

GTF wins award for research on depression

George Slavich's research was in conjunction with Stanford University

BY AMANDA BOLSINGER
NEWS REPORTER

University graduate teaching fellow George Slavich was recently awarded the 2004-05 Edwin B. Newman Graduate Research Award, a national award given annually to the psychology student who submits the best research paper published or presented during the past year.

The award is given by Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology, in conjunction with the American Psychological Association.

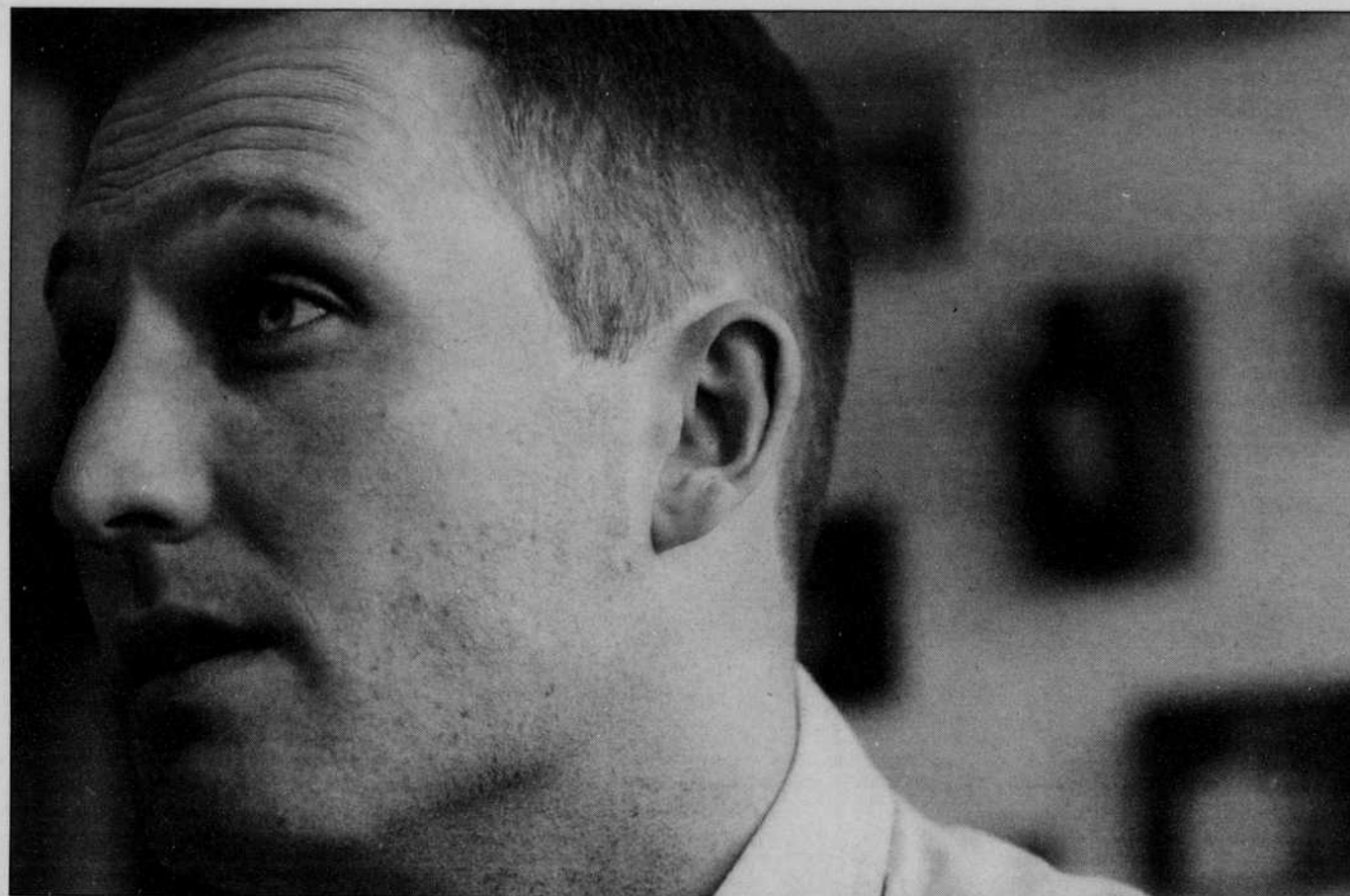
"The best part of the award is the national exposure for our research," Slavich said. "The award gives national exposure and validation that we are on the right track and our work is important and interesting."

Slavich won the award for a 12-page manuscript he submitted that discusses the work he and other researchers conducted about the effects of stress on physiology in the context of people who become depressed.

The project began five years ago as a collaborative effort between researchers at Stanford University and the University of Oregon. Slavich began working on the project at its conception as a junior undergraduate student at Stanford and continued with the project when he started graduate school at the University.

"It's a collaborative project to look at how depression develops among adults," Slavich said.

The project has four principle investigators, each heading up a specific portion of the project. Slavich is working with University professor Scott Monroe, his adviser and co-author,



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LAUREN WIMER | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

who headed the life-stress segment of the project.

Their research involves a "Life Events and Difficulties Schedule," a tool used to measure different life events and the effects they may have.

Slavich said he and Monroe hold weekly conference calls with an interviewer at Stanford, who relays information from people participating in the research to Slavich and Monroe at the University. The questions are about life stressors

such as finances or whether the person has lost someone close.

"They elicit information about stressful events that occurred before they were depressed," Slavich said. "Then we rate the events along different dimensions."

The information gained through the research can be used to better understand depression.

"Understanding how disorders develop is the first big step to knowing how to treat the disorder," Slavich said.

"This is important information because it suggests that disordered physiology may be related to severe life events within depressed persons and may represent one pathway through which life stress can cause depression," Monroe said in a University press release.

Last year, Psi Chi and the American Psychological Society awarded Slavich with the Albert Bandura Graduate Research Award. Slavich is the only person ever to win both the

Newman and Bandura awards. Both awards are given based on a blind read in which reviewers judge the papers without knowing the authors' names or with which institution or university they are affiliated.

"(The blind-read review) makes receiving both awards much more validating," Slavich said. "It is ongoing validation that what we are doing is important."

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