

POINTS OF INTEREST

- Meet the newest department addition, Dr. K!
- Creighton prepares for the 2013 Great Plains Psychology Conference
- Learn about Dr. Badura Brack's PTSD research

The Dahl Fund

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

Please send your contributions to the Creighton University Office of Development, PO Box 30282, 68103-1382. Checks should be made payable to Creighton University, with the Dahl Fund noted in the memo line.

Any donation is acceptable and appreciated. Thank you for your support!

InPsyght is Going Green!

In order to better the environment by eliminating paper waste, future issues of InPsyght will be delivered online.

Please send your email address to Dr. Alicia Klanecky at aliciaklanecky@creighton.edu to get on the list to receive future issues of InPsyght.

Creighton Psychology in the Modern World

By Taylor Baumann

Throughout Creighton's history, the Department of Psychology has evolved from Fr. Meyer's first "Experimental Psychology" course (a lab class offered through the Department of Philosophy) into the largest undergraduate major. Today, our majors' interests have extended far beyond our philosophical roots into a staggering variety of fields including forensics, education, health, neuroscience, counseling, business, and research. As the need for social scientists grows, the field of psychology has responded by evolving into a multidisciplinary collection of subjects.

Despite the apparent diverse nature of psychology, each field can trace roots to inquiring how and why people engage in their behavior. For example, these questions are asked in forensics to develop critical tools used in predicting an individual's likelihood of committing violent crime or to judge the accuracy of an eyewitness' testimony. Even Fortune 500 companies such as Con Agra are

becoming increasingly concerned with understanding the underlying motives of their customers as these companies develop competitive products backed by compelling marketing strategies. Thanks to recent advancements in modern technology, we are now able to apply previously theoretical questions of the mind to the strict methodology of the scientific

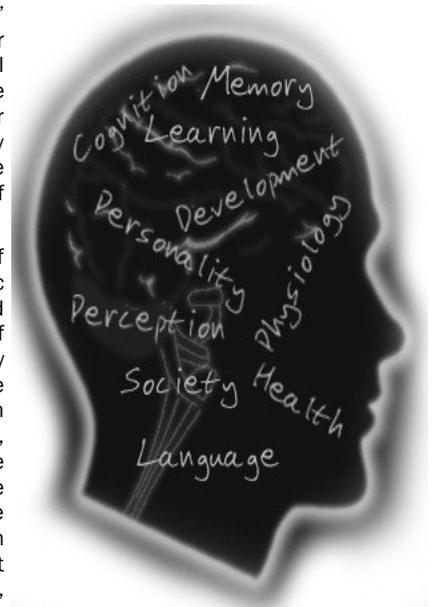
method, expanding psychology's ability to understand the "how" and "why" as well as our presence in the neurological arena. Not only have these refinements expanded our understanding of psychology today, but they have also set the stage for an exciting period of continual growth and influence.

Respect for the field of psychology among the scientific community has expanded alongside the progression of research methodology. One key example of this trend can be seen in psychology's inclusion on the redesigned 2015 MCAT, the medical school entrance exam. In a press release regarding this decision, the AAMC (Association for American Medical Colleges) president Darrel Kirch, M.D., explains, "What we're realizing now is that there is a lot more that goes into the making of the doctor of the future. For example, we understand that there are psychological, social, and behavioral factors that really are very central to determining the health of an individual."

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—Darrel Kirch, M.D., AAMC President

"In the long run, I don't know if that translates to more majors," responds Isabelle Chorney, Ph.D., "I think that the department of psychology as a whole has outstanding teachers and so people are drawn to the faculty, but ultimately they're drawn to the subject."



A simplified spectrum of opportunities available to psychology majors in the modern world.

Psychology's inclusion on the MCAT marks yet another step in the development of the science. We are in the midst of an exciting period of growth, both at Creighton and within the discipline as a whole.

With exponential advancements in technology and the expanding demand for social science, psychologists offer a unique perspective for examining the human condition. As of now, we can look forward to watching the discipline continue to develop to meet the constantly advancing demand for psychology in the modern world.

It's Pronounced KLA-NEN-SKI

By Biz Hall

Nebraska native Alicia Klanecky, Ph.D., has found a new home at Creighton University. Klanecky went to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), where she obtained her B.A. in psychology with a minor in sociology and later her Ph.D. in clinical psychology.

Klanecky researches substance abuse and trauma exposure with particular interest in college student populations. She finds researching the relationship between trauma exposure and substance abuse in college students to be meaningful because the results have implications in the "real" world. Klanecky's research ultimately aims to create brief treatment or prevention plans for at-risk college students.

Upon coming to Creighton, Klanecky wasted no time getting the ball rolling in her area of interest. Currently, her research lab is gathering data from Creighton students examining factors that may facilitate the relationship between substance

use and past trauma. This research began while she was a graduate student at UNL.

When asked about her favorite parts of graduate school, she believes it was the "lifelong friends and collaborators." She also enjoyed the integrated nature of



her work. "In a given week, for example, I would have the opportunity to serve as a co-therapist for a brief alcohol intervention, analyze data from that intervention to examine factors related to drinking, and then instruct a research methods and statistics lab on data analysis

procedures." She found her niche in the academic aspect of clinical psychology, which is how she found herself teaching at Creighton University.

Klanecky loves being a part of the Creighton community and appreciates the enthusiasm among students in the psychology department. She is also thankful for the care and support of her co-workers. Overall, Creighton's sense of community and friendliness have exceeded her expectations, factors which she said have greatly eased her transition into the department.

Lastly, Klanecky leaves us with some advice for those hoping to pursue a Ph.D. in psychology. "Get involved! It is no secret that graduate programs are looking for students who have engaged in activities outside of the classroom such as work as a research assistant and related productivity, student organizations, and possible applied experiences. These experiences strengthen your application, but just as importantly, they can help narrow your interests and goals."

Match the Professors with their Pet Peeves!

By Robin Strominger

1. Leah Georges
2. Matthew Huss
3. Amy Badura Brack
4. Maya Khanna
5. Isabelle Cherney
6. Gary Leak
7. Laura Finken
8. Gene Walker
9. Dustin Stairs
10. Corey Guenther
11. Thomas Budesheim
12. James Lupo
13. Jill Brown
14. Alicia Klanecky
15. Joseph Allen

Being Successful in Psychology

By Karen Vanderzanden

To be a successful psychology major it is important to get involved in the department. Whether you work as a teaching assistant, research assistant, join Psi Chi, or just visit your professors during their office hours, becoming involved in the department will be of great benefit to you. Not only is the psychology department the most exciting department on campus, but forming connections with professors outside of the classroom will also be beneficial when it comes time to start the application process for graduate school.

The best advice I have regarding the application process for graduate school is to START EARLY! Senior year is busy as it is, and the graduate school process is essentially another class on top of the credits you will already be taking. Preparing for the GRE, researching programs, crafting your personal statement (multiple times), creating a curriculum vitae (CV), and perfecting applications are critical steps in the process that require a great deal of time and effort. Let me break it down for you.

The GRE: I recommend taking this test prior to beginning your senior year because it requires an extraordinary amount of studying and preparation. Trying to learn 500 new vocab words in one night is probably not going to happen, so start studying well in advance. Taking the GRE before senior year also allows you to retake the test before starting the application process if you choose to do so.

Selecting Programs: When researching programs, you will quickly find that there are many different options you can pursue. It is important to take the time to read about each specific program that you are considering, as well as the research conducted by professors in that program. Also, be sure to know about the different degrees you can obtain and which one best matches your career goals and past experiences. Graduate schools emphasize the fit between the applicant and their specific program, so that should be your focus when searching for schools. For instance, it will be nearly impossible to gain

admission to a program that focuses on addiction and drug abuse if your previous experiences and future aspirations are to work with special needs children.

Personal Statement: The personal statement carries a lot of weight in the graduate school application process. Don't expect to get this right on the first try. It will take multiple revisions to construct a quality personal statement. However, don't hesitate to get feedback from one or more professors throughout this process!

CV: Think of a CV as a "souped-up" resume. This document should include your contact information, research experience, applied experience, presentations, publications, and honors/awards. It helps to have a professor or two look this over as well.

Applications: Finally, you can put all of your information together in the formal applications and send them off to be reviewed. Once applications have been submitted, all that's left to do is wait!

- A. Lateness
- B. When someone forgets to wipe the countertops down after splashing water all over them doing the dishes
- C. People forwarding junk emails
- D. Grade grabbing
- E. Students who just get their scores and never look over their test to see what they missed. They are not just missing points, they are missing *the* point.
- F. Flo from the Progressive insurance ads
- G. When people don't listen
- H. Snap-on baby clothes
- I. Racist people using "ginger" term
- J. "Mouth noises" - eating with your mouth open/chewing/slurping
- K. People walking and texting simultaneously
- L. When students write me an email without addressing me in it
- M. People who should know better and abuse the English language
- N. Chewing on popsicle sticks
- O. When people leave wet towels on the floor

Badura Brack's Research: Bringing PTSD to Attention

By Nicole Landowski

Creighton's own Amy Badura Brack, Ph.D., has recently gained support from At Ease USA, an organization dedicated to research and treatment for veterans, to investigate a new behavioral treatment for veterans affected by post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Although this research is being conducted at Creighton University, the treatment is currently being tested at 30 sites worldwide in a joint initiative by Tel Aviv University and the National Institute of Health. Individuals who currently seek out treatment for PTSD usually receive cognitive-behavioral therapy including exposure therapy, or medication. In reality, these techniques do not offer complete relief of the symptoms.

As a result, Badura Brack is investigating attention bias modification treatment (ABMT) for PTSD. Because attention patterns are automatic, attention is not typically targeted as a focus for change. Attention bias modification treatment aims to modify processing such that the individual's attention is directed away from perceived threats in

their everyday environment. This treatment has been shown to effectively reduce anxiety in social phobia and generalized anxiety disorder, so she is hopeful it will also prove effective in PTSD. Badura Brack jokes that this treatment is "like playing a boring computer game," which is much less upsetting to clients than

current exposure-based therapies. Participants in ABMT complete a simple and repetitive computerized training program, which is quick and different from psychotherapy or taking medication since the intervention is at the early cognitive processing level of attention.



Magnetoencephalography (MEG) scanner that is used in one study.

Badura Brack is also studying how PTSD affects the brain through the imaging techniques of magnetoencephalography (MEG). This technology is able to measure electromagnetic fluctuations in the brain as neurons fire, localizing spatial activity down to the millisecond while participants are at rest or working on a task. This study utilizes MEG and focuses on how PTSD affects the brain and its functioning, by comparing the brain recordings of veterans with or without PTSD as well as veterans with PTSD both before and after ABMT. If the treatment is effective, she hopes to see dynamic brain changes reflecting the treatment effect in the brain, which would provide rich information about PTSD and treatment response.

Badura Brack is currently seeking participants (with or without symptoms of post-traumatic stress) who were involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom. Please contact her by email at PTSD@creighton.edu or phone at (402) 280-1229 if you are interested in this paid study opportunity.

Great Expectations: Written in Anticipation of Great Plains

By Alan Butters

Not everyone will be celebrating spring break down south this year. On March 15th and 16th, the Creighton Department of Psychology will host a large selection of student researchers at the 33rd annual Great Plains Students' Psychology Convention. The convention, which commenced in 1981 in Kansas, was founded by Dr. Stephen F. Davis of Emporia State College as a forum for idea exchange between regional psychology students. Since then, the convention has grown to accept more than 250 student presentations every year from over

20 universities, allowing young researchers the opportunity to share projects with fellow students.

"I think it's important to gain experience presenting at a conference," said senior Kristyn Angsten. "This is a point in our lives where we can learn how to properly articulate what we've done in our labs." Undergraduate and graduate students alike will give either oral or poster presentations on a variety of psychological topics, including empirical or theoretical papers on clinical, social, developmental, and evolutionary psychology. The last time the convention was held at

Creighton was in 2005, during its 25th Anniversary. According to Maya Khanna, Ph.D., the conference manager, the event should be "a little bigger this year."

"We're anticipating around 300 students," Khanna said regarding this year's turnout. "And usually 10 to 20 of those come from Creighton." One student returning to Great Plains is Amy Wu, a sophomore conducting research in Dr. Isabelle Cherney's lab.

"My presentation looks at the effects of familiarity and siblings on toy preferences in children," Wu said. "I am excited to be presenting again at Great Plains, especially since it's at Creighton."

In a competitive spirit, research awards for each poster and oral presentation will be announced during the closing luncheon on Saturday. These formal awards will not be the only benefits of

presenting, said Angsten.

"[The conference] is a great opportunity to learn about what other research is being conducted," said Angsten. "It can expand our knowledge within our field and also potentially give us new ideas or tips that we can incorporate into our own projects."

This year's convention will feature two honored guests. The first, Creighton professor emeritus Dr. Mark Ware will offer opening greetings. Ware, who retired in 2008, founded the *Journal of Psychological Inquiry* in 1994 to allow undergraduate presenters at Great Plains to publish their theoretical and empirical research. The second guest is Dr. Sheldon Solomon of Skidmore College. A prolific social psychologist, Solomon will offer a keynote speech entitled *Grave Matters: On the Role of Death in Life*.

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. Contact Corey Guenther, Ph.D., at clg52734@creighton.edu about contributions.

Thank you!

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Psi Chi Provides Resources to Members

By Rachel Meisinger

Psi Chi, the honor society in psychology, has provided exciting opportunities over the course of the first semester of the 2012-2013 academic year. In the fall semester, the organization was dedicated to helping students become more aware of the opportunities available to psychology majors.

To accomplish this goal, Psi Chi hosted a "Careers in Psychology Panel," which featured professionals from a variety of careers related to psychology in the Omaha area to tell more about careers that utilize psychology. Speakers included: Courtney Lohrenz, school psychologist, Eva Denton, school psychologist, Scott Miller, applied behavior analyst, Scott Leak, senior manager of institutional sales, and Jackie Paxton, licensed mental health practitioner in the forensic area.

The organization also hosted a "Student Research Panel" where current student researchers offered information and advice to

the underclassmen about getting involved in research with faculty on campus.

Along with the aforementioned activities, Psi Chi hosted several events that gave members the opportunity to get to know each other and the faculty. The organization welcomed students and faculty back after the summer by hosting the annual psychology majors picnic at nearby Elmwood Park. The organization also hosted monthly movie nights, showing psychology-related movies, including *A Beautiful Mind*, *The King's Speech*, and *Primal Fear*. Finally, the organization hosted its annual



Fall 2012 Psi Chi Inductees (pictured left to right): Emma Pavkovic, Bailey Ossello, Kayla Nelson, Lauren Mason, Christopher Little, Brian Dang, Colin Conduff, & Victoria Coakley (not pictured: Adam Cohen)

holiday party in the psychology department, providing cookies and cider while faculty and students enjoyed spending time getting to know each other better.

This spring semester, Psi Chi assisted with the annual Great

Plains Student Psychology Convention at Creighton on March 15-16. Additionally, Psi Chi partnered with Habitat for Humanity to spend a day of service in the Omaha community.

The organization was excited to initiate nine new members in December, making a total of 52 current members. The current executive team, Rachel Meisinger (president), Jack Erbs (co-vice president), Ryan Hafner (co-vice president), Karen Vanderzanden (secretary), Vince Flynn (treasurer), and Robin Strominger (historian), plans to end the year by applying for the Model Chapter Award.

To receive this award, the organization must document chapter participation in at least one service project, a regional convention or undergraduate research conference, and the Psi Chi awards/grants program as well as conduct at least one induction during the year. The organization is proud to announce that it will have met these requirements by the end of the academic year.