

First Year Research Award: Neuroscience and Psychology

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Gwynne Davis

Position Title: First Year Research Scholar in Neuroscience/Psychology

Criteria: The Wittenberg University Psychology Department and Neuroscience Program will offer a First Year Research Award for the academic year 2024-2025 to an incoming student to work with Dr. Gwynne Davis. This student will have a demonstrated academic ability and/or research interest in behavioral neuroscience.

Expectations: FYRA Scholarship recipients will devote between 6 and 8 hours per week across their first year to FYRA program and their research-related project, according to the FYRA Learning Contract agreed upon by the sponsoring professor and the scholarship recipient. Recipients will also be expected to participate in a regular meeting of FYRA recipients, present their results in an appropriate forum and submit a copy of their presentation to the appropriate university office. FYRA Scholarship recipients will also participate in an assessment of the FYRA program. (The FYRA Scholarship is not part of a student's work study award.)

Research Activity: The First Year Research Award recipient will assist Dr. Gwynne Davis, Assistant Professor of Psychology, in her research focused understanding the biological basis of goal-directed motivated behavior, impulse control, and habit formation. The student may have the opportunity to help develop a specific research question under Dr. Davis's broad research goals or contribute to existing on-going research. Currently, Dr. Davis is pursuing research questions understanding how food insecurity impacts the biology of the brain and how those changes impact working memory and impulse control. The FYRA student will be mentored in designing behavioral neuroscience experiments, statistical analysis, and data presentation as well as gain hands on experience and ethical training in the use of the model organism *mus musculus* (mouse). The student may also gain experience with writing code, and will get some exposure in reading code and biochemical assays, depending on student interest. The FYRA recipient will have an opportunity to present their work publicly at an undergraduate conference or colloquium at Wittenberg University, or a regional conference. Depending on the recipient's interest and level of involvement there may also be the opportunity for co-authorship of manuscripts to be submitted for publication in an academic journal. Behavioral neuroscience experiments take a combination of consistent time commitment, attention to detail, and care, because of this, recipients may have to devote 3-4 hours at a time during the week as well as occasionally come in the evenings or over weekends for short periods to ensure continuity of experiments. Recipients should have good critical thinking and writing skills as well as a strong interest in how our brains drive behavior.