

POINTS OF INTEREST

- Summer research grants provide research opportunities for students
- NEW Qualitative Honors Seminar
- Say Hello to Dr. Tiegs
- Remembering Dr. Dahl
- PSI CHI Report

The Dahl Fund

We have reached the time of year to consider donations for the Dahl Fund, which sponsors undergraduate research.

Enclosed is an addressed envelope for your contributions. Any donation is acceptable and appreciated. Thank you for your support!

Creighton Names Clinical Psychologist as Dean

By Jaime Lang

Clinical psychologist and Dean of the Creighton College of Arts and Sciences, Robert J. Lueger, Ph.D., uses the discipline of psychology in his everyday work. "Psychology as a discipline is about people, and organizations, for me, are about people." Whether he's working with students, faculty, staff, or administrators, Dean Lueger tries to understand about an individual as a person, including motivation, style of managing tasks, and level of understanding. He believes that such an approach makes him more patient and more likely to get work done. Dean Lueger also believes psychology is about "assessing change over time," and uses this in assessments of student learning.

A native of northeastern Kansas, Dean Lueger attended St Benedict's College, now Benedictine College, in Atchison, Kansas, for his undergraduate education. When asked why he decided to study psychology, he replied, "I had no intention at all of majoring in the discipline." By chance, his advisor happened to be the head of the Psychology Department and convinced him to take more courses.

One experience that shaped his interests in psychology happened during his time as president of St. Benedict's Psi Chi chapter. Their service effort was held at a local community health center in which they were "trying to understand the challenges of people in the context of the environments in which they live." With a minor in biology, Dean Lueger's interest in the brain-behavior relationship led to a focus on neurological psychology as well.

Dean Lueger attended the Loyola University, Chicago for his graduate education. At the time,

he had never thought about going into academia. When he was asked to teach a course, he found it was something he did well and went on to teach many other courses, shifting his interests toward academics in clinical psychology. Upon receiving his Ph.D., he took a job at Washburn University in Topeka, KS, and spent five years teaching, doing research, and working in the clinical setting part-time.

As a result of a joint job search,



Dean Lueger and his wife, who has her Ph.D. in industrial-organizational psychology, moved to Milwaukee, where he was chair of the psychology department at Marquette University for nine years. During this time, he worked as the director of the training clinic for the master's program.

After serving as Chair of the Department of Psychology at Marquette, he went on to serve as Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for three years, and then spent two years as Associate Provost for Academic Affairs at St. Edward's in Austin, Texas, before coming to Creighton.

The Jesuit education at Creighton was an attraction for Dean Lueger, as he spent most of his career in Catholic education. "Jesuit education is intellect

guided by values," said Lueger. The opportunity to be a part of this education again is why he came to Creighton. Dean Lueger also had much praise for the psychology department as a reflection of the Jesuit mission. "The psych dept has some faculty who are just wonderfully dedicated to student learning, who give of themselves in ways that are way beyond anything that a dean could ask faculty to do," said Lueger. He hopes to continue to provide opportunities for students and faculty to do research and attend conferences.

While Dean Lueger was in graduate school, his younger brother asked if he could use him as inspiration for a paper on psychologists. He told his brother, "Psychologists often wear many hats, fulfill many roles. Teaching, scholarship, and professional service are all interrelated. Each of them informs the others." Thinking back on that experience, he said, "I really nailed it when I said that." His clinical work, research, and scholarship have proven to inform each other throughout the course of his career, but he didn't know how well he really understood psychology at the time. Dean Lueger advised that "Psychology is a very dynamic discipline," which requires one to be a life-long learner.

Helping students to become aware of the opportunities that await them after graduation, whether it be graduate school, working, or volunteering, is one of his top priorities as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. However, just by setting forth the example of his life, one can see the many paths and opportunities open to psychology students. Welcome to Creighton University, Dean Lueger!

Impressive Student Research Earns Summer Grants

By Jenna Strawhun

Although school was out for most students, the summer of 2008 was a busy and fulfilling one for several psychology students. A remarkable five psychology students were recipients of the competitive summer research grants offered by the College of Arts and Sciences during the 2008 academic year. The recipients of the grants were Lacey Lagoni and Erin Crawford, both senior psychology majors, for their research project on the self-medication hypothesis; Sam Pierre, senior psychology major, and Kunal Sualy, junior psychology major, for their project on stereotype threat in women's scientific career decisions; and senior psychology major Sarah Norris for her project on stalking typologies. Although the pool of applicants for the grant was large and deserving, all three of the projects had clear objectives, interesting research questions, and strove to advance the field of psychology.

Each project was evalu-

ated by five different reviewers who are experts inside and outside the discipline of psychology. Dr. Bridget Keegan, associate dean and professor of English, emphasized that the students who received the prestigious grant "possessed pride in their academic research which fit closely with their path in life." For example, Sam and Kunal worked with psychology professor Dr. Isabelle Cherney, BA '96, to assess gender differences in math ability as it applies to entering careers in the natural sciences. Dr.

Cherney's pride in her previous and current research, which includes projects dealing with gender reasoning, has easily been transferred to her students. Sam and Kunal have collected a wealth of data from urban and rural communities in the United States, while Dr. Cherney has gathered

corresponding data from Switzerland. Participating in research that has such broad cultural and social ramifications has allowed the students to not only answer their research inquiries, but also gain experience in their desired career fields. Sam

stated specifically that his project "has important implications for both education and work in the science fields which is directly associated with my plan to enter medical school after graduation."

Likewise, Sarah Norris' project examining stalking and domestic violence, sponsored by Dr. Matthew Huss, BA '92, not only relates to her long-term career goals of attending a clinical psychology program, but it has also aided her in achieving current

objectives. Sarah interned with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington, D.C., this past summer and the money from the summer research grant played a large part in her finishing the project while still gaining the valuable understanding that comes with participating in an esteemed internship.

Dr. Huss also sponsored Lacey and Erin's research work concerning substance abuse, mental illness, and treatment success, as well as senior Gerard Forbes, who received a Psi Chi summer research grant. Dr. Huss urges all undergraduates to become involved in faculty research as a stepping stone to professional school and beyond. Additionally, engaging in research enhances students' perspectives towards research design and analysis while developing a relationship with faculty members. Thus, faculty and students agree that summer research may force you to replace your beach towels with statistical formulas, but that the exchange is worth the reward!



Grant winners and other students at Great Plains.

Dr. Brown Conducts QUALITATIVE Honors Seminar

During the fall 2008 semester, nine seniors were invited to take part in this year's honors seminar, Qualitative Methodology in Psychology, taught by Dr. Jill Brown. The students were given the opportunity to explore an alternative method of psychological inquiry, one significantly different from the quantitative methodology each had become accustomed to. The use of qualitative methods removed emphasis from lab settings and statistics and allowed the students to investigate in a unique field setting and interpret observations and interviews as results rather than statistical outputs.

Throughout the course, students read a variety of literature relating to the different qualitative paradigms, with the intention of becoming better informed to conduct their own qualitative studies. In order to understand qualitative methods, the students had to understand and adopt entirely new terminology and procedures foreign to previous quantitative training. Despite some criticisms that

qualitative methods are "soft" compared to quantitative methods, the students came to understand that the process as a whole is just as rigorous and demanding. Qualitative methods may focus on smaller samples which leads to less generalizable results, but their purpose is not to create a broad, encompassing theory; rather, this sort of methodology is geared towards an intimate understanding of the subject matter being studied. To strive for this intimate understanding, qualitative psychologists and other social scientists have laid out guidelines for the various qualitative paradigms that insure proper implementation, which creates a rigorous rather than "soft" or "fuzzy" method of psychological inquiry.

The students conducted a series of qualitative research studies in the same, unique field site. This site was BIG Iron Gym, a world-renowned powerlifting gym and where the "Freaks Come to Play" located in Omaha, NE. The students spent an extensive amount of time in the gym, observing practices and interviewing various members of the powerlift-

ing team. The powerlifters, a true amalgamation of personalities, presented an excellent source for qualitative exploration.

After the students formed their research questions, many of the lifters were invited to participate in the class by relating their experiences through interviews and old photographs and other archival data. The studies include narrative life-histories of the world's strongest woman and of another team member, a phenomenology exploring the lived experience of respect amongst the team, and an ethnography encompassing many aspects of life at BIG Iron. In line with qualitative methods, the student researchers returned to the gym in order to verify their findings, a process which includes allowing the participants to read the conclusions and ensure their experiences had been accurately captured and reflected by the researchers.

The course culminated in the students' presentation of their projects to the department faculty and a group of students. Despite the course ending with the semester, many of the students have

By Ted Bartholomew

continued to collect data and work on their qualitative manuscripts. While pursuing publication, the students have continued to craft their manuscripts in order to properly relate their findings, a process that differs significantly from presenting quantitative results. The seminar was an outstanding opportunity for the students to pursue a different form of research and see that statistics and laboratory studies are not always the best way to understand psychology.



Resident Personality Professor, Dr. Tiegs

By Mikaela Miller

It does not take very long for anyone talking with Dr. Tom Tiegs to realize that he brings numerous assets to Creighton. This personable professor is an avid football fan of the Minnesota Vikings and the Florida Gators, enjoys trying his hand at gourmet cooking, likes exploring Omaha, and also enjoys running and playing racquetball. Besides an interest in sports and cooking, however, Dr. Tiegs also brings yet another educated mind into our midst here at Creighton.

Dr. Tiegs, originally from the suburbs of Minneapolis, received his bachelor's in psychology, from the University of St. Thomas. Afterwards, he pursued his master's and doctorate's from the University of Florida, where he recently finished his education in 2008.

While pursuing his degrees, Dr. Tiegs also worked in an internship at St. Thomas, and taught at Penn State for one year.

His experiences with psychology are not limited to teaching, as Dr. Tiegs holds a Ph.D. in counseling psychology. One aspect of his research focuses on the degree of improvement seen in clients while in counseling. His research also focuses on gender and gender stereotypes in romantic relationships. Currently, he is looking at how men and women in relationships see each other, and whether or not it impacts the relationship.

Dr. Tiegs teaches Introduction

to Psychology, and Psychology of Personality classes. After his first semester of being here, Dr. Tiegs says that Creighton has an excellent psychology faculty and a wonderful student base. He notes that Creighton students are engaged, intelligent and more likely to participate openly in class discussion compared to other schools where he has taught.



Dr. Tiegs has pursued three main goals at Creighton: To do his best teaching his classes so students will enjoy learning about psychology, and hopefully even pursue a degree in the field.; to further his

own research thereby representing Creighton well; and finally, to further his own understanding of psychology and teaching.

When asked if he had any advice for students, Dr. Tiegs replied that students need to get involved, whether in psychology research or any group on campus. He also believes that students need to develop critical thinking skills, because they will always serve students well, personally and professionally.

We were lucky to have Dr. Tiegs as an addition to our faculty this year, but unfortunately he will be leaving us at the end of the semester. We will miss you Dr. Tiegs and want to wish you the best of luck next year!

Dr. Elizabeth "Betty" Dahl Remembered for Her Incredible Influence

By Meghan Hastings

This year, Creighton University lost one of the most influential, enthusiastic faculty members it has ever been privileged to know. Dr. Elizabeth Dahl, who passed away in May 2008, from Parkinson's disease, was born and raised in India by missionary parents. Upon her arrival in the United States, she studied at Tabor College and received her bachelor's degree in education and music and her master's degree in psychology from Kansas State Teachers College. When she was hired by Creighton University in 1971, she became the first female faculty member in the psychology department. During this time she was in the process of earning a Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and, in support of her husband's plastic surgery practice, was the primary caregiver for four children—a feat that would be incredibly difficult, if not impossible, for most.

Dr. Dahl served as the chair of Creighton's psychology department for six years and sat on several boards, including the International Council on Children's Rights, the Directors for the National Council on Family Relations and Creighton's Child Care Center Board, and was the Vice President of the Nebraska Council on Family Relations. She was also the recipient of the Mary Lucretia Creighton Award in 1991 and the Distinguished Teaching Award in 1987. Dr. Laura Finken, BA '90, Dr. Dahl's replacement upon her retirement, remembers Dahl as "very interesting, she took on a different aspect of culture and had a broader world view. She had a quirky sense of humor." Gene M. Walker, of Creighton's psychology department and former student of Dahl's, remembers that it was a paper for Dr. Dahl's class that set his course of study.

During her years at

array of changes at the University. Dr. Dahl herself was a great pioneer for change. When she arrived at Creighton, undergraduate research was very rare—that changed with Dr. Dahl. She engaged as many students as possible in research and went out of her way to facilitate the advancement of students in their education beyond Creighton. Dr. Mark Ware, who was a member of the faculty when Dahl arrived, remembers that his colleague was very helpful to students at conventions, "making them feel comfortable," and facilitating a network between her undergraduate students and the graduate school representatives who attended.

Dr. Dahl's enthusiasm inspired the establishment of the *Journal of Psychological Inquiry*—which was one of three journals dedicated solely to undergraduate research at the time. The editorial for the journal's first issue states, "Betty Dahl's dedication to encouraging and supporting undergraduate research provided inspiration for the journal." On the 10th anniversary of the journal's start, the Elizabeth A. Dahl, Ph.D., Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research was created.

Upon Dr. Dahl's retirement, the Elizabeth A. Dahl Fund



Dr. Dahl

was established at Creighton to fund the travel expenses of student researchers presenting at conventions all around the country. The fund, which in the first few years alone raised over \$10,000, "has benefited students wonderfully," says Dr. Ware. "All dedicated students who have a desire to present their research are able to do so." In years before, the funds were simply not available and often came out of the pockets of the students themselves.

Even during her stay at a nursing facility in more recent years, she was committed to learning, asking Creighton professors to borrow books so that she could share them with her nursing staff. This amazing talent and mentor will not soon be forgotten. As Dr. Ware stated in his eulogy of Dr. Dahl, her influence at Creighton is "revealed in the psychology department's archives," which include 88 publications by undergraduate students and countless presentations undergraduates have given at psychology conventions—no doubt due to Dr. Elizabeth Dahl's commitment to her students and

Interested in supporting student research?

Promoting student research opportunities is a priority for the Psychology Department and for Creighton as a whole. Please consider making a contribution to the Dahl Fund, which enables Psychology students to apply for funds to present their research at other institutions.

Thank you!

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Puffin.creighton.edu/psy/

A Busy Year: PSI CHI President Reports

By Sarah Norris

This year has brought several exciting Psi Chi events so far. To kick off the fall semester, Psi Chi held the annual barbecue. The grill was a little slow to get going, but the food was fabulous, thanks to the combined effort of Psi Chi secretary Bennett Poss and our own Department Chair, Dr. Gary Leak. After we all ate our fill, a kickball game was organized, with many a student and children of the faculty facing Dr. Budesheim's tricky pitches! The barbecue was a great way to enjoy the beautiful weather and roll into the new school year.

Later in the fall, Psi Chi brought in Dr. Brad McAuliff, BA '94 from California State University Northridge, a professional in the field of Psychology and Law, and a graduate of Creighton. He gave the presentation "Daubert and Psychological Science in Court: Judging Validity from the Bench, Bar, and Jury Box." He met with students before and after the talk to answer any questions they had about graduate school or his presenta-



One of Brian Polonicic's intricately, beautiful pieces.

tion.

The fall induction brought four new members into Psi Chi! We were delighted to have Dean Robert Lueger, a clinical psychologist, attend the ceremony as well as join us afterwards with the faculty and students at Old Chicago for a celebratory dinner!

Dr. Badura Brack hosted the annual Psi Chi Christmas party with food catered by Boston Market. We spent the evening eating and chatting with the faculty and their families. We even had a gift exchange, which prompted more than a few laughs! This year's party was made a little bit more special by the donations of several

bags full of new toys from students and faculty to Toys for Tots. What a great way to give back to the community!

Psi Chi recently brought a guest speaker, Brian Polonicic, who is an artist and a musician living with schizophrenia since he was 21. Brian brought copies of his CD for all who attended, and also brought many 8x10 prints of his fantastic drawings to sell. Psi Chi purchased a very large print from Brian, which will be on display later this semester in the psychology department!

The rest of this semester is sure to be busy with many upcoming events, so keep your eyes open for Psi Chi flyers!

