

## **Summer 2016 Proposal**

### **Application Part 2: Project Proposal**

Title: "Friendship, victimization, and peer interactions in school-aged children"

Faculty: Michelle Schmidt, Professor, Department of Psychology

Student: Emily Miller ('17)

### **Description of the project**

Emily and I will work on 3-4 separate projects over the course of the summer:

#### Project 1 Manuscript

Project 2 Conference submission for SRCD 2017 due in August 2016

Project 3 Project of the student's own design from my data

Project 4 Book review. I would like to engage Emily in a book review. The specific book would need to be determined as the summer draws nearer, as the newest books are the ones that warrant review. I will keep my eyes out for an opportunity to do a book review.

I have 3 data sets with which we can work:

Data set I. The first data set comes from my Learning Connection evaluative study. Moravian College's former program, *The Learning Connection* (TLC), provided mentoring and parent training to high-risk families whose children attended Lincoln, William Penn, and Fountain Hill Elementary Schools in Bethlehem. Children were recruited at the beginning of fourth grade and received services through the end of fifth grade. For 5 years, I collected data from the children enrolled in this program as well as from their parents, teachers, and mentors. Each year, my TLC study compared approximately 20 mentored children to a group of 20 non-mentored children (each cohort of children was followed for 2 years). Children were also assessed on a variety of behavioral, social, emotional, and academic factors. Data was collected both at the beginning of the school year (September/October) and at the end of the school year (May/June). Although I have published two papers from this data set with student co-authors through SOAR, this data set is rich for additional analyses, which examine children's self-worth, relationships, mental health, and academic performance (socially and academically).

Data set II. The second data set examines approximately 700 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Data considers children's perceptions of peer likability and popularity, friendship quality, victimization, aggression, depression, and anxiety at two time points, six months apart.

The data set is quite extensive and there are dozens of research questions that could be asked and answered.

Data set III. For the past 6 years, I have served in a consulting capacity for Moravian Academy's *Atmosphere of Love and Understanding Project*. Each year, I collect data from students,

teachers, and parents about the social environment at the school. Variables of interest include bullying and victimization, friendship, acceptance of differences, and cyber behavior. I am currently working on creating a data set that appropriately combines the data for all years, so that there is a longitudinal picture of the students. By the summer, there should be a complete data set that will allow for analyses that consider trends as students progress through Moravian Academy.

This data set is also quite extensive and is chock full of questions to ask and answer. This data is especially important because there is near nothing published on victimization within independent school settings. Based on my analyses thus far, the social picture is quite different than that published in studies that are inappropriately generalized to all students.

Together, Emily and I will work on a manuscript from one of these data sets (PROJECT 1). We will strive to submit a proposal to the SRCDD 2017 conference (PROJECT 2). We will need to do a complete literature review, expand the analysis plan, and create full Results and Discussion sections. I would hope to have at least a full *draft* of this manuscript by August.

Scholarly Value: All data sets contain rich information on the topics of dyadic friendship, friendship quality, victimization, and children's mental health. The field of developmental psychology currently considers these "hot topics" and journals welcome papers in these areas.

Book review (PROJECT 4): As indicated above, I will look for an opportunity for Emily and I to jointly write a book review together. This will require finding a book that is published in the next several months, having each of us read it, and then jointly writing a book review for PsycCRITIQUES.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

As described above, a number of tasks need to be accomplished over the summer months.

- Literature reviews—from beginning searches through PsycInfo to acquiring appropriate articles to reading and reviewing articles to writing a full literature section of an empirical paper.
- Data cleaning and analysis—as we work with the data in SPSS, Emily will learn data cleaning techniques and will use analytical tools to apply the appropriate analyses to answer questions of interest
- Results interpretation—Emily will learn to interpret analyses and write up results according to APA style. This will be linked to a Discussion section of a paper that will explore why the results obtained were what they were (or what they were not)
- Book review—we will read a book, discuss it, and build a paper.

Emily and I will both be involved in all aspects of the projects. I feel Emily is well prepared to work on the library research, data analysis, and manuscript preparation over the summer months. Having worked with many SOAR students before, I have learned several things: (1) it is wise to have multiple projects so that students can change projects when frustrated, bored, or in need a change of pace; (2) 40 hours a week is a lot for a student to devote to research, so there needs to be enough work for the students to do to keep busy; and (3) students enjoy working on joint projects with me but also like the freedom to explore questions of interest to them. By having 4 projects, I think the student will have enough work to keep her busy and stimulated, and will also have the opportunity to try different things and challenge herself in new ways.

Schedule (10 weeks):

- June 2016  
Work on developing research questions  
Familiarize Emily with the data  
Begin extensive literature reviews (for Projects 1 and 3)  
Read book for book review (Project 4)
- July 2010  
Begin to create hypotheses and analysis plans  
Run analyses  
Continue literature review; work on selected parts of manuscript  
Complete first draft of manuscript  
Do basic analyses and write a conference proposal (Project 2)  
Write book review

### **Summary of Benefits**

I anticipate my work with Emily leading to the development of a manuscript for submission for publication (in addition to the book review). Our goal will be to have a manuscript near completion at the end of the summer. The beauty of Emily being a rising senior is that we will be able to continue our work beyond the summer months and hopefully have a publishable paper.

The benefits of the Emily's participation in these projects are numerous. Emily is a uniquely motivated student. Through our summer work together, she will gain extensive experience in data analysis and management, as well as in the process of creating a manuscript. She will enhance her library research abilities and be exposed to rich longitudinal data. As with previous SOAR students, Emily would serve as my research assistant and partner over the summer months. In addition to working on at least one manuscript and a book review together, she will be co-author on a conference presentation that we will work on together and submit in August to the Society for Research on Child and Adolescent Development.

I also will reap benefits of the SOAR grant. Without the full-time assistance of competent students, I simply do not have enough hours to complete the outlined tasks. Emily is a wonderfully responsible, capable, and motivated student. I have no doubts about her ability to serve in a capacity similar to graduate level students working on research.

There are undoubtedly benefits of this SOAR funding to the College. I can help (hopefully) graduate school bound students by providing them with necessary research experience. The College then has a better chance of having additional students go on to graduate school. Additionally, the conference presentation and publications that result from this project will have Moravian College's name on them. This obviously provides a great deal of exposure for the College. Finally, the presence of student-faculty collaborative research is desirable for the larger intellectual community at Moravian College.

**Other relevant information:** My previous SOAR projects have resulted in 2 publications in professional peer-reviewed journals with 3 separate students, and 6 conference presentations with student co-authors. Two of my SOAR students have gone on to doctoral programs and 7 have gone on to Master's programs.

### **Application Part 3: Student Statement of Purpose**

Title: "Friendship, victimization, and peer interactions in school-aged children"  
Student: Emily L. Miller, Psychology and Environmental Science Major, Class of 2017  
Faculty: Dr. Michelle Schmidt, Professor, Department of Psychology  
On-campus housing is requested

SOAR is a unique opportunity for me to experience psychological research, collaboration, and publication. After college, I plan to go to graduate school for clinical-counseling psychology with a concentration in developmental psychology. It goes without saying that graduate schools look for field and research experience when they look for worthy applicants to their programs. When seeking out a SOAR project, I made a point to look into the research areas of each of the psychology professors to see if any aligned with my future visions. I was ecstatic to learn that Dr. Schmidt did research in developmental psychology. I contacted her and spoke to her about her research. The data that she has collected over many years provides an amazing opportunity to analyze and find practical and applicable meaning behind extensive longitudinal data that pertains to the field of developmental psychology, specifically with children that are considered "at risk".

All three of the data sets that Dr. Schmidt has collected are incredibly extensive. She has shown me the room where she keeps the data to this project and explained to me the specific information she has collected on at risk children. Dozens of questions could be asked about all three data sets. In fact, it will be difficult to narrow down just a few questions for the manuscript Dr. Schmidt and I will complete.

Not only will I be exposed to research in the psychology field, I will also assist Dr. Schmidt in submitting our work to the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) 2017 conference. Additionally, we will be completing a book review. This provides a chance for me to be exposed to the publication area of psychology. In the past, professors have assigned mock book or article reviews, but this would be the real thing. Here, I would be reading a newly published book and critically analyzing it in conjunction with Dr. Schmidt. These projects would keep me busy every week during the summer and may even carry into the following fall semester.

The projects that Dr. Schmidt has prepared for this summer would provide me with a great deal of experience that not many undergraduate level students get to have. My expectation of this SOAR project is that I will be able to utilize the skills I have been learning the past three years of my college career in a practical and "real world" way. These projects would assist in enhancing my use of SPSS, working with large sets of data, conducting successful searches through psychology databases, writing in APA format, critical analysis of both my work and other published works, and collaboration with other researchers (in this case, Dr. Schmidt). These skills will not only benefit me by making me a more worthy candidate for graduate programs, but more importantly they will follow me into my future career as a psychologist.

My expectations for the outcome this SOAR project are quite numerous. Specifically, I want to find the impact that bullying, friendship, and social-interactions can have on school aged children. This has been a hot topic for many years and an exciting area of research due to the fact that it seems to be a dynamic topic through changes in generations. I also look forward to forming a closer and more professional relationship with a professor at Moravian by assisting them with their research. Dr. Schmidt is incredibly accomplished in this field and would be a great mentor and partner to work with through these projects. In a much broader sense, SOAR would allow me to have first hand experience in the research end of clinical-counseling

psychology. Other than the small empirical studies I have completed at Moravian, I do not have real experience in psychology research, let alone producing a manuscript that has the possibility of being published. SOAR provides an opportunity for me to truly discover if I want to make research part of my career. Regardless of what that answer may be, the benefits that would come out of SOAR would not just pertain to myself but to Dr. Schmidt and Moravian as well. I will help Dr. Schmidt conduct her research, write a manuscript, and book reviews that would otherwise be difficult to complete without some assistance. If this project is accepted into the SRCD conference, Moravian College's name will be attached to it which will be good publicity and exposure for the college as well as the Moravian College Psychology Department. I intend on making the most out of this project both for myself and my own benefits as well as for Dr. Schmidt and Moravian College.

#### **Application Part 4: Expense Proposal**

##### **Budget**

No extra budget requests are included in this proposal.