

SSCP Honors Student Researcher for Studies on Racial Bias

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Donte Bernard, a graduate student in the clinical psychology program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has received the prestigious Society for a Science of Clinical Psychology's Outstanding Student Diversity Research Award. Bernard, a member of Enrique W. Neblett, Jr.'s African American Youth Wellness Lab, studies the factors that affect the rationalization or suppression of racial biases. As Bernard describes on the lab's website, he is currently examining "the relationships among racism and discrimination, racial identity, racial socialization, and African American and underprivileged youth development and mental health."

Bernard, an APS student affiliate, explores how racial identity influences impostor syndrome — the feeling that one is not worthy of one's accomplishments and is, in fact, a fraud — as well as what factors contribute to, or buffer against, that syndrome. Understanding the mechanisms that drive impostor syndrome is especially important in this population, as the syndrome often is experienced by African American youth who have been told, implicitly or explicitly, that they are not deserving of their accolades. Bernard also researches the positive psychological development of emerging adults who are in the racial minority. More broadly, the African American Youth Wellness Lab focuses on racial discrimination and its impact on mental health, protective factors that can help shield adolescents from the effects of racial discrimination, and the relationship between racism-related stress and mental and

physical health in young adults.

“I am grateful for having been selected for this award,” Bernard said. “This is an important achievement for me personally and professionally, and also a testament to the important work that my lab is doing. I truly appreciate research awards such as the SSCP Outstanding Student Diversity Research Award, as they support scholars doing important research that often goes unrecognized.”

In 2014, Bernard received a National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Award, which recognizes distinguished student research in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields. The fellowship provided 3 years of NSF support as well as professional growth and international learning opportunities.