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1-1-2016

"My Area of Expertise is Interpersonal/Human Communication"

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Recommended Citation

Gilchrist-Petty, Eletra, "My Area of Expertise is Interpersonal/Human Communication" (2016). *Summer Community of Scholars (RCEU and HCR) Project Proposals*. 292.

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RCEU Summer 2016 Faculty Proposal

Faculty Information

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Project Summary

My area of research expertise is interpersonal/human communication. Specifically, I study how various life events and communication phenomena impact how humans relate to each other. Toward this end, the project I am seeking to engage explores how fathers are impacted by the miscarriage of a child. Research abounds regarding how mothers are affected by the loss of a child pre-birth, but research has rarely explored how fathers experience the miscarriages. This project seeks to delve into this important “dark side” topic. The goal is to conduct a series of semi-structured interviews with fathers whose partners have endured a miscarriage. By capturing the rich narrative experiences of the fathers, this study seeks to explore not only how fathers perceive the miscarriage, but how the loss of the unborn child affected their relationship with the baby’s mother. The study will further examine how the fathers view social support after pregnancy loss. The student will assist in many aspects relative to this study’s completion, including reviewing relevant literature, conducting interviews, and assisting in the overall write-up. More specifics regarding the student’s work is explained below in the section on student duties and benefits.

Student Prerequisites

The ideal student for this project will have a junior-level academic standing. The student should also have taken and passed with a B or higher either in the Communication Research Methods (CM 370) course or a comparable course in another discipline where the student has acquired a basis of research design, implementation, and completion. The student should also be a good writer, have a working knowledge of the APA reference style, be mature, and eager and willing to engage in independent research.

Student Duties & Benefits

I will take a hands-on approach in thoroughly training the student in all aspects needed to fulfill his/her duties. After engaging in the research process, the student will enhance his/her knowledge of data collection by directly interviewing the research participants. Once I receive a list of willing and eligible participants, the student will contact each one and set up individual appointments that will occur either face-to-face, via Skyppe, or over the telephone. The student will initially inform the participant of the study’s purpose and the informed consent requirement. Afterwards, he/she will follow a script of predetermined interview questions and will audio record each interview session for accuracy. Additionally, the student will transcribe the audio

recorded interview notes, saving them to a disk. The student will work closely with me regarding analyzing the data, gaining valuable research skills and a working knowledge of research computing tools, such as SPSS. Moreover, the student will assist in the research stage by consulting external sources for the review of related literature and reference list. The student will also engage in the writing and editing stages that are necessary to complete an academic paper. In sum, students will acquire knowledge of the complete research process, adding both breadth and depth to his/her classroom content in various courses that focus either on human communication or research methodology. I am also hopeful that the results will warrant a publication in a nationally renowned publication outlet, in which the student's name will be specifically listed and recognized for his/her contributions.

Mentor Supervision and Interaction

I will take a hands-on and direct approach regarding student instruction. Not only will the student learn directly from my experience and knowledge-base, but I will provide the student appropriate readings and supplemental material necessary to successfully complete the project. I will facilitate open communication with the student, encouraging him/her to ask questions and seek guidance as needed. We will have weekly contact. The Department of Communication has a research lab in Morton Hall where the student can work. We can also meet in my office, which is in Morton Hall. In the event that we are unable to have a face-to-face meeting, I will use various mediated channels to conduct our meetings, such as email, Skype, and the telephone. The student will report directly to me, and I will supervise and evaluate his/her work. The overall assessment will be based on 3 main criteria: (1) submitting work on time and attendance in regard to keeping various appointments and due dates; (2) professionalism in terms of overall attitude and displaying appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication to the professor and research participants; and (3) the quantity and quality of work completed.