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2020 Undergraduate Research Symposium

Welcome to the 2020 Undergraduate Research Symposium Online. Each year a little known group of exceptional Western students and faculty spend hundreds of hours tirelessly conducting [original research](#). Whether it's in a lab, in the field, in the library, or visiting an archive-- Western's research students and their faculty mentors exemplify the value of higher learning.

These presentations won't be complete without audience participation. Each of our research students have exhaustively prepared to answer your questions about their research inquiries, and to receive your thoughts and feedback as well. Below, you will find video presentations and a link to provide feedback to each researcher or research group. Please, help our students grow by providing them with an opportunity to respond.

Thank you for participating,

[Janice Grover-Roosa](#)

Director of Library Services
Western Wyoming Community College

For the past seven years, Western's Undergraduate Research Symposium has been a place where Western researchers are able to report on their findings.

This year, as social distancing standards have prohibited many student researchers from collecting data, you may notice some students presenting on their research design, or conducting a meta-analysis of existing research, instead of presenting their own data and findings.

Two Years of a Fair and Just World

Presenter- Ryan Desmond

Advising Faculty- Shane Westfall Ph.D.



Feedback for Ryan

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Abstract: Previous research indicates that physically attractive individuals tend to be stronger endorsers of the just-world hypothesis. Social media allows people to present and be seen however they wish to a large population. This study examines the effect of social media on this relationship between appearance and the just-world hypothesis. In this talk, we will discuss the last two years of research and what we have found and where that research is headed. We will also cover the implications of Fair and Just World Theory as well as look at the effects of sexual orientation and its effect on attractiveness, self-monitoring, and social media usage before showing how those interact with Fair and Just World Theory.

Social Media, Physical Attractiveness, and Fair and Just World Theory

Presenter- Jon Weed

Advising Faculty- Shane Westfall Ph.D.



Feedback for Jon

Abstract: With the present study, we hope to demonstrate the moderating effects of Social media on this relationship between physical attractiveness and endorsement of the just-world hypothesis. Participants (n = 200) completed a measure of perceived physical attractiveness as well as a measure of endorsement of the just-world hypothesis. Additionally, participants completed a series of personality measures including one to assess their propensity for self-monitoring and a series of measures for their media and technology usage.

Data analysis is still in the initial stages, so we look forward to presenting our initial results. It is predicted that we will replicate previous work establishing the relationship between physical attractiveness and just-world endorsement. Additionally, we predict that self-monitoring will mediate this relationship. Our work explores two important notions: that physical attractiveness is a powerful force on our subjective experience as a human and that just-world beliefs are driven, at least in part, by the level of societal privilege one possesses. This suggests that one's physical appearance may play a previously overlooked role in navigating and interpreting the social world around them. Whether one seeks to reduce their own biases or to explain the behavior of those around them, the important first step in determining when such biases exist.

Since just-world biases drive many discriminatory behaviors, such as victim blaming and derogation of the poor, the importance of understanding these beliefs is paramount. Just-world beliefs are influenced by a variety of factors; however, it seems that the role of physical attractiveness cannot be overlooked. One area for future research will be to explore what moderating variables influence this relationship. It is likely that Social media usage plays a role in this relationship. This may help to further address the applied aspects of this research line, primarily helping individuals to understand and reduce their own cognitive biases.

Testing a fast and reliable protein-protein interaction tool

Presenter- Steven Poyer

Advising Faculty- Joshua Holmes Ph.D.

Testing a fast and reliable
protein-protein interaction tool

Feedback for Steven

Steven Poyer and Joshua Holmes
Department of Life Sciences
Western Wyoming Community College WY 82901

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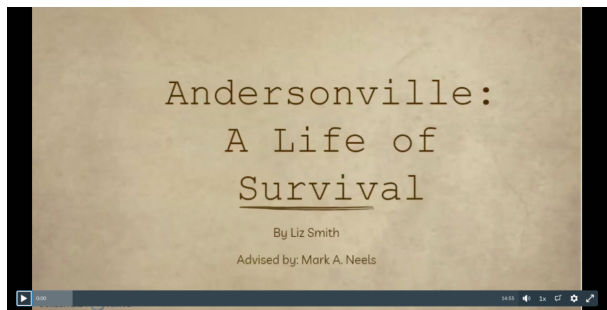
Abstract: *Caulobacter crescentus* has a protein called PopZ. PopZ contains an intrinsically disordered region that allows it to bind with multiple other

proteins. Our goal was to develop and test a simple alternative to more expensive traditional techniques that could still show these interactions and maybe even discover more. The BACTH system we have developed has successfully shown interaction with one of PopZ's binding partners, ParB.

Andersonville: A Life of Survival

Presenter- Liz Smith

Advising Faculty- Mark Neels Ph.D.



Feedback for Liz

Abstract : Andersonville Prison, also known as Camp Sumter, was a notorious prison camp in the deep South during the Civil War. 13,000 men died due to the horrendous conditions that the Confederacy confined the Union prisoners to. Throughout time, there has always been an image of what being a man was. However, these soldiers within the walls of Andersonville Prison had their manhood stripped from them as they strived to survive this camp as they fought off disease, hunger, and other prisoners. The research I performed was from journals, letters, books, and pictures provided from online archives and resources.

Bringing Hope to the Surface:

Community in Sweetwater County Coal Camps

Presenter- Elizabeth Chollak

Advising Faculty- Mark Neels Ph.D.



Feedback for Elizabeth

Abstract: Company towns are not known for taking care of employees. Company ownership of the town created many opportunities to trap families in inescapable debt. However, in Sweetwater County, Wyoming, these conditions were overcome through the community people formed by their shared experiences. Food and cooking allowed for bonds to be created beyond nationality. In addition, the harsh conditions of the environment and the mining industry created a shared experience where they could support each other and change the traditional roles of women and families. Through memoirs, resources at the Rock Springs Historical Museum, and writings from local historians, the narrative of community in Sweetwater County comes to life.

Wyoming Landowner Perspective on the Red Desert to Hoback Wildlife Migration Conservation Corridor in Wyoming

Presenter- Shane Heavin

Advising Faculty- Angela Thatcher



Feedback for Shane

Abstract: The mule deer population in Wyoming has been on the decline for several years (Bennet & Gautier, 2019), and the Migration Corridor has played a role in that decline. One of the most significant hurdles facing mule deer migration is crossing private/leased lands. As the mule deer cross these lands, they are in direct competition with local livestock for food and water resources.

Mule deer need to migrate over these corridors as it allows them access to seasonal habitats on different ranges. Mule deer can travel to high mountain areas for forage rich in nutrition in the summer, then travel to lower elevations to avoid deep snow and harsh high mountain conditions during winter. Corridors such as the Red Desert to Hoback Migration Corridor allow that critical access for not only mule deer, but all wildlife that need to travel for survival.

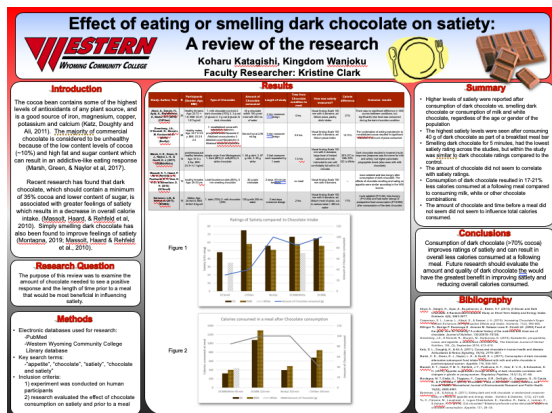
This study will examine the perspectives of landowners in Southwest Wyoming about mule deer migration corridors that run through the property that they own, lease for grazing their livestock, as well as that used for recreation and other forms of public use. This study will also explore the opinions of these landowners about outside (State/Federal) management of private lands and the level of involvement the landowner would like to play in setting regulations and contribute to the conservation of these migration corridors. When

combined with the help of conservation groups, the habitat contributions benefit livestock, wildlife, and the landscape as well.

Effect of dark chocolate on satiety

Presenters- Koharu Katagishi & Kingdom Wanjoku

Advising Faculty- Kristine Clark MS, ACSM-CEP, MS, RD, CSSD, LDN



Feedback for Koharu & Kingdom

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Abstract : Recent research has found that dark chocolate, which should contain a minimum of 35% cocoa and lower content of sugar, is associated with greater feelings of satiety which results in a decrease in overall calorie intake. We used databases to review the research to examine the amount of chocolate needed to see a positive response and the length of time prior to a meal that would be most beneficial in influencing satiety. From research results, The highest satiety levels were seen after consuming 40 g of dark chocolate, and consumption of dark chocolate resulted in 17-21% fewer calories consumed at the following meal compared to consuming milk, white or other chocolate combinations.

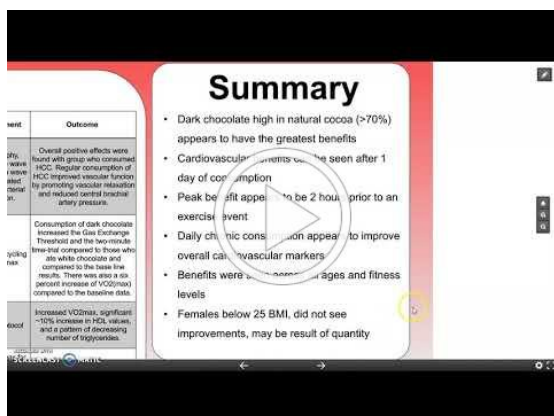
The effect of dark chocolate consumption on cardiorespiratory markers and physical performance: a review of the literature

Presenter- Kedric Coonis

Contributors- Kodee Thomas, Alyssa Vigil, Alana Floyd , Devon Clark, Edgar Galvez

Advising Faculty- Kristine Clark MS, ACSM-CEP, MS, RD, CSSD, LDN

Feedback for Kedric



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Abstract: Meta-analysis on past research of dark chocolate consumption and the cardiorespiratory benefits there are.

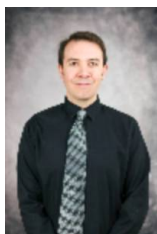
Meet the Faculty



[Kristine Clark, MS, ACSM-CEP, MS, RD, CSSD, LDN](#)
Professor of Exercise Science and Nutrition, Exercise Science Program Facilitator, IRB Chair



[Josh Holmes, Ph.D.](#)
Instructor of Microbiology



[Mark A. Neels, Ph.D.](#)
Assistant Professor of History and Political Science



[Angela Thatcher M.S., Ph.D. ABD](#)
Sociology Instructor

[Shane Westfall, Ph.D.](#)
Assistant Professor of Psychology



Don't miss the Nursing Student Research [Poster Presentations](#) on May 5th from 11-1 via Zoom!
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Western Wyoming Community College
2500 College Drive
Rock Springs, WY 82901

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