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ECU Psychology Professor Receives Award for Paper on Personality, Mood, Health

GREENVILLE, N.C. (June 26, 2013) — This past week, an East Carolina University assistant professor in the Department of Psychology, Dr. Lisa Baranik, received the 2012 Best Paper Award from the Journal of Research in Personality.

“Physical Health, Positive and Negative Affect, and Personality: A Longitudinal Analysis,” was co-authored by Dr. Stephen West and Yu Liu from Arizona State University, and Dr. John Finch, an ECU professor of psychology who passed away in 2012. The award ceremony took place at the Biennial Convention of the Association for Research in Personality Friday, June 21, in Charlotte, N.C., and included a tribute to Finch’s career.

“John was a brilliant scholar, a gifted teacher and a thoughtful, kind person. My coauthors and I are greatly appreciative that John’s last research project could be honored in this way,” said Baranik.

Baranik is a member of the occupational health psychology concentration of the health psychology doctoral program in the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences. Through her research, she examines employee emotions, health and well-being, and mentoring relationships. Research presented in the award-winning paper tested a statistical model of personality, mood and health, and found that negative moods may contribute more to health than positive moods.

“The connection between the mind and the body is well-known, but researchers are still discovering exactly how that connection works,” said Baranik. “Our paper shows that a person in poor physical health experiences both fewer positive emotions and more negative emotions. On the other hand, our study shows that only negative emotions predict subsequent physical health, not positive emotions.”

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