



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
**WHITEWATER**

COLLEGE of LETTERS AND SCIENCES

Biological Sciences

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**Research Interests:** Behavioral neuroscience, with focus on understanding the neural circuitry underlying the computation of survival value of environmental stimuli by the mammalian brain. Current projects entail techniques in psychophysically-based behavioral assessment, pharmacological manipulation of brain systems, immunohistochemical assessment of brain tissue, and computational modeling of neural systems.

**Examples of Current Ongoing Research Projects:**

- Our major long term project investigates the role in reward computation of various cell signaling mechanisms in neurons in the extended amygdala. This year we are focused on the role of L-type calcium channels and of endocannabinoid-mediated regulation of glutamate neurotransmission.
- A related project aims to delineate the relative distributions of D1- and D2-type dopamine receptors and of GABAergic and glutamatergic neurons in the extended amygdala. I am very interested in recruiting to this project students who have successfully completed the Biotechnology Laboratory Methods sequence and have interest in and experience with confocal microscopy.



**Student Testimonials:**

**Nate Johnson (2013):** “As a non-traditional student I am faced with a “non-traditional” climb up the hill of success. Undergraduate research was one of the best decisions that I have ever made. I believe the opportunity to conduct undergraduate research has strengthened my education and will continue to work for me into the distant future. Reading books and learning in a classroom is a great thing but there is so much more to be learned first-hand on the job. I was

*invited to join a research lab on campus which helped me to learn the practical application of the research method, from that point on I was hooked. Working as a lab tech allowed me to grow as a student researcher and also gave me the opportunity to develop my own research question and hypothesis. Working with my mentor in the spring semester, I applied for a Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF), for the summer of 2012. When you apply for something like this, you put a lot of effort into making sure it is right and waiting for the review board to make their decision seems like an eternity. I was notified on my award and found that I was only one of 15 that get accepted each year. From the beginning, I felt that it was my research and not my mentor’s. Working directly with my mentor I was able to receive guidance and direction in all aspects of my project. My mentor was and always will be a huge resource for me. Whenever I ran into a brick wall she was there to suggest alternate ideas, but she never dictated which path I should take. My decision to attend UW-Whitewater was for my education, and I feel that I will walk out of graduation on a career path that has no limits.”*