



Eastern Connecticut State University

NEWS

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For Immediate Release

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Eastern Students Test Patients at Yale

Willimantic, Conn. – What are Eastern Connecticut State University students doing at Yale University’s Department of Neurosurgery? They are enrolled in Eastern’s Cognitive Neuroscience program, an interdisciplinary individualized major. Through their internship experience at Yale these students are gaining valuable research knowledge as they administer memory tests to post-surgical epilepsy patients in order to better understand the effects of surgery.

Franklin Brown, assistant professor at Eastern and clinical associate researcher in Yale’s Department of Neurosurgery, is a clinical neuropsychologist and the cognitive neuroscience program coordinator.

Brown says that Eastern students who intern at Yale acquire the skills necessary to become employed as test technicians. “One of our students who graduated in spring 2006 is already working at Yale as a neuroscience technician,” said Brown. “The technique of knowing how to administer tests to study participants is a valuable skill. It is a rare luxury for many test centers to hire students who have had related experience and understand the intricacies required for accurate test administration.” In addition to jobs in clinical settings, graduates of the program may opt for research-based positions; or decide to attend graduate school or medical school.

Teresa Chmielowiec '07, majored in history when she enrolled at Eastern. “I was majoring in history, then biology, but really wanted to learn about the brain, so the neuroscience program was ideal for me,” Chmielowiec explained.

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As a research assistant at Yale, Chmielowiec meets individually with study participants for about two hours. “We go through a questionnaire reviewing their medical history, including things like sleep habits and anxiety attitudes. Then I begin administering the memory tests. I really enjoy meeting such a wide assortment of people. Everyone has a different story and it is interesting how the surgery has changed their lives,” said Chmielowiec.

While taking a full courseload, working per diem as a patient care technician at Windham Hospital and doing research at Yale, Chmielowiec has found the time to pursue her next goal. She has enrolled in a medical college admission test (MCAT) preparation course and plans to sit for the MCATs in July before applying to medical schools. Her goal is to become a neuro-oncologist specializing in brain tumors.

Cognitive Neuroscience is one of Eastern’s interdisciplinary individualized majors, which are supported by faculty in the fields of psychology, chemistry, biochemistry, computer science, and mathematics. Other interdisciplinary majors include Environmental Studies; Psychology of Video Communication; and Multimedia Writing.

The Individualized Major program is designed to enhance a student’s ability to integrate methods and content from two or more academic disciplines while meeting their educational interests and career objectives. The program allows students to take courses in areas that naturally complement each other in today’s workplace. Students are also provided with flexible career skills in order to meet the challenges of a society undergoing rapid technological change.

Students planning to pursue an individualized major must declare it before they have earned 60 credits; develop a plan of study that consists of at least 36 credits in two or more disciplines; select faculty advisors; and submit their plan for review and approval. Students completing an Individualized Major program receive either a B.A. or a B.S depending upon the discipline from which they have the most credits.

For additional information about the Individualized Major Program contact: Catherine Carlson, Chair, Individualized Major Committee Phone: 860-465-5218, carlsonc@easternct.edu or Carmen Cid, Dean, Arts and Sciences, phone: 860-465-5295, cid@easternct.edu.

PHOTO CAPTION: Professor Franklin Brown and student Teresa Chmielowiec utilize the “Brown Locator Test.” A test that the professor developed to detect post-operative visual memory deficits.

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Eastern Connecticut State University is part of the Connecticut State University (CSU) system and is the state’s public liberal arts university. ECSU serves more than 5,000 students each year on its Willimantic campus.

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