

Psychology to Hire Two New Faculty Members

By R. Stewart

We are happy to announce that the Department has been given the authority to search for two new faculty members. In the difficult economic times we now face this is very good and welcomed news. The next couple of months will be very busy as we screen applications, invite candidates to campus and conduct many interviews to identify who will be our two new colleagues.

A Life-span developmentalist will fill one of the new positions. Our PSY 225 – Life-span Development has grown to be the second most heavily enrolled class of our entire curriculum. The only class taken by more students is PSY 100. Life-span development is a theoretical orientation that is interested in questions centering on the description, explanation and modification of processes that lead to a given outcome or a sequence of outcomes. Historically, there has been a distinction between “child psychology”, “developmental psychology” and “the life-span orientation”. A child psychologist obviously studies children, but they often do so in a way that ignores the context of “growing up” in a family composed of people of various ages who are also “growing up” at the same time. A developmental psychologist typically conducts research within one period or stage of the life-span. Many so-call “life-span” textbooks reflect this orientation in their chronological organization. I often refer to such books as being “womb to tomb” types because they always start with conception and infancy and close with death and dying. They also give you a little bit of information on cognitive development as it pertains to infancy, then a little more a few chapters later when the focus shifts to children and then a little more when they finally get around to older adults. The result is a disjointed stage-like presentation that rarely presents life as an on-going process. (Yes, the bias of my life-span training is showing.)

Life-span developmentalists are trained to search for both continuities and discontinuities that exist in individual growth. Life-span researchers focus how various phenomena change, and many of them further focus on either on how this process of change may be different for some people or how this process of change may itself evolve over time. A life-span researcher may focus on social relationships, personality, cognition, learning or any of the fundamental themes found in psychology, but they do so with a special emphasis on how the process or phenomenon *changes* over the course of an individual’s life or over the course of history. In searching for a life-span developmentalist, we will be seeking a person who not only can teach PSY 225 but who will be able to set up a laboratory designed to investigate one of the many interesting aspects of psychology that actually change over the course of a lifetime.

A health psychologist will fill the second position. The mission of health psychology is to advance contributions of psychology as a discipline to the understanding of health and illness through basic and clinical research. Health psychologists encourage the integration of biomedical information about health and illness with current psychological knowledge to promote education and services in the psychology of health and illness to inform the psychological and biomedical community and the general public on the results of current research and service activities in this area. Health Psychologists are currently conducting applied research on the development of healthy habits as well as the prevention or reduction of unhealthy behaviors. Both the impacts of behavior on health as well as the influence of health and disease states on psychological

Table of Contents

Psychology to Hire Two New Faculty Members	1
Chair's Corner	2
How to Contact Us	3
Where can I get information about being a Psychology major?	3
Career Focus: Adult Development and Aging	4
PSA Statement of Purpose	5
Applications for Student Research Endowment Funds Sought	6
Internships...paid or otherwise	6
I Drove Here for Nothing!!!	7
It is Important: This Study Proves It	8
Teaching & Technology: Promises and Pitfalls	9
An Invitation for You	9
Meeting of Minds XIV	9
PSA/Psi Chi Event Dates: Winter 2006	11
A Little Assurance in Regards to Statistics	12
What Psychology classes will be taught in the Spring/Summer sessions?	13
Making the Most of Your Time at Oakland	14
Graduate School Workshop Registration Form	16

Chair's Corner: Prepared or Comfortable?

Being prepared and feeling comfortable are not necessarily the same thing. Comfort is great, but there is something in me that really prefers to be prepared. (And no, I never was a Boy Scout.) Personally, I really don't care for surprises. I like to look ahead, anticipate, and plan for various contingencies. Whether I am preparing for a long hike in the wilderness, a long cycling tour, a research project, a new semester, or even retirement, I like to devote time to thinking about what could happen and whether or not I would be prepared to handle it.

I bring this up because I have noticed a couple of things that make me wonder if psychology majors favor being prepared or feeling comfortable. The first thing I noticed, something that I have known for a long time, was that easy professors are liked more than professors who are more demanding. It has been repeatedly established that ratings of professors and course difficulty evaluations are negatively correlated. Read the "stuff" that appears on websites such as "Rate My Professor" and you will see that "good professors" are those who are easy, let you out of class early, tell you exactly what will be on the test, and distribute lecture notes to all students. I find the same pattern holds true with the course evaluations that we collect at the conclusion of each semester. This year I read "he is a great professor cuz he lets us out of class by 8 pm every week" or "she is a great prof who tells you exactly what is going to be on the test". Gee, the very things some describe as why a professor is "great" are also potential grounds for dismissal.

Every semester I watch as special seminars and topics classes risk being cancelled because they fail to draw a sufficient number of students. What once made this department truly distinctive in terms of providing a quality educational experience for our students is now at risk because many of those students appear to be unwilling to take classes where a professor makes demands. Seminar classes are the norm in graduate school. I don't recall taking a single large class with multiple-choice tests during my graduate experience; all of my classes were seminars of 5 to 20 people with heavy reading and writing requirements. I would think our students would be advantaged by having had the opportunity to take such classes; taking a seminar would prepare them for what they would experience when they go to graduate school. When I read the course evaluations of students in PSY 251 I see that well over 85% say they are indeed planning to go to graduate school. Then 85% of the 80 students enrolled in PSY 251 each semester might be expected to take eventually upper division seminars...right? Well, that would mean that we would have approximately 68 students in these classes. During the Fall 2005 semester less than 10 students were enrolled in two seminars combined, and as I write this only 9 students are enrolled across the three seminars offered during the Winter 2006 semester.

Continued on page 15

Two New Hires
Continued from page 1

factors are being explored. Psychosocial and physiological linkages in areas such as psychoneuroimmunology, cardiovascular disorders and other chronic diseases are being defined. Ground breaking work is being conducted in psychopharmacology as the neurological bases of behavior are being mapped.

Psychologists are in increasing demand in health and medical settings. The single largest area of placement of psychologists in recent years has been in medical centers. Psychologists have become vital members of multidisciplinary clinical and research teams in rehabilitation, cardiology, pediatrics, oncology, anesthesiology, family practice, dentistry and other medical fields. We hope that the addition of a faculty member trained in health psychology and committed to establishing a laboratory at OU dedicated to conducting empirical research in this area will provide our students with experiences that will open doors to this fast growing area of psychology. ♦

How to Contact Us

We would like to hear from you. We encourage all alumni to drop us a note to let us know what you are doing. Who knows, this might be a great way to get in touch with people you have not seen since your undergraduate days at OU. Current students are invited to write articles describing the research or field experiences, to send questions or requests for information, or simply to comment on the materials found here.

Department of Psychology: <http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/>
Or 248-370-2300
In Pryale Hall on the OU campus

PsychMatters staff psych@oakland.edu

PSA/Psi Chi at OU: <http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/psychstudent/>

Where can I get information about being a major in Psychology?

There are a number of places to look:

1. The racks just inside the front door of Pryale Hall contain handouts such as the complete “Majoring in Psychology” booklet, summaries of the requirements for all independent project courses, applications for grants for the Student Research Endowment fund, a checklist of all requirements psychology majors must satisfy and much more.
2. If you don’t want to walk to Pryale Hall, go to http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/advising_forms.cfm and you will find nearly all of the forms in downloadable format.
3. Your academic advisor within the Department of Psychology...you don’t have one? Then get one...you might be surprised to learn that most faculty chose careers in academia because they actually like interacting with other folks.

Career Focus: Adult Development and Aging

Deb McGinnis, Ph.D.

Most students are drawn to Psychology because of an interest in learning about people and in helping people face various challenges. For the typical OU undergraduate, this interest pertains to helping healthy individuals, leading to the pursuit of clinical or counseling degrees. Some students also have a specific interest in children or teens. Then there is the rare (but tremendously enlightened) student who is actually interested in middle-aged and older adults. However it is more common for students to report disinterest (or even disgust) in adult development and aging: a discomfort reflecting negative attitudes prevalent in our youth-oriented culture. The rest of this essay will describe (1) some of the positive topics related to adult development psychologists study, (2) post-baccalaureate training and career opportunities; and (3) where to start if you want more information about this exciting area.

Even though negative age-related changes influence the work many gerontologists do, there are many empirical and applied areas that reflect positive changes associated with age. For example, compared to young adults, older adults have healthier approaches to coping and emotion regulation: all of which have implications across a variety of domains, including mental health, physical health, quality of relationships and life satisfaction. Even in cognition, there is evidence that certain processes improve or remain stable as people age with a variety of intellectual, social, and physical factors associated with such stability. In fact, neurocognitive scientists contend that, in the absence of dementia-related disorders, the brain may be the least affected by biological aging. Furthermore, psychological development in adulthood is quite nuanced, even complicated, and, as a result, it is never uninteresting. Even though our skin will sag and our hair will change to silver or white (the negativity of which is debatable), developmental psychologists are discovering that getting older is a time of interesting and positive development.

Counseling or clinical careers in the field of Psychology and Aging include Clinical Geropsychology (primarily Ph.D.s) and Gerontological Social Work (primarily MSWs). At present there is a pressing need for well-trained practitioners in both areas, enabling better access to training programs and increased financial support for students interested in Aging and Gerontology. For students who are interested in doctoral programs, there are a number that provide tuition remission and fellowships (e.g., University of Southern California and University of Colorado, Colorado Springs are two that I am familiar with). Naturally, there are career and training opportunities for students interested in teaching and research at the college level (like the professors you are familiar with): interests that can be integrated with clinical or counseling pursuits.

As in all areas of Psychology, careers open to students with life-span interests go beyond those in mental health settings. Because retirement at 65 years of age is no longer mandated, it is anticipated that there will be increased workforce participation by adults over 65. Students interested in developmental issues in the workplace may want to study Industrial / Organization or Social Psychology. At present, various I/O and Social Psychology scholars are involved in the Health and Retirement study (University of Michigan) looking at the relationship among health, retirement, work, and, surprisingly, cognitive variables. In addition, students interested in social advocacy are encouraged to pursue careers in non-profit agencies or organizations that work with legislative bodies and institutions on various social and economic issues relevant to older adults and their well-being (e.g., AARP, Area Agencies on Aging).

To get a flavor for the vast array of topics in the Psychology of Adult Development and Aging, students are encouraged to register for PSY 323: Introduction to Adult Development and Aging. Undergraduates interested in participating in psychological research addressing issues relevant to change in adulthood, are encouraged to discuss these interests with me. In addition, a variety of fieldwork opportunities in this area are available (e.g., Area Agency on Aging, Older Person's Commission, and various Hospice Organizations). I would like to see more OU students intern in these kinds of settings. Interested students are also encouraged to check out the information provided online: a project funded by an AARP grant [<http://www.careersinaging.com/careersinaging/>].

In conclusion, I hope this essay provides a little more clarity about this field and the diversity of opportunities available to interested students. ♦

Psychology Student Association (PSA) Statement of Purpose

- **Provide academic support for psychology majors**
- **Help prepare students for careers and graduate programs**
- **Promote involvement of psychology majors**

Academic support includes:

- How to Write an APA style paper
- Guidance provided by senior PSA officers

Career and graduate school preparation events include:

- Careers in Psychology and Graduate School Workshops
- Tips for taking the Graduate Record Exam (GRE)
- How to write a personal statement

Involvement opportunities include:

- Research presentations
- Meeting of Minds pre-conference event
- Community Service Events

Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology

Why should you join Psi Chi?

- Members receive national recognition for academic excellence in psychology, an honor which can be noted on employment applications, vitae and résumés.
- Psi Chi provides over \$225,000 annually in awards and grants to its student members, faculty advisors, and chapters.
- Members receive a membership certificate and card as well as honor cords to be worn on graduation day
- Membership is for life. The national registration fee is the only payment ever made to the national organization, which does not charge dues.

How can I join Psi Chi?

- Download an application and registration card on the PSA/Psi Chi website at <http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/psychstudent/membership.cfm>
- Fully fill out the application and have it signed by a faculty member.
- Leave your application with a check for \$55 made out to Oakland University in the Psi Chi mailbox in the mailroom outside of room 130 Pryale Hall or give it to Professor McGinnis.

What requirements should I meet to be eligible to join Psi Chi?

- Completion of a minimum of 48 credits of college courses with at least 16 from OU
- Completion of a minimum of 16 credits of psychology courses with at least 8 from OU
- Registration for major or minor standing in Psychology
- At least a 3.5 GPA in Psych and at least a 3.3 GPA overall
- High standards of personal behavior and dedication to the field with endorsement from an OU Psychology Department faculty member
- Members are expected to contribute on a regular basis to PSA/Psi Chi

Applications for Student Research Endowment Funds Sought

In the September 2002 issue of PsychMatters we announced that the department had received an endowment of \$45,000 to establish a fund to support undergraduate research. The Undergraduate Psychology Student Research Endowment has been established and will provide funds “to interest, encourage and keep undergraduate psychology students engaged in research”. We are now happy to report that the fund has grown sufficiently such that we are now able to distribute awards to students seeking support for their research activities.

Any psychology major may apply for funds from this Endowment fund to support their research projects, defray some of the expenses related to presenting the results of their research at conferences or defray some of the expenses associated with travel to and participation in research conferences.

In distributing grants from this fund the Department assumes the following:

1. A call for proposals will be made twice annually. Proposals for research to be conducted in the Fall semester should be submitted on or before August 15th (or the nearest business day), and those for research to be conducted in the Winter semester should be submitted on or before November 15th.
2. Requests for funds to cover the costs of posters to be submitted at the annual Meeting of Minds conference or at any professional conference may be made at any time during the year. Awards will be contingent upon verification that the poster has been accepted.
3. Students submitting proposals will be expected to seek matching funds from other sources.
4. Students submitting proposals will be expected to pay a portion of their expenses, especially their travel costs.
5. The chair and the three current members of the executive committee will review submissions.
6. Equipment, supplies or software purchased with these funds become the property of the Department when the student completes their project.
7. Awards may be made to cover a range of total expenses but are expected not to exceed \$500 to any one student.

Application forms are available on the Departmental website and should be submitted to Professor Robert Stewart, Chair of Psychology, to be reviewed by him and members of the departmental executive committee. ♦

Internships...paid or otherwise

By R Stewart

Every now and then someone walks into my office and says, “I’d like an internship that pays \$20.00 an hour, and I am free on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons between 1 and 4:30 pm.” I generally respond, “Yes, so would I, but it doesn’t work that way.”

The purpose of this note is not to tell you how internships do work. I have too little space for that. Instead, I’d like to point out that the College of Arts and Sciences has a liaison team that works with students seeking internships. They will be more than happy to help you.

How do I know that they will be “more than happy to help you”? Well, for starters, in their last newsletter they announced that 111 undergraduate students from the College were placed in paid internships, co-ops and career related positions. They also reported that over the two day Career Fair held in September, 45 employers came to campus to meet with CAS student and 75 students attended the meetings.

I have converted their newsletter into a PDF file and uploaded it to the Psychology directory. If you would like to read more about internship possibilities at OU, click this link

<http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/CAScareers.pdf> to download a copy. For further information, the Careers Services Office has a website at <http://www.oakland.edu/careerservices> . ♦

I drove here for nothing!!!

By R. Stewart

It was cold, snowing, and the roads were slick. You drove all the way from Port Huron, or Roseville, maybe Detroit or was it Lapeer to go to your class. When you got there you saw a sign on the door indicating that the professor was ill and that the class was cancelled. This frustrates you, so you call the Department of Psychology to yell at a secretary for a while. If that make you feel better you leave, and if it doesn't then you find me, the chairperson of the department, and yell at me for a little longer. I have never known this to make either of us feel better.

Yeah, this happens every semester. Sometimes the snow is missing, but the anger and frustration always seems to show up. Can we do anything more constructive than yelling at secretaries and department chairs? I think so...at least I hope so.

First, realize that faculty are human beings just like you. Sometimes we get sick. Sometimes our family members get sick. Sometimes we have deaths in our families too. We can experience all of the reasons for missing a class that any of you might have. Life happens, deal with it.

Second, the faculty in this department know to inform me and/or the secretaries as soon as they know they are unable to attend a class, and we post this information as soon as we get it. Ah, but that does not tell you that class is cancelled until you get here and have wasted gasoline/time/effort for nothing. This remains the real issue.

OK, here is a potential solution. The SAIL information system has a feature that permits the professor of a class to click a single button and send an email to the entire class. Neither the chair nor the secretaries can email a faculty member's class, but the professor certainly can. The email goes out with all students who use their OU email address. The "blind cc" feature is even used so all individual email addresses remain confidential.

But, there's a problem. Some students prefer to use their Hotmail, AOL or whatever addresses, and the SAIL system will only mail to addresses that are *something@oakland.edu*. OK, the choice is yours...you decide – would you rather use Hotmail and not receive such potential notices? Of course you could forward your OU email to your hotmail address and have the best of both options. This is relatively simple to do. Then all you would need to do is check your email before leaving home. (What if you don't have email? Hummm...that would still be a problem. Sorry.)

I encourage you to mention this issue to your instructors during the first few days of class this semester to see if they will utilize the communication features that are built into SAIL. If they do then none of us will drive to campus needlessly, and no one will get yelled at. ♦

Professor Stewart won't share...he always hogs those 400-level classes for himself

Actually, Professor Stewart is listed as "professor of record" for the field experience, reading and research projects, research apprenticeships, and independent honors projects. The Registrar does this because it would be too confusing to list a section of each of these courses for every faculty person in Psychology. Professor Stewart's primary responsibility toward these courses is to collect grades from all faculty members for the students they are supervising and submit these grades at the end of the semester.

If you wish to enroll in any of these independent projects courses you need to first find a faculty member who is willing to supervise your work. You and that faculty member will determine how often and when you will meet, and what type of product you will complete to satisfy the course requirements. To learn more about what is expected in any of these projects, please go to the "Advising Forms Section" of the Psychology @ OU website, http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/advising_forms.cfm to download and read the file explaining what students can expect in each of these classes. ♦

It is important: This study proves it

By M. Eberly

It is really important to understand. This study by Claus, using 254 participants who filled out some questionnaires, some who were boys and some who were girls, in a small classroom proved it (1887). A correlation occurred between it and this. I know it is true because in my own experience, it happened and it was real. The writing of the article was hard to understand. The author's kept repeating themselves. But I liked the article. It was interesting. I think in the future, they should do more research on it.

So! Did you know what “it” is? I do not know, either. But “it” is important, right? This study did prove it.

As many of you have discovered, the Department of Psychology has instituted a policy in which all 300-level courses have a “writing intensive” component. After much discussion, as a faculty, we believe that including a writing requirement is essential to your success as students. Rhetoric courses certainly provide a base, but psychological writing has specifications that often are not included as part of the curriculum in RHT 160. Moreover, the thought underlying psychological writing is scientifically analytical. It requires an understanding of the literature, ways to synthesize the literature into coherent thematic paragraphs, and an ability to identify shortcomings, strengths and future directions for research. You might think of writing as a tool to clarify your thoughts and increase your understanding. Moreover, in addition to statistics, writing is the basis of our field. Consequently, writing is important.

The following is a list of suggestions and recommendations to keep in mind while you write:

1. **Start early** in the semester identifying a topic and gathering articles
 - a. Remember ILLIAD can take anywhere from 1 – 4 weeks to deliver an article
2. **Know your thesis and write it clearly**
3. **Create an Outline**
 - a. Within the outline identify your themes and sub-themes
4. **Citations:** Remember that empirical research articles can be used more than once in a paper – they are used to provide supporting evidence for a thought, assertion or finding. Typically, direct quotes are not used.
 - a. One recommendation from a student was to use different colored highlighters for different themes in the paper. Thus identifying where certain findings or ideas were needed in a paper was much easier than searching around a stack.
 - b. One idea or finding might have 2 or more citations because more than one researcher has found a particular result. This is a wonderful way to show your expertise and understanding of psychology.
 - c. Use the APA manual (5th ed) to know correct citing. Writing in psychology does not use MLA formatting.
5. **Use Topic Sentences!!!**
 - a. Indicate what you will be discussing in a paragraph
 - b. Stick with the idea in the paragraph
 - c. A suggestion is to circle the topic in your topic sentence. Then make sure all phrases are consistent with the idea presented. If there is a phrase or a sentence that is different or tangential, it is usually distracting from the main idea. Often this “extra” phrase or sentences becomes an important thought or theme for another paragraph.
6. **Use Concluding Sentences.**
 - a. Let the audience know what you want them to understand given the information you presented in the paragraph
7. **Get to the point.** Often in creative writing, students are taught to “ease into the topic.” This technique usually is not appropriate in psychological writing. State your thought or idea outright, up-front and obvious. Then your reader has no question about the idea you are proposing.
8. **Avoid Flowery Language** – Yikes!!
9. **Understand the difference between a personal reaction, critique and conclusion.**
10. **Use correct Reference Formatting** (See APA manual, 5th ed.)

Teaching and Technology: Promises and Pitfalls

By R. Stewart

The folks at Worth Publishing invited me to attend a workshop concerning the uses of technology in teaching Introductory Psychology. Representatives from Worth tell faculty at other institutions how we have upgraded our PSY 100 sections here at OU and describe us as a positive example of innovative ways to think about the class. When they told me there were faculty at other institutions doing some revolutionary things, I knew I had to attend the workshop.

The all-day affair focused on four themes and I would like to tell you about three of them that relate to teaching at OU. The first focused on teaching and technology from what was, for me, a refreshing new approach. The second presented a model of teaching that struck me as being so bizarre that it made me feel old...very old. The last presented a new twist on some not-so-new technology that actually increases student engagement in the classroom.

First, the presentation on teaching and technology was a humorous one presenting tons of empirical evidence of how some textbook features, such as concept definitions in the margins and chapter summaries, actually have no or even a negative impact on student learning. It appears that some widely used pedagogy feature such as putting key terms in **BOLD** or in **colored words** in the margins have no impact at all on the amount of information retained. Features such as *Key Terms* at the end of a chapter have a significant negative impact because students tend simply to memorize them and faculty tend to assess students' knowledge of the terms by asking questions requiring generalizations or applications rather than mere definitions. Empirical evidence was presented to show that both web-based quizzes and in class quizzes increased student learning by as much as 18%. I know that many OU students complain bitterly about faculty who use either of these devices (I do read the course evaluation statements.), but the evidence is clear – preparing for weekly web-based or in-class quizzes results in better overall performance in the class.

No current discussion of teaching and technology would be complete without mention of the PowerPoint. The presenter treated us to the worst PowerPoint display I have ever seen in a purposeful attempt to illustrate how not to give a PowerPoint presentation. Problems of

Continued on page 10

An Invitation for You

The faculty of the Department of Psychology invites you to attend a very important workshop. On Saturday, February 4, Professors McGinnis and Sifonis will be conducting the annual “How to Get into Grad School” workshop. This workshop explores strategies that will improve your chances of gaining admission and detailed information on the process of making applications. Most students do not realize that the process of applying to graduate schools is incredibly different from that of applying to an undergraduate institution. This workshop will explain what is expected of applicants at the graduate level.

The workshop definitely is **NOT FOR SENIORS ONLY** because McGinnis and Sifonis will be describing a strategy that covers 2 to 3 years of preparation to insure that you have the credentials needed to gain entry to graduate study. Freshmen and Sophomores are especially encouraged to attend.

The workshop will be held from 9 am until noon on Saturday, February 4 in 204 O’Dowd Hall. Registration information can be found on the last page of this newsletter

This workshop is a very important part of the overall advising effort of the Department of Psychology. Do yourself a favor, register today and be there on February 4th. ♦

Meeting of Minds XIV

The fourteenth annual Meeting of Minds Conference for undergraduate research and scholarship will be held at the University of Michigan – Dearborn on Friday, May 19, 2006. The formal request for submissions is expected to be made later this fall, with an anticipated due date sometime in March. MOM is a great way to get started your career in Psychology into high gear. All of the PSA students who attended the APS Convention and wrote articles describing their experiences got their start with MOM. You should join them! ♦

having too much text, too much movement, funny or weird sounds and cute but pointless clip art were illustrated in ways that drove the points home immediately. But the presenter's point was not that PowerPoint was bad; instead, the point was that PowerPoint could easily be misused. PowerPoint is no more the cause of a bad lecture than is chalk or a set of transparencies. (Believe it or not, traditionalist faculty members denounced the use of transparencies when they were first introduced in course packs in a manner some now protest PowerPoint.) People can use the PowerPoint tool effectively and efficiently, or they can forget their purpose, their audience and their objectives and make a real mess of things. The presenter closed by admonishing us that presenting is not teaching. I like it when I can reduce an hour-long lecture to a few words: *Presenting is not teaching*. Instructors can use a presentation tool such as PowerPoint, but they still need to teach if they want to be effective with students.

The next presenter told us about something new she was trying...something I would never imagine doing. She is the instructor of a very large (N=300) class of introductory psychology students, and she never lectures. Instead, she leads the class in all of the exercises, hands-on experiences, discussion groups, small group projects, etc., that she can fit into the allotted class time. Her teaching assistants (ten graduate students) have the responsibility of discussing textbook material and giving lectures during recitation sessions to groups of 30 students. We do not have many recitation sessions at OU because we do not have the graduate students to lead them. I have read much of the publisher's supplemental materials and have often wished I had the time to go into some of the discussions and "side-bar" activities they describe. So, what has happened with student performance in this novel experiment? Well, it appears the majority of the class grew tired, bored or uninterested in these exploration exercises soon after the first test. Students continue to attend the sessions with the graduate student TAs, and, as of early November, many were skipping the professor's presentations completely. Some of these students indicated that the link between test items and what the TAs did was far more obvious and that they saw little point of attending demonstrations or discussions if they "were not going to be on the test". The professor argued that those who attended the demonstrations had a deeper and better understanding of the material, but admitted that their performance on the tests was not significantly better. I left her session thinking I would reverse the roles and have the professor teach and the graduate student TAs could do the small group projects with their smaller groups. Now, if I could only find 28 graduate TAs and 28 classrooms, we could divide the 850 students currently taking PSY 100 into groups of 30 for supplemental/alternative learning exercises.

The third speaker presented a means to increase student engagement in the classroom. Engaging students is the current "buzz" word at OU, so I was primed to hear what he had to say. We have all been in a classroom where the instructor asks a question and dead silence follows. The professor may grin and say, "That was not a rhetorical question. Come on now, who wants to take a crack at it?" And silence just continues. Why?

The obvious answer is that answering a question in public involves risks, and people do not want to take risks in the classroom. Provide a wrong answer and you are branded the idiot of the classroom. Say the right answer and you risk being labeled a dorky nerd. What the professor really wants to know is if the class understands what he or she has been talking about before moving on to new material. A very traditional solution to this problem was to have students hold up red, blue, green or yellow flash cards to indicate their responses. I had not been reminded of this approach until recently when my daughter commented on how well it worked in one of her first graduate school classes. So, what can we do with this information, and what does this have to do with engagement?

Electronic devices known as "clickers" have been in some classrooms for years, but they have had a number of performance problems that have resulted in a steady decline in their popularity. I took a serious look at them about three years ago and said "no way." The third presenter, an engineering professor from the University of Illinois, made his own version of the clicker and resolved all of the problems that plagued the previous models.

Continued on page 12

Need Psychology Advising Forms?

Go to http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/advising_forms.cfm

PSA/Psi Chi Event Dates: Winter 2006

JANUARY 2006

PSA Information Meetings

Thursday	Jan 12, 2006	12-12:30 pm	110 Pryale Hall
Tuesday	Jan 17, 2006	12-12:30 pm	110 Pryale Hall
Wednesday	Jan 18, 2006	4:30-5:00 pm	110 Pryale Hall
Friday	Jan 20, 2006	10-10:30 am	110 Pryale Hall

Psychology Department Meet and Greet

Friday	Jan 13, 2006	Noon	Pryale Conference Room
--------	--------------	------	------------------------

Psychology faculty and PSA officers will provide general information about majoring in Psychology at Oakland. FREE LUNCH! Pizza, punch, and cookies will be served.

FEBRUARY 2006

How to Write Your Personal Statement

Thursday	Feb 2, 2006	5:00-6:00 pm	Pryale Conference Room
----------	-------------	--------------	------------------------

Psychology seniors who have recently applied to graduate programs and Dr. McGinnis will provide tips on how to write a great personal statement. (McGinnis)

PSI CHI Information for Psychology Majors

Friday	Feb 10, 2006	12-12:30 pm	110 Pryale Hall
Thursday	Feb 16, 2006	5:00-5:30 pm	110 Pryale Hall

Graduate School Workshop

Saturday	Feb 4, 2006	9 am to noon	O'Dowd Hall
----------	-------------	--------------	-------------

Dr. McGinnis and Dr. Sifonis will provide information regarding graduate school preparation, life as a graduate student, and how to decide if graduate school is right for you. An information packet and breakfast will be provided. Students preregistering for the workshop will be charged \$5 to cover printing and food costs. Students paying at the door will be charged \$10. The workshop room number and preregistration information will be posted in Pryale Hall and on the psychology student association website when these details are known.

MARCH 2006

How to write scientific papers in the APA format

Friday	Mar 17, 2006	Noon-1:15 pm	Pryale Conference Room
--------	--------------	--------------	------------------------

Dr. Eberly will familiarize students with the APA writing format and provide them with information on writing a sound research paper.

Get involved in Psychology Research

Thursday	Mar 23, 2006	4:00-5:00 pm	Pryale Conference Room
----------	--------------	--------------	------------------------

Faculty with research programs will discuss the advantages of undergraduate research experiences at OU.

APRIL & MAY 2006

Psi Chi Induction Ceremony

Thursday	Apr 13, 2006	6:00 pm	Oakland Center
----------	--------------	---------	----------------

All new Psi Chi members and their families, psychology department faculty and staff are invited to celebrate the induction of our new Psi Chi members.

Annual Psychology Department Commencement Gathering

Saturday	May 6, 2006	time tba	Pryale Conference Room
----------	-------------	----------	------------------------

Meeting of Minds Preconference Presentations

Friday	May 12, 2006	Noon-1:00 pm	Pryale Conference Room
--------	--------------	--------------	------------------------

Students presenting their research at the 13th annual Meeting of Minds conference will show their work to faculty and students to practice presenting and get feed back on their work.

A Little Assurance in Regards to Statistics

By Michael Mukavetz

Hello, my name is Michael Mukavetz and I tutored a statistics class in the fall semester of 2005. I noticed that many problems people encountered were very similar. To give a “heads up” to those who are anxious about taking statistics in psychology, I will describe these common errors and their ultimate solutions.

The most common problem I witnessed was a lack of organization. This course is chock full of information and formulas, so it is very necessary to organize notes and procedure logically. When people were able to do this, they became very successful. I would also consider good mathematical notation an essential part of good organization. Not only will you be able to retrace your steps, the teacher will be able to as well. If you get a result that is impossible, you can follow your mathematical steps and pick out funny miscalculations. Some of these statistical procedures have many steps, and keeping good notation is a safeguard against random human error that is bound to occur every now and again. Nobody’s perfect.

While this course is heavy on math, the conceptual understanding of statistics is just as important, if not even more so. I find that people who only attempt to learn the math perform much worse than do people who learn the statistical concepts, as well. It is my strong belief that a firm grasp of the concepts should be the base of all work in statistics. If you can grasp the statistical concepts, the math will come easier. If you get the math, you aren’t necessarily guaranteed to understand the concepts. A good way to ensure success is to learn the math and the concepts concurrently.

When you’ve finished the math part of the problem, take a second to stop and conceptualize. The concepts do you no good unless you employ them. Be able to go back and forth from summarizing the work with “real-life” words as well as with numbers. It does no one any good to say, simply, “65.5”. A better answer is, “The average height of females in

Continued on page 13

Teaching & Technology, continued from page 10

I know because he started his presentation by distributing clickers to us and then gave his presentation with a series of questions embedded into the PowerPoint presentation. He would talk for a while and then present a slide with a simple multiple-choice question. We could select A, B, C or D buttons (also colored red, blue, green and yellow, imagine that) and immediately a bar graph popped up on the screen summarizing our responses. The professor/presenter got his feedback to determine how well we understood the last few minutes of his lecture, and we, the audience, enjoyed the anonymity of being able to respond with a simple press of a button. The nicest feature this professor has added to the clicker...now known as “iClicker” ... is that each one has a unique serial number and radio frequency that can be associated with a student identification number. The results of the in-class quiz are automatically stored in a computer file running on the professor’s laptop computer. We can have in-class quizzes without paper, embedded into the lecture or created spontaneously when the instructor wants to know that a point has been made. A five to seven item “quiz” can be spread over the entire lecture with one question popping up every 15 minutes or so.

What does this have to do with student engagement in the classroom? Ah grasshopper, you are paying attention, aren’t you? Do you remember the principles of operant conditioning that were taught in every PSY 100 class? The iClicker provides the means of delivering a variable schedule of reinforcement, the type all psychologists know generate steadier response rates and greater resistance to extinction. The iClicker has been tested at Illinois with engineering students and at the University of Louisville with introductory psychology classes with nearly 500 students per class. The classes at Louisville where the iClicker is used report 94% attendance; those not using the clicker are approximately 50%. Statistical analysis is not necessary with data such as these.

Does being in the classroom lead to better grades? You betcha; there is clear empirical evidence for this. The only remaining question is how long will it take us to get iClickers into our classrooms. I am hoping we will have a trial run next fall. ♦

A Little Assurance
Continued from page 12

this group is 65 and one-half inches.” The point is, anyone can spit numbers, but being able to analyze and interpret them with non-mathematical jargon is much more useful for everyday application. Also, an interactive understanding of the statistical work is essential for success.

I also suggest learning the “store” function of your calculator. The chances are, you probably have a store function, and don’t know how to use it. I find, personally, that this function saves much time and helps control human round off errors. For example, the function 20! is a very long digit that most calculators only display about ten digits. Without using a store function, you lose several digits, therefore increasing the odds of a wrong answer. If you’re like me, you’ll want to save every one of those precious digits. If you’ve done a lot of work on a problem, it would be very disheartening to discover you gave a wrong answer because of a silly round off error. Also, using the store function saves much time (and stress, if you can believe it).

Another point I must emphasize is that no one is typically born a statistics wiz. I didn’t realize I even like statistics until my course was finished. I, like most Psychology students here at Oakland, had a strong fear of the course. I must say the best way to guarantee success in statistics is to accept this fear. It is normal to be nervous about an upcoming test, and the best response is to ask questions. The tutors are always available, as well as the teachers. I have seen too many people resign to failure. If you don’t know, ask now, relax later.

Finally, do not blame defeat on the difficulty of the test, or the quality of the teacher. This will only serve to discredit your hard work. There are no significant negative consequences for over-estimating the difficulty of a test, if you react appropriately. Never give up, and never believe that you cannot be successful with statistics. You are only bounded by your effort. I hope that you find your statistics experience an enjoyable one, like I did.

Good luck. ♦

What Psychology classes will be taught in the Spring/Summer sessions?

Would you like to know future schedules of classes? As soon as a tentative schedule for an upcoming semester is created Professor Stewart posts it on the departmental website. The Spring and Summer schedules has been there for months, and the Fall 2006 and tentative Winter 2007 schedules are expected to be ready by the end of January. Don’t wait until the last minute to know what is coming. Get the info you need now.

Tentative schedules for future semesters can be found at:

<http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/schedule.cfm>

Can’t drive to Dearborn to attend Meeting of Minds?

OK, then come to the Pryale Conference Room at noon on Friday, May 12 to see the posters and hear the presentations our students will be making the following week. The tradition of the MOM pre-conference gives our students the opportunity to get everything in order (including the butterflies that often accompany a first presentation). It would be good to have a small audience to witness the “dress rehearsal” ...and it may even convince you that you ought to make the drive, or better yet, to carpool to Dearborn. Take advantage of the MOM experience by being a part of it. ♦

Making the Most of Your Time at Oakland

By Alice Wastag

Whether you are a freshman just entering the psychology department or a senior finishing your last semester before graduation there are opportunities to make the most of your degree from Oakland. It is never too late to make your experience better. The hardest part is getting started. For the winter semester, make it your goal to try something new. You will never regret making the most of your education. It will help when applying for a job in the field or applying to graduate school. Here are a few tips on how to make the most of your education.

Tip One: Make yourself known. Get involved by talking to your professor. Break the ice by asking about assignments in class, an upcoming test or even something related to the lecture. Your education is important, but knowing people is important too and if you want to be successful, you have to make yourself known to the department.

Tip Two: Select the right courses. When considering what classes to take, think of your objectives. Plan your direction and take courses that complement your field. For a list of recommended courses based on specialty area visit the psychology website at www.oakland.edu/psych and look under advising. If you plan on going to graduate school, there is also a list of general courses recommended on the website. Some courses may be more work, but the payoff can be worth it. Not only are you enhancing your knowledge and resume, but you are also getting an even better chance to know your professors personally as the tougher courses tend to have fewer students.

Tip Three: Get to know other students. Just as important as getting to know your professors you should get to know your peers. Try joining the Psychology Student Association where every psychology major is welcome. Also, inquire about Psi Chi membership (see minimum grade requirements on the OU psychology web page).

Tip Four: Get involved in the department. Once you get to know your professor for the duration of the semester, inquire about opportunities to work in their lab, as a teaching assistant or as a research assistant. This opportunity can act as a two or four credit class and you will get some hands on experience.

Tip Five: Explore course that need professor approval. There are several courses that required the professor's signature to join. These courses include, the advanced experimental courses in development, personality, social or basic process, as well as a new seminar course on attachment running in the winter. These courses are a must for graduate school students because they expose you to a new styles of teaching, such a seminar, that is common in graduate programs.

Tip Six: Do an independent project. After helping your professor with their research or lab take the next step and do your own work. Think of this as a learning experience. Don't be afraid to try something new. Your professor will help you through the process. One word of advice, get involved as a lab assistant before you try it on your own.

Tip Seven: Apply for graduating with honors. By taking a course such as once of the advanced experimental or working on an honors independent project, you meet the requirement for consideration to graduate with honors from the psychology department. All you need to apply is a tangible product from an upper level course. The psychology department can give 15% of their students the status of graduating with honors each semester, however only a few ever bother applying.

A Few Things You Should Think About if You Want to Go to Graduate School

The How to Get Into Graduate School Workshop is on Saturday, February 4, 2006 from 9:00 until noon. It is a great way to introduce yourself to what it means to apply to graduate school and what graduate schools are looking for so you can plan accordingly for the future. Registration forms can be found at the end of this newsletter.

The general GRE test is on March 11, 2006. Most graduate schools require these scores so plan accordingly. The deadline for registration is January 27, 2006. The subject GRE for psychology is on April 1, 2006. The deadline to sign up is February 10, 2006. Sign up early each test is approximately \$115 to \$130.

If you have a year off before going to grad school, stay active. Your education does not have to be put on hold for a year. Take a few additional courses as a post bachelor student. If possible even take courses at the graduate school where you wish to go. You may even be able to transfer those credits into your program. Think of it as an early start. If you do not have any more courses to take offer to volunteer in the graduate school lab where you are applying. This is a great way to meet new faculty as well as prove you are a worthy candidate for the program.

School, like many other things, is an investment and like any good investment you get out what you put in.

Prepared or Comfortable
Continued from page 2

I have asked students why they think so many people avoid classes such as these, and the most common response is that they have heard seminars are difficult and that it is easier to get a good grade in a simple class with multiple-choice exams. Some add they are uncomfortable with classes that require reading and discussion and prefer the professor to just lecture. They point out that you cannot hide in a small class. I follow up by asking if these students plan to go to graduate school, and most say that they do. If you have read this far you know the next question – I ask if they feel they are prepared for going to graduate school without having a seminar experience. This really seems make some students uncomfortable with the conversation. The typical response is that they will worry about graduate school when they get there. That strikes me as waiting to get into the backcountry to check to see if your first aid kit contains everything it should.

I will close with a simple piece of advice: take a chance outside of your comfort zone. Prepare yourself for your own future success. Choosing an academic career of getting good grades from a professor who ends class early, makes few requirements of you and never challenges students to grow will hurt you eventually. Sure it make you comfortable now, but the cost in the future could be huge. Why risk it?

Let's get to work. ♦

Robby

PS.

You might notice that the student editor position remains unfilled. Perhaps Nikki did such a wonderful job that people are afraid to stepping forward and volunteering for the position. This opening represents another opportunity for a Psych major.

The original purposes of *PsychMatters* were to provide information about events occurring in the Department that would be of interest to students and faculty, provide commentary about topics of interest to people interested in Psychology, and provide a means of communication concerning student, alumni, and faculty accomplishments. I am happy that colleagues such as Professors Eberly and McGinnis are willing to take time to write pieces for this newsletter. I look forward to submissions from the rest of my colleagues in future editions.

I am also quite happy that Michael Mukavetz and Alice Wastag submitted pieces for this issue. I think that every current psychology major at OU should take the time to read these articles. These two students are completing psychology majors in a way that I would hope would become a model for more of their peers. They have been active in independent studies courses, special seminars, and research projects – the very things that make the psychology major at OU a distinctive educational experience.

Twice every year I participate in graduation ceremonies to read the names of psychology majors who have completed their programs of study. Every year, twice a year, I am amazed at how few of these students I know. Because I am the “Professor of Record” for the independent projects, I at least get to see the names and grades of everyone involved in these activities. This provides me a clue as to how many of our graduates never take advantage of these opportunities. For those of you who are still early in your academic careers, read the advice provided by Michael and Alice, read what Professors Eberly and McGinnis provide, and **take the chance to do more than just work to finish your degree....get an education instead.**

Psychology @ OU

Our website can be found at <http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/> . At this site you can find detailed advising information, advising forms, descriptions of upcoming events, links to faculty pages, future schedules of classes, and copies of our newsletter, *PsychMatters*. It's your educational experience, why not make the most of it? Get informed, stay informed.

The next step after becoming informed is to get involved. Visit the Psychology Student Association website at <http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/psychstudent/> to learn about their upcoming events. Better yet, join PSA today!

Graduate School Workshop Registration Form

Dr. McGinnis and Dr. Sifonis will provide students with information about applying to graduate programs to earn Masters and Doctoral degrees in this annual workshop. They will explain how to determine if graduate school is right for you, what life as a graduate student is like, what undergraduate preparation is necessary to get into most programs, and what are the typical processes of applying to graduate schools. Did you know that the process of applying to graduate schools can take up to 5 months just to identify the schools and prepare the documents? Do you know what a personal statement should include? Do you know the most common mistakes students make in their personal statements? How do you ask a faculty member for a letter of recommendation? Who do you ask?

If these questions are all “no brainers” for you, then feel free to sleep in when the workshop is being held. Otherwise, all students who are considering applying to graduate programs are strongly encouraged to attend this workshop regardless of class standing. Please note that the information provided in this workshop is most helpful if it is obtained when you are a freshman or sophomore – do not wait until your junior or senior year and then discover that you should have attended earlier. As is usually the practice variety of breakfast items, juice, coffee, and an information packet will be provided.

The 2005 Graduate School Workshop will be held on Saturday, February 4th from 9:00 am until noon in 204 O’Dowd Hall.

To register for the workshop you can either:

1. Turn in this completed form and \$5 to Sandy Gabert in room 111 Pryale Hall.
2. Mail this completed form and a check made out to Oakland University for \$5 to the address below:

Sandy Gabert
Psychology Department
111 Pryale Hall
Oakland University
Rochester, MI 48309-4489

-----cut here-----

**** All forms must be received by Thursday, February 2nd at 5:00 pm ****

People not pre-registered may pay at the door, but will be charged \$7 and will not be guaranteed breakfast or an information packet. Please register ahead of time.

If you have any questions contact Professor McGinnis at mcginnis@oakland.edu. Visit the Psychology Student Association webpage at www2.oakland.edu/psych/psychstudent to learn about other PSA sponsored events.

Please register me for the 2006 Graduate School Workshop to be held on Saturday, February 4th.

Name: _____

Email Address: _____