



**BEST 230, University of Kansas Edwards Campus  
12604 Quivira Road, Overland Park, KS, 66213  
Saturday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

8:30am-9:00am Registration

9:00am-12:00pm *Application of Preference and Reinforcer Assessments Across Species*

8:30am-9:00am Registration

9:00am-10:20am Dr. Steven Payne; *Identifying Reinforcing Stimuli in the Dog Shelter: Food and Attention as Reinforcers for Shelter Dog Behavior*

**Abstract:** There are currently millions of dogs residing in animal shelters. Each year hundreds of thousands of dogs are euthanized, with a majority of euthanizations due to overcrowding (ASPCA, 2017). Research has shown that specific behaviors, especially those involved in human interaction, may contribute to increased chances of adoption (Protopopova & Wynn, 2014). However, in order to train many of these behaviors, effective reinforcers, especially food and human attention) must be identified. Preference assessments and reinforcer assessments are commonly used to identify and test the efficacy of stimuli as reinforcers for human behavior. However, these assessments have rarely been used with non-human animals. Our lab conducted assessments of the efficacy and efficiency of two types of preference assessments in determining preferred food reinforcers for shelter dogs. In a second study, we used reinforcer assessment methods to determine whether human attention was a reinforcer for dog behavior. Finally, we determined if a simple pairing procedure could be used to condition human attention as a reinforcer for problem behavior. The implications of this research to shelter dog wellbeing and adoption will be discussed.

10:20am-10:40am Break

10:40am-12:00pm Dr. Julie Ackerland Brandt; *The Power of Attention: Why we Should Assess Different Types*

**Abstract:** Attention has been shown as an effective reinforcer for problem behavior (e.g., Iwata et al., 1982/1994; Kodak et al., 2007) and appropriate behavior (e.g., Clay et al., 2013; Nuernberger et al., 2012). Additionally, various types of attention (i.e., eye contact, praise, physical, conversation, and reprimands) affect an individual's responding differentially. In recent years, researchers have begun to evaluate preferences for different types of attention (Clay et al.; Kelley et al., 2014; Nuernberger et al.). These researchers also evaluated the reinforcer efficacy of different types of attention and shown differentiated preference hierarchies and level of responding during reinforcer assessments. It is also likely that participants have preferences for different adults, and these preferences may be due to the type of attention provided by that adult in conjunction with the child's preference for different types of attention. This talk will explain the different methods for evaluating preference for different types of attention, the reinforcing efficacy of different types of attention, and how different types of attention may or may not affect a child's preference for a specific teacher or clinician.