

Psych Matters

Fall 2009

Editor, Jennifer Mailloux, Associate Professor of Psychology

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The Newsletter of the University of Mary Washington Department of Psychology

New England Center for Children and the Department of Psychology Partner to Offer Cooperative Learning Experience

By Megan Tisdelle, Psychology Student Representative

The University of Mary Washington Department of Psychology is partnering with the New England Center for Children (NECC), located near Boston, to allow psychology majors to enroll in a semester-long program at their school. NECC provides education and treatment for individuals with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities. Also, NECC conducts research to further the understanding and treatment of autism and other disabilities. The program in which students may enroll is called the Cooperative Learning Program. It includes course work and practicum experience.

NECC is one of the premiere centers in the country for working with children with autism, so this is an exceptional opportunity for UMW students. This new collaboration between NECC and the Department of Psychology is part of a 10-year-old program that includes collaborations with a small number of colleges. NECC staff members consist of individuals with bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in psychology, education, and related fields, as well as nurse practitioners.

NECC's primary mission is to increase the skills of children, adolescents, and young adults with autism and other developmental disabilities through the use of applied behavior analysis. Applied behavior analysis-based programs of therapy are designed to increase autistic or otherwise disabled individuals' ability to function and communicate successfully with as much independence as possible.

NECC currently serves more than 200 students between the ages of 2 and 22 from across the United States and several foreign countries. Dr. Daniel Gould, one of NECC's clinical directors and a board certified behavior analyst, states that, "Early recognition and early treatment are the keys to increasing positive outcomes. Children with autism can make tremendous improvements when effective treatment is given from a very young age." Although the importance of early intervention is emphasized, NECC offers a range of programs from home-based interventions for children as young as 14 months old to programs for adults emphasizing integration into the community and workforce.

UMW students enrolled in the Cooperative Learning Program are taught theoretical and practical applications of applied behavior analysis, how to develop applied behavior analysis programs, and how to design programs to manage the behavior of individuals with autism or other developmental disabilities. They learn these skills under the supervision of a faculty mentor.

Tatiana Ramallo, a current enrollee, recommends the program to students interested in psychology or education or to those with a general interest in working with individuals with autism or other developmental disabilities. She states, "My experience at NECC has been an amazing one. Every day I learn more about applied behavior analysis and I get to experience it firsthand." Tatiana describes the atmosphere in which she learns and works as familial. In her words, "For me, working at NECC is like being part of an enormous family. I love the kids and the people I work with. I will miss them very much when I leave."

Students enrolled in the Cooperative Learning Program take two courses that can count as UMW psychology major electives. The courses from which they can choose are Behavior Assessment, Advanced Learning, Programmed Learning, Research Methods and Design in Applied Behavior Analysis, and Systematic Inquiry in Applied Research. In addition, students spend approximately 30 hours per week serving as student teachers. For this hands-on component of the program, students earn internship credit, which can fill a requirement for the psychology major as well. Scheduling of



Cooperative Learning Program Brochure

Alumna Beth Jerome Returns to Fredericksburg to Practice Clinical Psychology

By Kendall Cloeter, Psychology Student Representative

In August 2009, Dr. Beth Jerome, who graduated from the University of Mary Washington in 2003, returned to Fredericksburg to practice clinical psychology. Dr. Jerome is working for the local Community Health Center (CHC). A CHC is a private, non-profit organization providing medical, dental, and behavioral health care. Typically, CHCs are located in areas where the residents' health care needs are not being met. The services provided by CHCs are available to all residents in the area; however, CHCs are geared toward individuals who do not have access to these services elsewhere.



Dr. Beth Jerome

Dr. Jerome's addition to the Fredericksburg CHC staff marks the beginning of this particular center's behavioral health division. Her specialty is child, adolescent, and family therapy and treatment of trauma. Dr. Jerome has an interest in working with immigrant and refugee populations, too. Currently, she is the only behavioral health provider at the Fredericksburg CHC, so she will

serve a wide variety of clients.

Dr. Jerome graduated from UMW with a bachelor's degree in psychology and studio art. During her final year, she worked with Dr. Miriam Liss, Associate Professor of Psychology, on a research project that examined relationships between sensory processing style, adult romantic attachment style, and coping style.

A number of interesting relationships were described. Dr. Liss and then-student Jerome found that individuals who are sensitive to sensory stimulation were more likely to experience anxiety in their relationships, and one reason for this was a coping style characterized by focusing on one's emotions. Furthermore, individuals who either avoid sensory stimulation or who process sensory stimulation at a low level tend to avoid getting into relationships,

and one reason for this was a coping style characterized by denying their emotions. These findings are described in the paper "Relationships between sensory processing style, adult attachment, and coping," published in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*.

After graduating from UMW, Dr. Jerome moved to Thailand for a year where she helped start a school for Burmese refugees. She taught at this school and taught English at a local Thai school; she worked at refugee camps also. Dr. Jerome reports that the most influential project in which she was involved in Thailand took place on a backpacking expedition through the jungle.

On that expedition, Dr. Jerome interviewed about 200 displaced children, most of whom had witnessed brutalities such as beatings, rapes, and murders. The purpose of the interviews was to provide the U.S. Department of State with evidence illustrating that Burma continues to commit such brutalities.

Dr. Jerome's experiences in Thailand and, in particular, those with Burmese refugees have proved a valuable influence on her work today. She states, "My experiences in Thailand helped me to see the extent of damage that psychopathology, both in individuals and in a society as a whole, can have on entire communities." One observation Dr. Jerome made while working with refugees was that their expectations for life in America were unrealistic. Observations like these sparked her interest in working with immigrant and refugee populations in graduate school and, in turn, sparked her interest in working with traumatized individuals in underserved populations – the primary mission of the CHC.

Upon her return from Thailand, Dr. Jerome began the University of Virginia's clinical psychology doctoral program. Her graduate education culminated in a dissertation on teacher-child relationships with Hispanic-English language learners. The clinical psychology doctoral program at U.Va. requires a practicum, and Dr. Jerome completed that requirement at a CHC not far from the university. Therefore, it seems natural that Dr. Jerome would continue her work at a CHC.

Dr. Liss remembers then-student Jerome as "smart, fun to work with, and a fantastic artist." It is no wonder that Drs. Liss and Jerome have been in contact regularly since Dr. Jerome's return to Fredericksburg. In fact, we are all happy to have such an accomplished alumna return to the area!

Cooperative Learning Experience

Continued from front page.

internship hours is flexible; internships can be completed in the summer. Furthermore, internships have resulted in employment after graduation in many cases.

Students interested in the program must have taken four psychology courses at UMW, including one of the following: Psychology of Exceptional Children and Youth or Fundamentals of Learning and Motivation. Students enrolled in the program pay full tuition and fees at UMW

and must pay for housing. NECC provides furnished housing nearby the center.

To obtain more information about this program, students should contact the Department of Psychology Chair, Dr. Debra Steckler at dsteckle@umw.edu. Also, more information can be found at the department website, psyc.umwchandler.net, or the NECC website, www.necc.org.

Another Successful Psychology in Europe Trip!

By Liz Shewark, Psychology Student Representative

In May of 2009, Dr. Denis Nissim-Sabat, Professor of Psychology, his wife, Mary Lou Nissim-Sabat, and 12 students completed the third Psychology in Europe trip. For two weeks, the group experienced the history of psychology as they visited key sites in a number of cities. Students receive course credit for the trip, and this year the course will count toward the Global Inquiry General Education requirement. Course assignments are designed to maximize the students' experiences by preparing them for each site visit. The only prerequisite for the course is completion of General Psychology.



Psychology in Europe 2009: Dr. Denis Nissim-Sabat, Michael Pena, Eric Zupko, Diamond Sciequan, Ryan Smith, Ashlie Dofflemeyer, Monica Band, Krystine Lantz, Erin Bailey, Sarah Spangler, Christina Weissenberger, Amy Maddox, and Erika Caramillo

Many students find the trip to be a valuable experience personally and academically. Sarah Spangler, one of the students who went on the trip this year, said, "The trip enriched my college experience not only because I was immersed in so many different European cultures, but also because I had the opportunity to learn about the roots of psychology in their primitive form."

This year, the group visited London, Amsterdam, Paris, Geneva, Munich, and Vienna. The group visited a number of sites, including Freud's house, the Anna Freud Center, the Van Gogh Museum, and Anne Frank's house. Monica Band, another student who went on the trip this year, reflected on her experience. She said, "I still cannot believe I was in Freud's living room, where he did the majority of his psychoanalytic work." The students' experiences on the trip are those that occur once in a lifetime.

Two cities, Prague and Wurzburg, will be added to the itinerary next year, while visits to Paris, Munich, and Geneva will not be included. Many of the sites visited this year will be revisited next year; however, new sites will be added,

including Virginia Wolfe's house.

The academic component of the course includes watching films prior to the trip to prepare students for their experiences abroad. Another requirement is that students complete assigned readings relevant to the sites they will visit and take turns presenting the material to the group. These presentations are followed by discussion of the readings and how the readings relate to the history of the sites. Sarah Spangler praised this discussion-based format. She said, "The small group discussions gave us the opportunity to learn from one another."

As a former Psychology in Europe student, I can say that being in class after seeing these sites in person brought a greater understanding of the material. This course brings the history of psychology to life. Monica Band concurs, stating, "The best part of the trip was that although every site was unique, every site tied into everything we had been learning and reading about."

Although the trip focuses on sites important to the history of psychology, Dr. Nissim-Sabat sets aside time for students to experience parts of Europe that are of general interest. Monica Band reflected on this aspect of the trip. She said, "I don't know many people who can say they went to the Louvre and saw the Mona Lisa, walked through Paris under the Arc de Triomphe to the Eiffel Tower, went to the Eiffel Tower at night while it was sparkling with lights, and experienced the excellence of a midnight crepe, all in one day!"

Dr. Nissim-Sabat says that students have requested he change the course number so they could attend again. Aside from the impressions formed by the sites visited – historical to general interest – friendships made on the trip have longevity. Furthermore, Monica Band comments that getting to know Dr. Nissim-Sabat outside of the classroom was a great experience!

For more information about next year's trip, contact Dr. Nissim-Sabat at dnissim@umw.edu.

Virginia Psychological Association Recognizes Student's Research

Melissa Falkenstern '09 received the Uzi Seltzer Award for the Best Undergraduate Paper in an Applied Area at the spring meeting of the Virginia Psychological Association. At the conference, Melissa presented her research in positive psychology; her talk was titled *The effects of mood on cognitive processing*. During the '08-'09 academic year, Melissa worked with Dr. Holly Schiffrin, Assistant Professor of Psychology, and the other members of Dr. Schiffrin's research team. The work for which Melissa won the award was completed for her honors project. Congratulations, Melissa!

Students Named Scholarship and Award Winners

A number of students were awarded scholarships for the '08-'09 academic year. The *Topher Bill Scholarship* was awarded to **Brittany Killian** for her outstanding performance, particularly in statistics and research. *Burney Lynch Parkinson Scholarships* for students who intend to make education a career were awarded to **Michelle Bond** and **Gina Rhodes**. *Minnie Rob Phaup Scholarships*, named in honor of a former faculty member, were awarded to **Sean Freeman**, **Melissa McTernan**, and **Caitlin Messinger**. Last, the *Outstanding Senior Award* was given to **Melissa Falkenstern**.



**Dr. Debra Steckler and
Melissa Falkenstern,
Outstanding Senior '08-'09**

Alumni and Faculty Reconnect at Association for Psychological Science Meeting



Meredith Goode '09, Dr. Mindy Erchull, Leslie Taubenberger '09, Jenna McKee '09, Melissa Shepherd '09, Aryn Rosner '09, Jillian O'Rourke '09, Emily Forsyth Queen '09, Abby Bates '09, Sabrina Askari '09, Petra Thompson '09, Dr. David Rettinger, and Laura Ramsey '06

Drs. Mindy Erchull and David Rettinger, Assistant Professors of Psychology, and their former research team members presented their research at the July 2009 meeting of the American Psychological Society. Dr. Erchull presented two posters. One of the posters presented a study based on collaboration between Drs. Erchull and Miriam Liss and alumna Sabrina Askari, and was titled *Young adults' ideal and actual expectations for future division of household labor*. The other poster presented a study by Dr. Erchull and alumnae Melissa Shepherd, Leslie Taubenberger, Emily Forsyth Queen, Aryn Rosner, and Jenna McKee, and was titled *I'll get that for you: The relationship between benevolent sexism and objectification*.

Dr. Rettinger presented a poster titled *Emotional and social influences on moral decision making in an academic setting*. This study was conducted by Dr. Rettinger and alumnae Jillian O'Rourke, Abby Bates, Meredith Goode, and Petra Thompson.

Drs. Erchull and Rettinger and their former students met up at the convention along with alumna Laura Ramsey, who was also in attendance.

Students Awarded Honors in Psychology

Honors are awarded to academically outstanding psychology majors who complete a theoretical paper or an empirical investigation either independently or as part of the work of a research team. In addition, these students present their work to an honor's project committee for evaluation. **Grace Boyers, Heather Butler, Melissa Falkenstern, Emily Forsyth-Queen, Jillian O'Rourke** and **Kristynn Sullivan-Leon** were awarded honors for the '08-'09 academic year. Congratulations!

New Student Representatives and Lab Aides for '09-'10



Psychology Student Representatives: Akhil Rachamadugu, Liz Shewark, Dr. Debra Steckler (Advisor), Megan Tisdelle, and Kendall Cloeter



Lab Aides: Caitlin Messinger, Brittany Killian, Dr. Jennifer Mailloux (Advisor), Lauren Hartwell, and Lindsay Meredith

Last spring, **Kendall Cloeter**, **Akhil Rachamadugu**, **Liz Shewark**, and **Megan Tisdelle** were elected by their peers to serve as psychology department student representatives. The representatives have been busy organizing events like the Majors Meeting and the Fall Picnic this semester. Also, they contributed to this newsletter!

Four students were selected by their peers to serve as lab aides.

Returning from last year are co-head lab aides **Brittany Killian** and **Caitlin Messinger**; they are joined by **Lauren Hartwell** and **Lindsay Meredith**. The lab aides oversee the computer labs in Chandler Hall, which serve all psychology and business majors.

On behalf of the psychology and business departments, thank you to the psychology representatives and the lab aides for the services you provide.

Psi Chi Inducts New Members and Elects New Officers

Dr. Denis Nissim-Sabat, the keynote speaker, welcomed a number of psychology majors into the UMW chapter of Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology. The spring 2009 inductees were:

Michelle Bond, Raquela Carlson, Sean Freeman, Katherine Giles, Jennifer Hicks, Patrick Love, Jillian Maier, Natalie McLarty, Melissa McTernan, Katherine O'Leary, Caitlin Paris, Kathryn Parvin, Elizabeth Pringle, Sonia Roschelli, and Elizabeth Shewark.

Also, the Psi Chi chapter elected new officers last semester. **Brittany Killian** and **Caitlin Messinger** are serving as co-presidents, **Elizabeth Shewark** is serving as secretary, and **Melissa McTernan** is serving as treasurer. Two new positions were added: **Sean Freeman** is serving in the new position of historian and **Patrick Love** is serving in the new position of fundraising chair.

Announcing the annual **Topher Bill Auction!**

This auction is held in honor of Dr. Topher Bill, a former psychology professor. Money raised at the auction goes toward scholarships for psychology majors, one of which is in Dr. Bill's name. This year's auction will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 24 at 5 p.m. in Chandler Hall, Room 102. The psychology department encourages

your attendance and requests donations of many kinds including outings, artistic works, gift baskets, baked goods, etc. We are grateful for monetary donations also. Please make checks payable to the University of Mary Washington Foundation and specify that the donation is for the Psychology Department – Topher Bill Auction/

Scholarship. Please send checks to the following address: University of Mary Washington Foundation, Jepson Alumni Executive Center, 1119 Hanover Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401-5412. Thank you!

Where Are They Now?

Cindy Abernathy '07 earned a master's degree in counseling psychology from Towson University. She lives in Columbia, Md., and plans to work in the area of sex therapy and sexual trauma as a licensed clinical professional counselor.

Erin Bailey '09 began the doctoral program in clinical psychology at Alliant International University this fall.

Carly Barron '09 is a zookeeper at the Maryland Zoo.

Liz Bean '98 received a doctorate in nursing practice from the University of Colorado and practices in Denver.

Alison Breland '00 is employed by the Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

Kerri Buscaglia '09 moved to New Jersey after graduation. She plans to apply to medical school and become a pediatrician.

Heather Butler '09 began the master's of education in school counseling program at the College of William and Mary this fall.

Cathrine Dam '00 received her doctorate from the Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute at The University of California, Berkeley. Her doctoral work focused on disentangling novelty and emotional responses to faces. Prior to entering this degree program, Cathrine worked in the neuroscience field at the National Institutes of Mental Health in Maryland. Recently, she was employed by Neurofocus, an upstart company devoted to analyzing brain activity in response to advertisements.

Carolyn Duffy '09 began the UMW master's of science in elementary education program this fall.

Katie Elmore '99 is the central office administrative coordinator for the emotionally disturbed/learning disabled in Prince William County. She has a master's degree from James Madison University and is pursuing a doctorate at George Mason University.

Melissa Falkenstern '09 began the doctoral program in clinical psychology at Washington State University this fall. The research she will conduct is in the area of positive psychology.

Emily Forsyth Queen '09 is serving in the Peace Corps in Burkina Faso, West Africa.

Lauren Fuller '09 began the doctoral program in counseling psychology at the University of North Dakota this fall.

Morgan Hembree '09 began the doctor of psychology program at Widener University's Institute for Graduate Clinical Psychology this fall.

Sarah Hepp '09 began the master's of social work program at George Mason University this fall. Also, she married Jeffrey Campbell in October 2008.

Marissa Housman '09 began the school psychologist specialist program at Rowan University this fall, pursuing a master's degree in school psychology and an educational specialist degree in educational services.

Cynthia Landesberg '05 graduated from George Washington Law School in 2008. She passed the bar examination and is employed by Solomon and Cohen, P.C., Attorneys at Law in Bethesda, Md.

Roseanna Loucks '09 began the master's of social work program at Virginia Commonwealth University this fall.

Megan McDonough '09 lives in New York City and works for Wind-up Records, a rock music label distributed under SONY in the U.S. and Warner in Canada. She writes for a couple of fashion-based websites as well.

Kristin Merica '09 began the master's program in professional counseling at Liberty University this fall. Also, she works full time as a day-treatment lead counselor for Dominion Day Services in Fredericksburg.

Katie Ontko '09 moved to Virginia Beach after graduation.

Aryn Rosner '09 began the combined master's degree in social work and gender violence intervention certificate program at Virginia Commonwealth University this fall.

Jessica Van Brocklin '09 began the master's of education in speech-language pathology program at the University of Virginia this fall.

Michelle Wenz '09 began the master's of social work program at Virginia Commonwealth University this fall.

Chrissie Woolsey '09 began the UMW master's of science in elementary education program this fall.

Victoria (Tory) Wright '07 received a master's of science in counseling from Loyola University, New Orleans. Tory is looking for employment in Northern Virginia and plans to pursue a doctor of psychology degree.

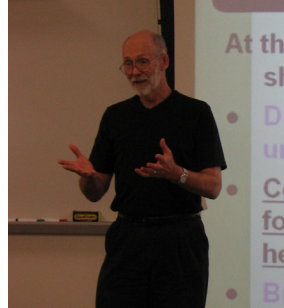
A Moment in the History of the Psychology Department

Historical information courtesy of Dr. Tom Moeller, Professor Emeritus of Psychology

In '75-'76, Dr. Roy Smith, now a Professor of Psychology, developed the department's student internship program and became the first internship advisor. To complete an internship for credit in psychology, the internship had to be approved by the psychology faculty. This remains true today; students can find a list of internships approved by the psychology faculty on the department website at psyc.umwchandler.net under "Outside Learning." Today, the department offers internships in many categories, for example, child/adolescent psychology, domestic violence intervention, alcohol and drug abuse intervention, criminal justice, and mental health counseling. An internship is one option students have to fulfill the out-of-the-classroom or experiential learning requirement of the psychology major. More information about internships can be found in the psychology department brochure.

Psi Chi Symposium Presenters Given Awards for Outstanding Research

At the Psi Chi Symposium, outstanding research was recognized in three categories: Methods Course Research, Laboratory Course Research, and Independent Study Research.



Dr. Everett Worthington

Kristin Gauta, Gwen Paulson, and Allison Sleeman were given the award for best Methods Course Research. Their project was titled *What does his face say about him?* They completed this project in Dr. Dave Rettinger's class.

David Flores, Margaret White, and Heather Wilson were given the award for best Laboratory Course Research.

Their project was titled *Why can't they wait? The difficulties of a DRL schedule.* They completed this project in Dr. Dave Mac Ewen's course.

Kerri Buscaglia, Melissa Ontko, Kristynnn Sullivan-Leon, Erin Bailey, and Marie Kilby were given the award for best Independent Study Research. Their project was titled *Mood, motherhood, and misconceptions: Reactions toward women with postpartum depression.* They completed their research with Dr. Christine McBride.

Congratulations to our award winners and to all the Psi Chi Symposium presenters!

These awards were presented following a keynote address by Dr. Everett Worthington, Professor of Psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University. His address was titled *Understanding forgiveness.*

Fall Picnic

This year's Fall Picnic took place on a balmy day in early October at St. Clair Brooks Park. Students and faculty enjoyed hamburgers, hot dogs, some faculty-made side dishes, and cake. Volleyball and softball games kept folks busy. A fun time was had by all!





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Keep In Touch

Keep in touch with your psychology department and fellow graduates.
Join the UMW Department of Psychology Alumni Group on Facebook!

The department encourages visitors to the psychology department website, psyc.umwchandler.net. You will find information about obtaining an advanced degree in psychology, careers in psychology, opportunities for research and internships in psychology, activities sponsored by our chapter of Psi Chi, and more!