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PSYCH MATTERS

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The Quarterly Newsletter of Psychology at Oakland University

DEPARTMENT RECEIVES \$45K FOR UNDERGRAD RESEARCH!!!

Details on Page 2

Meet the Two New Professors in the Department



**Debra
McGinnis**

I completed my BA in Human Development at California State University Long Beach and my Ph.D in Psychology and Aging at the University of Southern California. In addition, I taught at CSULB from 1994-2002, teaching various courses in Psychology as well as those in my area of expertise, Adult Development and Aging. My research examines aging processes from various psychological perspectives. As an undergraduate, my first project examined transitions in women's lives and the impact of those transitions, which I designed and conducted under the guidance of a CSULB faculty member. In addition, I designed and conducted a study of the life differences between memories for real and imagined experiences: a study that began as a class project for my undergraduate cognition course.

As a graduate student, my interest in memory aging evolved into an interest in the effects of aging on comprehension. Because of a few early studies, aging researchers had concluded that aging was not associated with comprehension declines, allowing them to interpret age-related declines in a story recall as due entirely to memory declines. I (continued on pg 6)



**Sylvie
Lombardo**

My professional area of interest in psychology is in "Community Psychology." Although I am trained as a clinical psychologist, my focus is not on individuals, but on the multiple forces that influence the entire community. For a Community Psychologist, the emphasis is on understanding the interactions between systems - for example schools, families, peer groups, neighborhood dynamics, and clinics - and how these community systems affect individual outcomes. Interventions are designed at the systems and community levels. The idea is that one can, by changing systems, help much larger numbers of individuals. These interactions with the community often have a preventive focus, involve community partnerships and use research designs that are carried out in the community (i.e., community-based research).

My interests in community psychology, particularly in an urban setting, developed over time. I first received a MA in clinical psychology at the Catholic University in Louvain, Belgium, close to where I grew up in Belgium and France. Growing up in Europe, I have been exposed to different societies- different ethnic groups, countries, and languages, (continued on pg 6)

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Faculty Matters



Psychology Department Receives \$45K to Create Undergraduate Research Fund

endowment (in dou' ment) n. 1.the act of endowing 2. that with which something is endowed, specifically, any bequest of gift that provides a permanent income for an institution, group, or person.

When we began publishing *PsychMatters* in September of 1999 I hoped that it would not only inform our students and alumni about activities within the department of Psychology but would also generate excitement about our activities and enable them to grow in quality and quantity. My hopes are beginning to be realized.

This summer the department of Psychology received a gift of \$45,000 from an anonymous donor to establish the Undergraduate Student Research Endowment Fund. This fund specifies that it "will provide funds to the Department of Psychology in the College of Arts and Sciences to interest, encourage and keep undergraduate psychology students engaged in research." It is further stipulated that "the distributions for the endowment may be used for any expenses related to student research including, but not limited to, student stipends, travel to conferences, materials, software, and student computers as approved by the faculty committee established to review and approve expenditures. No funds are to be used for faculty research expenses."

Each year since the year 2000 we have published a special edition of *PsychMatters* to highlight the presentations our students have made at conferences such as Meeting of Minds, American Psychological Association, the Society for Research in Child Development, and the Midwestern Psychological Association, to name just a few. I had hoped that we would be able to attract the attention of a potential donor who would be willing to help support the work we do in Psychology to provide our students with a distinctive undergraduate research experience. I am very pleased to have this endowment fund created to support this very important activity.

I would like to share a few things the donor told me about his/her reasoning for establishing the Fund. First, I was told that the donor was very involved with research during their years as an undergraduate student in Psychology, and that they had been able to work with a number of faculty members who had influenced them greatly. Indeed, the donor reported that their involvement with research projects was the most memorable thing of their undergraduate experience.

Second, the donor told me that their research had greatly impressed the faculty at the institution where they continued their education as a graduate student. Specifically, the donor reported that their level of preparation was among the best of their peers in the entering graduate class, and that the experience of working on research greatly eased their transition into the rigors of graduate-level education.

Third, the donor indicated that he/she hoped this Fund would help the Department of Psychology attract other gifts to support undergraduate research activities. Specifically, the donor said that they knew there were other potential donors who were in the position to add \$5,000, \$2,000 or maybe just \$100 to show that they support this activity. She/he said that they hoped these potential donors would follow their example and assist the department in its effort to provide more and more students with quality research opportunities. Part of my activities during the upcoming months will be devoted to contacting some of these potential donors, but this will be in addition to my continued effort of working with my teams of undergraduate research assistants and in encouraging our faculty to continue to provide such opportunities for our students.

I cannot adequately express my joy in having this Endowment established. Throughout my undergraduate and graduate years I benefited from being in departments that had many such funds to support a wide range of integral activities. I am very pleased that this Department will now be able to enter what should be a new era. In closing, the only thing I can say is this, Dear Donor, on behalf of the faculty and students of the Department of Psychology, thank you very much. ♦

Robby

Advising Matters



Advising Matters (All puns intended)

Welcome back! I hope your summer was fun-filled, productive, or both. I have a few subjects that I would like to mention at the start of the next academic year. First, the Psychology Department has put up an advising information board. It is located on the bulletin board that is right next to the front doors or across the hall from Room 130. In addition to announcements and other information, there will be a set of hanging file holders in which you will find many important forms that you might need throughout your college tenure. Specifically, the forms that will be available are "Change of Major," "Advising Checklist," "Adding a Minor/Concentration," "Incomplete request form," "Instructions for Signing up for Experiments on the Web," and "Written Assignment forms for PSY 100, PSY 130, & PSY 250."

Second, the Psi Chi/Psychology Club will be holding its annual "Careers in Psychology" workshop. The workshop will be held on Saturday, November 2, 2002. Time and Place will be announced during the semester. Please look for it and join me in a discussion about YOUR future. Getting prepared for the next step in life is important.

Third, I would like to advise you to take advantage of the Senior Audit, which is offered through the College of Arts and Sciences advising office. It is a very important part of being a responsible student. You can request an audit at any time during your stay at Oakland University, but it is especially important as you are entering your senior year. The College of Arts and Sciences invites you to get a senior audit when you register with 91 credits. The audit will tell you exactly where you stand with regard to meeting General Education requirements, ethnic diversity requirements, writing requirements, 300+ level requirements, College Distribution requirements, and Major requirements. When your audit is completed AND YOU HAVE GO AND GET IT, then you have in your possession something like a receipt. The audit will not be sent to you, YOU MUST PICK IT UP YOURSELF. Oakland University must honor the "all clear" if it was given and you have followed the recommendations toward graduation. I strongly recommend that, for those of you who believe they will graduate next May, please request and subsequently retrieve your senior audit.

As usual, I am holding office hours on Wednesdays from 2:00 to 6:00 (the last appointment will be at 5:40). Please check to find out who your faculty advisor is, first, and make an appointment with him/her. If you are not yet assigned an advisor, you can come and visit with me and we'll get you going on your major in Psychology. ♦

Best Wishes, -- Dr. Eberly

Psi Chi Matters

Hi there, welcome back to school. I hope that you had an exciting summer because I know that Psi Chi/Psychology Club did. That's right, we were quite active over the summer. It all started back in April and May when we sent surveys to all the faculty. We wanted to hear what the faculty had to say about Psi Chi/Psychology Club and create a research guide that would have information on each faculty member's research, past and present. It would also list if a faculty member was in need of research assistants or other kinds of research help. I know that when I went looking to become a research assistant, I had no idea who was doing research or who to ask. I have heard similar statements from other students so I know it will be a great service for all.

Going into the summer one of the goals was to increase membership. We had a great opportunity to do this with the freshman orientations. The orientations were a huge success. Many students came to our table very excited to know that there was a Psychology Club on campus. We signed up about 70 new members and increased our visibility on campus. It was a huge success. Look for a picture of our display at the orientations in Pryale Hall.

So far so good, but we were not done yet. We also set out to redo and beautify the areas around the Psi Chi office in Pryale Hall. Look for the welcome sign and improvements made to the bulletin boards, which needed a major overhaul. Now the bulletin boards will be more organized and informative. Also, look for a display case with Psi Chi/Psychology Club merchandise in it. I'm sure you will be happy with the improvements we made to Pryale Hall.

We were still not done. We wanted to do more so we decided to have a summer party. We invited faculty and students and I would like to thank those who came. It was a fun party and gave students and faculty a chance to get to know each other better. Did we do more? You bet.

Over the summer we lined up guest speakers. We will have people speaking on the trauma from rape, issues facing adolescent girls and the development and treatment of delinquency, and giving drugs, such as antidepressants to children. We will also have speakers from the Peace Corp and the OU Counseling Department. Getting speakers to commit this early was tough but we were glad that we did.

Is there more? Yes there is. We started to plan for the Psi Chi Open House on September 5th from 4 to 6pm, for charity events such as the canned food drive and the toy drive, and updating our web site. I encourage you all to check out at www.oakland.edu/psych/psi-chi. This extremely busy summer was capped off with a trip to Chicago for the APA convention. I never realized how much we actually did until I had to write this! I want to thank all the officers; they worked extremely hard. I'm glad to have such dedicated and motivated people working with me. So you can see Psi Chi/Psychology Club is working hard and will continue to do so throughout the Fall. I look forward to seeing you all at our events. ♦

-Ian Kierpaul, Psi Chi/Psychology Club President

Join Psi Chi at Oakland University

Psi Chi Membership Requirements:

- Completion of minimum 48 credits of college courses with at least 16 from Oakland University
- Completion of 16 credits of Psychology courses with at least 8 from Oakland University
- Registration for a major or minor standing in Psychology
- At least a 3.5 GPA in Psychology and at least a 3.3 GPA overall
- High standards of personal behavior and dedication to the field
- Contribute to (participate with) the organization on a regular basis

Application deadline is November 15

Remember: If you don't qualify for Psi Chi you can still be a member of Psi Chi/Psychology Club, just come to meetings and actively participate with the organization. See page 7 for a list of our meetings

Student Comment

My Thoughts on PSY 251 by Kathie August

As a non-traditional student and a recent psychology major graduate, I would like to share my experience and thoughts on everyone's "favorite" class --Statistics. If your plans include graduate school, a master's degree, or work in the mental health field, please read on. I'll fill you in on what I wish someone would have shared with me.

First of all, do not listen to the current talk, chatter or gossip floating around campus regarding Stats. If you do, you will hear conversations that include advice on which professor to take (the "easy" one of course) how incredibly impossible it is, and how to avoid taking it until the bitter end. Remember, while it is important to take advice from students and friends, make sure it is accurate, beneficial and not just plain old gossip.

The idea of taking an "easy" professor for Statistics is something I heard about from the moment I stepped foot on campus. Some students go further by stating "Avoid Professor Stewart at all costs. He's horribly difficult and you'll never pass." Believe me, this is not the way to choose a professor for Stats. After all, is your goal to learn something or just breeze by with a two point?

Well, I did take the course from Professor Stewart, and after hearing the gossip for many a semester, I was very anxious on my first day. Fortunately, I was pleasantly surprised by how well structured his class was and how it was designed for students to succeed. He clearly states his objectives, goals and expectations for the class. He provides not one, but two tutors, who held sessions four to five times per week to meet the demands of every student's schedule. In addition, he is always available during office hours and answers email promptly. To me, this sounds like the "easy" professor.

Although I was still somewhat anxious after leaving class that first day, I knew with these tools at my disposal, much hard work, and dedication on my part, I could do this. Believe me, no easy fete for one whose last math class was before some of you were even born! The anxiety remained for most of the semester, however, always attending class, reading and completing all assignments, meeting with the tutors once or twice a week, and periodic visits to Professor Stewart's office, got me through, and may I say, with much more than a two point.

As the semester came to a close, I realized that my perceived expectations were far off from my actual experiences. Not only had I taken the "right and easy" professor, I now look at journal articles, research, and studies in general, in a whole new light. What a difference it makes when one understands the methods and statistics behind the conclusions reached. My only regret, I didn't take Stats earlier. Please do yourself a huge favor, don't put it off to the bitter end like I did. You see I do plan to go on for a Master's degree and what I learned in Stats, I have no doubt, will be invaluable when I get there. ♦

Good Luck--Kathie August

Editor's Note: Kathie August graduated with a BA in Psychology in May 2002. We wish her the best of luck in continuing her education at the graduate level.

*Have you discovered the "All the Web" search engine? If not, then check out
<http://www.alltheweb.com>.*

This might be the next addition to your list of favorites.

Department Matters

Psychology Departments Two New Professors-Continued From Page 1

(McGinnis)... wanted to re-examine aging and comprehension using an approach that differed from those used previously, and to explore the hypothesis that there may be comprehension declines in old-old adults (adults 75 years of age and older) even though young-old adults (adults under 75) often do as well as young adults. In these studies, rare words are presented in contextually supportive short stories, and adults are asked to interpret these words. Age differences were obtained with old-old adults favoring definitions that were less precise than young-old adults. At present, I am working on a project examining why this decline arises, exploring the influence of various cognitive and health factors, (e.g., pre-clinical Alzheimer's Disease, inhibitory processes, general fatigue, hypertension). Even though my comprehension research has been my primary emphasis, I also have research interests in the following areas: meta-comprehension, belief processes, and time orientation in late life, and plan to continue work I have started in those areas.

Research assistants will have the opportunity to participate in project development, to test community-dwelling older adults, to enter and analyze data, to present posters and papers at regional and national conferences, and to co-author journal articles. Interested students are encouraged to contact me.

Even though all of the preceding has kept me beyond busy for the past decade or so, I did have time to raise two sons (now 17 and 20 years old) and to learn some Scottish fiddle tunes. Even though I lack musical talent, I do love to play. Recently I acquired a button accordion (after yearning for one for many many years), and to hope to learn to play some moving airs and spritely jigs soon. At present I am trying to learn two Irish airs, both called "The Foggy Dew." My fondness for button accordions was not a surprise to my friends, who proclaim my talent on the 7-button accordion (the \$11.00 Chinatown model). I do think they exaggerate, given that all I play on the 7-button accordion is Auld Lang Syne and a tune I call Ode to Joe (commonly known as Ode to Joy), and then only once a year at a New Year's Eve party in late January--it all makes sense in an unhinged kind of way. In Los Angeles, I was also a member of an all female percussion ensemble, that, unfortunately, has disbanded. We played African and Brazilian ensemble pieces, including Batucada commonly played during Carnival in Brazil. Oops, I almost forgot about those children--one is a junior at the University of California Santa Cruz with interests in political theory and philosophy of all sorts; and the second is a senior at Wilson High School in Long Beach with interests in volleyball and volleyball. They're great kids.

As for outdoor activities, I cross country ski (not such an easy proposition in Los Angeles where I live) in the winter, and ocean kayak (the bay kind of ocean) in the summer. I am definitely looking forward to engaging in outdoor activities once I get settled in Michigan--well, after I learn both of those two "Foggy Dew's". I am looking forward to getting to know everyone at Oakland and hope that you stop by and chat anytime. ♦

(Lombardo) ... and different styles for addressing social problems. And I have had the chance to see dramatic examples of social change, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall. These experiences sensitized me to the great role that social forces can play. With a strong interest in working with urban communities, I applied to graduate school and, in 2001, obtained a Ph.D. in Clinical / Community at Wayne State University in Detroit.

Experiences in the US further solidified my interest in Community Psychology. At Wayne State, under the guidance of my advisor, Dr. Paul Toro, I collaborated on the development and implementation of the "Housing, Adolescence, and Life Outcomes (HALO)" project. This longitudinal study has been investigating social, family and personal pathways into homelessness among adolescents. Earlier work for my master's in Belgium, along with my involvement on the HALO project piqued my interest in understanding pathways into problem behaviors in adolescence, including risky behaviors. After getting my Ph.D., I took an internship at the University of Maryland, which I selected because of their excellent school mental health program, as well as their research on child and adolescent mental health services and prevention programs that promote the development of healthy behaviors among teenagers.

I love to teach. While a graduate student, I taught at Wayne State University and at Oakland University (some of you might remember me from "Psychology of Emotions"). I hope that I can develop some innovative teaching strategies in my classes. As a new faculty, I will continue to study factors in influencing the development of problem behaviors in a variety of populations. As a first project at Oakland University, I would like to focus on the development of risky behaviors in college students, and would welcome students' and faculty's ideas in developing research projects. As students become involved in my lab, I would support them in developing original projects that could lead to publication and presentations at national and/or regional conferences. Any student who is interested should feel free to drop by my office.

Although my professional development has been a great source of satisfaction, I do have other interests. I have a passion for traveling, learning new languages and discovering new cultures. My husband and I recently developed a new passion, Ballroom Dancing, with Latin dances being among our favorites! I am also a fan of outdoor activities including rollerblading and biking. And through the long dreary Michigan winters, we have lots of fun skiing in Northern Michigan. I look forward to join Oakland University and get to know everyone, students, staff and faculty! See you all in the Fall! ♦

Student Matters

Psi Chi/Psychology Club Meeting Schedule

Tuesday September 17	General Meeting	12:00-12:45pm Lake Superior A Room*
Tuesday October 1	Guest Speaker:TBA**	12:00-12:45pm Lake Superior A Room
Tuesday October 15	General Meeting	12:00-12:45pm Lake Superior A Room
Tuesday October 29	Guest Speaker: TBA	12:00-12:45pm Lake Superior A Room
Tuesday November 12	General Meeting	12:00-12:45pm Lake Superior A Room
Tuesday November 26	Guest Speaker: TBA	12:00-12:45pm Lake Superior A Room
Tuesday December 10	General Meeting	12:00-12:45pm Lake Superior A Room

Everyone is invited to all meetings!!

*Lake Superior A is located in the lower level of the Oakland Center across from the book store

**Guest speakers will be identified on our website during the Fall semester. All guest speaker meetings include a free lunch

ATTENTION ALUMNI!!!

Tell us what you're doing. The faculty, students and staff in the Department of Psychology would love to hear updates about your life and your career after you graduated from OU. In future editions of *PsychMatters* we would like to include an "Alumni Matters" to report on your accomplishments. Please help us keep in touch by sending us notices or information directly to Antoinette Lobaito at either of the following addresses:

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