

Psi Chi to Re-organize

By R. Stewart & N. Hoffmeister

Many people have heard “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” and know what this means. But what is the flip side of this statement? How do you know if something is broken? How do you determine when something really needs to be fixed? How do you fix it?

In discussions of psychopathology, we often identify a condition to be a disorder by considering three criteria: statistical deviance, maladaptiveness, and personal distress. A situation or behavior can be declared a disorder if it falls outside the normal range of behavior, if it interferes with the personal or social adaptation for the individual, or if it causes anguish or discomfort for the individual. These three criteria have served psychologists well in defining conditions known as abnormal or dysfunctional when the target is an individual person. Can these criteria be employed when the target is an organization rather than a person? We think so.

The Problems: There are over 730 psychology majors on campus, yet fewer than 10 people are actively involved in Psi Chi or the Psychology Club. Does this sound like a small number to you? Why are so many people opting not to participate in Psi Chi activities? In past years, when we had fewer majors, nearly 200 people would participate in the Careers in Psychology workshop. It was typical to have 30 to 50 fifty people attend a colloquium where a faculty member or invited guest would present a summary of their research or clinical practice. Students organized peer mentoring programs, academic tutoring, and numerous service projects each semester. With the large number of students at hand, a diversity of programming was provided and enjoyed by many. The annual Psi Chi induction ceremony not only added new members to the roster, but also provided an opportunity to recognize the accomplishments and contributions of dozens of psychology majors. Twenty or more students routinely presented the products of their independent projects at the annual Meeting of Minds conference. The number of psychology majors has increased by 40% over the last 5 years, but student involvement in Psi Chi and Psychology Club is at an all time low. Perhaps the time has come to wipe the slate clean and start anew.

We have heard that students just want to add “Psi Chi member” to their résumé. We are told many believe that

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How To Get Into Grad School Workshop Scheduled for Saturday, February 7

By N. Hoffmeister & R. Stewart

Every year the faculty of the Department of Psychology conduct two career-oriented workshops for Psychology students. The first, on October 25 in 190 Hannah Hall, focused broadly on the range of careers that are available to students of Psychology. A summary of this workshop appears on page 11. The second workshop will be held on February 7 in the same room. This workshop focuses more specifically on the strategies that will improve one’s chances of being admitted to graduate school. These workshops are open for all students, whether or not they have declared a major in Psychology. More importantly, these workshops are

NOT FOR SENIORS ONLY.

We strongly advise first year students to attend so that they can learn how to get the most out of their years at OU. Too often we hear juniors and seniors leaving these workshops saying “Why didn’t someone tell me about this four years ago? I would have done so many things differently.”

To learn more about the upcoming workshop PsychMatters asked Professor Stewart, one of the presenters this year, to answer a few questions:

PsychMatters: *What is the purpose of the Grad School workshop?*

Stewart: A major purpose of the Grad School workshop is to address the needs of those students who know or think that they want to go to grad school. The absence of a graduate program in Psychology at OU means that students here lack access to graduate school role models, so many of our students do not really understand what is involved in going to grad school. Moreover, we will talk about the skills students need to develop in order to be successful in graduate school. Many of our students have been quite successful in graduate programs all over the country, and a large part of this success can be attributed to careful planning and preparation for the demands of graduate level education.

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Chair's Corner

Well, the Fall 2003 semester is done. Grades are submitted, and there are plenty of parking spaces in front of Pryale Hall. In preparing this edition of the newsletter I am struck by two things: [1] things look incredibly bright for the future, and [2] the future looks incredibly full of things to do. In the near quarter century that Psi Chi has been at OU there have been times of upheaval, revolution, and change. Such a change is facing us now, and I welcome it. I don't know which students will come together and form a team to re-vitalize this organization, but I have confidence that it will happen. I look forward to January and February with excitement and anticipation that things will end up better.

This is not to say that all is now or has been bad. You will notice in this issue of *PsychMatters* that much is going on in Pryale Hall. I am especially pleased to announce that we have hired a new secretary, Charlene Waldorf, to fill the position that Lori Boughner vacated last February. Yes, it has been that long, but the position freeze was lifted (at least for us) and a search was completed just before final examinations, and we are very happy to once again have both secretarial positions filled. Welcome to Pryale, Charlene.

The second major success for the department was that our annual *Careers in Psychology* workshop was one of the best attended in years. Note only did students from other colleges attend, but many local high school students joined us on a dark and rainy Saturday morning. Nicole's summary of the workshop appears on page 11. A special thanks goes to Natalie Obrecht for all the behind the scenes work she did to make this happen. Natalie and I are now collaborating to revise and update the materials for the *How to Get into Grad School* workshop that will be held in February. You may register for this workshop at any time up until January 30th by sending an email to pmatters@oakland.edu and stating that you wish to attend.

In this edition of *PsychMatters* you will find an article from Dr. Ruth Anan of Beaumont Hospital describing a potential field experience working with autistic children and their mothers (see page 6). I spent the better part of an afternoon visiting with Dr. Anan and her staff at the Center for Human Development before presenting this program to OU students. I was thoroughly impressed by what I saw, so much so, that I called my daughter at UM-Ann Arbor and told her to check into it. She will be working with Dr. Anan and her staff during the Winter semester. So, that should tell you the "real" bottom line...it's good enough for my kid. I encourage you to take a few minutes to read the article. And if you know of other comparable sites where students can get a quality field experience, please let me know about them.

My space is limited this month due to the size of other articles. I am not complaining; it is great to see *PsychMatters* growing. A special thanks to Cindy Shantz and Andy Wagstaff for providing their "since I left OU" pieces. I invite other alums to contact me if they wish to contribute an article. Thanks also to Professors Schillace, Mielke, and Anschuetz for their submissions. Finally, please note that MOM is coming on May, 14, 2004...if you don't know MOM then please go to page 14 immediately. Don't miss it. ♦

Robby

Grad School Workshop...from page 1

PsychMatters: Who conducts the workshop?

Stewart: Professor Mary Eberly and I will conduct the workshop again this year. We have collaborated on this task many times in the past and have learned how to interrupt each other with a precision that is a sight to behold. (Professor Eberly is in the final days of her sabbatical leave as this newsletter is being prepared...enjoy the end of it, Mary.)

PsychMatters: Who should attend?

Stewart: Every single psychology major and minor at OU. I would be pleased to see all 736 of you on February 7th. This is your potential career we are discussing...what else would you be doing that would be more important?

PsychMatters: How will this workshop benefit me?

Stewart: The world of graduate school is vastly different from what you experience at OU. The stress of adjusting to the rigors and demands of grad school were described in detail in the September 2003 issue of *PsychMatters* when some recent graduates provided their advice on how to successfully make the transition. Let me address this question with a few numbers: approximately 150 students graduate each academic year from OU with BA's in Psychology. About a third of these students, that is, 50 of them, express an interest in getting into graduate school. Of these 50, only half are really prepared for the process. The other 25 never attended either of the two workshops and are disappointed when they learn that applying to grad school is not the same as applying to an undergraduate institution. Of the 25 who were really prepared only 15 actually get into the graduate programs of their choice. This suggests that approximately 10% of our graduates successfully get into grad school. Are you surprised? Don't be...this is typical of most graduating classes in Psychology. Now, the real question: do you know what to do to increase your chances of being one of the 10%? That is what we will tell you at the workshop. Be there! ♦

Broaden your knowledge of Psychology...

Visit the American Psychological Society
Website at

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

Presidential Leadership in Fall 2004

The chairs of the Social Science departments have committed to offering a course associated with a theme on Tuesday evenings the Fall 2004 semester. Given that the country will be experiencing a presidential election, it seemed obvious that all departments could offer special topics courses on this general theme and thus highlight both the commonalities and the distinctiveness among the Social Sciences group. The Psychology, Political Science, History, and Sociology/ Anthropology departments are all cooperating in this venture. Six courses and possibly more have been identified for the theme "Presidential Leadership". Courses are tentatively identified as the following:

- Political Sociology
- Presidential Leadership and Personality
- The American People and their Presidents
- Parties and Elections
- The History of the Presidency

Details concerning the course from Psychology are found below:

PSY 435 - Advanced Topics in Social Psychology: Presidential Leadership and Personality

Larry Lilliston
Tuesdays 6:00 -9:20 pm

This course will analyze presidential leadership style in terms of research and theory from the psychology of personality. These concepts will be contextualized in terms of the audience (the people) and historical events.

Several bodies of research from the field of personality psychology will be used to analyze presidents of the past forty years with a special emphasis on current candidate. We will use the current campaign to help us in this analysis. Methods to be applied will be the psychohistorical approach (as rooted in ego psychoanalysis), the Five Factor Model, styles of attachment, David Winter's analysis of power vs. intimacy motivation, Silvan Tomkins' political psychology scales, and Dan McAdams' Life Story Model and Imago analysis. ♦

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participation in group activities is not important. One presumes these folks already know everything we would talk about at the Careers in Psychology and How to Get into Grad School workshops. They already know enough about psychology to be certain as to what their careers will be, and they already read and study psychology enough that they would not benefit from a colloquium presented by any professor at OU or our neighboring universities.

We have heard that students object to combining Psi Chi with the Psychology Club, or that they do not like the connotation implied by the word “club.” The Psi Chi people resent the presence of the non-Psi Chi people, and the Psych Club people resent being looked down upon. Please, change the name to something like the Psychology Student Association, or anything else you want. Just recognize that the need for an academically oriented student organization focusing on career and professional issues is real. If you are looking for a social outlet, we suggest that you join any of the entertainment-oriented groups on campus or in the community. We should bestow the honor of Psi Chi membership on the few who deserve it, but we must not ignore the needs of the majority in doing so.

The Background: When we look back on the history of Psychology Club and Psi Chi at OU we see the most successful years were those when our best and brightest collaborated to bring a variety of programming to the entire community. The Psychology Club was here first, and they worked together for a number of years before even considering the potential for bringing a Psi Chi chapter to OU. From its conception the Psychology Club was the organization for all psychology students, and induction into Psi Chi was simply a way to recognize the few stellar students each year. With time the Psychology Club was viewed as less significant, and Psi Chi as more elitist. Still, there were many good years of great programming.

If you do not know the history of psychology student programming at OU please take a few minutes to look at the incredible programming described in earlier issues of *PsychMatters*. All of these can be found on our “Newsletter” website [<http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/newsletter.cfm>]. Other great programming existed in the days before *PsychMatters*, but you would have to find printed editions of *The Freudian Slip* to read about these. In addition to the Careers and Grad School workshops, President Deb Shindler led a yearlong service project with Gilda’s Club of Detroit [<http://www.gildasclubdetroit.org>] to supplement club activities. Students participating in this activity learned how cancer is a disease that affects an entire family. More than anyone else, Deb led an organization where all psychology students could participate, and many did. Freshmen, sophomores, and people who would never meet the high academic standards of Psi Chi were active members who contributed to and benefited from the variety of programming available.

President Cheryl Peters followed Deb Shindler and added a Fall open house and a series of skill building workshops to an impressive list of colloquia. Cheryl recognized that innovations in the way the library was organized meant that students would need to learn how to use the new technology effectively and efficiently. Students still have this need, and the information literacy skills of psychology majors certainly could be improved, but it takes leadership and commitment to make such things happen. You might recall from our last issue of *PsychMatters* that Cheryl is now assisting Professor Alexis Walker in editing the *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. Cheryl’s tenure as president saw the creation of *PsychMatters* in the form we now enjoy. This was accomplished because a single member of her team of officers, Pat Faircloth, took the initiative and demonstrated the commitment to make it happen.

The next year President Pat Faircloth added even more service activity to the now standard set of workshops, colloquia and open house events and increased the membership ranks significantly. He headed up the largest service project Psi Chi has ever known. Five OU undergraduate students committed to a yearlong project at an elementary school in Pontiac designed to improve the reading of first and second graders. Not only did they volunteer at the school, they collected data and presented a paper at MOM demonstrating the effectiveness of their intervention. To support their activities Pat rallied Psi Chi to donate over 35,000 books to the school. Many of these books went home with the children, in backpacks filled with other school supplies. Those who did not want to work with young children in Pontiac dedicated their efforts to AIDS awareness programs in Royal Oak and Ferndale. This was a very busy year.

The secret to each of these successful years was that each president worked with *teams* of fellow students who were committed to bringing diverse and quality programming to psychology students at OU.

So, where is the teamwork today? Two significant changes have made it very difficult for the teams to be formed. Shindler, Peters and Faircloth all approached Psi Chi after selecting the individuals to be on their “team.” They presented the group as a collective entity to the members of Psi Chi and the Psychology Club for endorsement. Before they were elected we could all hear their plans for the following year. Since their era, individual officers have been selected for each office and no one has been asked to describe their plans in advance. In addition, only members of Psi Chi were allowed to vote, so the majority of psychology students have been cut out of the decision process completely. Imagine a comparable thing being attempted in the federal elections scheduled for next Fall – only

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individuals with incomes in excess of \$100,000 per year will be allowed to vote, and after George Bush is re-elected then he learns who is Vice President will be. Personally, we would like to see George Bush and Al Sharpton learn to work together. That would be interesting.

A Potential Solution: On Tuesday, January 6 Professors Stewart, Butzlaff and McGinnis will be conducting the regularly scheduled Psi Chi Meeting. Groups of psychology students who meet (or soon will meet) the qualifications for Psi Chi are invited to develop plans as to how they, as a team, would organize and run Psi Chi (or whatever we call it in the future). These qualifications for Psi Chi can be found at the end of this article. This meeting will have a single agenda item – a discussion of the activities teams might consider sponsoring. It is our expectation that teams of four to seven people (a president, any number of vice-presidents, a secretary and a treasurer) will develop a “platform” describing the programs or activities they would like to present. On January 20th Butzlaff and McGinnis will continue the discussion with interested students.

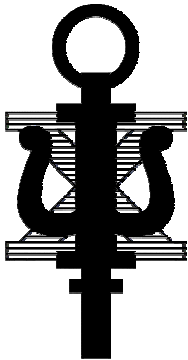
Each team should describe the programs they would offer during the remainder of Winter 2004 semester, and what they would like to do throughout the Fall 2004 and Winter 2005 academic year. The teams should feel free to approach any faculty member in the Department to secure the services of a faculty advisor. They should feel free to look at the current and past copies of *Eye on Psychology* [<http://www.psichi.org/pubs/eye/home.asp>] to see what other Psi Chi chapters around the country are doing. The deadline for individuals or teams to file a formal statement that they plan to develop a platform is Tuesday, January 20th. The single agenda of the Psi Chi meeting scheduled for February 3rd will be to hear presentations of these program plans and then a vote to select a new team of officers. Anyone who is currently a psychology major or minor will be permitted to vote.

Yes, this is “wiping the slate clean.” It is a bit risky. But the simple fact is that Psi Chi at OU is broken, and it needs to be fixed. So we must act to fix it. ♦

Requirements for Membership in 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 Psi Chi/Psychology

So what is Psi Chi all about?



You can get the complete story by looking at the homepage [<http://www.psichi.org/>] of the national organization. The mission of Psi Chi is to produce a well-educated, ethical, and socially responsible member committed to contributing to the science and profession of psychology and to society in general. The intrinsic value of membership in Psi Chi is rewarding to the achiever. We assume that recognition of excellence leads to self-fulfillment and thus to self-realization. By recognizing that what *you* do *does* make a difference, we hope you will be stimulated to higher productivity. Accomplishments are enjoyed more when shared with others. Furthermore, the contacts made through Psi Chi will be valuable throughout your educational and professional careers.

Opportunities For Hands-On Clinical Experience Working With Autistic Preschoolers at Beaumont Hospital

By Dr. Ruth Anan



Children with autism demonstrate deficits in the areas of communication, self-help, academic, social, and play skills. Many are also diagnosed with mental retardation. These children are often unable to understand simple verbal and nonverbal communication, are confused by sensory input, and withdraw in varying degrees from the social environment. Although there is no cure for autism, research indicates that interventions utilizing principles of applied behavior analysis are effective in decreasing or eliminating problem behaviors and teaching essential skills to children with autism. Two factors have been identified which optimize the outcomes for children with autism. First, the younger the child is when behavioral intervention is started, the more effective it is. Secondly, the intensity of the intervention influences how successful it will be.

The interventions used in applied behavior analysis have been empirically studied by behavioral scientists. Essential to these interventions is the principle of reinforcement. Children with autism often require external reinforcement, as they may not be as intrinsically motivated as typically developing children. Reinforcers are identified which are specific to each child, and may consist of an edible snack, a tickle, a hug, brief access to a desired object, etc. Initially the child receives reinforcement each time he or she performs the appropriate behavior. Over time, reinforcement is delivered less frequently, gradually requiring the child to perform more behaviors or a more complex skill before being reinforced. Further, social praise is always paired with other types of reinforcers, as the eventual goal is for praise alone to be rewarding to the child.

Teaching programs based in applied behavior analysis often break down tasks into their smallest components and each tiny step is taught individually. The steps are then slowly chained together, gradually becoming more and more complex. Another technique is to teach tasks through the use of prompting. This means that the adult initially assists the child in producing the appropriate behavior, insuring the child's success and also guaranteeing that reinforcement is received. Gradually the level of prompting is faded so that the child is doing more and more of the behavior independently. For example, initially the adult might guide the child in a hand-over-hand fashion, but over time the amount of assistance is faded and the child gradually becomes more independent in performing the task.

Applied behavior analysis also incorporates a technique called incidental teaching. In this method of teaching, behavioral interventions are incorporated into whatever the child is doing at a particular moment when engaged in play. Incidental teaching is a particularly powerful method of increasing children's communication skills. Psychologists capitalize on the child's internal motivation whenever it is apparent that the child desires something. The child learns how to request objects or actions and then the child is immediately reinforced by receiving what he or she wants. The techniques described above (e.g., breaking down a behavior into small components, chaining them together, prompting, and gradually fading prompts) can all be used to teach a child to request things such as a drink of juice, a hug, or a favorite toy.

Children with autism frequently exhibit a number of aberrant behaviors. These often include aggression and self-injury. These difficulties impede children's learning and prevent their integration into social and community settings. Alternative, appropriate behaviors are targeted, taught, and selectively reinforced while aberrant ones are simultaneously extinguished.

In a recent issue of the interdisciplinary journal, *Infants & Young Children* (April 2002) Dr. Jensen, the director of Cleveland Clinic Center for Autism, cites strong evidence for the efficacy of early and intensive intervention using applied behavior analysis. The Cleveland Clinic has developed a center-based autism program, which utilized principles of applied behavior analysis, but there is a scarcity of other quality programs using this type of intervention, particularly in the Midwest.

The Center for Human Development at Beaumont has begun a similar center for preschoolers with autism. We are recruiting practicum students to assist in this endeavor by working with autistic children under the direction of behavioral psychologists. Hands-on training and supervision will be provided, and there will be opportunities to learn specialized intervention techniques. This is an excellent prospect for students intending to become psychologists, special-education teachers, speech/language pathologists, pediatricians, or other related professionals. Students enrolled in Psychology 399 Field Experience in Psychology course can receive course credit for their participation in this autism intervention program.

For further information, please contact Dr. Ruth Anan at 248-691-4712. ♦

Seasonal Affective Disorder

By N. Hoffmeister

Durand and Barlow (2003) define Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) as a “mood disorder involving a cycling of episodes corresponding to the seasons of the year, typically with depression occurring during the winter.” Because we are currently in the winter season we thought it might be prudent to ask a licensed psychologist some questions about the disorder. We asked **Dr. Robert Mielke**, also a lecturer here at OU, to give us some information on SAD.

PsychMatters: What exactly is SAD?

Mielke: The major symptoms of SAD are similar to those of depression (e.g. sadness, irritability, lack of interest in normal activities, low motivation, fatigue, etc.), but are associated with seasonal changes, mostly in extreme northern and southern latitudes. SAD is not a specific classification in the DSM-IV but it is noted as a seasonal pattern in some patients who have been diagnosed with major depression.

PsychMatters: What would you estimate is the prevalence of SAD?

Mielke: It is estimated that 10-12 million Americans have SAD or a seasonal pattern to their depressive symptoms.

PsychMatters: Which season brings about SAD most often?

Dr. Mielke: During the late fall, winter, and early spring when there is more darkness, it is believed that either people sleep more or are directly affected by the lack of light they are exposed to. This then affects their melatonin production and behavioral patterns.

PsychMatters: What are some available treatments for SAD?

Mielke: Often people are treated with light therapy, which is believed to reset their internal clocks by affecting the production of melatonin in the body. People can use light therapy, from a small box, 1-3 times a day for 15-60 minutes for good results. The normal regimen of antidepressant medications and psychotherapy may be equally effective for many who have seasonal patterns to their depression.

PsychMatters: If someone believes that they have SAD what can he/she do to get help?

Mielke: If you suspect a seasonal pattern to your depressive symptoms you should contact a clinical psychologist, psychiatrist, or your family physician for further evaluation and treatment recommendation.

PsychMatters: Thank you, Dr. Mielke, for your help with our understanding with SAD. I would like to again note that this is not in the DSM-IV itself as a disorder, but instead is considered a possible pattern to depression or depressive symptoms. Therefore people suffering from a seasonal pattern should definitely seek treatment instead of waiting for the season, and depression, to pass. Durand and Barlow (2003) also note that light therapy is the treatment of choice for SAD and that it may be effective for non-seasonal depression as well. For further information on SAD contact a doctor, counselor or visit the library. ♦

Planning Your Schedules

So, do you know what classes you are taking next Spring? next Summer? How about next Fall? Tentative schedules are made that far in advance, and you can get a preview of the expected Psychology offerings far by going to the Schedules webpage [<http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/schedule.cfm>]. Professor Stewart publishes these to give us an idea of what to expect, but warns that changes might occur if faculty members are granted sabbaticals, or if other administrative needs require modifications. Still, most of the schedules remains as it is originally published. So, plan ahead.

Please permit me to introduce myself...

By Heather Anschuetz

It is certainly a pleasure to be teaching at Oakland University. Prior to being hired here, I was a part-time faculty member at Oakland Community College for several years, along with working as a contractual psychologist at an outpatient clinic. I am not entirely new to Oakland or its students, however, as I just recently completed a two-year doctoral internship at the University's Counseling Center.

My academic interests in psychology have been varied. Towards the end of completing my undergraduate degree in psychology at Central Michigan University, I began to develop a strong interest in Minuchin and Bowen and their family systems approach to pathology and treatment. As a result, I chose to complete a master's degree program in marriage and family psychology through Wayne State University. In keeping with my area of interest, I undertook a ten-month internship at an outpatient clinic working with children and their families. Along with an in-office caseload, the internship provided me with the unique experience of being able to conduct home-based therapy, which required me to go into the homes of children receiving treatment and meet with the family as a whole. Giving up the controlled environment of the outpatient setting was far outweighed by the much richer picture provided by observing families on their own turf, and was easily the most valuable part of my training there.



While I enjoyed this area of clinical work, I found that I preferred working with adults rather than children, feeling as though I had more of a talent enacting change with this population. My contractual work as a master's level psychologist allowed me to focus my interest on adults and couples and was a truly enjoyable time of my clinical experience.

Immediately after I obtained my master's degree, I made application to and was accepted into Wayne's Ph.D. program in educational psychology. I am happily near the end of this long journey and in the midst of completing my dissertation. And because it was not so long ago, relatively speaking, that I too was an undergraduate I still have a very vivid recollection of what this time can be like, as well as a lingering appreciation for the trials and tribulations that undergraduates go through. One mistake that I didn't truly appreciate until I was in graduate school was the fact students tend not to invest in course material for the sake of learning, but simply as a way to perform well on examination. And while exams are certainly important, my aim is to help students to find material exciting rather than a burden that they need only memorize and regurgitate. Whenever possible, I try to present course material in a way that might make it more personally interesting or relevant to students.

My previous internships and contractual work at various outpatient clinics provided me with a diverse mixture of treatment settings, modalities, and age ranges- enough to tell me what I liked and didn't like, and, not surprisingly, what I was good at and what I was not so good at. One thing I have consistently found enjoyable, however, is teaching. Being able to teach along with seeing patients part-time provides me with the best of both worlds.

Overall, I am just thoroughly enjoying having a life again after surviving graduate school. I feel very fortunate to be a part of Oakland University and look forward to getting to know the faculty, staff, and students during my time spent here. ♦

I wonder if that is the real story....

Have you ever questioned whether the news reporter you are listening to is really telling you the truth, or merely repeating the "party line" he or she is permitted to report? If you are looking for an alternative source of news or are looking to become more politically active, we encourage you to take a look at the website called MoveOn.org [<http://www.moveon.org/>].

MoveOn describes itself as a group that is working to bring ordinary people back into politics. With a system that today revolves around big money and big media, most citizens are left out. When it becomes clear that our "representatives" don't represent the public, the foundations of democracy are in peril. MoveOn is a catalyst for a new kind of grassroots involvement, supporting busy but concerned citizens in finding their political voice. Our international network of more than 2,000,000 online activists is one of the most effective and responsive outlets for democratic participation available today. ♦

If it doesn't kill you, it will make you stronger.

By Ralph Schillace

Find something that is very difficult for you to learn. Add a significant measure of fear from the consequences of not learning. Crank up the fear factor by requiring a performance, an action rather than just understanding. Into the mix add the risk of personal and public failure if the learning and performance go badly. You're on the line to do well in an area important to yourself and others. There are deadlines, requirements to work under pressure and demanding evaluations to undergo. Call it extreme learning.

Learning that challenges us offers the opportunity for maximum personal growth. It offers not only the chance to find the limits of our abilities but to change us as persons. In most instances the actual content or actions learned are irrelevant. The emotional risk and effort play a major role in the experience and the personal growth that occurs. We may look for and choose an occasion to challenge or test us or it may be forced upon us. That we see it as an opportunity to survive or excel and to confront it with an attitude of excitement and hope may be the difference between being traumatized versus growing.

I would like to see more of our psychology courses entered into by faculty and students with this extreme learning, personal growth approach. Teaching statistics and research design has always provided this opportunity for me and for my students. Certainly the content is important for any psychology major, but the demand requirements, the fear and sense of risk the students feel, the confrontation with what they believe is impossible for them, the view that this is a life or death situation all contribute to the adventure of finding out about themselves and succeeding at something important and difficult. Hence, the personal growth occurs as well as the learning of the useful ideas of probability, experimentation and the uncertainty of knowledge. My guess is that they will soon forget the concepts, but be forever changed by the personal learning.

The learning that is personal growth helps define us. This is the learning that comes from ideas that "blow our mind" and from challenges that frighten, but stretch us. It forces us to see our values and priorities. It helps us discover our strengths and weaknesses. Defenses are broken down and our fears are faced. We are often tempered by the stressors we encounter and find ways to cope that we did not imagine existed. Could it be that this is the learning which will best serve us when we leave college?

Students come to college and select psychology to study for deep personal reasons. It is not a trivial pursuit or inexpensive purchase. Faculty teach and commit to psychology for equally serious reasons. We come together then, greatly invested and ego involved. The stage is set for something important, even profound, to happen. Let us then go at it with great energy and take the risks that will bring us the most rewards. I submit these rewards are those of personal change and that the path to them is one of demand and strain in an atmosphere committed to personal growth. What I have found is that the earnest struggle to learn difficult lessons is the fundamental content of education.

There is a place for soft and gentle learning. To create a safe place where one may venture into the unknown and not be punished for mishaps along the way is of value. But even there it is personal risk and self demand that seem to pay the most dividends. There seems to be no escaping the observation that challenge and effort are necessary for important learning to occur. ♦

Web Sites You Should Know

The American Psychological Association (APA) maintains a site of resources for students. Take a look at <http://www.apa.org/students/>

Each month, Peterson's Velocity offers important information and timely tips to a wide variety of readers who are interested in education. Each year they deliver articles dealing with search & selection, financial aid, and test preparation for college, graduate school, continuing education, career, distance learning, and summer opportunities. Check it out at

http://www.petersons.com/velocity/previous_issues.html

Comments from the Student Editor

Well, the school year is half-way over, for most of us! Hopefully everyone's final exams went well last semester. I just have to say that I was very pleased with Fall 2003's newsletter and I would like to thank everyone who made it happen. I received so many compliments on the newsletter through email and word-of-mouth, and I know that Dr. Stewart did also.

We strived very hard for this newsletter to be even better and tried to add as much information as possible. The information on jobs for undergrad psychology majors was added because of the high demand from students to know how to get a job without a degree. Since the Careers in Psychology Workshop focused on getting a job after obtaining a degree I thought it would be helpful to also give out some information on what students can do while still in college.

Dr. Mielke's piece on Seasonal Affective Disorder was created due to high demand from students to have some information on depression. This type of depression, as you will read, comes around during certain seasons, such as the current season of winter. Hopefully anyone who happens to become a little depressed during this drab, cold season can benefit from this article.

Just about every article in this newsletter is in response to student or faculty requests. We make this newsletter for the faculty and students at OU who are interested in psychology so it is only right that we write about what you want to read. If there are any other topics you would like us to cover please email *PsychMatters* at pmatters@oakland.edu, or email me at NJHoffme@oakland.edu.

Thank you,

Nicole Hoffmeister
Student Editor ♦



Learning The Lingo

By N. Hoffmeister

For those of you studying for the GRE, you know that there is a big emphasis on vocabulary in the test. We recommend that students sign up for the mailing list at <http://www.dictionary.com>. They will send you a "Word of the Day" everyday, which includes the word, a definition, and a sentence using the word. Here are some words to get you started:

- Seminar – A small group of advanced students in a college or graduate school engaged in original research or intensive study under the guidance of a professor who meets regularly with them to discuss their reports and findings.
- Didactic – Fitted or intended to teach; conveying instruction; preceptive; instructive; teaching some moral lesson; as, didactic essays.
- Etiology – The assignment of a cause; cause or source of a disorder; the philosophical study of causation.
- Empirical – Based only on experimental research or observation rather than on theory alone. "Empirical results supported the hypothesis." Relying on or derived from observation or experiment: *empirical results that supported the hypothesis*. Verifiable or provable by means of observation or experiment: *empirical laws*.
- Synthesis – Composition, or the putting of two or more things together; the combination of separate elements of thought into a whole, as of combining of separate elements or substances to form a coherent whole (as when one combines information from numerous references to form a coherent whole rather than a simple list of findings).
- Thesis – A position or proposition which a person advances and offers to maintain, or which is actually maintained by argument; an essay or dissertation written upon specific or definite theme; especially, an essay presented by a candidate for a diploma or degree.

For further definition of any given word, please email Nicole at njhoffme@oakland.edu and we will include the word and its definition in the next newsletter. Or visit <http://www.dictionary.com> to receive your definition right away. ♦

Psi Chi/Psychology Club Events Throughout 2003-2004 Academic Year

Careers in Psychology Workshop a Huge Success

By N. Hoffmeister

In the fall Psi Chi and the Department of Psychology co-hosted the annual Careers in Psychology workshop. This time Dr. Larry Lilliston joined Dr. Robby Stewart in the discussion of the careers available in the psychology field. There was quite a large turn-out this year (nearly 100 students participated) and it is believed to be due to the increase in publicity of the event. Indeed, students from other universities and from many local high schools also attended the event. Hopefully with even more publicity and advertisement next year there will be an even larger turn-out.

The workshop was very informative. Dr. Lilliston and Dr. Stewart provided a broad overview of careers available for psychology majors. They discussed various careers with each degree available in psychology, not merely PhD careers. Every student received a large packet full of information on careers, such as books to read if majoring in psychology, statistics on employment rates and opportunities, and information on earnings. Students also enjoyed a breakfast buffet full of bagels, muffins, donuts, coffee, and juice.

The lecture included a power point presentation, the notes of which are posted on Oakland University's psychology website for any students who could not make it to the workshop. The lecture began with a discussion of some common misconceptions that most students have: "I must have a PhD to get any job in the psychology field," and, "The B.A. is worthless." It was helpful to know that these ideas are wrong.

For those students who were undecided about what to do after leaving OU, this workshop helped distinguish all the different opportunities available. One student commented, "I learned that there are endless career opportunities for a psychology major." Another student stated, "I was starting to get a little discouraged because I kept hearing negative things about the psychology field. Coming to this workshop made me realize that I do want to stick to my major." For those students who already knew where they were headed after college, the workshop helped remind them how to job search and how to prepare for graduate school (this will be further discussed at February's Graduate Schools Workshop).

Continued at right

Winter 2004

- January 6 **General Meeting** (12:00 – 1:00 Pryale Hall)
Reorganization of Psi Chi at OU; chaired by Stewart, Butzlaff & McGinnis
- January 20 **General Meeting** (12:00 – 1:00 Pryale Hall)
Reorganization of Psi Chi at OU; chaired by Stewart, Butzlaff & McGinnis
- February 3 **General Meeting and Election** (12:00 – 1:00 Pryale Hall)
Reorganization of Psi Chi at OU; chaired by Butzlaff & McGinnis
- February 7 **GRADUATE SCHOOL WORKSHOP** (9:00 am – 12:00 pm, place 190 Hannah Hall)
- February 16 **Speaker** TBA (12:00 – 1:15 place TBA)
- March 2 **General Meeting** (12:00 – 1:00 Pryale Hall)
Deadline for Psi Chi Applications.
- March 16 **Speaker** TBA (5:00 – 6:15 place TBA)
- April 6 **General Meeting** (12:00 – 1:00 Pryale Hall)
- April 27 **Induction Ceremony** (6:00 pm place TBA)
- May 14 **Meeting of Minds Conference**, UM-Flint

Careers in Psychology Workshop...from left

For those who were not able to make it to the Fall 2003 Careers in Psychology Workshop, I strongly suggest that you try to come to the next one. The Careers Workshop is always held in October, so mark you 2004 calendar today. Also go to the departmental website (<http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/>) and print out the power point notes from the lecture. Most importantly, don't forget about the next workshop in February; anyone who plans on attending graduate school should be there!

I would also like to say thank you to all of those students who were able to attend the Careers in Psychology Workshop, and I hope it benefited you to come! Finally, I would like to thank Natalie Obrecht for doing so much of the "behind the scenes" work necessary to make the workshop the success it was. ♦

Learn more about Psychology...get the PsychWatch Newsletter weekly. Sign up at

<http://www.psychwatch.com/>

A few words from those who were once in your shoes...

Readers will recall that the September issue of *PsychMatters* included a detailed and highly informative contribution from **Dr. Sherry Pagato, Dr. Andrea Kozak, Sarah Foley, Cheryl Peters, and Wendy Cunningham**. We would like to again thank them for taking the time to share their thoughts with our readers. The responses received at PsychMatters were overwhelmingly positive concerning their suggestions for how students could increase their chances for success in pursuing careers in psychology. This month we asked two graduates of the department to share with our readers their experiences since they left Pryale Hall. **Cindy Shantz** and **Andy Wagstaff** have taken very different journeys, and when compared with the comments from the five previous alumnae you will clearly see that psychology is an incredibly diverse discipline. ♦

Life after OU: Observations from an alum

By Cindy Shantz

When Dr. Stewart approached me to write a brief article describing what I have done career-wise since I graduated from Oakland, I was immediately struck with just how old I am! Wow, almost *12 years* have gone by since I earned my B.A. in Psychology! Where does the time go?! Well, I guess that is the point of the article.... to give current O.U. psychology students a feel for what a degree in Psychology can lead to – so here goes!

I left Oakland University in 1992 and spent the next 10 years (ugh!) pursuing my doctorate in Industrial/Organizational psychology. While in graduate school, I worked full-time in a number of interesting positions. The various areas I have worked in are diverse – a degree in I/O psychology certainly offers many different career options! To give you all a better feel for the some of what an I/O psychologist does, let me walk through a few of the more interesting things I have done thus far in my career.....

I started what I consider to be my “real I/O career” at Ford Motor Company in the summer of 1999 in the Personnel Research Department. In this position, I worked with other I/O psychologists on projects such as creating an intern selection and assessment process to assist the engineering department in choosing their new interns. My team was soon integrated into the Recruiting Department, which is where I spent the remainder of my time at Ford. In this role I worked on incredibly interesting projects, including leading a team in the creation and execution of 800+ person hiring conferences. This included co-creation of all selection/assessment tools, which involved both on-site assessment (interviewing, group activities) and web-assessment. Interestingly enough, it also involved a lot of “event planning” activities such as handling the logistics of such a massive weekend event – not exactly what I was envisioning myself doing with my degree! But it was great fun and offered me an opportunity to learn new skills, and apply my existing skills in new ways.



I left Ford last summer after realizing how important “person-organization fit” is to job satisfaction (...more specifically, after realizing what a negative impact a LOW degree of fit can have on job satisfaction). Don’t get me wrong - I would never trade the experiences I had at Ford for anything. However, after three years I realized that I was ready to be in a position where I could be more hands-on, to be in a culture that was less conservative and a bit more laid-back than Ford, and especially one in which I have more latitude to make decisions and act on them.

This leads us to where I am today....I am currently the Staffing & Leadership Development Manager at a financial services company, and I absolutely love it! I work in the Human Resources Department, although my job relies largely on my I/O background as opposed to any specific Human Resources knowledge (of which I have practically none!). In this role, I provide overall direction for the creation and deployment of processes related to the hiring and development of employees at all levels in the organization. I manage the recruitment processes for hourly, professional and managerial level positions including managing recruiters and other such staffing vendors. This includes the creation and validation of assessment tools for the selection of the new employees. Further, I develop and implement tools to identify areas of developmental need in current employees and use this information to create tailored development programs to address these needs. I have created, implemented and currently manage the company performance review process, including the development and delivery of training for evaluators on how to assess performance and give performance feedback.

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At this point I am not sure where I see myself going in my career. At one time, I had briefly considered Executive Coaching as a possible future career move (usually these people have Clinical or Industrial/Organizational Psychology backgrounds), but realized I was not up for all the travel involved. For the same reasons, I have not thought too much about working for one of the larger I/O consulting firms. I am a homebody and am proud of it! So for the meantime, I think I will continue to learn more about how to be a better Staffing & Development Manager, develop more relationships with people in the I/O world as well as in the Human Resources arena, and continue to develop myself as an all around “professional” as well as an I/O psychologist. I am really enjoying my experiences in my current role, and feel great about the company I work for, so I am in no rush to go anywhere at this point in my life. But I want to send a heartfelt “good luck” to you all – it’s an exciting world out here for us psychologists – hope to run into you one day! ♦

Since I left OU?

By Andy Wagstaff

Assistant Coach, Oakland University Women’s Soccer



I have certainly taken a different path than most Psychology graduates from OU. I originally came to the USA from England as a soccer scholarship player back in the early 90’s. I played four glorious years for the men’s team here at OU and studied hard with the intention of becoming a sports psychologist. I graduated in 1995 from OU and was fortunate enough to continue playing soccer with local professional teams, the Detroit Neon and the Detroit Rockers.

Following my flirtation with professional soccer I continued to pursue my goal of becoming a sports psychologist by moving back to my homeland in the UK. I attended John Moores University in Liverpool, England on a part-time Masters of Sports Science (Msc) program. The main focus of my time was spent researching sports psychology theories with professional Football (soccer) players in the English Premier League. The majority of the work I did was working one on one with players who had suffered a long term injury. I was instrumental in helping them get back into their routine of practicing, team meetings, games, etc., by implementing various sports psychology techniques such as imagery, positive self-talk and, most importantly, goal-setting.

I completed my post-graduate certificate in Sports Psychology in 2002 and I am a thesis shy from completing my masters. During my years in psychology I have continued coaching and I recently became the assistant coach for the women’s soccer team here at OU.

What advice could I offer to those just starting to think about a career in psychology? I would offer probably the generic response which seems to be that a bachelor degree alone will not be enough to establish you in the field of psychology. Take the necessary steps now to make sure you are able to continue your education until you have at least a master’s and preferably a PhD.

Take your time; find out what makes you tick. Ask yourself questions such as; what aspects of psychology do you most like? What kind of a job would you like to do in the long term? By answering these questions it may help ensure that you pursue a career that you will love. I cannot express to you how important it is to enjoy your work. So if I can offer any advice, don’t be in a major rush to enter the “real world” as people like to put it, get on with your education and follow what your instincts tell you.

What I wish I knew when I was a student that I know now? I wish I knew how important it was to get more than a bachelor in Psychology. I think that I convinced myself that it would be enough and therefore I wasn’t ready to enter graduate school. Then after I spent a few years playing and coaching soccer, it became hard for me to go back to school and apply myself to being a student again.

I also would like to add that it is crucial that students get out and do as much research as they can. I spent too much time stressing about my exams and trying to get perfect grades instead of getting out into the field and researching subjects that excited me.

What of my background at OU has benefited me most in grad school? I think that my experiences with people at the university helped me deal with various issues that arose in grad school. But I also think that working with the professors at OU made me realize that I needed to know more about my field of study than just what is written in text books. I was encouraged to go out and do research instead of spending endless hours memorizing text books and trying to ace multiple choice exams.

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In grad school at John Moores University in Liverpool, I felt that many students focused way too much on the academic side of psychology; so much that they never gained the applied knowledge that is crucial to their future development as psychologists. I found that I was very different in grad school than most of the other students. While a number of them stressed over grades and had their noses stuck inside text books all day I was out working with professional players on sports psychology strategies and techniques. I was fortunate to work with players from the world of professional soccer in England. Being a former apprentice professional player with a club in England, it helped me understand that it would be hard to be accepted as a sports psychologist in their soccer world. So I firmly believe that it was my applied knowledge of the sporting world combined with my academic background that helped me "break the ice" with these professional players. That is why I suggest that undergrad and grad students spend as much time researching as they do reading text books and worrying about exams.

What would I have done differently? Even more research. ♦

Meeting of Minds XII May 14, 2004 at the UM-Flint

R. Stewart

Ah, when Andy closes his contribution with a succinct statement such as that found just a mere inch above where your eyes now gaze I have no choice but to mention a topic that is near and dear to my heart. Thanks for the set up, Andy.

Throughout this newsletter and any of the previous issues of *PsychMatters* you will find repeated messages from faculty, alumni and current students emphasizing the importance of getting involved in research as a way to develop the skills you will later need for graduate school or careers in Psychology. The annual Meeting of Minds (MOM) conference for undergraduate students is an excellent forum for students to present the projects of these research activities. Over the past decade students from this department have been especially active in MOM. You can view abstracts of past presentations by OU Psychology majors by visiting the *PsychMatters* website at <http://www2.oakland.edu/psych/newsletter.cfm> and downloading any of the three special MOM editions found there.

The next MOM conference will be held on the campus of the University of Michigan at Flint on Friday, May 14, 2004. All undergraduate students at the UM-Dearborn, UM-Flint and Oakland University campuses are encouraged to participate in this day filled with presentations, posters, and performances highlighting undergraduate research, creative endeavors, and student-faculty collaborations. The deadline for submitting abstracts of the project you might want to present is March 12, 2004; those who plan to attend are also encouraged to register for the conference by this date. All proposal and registration information must be submitted on-line at <http://meetingofminds.umflint.edu>.

Most of the faculty in the Department of Psychology have been active in mentoring students to make their first formal presentations at prior MOM conferences, and many of our students have used the MOM forum to get the experience and confidence necessary for them to make presentations at professional conferences around the country. There have been years in the past when as many as 8 faculty and 26 Psychology majors were actively involved in MOM. One of our majors, and a former Psi Chi President, Andrea Kozak, was honored by MOM as being one of the "Student Success Stories", a special recognition of an outstanding student from each of the three campuses. If you are serious about Psychology as a career then this event should not be missed. Even if you do not plan to present a paper or poster this year, I most strongly encourage you to attend the conference so that you will know what to expect in 2005 when MOM returns to the OU campus.

Believe it or not, March 12 is just around the corner. Meet with your faculty advisor or mentor this week and ask them what you can do to get ready for MOM XII. Tell them that you want to be one of the 10% of students graduating from OU who will be successful in graduate school (Did you read the story about the Grad School Workshop from the first page?) and that you understand that you must do more than just sit in a classroom and get good grades. Do it today!!! ♦

**Abstracts of papers/posters presented by OU Psychology majors
at the 2004 Meeting of Minds Conference
will be presented in a Special Issue of *PsychMatters* in late May.**

Wanted: A Good Job

By N. Hoffmeister

Without a degree it is tough to get a good job in the psychology field. Most students think that it is impossible to get any experience in the field without at least a Bachelor's degree. However there are jobs available in the psychology field that involve minimal work with clients and do not require degrees. Some of these jobs are internships (paid and unpaid), and some are just regular jobs, but both look good on resumes and provide good experience for psychology majors.

In the lobby of Pryale Hall, Psi Chi has a bulletin board to post messages. Professor Stewart posts job opening announcements he receives from various sources in the community. For example, in November there was a job posting for a helper/tutor for an autistic child. It is usually not required to have a degree or even any experience for most of the jobs posted on this bulletin board. I strongly suggest that students check it out frequently! There have also been announcements for paid research position, positions in child care facilities, and positions with mental health organizations.

Another way to obtain a job in the psychology field is to go to the Oakland University Career Services office, 275 West Vandenberg. They will have you fill out a sign-up sheet, which will require an email address. Later you must log-on to their web site to set up a profile. You can add your resume(s) and/or cover letter(s) to your profile, which allows employers to find you. This web site allows you to search for jobs, internships, and/or co-ops. The careers office will also periodically send you tips on finding a job. If you are interested give the Career Services a call (248-370-3250), visit their web site (www.oakland.edu/careerservices), or stop by the office during office hours (8:00-5:00 pm MWF, 8:00-6:30 pm Wednesdays). They also have open advising from 1:15-4:30 pm Mon-Thurs, and from 5:00-6:30 pm Wednesdays. You can also email the Program Manager for Arts & Sciences and Nursing, at careers@oakland.edu.

Another way to obtain good experience in the psychology field is to become a research assistant to one of the professors here at Oakland University. This also helps build relationships with professors, which comes in handy when it is time for letters of recommendation. It is also nice to have a mentor or two, to help you get through college. Many graduate school programs look for research experience in your applications. Professors prefer students to come to them and ask if they are doing research and if they would like an assistant. This gives the professors a chance to meet you, if they do not already know you, so they can determine if you would be right for the job. Sometimes, though, research positions will be posted on the same bulletin board that Psi Chi posts job openings. Research assistants can get credit for their work or do it voluntarily for the experience.

There are plenty of ways to obtain experience in the psychology field before graduation. Whether it is a job, internship, co-op, or research assistant, any experience helps to build self-confidence in the field of interest. It is also a way to test the waters; to see if psychology is really what interests you. Besides, the more experience a student has, the easier it is to get a job once a degree is obtained. So get out there and search!

That's all for now.

The next issue of *PsychMatters* will be distributed in September 2004.

Please contact Professor Stewart or Nicole Hoffmeister if you would like to contribute an article. Correspondences may be addressed to pmatters@oakland.edu.