The 2007-2008 academic year will be the last opportunity Creighton psychology students will have to take a class taught by Dr. Mark Ware. After many years of teaching, he has decided to retire.

Many things have changed since Dr. Ware first began teaching at Creighton University in 1965. At that time the psychology department consisted of the chair and one other faculty member. Furthermore, from 1955-1965 the education and psychology departments shared the same chair, as there was much overlap between the two subjects at that time. Faculty offices were scattered throughout the Eppley Business Administration building until the Rigge Science building was built.

Dr. Ware has seen the psychology major at Creighton evolve into one of the most popular majors at the university, and faculty and staff numbers increase from two to fifteen. The department, which now has its own wing in the Hixson-Lied Science building, recently hosted two conventions—the Nebraska Psychological Society convention in 2001 and Great Plains convention in 2005—both of which were important events for Dr. Ware and the department as a whole.

Throughout his years at Creighton, Dr. Ware has enjoyed teaching Introductory Psychology, Psychology of Personality, Statistics, Career Development, History and Systems of Psychology, Research Methods I, Personal Growth and Development, and the Undergraduate Internship in Psychology. Dr. Ware enjoys teaching the internship class because he can “see students expand themselves outside the classroom.” His devotion to students is evident in the way he teaches this class in particular. As junior Heather Kaestner states, “He truly tries to help you figure out what you want to do with your life, how to get there, and how he can help you achieve your goals.”

Dr. Ware would like to spend more time volunteering and working with his hobbies after he retires. He intends to work at the Literacy Center for the Midlands, a tutoring center for Omaha adults; read for Radio Talking Book, a service that provides reading materials for the blind; and work with elementary children on their reading skills. In addition to this volunteer work, Dr. Ware began making stained glass art a few years ago, and has since donated many of his pieces to raise money for different organizations.

Dr. Ware says he will miss the intellectual environment at Creighton that “encourages, fosters, and provides an opportunity for individuals to think outside the box.” He will miss seeing the enthusiasm, dedication, and eagerness of the Creighton psychology students. The students also are sorry to see Dr. Ware retire, but are grateful for the years of service he has given to Creighton Psychology. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors!
Moving Forward with the Class of 2007

By Kristin Jones

As the end of the semester approaches, many seniors are becoming more anxious, anticipating life after graduation.

A year away from school can be a great way to “recharge, relax, and prepare for the next step,” explained Amir Zeb, who is moving to California to teach, while applying to law schools. Some students are planning to volunteer for a year. When asked to discuss the Teach for America program, Dr. Maya Khanna said, “by taking the time to give back to society, most people find that they are the ones that benefit most.”

However, most seniors will be continuing their studies next fall. Seniors are going to psychology graduate school, medical school, and law school. “I think many students with very different future plans choose psychology because it is a major that really prepares you very well to work with people,” said senior Claire Brabec.

Regardless of future plans, the psychology seniors agree they will have fond memories of Creighton. When asked in an online survey about their favorite part of being a psychology major, most students mentioned the close relationships with students and faculty. One student responded, “I love the faculty. They are excellent in the classroom and extend that excellence by learning about and caring for students outside of the classroom, too.”

This professional excellence certainly influences the education that psychology students receive at Creighton University and carry with them throughout future experiences.

Summer Grants Reward Student Research

By Nicole Thurston

During the spring of 2006, three Creighton psychology students received summer research grants. These highly coveted grants entailed a full summer of research on a psychological topic of their choice, combined with mentorship provided by a psychology teacher sponsor. Mallory Henninger, a junior psychology major, Jennifer Johnson, and Nicole Thurston, both senior psychology majors, represented the Creighton University Department of Psychology in receiving these summer grants.

Mallory and Nicole were awarded the Creighton University Arts and Sciences Summer Research Grant for research projects focusing on very different psychological topics. Mallory used her research grant to explore the development of eating disorders with an emphasis on prevention. The impetus for this research is the belief that “one way to prevent eating disorders is to understand how they develop in children.” Mallory explored the presence of body image dissatisfaction in children aged four to seven.

The College of Arts and Sciences research grant provided funding for Nicole to continue her previous research through the summer months. Nicole’s research incorporated aspects of psychology and the law to examine the influence of expert testimony in Sexually Violent Predator commitment trials. Having worked on this research project during the school year, the grant allowed Nicole to refine the research procedures also proved to be a time consuming struggle for the students. Despite grappling with IRB protocols and various setbacks, all three students gained valuable knowledge from the experience. Mallory says: “Despite the difficulties, working on this research project has certainly been worthwhile. It’s interesting to run statistics and see trends emerge in a study that I personally designed.” All of the research projects are still underway. Jennifer is writing the manuscript for her study, and Mallory and Nicole are exploring different aspects of the data they collected.

All three students agree that the summer of research will prove beneficial in graduate study and future careers. They encourage other students interested in research to speak with their advisors regarding summer research grants.
Around the World in One Semester: Psychology Abroad

By Jordan Poss

Dr. Gibson Brings Her Expertise East

For the past six years, Dr. Gibson has provided the students of Creighton with an opportunity to explore various applications of psychology and research. Next fall, however, Dr. Gibson will be teaching at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland.

During her time at Creighton, Dr. Gibson has taught introductory psychology and statistics classes, as well as Drugs and Behavior and Physiological Psychology, which reflect her research interests. Dr. Gibson's current research focuses specifically on the effects of traumatic brain injuries on GABA-A receptor expression in animal models. Students like Jessica Svoboda feel that this research “adds a novel component to the psychology department.”

At Washington College, Dr. Gibson plans to teach courses similar to those she taught at Creighton along with several others specific to the school. These classes include Psychopharmacology, Learning, Sensation and Perception, and Biopsychology. Dr. Gibson will also be closer to her family in Virginia, which made the decision to leave easier. Furthermore, she cannot hide the fact that sailing and crabbing are more appealing than shoveling snow in Omaha. However, Dr. Gibson says she will miss her peers and students at Creighton.

No matter the location, Dr. Gibson will continue to teach both the art and science of psychology. Those who know her best can hardly explain the impact Dr. Gibson has had on them and the university as a whole. Becky Meyer, a senior biology major says, “Dr. Gibson has motivated me to broaden my outlook as a scientist. As a result, I am taking psychology classes which have given me a greater understanding of my field. As her student, I learned to think—that's the greatest thing I can say of any professor.”

We hope those at Washington College learn to appreciate the amazing professor they are gaining. Although her time with us may have been quick, Dr. Gibson will be remembered as a professor who truly expanded the many avenues of psychology.

A Note From the Editor

Forty-eight hours after arriving in Omaha in 2003, I had my transfer applications filled out. I thought I would never fit in at Creighton, that no one would ever know my name, and that I had just made the biggest mistake of my life in coming to Creighton. I could not have been more wrong.

When I became a psychology major, I knew I had found my niche. So this was where Creighton kept the interesting classes and witty professors! Needless to say, the past four years have flown by and I can wholeheartedly say that I will be sorry to leave Creighton behind.

I cannot adequately express the gratitude we students feel for all of the professors’ patience and guidance as we struggled to understand APA style citations, two-way ANOVAs, and the levels of processing theory. Beyond the classroom, the entire faculty and student body has made the Department of Psychology a welcoming and intellectually challenging environment. A student cannot ask for more.

Thank you to all, and best wishes for the future!

Sincerely,
Emily Polachek, Editor
A YEAR IN PSI CHI

We're on the Web!
Puffin.creighton.edu/psy/

By Claire Brabec

Creighton University’s chapter of Psi Chi, the National Honors Society in Psychology, had a successful start to the 2006-2007 school year. To commend its hard work, Creighton’s chapter of Psi Chi was awarded the “Model Chapter Award” by the National Psi Chi Office.

Psi Chi began the year with both social and philanthropic events, including a walk for the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society and a barbeque picnic. Psi Chi’s major fundraising event of the fall semester was the annual bake sale. Along with the bake sale, Psi Chi had a penny war to see which psychology professor would have to wear a hippie outfit to class. Dr. Lupo was the winner and dressed as a hippie for his Neuropsychology and Learning classes.

In November, Psi Chi inducted 12 psychology majors as members. The induction ceremony, which was held in one of Creighton’s psychology classrooms, was followed by a dinner at Old Chicago in the Old Market. Several faculty members and students attended the dinner, and had a fantastic time. The last social event of the semester was the annual Christmas party, hosted by Dr. Badura-Brack. In addition to excellent food and company, the party represented the culmination of a holiday fundraiser for the Open Door Mission’s Operation Santa, which provides Christmas gifts for less fortunate children.

Psi Chi member activities are not limited to social and service projects. An important aspect of Psi Chi is scholarship, and Creighton members embrace this expectation. Several students presented posters and research talks at the November convention of the Nebraska Psychological Society and Association for Psychological & Educational Research in Hays, Kansas. Later in the year, Psi Chi members will be presenting at Great Plains, the Midwestern Psychological Association Meeting in Chicago, the Association for Psychological Science Annual Convention, Posters on the Hill Convention in Washington D.C., and the American Psychological Association Convention in San Francisco. Clearly, Creighton University Psi Chi students are promulgating the school’s reputation as a premier institution for undergraduate research.

In sum, the 2006-2007 year has been a busy one for Psi Chi, and does not appear to be slowing! Before the end of the year, students will be participating in the annual Psych Bowl, Sunday bowling, spring induction, and a spring bake sale to raise money for eosinophilic disorders.

Congratulations to the 2007-2008 Psi Chi Officers!
Jessica Dempsey — President
Allison Rudersdorf — Vice-President
Mallory Henninger — Secretary
Katy Lang — Treasurer