

Psychology Doctoral Candidate Selected to Attend Prestigious 64th Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting in Germany

PHILADELPHIA, February 28, 2014 – Steven J. Simmons, a doctoral candidate in Psychology with a specialization in Neuroscience, has been selected by the scientific review panel of the Council for the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings to participate in the 64th Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting. Only 600 top young researchers worldwide are given the opportunity to participate in Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings. This year, 34 Nobel Laureates are expected to meet with the young researchers to share their knowledge, establish new contacts, and discuss topics in medicine relevant to global health, the challenges to medical care in developing countries, and other future research approaches.

Steven's nomination to participate in this prestigious honor was put forth by Zebulon Kendrick, Vice Provost for Graduate Education. Steven was selected from a pool of 20 outstanding candidates in Psychology as the department's sole nominee. Steven states, "The attendees at the Lindau Meeting are elite with respect to their contributions and innovative thinking toward bettering their science disciplines." He recognizes that this opportunity presents a unique way in which to "openly discuss ideas and consider experimental methodologies with peers in related disciplines to better their own research and acquire a professional network for detailing and advancing such procedures before improving methodologies in the laboratory."

Steven's research topic is "Behavioral Neuroscience: Effects of Nicotine on Learning and Memory." His research requires the use of cellular, molecular, and genetic techniques to better understand nicotine's effects on learning and memory in mice. While nicotine is present in the animal's system, he

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investigates the effects of associative learning, of nicotine, and of learning on neurogenesis rates in mouse dorsal and ventral hippocampi. His research also examines molecular intracellular signaling cascades involved in learning and nicotine addiction.

Thomas Gould, Professor of Psychology, recommended Steven for the honor because he was impressed with Steven's diligence in researching, establishing a protocol for, and implementing a new technique for looking at the effects of nicotine and learning on hippocampal neurogenesis rates in mice. He calls Steven "a rising scientist."

Steven has worked in drug addiction research for the past three years. As an undergraduate at Rutgers University, he examined changes in affect during drug use in cocaine self-administering rats and acquired evidence that a euphoric state is uniquely experienced during initial drug use but not after animals titrate and achieve drug satiety. This work resulted in two publications, two poster presentations, a summer research fellowship, and two awards for research proposals. As a doctoral student at Temple University, his research has earned him authorship on a study to be submitted in Fall 2014 examining the effects of nicotine and learning on intracellular signaling cascades. He is also writing an invited review with Dr. Gould on the contribution of the $\beta 2$ nicotinic acetylcholine receptor subunit in generating nicotine reward and symptoms of withdrawal. In September 2013, he earned a fellowship on a T32 institutional training grant through the National Institute of Drug Abuse. He plans to apply for a National Research Service Award through the National Institutes of Health when his training fellowship concludes.

Steven will attend the 64th Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting in Lindau, Germany, from June 29 to July 4, 2014.

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