

# INPSYGHT

Newsletter for students, alumni, and faculty

Department of Psychological Science, Creighton University

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**Corey Gunther**



## To the Stars by Natalia Stys

"Per aspara ad astra" means "through hardships to the stars" in Latin. This phrase has been pivotal in my experience as a senior during the pandemic. A key role in living through these unprecedented times is to set goals. In return, goals drive motivation, motivation creates hope and hope helps us cope with adversity. As a senior, I learned that some things are out of your control, and that's okay. It's okay to have compassion for yourself and to put yourself first. I know through experience that taking care of yourself will then help you to take care of others better. It's all about balance





### New Faculty Spotlight: Katherine P. Hazen, MA, JD

Katherine Hazen is a Resident Assistant Professor of Psychological Science at Creighton University. She is teaching Introductory Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, and Research Methods and Statistics I. Katherine is a doctoral candidate in the Law-Psychology and Social Psychology Programs at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and received her Juris Doctorate from the UNL College of Law in 2018. Her research examines interactions between legal-decision makers and civilians in court and police interaction contexts. Throughout graduate school, Katherine was a graduate research assistant for the Nebraska Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children and the Children's Justice Clinic at the UNL Center on Children, Families, and the Law. She has done research examining the effectiveness and mechanisms of programs to improve families' and professionals' experiences with the children welfare system in Nebraska. This research has been published in the *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, *Child and Youth Services Review*, and the *Juvenile and Family Court Journal*. Next year, Katherine will join the Behavioral Sciences Department at Fitchburg State University in Massachusetts as an Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice. At Fitchburg State, she will continue her research on police-civilian relations by focusing on how police officers interpret interactions and develop their social identity. Earlier work in this area, which is forthcoming in *Psychology, Crime, and Law*, suggests that police officers and civilians interpret interactions in largely the same way, but that police rely on interpersonal information about respect differently than civilians. To learn more about Katherine's research and teaching, visit her website [katherinephazen.com](http://katherinephazen.com).

and putting your best effort forward. One of my professors, Father Carlson, always told me “don't *should* yourself”. I took this to heart. I always felt like I should be doing more, doing better, doing less. Until I silenced my thoughts and just went for it. Life's too short to focus on what could've, should've, did not happen, etc. Focusing on the present built my self-confidence and helped me to hone in on my goals. The past is the past, we can't change it, but we can change the now. Looking back on my four years, I can't believe how fast time flies.

*“...I learned that some things are out of your control, and that's okay”*

Four years ago I pulled up to Kiewit with my mom by my side, ready to take on whatever came at me. The proud feeling of being a Bluejay that day is still the same today. Creighton encouraged me to become the person that I am



today. Time passes, life goes on, and it is in your hands to decide the next step.

As my senior year comes to an end, I reflect on the resilience, compassion, and work ethic that the Creighton community has shown. Every single one of my professors has shown compassion, empathy, and understanding towards students. It is heartwarming seeing the Creighton Community work together to ensure a positive, safe, and healthy environment for all. Students and faculty are diligent in wearing masks, practicing safe social distancing, and keeping the environment clean. I am proud to be part of the Creighton community as we navigate through these challenging times. *Cura Personalis* runs deep in every aspect at Creighton, and throughout my four years I have always felt that Creighton did everything in their power to ensure care for the entire person. It has been an honor to attend this university and I am forever grateful.

## A Conversation with Dr. Leak by Jenna Ampulski

Dr. Leak has been an integral part of the Creighton psychology department since 1979; he has recently announced his retirement for next year. Dr. Leak was born and raised in Washington state. After working for a time in the Midwest, Dr. Leak decided to return to his home state of Washington before eventually returning to Nebraska where he has stayed for over 40 years. To acknowledge his upcoming retirement, he agreed to sit down with me and discuss all things Creighton, careers, and his future plans.



**JA:** Has Creighton changed since you've been here?

**GL:** I have been here since 1979, how has it changed since I've been here? It's gotten bigger, [the] department was in an old house in the middle of campus at that time. It was cute, but kind of dumpy and really old. Psych separated from education and philosophy to become its own department in 1965. There were only 3 psych faculty, and offices were shared with business faculty. Come a long way! Now what's changed? What I would need to do is—and I am not trying to be funny—would be to go into a time machine for a few weeks and interact with teachers and students again. They always want to say there's a lot of differences. But I think there's been a lot of continuity.

**JA:** What was your most memorable project and how did it impact your career?

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### **New Faculty Spotlight: Colin P. Holloway, JD, PhD**

Dr. Colin Holloway earned his bachelor's degree in behavioral decision science from Carnegie Mellon University and his law degree from the University of Emory School of Law. After law school, Colin worked as an attorney in Washington D.C. before attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln where he earned his Ph.D. in Psychology with a research focus in legal studies. Colin's background with the legal system motivates research in social justice, criminal law, ex-offender hiring outcomes, and legal and political decision-making. Colin also works with the Nebraska Department of Probation as a program evaluator and maintains an active research agenda in applied legal psychology. In his spare time, Colin enjoys playing golf (well, attempting to), grilling, and forcing his dog, Cash, to join him in watching Law and Order (the original series) reruns.

**GL:** Well I know the answer right away. I had a couple very important projects, but not many. I would have been pleased to let my mentor read the finished product... I wouldn't have been embarrassed! It would be the project I did as an undergraduate that I continued here. It was a study on weight loss, it used the principle of over justification effect. We worked with the social psychology guy at the University of Washington. It was a big deal because I was actually doing research for the first time. I got to work almost daily with this teacher, he treated me like a collaborator more than a student. That was during senior year, and I ended up applying to a few social programs, though mostly clinical. When it came spring time I ended up going social, so it was a very critical turning point. If you really like psychology, see if you can do something like I did and it may you decide what you'll do with your life.

**JA:** That totally diverted your whole career! Do you think you would have returned to social psychology if you ended up doing clinical?

**GL:** I can't answer that for certain... If I had felt unsatisfied then yes, but if I hadn't done social psychology research then I wouldn't have been attracted to teaching social psychology.

**JA:** I heard you are planning on retiring soon!

**GL:** Yes! One year from this semester. I can do the math... it will be May of 2022.

**JA:** Has the pandemic impacted your plans at all?

**GL:** The only impact has been temporary, we had to do the second half of last year online.

**JA:** How did you like that?

**GL:** I hated it, talking into a microphone and a screen... I know I didn't like [it], I know students didn't like it. I hope we never have to go back to that. Once in a while there's a spark where the student is interested or passionate about the subject, and that's hard to see on Zoom.

**JA:** What's next for you?

**GL:** I don't have big plans, I would love to go to Europe, but what am I going to do with the rest of my time? Maybe a little



golf with my son, by then, with my grandsons. Given that, I don't have any big plans like joining a bowling league. I think desperation would lead me to that. I will be home for 6 months and go, "I need a part time job".

**JA:** Do you think you'll continue teaching a little bit?

**GL:** If they'd let me, I'd like that. There is talk that I would teach one class a semester.

**JA:** Any final advice for the students?

**GL:** My advice is to open your mind, find out what you're good at and what you find interesting. Keep yourself open to experiences that pull you towards them.

## Where Are They Now? by Bernie Hoffman

The Creighton Psychological Science Department has catalyzed numerous successful career options in psychology and related disciplines. Some of our inspirational alumni - Brittany Harner ('20), Bri Momchilovich ('20), and Jamie Ortiz ('19) - were gracious enough to answer various questions about their experiences. Their journeys can provide insight into our aspirations and future endeavors.

### What are you currently doing as an alumna?

**BH:** I just recently committed to Gonzaga law school! I couldn't have done it without the support and letters of recommendation from professors in the psych department. I am confident that my understanding of psychology will uniquely help me as I enter the legal field.

**BM:** I am a first-year at the University of Nebraska Lincoln school psychology (EdS) graduate program.

**JO:** Currently, I am working full time in a job focused on behavioral psychology. I interned as a psychology student at Behaven Kids and decided to stay on as I decide what type of graduate program I'd like to go into. I wanted to take a bit of a break between undergrad to gain some experience and see if behavioral psychology was something I could see myself doing long-term.

### How did you determine what area in psychology you wanted to pursue?

**BH:** My interest in psychology and criminal law pushed me in the direction of pursuing a career in law. I think that understanding human behavior will assist me in my future career.

**BM:** After taking Professor Schwiesow's school psychology class and doing an internship under her, I realized that school psychology had all the aspects of a career I wanted. I liked the idea of working in a school while also being an advocate for students. With those two things put together, I realized school psychology is what I wanted to go into.

**JO:** I think taking a variety of psychology classes at Creighton helped me find what areas of interest I had in psychology. I enjoyed my child/adolescent psych class and my school psych class and saw that as a potential career path. I've always loved working with kids, so it seemed like a natural choice. The

internship class was a cool opportunity to have some hands-on experience which also helped solidify that I wanted to do behavioral psychology with children.

**How do you feel the Department best prepared for your post-undergraduate career?**

**BM:** I feel that the psychology department prepared me extremely well for graduate school. I had the support and knowledge to be able to take the rigor of graduate school classes. Creighton professors hold you to a very high standard similar to graduate professors, so there was not much I had to change as a student transitioning to grad school.

**What is your favorite memory in the psychology department?**

**BH:** My favorite memory from the psych department was being able to walk into the Department and talk to the professors about anything! The psych professors were always so helpful, and they all truly cared about their students both inside and outside the classroom.

**Which professors were instrumental in assisting you in your professional pursuits?**

**BM:** I had a lot of amazing professors, but the two that really stood out to me were Dr. Gunther and Dr. Brown. Dr. Guenther was critical at the beginning of my psychology career. I took his intro to psychology class and absolutely fell in love with psychology and ended up changing my major to psychology. I also had his support through his personality class, and even without him being my professor, I still went to him for advice and support. Dr. Brown supported me through my ending years in my psychology career at Creighton. She opened my eyes up to different ways I could use my psychology degree. I loved sitting in her office and talking about things related to psychology and things not related. I knew that I always had her support in whatever I would do.

**Why should undecided majors consider the psychological science major?**

**BH:** Undecided majors should choose psychology as a major because psychology allows the exploration of so many different avenues of study. I also think that in any field, having an understanding of how people think, behave, and are affected genetically, can be a major strength!

**What is some advice for current psychology students in the Department?**



**New Faculty Spotlight  
Patrick Saint-Jean, PsyD**

Dr. Saint-Jean is a Jesuit Regent. He graduated from undergraduate education at the Universite Victor Segalen de Bordeaux in France and received his graduate degree in Psychoanalysis from the Parisian Ecole Lacanienne de Psychanalyse in Paris and his PsyD from the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico. Dr. Saint-Jean has studied, conducted research and worked in various countries. He completed his theological studies at Catholic Theological union in Chicago in 2019. In his free time, Dr. Saint-Jean enjoys talking with friends and family, writing on social justice issues and watching sports.

**BH:** For current psychology students, I would say try to connect what you learn in class to real-world examples. The more I was engaged in class and able to make connections to the world around me, and this made studying so much more effective.

**BM:** Current advice is to enjoy undergrad and the connections you're able to make with your peers and professors. Applying to grad school can be stressful, but don't let the stress of it take away from the experiences you could have in undergrad.

## A Message from the Incoming Chair Corey Guenther, PhD

It is with excitement that I look forward to serving as the next chair of the Department of Psychological Science! In my 12 years on the faculty, it has become abundantly clear that the psychology department is led by a talented faculty of productive teacher-scholars, and an exceptional group of intellectually curious majors and minors. As I look forward to what lies ahead in my duties as department chair, I have the privilege of looking back for inspiration at the excellent foundation that has already been laid by our experienced faculty and engaged student body. Among other aspirations, I hope to serve as a source of support for my colleagues, and leverage each faculty's unique strengths to maximize their and our department's professional successes. I hope to continue fostering a welcome, inclusive environment for all members of the department, students and professional alike, and focus efforts on improving our sense of community after what has been a challenging COVID-19 disruption. Finally, I am eager to continue promoting the exceptional hands-on learning experiences our department has to offer, including collaborative research opportunities with faculty and our wonderful internship program, while highlighting our students' many impressive accomplishments along the way. In short, as chair my hope is to be an advocate for our department, to promote a collaborative and inclusive work environment, to foster a collegial community among students and faculty, and to be a source of support however is needed to help students and faculty excel in their professional and academic endeavors. I am mindful of the challenges that lie ahead, but I am genuinely honored and excited to serve as the next chair of such a wonderful department!

