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# Honors Students Present at Harvard University's NCRC

February 5, 2020



*Pictured from Left to Right: Natalie Woodward,  
Katie Kennedy and Samantha Estep*

Under the mentorship of Department of Health Sciences and Kinesiology Professor Daniel Czech, Ph.D., and Assistant Professor Ron Snarr, Ph.D., three University Honors Program students attended and presented their research at Harvard University's National Collegiate Research Conference (NCRC) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, this past January.

The following students presented their research:

- Katie Kennedy "The Experience of Disposition Optimism among Female African Americans, Latinas/Hispanics, and Caucasians in the Generation Z-An Existential Phenomenological Investigation"
- Samantha Estep "A Comparison of Laboratory Measures for Estimation of Body Fat Percentage Against Criterion Multi-Compartment Models"
- Natalie Woodward "An Examination of the Relationship between Perceived Health and Optimism in Generation Z – A Generational Analysis"

Junior exercise science and Spanish major, Kennedy sees research as an opportunity to help seek out new knowledge that can change the way the world learns or views a topic. Under the leadership of Czech, Kennedy is focusing her research on the experience of dispositional optimism among female African Americans, Hispanics/Latinas and Caucasians in Generation Z.

“Everything in our society is advancing and progressing so quickly, and I feel as though being a part of this constant quest for new knowledge, with the ultimate goal of being able to improve the lives of others, is such an amazing opportunity,” stated Kennedy.

“Our program believes in the EPIC (Experiential, Participatory, Image-Rich and Connected) acronym of student engagement and the NCRC is the epitome of an EPIC type experience for our students,” stated Czech.

“Research is important because it allows us to always stay curious and never become static in our learning,” stated Estep, a junior exercise science major. The Canton, Georgia native is working under the guidance of Snarr where they will be testing Division-I, female, collegiate athletes from various sports. Estep noted they decided to focus on this population due to it being greatly underserved with scientific research. During the study, Estep and Snarr will focus on validating body composition measures in female athletes to allow them to gain a deeper insight into the differences in body composition as compared to the general population. “I believe humans always have ways to improve in all aspects of life, and research allows us to improve our knowledge and improve the world around us.”

To be selected to present at the conference, students had to go through a competitive process which included submitting a research abstract, resume and essay.

“The best part about the NCRC was being able to meet students from universities all over the country and learn about their research as well as share what I’ve been working on,” stated Kennedy, the Bloomington, Illinois native. “I met some really amazing people, who were working on incredible projects, and we truly bonded over our passion for research which has led to friendships that I know will last for a very long time.”

“From being able to travel to Boston, learning the ins-and-outs of a large metropolitan area, meeting and interacting with students from all over the world, to learning from some of the best experts and professors in the health science arena, I believe this experience is invaluable to our students,” stated Czech.

Students received funding from the University Honors Program to attend the conference.

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