Gatton Perception Research

VFTH

7/5/18

Approximately two dozen Gatton Academy students are conducting research on campus this summer.

Amy Bingham takes us inside a lab focusing on aging and perception in this week’s View from the Hill.

 “Working in perception has a lot to do with the brain which is really what interests me.”

Senior Sydney Wheeler was interested in research when she first arrived at the Gatton Academy.

 “Dr. Norman and perception seemed like the best fit for my long term interests.”

Dr. Farley Norman has been researching perception for the past 34 years.

He says this is the only lab in the world that studies aging and perception.

 “Our lab really is different because we do study how people visually and using their sense of touch perceive the shape of natural objects.”

 “They’ll sit at the table and I’ll sit under the table and there are two sets of objects. Each one has peppers one through twelve and there are identical copies in each set.”

 “It’s kind of a matching task so they feel it and they match it to one that they see.”

Sydney is currently replicating a set of sweet potatoes for additional research.

 “sounds kind of odd but it really goes along with what we’re doing with natural and artificial object shapes.”

 “We just go through one at a time, scan the potato using the scanner the engineering department has loaned us.”

It’s research that will provide a clearer image of how aging impacts people’s perception of environmental objects.

“Given that all of us are subject to aging, I think it’s important to investigate how images of three dimensional objects changes as we become older. “

While offering an amazing opportunity for Sydney.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

Sydney and Dr. Norman will present the findings from their perception research at a conference in New Orleans this fall.

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