CBA professor receives achievement award

College of Business Administration Professor Necmi Karagozoglu is this year’s recipient of the Outstanding Scholarly Achievement Award.

He will receive the award at 4 p.m. Monday, May 6, in the University Union California Suite and present a lecture, “Dark Side of Humanity and Neuroscience.” The presentation will be followed by a reception at 5 p.m.

Karagozoglu is a professor of strategic management and entrepreneurship whose current research is in the field of neuro-entrepreneurship, the study of how the brain works in creating and managing a new venture.

His fascination with neuroscience, he says, has paved the way to his new interests beyond neuro-entrepreneurship – in particular, the study of the brain in relation to violent conflicts. Traditional social science uses inferences made from observations to address violent human conflicts such as wars, genocide, and terrorism, but lacks understanding at deeper levels than behaviors and attitudes, says Karagozoglu. “Neuroscience gets right to the source – the brain that generates these decisions,” he says.

Karagozoglu believes that as humans evolved from a subsistence existence up through the agricultural, industrial and computer revolutions, it was accompanied by evolution of the dedicated neural circuits vis-a-vis the resource acquisition, accumulation, and generation behaviors. Conflict in resource competition – particularly those of violent variety – may manifest irrational, mismatched behaviors due to the evolutionary influence and these can be explored effectively using neuroscience methodologies.

War-making behavior can be viewed as a violent and extreme variant to the resource acquisition and accumulation behavior. Clever and effective research designs may help explain the paradoxes between the sophisticated and primitive aspects of modern societies. In coping with resource uncertainties, researchers may be able to discern the extent and intensity of involvement of the neural circuits in the neo cortical versus the limbic system regions.
The scientific knowledge that ensues from these studies can help clarify and ground our consciousness to revisit humanity’s approach to war and peace, says Karagozoglu. This would help sensitize leaders to the irrational tendencies, and motivate them to foster integrative, mutually beneficial, “transformative” approaches to cope with conflicts.

The professor has been at Sacramento State for 29 years, and has taught doctoral courses and engaged in scholarly activities in Finland. He is currently partnered with two neuroscientists from Aalto University in Finland to pursue his neuro-entrepreneurship study. The study involves 40 subjects and the actual laboratory experiment using fMRI method is scheduled to take place in June.

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