Diversity Scholarship Fund is supported by generous gifts, grants and contributions from individuals and organizations who seek to honor Dr. Sullivan and advance diversity initiatives or research in states, provinces and territories.
This is the thirteenth year for the Michael Sullivan Diversity Scholarship. Past winners are:

2019  Alena Borgatti, Univ. of Alabama | Kyle Simon, Univ. of Kentucky | C. Nicole White, Univ. of South Carolina
2018  Anna Abate, Sam Houston State University | Kathleen Collins, University of Massachusetts
2017  Liz Weber Ollen, Clark University | Madison Silverstein of Auburn University
2016  Stacy Ko, Iowa State University | Chassitty Whitman, City University of New York
2015  Caitlin Cavanagh, The University of California, Irvine | Barbara Wood Roberts, Idaho State University
2014  Calia A. Torres, University of Alabama | Jeremy J. Eggleston, Fordham University
2013  Jin Kim, University of California-Davis | David Lick, University of California-Los Angeles
2012  Marisa Franco, University of Maryland | Anahi Collado-Rodriguez, University of Maryland
2011  Ana Fernandez, Long Island University/Brooklyn Campus
2010  Ariz Rojas, University of South Florida
2009  Sangetta Parikshak, University of Kansas
2008  Janelle Hines of University of Cincinnati

Your Donation Supports the Michael Sullivan Diversity Scholarship

The Michael Sullivan Diversity Scholarship Fund was created to provide financial assistance to support graduate student research projects in honor of Dr. Sullivan’s work with the American Psychological Association, state, provincial and territorial psychological associations and his commitment to diversity and inclusion. It has been funded by gifts, grants, contributions and bequests made in honor of Dr. Sullivan over the years since he retired from the American Psychological Association.

Dr. Michael Sullivan served as the Assistant Executive Director for State Advocacy at the American Psychological Association. In this position, he managed the Practice Directorate's program of making resources available to 60 affiliated psychological associations in every state and several Canadian provinces and U.S. territories. A fellow of APA, Dr. Sullivan has been a strong supporter of state psychological association involvement as a means of promoting diverse and multicultural leadership in psychology and positively impacting communities.

Additional information about the scholarship is available at ohpsych.org/MichaelSullivanDiversityScholarship.

Call for applications for the 2021 Scholarships begin in the fall of 2020.

Donation Form: Support the Michael Sullivan Diversity Scholarship Today!

Online donations can be made at ohpsych.org/MichaelSullivanDiversityScholarship, or complete and return this form to:
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