

## POINTS OF INTEREST

- Say Hello to Creighton Psychology's new Administrative Assistant Rhonda Kodad
- Undergraduates find psychology job experience at Creighton
- Creighton Psychology's alumni pursue alternative careers
- Psi Chi's busy year

### 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 Psychology Department care of Dr. Corey Guenther.

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. Matthew Huss at [matthewhuss@creighton.edu](mailto:matthewhuss@creighton.edu) to get on the list to receive future issues of InPsyght.

## Dr. Corey Guenther joins Creighton faculty

By Samantha Brown

One of the newest people to join the Creighton University Psychology Department this school year was Dr. Corey Guenther. He is a 2009 graduate of Ohio University where he earned his masters and Ph.D. in experimental and social psychology. Before obtaining his graduate degrees he attended the University of St. Thomas, majoring in psychology and minoring in English. Although he originally wanted to be an athletic trainer, he changed his mind after taking his first psychology class. Seeing psychology's applicability to everyday life made Dr. Guenther know that he wanted to pursue psychology as a career.

"To me it was amazing that the moment I walked out of the classroom I could see psychology at work in the world around me. You simply can't get more applicable than that, and I loved it," Guenther said.

His decision to teach at Creighton revolved around its congruency with his personal goals. He feels that Creighton strikes the perfect balance between being student-oriented and research-oriented. Being able to build meaningful relationships with students while still pursuing his research goals is extremely important to him—and he fortunately feels he has found that. He also greatly appreciates the support of his fellow faculty members as he transitions into the Creighton and greater Omaha community.

Now starting his second semes-



**Dr. Corey Guenther is the most recent addition to Creighton Psychology's faculty. He teaches Introduction to Psychology, Research Methods and Statistics I, and Psychology of Personality.**

ter at Creighton, Dr. Guenther teaches Introduction to Psychology, Research Methods and Statistics I, and Psychology of Personality. In the future he hopes to develop and implement new classes, including one on motivation and emotions and a special issues course on sports psychology. Currently, his research focuses on the mechanisms that underlie the development of one's self concept, how motivation and goals affect perceived self-confidence, and how motivation can shape the way people interact with the environ-

ment.

"When you think about all of the information we have at our disposal to develop a sense of who we are as individuals, it's interesting to look at how strategic people are in deciding which information they should pay attention to, and which they should throw aside as inaccurate," Guenther said. "To me, understanding how our motivations and desires impact the way we engage in this process is fascinating."

Outside of the classroom, Dr. Guenther enjoys spending time with his wife Libby who works as a Wellness Coordinator and their Jack Russell Terrier Lilah. Both enjoy being active and do a lot of biking, running, and hiking. They also like experimenting with new recipes in the kitchen.

# Alumni pursue alternative careers with psychology degree

By Nicole Schmidt

Many students believe that the only option after graduating from Creighton with a degree in psychology is graduate school. However, several recent successful Creighton alumni have "taken the road less traveled," which led them to careers not often considered by undergraduates in the field.

One of Creighton's most recent graduates, Anthony Ralston, has worked in Hawaii for three years as a Behavioral Health Specialist for the U.S. Army. In this position, Ralston did both one-on-one and group counseling with psychiatric patients. His main concern was to maintain the safety of the patients, which sometimes included physical restraint. One unique experience, and the most rewarding for Ralston, was working with the U.S. soldiers who defend our country.

Another recent graduate, Mike Odeh, received his Masters in Public Policy with a concentration in Health Policy from Georgetown University. Odeh chose to obtain this degree because of its quantitative basis and versatility and now works as the Program Coordinator for the Health Access Foundation, a Coalition of California Consumer Health Care Advocates. His advice to current students is to "prioritize what you want out of your career/life and figure out how to get there."

Hilary (Harper) Moores, a 2005 graduate, has perhaps chosen the

most alternative career. After beginning a graduate program for marriage and family therapy, Moores realized her desire was to return to her family farm in Woodbine, Iowa. She received her BA in Accounting from Buena Vista University in 2009 and is preparing to sit for the CPA exam. Currently Moores is employed as the farm's bookkeeper in addition to owning and operating a plumbing company with her husband. In the future, Moores would like to provide bookkeeping/financial planning services to other farmers in her community. Her advice to current students is not to be stubborn about finding your dream job for your first job.

"Try to think of something that makes you unique or something you do particularly well that could make you stand out in the interview process and become irreplaceable in your position," Moores said.

As students explore their career options after their time at Creighton, they should consider taking the road less traveled. As evidenced by the stories of these alumni, the road to graduate school is not the only option after graduation. There are countless different paths to choose from, so students should remember Odeh's advice: "be creative, expand your options, and go after what you desire

# Department offers undergraduates valuable work experience

By Emily Adams

Because of the relatively recent economic turn of events, job opportunities for undergraduate students in the field of psychology are becoming increasingly scarce. Not only do today's undergraduates face the difficult economic times, but they also must face the fact that an undergraduate degree is becoming less prestigious. In this economic climate, it is becoming increasingly important to gain undergraduate job experience in the field of psychology so that students can have a leg-up over competitors for graduate school and job applications. Many such opportunities can be found right here at Creighton.

One opportunity for gaining undergraduate psychology job experience is spring internships. Every year psychology students are given the opportunity to interview for internships with a wide range of companies throughout the Omaha area as part of a semester-long class. Each of these internships is related to the field of psychology. Possibilities include working with children at a behavioral modification center and reviewing probation terms with individuals convicted of crimes relating to domestic violence.

Although these internships may be better suited for those students wishing to pursue a psychology career in a more applied setting, those students wishing to pursue a career in experimental psychology can certainly gain knowledge by the experiences observed during the internship. Having this psychology-related work experience is often required when applying for jobs. An additional benefit of taking part in Creighton's unpaid semester internships is association with a company. Some of the internships, such as the position

with The Child Saving Institute, require a six-month commitment. While this experience is unpaid, it provides the intern with a thorough understanding of the company and its practices; this opportunity can lead to a transfer within the company to a part or full-time paid position.

Additionally, Creighton-funded summer research scholarships provide another method of gaining work experience in psychology. At the start of each spring semester, students are able to apply for a scholarship to conduct an original research project for eight to ten weeks during the summer term. While these scholarships are only a temporary fix for the psychology-related-unemployed student, they still provide great experience for an undergraduate student. This opportunity not only allows students to gain valuable experience in conducting their own psychology research, but it also provides realistic experience as to how much work goes into applying for a research grant. Students are required to write a detailed topic description and proposal, create a budget, and explain why this project would be relevant to their futures.

While the economy may be doing everything it can to keep undergraduate students unemployed, many can turn to Creighton for job opportunities and experiences in the field of psychology. While neither the internship nor scholarship opportunities are enough to carry a student through their entire college career, they certainly provide valuable experience within a field where experience is both crucial and hard to come by.

## 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!

## Psi Chi's new leadership pushes to emphasize social aspects of organization

By Lisa Wolf

Psi Chi, the National Honors Society in Psychology, is seeing some changes this year at Creighton University. The 2009 – 2010 school year has been a busy one so far. Along with the usual monthly meetings, induction ceremonies, and fundraisers, moderator Dr. Dustin Stairs and the current Psi Chi officers are pushing for the group to become more of a club as well as an academic and scholarly organization. At meetings and social events, Psi Chi members are able to come together and share their recent endeavors within the field of psychology as well as form friendships.

Many of Psi Chi's members are involved with independent research in collaboration with a psychology professor, work as a teacher's assistant, present their research at local or national conferences, hold an internship in a real-world psychology setting, or pursue futures as psychologists. When psychology majors are inducted into the society of Psi Chi, they have already accomplished a great deal, and Psi Chi offers them the chance to get to know other psychology students who are facing the same challenges or are



**Psi Chi members Julia Meyers, Mark Rizzo, and Jenna Strawhun mingle and relax at the annual Psi Chi Picnic. The event was a chance for students and professors to get together for some socializing and entertainment outside of the classroom.**

actively achieving similar goals. The faculty support that Psi Chi members receive is also an encouraging aspect of the organization. For example, during the 2009 Christmas party at Dr. Amy Badura Brack's home, students were able to interact with many of the professors and their families, enjoying

great conversation and food.

Other activities that Psi Chi has held this year, in an attempt to build the community within psychology majors, include a bowling social event, designing a Psi Chi t-shirt, and participating in the holi-

day 'Adopt-A-Family' program where the students were able to buy presents, wrap them, and deliver the gifts to a deserving local family. Psi Chi President Mikaela Miller, Vice-President Julia Meyer, Secretary Jenna Strawhun, and Treasurer Marc Rizzo have worked hard with Dr. Stairs to help incorporate social activities into this scholarly organization.

Discussing what he enjoyed most about Psi Chi, Rizzo said, "the opportunity to build a community of people that have the same academic interests as me."

After inducting one of the largest groups in the history of the Creighton chapter this past fall, Psi

Chi hopes to continue to grow, foster community, and encourage knowledge within the field of psychology.

## Post-graduate volunteer opportunities varied, personally beneficial

By Julia Meyers

Why choose to volunteer after graduating college? Many believe that post-graduate volunteering will provide students with many opportunities that will help them succeed in their future endeavors. Post-graduate volunteering is a path many graduating seniors choose when determining their plans for after college, especially with the current economy. It is a great opportunity for students to use their skills to make a difference in the world around them and to take time to discover more about themselves.

As former Director of the Office of Volunteer Development Harriet Naylor said, "volunteering can be an exciting, growing, enjoyable experience. It is truly gratifying to

serve a cause, practice one's ideals, work with people, solve problems, see benefits, and know one had a hand in them." This experience can also provide an opportunity for graduates without a decided career path to employ their skills and explore their interests to determine their next step.

Post-graduate volunteer programs are varied and expansive. Graduates can choose from a range of options including location, age group and population they would like to work with, problems they would like to address and time they would like to spend volunteering. These programs can be domestic, international, faith-based or community-based. Most programs allow graduates to state their preferences and make their best attempt to fit them with a

program they will enjoy. Many programs provide housing, meals, stipends and transportation. For psychology majors, there are opportunities in counseling, social service agencies, schools, community development, community outreach and many more areas.

Participating in a program can provide a plethora of benefits; it can create a chance to gain the qualifications necessary for many job opportunities as well as many graduate schools. For example, as an AmeriCorps member, "you will gain valuable experience that translates directly into job experience in your chosen field." Volunteer positions can provide opportunities to improve communication skills, leadership skills, organization and professionalism.

Several nationally recognized

programs also provide assistance after volunteering. For example, AmeriCorps programs provide a grant to go toward future education or loans, and many graduate schools recruit from different volunteer programs. Volunteering can also be used as a networking tool to meet professionals in a chosen field.

Post-graduate volunteering can be a valuable experience that provides an opportunity to learn and make a difference. By volunteering, students can increase their understanding of the world and be able to better help those around them.

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## New Administrative Assistant gets settled into department

By Hannah Grawe

The new year brought a new face to Creighton University's Psychology Department. After the loss of beloved Administrative Assistant Taunya Plater to the University College last year, Rhonda Kodad was a welcome sight as Taunya's replacement.

Kodad is retired from the Air Force and has been working in administration all her life; she describes it as her "calling." Kodad originally worked as the Administrative Assistant for the Sociology Department, but became interested in working for the Psychology Department when she heard Plater was leaving. According to Kodad, she was "convinced she belonged here" after meeting a few people from the department.

Kodad's favorite things about the department are the people and the view. She said the joking of the professors down the hall creates a welcoming environment. She also enjoys the big window in front of her desk—an upgrade from Creighton Hall. Kodad is very excited to meet more of the psy-



**Rhonda Kodad is Creighton Psychology's new Administrative Assistant. She is retired from the Air Force and recently moved to Psychology Department from Creighton's Sociology Department.**

chology students, as her interactions so far have been good but limited.

"I have heard such good things about the students. I just hope they will be patient as I learn

names," Kodad said.

Kodad spends much of her time in the office working with the budget and keeping track of the department credit card, working on the class schedule with the De-

partment Chair, organizing, copying, and answering phone inquiries.

Kodad said that her most important role is "being the front door to the department. When people walk in I am the first person they see, and I help to set the first impression of the entire department."

But Kodad is not all work and no play. She is married with two grown children and loves the feeling of the wind in her hair. She drives a scooter to work from her home in Bellevue when the weather is nice, and she and her husband are also members of a motorcycle club. They have a Harley that they drive to rallies and fundraisers. Rhonda Kodad is not an average Administrative Assistant, and a welcome addition to Creighton's Psychology Department.