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# PSYCHMATTERS

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## Reorganization and Modification: The NEW Psychology Student Association

By N. Hoffmeister

The Psychology Club has been successfully reorganized and significantly modified. We will now be referred to as the Psychology Student Association (PSA). PSA encourages all students to join and become actively involved in many on and off-campus events. There are no requirements to join PSA; everyone is welcome! To learn more about PSA, go to our new website (coordinated by Natalie Obrecht):

<http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/psychstudent/index.cfm>.

The new Psi Chi officers are currently directing all of the PSA sponsored events, however, anyone is welcome to help. The new panel of officers of Psi Chi are: Brandy Matz (President), Natalie Obrecht (Vice President & Website Coordinator), Nikki Hoffmeister (Vice President & Student Editor of PsychMatters), Andrea Groleau (Vice President), Courtney Fons (Vice President), Tara McIntosh (Treasurer & Director of Fundraising), and Dr. Debra McGinnis (Faculty Advisor). Becoming a Psi Chi member is still an option for those who meet the requirements and desire the academic recognition. It is not necessary, however, to be a member of Psi Chi to be involved in any PSA or Psi Chi sponsored events. Psi Chi membership is an optional honor for psychology students who meet the requirements. ♦

### Mission Statement

#### Oakland University Psychology Student Association

The mission of the Psychology Student Association (PSA) of Oakland University is to promote a community intellectually engaged in Psychology. This community includes Psychology majors, non-majors interested in Psychology, faculty, administration, staff, and any community member having an interest in Psychology.

Each academic year, the Psychology Student Association will facilitate activities related to this mission. These activities pertain to three areas of interest to the Oakland University community: (1) education as it pertains to studying Psychology at Oakland University, (2) career and graduate school preparation addressing the needs of Oakland University Psychology majors, and, more broadly, (3) intellectual engagement in Psychology.

More specifically PSA will organize activities that: (1) enhance the educational endeavors of Psychology majors by organizing mentoring activities related to the requirements for a B.A. in Psychology, scientific literacy, and effective writing; (2) provide assistance to Psychology majors preparing for post-baccalaureate careers by providing information about post-baccalaureate training, graduate school preparation, research assistant training, career opportunities, and fieldwork; and (3) promote intellectual engagement in the topics of interest to the Psychology community at Oakland University by inviting speakers and organizing discussions, and by organizing attendance at regional, national, and international conferences related to Psychology (e.g., APA, APS, MPA conferences). ♦

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## Chair's Corner

The process of reorganization can be frightening and disrupting, but the results can be incredibly positive. I received many emails from former Psi Chi and Psychology Club officers who expressed both concerns over the problems the current students faced and sincerely best wishes that the process be completed successfully. I am happy to report that we have been successful.

Professors Ron Butzlaff, Debra McGinnis and I participated in a number of meetings with students to hear complaints as to what was wrong, who was at fault, and what needed to be changed. One thing we heard was that the former organization had become too much of a social club of elite students who didn't really accomplish anything. We heard this as three issues...social club, elitism, and ineffective faculty-student communication. The "club" issue was, in part, due to the fact that "Psychology Club" had grown to be seen as a social group. More exploration revealed that this "club" event was tied to the former advertising ploy of saying something to the effect of "come to the Psych Club/Psi Chi meeting and get a free lunch." The message was that Psych Club provided chicken fingers, and everyone wanted chicken fingers. And what happened at the meetings...well, no one could really tell us that.

We also heard that the focus of student activities had shifted disproportionately to Psi Chi, and that students who did not meet the requirements for this national honor society in psychology were not made to feel welcome except as a second class citizens. Those of us who knew the history of the student organization within this department were saddened to hear this, because involvement with the student organization had been a mechanism for improving one's performance so that induction into Psi Chi became a logical and reasonable outcome.

The issue of ineffective communication was reported by noting that faculty would not do anything to support the student organization. This information further saddened us because we wanted to be involved with student activities but could not remember being asked to do so. Rather than pursuing who was and was not asked to participate we instead asked the students to give us a list of programs, lectures, or workshops they would like to experience. The result was a shopping list of topics the students described as things they wanted to explore in more depth after they completed the annual "Careers in Psychology" or "How to Get into Grad School" workshops. The students indicated that they did not feel that they could raise questions and establish dialogs when sitting in a room with 100 other students. I took this shopping list to the faculty and asked everyone to volunteer to participate in at least two of the events. The result can be found on the final page of this special edition of *PsychMatters* – note that 17 events have been scheduled over the upcoming months involving every member of the department and a few of our colleagues from other departments. The fact is that the faculty do support the student organization, and are happy to do so.

So, the slate has been wiped clean and a new program is in place. The mission statement on the first page clearly summarizes what the Psychology Student Association at OU hopes to accomplish. Current students (there are 745 psychology majors taking classes this semester) will be getting email messages announcing the PSA and Psychology events scheduled for the upcoming week. The transition is not completely finished, but we certainly are in a better place now relative to the announcement in the last issue of *PsychMatters*. I would like to thank all of those involved, especially the new officers and Deb McGinnis, their faculty advisor, for their work in getting us here. ♦

Robby

## Graduate School Workshop a Success

By N. Hoffmeister

This year's Graduate School Workshop was even more informative than in previous years, thanks primarily to the efforts of Dr. Stewart and Natalie Obrecht in updating the information packet that each attending student received. The packet contained information on how to prepare for graduate school and the application process. It included a timeline for psychology students, broken down by semester and year (i.e., what each student should do during the winter semester of their junior year). It also had a quiz to help individual students realize how successful they might be in graduate school. The packet also lists various books that may be helpful in preparing for graduate school, choosing a graduate school, and preparing for the Graduate Records Exam (GRE). This packet is available on the OU psychology website for those who were unable to attend the workshop. (The packet from Fall 2003 "Careers in Psychology Workshop" is still available on this website.) Go to the "News and Events" link on the Department of Psychology web site [<http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/events.cfm>] to download these packets.

The workshop helped students understand how important the application process is. Some valuable advice offered to students by Dr. Eberly and Dr. Stewart during the presentation included: asking for letters of recommendation well in advance, instead of waiting two weeks before the deadline; spending a lot of time preparing each personal statement; developing or improving your writing skills; getting involved with professors beyond the classroom, so that they may know you well enough to write better letters of recommendation; becoming involved in at least one research project, if not more, while an undergrad; taking electives outside of the subject of psychology that are similar to your areas of interest; and, of course, knowing your research methods and statistics!

For more information, or for answers to more specific questions, attend one of the PSA coordinated graduate school preparation discussions. Also, download and read the packet from the workshop off of OU's psychology website. Remember: it is never too soon to start preparing for graduate school!

The workshop was sponsored by the Psychological Student Association and was coordinated by Natalie Obrecht. Thank you, Natalie, for organizing such a successful event. Special thanks to Andrea Groleau and Tara McIntosh for helping set-up and clean up the wonderful assortment of bagels, muffins, coffee, and juice that was available for the attending students. Thank you, also, to Dr. Stewart and Dr. Eberly for a truly informative presentation. ♦

### How to Contact Us

Department of Psychology: <http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/>  
Or 248-370-2303  
In Pryale Hall on the OU campus

*PsychMatters* staff [pmatters@oakland.edu](mailto:pmatters@oakland.edu)

Psychology Student Association: <http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/psychstudent/>

Broaden your knowledge of Psychology...

Visit the American Psychological Society Website at

<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/>

# Psychology Student Association Events

## Winter 2004

### February

Thursday 2-12-04 at 6 PM in Pryale Conf Rm  
Personal Statements: Eberly, Butzlaff  
PSA Coordinator: Natalie

Friday 2-13-04 at 2 PM – OC 126-127  
Research Experiences: Purcell, Sifonis, McGinnis  
Lombardo  
PSA Coordinator: Tara

Tuesday 2-17-04 at 3:30 PM in Pryale Conf Rm  
Special Lecture: Evolution and Psychology: Landau  
PSA Coordinator: Andrea

### March

Wednesday 3-3-04 at 12 PM -- OC 126-127  
I/O Career Focus: Barclay, Malatesta  
PSA Coordinator: Courtney

Friday 3-12-04 at 2 PM in Pryale Conf Rm  
Special Lecture: Facial Affect Processing: Purcell  
PSA Coordinator: Brandy

Friday 3-19-04 at 12 PM – OC 126-127  
Special Lecture: Non-conscious Learning: Sifonis  
PSA Coordinator: Tara

Friday 3-19-04 at 2 PM in Pryale Conf Rm  
Letters of Recommendation: Eberly, Stewart  
PSA Coordinator: Brandy

Tuesday 3-23-04 at 3:30 PM in Pryale Conf Rm  
Experimental Career Focus: Purcell, Landau  
PSA Coordinator: Brandy

Wednesday 3-24-04 at 3 PM in Pryale Conf Rm  
Clinical Career Focus: Lilliston, Shillace, Shantz,  
Lombardo  
PSA Coordinator: Nikki

Friday 3-26-04 at 12 PM: – OC 126-127  
Developmental Career Focus: McGinnis, Eberly, Stewart  
PSA Coordinator: Tara

Tuesday 3-30-04 at 6 PM in Pryale Conf Rm  
Social Career Focus: Butzlaff  
PSA Coordinator: Andrea

Wednesday 3-31-04 at 3 PM in Pryale Conf Rm  
Special Lecture: Applied Research: Lombardo  
PSA Coordinator: Nikki

### April

Thursday 4-1-04 at 2 PM in Pryale Conf Rm  
Field Experiences: Lilliston, Shillace  
PSA Coordinator: Courtney

Wednesday 4-7-04 at 12 PM Room: TBA  
Counseling Career Focus: Faircloth, Blume, Stotts  
Counseling faculty representatives  
PSA Coordinator: Andrea

Thursday 4-8-04 at 2 PM in Pryale Conf Rm  
Special Lecture: Loss & Trauma: Shillace  
PSA Coordinator: Natalie

Friday 4-16-04 at 2 PM in Pryale Conf Rm  
Getting a Mentor: Stewart, McGinnis  
PSA Coordinator: Nikki

### May

Friday 5-7-04 at 2 PM in Pryale Conf Rm  
MOM Papers / Posters; coordinated by Sifonis  
PSA Coordinator: Natalie

Friday 5-7-04 at UM-Flint  
Meeting of Minds Undergraduate Conference  
Register at <http://meetingofminds.umflint.edu>

Please let us know your reactions to these programs, and feel free to make suggestions for other programs not included here. During the summer months we will be putting together a series of programs for the Fall 2004 semester. What programs would you like to see? Email suggestions to [pmatters@oakland.edu](mailto:pmatters@oakland.edu) or to any of the PSA officers. ♦