

Celebrating Student Achievement

The Herald interviewed a few Meredith alumnae who are continuing their research after graduation.

Marlena Brown '15

Major in History and English, Minor in International Studies

Research topic at MC:

My research focused on the intersection of Western and Eastern culture from the 1930s to the 1950s based on the biographical accounts of Nien Chang, Adeline Yen Mah and others, and historical fact. I specifically focused on how Western culture influenced the social landscape of China from the mediums of fashion, education and changing social norms of women during the period.

Takeaway:

I learned more about a culture that is different from my own. Specifically, there are several stereotypes that seem to be floating about regarding women in non-Western cultures (i.e. they are oppressed by men and cannot attain a decent education, gainful employment, etc) and tend to be exaggerated from a Western view.

What are you working on now at grad school?

Currently I am working on my Master's degree in Physiology at NC State, which is a big switch from the humanities! But I am pursuing a lifelong dream in the sciences (my intention was to enter Meredith as either a biology or chemistry major so I could attend vet school, but I also came in with many minds!).

How did MC research impact you/your career?

Although my research is not directly related to my graduate studies, it has been more help than I could possibly have imagined. The skills that I gained with writing and critical thinking have been very important in my graduate studies. While most people may believe that the life sciences do not demand students to know how to write, they are very mistaken. I think I have written more papers and assignments than I have done problem solving and studying anatomical diagrams!

Tamara M Shovelton '14

Major in History, Minor in Religious Studies



Photo Credits: Tamara Shovelton

Research topic at MC:

Queen Elizabeth I and her relationships with men.

Takeaway:

I learned the importance of having a community around you that could help to guide you towards your dreams.

What are you working on now at grad school?

I am currently writing my Master's thesis on the "Lessons of a Queen." Based on the relationships of Queen Elizabeth I during her adolescence.

How did MC research impact you/your career?

My research at Meredith helped me to get to where I am today. Having to write these as an undergraduate taught me how to do research. I had a leg up coming into grad school because I had already written both a historiography and a thesis. Doing research at Meredith gave me the opportunity to participate in CSA day when I was a senior and it was one of the best things I ever did.

Puja Patel '14

Major in Psychology and Sociology



Puja Patel and Lara Pantlin with Dr. Cynthia Edwards

Research topic at MC:

Parent-Child Communication Amongst Asian-American Families and its Relationship to Bicultural Self-efficacy in Young Adults.

Takeaway:

Bicultural efficacy is an individual's belief in his or her ability to live effectively and satisfactorily within two cultural groups without having to compromise his or her own sense of cultural identity. The results indicated that high levels of communication with one's mother, whether in the adopted culture's language or native culture's language, affect the young adult's sense of self and ability to navigate between cultures.

What are you working on now at grad school?

Currently working on neurocognitive impacts of HIV/AIDS and substance use as a part of the HARP lab at Duke University. I hope to continue researching these topic in terms of cross-cultural intervention methods as a part of the Duke Global Health Masters in Science program next year.

How did MC research impact you/your career?

Having the freedom to explore topics that were completely in line with my interests and having the opportunity to work closely with such amazing faculty was a priceless experience. I was able to use all of the research skills I gained at Meredith for my Clinical Trials Assistant position at Duke University. The research experience gave me an upper hand and paved the way for my success here at Duke.

Ariel Nikas '14

Major in Mathematics, Minor in Studio Art

Research topic at MC:

Physiologically-based pharmacokinetic modeling of the antibiotic ertapenem.

Takeaway:

Using some clinical data we can map the location and effective agents of a drug at any given point in time after administering it with some confidence. Models like these can eventually be used to recommend effective dosing levels for different weights and heights, as opposed to a certain amount based on the average person.

What are you working on now at grad school?

Currently, I am working on quantifying and predicting how ultrasound waves bounce back from elasto-dynamic tissues in the human body in order to decrease uncertainty and better identify potentially dangerous tissues, like cancer or tumors, sooner.

How did MC research impact you/your career?

Meredith College taught me the skills and perseverance that have enabled me to continue in mathematical research.

Dr. Jayme M. Hickman '01

Major in Psychology, Minor in Computer Studies



Dr. Rosemary Hornak, Laura Eischen, Eva Rose Hornak Snapp

Research topic at MC:

The effects of effort training and time delay on task persistence

Takeaway:

During training, it is important to keep instruction simple and gradually increase complexity. Additionally, the aspect of time increases task complexity.

What are you working on now at grad school?

I finished my doctoral research at Georgia Tech in 2009. My research focused on the effects of age and time on training older adults to use technology such as cell phones and medical devices. Currently I own a government contracting firm focused specifically on instructional design, training, and user experience (UX).

How did MC research impact you/your career?

Meredith in general fostered my love of learning and imparting knowledge. My research showed me that the design of development of training can greatly improve or inhibit learning.

Lara N. Pantlin '14

Major in Psychology, Minor in Economics

Research topics at MC:

For my senior thesis, I researched social support structures during transitional stress.

Takeaway:

Having a strong social support network through transitions can come in many forms and having a mentor or some form of social support in both the network your are leaving (e.g. home, or graduating from college) and establishing one in your new network (e.g. new school, job) are of high importance.

What are you working on now at grad school?

PhD in Cognitive Neuroscience with a concentration in Statistics. I am a doctoral candidate and just received my master's this January. I research timing in clinical populations using EEG, neuropsychological assessment in dementia/TBI with transcranial magnetic stimulation, and I also work as a data analyst for a music therapy project.

How did MC research impact you/your career?

I would have never received the opportunities and support had I not attended Meredith College. The small class size offers opportunities to create lifelong, meaningful relationships with mentors. Meredith not only provided me with the intellectual stimulation and challenges I constantly seek as a student but also with the confidence to venture into a male-dominated field and continue to be successful.

Michelle Maiden, '14

Double Major in Mathematics and Chemistry

Research topic at MC:

Mathematically describing a Belousov-Zhabotinsky reaction

Takeaway: Special types of chemical reactions are self-sustaining. As such, you can see really interesting patterns that look like fingerprints! These patterns can be described mathematically using dynamical systems.

What are you working on now at grad school?

Now, I'm a grad student in Applied Math at CU Boulder. I study how magma moves in the Earth's mantle. I even get to do experiments! Instead of magma, we use corn syrup in our lab. We see a wide variety of waves, and my goal is to understand these waves and their interactions with each other better.

How did MC research impact you/your career?

Through Meredith College, I was able to hone my skills in independent research. I learned how to begin, sustain, and wrap up a research project in a meaningful way. I was also able to work on a variety of projects in chemistry and math, and this helped me find something I am passionate about for graduate study.