

APRIL 2015

## Post Traumatic Growth lab gives psychology students the opportunity to study growth after trauma

Nearly everyone has heard of post-traumatic stress disorder. But what about post-traumatic growth?

Dr. Kanako Taku, assistant professor of psychology, is a leading scholar on post-traumatic growth (PTG) and has conducted research on the subject for 11 years on how people change psychologically, cognitively, socially and spiritually after traumatic events.

In her PTG Lab, undergraduate psychology students at Oakland University can join in on the exploration of this relatively uncharted territory. They are currently visiting local high schools to see if this growth after trauma is possible for the younger generation, particularly for those who have been bullies and inflicted harm on others.

This is fifth-year Leah LaLonde's fourth semester studying PTG in the lab.

"It's a positive spin on experiences after trauma,"

LaLonde said. "The important thing is that ... most people recover from trauma or stressful life events, but the post-traumatic growth is beyond the recovery. So its psychological benefits are besides just recovering from the trauma or whatever happened."

She and four others are currently studying this occurrence in the Rochester area's high school students.



"I'm looking at how their perception of growth might change from the adults and find a different way to measure PTG with adolescents because they're just at such a different time in their life than adults," LaLonde said. "So what they might think psychological growth is might be different from an adult."

LaLonde and fellow lab members visit the high schools three times. First they pass out a 10-page survey on variables such as demographics, self-esteem and self-reflection habits. Next they retrieve the survey and give an interactive presentation on PTG. Three weeks later they return one last time for a second survey and compare responses from before and after the PTG discussion.

The psychology students are also exploring cross-cultural differences, learning from differences around America and using data specifically from Taku, who was born and raised in Japan.

Taku regularly publishes her research, and encourages her students to publish research as well. They continuously update Taku's website with their activities, research and presentations.

"She wants to prepare us for graduate school or whatever we're going into," LaLonde said. "She kind of replicates the experience of grad school."

# NEWS YOU CAN USE

## **Breaking through the STEM stereotypes**

By Scott Davis | April 6, 2015

Through volunteering and other outreach programs, professor Laura Dinsmoor is trying to get more women into STEM related programs at the university level.

In a field that is mostly dominated by males, it has become a nationwide issue that not enough women are involved in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) related careers. This means that the answers to climate change, biomedical issues and the cure for cancer are going to come from the minds of current and future STEM students.

Professor Dinsmoor is one of the professors molding the young minds of STEM students. She graduated Oakland University in 1980 with a degree in computer engineering.

There is a lot of data that shows that not enough women are interested in STEM, which is why Dinsmoor, along with many other Oakland professors, are trying to raise the interest level.

Dinsmoor's efforts include going to local high schools and speaking to them about STEM, volunteering at coding events and judging local robotics competitions. She says that even though she hopes her efforts are helping influence

girls to get interested in STEM, it's female STEM college students that should go out and help with the cause.

With the country (and the world) facing numerous issues related to the STEM field, it is important to promote and keep the best and brightest minds within those fields. There is evidence that a lot of capable women stray away from the STEM fields due to stereotypes, but with the efforts of Professor Dinsmoor and others at Oakland, hopefully those stereotypes start to fade away.

---

## **Appointment presents opportunities to expand undergraduate research**

Oakland University's Graeme Harper, DCA, Ph.D., has been elected a councilor of the Council for Undergraduate Research, the national body representing and supporting undergraduate research in the U.S. The appointment is for three years and promises many opportunities to expand undergraduate research nationally and at OU, according to Dr. Harper.

"My appointment should send the message to others that Oakland University is indeed a hub of world-class undergraduate research," said Dr. Harper, dean of OU's Honors College. "This is something on which we can build, and it is something that clearly links back to our

history, as well as informing our future."

Dr. Harper's election comes as Oakland continues to establish itself as a destination for strong undergraduate research. The university recently hosted the 2014 Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters Conference, which featured scholars from throughout the U.S. and Canada. OU undergraduate students presented original research at the conference and at other conferences, including the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900, Endocrine Society Annual Meeting and Expo, Midwest Political Science Association Conference and Claremont-UC Undergraduate Research Conference on the European Union.

"I have assessed faculty, graduate and undergraduate research in over 40 institutions around the world. But I knew some years ago that the strength of graduate and faculty research is dependent on building undergraduate research to the highest level of achievement," he explained.

"That's why we have a considerable opportunity at Oakland. We know how to build strong undergraduate research, and it is my contention that strong undergraduate research will determine the future of higher education."

# STATE AND NATIONAL HEADLINES

## **Minnesota legislation approves more money, but no full tuition freeze**

Minnesota Senate-passed legislation would increase state-run college and university spending slightly less than the House wants, but neither bill contains the money college officials seek to freeze all tuition.

"It is my strongest intention that they do keep tuition low," said Sen. Terri Bonoff, the Senate higher education chairwoman.

Her bill, which passed 42-21 Monday night, and one by Rep. Bud Nornes, R-Fergus Falls, that awaits a House vote, include less money than the University of Minnesota and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities systems say they need for tuition freezes.

*Grand Forks Herald*  
April 22, 2015

---

## **PA: Board agrees to freeze tuition if state funding increase materializes**

The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) Board of Governors expressed their intent this week to freeze tuition for the upcoming academic year if a \$45.3 million, or 11 percent, funding increase proposed by Gov. Tom Wolf (D) passes the

legislature.

The funding increase, if approved, would be the largest in PASSHE history and the first funding increase in seven years. If the board freezes tuition, it will be the first PASSHE tuition freeze since 1998.

*PittsburghPost-Gazette*  
April 9, 2015

---

## **MT: Campus gun measure narrowly fails to pass**

Last week the Montana House of Representatives voted 51-49 against a bill that would allow individuals with permits to carry weapons on the state's public college campuses. The measure was opposed by all 41 House Democrats and 10 House Republicans.

*Missoulian*  
March 31, 2015

---

## **Matching fund for academics gets \$23.5M from Legislature**

State lawmakers voted Tuesday to spend \$23.5 million on a program that matches private donations with state dollars to advance academics, with language added to allay concerns about the money being used for athletic scholarships.

Lawmakers created the Higher

Education Challenge Fund in 2013 with a \$29 million appropriation. The program provides \$1 in state funds for every \$2 in private donations raised by college and university foundations.

The House and Senate on Tuesday approved \$23.5 million in House Bill 1151 for the program in 2015-17. That's lower than the \$29 million recommended by Gov. Jack Dalrymple in December but higher than the \$19 million the House initially approved in February.

*The Dickinson Press*  
April 23, 2015

---

## **The college degrees and skills employers most want in 2015**

The hiring picture keeps getting better for college graduates. According to a new survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), employers are planning to hire 9.6 percent more graduates for their U.S. operations than they did from the class of 2014.

That's a one percent hike from the 8.6 percent gain a year ago and a significant jump from 2013, when employers said they would boost hiring by just 2.1 percent over the previous year.



123 Wilson Hall  
2200 North Squirrel Road  
Rochester, Michigan 48309-4497

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Rochester, MI  
Permit No. 17

**OAKLAND UNIVERSITY  
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT AND  
COMMUNITY RELATIONS**  
(248) 370-3682 | oakland.edu/govrel

**Rochelle A. Black**  
Vice President  
black@oakland.edu

**Nicole Wells Stallworth**  
Assistant Vice President  
wellstallworth@oakland.edu

**Claudia DiMercurio**  
Executive Assistant  
dimercur@oakland.edu

**Jacqueline Racchi**  
Executive Secretary  
racchi@oakland.edu

**State and National Headlines *CONTINUED***

A non-profit group in Bethlehem, PA, NACE links college placement offices with employers. It surveyed more than a thousand of its employer members from February 9 – March 23, 2015, and got responses from 162 companies in industries ranging from agriculture to energy to retail. Respondents included American Express AXP, Exxon Mobil, Merck, Procter & Gamble and United Airlines.

*Forbes*  
April 17, 2015

---

**Higher ed's one-on-one admissions approach**

There was a time when colleges and universities could put their best marketing message out to the masses, and wait for students to respond and express interest.

Today, it's about being aggressive without being pushy, being more student-focused without being intrusive, and being more open to digital communication without sacrificing authenticity.

*University Business*  
April 16, 2015